

Sefilođlu, Muhammed Salih. (2022). “China Through The Eyes of The Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Empire”. *Asya Arařtırmaları Uluslararası Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*. 6 (2), 217-232.

Arařtırma Makalesi

**CHINA THROUGH THE EYES OF THE SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY
OTTOMAN EMPIRE***

17. Yüzyıl Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Gözüyle Çin

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Abstract

Atlas Maior, the most expensive and luxurious book of its time, published in the 1660s, was presented to Mehmed IV by the Dutch ambassador Justinus Colier in 1668. It was translated into Ottoman Turkish under the name of Nusretü'l-İslâm by Ebu Bekir Behram ed-Dımařkî with the suggestion of Fazıl Ahmed Pasha to the sultan in 1675. In this article, I will first present the basic narrative used about China in the work, with reference to the original Latin and Ottoman Turkish text. In this way, I will show how China was perceived in the Ottoman Empire in the seventeenth century. At the same time, I will present a critique of the translation with the Ottoman transliteration which I prepared and quotations from the Latin original. As a result of the comparisons made, it has been shown that the book is fundamentally translated in accordance with the original copy, although it includes some deliberate mistranslations and extensive summaries. In a certain sense, this article shows the cultural vitality and curiosity in the seventeenth-century Ottoman Empire. Although Nusretü'l-İslâm is presented as a result of the military-intelligence necessity of the Ottoman Empire of the period, it is actually an expression of a wide intellectual cultural curiosity. Thanks to this translation prepared by Dımařkî, the Ottoman reader was able to obtain important information about China in terms of history, culture and geography, therefore it is expected that the article will make a contribution to the Ottoman geography literature.

Keywords: *Atlas Maior, Nusretü'l-İslâm, Geography, Translation Movement, Ebu Bekir Behram ed-Dımařkî, China.*

Öz

1660'lı yıllarda basılan, döneminin en pahalı ve lüks kitabı olan Atlas Maior 1668'de Hollanda elçisi Justinus Colier tarafından Mehmed IV'e sunulmuş, 1675'te Fazıl Ahmed Pařa'nın önerisiyle Ebu Bekir Behram ed-Dımařkî tarafından Osmanlı Türkçesine Nusretü'l-İslâm olarak çevrilmiştir. Bu makalede metnin orijinal Latince ve Osmanlı Türkçesi temel referans alınarak, eserde öncelikle Çin hakkında kullanılan temel anlatım sunulacaktır. Bu şekilde 17. yüzyılda Çin coğrafyasının Osmanlı entelektüel çevresi tarafından nasıl algılandığı gösterilmeye çalışılacaktır. Aynı zamanda tarafımca hazırlanan Osmanlıca transliterasyon ve Latince aslından yapılacak alıntılar ile yapılan çeviri eleştirel olarak değerlendirilecektir. Yapılan karşılařtırmalar sonucunda gözükümüřtür ki çeviri bazı bilinçli yanlış çevirileri ve geniş özetlemeleri içerse de büyük oranda aslına sadık

* Geliř Tarihi / Received: 18.08.2022, Kabul Tarihi / Accepted: 23.12.2022. <https://doi.org/10.58640/asyar.1163730>

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kalınarak yapılan bir alıřmadır. Bu makale belli anlamda on yedinci yzyıl Osmanlı İmparatorluđu'ndaki kltrel canlılıđı ve merakı gstermektedir. Nusret'l-İslm her ne kadar dnemin Osmanlı İmparatorluđu'nun askeri-istihbarat ihtiyaacının bir sonucu olarak sunulsa da aslında geniř bir entelektel bilgi ihtiyaacının da dıřa vurumudur. Dimařk'nin hazırladıđı bu eviri vasıtasıyla Osmanlı okuyucusu in hakkında tarih, kltrel ve cođrafi aıdan nemli bir bilgi edinebilmiřtir. Bu nedenle konunun Osmanlı cođrafyasının literatrii ile ilgili yazıma katkı yapması beklenmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Atlas Maior, Nusret'l-İslam, Cođrafya, eviri Hareketi, Ebu Bekir Behram ed-Dimařk, in.*

Introduction

Scientific studies of geography were established in the nineteenth century by the work of Alexander von Humboldt and Carl Ritter. Until the nineteenth century, studies on geography dealt with people living in certain parts of the world, together with their history and customs (Hagen, 2015: 329). The first studies on this subject go back to Strabon (64BC- 24AD), while he dealt with the regions geographically in his work, *Geographika*, he also included entertaining and instructive information full of historical material (Strabon, 2012). This approach to geography was also valid in early modern Europe. Although human knowledge has developed considerably thanks to the discoveries, the scholars' approach to the discipline of geography has not changed. In this respect, it has an encyclopedic structure, first of all, states and cities are described in general terms, the main geographical formations of the region, rivers and lakes are listed. Then, the people living in this region are depicted with a series of subjects such as their food, customs, and religious beliefs. In order to make the work even more interesting, a series of extraordinary events are also included in the narrative.

Geographical Studies in the Ottoman Empire Before *Nusretü'l- İslam*

Until the middle of the sixteenth century, Ottoman geography following the footsteps of traditional Islamic geography, developed with the studies of Piri Reis, Ali Macar Reis, Aşık Mehmed and Ali Reis. In Europe, after the sixteenth century, important works that provided holistic and systematic contributions to the science of geography were produced (Üstüner, 2019: 41). These developments, which took place in the West, had an impact in the Ottoman world in a short time, and works that would open the door to modern geography science began to be prepared through the translations of European works. Until very recently, serious claims that Ottoman scientific studies stopped after the sixteenth century dominated Ottoman historiography (Adıvar, 1982). However, there has been a change in these ideas with recent studies on the subject.

The person who has the most important place in Ottoman geography studies is Kâtip Çelebi (1609-1657). Kâtip Çelebi translated the Latin work of Gerardus Mercator (1512-1594) and Jodocus Hondius (1563-1612) known as *Atlas Minor* into Turkish under the name *Levâmiu'n-Nûr fî Zulmet-i Atlas Minor* with the help of the convert Şeyh Mehmed İhlasi (after 1655) (Kâtip Çelebi, 2017). Before translating this work, Kâtip Çelebi started to write the *Cihannümâ*, but when he came to the section containing the European geography, he encountered a shortage of resources to use. Therefore, he started the translation of *Levâmiu'n-Nûr*. When he started to write *Cihannümâ* for the second time, he created a European-style work that combined the works of the East and the West. Another author who applied to Western works in Ottoman geography studies is Hezarfen Hüseyin Efendi (d.1691). He also kept in touch with famous people of the period such as Antonie Galland (1646-1715) and Dimitrie Cantemir (1673-1723). *Tenkîhü't-Tevârîhü'l-Mülûk*, which he wrote by using Eastern and Western sources, gives information about places such as China, India and America (Üstüner, 2019: 44).

