

TURKISH LITERATURE IN ITALIAN: 1923-2012¹

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Abstract

This paper presents a brief survey on translated Turkish literature in Italian. Italy and Turkey, two Mediterranean countries that are geographically not too distant, have had long historical, commercial, and cultural ties. However, despite the considerably high number of translations from Italian into Turkish since the 1870s, the flow of translations from Turkish literature into Italian, which started only in 1923, has been slow until the 2000s. This paper examines the position of Turkish literature in Italian based on a bibliography of translated works; discussing at the same time several issues that arise while compiling a bibliography of translated works.

Keywords: Turkish literature, translations into Italian, translation bibliography.

Özet

Bu makale Türk edebiyatından İtalyancaya çevrilen eserler üzerine kısa bir inceleme sunmaktadır. Coğrafi olarak birbirlerinden çok uzak olmayan bu iki Akdeniz ülkesinin yüzyıllara dayanan tarihi, ticari ve kültürel bağları vardır. Ancak, 1870'lerden itibaren İtalyancadan Türkçeye çevrilen çok sayıdaki esere rağmen, Türkçeden İtalyancaya ancak 1923 yılında başlayan çeviri süreci 2000'li yıllara kadar yavaş ilerlemiştir. Bir çeviri bibliyografyasına dayanan bu çalışma, Türk edebiyatının İtalyancadaki yerini incelemekte, aynı zamanda bir çeviri bibliyografyası hazırlarken ortaya çıkan sorunları tartışmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Türk edebiyatı, İtalyancaya çeviriler, çeviri bibliyografyası

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¹ A preliminary study of this paper was presented at the panel entitled "Türk Edebiyatından Çeviriler ve Almanca, Fransızca, İngilizce, İtalyanca, Rusça, Yunanca Kaynakçaları Üzerinden Kültürlerarası Çeviri Politikalarının Tartışılması" / "Translations from Turkish Literature and Intercultural Translation Policies with regard to German, French, English, Italian, Russian and Greek Bibliographies" at Akşit Göktürk'ü Anma Toplantısı, Istanbul University (13-14 March 2008) using the bibliography drawn up for the First International Symposium of Translators and Publishers of Turkish Literature, held in June 2007 at Boğaziçi University. The list of translated works has been updated for this paper.

Introduction:

Cultural and commercial relations between Italy and Turkey go back centuries. According to Şerafettin Turan, apart from the various ethnic and religious Byzantine subjects, Italians were among the first Europeans Turks met after their arrival to Anatolia in the 11th century (Turan 2000: 9). Italians were also the first using the denominations of *Turkia*, *Turquia*, or *Turchia* long before the Seljuk Turks and the Ottoman Turks accepted the term (Turan 2000: 10-12). Commercial relations that had started between the Italian city-states, such as Venice and Genoa, and the Seljuk Turks, continued during the Ottoman period. Before they interacted with the Venetians, the Ottoman Turks had relations with the Genoese. From the time of Sultan Orhan until Sultan Mehmet II, Ottoman-Genoese relations were positioned as an alliance against the Venetians. The Turks crossed from Anatolia to Thrace, and thus to Europe proper, with ships rented from the Genoese. Venice, on the other hand, was a wealthy state during the 15th and 16th centuries, and needed to have good relations with the East both for the provision of raw materials and for selling finished goods. It was in this contradictory context of competition and cooperation that the Ottomans and Venetians experienced living side by side (Karakartal 2002: 13). Shortly after the conquest of Istanbul by Sultan Mehmet II in 1453, the Venetians were the first Europeans to open an embassy in the new capital, sending Bartolomeo Marcello as ambassador. Political and commercial relations between Italians and Turks that developed –with ups and downs– for centuries, had a great impact in the cultural and artistic spheres. A historical overview reveals that changes in power relations were crucial in determining the character of cultural relations.²

After 1453, the new situation that put the Ottomans in direct contact with Christian states prompted the Europeans to take an interest in Turks and the Turkish language. The number of works about Turks increased considerably. Now, not only the European interpreters, but also travellers,

² For the cultural, commercial, and political relations between two nations, see Turan (2000, from the Seljuk Turks until 1453) and Karakartal (2002). For the reciprocal cultural flux in performing arts, such as the opera, ballet, and theatre, see Metin And 1989 and 2004. The image of the “Turk” in Italy and Italian literature was examined in Soykut (2001) and Gürol (1987). Similarly, the image of Italy in Turkish literature and of the Italians in Turkish culture was studied by Karakartal (2002 and 2003).

