

Two hitherto little studied Turkish translations by Wojciech Bobowski alias Albertus Bobovius

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Abstract

In this contribution, I will discuss two Turkish translations made by the famous Ottoman court official, Wojciech Bobowski, alias Albertus Bobovius (d. ca. 1677 CE). One is his translation of the Anglican Catechism (1654), the other his version of the *Ianua linguarum* by Johannes Amos Comenius (Komenský, 1592-1670), the Czech philosopher, pedagogue and theologian (1658). Both texts have only survived as manuscripts and neither has been studied in any depth before. I will present the texts, as well as their historical backgrounds, and shed some new light on the life of the translator as well.

Introduction

In this contribution two very different texts will be discussed which have much in common. They are both translations made by the famous Ottoman court official, Wojciech Bobowski, alias Albertus Bobovius.¹ One is his translation of the Anglican Catechism (1654), the other his version of the *Ianua linguarum* by Johannes Amos Comenius (Komenský, 1592-1670), the Czech philosopher, pedagogue and theologian (1658). Both texts have only survived as manuscripts and neither has been studied in any depth before. One manuscript of the text of the Catechism was even completely unknown, until recently. In this contribution, I will present the texts, as well as their historical backgrounds, and shed some new light on the life of the translator as well.

Bobowski / Bobovius: his life²

* My thanks are due to Dr. Jan Schmidt (Leiden University) and Dr. Bruce Privratsky (Tekirdağ, Turkey) for their useful comments, and to Dr. Corinna Vermeulen (Leiden), who edited and translated, and added editorial notes to the Latin text of the dedication in MS Glasgow, Hunterian Collection no. 352. Hannah Neudecker, School of Middle Eastern Studies, Leiden University, PO Box 9500, 2300 RA Leiden, Netherlands, h.neudecker@hum.leidenuniv.nl.

¹ References below, note 3. See also my two previous articles on this subject, “Wojciech Bobowski and his Turkish grammar (1666),” *Dutch Studies in Near Eastern Languages and Literatures* 2 (1996): 169-92, and “From Istanbul to London? Albertus Bobovius' appeal to Isaac Basire,” in *The Republic of Letters and the Levant*, edited by A. Hamilton, M. van den Boogert & B. Westerweel (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2005), 173-96.

² The most recent publications on Bobovius' life are B. G. Privratsky, “A history of Turkish Bible translations: Annotated chronology with historical notes and suggestions for further research.” Version “S” April 2014 <http://historyofturkishbible.files.wordpress.com/2014/03/turkish-bible-history-version-s-in-preparation.pdf>; C.

Behar, *Saklı Mecmua; Ali Ufkî Bibliothèque Nationale de France'taki (Turc 292) Yazması* (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi yayınları, 2008); N. Malcolm, “Comenius, Boyle, Oldenburg, and the translation of the Bible into Turkish,” *Church History and Religious Culture* 87 (2007): 327-62; N. Malcolm, “Comenius, the conversion of the Turks, and the Muslim-Christian debate on the corruption of scripture,” *Church History and Religious Culture* 87 (2007): 477-508; H. Neudecker, “From Istanbul to London?”; C. Behar, *Musikiden müziğe — Osmanlı Türk müziği: gelenek ve modernlik içinde* (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi yayınları, 2005), 17-56; S. Yerasimos and A. Berthier, *Topkapı Sarayı'nda yaşam: Albertus Bobovius ya da Santuri Ali Ufkî Bey'in Anıları* (İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2002, 2009³), 12-22. This book is a translation by Ali Berktaş from *Topkapi: Relation du Sérail du Grand Seigneur* (Arles: Sindbad, 1999).