The other person who is the subject of this study and who has an important position in Ottoman geographical studies is Ebubekir bin Bahram ed-Dımaşkî (b.1691). We do not have certain information about the early periods of Dımaşkî's life. Our information in most ways comes from the secondary literature; according to this information, we can say that he was born in Damascus and received his primary education there. Also, the relationship he established with the Köprülü family started there and he was supported by this family in the later stages of his life (Hagen, 2015: 277). Another person who supported Dımaşkî was Mehmed İzzetî Efendi (1629-1681), one of the famous scholars of the period, who was known for his patronage in science and literature. He engaged in communication and scientific discussions not only with people such as Hüseyin Hezarfen and Kâtip Çelebi, but also with people from many different walks of life such as Antoine Galland and Charles de Nointel (1635-1685) (Çalışır, 2021). The work that brought Dımaşkî to an important position in the Ottoman geography literature is the translation of *Atlas Maior*, which was published in 11 volumes in Latin in 1662 by Willem Jansszon (1570-1630) and Joan Blaeu (1596-1673). Dımaşkî was dismissed a year after he was appointed as the judge of Aleppo in 1690, and died a month after his dismissal (Sarıcaoğlu, 1994).

The translation of this work was first started by Alexandros Mavrokordatos, but in 1675 the translation work was given to Dımaşkî and the work was translated into Turkish with the name *Nusretü'l-İslâm*. He finished his translation in 1685 and submitted it to the palace in six volumes. Although there are differences between the copies, the nine-volume copy from the Topkapı Palace will be used in this article (Brentjes, 2012). In the first volume, Dımaşkî gives information about the solar system, astronomical issues, polar circles and continents. In the second volume, the geographies of Sweden, Poland and Russia; the third volume Germania; fourth volume to the Dutch country, fifth volume to France; The sixth volume is about Africa and Asia, the seventh volume is Italy, the eighth volume is Far East China and Japan, and the last volume is about the New World.

Dımaşkî wrote *İhtisar-ı Atlas Mayor*, which he presented as a summary of *Atlas Maior* with different interpretations. This book, which deals with the Ottoman and Islamic countries more broadly, was later translated into Arabic. He also has other works named *el-Fethu'r-rahmânî fî tarzi'd-Devleti'l-Osmânî* and *Cevelânü'l efkâr fî avâlimi'l aktâr* and he has a very important role in the preparation of *Cihannümâ* (Sarıcaoğlu, 1994).

Knowledge About China in Ottoman Society Before *Nusretü'l-İslam*

When it comes to the first periods of Turkish history, Chinese and Turkish peoples have intense contact. After the migration of the Turks to the west for centuries, they started to experience disconnections. Another point that separate these two culteres is that China lives in a closed way to the outside world and defines it self as the *Zhongguo* (中国) and insists on its dominant position over other cultures. Within this hierarchical system, ambassadors from the outside world were forced to pay tribute as a sign of their loyalty to China, and in return, the communication channel between them was kept open. In this way, communication between China and “other”, “barbaric” states can be established, and the Chinese will be able to tame this danger that may be directed against them from outside (Fidan, 2011).

Although there may be a great distance between the Ottomans and the Ming China in terms of geography, information about the Ottomans can be found in Chinese historical sources. The Ottomans are referred to as *Lu Mi* and *Lu Mi Guo* in Chinese sources, the word *Rumi* is named this way with Chinese characters (Özbaran, 2017: 25). Chinese sources contain information about what kind of tribute and gifts the ambassadors from “Lu Mi” brought. However, it is not clear whether these people were really the ambassadors sent by the Ottoman state or whether they were people trying to gain various gains by using this title. As we understand from the information about the Ottoman Empire, which is very short in the annals, these “envoys” are honored by the Chinese Emperor as much as the distance they covered in return for bringing various gifts such as lions and rhinos to the Chinese Emperor (Fidan, 2011). However, as it can be seen from the records shown, relations are very rare and both forces are aware of the existence of each other and live in a certain ignorance.

The most important book about China known in the Ottoman world is *Hutâyname* written by Ali Ekber. *Hutâyname* was presented to Yavuz Sultan Selim (1470-1520) in Persian in the first quarter of the sixteenth century, and then translated into Ottoman Turkish under the name of *Kanunname-i Çin ve Hitay* during the reign of Murad III (1546-1595). The reference that Yavuz Sultan Selim is called as the ruler of Islam at the beginning of the work suggests that it was written after the Mercedabık (1516) and Ridaniye (1517) Wars. The *Hutâyname* deals with the life in China down to the details. Faith, palace system, castles, arts, legends, porcelain production, postal organization, ways of hosting foreigners, prisons, the situation of Islam in the country, agricultural products, holidays, the Great Wall of China. There are twenty-one chapters in the book. This work, which was presented to the ruler, also has the characteristics of a *siyasetname* literature. There is disagreement in the secondary literature that the book was written by Ali Ekber. Lin Yih Min, who made researches on the subject, states that Ali Ekber had misinformation about religions in China throughout the work. He did not do a proper research, for example, although there is no sea in Yunnan province, in *Hutâyname* it has shown both sides of Yunnan province surrounded by seas. Also, Ali Ekber claimed that China consisted of twelve parts, the sources of the period clearly show that there were fifteen. He says that the cities of

Hanbalık and Daydu are shown as the capitals of China, but these places were used as capitals during the Mongols period. Therefore, there are serious doubts that Ali Ekber really went to China and the general consensus is that he took these kinds of informations from previous Islamic sources (Ali Ekber, Hitaı, 2021).

Kâtip Çelebi, who has an important place in the Ottoman geography literature, also devoted a chapter to China in his work, *Cihannümâ*. At the beginning of this section, he states that he does not give any value to Ali Ekber's book without giving even his name (Kâtip Çelebi, 2021: 153).¹ However, according to Professor Gottfried Hagen, who made an important study on the work, Kâtip Çelebi largely stands his transmission on China from Ali Ekber and Gıyâseddin Nakkaş (Hagen, 2015: 343). At the same time, Hagen and other researchers praised Kâtip Çelebi's approach to objectivity and not excluding different cultures in his narrative while dealing with China and other regions (Hagen, 2015: 254). However, Hagen's characterization of *Kânunnâme* as a good source on China seems suspicious given the criticisms of Lin Yih Min (Hagen, 2015: 319).

The Depiction of China Narrated in *Nusretü'l-İslâm*

This translation of Dımaşkı is not only the transfer of a book from one language to another, but it is an attempt to fuse Islamic and Ottoman geography literature with Blaeu's main text. In this study, I will wait for the document to talk about itself, using Dımaşkı's translation. What does Damaşkı's knowledge of China mean to him and to the Ottoman Empire? The main source to be used in this regard is the book *Nusretü'l-İslâm ve's-sürûr fî tahrîri Atlas Mayor*, which is in the Topkapı Palace collection.² References of the main Latin source, *Atlas Maior*, will be used through the electronic copy of the work available on the internet.³

The chapter about China is given under the main title as "Atlas Extremae Asiae, Sive Sinarum Imperii Geographica Descriptio". In particular, China's Tatar neighbors are discussed under the main title of "De Orientali Tartaria". The geographical region in the south of China is found in the Latin text under the following headings: De Regno Sifan, Gangis Ortus, Regnum Laos, Rerum Copia, Confinia Regni Laos, Poli Altitudo, Montes, Regnum Gannan, Montes Notandi, Flumina. The Ottoman translation text is different from the triple division in the Latin text. The part about China, Tatar and the southern region of China are discussed under the same title "Der Beyân-ı İklîm-i Çîn".