merchants, missionaries, diplomats, and soldiers felt a need for bilingual dictionaries, grammar, and phrasebooks (Hitzel 1995: 108). Starting from the 15th century onwards, a number of dictionaries and grammar books of the Turkish language were written and published in Italy (Cortelazzo 1979 and Karakartal 2002: 46-47). One example that dates to even earlier years is the *Codex Cumanicus*, a dictionary compiled in the 14th century to help Christian missionaries to convert Kipchak Turks to Christianity, and it could be considered the first Turkish-Italian dictionary (Karakartal 2002: 46). Interest in learning and teaching the Turkish language in Italy started much earlier than Turkish interest in the Italian language. In 1551, the Venetian Republic started to send some of its young citizens chosen by the Senate to Istanbul to learn the Oriental languages and become interpreters. These young students were known as “language boys”, *giovani della lingua*. When the French wanted to open a school to train interpreters in the 17th century, they took the Italian model as an example (Hitzel 1995: 18-19).³

The 19th century was a period of change in power. While with the *Risorgimento*, the Italian unification, the Italian states agglomerated into a single state of Italy, the Ottomans started a period of reorganization and reformation in 1839 to revitalize and to preserve the Ottoman Empire in a world increasingly controlled by European power and civilization. This resulted in an increased interest in Italian by the Turks, and the publication of Italian dictionaries and grammar books in Turkey.⁴ Several Italian-Turkish dictionaries and manuals to teach the Italian language were published after 1890, following the publication of a *Dictionnaire Français, Turc, Italien* by Mehmet Atıf in 1868 (Karakartal 2002: 48-51). The first literary work translated from Italian into Turkish was Silvio Pellico’s *Le mie prigioni* transferred from its French version by Recaizade Mahmud Ekrem in 1874 (Karakartal 2002: 51).⁵ Since then, there have been about one thousand

³ This model was later followed in Vienna, in 1754 by the Government of the Empress Maria Theresa from which the Oriental Academy emerged. An equally successful academic training establishment for Orientalists as the Parisian Ecole des Langues Orientales Vivantes is the current INALCO Institute.

⁴ Karakartal notes the earliest Turkish-Italian dictionary, the *Lugat’i Tilyan* by Esrar Dede (1748-1797), which was written already at the end of the 18th century (2002: 47). For further details, see Horata 2000.

⁵ We still have a limited knowledge of translations made into Turkish in Armenian, Hebrew or Greek letters. Parlak (2011: 87) mentions a translation from Torquato Tasso

Italian literary works translated into Turkish.⁶

In Italy, since the early twentieth century, the study of the Turkish language was developed within the field of Oriental Studies. *Istituto Universitario Orientale* of Naples (after 2002, Università di Napoli “L’Orientale”), Ca’ Foscari University in Venice, La Sapienza University of Rome, Istituto per l’Oriente C. A. Nallino in Rome, and recently, the University of Lecce offer Turkish language (and literature) courses (Nocera 2010: 3). In Turkey, however, only Ankara (since 1960) and Istanbul universities (since 1978) have departments of Italian language and literature. However, a number of public and private universities offer courses in teaching Italian as a second language at various levels and for diverse purposes.⁷

Despite the ostensibly earlier interest in the Turkish language in Italy, the data on translated literature reveal an entirely different picture. The first literary translation made from Turkish into Italian dates back only to 1923. Apart from a couple of edited volumes, not more than a dozen Turkish authors were translated into Italian up until 1990. What follows below will be a discussion based on a bibliography of translated Turkish literature in Italian.

Creating a bibliography of translated Turkish literature in Italian enables us to observe the prevailing trends related to the preference for the translation of works by certain Turkish authors as well as of particular genres and themes. A bibliography of translated literature can also shed light on the relations between Turkish and Italian cultures. Furthermore, the analysis of these translations, which includes the examination of the selection criteria of the texts, the strategies taken during the translation process, and the reception of these translations, can contribute to revealing how a certain “image” of Turkey has been constructed by these translations. However, it needs to be

made by Ohannes Aramyan in Armenian letters, and published in Venice in 1831.