It is not known where and when Bobovius was born. The first thing we know about him is that he was captured by Tartars as a young man, during an invasion of his native area of Poland (currently part of the Ukraine) around 1632. After his capture, Bobovius was transported to Istanbul and sold as a slave there. He was forcibly converted to Islam, adopting the name of Ali, and for almost 21 years was educated at the palace, also acting as a musician and servant. After the completion of his education, he went to Egypt in the service of a senior Ottoman master, whose name is unknown. When he returned to Istanbul, by 1657, he was freed from servitude, presumably by this Turkish master. Around 1650, through the services of Isaac Basire, chaplain to the English ambassador in Istanbul, Bobovius entered the service of the English ambassador, Sir Thomas Bendish (in office from 1647 to 1660). In 1654 Bobovius translated the Anglican catechism into Turkish for Basire. In 1658, he translated the *Ianua linguarum* by Johannes Amos Comenius into Turkish. He also worked for Heneage Finch, Lord Winchilsea, Bendish's successor (in office 1660 to 1668). Between 1662 and 1664, Bobovius worked on the Turkish translation of the Old and New Testament, as well as the Apocrypha, whether directly in the pay of the Dutch Resident in Istanbul, Levinus Warner, or under his guidance, but in the pay of Lord Winchilsea. This translation was intended as a replacement for the one made by Yaḥya bin 'Ishāq (Ḥaki) around 1659, under the guidance of Jacobus Golius and Levinus Warner.³

Towards the end of the second phase of his career Bobovius redirected his interests to England. His relations with that country, notably with Isaac Basire, became more intensive and his wish to continue his career in England as a Christian more urgent.⁴ Although he never made it to England, he was able to help Comenius and others who were concerned with converting the Muslims of the Near East to Christianity. This interest of Bobovius' was the context of his translations. Bobovius died around 1677, most probably in Istanbul.

The Anglican Catechism

The manuscripts

Of this text, to my knowledge, two manuscripts have survived, but only one of them had been known until recently. One is kept in Durham Cathedral Library,⁵ the other in the Hunterian Museum of the University of Glasgow.⁶ MS Glasgow 352 was already known, as is clear from the description in the 1908 catalogue by Young and Aitkin, but MS Durham 140:14 was listed incorrectly in the catalogue by Rud and therefore it was hitherto unknown. Thomas Rud lists the work as: "Hunter octavo 140:14, a tract in the Arabick language." However, study of

³ H. Neudecker, *The Turkish Bible Translation by Yahya bin 'Ishāq, also called Ḥaki (1659)* (Dissertation Leiden 1994; Oosters Instituut vol. 4).

⁴ Neudecker, "From Istanbul to London?"; see also below, "Historical background: why a Catechism in Turkish?."

⁵ MS Durham Hunter 140:14, Thomas Rud, *Codicum manuscriptorum ecclesiae cathedralis Dunelmensis* (Durham: G. Andrews, 1825), 417.

⁶ MS Glasgow Hunterian Collection 352. See J. Young & P. Henderson Aitkin, *A catalogue of the manuscripts in the Library of the Hunterian Museum in the University of Glasgow* (Glasgow: J. Maclehose and Sons, 1908), 501; Neudecker, "Bobowski and his Turkish grammar," 173.

the copy of this catalogue in Durham Cathedral Library itself clarifies that the text in fact is, as a marginal note reads, “A catechism of the Orthodox Church in Turkish.” This is apparent from a marginal note. There is no mention of a date or author in the catalogue, but there is in the MS itself.

The first MS I was able to study was the one in Durham and therefore I will base my description on that MS and will compare it with MS Glasgow briefly. The tract is listed as one of “a bundle of miscellaneous tracts, chiefly in the hand-writing of Dr Basire.” The tracts vary in subject from “the Pronuntiation of the French Tongue” to “*Catechesis Ecclesiarum in Regno Poloniae et magno Ducatu Lithuaniae*” and other theological and Church related matters. Our tract contains 32 pages. These are partially numbered in contemporary Arabic numerals (16-31). However, the title page, as well as the first fifteen pages and the final page are left unnumbered. The order of the pages is Western, but the language used is Ottoman Turkish.

All of the text is written in red ink, in the same hand. This handwriting is well-known from other sources as Nicolaus ibn Butrus’s, known in Holland as Nicolaus Petri. A Christian originally from Aleppo, he was one of the copyists employed by Jacobus Golius (1596-1667), the Dutch Orientalist and mathematician, in the Netherlands. After he travelled to Istanbul in 1647, he started working for Levinus Warner (1619–1665) as well. Levinus Warner was an Orientalist and Dutch representative in Istanbul, and also a friend and student of Golius. Petri’s hand is known from a number of Turkish and Arabic manuscripts kept in the Leiden University Library.⁷ These are for the larger part annotations and letters written by Warner himself or collected by him, but also the Turkish Bible translation by Yahya bin Ishak (Ḥaki),⁸ which was commissioned by Warner (the earliest surviving copy is the neat copy from 1659). The present manuscript shows that Petri offered his services as a copyist also to Bobowski. Both Yahya bin Ishak, and Bobowski were employed by Warner as interpreters.

