

ON THE TRANSLATIONS FROM RUSSIAN IN POST-TANZIMAT ERA

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Abstract

Translations from Western languages in the post-Tanzimat era played a significant role in the renewal and further development of Turkish literature. During the post-Tanzimat era, when the interaction with the West gained momentum, various works were initially translated from French as a result of political, social, cultural and literary circumstances. However, in the following years, and especially from 1880 onwards, translations of many works of prose and verse from English, German and Russian literature begin. Turkish readers met with Russian literature for the first time in 1884, 25 years after the first literary translations from French. The reason behind the growing interest in Russian literature was the beginning of Russian language education in military schools and orientalist Olga Sergejevna Lebedeva's visits to Istanbul. Following the first translation from Russian literature in 1884, there is a considerable increase in translation efforts. In this period, various dictionaries as well as grammar and course books were published to aid learning Russian. Prominent poets and authors of Russian literature were introduced through articles and monographs. Works on the history of Russian literature were also published with the aim of introducing Russian literature to a Turkish audience. Despite the existence of many good-willed endeavors, one can say that the translations from Russian into Turkish were not undertaken with a systematic and structured approach and rather depended on the individual choices of the translators as well as social, political and cultural circumstances of the period. Some of these translations are based on a second language, namely French. One can hardly identify a beautiful style and a high quality translation in some of these translations, which contained errors and missing parts. A systematic and planned approach to translation only came about in Republican era especially after 1940. Like the translations from Western languages, the translations from Russian had a substantial impact on broadening Turkish reader's and intellectual's horizon and on acquainting with the literary, cultural and artistic works and values of Russia. These first translations from Russian laid the groundwork for more quality translations to be made in the Republican era. This article will focus on the translations from Russian in Post-Tanzimat era.

Keywords: Tanzimat, Russian, Turkish, literature, translation

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TANZİMAT'TAN SONRA RUSÇADAN YAPILAN TERCÜMELER ÜZERİNE

Özet

Tanzimat'tan sonra Türk edebiyatının yenileşmesinde ve gelişmesinde batıdan yapılan tercüme önemli rol oynar. Batıyla etkileşimin arttığı Tanzimat sonrası dönemde, siyasî, sosyal, kültürel, edebî şartlara bağlı olarak önceleri Fransız edebiyatından birçok eserin tercüme edildiği görülür. Ancak ilerleyen dönemlerde, özellikle 1880'li yıllardan itibaren Fransız edebiyatının yanında İngiliz, Alman ve Rus edebiyatından da manzum ve mensur birçok eser tercüme edilmeye başlanır. Türk okurları Rus edebiyatıyla ise 1884 yılında yani Fransızcadan yapılan ilk edebî tercümelemlerden 25 yıl sonra tanışır. Rus edebiyatına ilginin uyanmasında askerî okullarda Rusça öğretimine başlanması ve şarkiyatçı Olga Sergejevna Lebedeva'nın İstanbul'a gelmesi önemli etkenlerdir. Rusçadan 1884 yılında yapılan ilk tercümenin ardından hatırı sayılır bir tercüme faaliyetinden bahsedilebilir. Bu dönemde Rusça öğreniminde kolaylık sağlamak amacıyla sözlükler, gramer ve ders kitapları hazırlanır. Rus edebiyatının önemli şair ve yazarları çeşitli makalelerle ve monografi çalışmalarıyla tanıtılır. Türk okuyucusuna Rus edebiyatını tanıtmak adına Rus edebiyatı tarihi mahiyetindeki çalışmalar da önemli yer tutar. İyi niyetli birçok çalışmanın olmasına rağmen Rusçadan Türkçeye yapılan tercümelemlerde belli bir sistem ve programdan ziyade çevirmenlerin kişisel tercihleri ve dönemin sosyal, siyasî, kültürel şartlarının etkili olduğu söylenebilir. Bu tercümelemlerin bir kısmı ikinci dilden yani Fransızcadan yapılır. Bazı yanlışlıklar, atlamalar görülen bu tercümelemlerin bazılarında güzel bir üslup ve çeviriden bahsetmek zordur. Sistemli, planlı bir çeviri etkinliğinden ancak Cumhuriyet döneminde, 1940'lı yıllardan sonra söz edilebilir. Batı dillerinden yapılan tercümelemler gibi Rusçadan yapılan tercümelemler de Türk okuyucusunun, aydınının ufkunun genişlemesinde, Rusya'nın edebî, kültürel, sanatsal ürünleriyle, değerleriyle tanışmasında önemli bir yere sahiptir. Rusçadan yapılan bu ilk tercümelemler, Cumhuriyet döneminde nicelik ve nitelik açısından çok daha kaliteli tercümelemlerin ortaya çıkmasına zemin hazırlar. Bu makalede Tanzimat'tan sonra Rusçadan yapılan tercümelemler üzerinde durulacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Tanzimat, Rusça, Türkçe, edebiyat, tercüme