The book explains the importance of the Asian continent with the narrative of Adam being sent to this continent and the spread of the first humans from Asia to the whole world.⁴ From this point of view, the book is based on an Asia-centered world narrative. Due to the emergence of religions, worship, reading and writing in Asia, this continent is in an important position among other continents. Based on the information in Chinese history books, the book reports that literacy, mathematics, astronomy, philosophy and politics emerged in China 3000 years before Christ. After this chapter, which explains the importance of Asia for humanity, China forms the main pillar of the narrative; where the name of China comes from, its borders, which parts it consists of, the customs of the Chinese people, etc.

The first pages of the translation are based on a lengthy discussion of the origins of the name of China. The author notes that China is called by different nations by names such as *Sirga*, *Sinem*, *Münçin*, and in particular, the word *Münçin* is used in a way that humiliates the Chinese people.

¹ "I have paid no heed to the words of that ignorant person (i.e., the author of Persian Qânunnâme), which is mostly idle talk, nor to the stories connected with the clime of Cathay that are recorded there, nor to the statement that the clime of China is without divisions."

² *Nusretü'l-İslâm ve's-sürûr fî tahrîri Atlas Mayor*, TSMK, Bağdat Köşkü, nr. 325, I, vr. 1^b-2^b, 75^a; nr. 330, VII, vr. 48^b. For easier access, the folio numbers of the copy will be referenced. From now on, the title of the work will be given in abbreviated form as *Nusret*.

³ *Atlas Maior sive Cosmographia Blauiana, qua Solum, Salum, Coelum, Accuratissime Describuntur*. In this study, I will use the version of Atlas Maior published on the National Library of Scotland's website. (<https://maps.nls.uk/atlas/blaeu-maior/> 13 January, 2022).

⁴ Dımaşkı, 1685: 007a: Ottoman: "Anın içündür ki Hazreti Âdem aleyhisselatü vesselam dârüsselâmdan cennetten hubût eyledikten ibtidâ bu mahalle nâzil olmuştur. Ba'dehü sâir beşer münteşâr olub etrâf cevânibte mekân etmişlerdir."

According to the author's claim, most likely the name of China itself comes from one of the name of a Chinese emperor, whose name is similar to the sound of China or Chinese. Other names than *Münçin* are not known to the Chinese, they describe their country with a word that means *Kungvu*, that is, the middle of the world. After all these uncertainties about the name, China's position on the Asian continent is explained. According to the cartographic information of that time, the sea in the east, which Chinese people call as *Tung*, occupies the entire coast of China and this sea covers from east to west. Therefore, the southern and western regions of China are surrounded by seas and mountains, while the northern part is surrounded by immense wall starting from the city of *Liyatong* and ending with the *Za'feran* river and also it is reinforced with soldiers. In the southern part, there are small kingdoms such as *Tibet, Mien, Lağos and Puğu* (Dımaşkı, 1685: B.332.007a).⁵

The meridian width of about thirty degrees is given from *Ningpo* to *Damasios*, and the borders of China last from the eighteenth latitude in the northern hemisphere to the forty-second latitude in the south, the author tries to explain this issue in a scientific sense in this way (Dımaşkı, 1685: 007b).⁶ According to the author, China geographically has the appearance of a square. In order for China to be kept under administrative control, it has been divided into sections by different emperors at various periods of history. The reason of China's administrative border's constant change over time is China's expansion and taking control of the surrounding regions under its management. Thus, over time, the provinces reached their final form: *Pekin, Şanton, Nankin, Kekiang, Fukin, Kuvengtung, Kuvaksi, Kiyanksi, Huvankvan, Honan, Şansi, Şinsi, Sükvan, Kuveykiyu, Yunan, Liyaotun, Korya*. At the same time, there are a lot of islands in the ocean part of China that are close to each other. If someone view these islands from afar, they look as if they are a single island, and the largest among them are *Haynan* and *Formosa* (Dımaşkı, 1685: 007b).

Cities in the country are shown under the title of "Bilād-ı Çin". He writes that there are 150 large cities and 226 small and medium-sized cities (Dımaşkı, 1685: 008b). Cities are made up of innumerable towns, fortified with high walls and ditches. Most of the cities are located next to navigable rivers. It claims that some of the cities in China are equal to or even larger than the states in the rest of the world. Special governors are appointed with various titles to these big cities. In order to manage these cities and towns, officials are sent from the center by the state. The ranks and positions of these officials are directly proportional to the status of the settlement to which they are sent (Dımaşkı, 1685: 008b).

Dımaşkı states that because China is very large, it has different temperatures in different regions. It is stated that the air and water quality in the country is good and more products can be grown here than anywhere else in the world. Due to the high temperatures on the southern places, pineapples, walnuts, dates and many more fruits can be grown. Especially wheat and rice, which are basic food materials, are abundant in China. All kinds of fruit are plentiful, but olives and almonds are not (Dımaşkı, 1685: 007b). China has an important position not only in terms of basic foodstuffs, but also in the production of silk, hemp, cotton and similar agricultural products with high economic value. The main reason for this progress in agricultural production in the country is the developments in the irrigation system. They connected the rivers with each other and made them accessible to the inner cities and villages. They have achieved great success as a result of centuries of work in agriculture. Farmers are endowed with great privileges in China, and they make even the uncultivated lands of the earth fertile as a result of their labor and effort. They bring water to the arid areas from far away and have built large water channels. For such reasons, China is a country where cheapness and prosperity are experienced. People eat different foods according to their financial power, while the rich people eat

⁵ After that, B.332, which shows the collection number of the work, will not be displayed.

⁶ In the Ottoman translation, this part is expressed as follows: "ve bu iklimin tûlinın mesafesi Ningpo şehrinden Demas dağlarına varıncaya değindir ve bu mesafenin miktarı yirmi beş derecedir. Ve arz on sekiz dereceden kırk ikiye varıncaya değin müntehi olur". Blaeu, "Atlas Asiae Extremae," *Atlas Maior*, 2. The Latin original of the text is: "... A capite seu promontorio Ningpo urbis (quod Lusitanis Liampo) ad Amaseos, seu Damasios usque montes. Latitudo maxima est a decimo & octavo gradu ad quadragesimum & secundum Borealis hemisphaerii." (From the beginning of Ningpo city to the Amosi or Damasii mountains, its length extends about thirty degrees. The greatest width is from position eighteen to forty-second across the Northern hemisphere).

sheep, cattle and pigs, ordinary people eat the meat of mules, donkeys and dogs. It is stated that some Chinese living here do not eat meat for religious reasons (Dımaşkı, 1685: 008a).

Fishing is very common in the seas and rivers in China, and Chinese are quite skillful in this profession. They have even reached an advanced position in aqua farming, in addition to fishing with natural methods. They let water flow from the rivers to their fields and they can raise plenty of fish in the artificial lake they have created in this way. At the same time, they can break the ice of the frozen lakes in winter and hunt the fresh fish below. Since fish are abundant in these regions during summer, they put the fish in large quantities in specially prepared water wells. In general, only the rich can afford to consume the fish produced in this way. On the other hand, poor people can dry the fish and consume them throughout the other months of the year. Another fishing method is quite clever. A long-necked bird is chained to the ship and a ring is worn around its neck. The bird, which is trained to dive into the water and catch the fish, cannot eat this fish because of the ring attached to its neck, and the fish are taken out of the bird's mouth by the fisherman. A very high number of fish can be caught in this way in China (Dımaşkı, 1685: 008a).