⁶ For a bibliography of Italian literary works in Turkish, see Bilgiç Kader (2011). Parlak, in her book, examines the place of Italian literature in Turkish using this bibliography (2011).

⁷ At state universities such as: Istanbul Technical, Hacettepe, Mimar Sinan, Galatasaray, Yıldız Technical, METU, Ege, Dokuz Eylül, Selçuk, and Boğaziçi University, and at private universities such as: Bilkent, Başkent, İzmir Ekonomi, TOBB University of Economics and Technology, Yeditepe, Koç, Maltepe, Sabancı, Doğuş, Bahçeşehir, Istanbul Ticaret, Ufuk, Yaşar, and Kadir Has.

noted that the space limits of this article do not allow any textual analyses of these translations; that should be the subject of a separate study.

Bibliography:

It is well known that English strongly dominates the global market for translations as 55 to 60% of all book translations in the world are made from English. German and French, each with a share of about 10% of the global translation market, come after English (Heilbron 2010). In a world-system of translation such as this, it is not surprising to note that the number of translations between two peripheral languages cannot be high. It is also worth mentioning that determining the number or even the percentage of translations from a minor language is nearly impossible.

As Lea Nocera stated, in Italy there are no precise statistics on translations from the Turkish language (Nocera 2010: 13). The Italian National Institute of Statistics (Istat) distinguishes the translations from languages, such as English, French, German, Spanish, Latin, Italian dialects, and Greek and Slavic languages. Turkish is included under “other languages.”⁸ According to Istat’s data, which up to present cover the period from 1997 to 2008, approximately 25% of all publications in Italy are translations, English and French being the most translated languages.

In compiling the bibliography of Italian translations from Turkish literature, the online catalogue of the ICCU, *Istituto Centrale per il catalogo unico delle biblioteche italiane e per le informazioni bibliografiche* and the publishers’ catalogues proved to be the most useful. However, these sources have a number of limitations and challenges, which also tells us about the reception of a certain literature. Although UNESCO’s *Index Translationum* allows searching for translations from a specific source language, it remains inadequate, missing a sizeable number of translations. In the *Index*, only forty works translated from Turkish into Italian from 1979 onwards can be found. One has then to search in the catalogues of ICCU and of various publishers specifically for authors’ names and titles to detect what has been translated. As can be imagined, it is highly probable that certain titles are

⁸ http://www3.istat.it/dati/dataset/20080415_00/.

overlooked in such a laborious job.

One of the major problems of the bibliographic records in ICCU's catalogue is the inconsistency of the data presented. The subject categories (Dewey Decimal Classification) of many of the works are wrong. The language and title of the original publication are not always given. Furthermore, a work translated from an intermediary language is not always mentioned (for example, Yakub Kadri's *Yaban* from English or Nedim Gürsel's *Kadınlar Kitabı* from French).

The publishers' online catalogues are another useful source for research. However, what has been said about the ICCU's catalogue is also valid for most publishers' records. Furthermore, the name of the translator is seldom mentioned in these catalogues.

What is included, what is excluded: Problems in categorization:

General terms such as "Turkish literature" become problematic when needing to decide what is included and excluded in this literature when compiling a bibliography. One can start from the assumption that Turkish literature comprises works written in the Turkish language. Many (ethnically) Turkish authors do not write only in Turkish, but also in other languages. Elif Şafak is perhaps the most famous example who writes her novels both in Turkish and English. Similarly, Alev Lytle Croutier, Moris Farhi, and İrfan Orga, whose novels have also been translated into Italian, write in English. There are also Turkish writers who reside in Germany and write their work in German. Names, such as Emine Sevgi Özdamar, Akif Pirinçci, Zafer Şenocak, Yusuf Yeşilöz, and Feridun Zaimoğlu who write in German are shown among the German authors translated into Italian on the Goethe Institute's website. Some critical writings on Turkish literature in Italian include Feridun Zaimoğlu and İrfan Orga in their discussions (Salomoni 2007). It is my contention that works by these authors should be considered products of German literature. However, in order to provide an inclusive bibliography for readers interested in Turkish culture and literature, I included translations made from Turkish authors writing in languages other than Turkish, including Turkish-German authors in the bibliography.