Introduction

Translations from Western languages in the post-Tanzimat era played a significant role in the renewal and further development of Turkish literature. The emergence of great civilizations is closely related to the interaction between them. There is no chance for a civilization to create anything new or to make

serious progress as long as it remains introverted, searching for answers only within itself¹.

With the regression in the Ottoman Empire in the 18th Century, attempts at reformation were undertaken to familiarize with the Western world and follow the developments that were taking place. Opening permanent embassies in the West, sending students abroad for language and science education are examples of such attempts at reformation, which began under the reign of Selim III and continued under Mahmud II. After the proclamation of Tanzimat Fermanı (also known as Edict of Gülhane) in 1839, these reform movements continued with increased momentum.

For Turkish intellectuals, the West was closely associated with France and therefore French was the first foreign language they learned. This can be attributed to the long-lasting social, political and economic relations with France as well as France's prominent position in the world. In addition to that, particular emphasis put on French works in the "Translation Office" and inclusion of French as a foreign language in many newly-established schools were also important. Moreover, the fact that many students went to France for education as well as many intellectuals who visited the country for political and cultural purposes also played a significant role.

The Turkish intellectuals, who went to France and learned French started to translate the books they read into Turkish with the aim of developing their language skills and keeping up with the latest developments in France. This could be the result of the desire of Turkish intellectuals to follow the scientific, intellectual and literary developments in France as well as their ambition to familiarize with the French cultural and literary world and promote it before the Turkish audience.

Various translation projects started during the post-Tanzimat era, a period when French literature began affecting Turkish literature. Şinasi stands out as one of the pioneers of this period. Before collecting his poems and publishing them in a book format, Şinasi began his work with a book promoting some examples from western poetry. Şinasi's booklet entitled Poems I Translated From the French Language into Turkish in Verse Form - Extrait de poesies et de proses traduits en vers du Français en Turc- was published in 1859. Şinasi changed the name of the booklet to *Tercüme-i Manzume* (Translations of Poems) for the second edition, published in 1870 in his own printing house. The importance of this little book, which contained the tragedies of Racine such as Esther, Athalie,

¹ Hilmi Ziya Ülken, *Uyanış Devirlerinde Tercümenin Rolü*, 3.b., İstanbul 1997, p. 15-20.

Andromaque; some prose written by La Fontaine, Gilbert and Fénelon as well as some pieces from Lamartine, lies in the fact that it was the first attempt to collectively translate the examples of Western poetry into Turkish². Also in 1859, *Muhaverât-ı Hikemîye* [Dialogues on Philosophy] was published by Münif Pasha and the book contained the philosophical dialogues of French philosophers such as Voltaire, Fénelon and Fontenelle translated from French.

In 1862, Yusuf Kamil Pasha translated Fénelon's *Telemaque*. This first translation of a novel, *Tercüme-i Telemaque* [Translation of Telemaque] was followed by Münif Pasha's short translation of Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*, published in *Ruzname-i Ceride-i Havadis* in the same year, under the title of *Hikâye-i Mağdurin* [The Story of the Wretched]. In 1864, chronicler Ahmet Lütfi Efendi translated Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* into Turkish from the Arabic translation. In 1871, Voltaire's *Mikromega* was translated by Ahmet Vefik Paşa under the title of *Hikâye-i Feylosofiye-i Mikromegas* [The Story of the Philosophy of Mikrogema]. Between the years 1871 and 1873, Teodor Kasap translated Alexandre Dumas Pere's *Monte Kristo Kontu* (La Comte de Monte Cristo). This novel had a great impact. In 1872, Mahmut Nedim translated Jonathan Swift's *Güliver'in Gezileri* (Gulliver's Travels) while Kadri translated La Sage's *Topal Şeytan* (Le Diable Boiteux). Also in 1872, Rezaizade Mahmut Ekrem translated Chateaubriand's *Atala*. In 1873, Bernardin de Saint Pierre's *Paul et Virginie* was translated. In 1878, Yusuf Neyyir translated *Graziella* by Lamartine; in 1879 Ahmet Mithat Efendi translated Alexandre Duma Fils's *Kamelyalı Kadın* (La Dame aux Camelias) and *Bir Fakir Delikanlının Hikâyesi* by Octave Feuillet in 1880 respectively³.