The Turkish text in the Glasgow MS is similar, but the MS supplies the Latin text (whereas the MS in Durham contains only the Turkish translation). The Turkish text in this MS, too, is written in red ink. The Latin is written in black, again in the handwriting of Nicolaus Petri. That the manuscripts belong together is clear, at first sight, from the short, but telling motto on the title page that both manuscripts have in common (I use the English translation here): ‘Paulus plants, Apollos waters, God lets grow’. The Durham manuscript has the text in Turkish, ‘*Pavlus diker Apullus suvarır Allah bitirir*’,

تعلیم اور تو / دکسییت⁹ / پولوس دکر اپولوس صوارر / الله بترر /

(*Ta`lim-i ortu-/ doksiyet / Pavlus diker Apullus suvarır / Allah bitirir*, ‘An instruction book of the Orthodox Church. Paulus plants, Apollos waters, God lets grow’), whereas the Glasgow manuscript also has the Latin version, ‘*Paulus plantat, Apollos rigat, Deus dat incrementum*’.¹⁰

⁷ Petri’s handwriting has been identified in the following manuscripts in the Leiden University Library: Or. 382-386 (386 with the exception of fols. 93a-104b6), 1112, 1119, 1130, 1139, 1159, 1161, 1163, 1171, 1180, 1228, cf. Jan Schmidt, *Catalogue of Turkish manuscripts in the library of Leiden University and other collections in the Netherlands*, vol. 1 (Leiden, 2000).

⁸ Neudecker, *The Turkish Bible*.

⁹ MS: final nun.

¹⁰ In MS Durham, a librarian’s note has been added, ‘*Liber Eccles. Cath. Dunelm. MSS Hunter No. 140 tr. 14*’.

This text is a citation from I Cor. 3: 6. What is meant here, is that Paulus was the first to preach the Gospel (to the Corinthians) and that his successor, called Apollos, by his preaching and exhortations, watered the seed that had been sown by Paulus. But the actual growth and spreading is due to a divine blessing.¹¹

Both MSS have a second title page, bearing almost the same titles (minor differences are given in the notes):

تعليم الاورتو دكسين¹² / انكلستان¹³ كنسه ن¹⁴ مواسم / اوزرينه اوغلنجلره¹⁵ ايسقوپسدن / مقرر اولمزدن اول از بر / اوكره تجك¹⁶ / لاتن عبارتدن / توركيه ترجمه / اولنمش / مولود سيد دن ص¹⁷ گره سنه¹⁷ / ١٦٥٤ في قسطنطينيه¹⁸

Ta`lim el-ortudoksin / ingilistan kenisenin mevasim / üzerine oğlancıklara episkoposdan / muqarrer olmazdan evvel ezber / öğretecek / Latin ibaretden / Türkiye terceme / olunmuş / Mevlud-i seyyid-den sonra sene / 1654 / fi Qustantiniye,
“Teaching book of the hours of the English Orthodox Church which young children shall be taught [until they know them] by heart before being confirmed by the Bishop. The Turkish translation has been made on the basis of the Latin text, in the year 1654 after the birth of the Lord, in Constantinople.” This title page is the more extensive of the two. It contains the date (1654), as well as the place (Constantinople), furthermore the original language is mentioned from which the translation was made, Latin.

MS Glasgow has this same title in Latin (page 6), under a heading of a special cross in red ink:

DOCTRINA ORTHODOXA: / SUPER RITUM ANGLICAE / ECCLESIAE À PUERIS, / ANTEQUAM AB EPISCOPO / CONFIRMANTUR, MEMO: / RITER ADDISCENDA. / EX LATINO IDIOMATE / IN TURCICUM TRANS: / LATA. / ANNO À NATIVITATE / DOMINI. 1654. / [IN]¹⁹ CONSTANTINOPO: / LI.

Translation:

Orthodox doctrine, according to the rite of the Church of England to be learnt by heart by children before they are confirmed by the bishop. Translated from Latin into Turkish. In the year 1654 since the birth of our Lord. In Constantinople.