One other decision to be made regarding the coverage of the bibliography was about Jalal al-Din Muhammad Rumi (Mevlana in Turkish), the thirteenth-century Persian Sufi poet who is considered an “Anatolian” in Turkey. Translations of Rumi’s work have also been included in the bibliography (and counted as anthologies) because of his identification in Turkey. His famous *Masnavi* (*Mesnevi*) written in Persian was included on the list -under the rubric of “Turkish literature”- of the 100 essential books recommended for primary and secondary school students by the Turkish Ministry of Education in 2004. Furthermore, the translation of (parts) of the *Masnavi* into Bulgarian, Albanian, and Tuvan has been supported by TEDA, the Translation Subvention Program of Turkey. This means those translations into these languages will be made from an intermediary language, which is Turkish.

The bibliography lists translations only in book form. There are obviously innumerable poems, short stories, or short excerpts from Turkish authors published in anthologies, journals and magazines. One example is Esmahan Aykol’s short story *Yılbaşı çapkını*, translated for a collection of short detective stories by various other writers (Aykol 2012). Another example is the bilingual edition of Sait Faik’s short stories that appeared in a journal, *A Oriente! Rivista italiana di lingue e culture orientali*, published by *La Babele del Levante*, an Italian site dedicated to the languages and cultures of the East (Abasıyanık 2010). The issue of the journal, entitled “*Az Şekerli/Con poco zucchero*” is entirely devoted to the Turkish author. These translations have not been included in this study. It is probable that I have overlooked some translations in compiling the bibliography. Moreover, the above mentioned decisions can easily be criticized. As mentioned above, my aim was to offer a comprehensive list of translations in Italian for anyone interested in Turkish culture and literature.

Translations:

The first translated work of Turkish literature in Italian was an anthology of translated poetry: *Antologia dell’amore Turco* was translated by Decio Cinti from the French version *Antologie des poèmes d’amour turcs* (of *Türk Eş’ar-ı Garâmi*) prepared by Abdülhalim Memduh and Edmond Fazy in

1905. The anthology included Divan poetry by Bâkî, Fuzûlî, Nâbî, Nedim, Nefî, Sultan Selim I, Fazıl Bey, Kazım Paşa, Arif Hikmet Bey, Ragıp Paşa, Ziya Paşa, and poems by Abdülhak Hamid, Kemal Bey, Ekrem Bey, Halid Ziya (Uşaklıgil), Tevfik Fikret, Cenap Şahabettin, Süleyman Nazif, Faik Ali (Ozansoy), Mehmet Rauf, and Hasan Fehmi. It was among the confiscated books because of its content of “homosexual love affairs” during the Fascist regime in Italy during the 1930s (Benadusi 2012: 400, n. 54).

The second translation from Turkish literature, Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu’s *Terra matrigna* (*Yaban*) appeared in Mondadori’s prestigious Medusa collection created in 1933. Yakup Kadri’s novel was rendered from its German version by Alessandra Scalerò (Rossi 1943). This series called “Quaderni della Medusa” continued between 1935-1967 and had the heading “I grandi narratori d’ogni paese” (The great writers of every country) on its cover page. *Terra matrigna* was published as the collection’s 133th book in 1941.

Karaosmanoğlu’s other novel *Nur Baba* was translated from Turkish in 1945 by the Turcologist Ettore Rossi (1894-1955), professor of Turkish language and literature at the University La Sapienza in Rome and author of *Manuale di lingua turca*, published in two volumes in 1939. *Nur Baba* was retranslated by Giampiero Bellingeri in 1995. Rossi also translated *Il Kitab-i Dede Qorqut* (*Book of Dede Korkut*) in 1952. His *Novelle turche moderne*, a volume of short stories by various Turkish authors, such as Ahmet Hikmet Müftüoğlu, Hüseyin Cahid Yalçın, Halide Edip Adivar, Ömer Seyfettin, Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, Refik Halid Karay, Reşat Nuri Güntekin, Fahri Celâl Göktulga, Sait Faik Abasıyanık, Ziya Osman Saba, and Haldun Taner, was published in 1964 after his death.