In addition to these first translations, articles and books on French culture and literature also began to be published. Between 1880 and 1896 when Servet'i Fünûn formed, Western literature was followed closely through some classic works. The writers of this period, who were better educated, compared to the previous generation and who had a better knowledge of Western languages and literature, also tried to convey the style of the authors in their translations.

The interest of Turkish intellectuals in Western literature were not limited to French, they also showed interest in English and German literatures. The intellectuals, who indirectly learned about the English and German literature from the works written in French, now began to read and translate the original works.

The most important works translated from English in the post-Tanzimat era are those of Shakespeare. The first translated work is *Othello*, though the

² Ömer Faruk Akün, Entry on "Şinasi", *İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, Vol.11, MEB pub., İstanbul 1976, p. 554

³ Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, *19. Asır Türk Edebiyatı Tarihi*, Çağlayan Kitabevi, 7.b., İstanbul 1988, p. 285-286

translation, which was made in 1876, was based on Ducis's adaptation. This was followed by Hasan Sırrı's translation of *The Merchant of Venice* [Venedik Taciri] (1884) and *The Comedy of Errors* [Sehv-i Mudhik] (1887). After these, Mihran Boyacıyan translated *Romeo and Juliet* and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* [İki Veronalı Asilzade] in three parts in 1884, based on the adaptations of Charles and Mary Lamb. Shakespeare's poems were also translated in this period. In 1885, Muallim Naci translated eight sonnets of Shakespeare and in 1887-1888 Mehmet Nadir translated forty-one sonnets⁴.

As a result of social, political, economic and military relations, [Turkish intellectuals] began to show interest in German culture and literature in addition to English culture and literature. Articles appeared in newspapers and journals on German artists and thinkers. Articles of Schopenhauer, Nietzsche and Schelling were translated⁵. Owing to the growing interest towards German language in Turkey during this period, Beşir Fuad translated Emil Otto's work under the title of *Almanca Muallimi* [German Teacher], in order to teach German grammar and language to Turkish people⁶.

Turkish readers met with Russian literature for the first time in 1884, 25 years after the first literary translations from French. The reason behind the growing interest in Russian literature was the beginning of Russian language education in military schools and orientalist Olga Sergejevna Lebedeva's visits to Istanbul.

The first Russian language education officially began in military schools. Starting in 1883/1884, the authorities at the military schools first used course books written in Russian and French for teaching Russian; after that new books were written and translated. It is also known that originals of Russian literary texts were used in classrooms.

In addition to the Russian courses in these schools, course books, grammar books and dictionaries were prepared for facilitating language education. The first works prepared within this scope belong to Infantry Master Mehmet Sadık. Mehmet Sadık prepared two course books in 1888/1889 based on his experience as a teacher at the Military Academy. These books are entitled *Rusça Muallimi* [Russian Teacher] and *Rusça Kırâ'at Muallimi* [Russian Reading Teacher]. In the preface to *Rusça Muallimi*, he states that he has been teaching Russian in Imperial Military Staff College and that there is still no "perfect" course book

⁴ İnci Enginün, *Tanzimat Devrinde Shakespeare Tercümeleri ve Tesirleri*, İstanbul 1979, p. 21

⁵ Nedret Pınar, *1900-1983 Yılları Arasında Türkçe'de Goethe ve Faust Tercümeleri Üzerinde Bir İnceleme*, İstanbul 1984, p. 1-11

⁶ Orhan Okay, *İlk Türk Pozitivist ve Natüralist Beşir Fuad*, İstanbul 1969, p. 121-122

available. The author attaches particular importance to learning Russian and explains his motivation for writing *Rusça Muallimi* in the section entitled “Editor’s Note”, where he provides significant information on the style and history of teaching Russian in military schools. In 1893-1894, Ahmed Sedâd translated Kerpiçinkof’s work as *Rusça Muhtasar Gramer* [Brief Russian Grammar]. In 1903, Kolağası Mehmed Hüsnü wrote *Rusça Öğrenmek* [Learning Russian]⁷.