China is also a center of abundance in terms of mines, gold, silver, copper, iron, cinnabar, tin, saltpeter. However, these mining activities were prohibited by the state, the reason for this ban was shown in the Latin original text (Blaeu, 1733: 4) as the use of poisonous gases during the extraction of the mines, while in the Ottoman translation it is shown as the collapse of soil on them during the extraction of the mine (Dımaşkı, 1685: 008a).⁷ The reason why the emperor made such a prohibition was that he valued his own people. According to the text, the safety of his own people is more valuable to the emperor than anything else.

China is a densely populated country, at the time this work was written, its population was given as 58,914,284 (Dımaşkı, 1685: 008b). The Chinese are depicted as physically healthy and strong, competing with Europeans for their whiteness. Although women are shorter, they are described as having an elegant face. Since the general perception of female beauty imposed by society is based on small feet, women tie their feet tightly from a very young age. For this reason, women in China have very small feet (Blaue, 1733: 7).⁸ The dresses of the women are quite long, but their faces are open, the clothes they wear are luxurious clothes like silk. The Chinese have very long hair, comb it and tie it with horse hair. Everyone wears a hat according to their rank (Dımaşkı, 1685: 009b). Because the population is so crowded, those coming from foreign countries even think that every woman gives birth to at least 10 children. It is also quite easy to make census in China, because according to Chinese tradition, the head of the household is obliged to post this information on their door, as many people live in each house, if the owner does not write this information or writes it incorrectly, that person will be sentenced to death. In addition, this information is collected in every ten houses and this figure is written on the tenth gate separately, so the census in China is carried out quite quickly (Dımaşkı, 1685: 008b; Blaeu, 1733: 5).⁹

The Chinese built their houses, bridges, roads and castles according to the basics of geometry. Buildings appear in a unique harmony both from the outside and from the inside. These buildings are beautiful buildings with a lot of effort, their interiors are decorated with embroidery in different colors (Dımaşkı, 1685: 010a). Everyone has their own house, and houses have everything that people may need. Separate and private palaces were built for viziers and notables. Buildings are constructed in an architecturally accepted style, but some are large and some are small. It is generally square in shape and made of brick. Ditches were dug between the two gates of each city. A tower has been built over

⁷ Latin: "Aurum et argentum ne eruatur, lege cantum est. Eo quod noxiis, ut aiunt, terrae exhalantibus vaporibus in mineris passim interirent homines, quorum vitam pluris, quam aurum et argentum..."; Ottoman: "Bu Çin ikliminde altun ve gümüş ma'deni çok bulunur lakin çıkarmazlar ol sebebden ki kazırken üzerlerine toprak yıkılıb âdem helâk olur onun içindir zira rea'yaların kemâl-i meritebe sakınurlar"

⁸ In the Latin text, this is made a mockery of "the ridiculous madness in such a cultured nation". "Ridicula sane et mira in tam culta gente stultitia".

⁹ The Latin text also states that an official called *Tifang* was assigned to every ten houses, and that this person searched the numbers and records and warned the authorities about the issue in case of any discrepancies.

each gate, and a guard sits there. Neighborhoods are as big as cities. Each city has a great tower, and in its great castles feasts are given to the dignitaries. There are mechanisms that show the time in the castles, the guard goes on top of the castle and shows what time it is. In cases such as fire, the guard takes charge and informs people. Next to the towers there are great images and places of worship, there are various idols and images inside. Classrooms were built all over China, sciences are taught here, they do not put idols in these classrooms, because they are reserved for places of worship. The roads are quite smooth, wide and built with pavement. Especially in the southern regions, they flattened some mountains and filled the pits. They placed stones at one-and-a-half mile intervals on the roads for travelers, traders, guests, and messengers. Between every eight stones, they built special mansions for messengers. They flattened the rivers so that passers-by would not suffer (Dımaşkî, 1685: 009-011a).

Moreover, Chinese are depicted in the translated text as equal with Aristotle's intellect and are shown as skilful in all matters (Dımaşkî, 1685: 008b; Blaeu, 1733: 5).¹⁰ They weave colorful fabrics from products such as cotton, hemp, especially silk and export them all over the world. People who see these fabrics are amazed by the quality of the weaving. They are more skilled than any other race, not only in products such as weaving, but also in all kinds of crafts. They can produce bowls, plates, glasses and many other luxury consumer goods from porcelain that can only be produced in China. Information such as ball, paper, compass, gunpowder goes back to ancient times in China. They are also quite jealous about their arts and crafts, and they are careful not to show them to anyone (Dımaşkî, 1685: 009b). All sciences, geometry, commerce are within the knowledge of these people. The oldest medicine book in the world is located in China, and doctors' knowledge of medicine is very advanced. Due to their knowledge of heart rate, they can easily understand all kinds of diseases. In the Ottoman translation, the aims and achievements of the Chinese in alchemy are explained in a separate section under the title of "el-Kimya" (Dımaşkî, 1685: 009a).¹¹ The main reason for dealing with this profession is not to obtain silver or gold, but to try to gain health benefits. He even claims that they sold the drugs they produced as a result of dealing with alchemy to Europe. But the Latin text has been constructed to contain almost the opposite of these claims. For example, the first Latin sentence on the subject begins with a rather negative language: "Although they value the sciences much more than we do, they are far inferior to us in the diversity and excellence of science. Apart from astronomy, which makes up the bulk of their world of thought, they have nothing real or solid" (Blaeu, 1733: 6).¹² On the other hand, in the text, the efforts of the Chinese on astronomy or alchemy are not conveyed in a positive way, unlike the Ottoman text.

The religious beliefs of the Chinese people are shown as philosophy, idolatry, and materialism. It is stated that philosophy occupies a very important position in the eyes of society and that no person who does not know philosophy will be accepted into government positions. Although it is not mentioned in either the Latin or the Ottoman text, what is meant here by philosophy is mostly Confucianism. The second religion believed in China is the religion called "Şeykyavud", which is based on the transmigration of the soul. Since Buddha images are the main focus of Buddhism, this is referred to as idolatry in the text. It is among some of the basic claims of this religion that those who do good deeds will have a good spirit, and those who do bad deeds will be punished with an evil spirit. The third religious belief in China is materialism, which is called *Dehriyyun* in Islamic philosophy.

¹⁰ "Çin'in halkı gayet ile zekilerdir a'kılları Aristâtâlfıs aklına muadildir ve Avrupa halkı derler ki kavm-i Çin'in akılları bizlerden ziyadedir diyü i'tiraf ederler dünyada bir şey yoktur ki onu bilmeyelerdir.": In the original text, however, this view is conveyed in a different way: "But the intelligence of the Chinese confirms Aristotle's statements about the peoples of Asia: the Europeans surpass China in courage, the Chinese with agility of intelligence."