Until 1990, apart from four anthologies, not more than a dozen Turkish authors were translated into Italian. A volume of poems, *Gocce di Ruggine*, and a novel, *Dimenticami* by Suzan Sözen, a popular novelist in Turkey during the 1950s and 1960s, were published in 1956 and 1959 respectively. Yaşar Kemal’s *İnce Memed* (*Memed, My Hawk*) was first translated by Giuseppe Cittone under the title *Il cardo* in 1961. Like Yakup Kadri’s *Nur Baba*, the novel was retranslated by Antonella Passaro under the title *Memed in falco* in 1977. Antonella Passaro translated Yaşar Kemal’s other novels in the following years. Orhan Kemal’s *Baba Evi* (*My Father’s House / La casa*

del babbo) was translated by Paolo Cerulli in 1969. Orhan Kemal's other novel, *Ekmek kavgası* (*La lotta per il pane*) had to wait for almost 40 years to be translated by Barbara La Rosa in 2008. Paolo Cerulli also translated a volume of Turkish plays by Sabahattin Kudret Aksal, Yıldırım Keskin, and Necati Cumalı in 1964. In 1969, Mahmut Makal's *Bizim Köy* (*Indagine su un villaggio in Anatolia*) was translated from its French version *Un village anatolien* by Gianfranco Fiameni.

During the 1970s, two Turkish poets were introduced to Italian readers. An anthology of Cahit Sıtkı Tarancı's poems was translated by Necdet Adabağ, a Turkish Italianist, in 1972. Anna Masala (1934-), an ex-student of Rossi and professor of Turkish language and literature at the University La Sapienza in Rome, has translated works of various Turkish authors and poets into Italian since 1978; among them poems by Ümit Yaşar Oğuzcan in 1978 and Cahit Külebi in 1986. Çatalı Köy (*Il villaggio di Ciatalli*), a play by Ali Yürük was also translated and published by Masala in 1978. In 1973, another anthology of Turkish and Persian poetry, *Poesia d'amore turca e persiana*, was published.

In 1980, *Poesie mistiche* by Rumi was translated by the prolific Italian orientalist **Alessandro Bausani, who was one of the most important translators of the Koran into Italian.** Apart from Cahit Külebi's poems, only two novel translations were rendered into Italian during the 1980s. Latife Tekin's *Sevgili arsız ölüm* (*Cara spudorata morte*) was translated by Edda Dossi and Ugo Marazzi in 1988, and Nedim Gürsel's *Kadınlar Kitabı* (*La prima donna*) was translated from its French version *La première femme* by Leonella Prato Caruso in 1989.

Nazım Hikmet (1901-1963) was the most translated Turkish poet during this time. In fact, for many years Italian readers knew Turkish literature only through Nazım Hikmet and Yaşar Kemal (b. 1922). Nazım Hikmet's satirical play *İvan İvanoviç Var mıydı Yok muydu?* (*Ma è poi esistito Ivan Ivanovic?*) was his first translated work by Franco Lucentini (from Russian) in 1957. But Nazım Hikmet's popularity in Italy came with Joyce Lussu's translations (Berk Albachten 2009). Lussu translated Hikmet's *Poesia ve Teatro* (1960), two volumes containing examples of Hikmet's poems and plays, *In quest'anno 1941* (*Şu 1941 Yılında*) and *La Conga con Fidel* (*Havana Röportajı*) (1961), *Poesie d'amore* (*Aşk Şiirleri*) (1963), and *Paesaggi*

Umani (Memleketimden İnsan Manzaraları) (1965). Nazım Hikmet's poems were republished many times and he was especially known and respected for his love poems. *Poesie d'amore* has remained a bestseller for years on Valentine's Day in Italy.

Lussu met Nazım Hikmet at the Stockholm peace conference of June 1958, and there, she read his poems for the first time from their English translations. They soon became friends, but their language of communication was French. Already at the conference they start working on an unusual translation project where Nazım first read his poems aloud in Turkish, and then explained them to Lussu in French (Lussu 1998a: 8). Their collaboration continued for the coming years at various meetings and congresses. After Nazım Hikmet's death in 1963, Lussu visited his former wife, Münevver Andaç in Warsaw and continued to translate Hikmet's poems from Andaç's French translations (Lussu 1998a: 157).⁹

At first, Nazım Hikmet's early translations did not attract much attention. Lussu argued that she rendered his poems and creativity of another country directly, without filtering them with her Western culture. This was something new that was not understood because it seemed if there had not been the ideological elaboration of a Westerner, one could not understand anything (Ballestra 1996: 227). Lussu attributed the interest Hikmet later received to the younger generation, complained, however, about the lack of any critiques published about him or his poems.¹⁰ But, the situation changed in a short period, and from the mid-sixties onwards Lussu received every year payment for three thousand copies sold every year (Ballestra 1996: 171, 238).