Following the inclusion of Russian in military school curricula, translations of articles and books on Russian literature as well as translations of poems and proses from Russian language started to appear in Turkish.

The first literary translation from Russian language belongs to Mizancı Mehmed Murad, of Dagestani origin. Mehmed Murad translated a four-act play by Aleksándr Sergejevich Griboyedov named *Gore ot Uma* [Woe From Wit] as *Akıldan Bela* in 1883/1884. Murad Bey, who came from Caucasia and who knew Russian very well upon being educated in good Russian schools, translated no other works from Russian literature. Just as the protagonist in the play encounters various calamities for being too clever, the deceased Murad Bey rightly or wrongly associates himself with him. As he identifies a close connection between this work and his own life, he in a way consoled himself by translating and publishing this play.

This play took its place as the first literary translation from Russian literature in the post-Tanzimat era: “The Turkish language and Turkish people have only recently been informed about the authentic, deep and tumultuous literature of our Russian neighbor, which we have been at war with for centuries and which is the house of many million Turks. This literature has been so important as to influence the literatures of other civilizations that complete works have been translated into world languages. And we have only learned about that literature through the play [translated] by Murad Bey and written by someone like Griboyedov, who has a single [literary] work and who can only be counted among secondary or even tertiary [class of writers]⁸.”

Three years after this translation, a poem from Russian poet Lermontof was translated into Turkish and was published on 14 April 1887, in the 26th issue of *Mizan* newspaper, published by Mehmed Murad. The poem had no title and was published under the heading of “Science and Literature” with a caption reading “this poem is written by one of the Russian Poets, Lermontof. It was translated in our printing house and edited by Menemenlizâde Tahir Beyefendi”.

⁷ Cafer Gariper, “Rusça’dan Türkçe’ye Yapılan İlk Edebî Türler Üzerinde Bir Araştırma: Manzum Tercümeleler”, *İlmi Araştırmalar*, İstanbul 1999, p. 108-109

⁸ İsmail Habip Sevik, *Avrupa Edebiyatı ve Biz*, vol. II, İstanbul 1941, p. 267

The translator of the poem is also not known.

In 1889, some poems were translated and published by Recep Vahyî. Poems entitled *Çiftçi Şarkısı* [The Farmer's Song], *Kuşçağız* [The Little Bird], *Rusya Çarı Birinci Petro ile Bir Köylü* [Tsar Petro I and A Villager] were translated by Recep Vahyî and published in the February, March and September issues of Nilüfer magazine published in Bursa in 1889.

The translations of Recep Vahyî are particularly important among the first translations from Russian. Thirteen of 27 poems translated from Russian until the beginning of the 20th century were translated by him. In this regard, he also holds a significant place among those translating poems from Russian. These translations of Recep Vahyî were published in magazines such as Nilüfer and Fevâid⁹.

Recep Vahyî also collected the poems he translated from Russian in a manuscript¹⁰. In the Preface to this manuscript, Recep Vahyî states that he studied Russian language in the Imperial Military Staff College for three years and that he learned Russian there. When his teacher, Master Sadık Bey realized his success in Russian, he wanted him to select and translate some articles from *Hristomatiya*¹¹, which was used as a course book for the class. Thus his translations began. He states that despite lacking the competence to translate poems from Russian language, he wanted to pose an example to those having an interest in the language and especially inform the Turkish audience about Russian literature. Recep Vahyî published three of these poems, namely *Çiftçi Şarkısı* [The Farmer's Song], *Kuşçağız* [The Little Bird] and *Kazlar* [The Geese] in Nilüfer magazine, before collecting his translations in this manuscript in 1891.

As Recep Vahyî states in the "Preface", he translated the parts written in verse and prose from *Hristomatiya* in verse. However, he provided no information about the origin of his translations, so whether the original text of a given translation were written in prose or verse is not known. He also did not refer to the poet and author of the texts. However, according to the research conducted, the fables such as *Kara Karga ile Tilki* [The Black Crow and the Fox]; *Eşek ve Bülbül* [The Ass and the Nightingale] and *Karınca* [The Ant] were written by Ivan Andreyevich Krylov (1768-1844), who wrote fables like those of La Fontaine.