¹¹ "Çin hükeması i'lm-i kimyaya kemâl mertebe mukayyitlerdir. Ve dirler ki bu iksirin beden-i insana kemâl mertebe faydası vardır bu iksirden her kim bir denk miktarı tenâvül eylese cemi'-i emrazdan hülâs olub selâmet üzere ömr-ü tabii'yyesine varıncaya değin vücudı rahnedâr alolmayadurlar ondan ötürü dirler ki bizim muradımız altun ve gümüş yapmak değildir belki bu iksir yapmaktan muradımız muhafazay-ı ibdandır ki ta ahiri ömre varıncaya değin bedende imrâz zâhir olmayadurlar ve bu fennin mübtedîleri beranisinden şeyler yapub Avrupa memleketine gonderub satdururlar."

¹² "Scientiarum varietate, perfectioneque multo nobis inferiores sunt, licet eas longe pluris, quam nostri aestiment. Astronomiam, (cuius iudiciariam partem maximi faciunt) vix quidquam habent veri, aut solidi."

According to this religious belief, there is no pain after death, because people perish after death, they have no soul (Dımaşkı, 1685: 009a). It is also common in astronomy and similar beliefs in China, where there are people who collect stones, examine them, and try to interpret events that may happen that year from these stones, and according to the text, they are successful in this. There are many mountains in China, and the Chinese believe that there are dragons in the mountains and there is a belief that the mountains where the dragons live are blessed, since it is thought that people buried in these places will find more peace, people bury their dead here. They make depictions of dragons on their graves and think that it will be fortunate. They think that there is abundance and cheapness in the cities where the dragon passes through different mountains (Dımaşkı, 1685: 011a).

According to the text, Chinese people are very dependent on their emperor, whatever the emperor wants, no one will oppose him. If the emperor dies, his own child is appointed as emperor, if he has no children, his brother, and if he has no brother, his relative is enthroned. If the person is appointed as emperor, he assigns a certain income to his brothers and sends them to different cities. They do not interfere with anything in the city they were sent to and cannot go out of the city, if they do not comply with these restrictions, they would be killed. The Emperor's brothers regularly transport to different locations on quarterly schedules. The emperor himself appoints the rulers in the cities, and these rulers cannot take any action. Therefore, whatever happens in China is only within the knowledge of the emperor. There are six types of divans in the administration of the country. The first is the general council of state affairs, the second is the economical, the third is the religious, the fourth and fifth is about settlements, and the sixth is the political council. An officer has been assigned to each of them. They are responsible for the country's administration. All of them were people close to the emperor, they were assistants of the emperor, they were assigned to different regions by the emperor. The emperor, on the other hand, does not leave his palace, but knows everything about his country (Dımaşkı, 1685: 010b).

In the book, after a comprehensive chapter on China, the communities surrounding China from the west to the east are discussed. In this part of China's neighbors, Tatars occupy an important position and form the basis of its narrative. In a sense, this is an understandable development, since China's eastern and western borders are surrounded by impassable mountains and the ocean. He states that it is not known exactly where the Tatars came from, but that they consist of many tribes among themselves and gives the names of *Yuyi*, *Niyul*, *Tanyu* and *Simhan* tribes in particular. Tatars' lifestyles, the clothes they wear, the way they eat, their economic and social life are discussed as a whole in this section. But the text is arranged according to the Chinese point of view, and this discourse is dominant in the narrative. It is said that Tatars adhere to the nomadic lifestyle, graze places, wear clothes made of animal skins, furnish their houses with carpets. Before looking at the author's thoughts on the Tatars, we can examine his account of the Great Wall in northern China. The beginning of the 1650-mile-long wall starts from the China Sea and goes back as far as the *Za'feran* River. There are strong castles on this wall, in which it is said that there are hundreds of thousands of guards. These walls were built by the Shiva Emperor (Xius Emperor Cinae), who made great expeditions, and the favors of this emperor were much more than the others. He fought many times with the Tatars and was victorious in all of them. During the construction of the wall, Tatar tribes were persuaded by financial support and negotiations and tried not to attack during the construction of the wall. Thus, in 215 BC, the construction of this building was completed in twenty years. Many people were assigned to the construction of the wall. They filled the sea and built buildings there. The wall starts from the east and goes to the hometown of Liyakutink in the west, and ends in the region *Shansi* and *Shinsi* (Dımaşkı, 1685: 011b).

In this way, the tension and cooperation between the nomadic Tatar tribes and an established Chinese empire is explained well. At first, it is shown as a method that the settled empire fight directly with some of these tribes and restrain them, but the continuous raids of these people are tried to be prevented to a certain extent through the Great Wall of China. In cases where military and defensive measures were ineffective, China is able to restrain these groups, which are a constant threat to itself, through financial aid, gifts and negotiations. Tatars are depicted with the whiteness of their faces and their healthy nature. Their stature, beard and mustache are long. They have a nomadic lifestyle. As natural conditions do not allow agricultural production, they are constantly displace. They live in tents

called *oba* and they are made of expensive materials such as silk, which is quite light. At the same time, Dımaşkî states that they created rooms in the *oba* by putting silk and fabric curtains in accordance with their financial purchasing power. With the help of beeswax, these tents are easily installed somewhere and then removed. He says that they laid carpets in the tents and sat on chairs like the Chinese and Franks. However, interestingly, the author claims that although Tatars claim to have a nomadic life, they have 124 different small and medium-sized cities, and only old and incapable people live in these cities. (Dımaşkî, 1685: 013b).

The definitions about Tatars are quite negative, they are described as a barbaric, irreligious community where theft and plundering is quite common. In the Latin original, the Tatars are compared to barbaric races such as the Got, Vandals in Europe's own past, such information about European history was not included in the Ottoman text. That is why in Ottoman Turkish, details were also added, such as that the Tatars buried people alive in the ground, and after the death of their husbands, their wives were also buried. In the text, they have always been depicted with words such as looting, attacking, and hostility (Dımaşkî, 1685: 013b). It is reported that they learned to fight from an early age and programmed themselves to live in difficult conditions. Their courage and fearlessness are shown as a virtue, but they are condemned for missing the measure and applying it excessively. It is said that not only the Chinese, but also all other countries in the region, even the Japanese, who are located beyond the sea, are afraid of the Tatars. They have armor made of iron, they tie swords from their heads, and these swords reach up to their shoulders. There is also information about the method used by Tatar warriors to heal the wounds they received in wars. It is said that in such extraordinary cases as injuries in battle, salt is rubbed into the entire body of people and they wait like this for a long time.¹³

Nusret As a Translation Book

The chapter on the Far East in *Nusret* has been translated as a whole in accordance with the Latin original. However, this translation can be shown not as a direct translation of sentences, but rather as a summary of the text after analysis by the translator or interpreters. For this reason, it is a translation made to understand the work rather than a literal translation. The subject, which was conveyed in a long section in the Latin text, was omitted or largely summarized if it could not attract the attention of the Ottoman reader. Thus, by sticking to the original and ensuring the continuity of the source text, the translation has been able to provide the legitimacy of the work and has been economically affordable by attaining relatively less important dimensions.

Although the work is largely based on summaries, parts of the work are almost exactly in the form in which sentences are translated. Some sections were met with distaste for Muslim readers and were censored, while others were completely mistranslated due to misunderstanding or for some other reason. A more detailed picture of translation will be presented below, with some examples on these topics.

