

From Discourse to Practice: Rethinking “Translation” (Terceme) and Related Practices of Text Production in the Late Ottoman Literary Tradition

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the present thesis is to explore and analyze on various levels concepts of translation in Ottoman culture in the late nineteenth century. Cemal Demirciođlu’s *From Discourse to Practice: Rethinking “Translation” (Terceme) and Related Practices of Text Production in the Late Ottoman Literary Tradition* investigates on one level the implications of various discourses on the literary translation activity carried out in this period from the historical-descriptive and systemic perspective in Translation Studies. It also examines the ways in which translation/s contributed to the making of Ottoman literary repertoires in connection with European culture and literature. On another level, it examines culture-specific aspects of Ottoman translation practices, with a special focus on terms and concepts, and suggests rethinking *terceme* as a *culture-bound* and *time-bound* notion of Ottoman translation tradition.

As an exemplary corpus for rethinking “translation” in terms of diverse writing practices, a number of works by Ahmed Midhat Efendi, a significant *Tanzimat* novelist, translator and journalist, are analyzed with an eye demonstrating diversity, culture-bound and time-bound notions in his translation discourses and practice. The present thesis also offers a comparative analysis of Ahmed Midhat Efendi’s summary translation, *Sid’in Hulâsası*, of Pierre Corneille’s *Le Cid* as a case study. The summary translation was chosen because it combines in a single work both paratextual and translation discourse that lend themselves to the analysis of a particular kind of Ottoman text production *via* translation.

The present thesis is also the first extensive academic research on the history of Ottoman/Turkish (a) translational terms and concepts, and (b) translational practices. It proposes a genealogy and lexicon of translational terms which is intended for the use of researchers. Most importantly, the thesis emphasizes the importance of the distinctions between time-bound and culture-bound practices of translation as *terceme* in the study of Ottoman translation history. As a result, the present thesis suggests rethinking “translation” in Ottoman culture not in terms of the modern concept of *çeviri* but of *terceme* and related practices, without overlooking historical continuity.

KEYWORDS: Ahmed Midhat, *çeviri*, culture-bound and time-bound notions of Ottoman translation tradition, genealogy of Turkish terms/concepts for translation, literary histories in Turkish, Ottoman translation history, Ottoman Turkish discourses on translation, summary translation of Pierre Corneille’s *Le Cid*, *terceme*.

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