Among the first translations of poems from Russian, there are also some which were translated in prose. These are *Tulû'u Temâşâ*, translated by Memdûh

⁹ Cafer Gariper, *op.cit.*, p. 112

¹⁰ Cafer Gariper states that this manuscript, which was found among the documents transferred to İstanbul University Library from Yıldız Palace, is registered with record number TY. 5668. *op.cit.*, p. 112.

¹¹ A supplementary course book, or a reading book, containing the short biographies of authors and poets as well as prose and poetic works selected for the students.

and published with the note “Translated from Russian” and two poems by Pushkin, which were translated from French by Ali Kemal. The first of Ali Kemal’s translations is included in his introductory note to the book entitled *Paris Mektupları, Şiir ve Şair: Puşkin Kimdir* [Paris Letters, Poem and the Poet: Who is Pushkin?]. The second poem is *İslavya’nın Kızı* [The Daughter of Sláva] written by the Slavic poet Kollar, which is referred to in his article entitled *Şiirimiz, Şairlerimiz* [Our Poem, Our Poets]¹².

At the time when translation of poems from Russian literature had begun, writings introducing the Russian literature also started to appear in the newspapers. The increase in the number of such articles shows that there was a growing interest towards Russian literature. Madam Gülnar stands out as one of the most prominent figures who helped promote Russian literature. The original name of Gülnar Hanım is Olga Sergeevna Lebedeva. Gülnar Hanım is often referred to as Olga de Lebedev because of her marriage to Count Lebedev of France, a member of an aristocratic family settled in Kazan. She is known as Gülnar, her pen name, and also as Olga de Lebedef or Olga dö Lebedef. As a result of her love for the Turkish people, she came to accept Gülnar as her own name. Although, she wanted to be known in Turkey solely with this name later she was presented to the Turkish audience with her original name. Even though, she always used Gülnar as her first name in her Turkish publications. In some of her letters sent to Turkish friends as well as in the forewords written for the books of some Turkish authors, she only used Gülnar. The selection of this name may be attributed to the widespread use of some names such as Gülbahar, Gülnisa etc. among the Tartar women living in the region where she grew up.

Olga de Lebedev, who was a famous orientalist, came to Istanbul on 13 October 1890, upon the invitation of Ahmet Mithat Efendi, whom she met at the 8th International Congress of Orientalists held in 1889 in Sotckholm. She spent seven months in the city. In a short time, the works written by Gülnar Hanım were presented before Abdulhamid II and she was given the second degree Nişan-ı Şefkat [Order of Grace] by the Sultan.

One of the prominent publications of the era, Ahmet Mithat’s *Tercüman-ı Hakikat* newspaper, which allocated many pages to Western literature, began to show considerable interest in the Russian literature during this period. Gülnar Hanım also contributed to the newspaper, which run reviews of Russian poets and authors.

In mid-May 1891, Gülnar Hanım left Istanbul and went back to Kazan,

¹² Cafer Gariper, *op.cit.*, p. 113-114

only to return on 12 October 1891. She spent six and a half months in the city and continued translating yet another work from Pushkin, which she had started earlier, but this time Gülnar Hanım's main focus was on the works of Tolstoy. Gülnar Hanım left İstanbul on 2 May 1892 for Paris, leaving great friendships and admirers behind. From newspapers and the published works of that period it appears that Gülnar Hanım came back to İstanbul in 1893, 1895 and 1896.

Gülnar Hanım resented the lack of knowledge and interaction between Ottomans and Russians. The two neighbors had gravitated towards the Western civilization for some time, but regarding this a failure of both parties Gülnar Hanım began translating literary works introducing Russian literature¹³.

Gülnar Hanım chose Pushkin as the first author to introduce to the Turkish audience. She translated one of the short stories of Pushkin, *Kar Fırtınası* [The Blizzard], which was serialized in *Tercüman-ı Hakikat* in 1890 and published as a short book in 1891. In the foreword to the book, Ahmet Mithat makes a note on both Pushkin and Olga de Lebedeva.

In 1891, she published a monograph entitled *Şair Puşkin: Hayatı, Sanatı, Eserleri* [Pushkin the Poet: His Life, Art and Works]. In this book, she gave information about the life and works of Pushkin. Her lengthy article entitled *Şair Puşkin* [Pushkin the Poet] was serialized in *Tercüman-ı Hakikat* for a few days. In the introduction to the article, Ahmet Mithat Efendi also provided information about Pushkin and stated that Pushkin was one of the prominent literary figures of Russian literature, having an impact on and contributions to literature not only in his home country but also in Western literatures.