Parts of the work are based on almost literal translations. For example, in the introduction, Dımaşkî gives direct reference to the *Atlas Maior* written by Willem and Joan Blaeu and explains the position of China in Asia and the importance of Asia among other continents. Accordingly, the first human was born and spread all over the world from here. Religions, worship, languages, reading, writing, science, industry and politics emerged for the first time in this geography. Therefore, the philosophy, astronomy and other sciences first started in China. This section is an almost literal translation of the Latin text as a whole (Blaeu, 1733: 1):

¹³ “Ve bu Tatar cenk ahvalin gayet ile iyi bilürler zira küçücükten öğrenürler ve kâliçe ve velnise üzerinde yaturlar. Ve bunların yedikleri atın yarısı çiğ veya Rûsî pişmiştir böyle atı gayet severler. At etin ve deve etlerin yerler seyd etmek de gayet mâhirlerdir ve onlarda tazılar ve doğanlar ve seyde mütea’lik olân şeyler cümle vardır ok atmağı güzel bilürler. Ve hırsızlığı ve yağma etmek gayet severler ve ademin demirden doğulğası vardır başlar giyerler vüzerâları demirden tahta gibidir gayet ile musaykal şöyle kim ademin gözükmekte gözleri ğaşı olur ok geçmemek için girerler kaçan cenk gittikleri zaman giyerler. Ve bunlar atlarına na’l etmezler. Ve bu Tatarlar Müslümanlara hakaret nazarî ile bakarlar kaçan bir Müslüman görseler hâyhây diyüp temeshûr iderler zira bir zamanda Çinliler Müslümanlardan imdâd istedikde Müslümanlar Çinlilere imdâd giderken Tatarlar o gün olub Müslümanları kırmışlar ol zaman Tâymenek pâdişâhî zamanıdır.”

“It is a very important region that occupies a large part of our world, from which everything came out in the past as it is now. Anyone who denies this is ignorant, clearly the most beautiful gardens were placed here by the hand of God (everyone collectively calls this place Heaven). They welcome and cherish their first human beings, from which later mortal man spread to the rest of the world. The first rites, all sacred wisdom, righteous thinking, literature and sciences taught and institutionalized. Eventually this God himself accepted them as the protector and savior of the human race. In Asia itself, no stratum is more noble, older, or more prosperous in any field, whether political, literary, or professional (at least after the general flood that covered the whole world). For the History of China includes almost three thousand years before the birth of God, more clearly seen than the Chronology and summary we have compiled of the history of Far Asia. Even then, these books are said to have sprung from the moral philosophy and mathematical sciences, for they abundantly illustrate the observations of the oldest stars, the laws of self-government compiled in the earliest volumes, and what the survivors teach up to this time.”

The Ottoman Turkish version of the text is as follows: (Dımaşkî, 1685: 007a):

“Kitab-ül Atlas Macor beyânî üzere vâzı ‘ Mârtînûsdir a’let tafsîl keşîde-i silk mastûr kılub bu minvâl üzere şerh beyân eylemişdir ki Asyânın büyük kısmî ve mu’teber iklîmi iklîm-i Çîn’dir. Ol cümle ki Asya aksâmından cüz-i a’zamdır ve mu’teberdir ânâ binaen ki Asya arzın aksâmının cümlesinden akdem ve eşref ve efdaldır. Ve sâhib-i kitâp der ki bu kısmın şerhinde mecbûruz. Anın içündür ki Hazreti Âdem aleyhisselatü vesselam dârüsselâmdan cennetten hubût eyledikten ibtidâ bu mahalle nâzil olmuştur. Ba’dehü sâir beşer münteşâr olub etrâf cevânbte mekân etmişlerdir. Ve ibtidâ-i şeriat ve i’badet ve tâa’t ve hurûf tahaccüm-ı ve okumak ve yâzma ve u’lûm ve sınaî ve siğâr ve kibâr mahkûmiyetleri ve hükûmetleri bu kısımdan vaki’ olmuştur. İmdî bu kısım cümle-i aksâmdan eşref ve efdaldır. Ve Çîn tevarîhinden mastûrdür ki okuyûp yâzma ve hendese ve nücûm ve felsefiyyât ve siyâset Hazret-i İsa aleyhisselâmdan üç bîn sene mukaddem iklîm Çînden mevcûd aylarken beyân olunmuştur. Ol cihetten derler i’lm-i hikmet ve nücûm ve sâirleri ibtidâ Çînden münteşir olmuştur.”

Only some minor changes have occurred in the transfer of this section. For example, the Latin text states that the first humans appeared on the Asian continent and spread to the rest of the world from there: “they welcome and cherish their first human beings, from which later mortal man spread to the rest of the world.” (Blaeu, 1733: 1). This section was transferred in a more religious context in the Ottoman document, and the definitions such as Adam and paradise were specifically stated (Dımaşkî, 1685: 007a).¹⁴ At the same time, Jesus, who is shown as God in the main text, was translated into Ottoman Turkish as the Prophet Jesus, again considering Islamic motives.

The second method used in translation is large-scale summaries. It is likely that the translators summed it up appropriately, considering that some chapters in the source work were long and detailed and confusing to their readers. For example, how the Chinese people and other countries define the Chinese people has been discussed at length in the main text (Blaeu, 1733: 1-2):

“Chinese, on the other hand, call their empire Chunghoa or Cungque: both because the word indicates its supremacy and because the word sounds like a middle kingdom (they think they are located in the middle of the world), but that middle garden is actually a flower. These two were the most common and stable names, though one was continuous and the other came from a variety of successive families and empires. That is why it is called Tai-cing by the Tatars, just as it was previously called Taiming, or Taijuen three hundred years ago. No one doubts without reason that this is the kingdom of Hippophagus, because they all feed on horse, beef or any other meat, but this is more

¹⁴ Latin: “ac parentes nostros sinu suo susceperit, foveritque: exinde propagato mortalium genere coloniae per reliquas orbis partes longe lateque diffusae.”; Ottoman: “Anın içündür ki Hazreti Âdem aleyhisselatü vesselam dârüsselâmdan cennetten hubût eyledikten ibtidâ bu mahalle nâzil olmuştur. Ba’dehü sâir beşer münteşâr olub etrâf cevânbte mekân etmişlerdir.”

common and familiar to the Tatars. But the origin of the name China, or rather the origin of China, emerges more clearly from my own summary, which I show that it comes from the imperial family of China. But those who want to come up with the word Cing, definitely from the urban sound mostly used in China, I think they are definitely wrong, indeed everyone in China who trades with Indians or their ships goes to India. They are used to politely addressing others as Cia, not as Cing in their own language. Only those who are literate or who belong to a more civilized language, says Cing. Most traders from Chincheu or Quantong, who have so far sailed almost exclusively from China, do not know. I prefer to believe that the name of the city of Chincheu was taken from the inhabitants of the whole kingdom, because they were accustomed to frequent all of India in their ships, the name Chine was easily formed by the Lusitanians or Indians. Some derive it from Sionibus because, as they say, the Chinese region itself means elite region in the Chinese language. Since nothing more definite is known to me on this subject, I shall not dare to assert anything definite.”