Nazım Hikmet's first translated book from Turkish into Italian was *Sevdalı Bulut (Il nuvolo innamorato e altre fiabe)*, published in 2000. Some of Hikmet's poetry, translated directly from Turkish by Barbara La Rosa, was published in *Poesia's* March issue in 2007.

⁹ In 1961, Lussu smuggled Münevver Andaç and her two children Renan and Memed by a Triton yacht from Turkey to Greece from where Andaç could go to Warsaw in 1961. See Lussu 1998b.

¹⁰ Despite a long critique on Hikmet written by Giacomo D'Angelo, and published as a booklet in 2008, Lussu's criticism still remains valid.

Italian publishers realized only after the 1990s there were other Turkish authors worth translating. One of them was Orhan Pamuk. His *Beyaz Kale* (*White Castle*) was first translated by Giampiero Bellingeri and published with the title *Roccalba* by Frassinelli in 1992. The novel was republished in 2006 by Einaudi, this time with a more appropriate title *Il castello bianco*. In 1993, his *Sessiz Ev* (*La casa del silenzio*), and in 1996, *Kara Kitap* (*Il libro nero*) were also published by Frassinelli. The 1990s was also a period when works by Nazım Hikmet were widely republished. Nine volumes by Yaşar Kemal, except *İnce Memed*, which was translated in 1961 and retranslated in 1977, were published by Tranchida during the 1990s. Tranchida also published four other books by Kemal between 2000-2003. Finally, in 2012, Rizzoli published another book by Yaşar Kemal. A selection of Füzûzan's collection of short stories, *Kuşatma*, and Ferit Edgü's novel *Hakkâri'de bir mevsim* (*A Season in Hakkari*) were translated in 1991 and 1995 respectively. Two volumes of poetry by Enis Batur were also translated for the first time in 1991 and 1994. However, these remain the authors' only translated works in Italian. Akif Pirinçci, Yusuf Yeşilöz, and Feridun Zaimoğlu were the first Turkish-German authors introduced to Italian readers during the 1990s. Finally, a number of Rumi's poems were translated from French and Persian into Italian. According to the bibliography, 36 new books were translated during the 1990s, making the number of all translations until then 63. The number of translated authors reached 20.

The real boom occurred after 2000. Since 2000, more than 100 new books of Turkish literature were published in Italian. Several factors might have contributed to this development. The Nobel Prize awarded to Orhan Pamuk in 2006, the Frankfurt Book Fair in 2008 where Turkey was the guest of honor, and the launch of the TEDA, a subvention project for the publication of Turkish cultural, artistic, and literary works in foreign languages by the Turkish Ministry of Culture in 2005. Furthermore, as Nocera suggested, the increase of translations into other languages, especially into English and French, allowed the publishers to read the novels in those languages and have the sales data in the relevant countries, even if those countries may have different business dynamics, before making a decision to publish a translation in Italy (Nocera 2010: 11).

Noteworthy is the increasing number of works translated by women aut-

hors. There has been a special interest in Turkish women writers. Füzuran and Latife Tekin were the only women writers translated during the 1980s and 1990s. After 2000, fifteen women novelist and short story writers' works have been rendered into Italian; these are: Buket Uzuner, Perihan Mağden, Elif Şafak, Suzan Samancı, Şebnem İşigüzel, Fethiye Çetin, Solmaz Kâmuran, Nazlı Eray, Oya Baydar, Halide Edip Adivar, Esmahan Aykol, Feride Çiçekoğlu, Mine Kırıkkanat, Ece Vahapoğlu, and Seray Şahiner.

The female cartoonist Ramize Erer's collection of cartoons entitled *Evlilik (Matrimoni: la Turchia vista dalla camera da letto)* was translated in 2007, shortly after its publication in Turkey in 2004. German-Turkish writers Emine Sevgi Özdamar and Yadé Kara, the American-Turkish author Alev Lytle Croutier, and two authors of children's literature, Sara Şahinkanat, and Zeynep Cemali were other women writers who have been translated after 2000. Another book for children, *Pronta per la scuola* by Zeynep Gürsel was published by Lapis in 2006. First written in English, the book could not find a publisher in the USA. The French translation also had the same fate. It was then translated into Italian by the author and published in Italy.¹¹ These examples might be a hint to predict that in the future the number of translations of children's literature from Turkish will increase.