The second Russian writer introduced by Gülnar Hanım is Tolstoy. In her lengthy article entitled *Rus Edebiyatı ve Avrupa Yâhûd Edip Tolstoy'dan Bir Mülâhaza* [Russian Literature and Europe or A Remark From Tolstoy, A Man of Letters] which was serialized in *Tercüman-ı Hakikat* newspaper in February and March 1891 for five days, she provided information about the Russian literary works translated into Western languages, which attracted great attention across Europe. The article also refers to the literary character of Tolstoy and makes a note that three of his works were translated into French. One of these works, a play entitled *Esmâr-ı Fünûn* [The Fruits of Enlightenment], was introduced in the article. Ahmet Mithat Efendi also commends the work while offering some information on Tolstoy.

In March and April of 1891, selected parts of Lermontov's long poem named *İblis* [The Demon] were translated in prose and serialized in *Tercüman-ı*

¹³ Ömer Faruk Akün, Entry on "Gülnar Hanım", *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, vol.14, İstanbul 1996, p.244-245

Hakikat, with an introductory note by Gülnar Hanım, offering an analysis and evaluation. In a foreword entitled “A Note” to a book in 1892, Ahmet Mithat mentioned how Olga Lebedeva’s Turkish had improved.

Again in 1891, together with Ahmet Cevdet, she translated *Redd-i Renan. İslâmiyet ve Fünûn* (Rejection of Renan. Islam and Science) from Atâullah Bâyezidof.

Tolstoy’s *İlyas Yahut Hakikat-i Gıma* [Ilyás], which Gülnar Hanım translated, was first serialized in *Tercüman-ı Hakikat* in 1892 and then published as a book. In his foreword to this short booklet, Ahmet Mithat Efendi stated that this was the first translation of Gülnar Hanım after she learned Turkish and that she did not want to publish the translation as she carried out much better translations after that and the work was published upon Ahmet Mithat’s insistence.

Tolstoy’s *Familiya Saadeti* [Family Happiness] was also first serialized in *Tercüman-ı Hakikat* in 1892 and then published as a book. Again in 1892, a story entitled *Kont Tolstoy’un Avama Mahsus Hikâyeleri: İki Pir* [Count Tolstoy’s Stories on People: The Two Brothers] in *Tercüman-ı Hakikat*. Tolstoy’s *İvan İlyiç’in Ölümü* [The Death of Ivan Ilyich] and *İnsan Ne İle Yaşar* [What Men Live By] were also translated in the same year. A story from Pushkin entitled *Kağıt Oyunu* [lit. trans. The Card Game, the original work: The Queen of Spades] was published.

Gülnar Hanım’s works on Russian literature was not limited to translations and she also wrote some articles with the aim of introducing Russian literature. In 1893, she published *Rus Edebiyatı* [Russian Literature], having the quality of a concise history of Russian literature. After a general introduction dealing with the first examples of Russian literature, 20 prominent figures, from Polotski to Tolstoy were introduced. The book was composed of 132 pages; the first 63 pages dealt with the period preceding Pushkin, and the second part included many significant Russian authors including Pushkin, Gogol, Turgenyev and Tolstoy¹⁴.

Gülnar Hanım’s works contributed to a great extent to the growing interest and knowledge about Russian literature in the post-Tanzimat era¹⁵.

¹⁴ İsmail Habip Sevük, *op.cit.*, p. 267-268, 275-276, 282-283

¹⁵ For further information please see Ahmet Mithat Efendi, *Avrupa’da Bir Cevlan*, İstanbul 1890 ; Ahmet Mithat Efendi, *Fazıl ve Feylesof Kızım Fatma Aliye’ye Mektuplar* (Prepared by Fatma Samime İnceoğlu-Zeynep Süslü Berkaş), İstanbul , 2011 ; Orhan Okay, *Batı Medeniyeti Karşısında Ahmet Mithat Efendi*, M.E.B. Yayınları, İstanbul 1991 ; Nazan Bekiroğlu, “Unutulmuş Bir Müsteşrik: Olga dö Lebedeva / Madam Gülnar”, *Dergâh*, no. 46, December 1993, p. 8-10 ; Ömer Faruk Akün, “Gülnar Hanım”, *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 14, İstanbul 1996, p. 243-248 ; Carter V. Findley (Trans. Ayşen Anadol), *Ahmet Mithat Efendi Avrupa’da*, Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, İstanbul 1999 ; İsmail Karaca, “Ahmet Mithat Efendi ve Madam Gülnar”, *İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Türk Dili ve Edebiyatı Dergisi*, vol. XLVI, 2012-1, İstanbul 2013, p. 55-72