¹¹ Cf. e.g. *Exposition of the Entire Bible* by John Gill [1746-63], http://gill.biblecommenter.com/1_corinthians/3.htm and *Commentary on the Bible* by Adam Clarke [1831], http://clarke.biblecommenter.com/1_corinthians/3.htm, both texts courtesy of Internet Sacred Texts Archive.

¹² Err. for *ortu-/ doksi* (nom.), without final ن.

¹³ In MS Glasgow the initial *elif* is a correction of an original *ayin*.

¹⁴ In MS Glasgow the *ya* is missing, MS Durham reads: كنيسه نك. The letters *nun* and *kef* are not connected in MS Glasgow.

¹⁵ This word is spelled with a ق in MS Glasgow, whereas with a ك in the other MS: اوغلنجلره.

¹⁶ MS Glasgow less correctly reads: اوكره نكج.

¹⁷ The *hemze* is erroneous; absent in MS Durham.

¹⁸ MS Durham: without *elif*: قسطنطينيه.

¹⁹ IN deleted. This error is obviously due to the wording of the Turkish text, which reads: “in قسطنطينيه في Constantinople.”

In outward appearance, the texts are very similar. In the Glasgow manuscript, the text is written in double columns of 12 lines each. The text is written on paper (160x106 mm). The MS contains 50 pages, paginated like a book, and 15 leaves, which are bound together with green thread in one quire. The pagination runs to 42 on the even pages, and to 43 on the uneven pages. The volume is bound in dark brown calf, 158x112 mm, and is gold stamped; the original clasps are missing. The flyleaves are marbled and the book block has come loose from its cover. The manuscript is kept in a small cardboard box for protection.

MS Durham is written on paper of the same dimensions, and on a similar number of pages. The text is written in columns of 14 lines, which are twice as short, about 2 inches, as in the other MS. In MS Durham, the Latin text is missing. On this basis, we can establish the relative age of both texts. Although both texts bear the same year, 1654, the one from Glasgow is more recent.

Apart from all the similarities, the Glasgow manuscript has a dedication which is lacking in the other text. This makes it clear that the text in this manuscript was meant to be the final version, and it supports our remarks considering the relative dates above. The text of the dedication (page 5, the preceding pages 2, 3 and 4 being empty) runs as follows:²⁰

NOBILISSIMO, ORNATISSIMOQUE JUVENI-VIRO DOMINO, DOMINO, JOANNI BENDYSHE, ARMIGERO ANGLICANO – ALBERTUS BOBOVIUS SALUTEM PLURIMAM DICIT.²¹

Quemadmodum operarij prudentes fundamentum aedificij cuiuspiam substraturi iactum primi lapidis PATRONO suo deferunt venerabundi, cùm honoris tum etiam boni ominis causâ, sic et ego impraesentiarum neutiquam interpretis,²² sed argumenti sacri fiduciâ fretus ILLUSTRISSE DOMINE, nomen tuum nobile huic opusculo praeponere audeo, imò debeo. Siquidem ipso iure cautum est uti – Quicquid solo alieno inaedificatum est, cedat DOMINO soli.²³ Insuper, hocce qualicumque²⁴ obsequio meo volui devincire tibi universos quotquot, vel huiusce mijsterij salutaris cognitione, atque etiam propagatione beari continget. vel etiam illos, qui in ediscenda²⁵ lingua Turcica ex hoc sijstimate exiguo, fructum haud exiguum capere poterunt, si velint. Quoniam (salvo semper rei ipsius sacro sensu) verbis, quàm potui Turcicis tersissimis totam hanc doctrinam vestire, cum ornatu, fideliter annexus sum — Ita tamen ut maluerim in rectam aliquando Latinitatem peccare²⁶ quàm in veritatem orthodoxam. Id autem omne allaboravi — praecipuè in gratiam clientelae vestrae, iuventutem loquor meam²⁷ in linguis orientalibus institutioni commissam in perillustri²⁸

²⁰ I gratefully acknowledge the help of Dr. Corinna Vermeulen (Leiden), who edited and translated the Latin text of this dedication. The following editorial notes are also hers.

²¹ The text resembles *S.P.O.* rather than *S.P.D.*, but such a phrase with any other verb than *dicit* would be highly unusual.

²² MS *interpretis*, inserted.