Another genre gaining some prominence is detective fiction (crime fiction). The German-Turkish writer Akif Pirinçci with his cat *Felidae* as the main protagonist, Mehmet Murat Somer with his unnamed transvestite amateur detective, Esmahan Aykol and her protagonist Kati Hirschel, the owner of Istanbul's only crime bookshop, have all reached the Italian readership. Ahmet Ümit who enjoys not only a Turkish, but also an international reputation, and other crime fiction novelists are still waiting to be translated into Italian.

Novels with a historical setting from names such as Mehmet Coral, Zülfü Livaneli (*Engereğin gözündeki kamaşma*), Alev Lytle Croutier, and Ahmet Altan (*Kılıç yarası gibi*) seem also to attract the interest of Italian publishers. Finally, although fewer in number than prose translations, poetry seems to be also popular with Italians. Books by 14 Turkish poets and eight anthologies of Turkish poetry have been translated.

¹¹ Personal communication with the author, January 2013.

Currently, there are over 150 literary translations from Turkish in the Italian publishing market and the number of translated Turkish authors came to 67. Around one third of these, 24 authors whose works are translated into Italian, are women. The most translated authors are Nazım Hikmet, Yaşar Kemal, Orhan Pamuk, Elif Şafak, and Nedim Gürsel. As can be seen in the bibliography, Rumi has also been widely translated into Italian. The number of translators is still not high, however, their role in promoting Turkish literature has been valuable not only as translators, but also as consultants to publishers helping them in their decisions to choose titles worth translating (Nocera 2010: 11).¹² There are still indirect (mediated) translations from Turkish literature, mainly from French, but also from English and German as indicated in the bibliography. As an example, Esmahan Aykol's novels were all translated from German. Nocera argues that this is not due to the lack of competent translators, and wonders if this is an economic choice, a way to directly control the translation, or is it because these translations were inspired by the success gained in other countries (Nocera 2010: 21)?

Table 1. Number and type of Italian translations from Turkish literature 1923-2012.

YEAR/CATEGORY	1923-1989	1990-1999	2000-2012	TOTAL
Poetry	10	5	10	25
Short Story	1	3	3	7
Novel	9	17	64	90
Drama	2	0	1	3
Children's Book	0	1	2	3
Anthology	6	7	11	24
Travel Literature	0	1	2	3
Essay	0	0	5	5
Folk literature	1	3	5	9
Collection of cartoons	0	0	1	1
Total	29	37	104	170

¹² See Nocera also for a discussion of translational agents: Nocera 201: 14-19.

Conclusion:

Translations from Turkish literature into Italian have generally been infrequent and spotty until the 1990s. Moreover, there were only a handful of translators who undertook such translation projects. Nazım Hikmet and Yaşar Kemal remained the most frequently translated Turkish authors for many years. In recent years, however, not only the number of translators from Turkish into Italian has increased, but also translations from Turkish literature into Italian are now more diversified.

Perhaps, one of the factors helping the increasing interest in Turkish literature after the 1990s was the transition Turkish literature itself experienced. Turkish literature, until the 1980s, was very much political and ideological. Political topics, especially Westernization, seemed to be the main source of inspiration until about the mid-forties. The duality seen as the West versus East in this period became the oppressor versus the oppressed after the 1950s.¹³ The so-called “village literature” written mainly by graduates and/or teachers from village institutes, but also by other writers such as Yaşar Kemal, Orhan Kemal (1914-1970), Kemal Tahir (1910-1973) during this period treated the poor peasant oppressed by the landlord as the main subject matter. This theme was modified later in stories of the rural migrants to newly industrializing areas after the 1960s. Finally, following the 1971 *coup*, came an increased politicization of literature (Özkırımlı). Social realism in Turkish literature, as Ahmet Ö. Evin argues, “introduced, nurtured, developed, and popularized the notion of class conflict for the Turkish reader at a time when an urban industrial class was barely emerging” (Evin 1993: 98).