In March-July 1894, Recep Vahyî's translations of the poems entitled *Serçe Kuşu*, *Tilki ile Leylek*, *Kedi ile Turna Balığı*, *Ayı ile Vahdet-güzin*, *Köylü Ne Uyuyorsun*, *Dede ile Torun* appeared in *Fevâid* magazine. Abdullah Cevdet translated a poem by Pushkin from French in the same year, which was published in *Mektup* magazine in August.

Two more poems of Pushkin was translated by Celâl Ünsî, who was working as a translator at the *Bâb-ı Âli* (High Porte), and published in *Malumât* magazine in July 1896 under the title of “*Rusya Meşâhir-i Şu’arâsından Puşkin’in İki Manzumesinin Meâlen Tercümesi*” [Two Poems by a Russian Poet Pushkin Translated with Broad Strokes]. In May-June of the same year, three translations by Celâl Ünsî entitled *Divane-i Aşk ve Sevda*, *Fırtına*, *İki Bulut Parçası* appeared in *Malumât* magazine, though the poets were not identified. In a note on the poems Celâl Ünsî is congratulated for his translations from such a difficult language as Russian.

In 1897-1898, the translations of poems titled *Melek* [Angel] and *Yelken* [Parus] by Lermontov made by Gülnar Hanım and Mustafa Reşid were published in *Şükûfe-i İstiğrâk* newspaper.

In 1899, on the centenary of his birth, Pushkin was commemorated through the article entitled *Şiir ve Şair: Puşkin Kimdir?* [Poem and the Poet: Who is Pushkin?] sent to *İkdam* newspaper by Ali Kemal, who then resided in France. In this article, Ali Kemal stated that Polish and Russian literature was covered greatly in the French press and the works from these literatures were translated. Ali Kemal then focused on Pushkin on the occasion of his 100th birthday. Aiming to inform the Turkish audience about the intellectual and literary movements in the West, the author compared Pushkin with prominent figures from Western literature. The author also wanted to introduce a work of Pushkin and translated a poem by him (The Bronze Horseman) in prose without specifying its title.

In April-June of 1899, Cihângir Andicânî, who had a good knowledge of Russian, translated a poem from Lermontof under the title of *Bir Firarinin Encâm-ı Hâli-Yahut Mucâhidîn-i Dinin İstikbâli* [Mtsyri, or The Novice] which was published in several issues of *Malumât*.

Until the beginning of the 20th century, a total of twenty seven poems were translated from Russian. The translators of these poems and the number of poems they translated can be listed as follows in a chronological order: Menemenlizâde Mehmed Tahir (edited by) (1), Abdullah Cevdet (1), Memdûh (1), Ali Kemal (2), Gülnar Hanım-Mustafa Reşid (2), Cihângir Andicânî (3), Celâl Ünsî (4), Recep Vahyî (13). In this framework, one can identify the important role played by Recep Vahyî in the first translations of Russian poems.

The translators of Russian works can be classified in three categories: The first group consists of Olga de Lebedef, Cihangir Andicânî, Celâl Ünsî, who learned Russian in Russia and then came to Turkey; the second group includes Abdullah Cevdet, Memdûh, Ali Kemal, who translated the Russian works previously translated to French; the third group contains people like Recep Vahyî, who learned Russian in Turkey and translated some works¹⁶.

Until the era of constitutional monarchy, translations from Russian continued to appear, though the numbers remained low. Turgenyev's *Duman* [Smoke] was translated by Abdullah Zühdü under the title of *Buhar* [Steam] in 1905, though the name of the author was not specified and only a note indicating that the book was "translated from French" was added. Turgenyev's (*Veshnie Vody*) *İlkbahar Selleri* [Torrents of Spring] was also translated by Abdullah Zühdü under the title of *Âb-ı Nevbahar* in the same year, again with no reference to the name of the author. The same work was also published in Balıkesir, under the same title of *Âb-ı Nevbahar*, translated by N. Zeki.