For this reason, due to the fact that the narration is quite long and detailed, the translation text has passed in the form of a summary stating that the main meaning of the word China is not known where it came from, and that the name differs from nation to nation (Dımaşkî, 1685: 007a). In this section, it is mentioned how China is called by different nations. In the Latin text, it is reported that China is called *Sericam, Sinam, Chinam, Catayum, Mangin*. In Ottoman Turkish, these words were not taken into account and it was shown how China was named by the Greeks and Arabs in the Islamic Turkish cultural understanding. In this process, there are some differences in the forms of words. These names were transferred to Ottoman Turkish as *Sırğa, Sinem, Münçin*. Again, although it is said in the original Latin text that the Chinese called their country *Chunghoa* or *Cungque*, an incorrect transfer was made by stating that the Chinese called their emperors *Kungvu* or *Kungvi* in the Ottoman text. While the empire itself was in question in the original text, the naming of the emperor was the subject in the translation (Dımaşkî, 1685: 007a):

“*Ve Çin halkı padişahlarına Kûngvû ve yahut Kûngvî derler ve bu isim mu‘teber memleketlerinden alınmıştır. Ve ol memleketlerine iklim-i Çin’in ortasında derler. Ve Çin halkının i‘tikâtları budur ki Çin dünyanın ortası ola ve Kûngvû ma‘nasını oldur ki bağçenin ortası ve yahut bahçenin mu‘teber çiçeği demek ola bu cihetten kavm-i Çin Tatarı cemi‘ zaman tefâhir idüb bizleri vasat-ı riyâz dünyâda sakinleriz. veadîka-yı dünyanın mu‘teber çiçekleri menzilesinde yüzerler ve bu iki isimlerin olunmuştur meşhur kadim isimlerdir. Ba‘dez zaman kalan padişahların isimleri bazı vekâyi‘den mâhûzlardır. Nitekim Taymenek padişahın devleti eski ismi Taymenek olub ba‘dehü tağyîr olunub Tâyching didikleri gibi. Ve Çin’in vech-i tesmiyesinde ihtilâf olunmuştur. Akıbası budur ki Çin nâm bir padişahın ismiyle tesmiye kıldı. Ve Hind bâzirgânları Çin iklimine iklim-i Çin derler.”*

Apart from this, there are other errors in the text when it comes to numbers. For example, in the Latin main text, *Varia Extremae Asiae Diviso*, the section where China's administrative and geographical divisions are discussed, it is written that China is divided into fifteen gigantic provinces (Blæu, 1733: 3).¹⁵ However, this is given as eighteen in the Ottoman translation (Dımaşkî, 1685: 007b).¹⁶ Such numerical differences continue in other sections as well. For example, in the chapter called *Urbium ac Civitatum Nemerus*, which describes the cities in China, the total number of cities in China is given as 1226 (Blæu, 1733: 5). In the section of the translated work *Bilâd-ı Çin*, this number is 226 (Dımaşkî, 1685: 008b). In addition to the translation differences regarding the numbers and spelling of names, there are also great differences in context. For example, *Scientia*, the section in the main text, which describes the abilities of the Chinese people in scientific matters, does not give a very positive picture about the scientific achievements of the Chinese. They are humiliated because of their

¹⁵ “Tum demum in quindecim ingentes Provincias totum hoc imperium Sinicum divisum est.” Eventually the entire Chinese empire was divided into fifteen gigantic provinces.

¹⁶ “Ve ol semtten iskân idüb kendilere itbâ‘ itdiler ve ma‘mûr olduktan sonra cümle Çin’in iklimini on sekiz memlekete taksim etmişlerdir.”

affinity for astronomy, and it is emphasized that the medicines they produce are less important when compared to those in Europe. This section is quoted in the Ottoman translation in the sections named *Çin'in Evleri Kuleleri* and *el-Kimya* (Dımaşkî, 1685: 009a).¹⁷ However, quite different from the main text, it is emphasized that the Chinese are even more successful than the Europeans in these areas, and their efforts in alchemy are appreciated. In this way, there is a serious difference between the main text and the translated text. Another different narrative is the part about polygamy in China. In the Ottoman text, it is claimed that polygamy is not permissible in China under the title of *A'det-i Çin* (Dımaşkî, 1685: 009a).¹⁸ The Latin original of the text is completely different, it is stated that men can marry more than once (Blaeu, 1773: 9).¹⁹

Some parts of the main text have been completely ignored. For example, the section called *Carnis et Rerum Necessarium Copia*, in which the abundance of agriculture and animal husbandry in China is conveyed in detail, was translated into Ottoman Turkish with some censors. In the section called *Evsaf-ı Çin*, where this subject is conveyed in Ottoman Turkish, since pigs are not an acceptable animal in the Islamic belief, the parts of the main text in which the taste of pork is mentioned are completely omitted. (Blaeu, 1773: 4). The negative relationship between Tatars and Muslims is conveyed in the *Ahval-i Tatar Sahara-Nişin* section. This part has been translated correctly, but the expression in which the Christian missionary feelings predominate in the main text that the Tatars will become Christians one day, is not seen in Ottoman Turkish. Interestingly, the translators did not express their hopes that Tatars would convert to Islam (Blaeu, 1773: 20).²⁰ Many such issues remained out of the question without being mentioned in the Ottoman text. The deliciousness of pork and the hope that Tatars will become Muslims in the future are ignored as it will disturb the Muslim reader. At the same time, there are many chapters where the details are skipped without any ideological reason, but the main content is still given in the translation.

General Analysis of the Text in Terms of Style, Content and Structure

Chapter titles are given in red colour to enable the readers to reach the desired topics easily. It can be said that the style of the work is generally quite simple and understandable. In very rare cases, Arabic or Persian words are used. Sentences are structurally short and giving direct information is the main purpose. The book has a general purpose of entertaining and teaching at the same time. How

¹⁷ "İ'lm-ü ferâset ve esârîr ve hendese ve ticaret enise-i nücûm ve felsefe ve gayrılarda gayet ile mâhîrlerdir husûsa tabiblere bizden ziyâde bîlürler kolay şeyler ile i'lâc iderler. Ve bunlarda bir kadim tıb kitabı vardır içinde i'lâcat ve i'shâb ve ahcâr ve akakir vardır bu kitap muktezâsınca her meraza i'lâc iderler ve hiç i'lâc tahallûf itmeyub alelfevr sıhhat bulurlar. Ve Çin tabibleri katlarında kan aldırma memnu'dur. Ve ahvâl-i nabzı kemâl mertebe bilurler ziyâde maharetleri vardır Avrupa edibbâsından ziyâde bilurler ve nabzdan her illeti teşhis idub fehm iderler. Evvelki nabızdan tuttuklarında ma'lûm idinurler ki insanın kalbinde ne vardır. İkinci dalaktan ve ciğerden her ne maraz var ise ma'lûm idinurler. Üçünciden katında her ne maraz varsa ma'lûm idinurler o öbürlerinden insanın bedeninde olan emrâz-ı ma'lûm idinurler. Ve kaçan tabib hastanın nabzı tuttuğa yarım saa't miktarı tutub yoklar. El-Kimya. Çin hükemâsı i'lm-i kimyaya kemâl mertebe mukayyitlerdir. Ve dirler ki bu iksirin beden-i insana kemâl mertebe faydası vardır bu iksirden her kim bir denk miktarı tenâvül eylese cemî'-i emrazdan hülâs olub selâmet üzere ömr-ü tabii'yyesine varıncaya değin vücudı rahne dâr alel olmayadurlar ondan ötürü dirler ki bizim murâdımız altın ve gümüş yapmak değildir belki bu iksir yapmaktan muradımız muhafazay-ı ibdândur ki ta ahiri ömre varıncaya değin bedende imrâz zâhir olmayadırlar ve bu fennin mübtedilerî beranisinden şeyler yapub Avrupa memleketine gönderub satdururlar."