Since the beginning of the 1980s substantial changes have occurred in all aspects of life in Turkey. The military regime, which came to power on 12 September 1980, put an end to political activity for the next three years. Amongst the characteristic features of the 1980s were attempts to remove fragmentation and polarization of the political parties, bureaucracy, universities, and the whole society. In this respect, as the 1961 constitution had permitted Turkish society to be politicized, the 1982 constitution reversed the process and tried to create a depoliticized society. However, the

¹³ See Karpas 1960 and Moran 1983-1994.

depoliticization process of the 1980s, as one can argue, may have had some positive effects on Turkish literature. As Talat Sait Halman pointed out, the Turkish novel, and literature in general, was liberated from ideology after the 1980s (Halman 1987: 6), and with a range of new viewpoints, beliefs, settings, situations and ideologies, it became more diversified. The increasing pluralism in the Turkish society with the emergence of new political ideologies and multiple identities also contributed to this development. With the diversity of genres, forms, and techniques, new Turkish literature could develop a synthesis of its own heritage and acquired elements. In this respect, Latife Tekin (b. 1957) and Orhan Pamuk (b. 1952) were among the main Turkish writers who challenged the Turkish literary system during this period. It should therefore not be surprising to see that beginning in the late 1980s, and early 1990s, works, especially novels, by contemporary Turkish authors such as Tekin and Pamuk, were translated into Italian and also other Western languages and praised for their literary values.¹⁴ Likewise, the increasing number of books written by women and by authors of other ethnic and religious origins¹⁵, and the appearance of journals and newspapers published by such groups invigorated the Turkish publishing sector in Turkey. Certainly, the recent Turkish literary texts selected for translation speak to a wider readership than in the past. Although these novels deal with Turkey and its problems, they do it not in a didactic manner as in the “village literature”.

As mentioned earlier, the increasing number of translations in other languages, especially in English and French, may have had an indirect effect on Italian publishers’ decisions regarding Turkish literature by becoming examples. This claim was also supported by Johan Heilbron who argued, “what is translated from one peripheral language into the other depends on what is translated from these peripheral languages into the central language-

¹⁴ This can, of course, not only be explained by the flourishing of Turkish literature. There was, for example, also a small rise in the number of English-language translations brought out by Anglo-American publishers towards the end of the 1980s, and Lawrence Venuti has suggested that this was a consequence of general trade publishers being forced “to compete against new translation initiatives at university and small presses” (Venuti 1992: 5).

¹⁵ For the first time a Jewish author, Mario Levi, received one of the prestigious literary awards, the 1990 Haldun Taner Short Story Award with his volume of novellas: *Bir Şehre Gidememek* (Unable to Go to a City) which was translated into Italian only in 2010.

ges” (Heilbron 1999: 435). The visibility of Turkish literature and Turkish writers in the international arena also contributed to an increased interest both by publishers and readers in Italy. This probably gives the publishers a certain guarantee for commercial success.

TEDA’s support to publishers for translations plays an important role, especially in enabling the translation of works by authors who would not become a bestseller, thus normally would not be published for economic reasons. In this vein, starting in 2007, every two years, an International Symposium of Translators and Publishers of Turkish Literature has been organized by the General Directorate of Libraries and Publications of the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism and by the Department of Translation and Interpreting Studies of Boğaziçi University. These symposia bring together translators, editors, publishers, literary agents, and critics who have contributed to the dissemination of Turkish literature in many different languages, enabling discussions on some questions relevant to translation. The symposia also enable professional networking by bringing together literary agents invited from different parts of the world and Turkish writers, publishers, translators, and literary agents.

Today, there are 67 Turkish writers whose books were translated into Italian. With other literary works translated and published in anthologies, journals, and magazines, this number becomes even higher. However, there is still a long list of Turkish authors waiting to be translated into Italian. And the numbers alone do not account for the reception of translations. There is still much need for an increased number of readers and reviewers, and of course students of Turkish literature in Italy. There is also need for detailed analyses of these translations to reveal translational decisions and norms, which play a role in creating an image of Turks and Turkey. Looking at the picture of translations from Turkish literature in the last decade, we can expect that more classic and contemporary Turkish literary works will continue to be translated and read in Italy, and contribute to strengthening ties between the two countries.

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