²³ MS *Quicquid/soli*, underlined. In the right margin, in a different hand: ‘Instit. Lib. 2. Tit. de rerum Divis. Etc. § Cùm in suo.’ The reference is to the *Institutes of Justinian (Institutiones Justiniani)* II, 1, 30: ‘Ex diverso si quis in alieno solo sua materia domum aedificaverit, illius fit domus, cuius et solum est. (‘Conversely if someone builds a house with his own materials on another’s land, the landowner still becomes owner of the house’); cf. *Justinian’s Institutes*. Transl. by Peter Birks and Grant McLeod. Latin text by Paul Krueger (London: Duckworth, 1987), 59.

²⁴ MS corr. from *qualecumque*.

²⁵ Above the beginning of *ediscenda*, one or two illegible letters have been added; they most resemble ‘io’.

²⁶ *sponte* (‘of my own accord’, ‘willingly’) has been added in the margin here, in the same hand as the reference to the *Institutes*.

²⁷ MS *mea*.

Familia EXCELLENTISSIMI, ATQUE AMPLISSIMI DOMINI DOMINI Oratoris ANGLIAE, Parentis vestri dignissimi cuius ego EXCELLENTIAE vestraeque (secundum ipsum) Magnitudini,²⁹ me meosque labores dedicare, gloriosum semper ducam. VALE, illustrissime DOMINE, Idemque PATRONE colendissime, atque hoc devoti animi, nec non splendoris tui monumentum aequi bonique consule. CONSTANTINOPOLI, ANNO Partae, Per JESUM CHRISTUM, verum Messiam, SALUTIS AETERNAE. MDCLIIII.

Translation:

To the most noble and excellent young man my lord John Bendish³⁰, English Esq., best wishes from Albertus Bobovius.

As prudent workmen reverently offer the laying of the first stone to their patron when they are about to lay the foundations of some building, both because of the honour and for good luck, so I (relying in no way on the translator's trustworthiness, but on that of the sacred content) now dare — indeed I must — put your noble name at the beginning of this booklet, most illustrious lord. Since it is cautious to refer to law itself: that which was built upon another man's ground, should fall to the owner of the ground.

Moreover, with this my allegiance, whatever its worth, I wish to bind to you all those who will be blessed by the knowledge of this salutary mystery, and its dissemination; or even those who in learning the Turkish language from this little system will be able to draw more than a little benefit, if they want to: because I have faithfully endeavoured to dress this entire doctrine tastefully in Turkish words as correct as possible (while always leaving the sacred meaning of the content intact), but I have preferred offending against correct Latinity now and then to offending against the orthodox truth.

However, I have worked on all this mainly for the sake of your family's patronage. I am talking about my youth, which was committed to learning Oriental languages with the most illustrious family of the most excellent and most honourable Lord Ambassador of England, your most worthy father. To His Excellency and Your Greatness (according to him) I will always deem it glorious to dedicate myself and my labours. Farewell, most illustrious lord, patron most worthy of honour, and please interpret favourably this token of a devoted mind and monument to your splendour.

In Constantinople, in the year 1654 since eternal salvation was born through Jesus Christ, the true Messiah.

Contents of the text

²⁸ MS *peillustri*.

²⁹ MS corr. from *magnitudini*.

³⁰ Sir John Bendish, 3rd Bt (1630- 1707), son of Sir Thomas Bendish, the English Ambassador in Constantinople. In the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Liane Saunders, 'Bendish, Sir Thomas, second baronet (1607–1674)', Oxford, 2004; online ed. Jan 2008) information on John is included in his father's entry: "Bendish's links with the Levant Company grew during his residence in Constantinople. Two of his sons took up posts locally, John (the eldest) at the embassy in Constantinople and Andrew as a factor in Smyrna. John appears to have returned to London to work for the company there and to manage his father's estate but Andrew continued to work in the Levant after his father left Constantinople, possibly securing a post in Cairo. An unnamed son of Bendish (possibly John) also worked for the company in Surat under the protection of George Oxinden in 1666."

We will return to John Bendish and his connection with the manuscript further below (Historical background).