¹⁸ "Ve bunlarda bir a'det vâdır bir kimesnenin a'vretî olsa gayr-ı anabir avret câiz olmaz."

¹⁹ "Maritis uxore defuncta aliam superinducere imo et domi habere pellicem probro haud vertitur, adeo ibi iniqua foeminis sors est." (After the death of her husband's wife, it is not a crime to have a mistress at home or even to bring in another, so there is an unfair lot there).

²⁰ "Religionem Christianam admittunt facile et iam nunc ex iis non pauci eam amplexi sunt. Quis neget divinitus illis hoc fortasse ad Sinas iter apertum, ut ita salutis viam, veram fidem ac religionem inveniret? cum alioqui ad illos penetrare difficillimum foret, imo tantum non factu impossibile, quod modo facillimum effectum: atque eo fere modo, quo olim a barbaris gentium dominam Romam occupari, destruique permisit Deus, ut ita Gothos, Vandalos, aliosque Christianis sacris imbueret, veraque fidei luce illustraret." English translation: They readily admit the Christian religion, and now not a few of them have embraced it. Who would deny that they had divinely revealed this, perhaps, that the road to China was opened, so that they might thus find a way of salvation, a true faith and a religion? since otherwise it would be very difficult for them to penetrate, nay, so far it was not impossible by deed, as it was only the most easy effect. And in almost the same manner as God permitted Rome to be once the mistress of the barbarians of the nations to be seized and destroyed, so that he might imbue the Goths, Vandals, and other Christian cults with the light of true faith and enlighten them.

Chinese young girls tied their feet from childhood is described in the text, but at the same time the information known at that time about China was tried to be given exactly. The narration is fluent, but it is certainly not of a legend-narration style. Chapters like these are consciously put in order to smooth away the monotonous narrative of the work, probably to entertain the reader.

Special names were deliberately written in a form consistent with the Turkish-Islamic tradition, or references were made to the Greek scientific tradition already known in the Islamic tradition (Dımařkî, 1685: 007a).²¹ It is not entirely clear whether there are problems with understanding the original copy, or because it is more convenient when expressing it in Turkish, the special names are written differently in translation. The way the translators worked was likely to consist of reading the text aloud and conveying key points in their own language. Thus, the parts that could attract the attention of the Ottoman reader less were skipped. Since the material in his hand is quite large, Dımařkî wanted to keep the work in a reasonable size in this way. However, there are cases where the sentences are translated verbatim at some points. At the same time, in cases where there is no information about the subject in his own cultural tradition or the possibility of confirming the transmitted information is low, the translator specifically states that he received this information directly from the original text. In this way, perhaps he wants to put a distance between himself and the information he conveys. Or maybe he wanted to increase his credibility on the reader even more. Thus, he was able to gain more legitimacy on the reader by constantly stating his sources.

Kâtip Çelebi states that a geographer should not only deal with the description of the places, but also examine the living conditions and other characteristics of the inhabitants (Hagen, 2015: 329). This dual integrity also shows itself on Dımařki's work *Nusret*. While describing the regions, geographical distinctions are given, but the main consideration is the cultural unity of the people living in these lands. First of all, the meridian and latitude degrees are given, but then cities, agricultural products, legal status, sciences, crafts, meals, cities are listed within this geographical range and a certain regional identity construction is created. Geographical spaces could only create a meaning with the people living in the regions and were explained in this way. However, in these sections where people are studied culturally, the method is not applied independently, the original Latin text in every sense demarcates the general subject of the author.

In the text, the strangeness and the extraordinary in the way of life of the Chinese people have an important place for the Ottoman reader. Although they are not contextually important in the development of the text, their main purpose is that they are written to entertain the reader. However, such entertaining elements are not only in question for the Ottoman translated text, this information is also found in the main text itself. In the section where he tells about religion in China Dımařkî does not insult the Chinese people because of their religions. The text is generally based on praising the Chinese superiority in the arts and sciences. However, considering the chapters in which the author describes the religious beliefs of the Chinese, his way of expressing his thoughts about paganism cannot be described as negative, but at least contemptuous. The thoughts of the Chinese on philosophy and morality are listed under the heading of religious beliefs. However, in these sections, the author has set his own value judgments aside and fictionalized his narrative, no derogatory definitions are seen, the sentences are intended to describe in general.

Conclusion

What prompted the Ottoman Empire at the end of the seventeenth century to translate an eleven-volume book covering a wide range of subjects from history to geography, human traditions and lifestyles? Was it a search for knowledge itself? The first and foremost reason for this translation must be the rapid discovery and mapping of unknown continents and regions of the world by the European navigators as of the fifteenth century. The people who made the effort to publish this book probably wanted this information to be available for them.

²¹ “Bu Çin isminde çok kimesneler ihtilâf itmişlerdir lisân-ı A‘rabide Çin dîrler ve kudema-i yûnâniyân seyyinâ ve ba‘zı muarrihler dîmişlerdir ki Çin’in ismi Sırğa ve yahut Sinem’dir. Ve lisân-ı tâtârda ism-i Çin kıtadır ve yâhût Müncindir...”

In this respect, this book is in a position where both aims can be achieved. It informs people about different geographies by containing a lot of information such as society, state, social structure, on the other hand, it contains information such as current maps and geographical locations of countries. In this respect, it is very important from a military and strategic point of view. But considering the regions that were far outside the Ottoman Empire's sphere of influence, such as China, India or the Americas, how useful was this strategic and military factor? Only with a study that would deal with the Ottoman Empire and its surrounding neighbors could meet their military and strategic needs. Especially some of the information given here about distant geographies is quite superficial and not sufficient to develop a real military strategy. In the main text and translation, the explanations made in the fields of women, agriculture, cities cannot meet any basic need of strategic needs. In this case, there must be a different reason for the Chinese section to be translated into Ottoman Turkish. This may be the desire of the Ottoman elite to meet their intellectual needs about distant geographies or to entertain themselves in their spare time by satisfying their curiosity about the lifestyles of people in different geographies. As a matter of fact, even after this work was published, the genre of *acâibü'l-mahlûkât*, which had entertaining and legendary qualities, continued for many years (Coşkun, 2020). According to Hagen, Hüseyin Hazerfen transferred sections about China to *Tenkîhü't-Tevârîh*, knowing Mehmed IV's interest in world history and interesting stories (Hagen, 2015: 291).

Did Mehmed IV ever consider sending a research group to China or newly discovered Americas when this work was presented to him? When we asked the question again in a different way, how much could the Ottoman intellectuals of the period trust this translated work? In general, they remained faithful to the original Latin text as far as can be seen. They did not add to the main text from a different source, they followed the main sub-headings, although they translated literally in some parts, the work was generally translated so as to convey its basic content. Some sections were skipped, some were translated incorrectly, but this was never in such a harmful way as to disrupt the general content of the work.

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