Gorki's *Bir Sergüzeşt-i Hunîn* [Puteviye zapiski] was translated by Ali Nusret from Catulle Mendès's translation of the work into French. Following the proclamation of constitutional monarchy, the work was serialized in *Tanin* newspaper and was published as a book in 1910. Gorki's (*Mat*) *Ana* [The Mother] was translated from French as well, by İsmail Müştak and Muhiddin (Birgen). The book was serialized in *Tanin* newspaper and was published as a book in 1911.

Between 1910 and 1923, Tolstoy was the most translated author. In 1910 Tolstoy's *Semeynoye Schast'ye* [Family Happiness] was translated by Raif Necdet under the title of *Bir İzdivacın Romani*. This novel was previously translated by Gülnar Hanım under the title of *Familya Saadeti*.

Tolstoy's *Voskreseniye* was translated by Haydar Rifat in 1911 with the title of *Diriliş* [Resurrection] and serialized in *Millet* newspaper owned by İbrahim Hilmi under the title of *Teceddüd-ü Hayat*.

Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* was translated by Raif Necdet and Sadık Naci in 1912. The book was published as the third book in a series called "Novel Series" as part of İbrahim Hilmi's "Kitaphane-i Askerî" [Military Library].

In 1914, Ahmed Midhat Rifatof, a Crimean Turk, translated two of thirty booklets of Tolstoy on philosophy under the titles of *Ölüm Bahsi* [On Death] and *Felsefe-i Hayat* [Philosophy of Life]. In 1924, these philosophical booklets

¹⁶ Cafer Gariper, *op.cit.*, p. 115-117; For further information please see Cafer Gariper, "Rusça'dan Türkçe'ye Yapılan İlk Edebi Türler Üzerinde Bir Araştırma: Manzum Tercümeleler", *İlmi Araştırmalar* 7, İstanbul 1999, p. 105-134

were published as a series for a second time. This second series was published by Major Ali Fuad Bey, a Russian translator at the department of translation at the Ministry of War. Nine works from the series were published in “Mahmutbey” printing house under the title of “Selections from World Literature”.

Tolstoy’s (*Otets Sergiy*) *Serj Baba* [Father Sergiues] was translated by Orhan Nüzhet in 1921 under the title of *Aşk ve İhanet*. The work was published as a part of Sühulet Library series. Another work of Tolstoy, was translated under the title of *Acıklı Bir Sergüzeşt* in 1922-1923 by Ahmed Selâhaddin and published as a part of Semih Lûtfî Library¹⁷.

There has been an extensive and a systematic translation effort from various languages into Turkish in republican era. The translations from Russian language made during this era are a subject for another comprehensive research. In order to keep within the scope of this article translations carried out in the time of the Turkish Republic were not included in this study.

Conclusion

During the post-Tanzimat era, when the interaction with the West gained momentum, various works were initially translated from French as a result of political, social, cultural and literary circumstances. However, in the following years, and especially from 1880 onwards, translations of many works of prose and verse from English, German and Russian literature begin.

Following the first translation from Russian literature in 1884, there is a considerable increase in translation efforts. In this period, various dictionaries as well as grammar and course books were published to aid learning Russian. Prominent poets and authors of Russian literature were introduced through articles and monographs. Works on the history of Russian literature were also published with the aim of introducing Russian literature to a Turkish audience. All these activities can be regarded as the endeavors of old neighbors who had political and social relations for centuries to get to know each other’s literature and culture more closely. The Turkish people, who remained within the borders of Islamic civilization for a long time, were inevitably influenced by Russian literature once they started to gravitate towards the West beginning with the Tanzimat.

Despite the existence of many good-willed endeavors, one can say that the translations from Russian into Turkish were not undertaken with a systematic and structured approach and rather depended on the individual choices of the translators as well as social, political and cultural circumstances of the period.

¹⁷ İsmail Habip Sevük, *op.cit.*, p. 276-279, 519

Some of these translations are based on a second language, namely French. One can hardly identify a beautiful style and a high quality translation in some of these translations, which contained errors and missing parts. A systematic and planned approach to translation only came about in Republican era especially after 1940.

In the post-Tanzimat era, the translations from Russian language were not as abundant as translations from English or French. Nevertheless, one can easily state that these played a considerable role in creating an interest and knowledge about Russian literature. Like the translations from Western languages, the translations from Russian had a substantial impact on broadening Turkish reader's and intellectual's horizon and on acquainting with the literary, cultural and artistic works and values of Russia. These first translations from Russian laid the groundwork for more quality translations to be made in the Republican era.

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