The text of the Catechism actually begins (MS Durham page 3, MS Glasgow page 9) as follows:

بِسْمِ الْاَبِ وَالْاِبْنِ وَالرُّوحِ الْقُدُّوسِ

(*Bi-sm el-eb ve-l-ibn ve-l-ruh-i l-quddus*, ‘In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost’). MS Glasgow has the same text also in Latin: *In nomine Patris, et Filij et spiritu[s] S[an]ct[i]*. There the text is written in two columns, to the left in Latin, to the right in Turkish.

Next follows in both MSS the actual translation of the traditional ‘Questions and Answers’ (سوال and جواب) of the Catechism, of which there are 23 in all. The translation is a fairly literal rendering of the 1560 edition of the Catechism in Latin.³¹ Both texts are similar, with only minor differences.³²

The ‘Questions and Answers’ are followed (Glasgow, 43, Durham, 31) by a concluding rhymed formula, in which God’s sovereignty is acknowledged:

تَمَّتْ الْكِتَابُ / مُحَرَّرَ بِالْثَوَابِ / وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزُ الْوَهَّابِ / م

(*Temmet el-kitab / muharrer bi-l-sevab / ve-allah aziz-i el-vehhab*, ‘The book is completed, it is written with merit and [but] God is the All-Bountiful Almighty’).

A Latin counterpart of the Turkish text has been added in MS Glasgow:

Fi=/ nis libri scripti / cum charitate et Deus Largitor supremus

To end the text there is final remark, functioning as a kind of motto, in both MSS (Glasgow, p. [44], Durham, p. 32):

كوك التنده عيسى ومسيح حضر / تلى ينك اسم شريفلرندن غيري بر /
نسنه وحسانلره³⁴ ويرلممش در³³ / كه انكله انسان / سليم اول

(*Gök altında Isa ve mesih hazre=/ tlerinin ism-i şeriflerinden gayri bir / nesne insanlara virilmemişdür / ki anunla insan / selim ola*, ‘Under Heaven there is nothing other given to men than the noble names of Jesus and His Lord the Messiah, whereby man must (could) be saved’).

In MS Glasgow, a Latin version reads (p. [45]):

PRAETER Unum JESUM CHRISTUM / NON est aliud sub caelo / nomen datum hominibus / per quod oporteat / Homines sal=/ vari.

Underneath there are bold lines, indicating the end of the text, one in red, the other in black ink. Under the red line is Albertus Bobovius’ signature:

SCRIPSIT / ET composuit Albertus Bobovius. / MAGISTER LINGUARUM. / م

³¹ Walter Haddon (ed.), *Liber Precum Publicarum* (London: Reginald Wolfe 1560) was reprinted in 1847 by the Parker Society, ed. William Keatinge Clay. The latter appears as 87:32 in David Griffiths’ *Bibliography of the Book of Common Prayer*; the original text from which the reprint was taken is 87:3.

³² MS Glasgow (p. 9) has the erroneous counterpart *quaestio*, instead of *responsum* for جواب and in ‘Answer 8’ (p. 18) the words *Primum*, اول (‘first’) and *2do*, ثانيا (‘second’) have been added (in red ink), while these are absent in the other MS

³³ MS Durham reads ويرلممش.

³⁴ Err. for انسانلره.

These words are written in the same hand as the Latin text in this MS. It is impossible to say whether this is Bobovius' own hand, or the hand of Nicolaus Petri or Shahin Kandi (another copyist in Golius' service, an Armenian Christian), since these three are hard to distinguish.³⁵

The translator

Of the two MSS only MS Glasgow bears the name of the translator, twice to be precise. The first time his name is mentioned is at the beginning of the dedication (p. 5), "Nobilissimo, ornatissimoque juveni-viro domino, domino, joanni bendyshe, armigero anglicano – Albertus Bobovius salutem plurimam dicit" ("To the most noble and excellent young man my lord John Bendish, English Esq., best wishes from Albertus Bobovius"), the second time at the conclusion of the translation (p. 45), "scripsit et composuit Albertus Bobovius magister linguarum" ("Written and composed by Albertus Bobovius, master of languages"). In MS Durham no name is mentioned, but the relations of the two MSS have been made sufficiently clear as to attribute that text to Bobowski as well.

Historical background: why a Catechism in Turkish?

I have argued in an article published some years ago that the person responsible for commissioning the translation of the Catechism was the divine and traveler Isaac Basire de Preaumont (1607-1676).³⁶ He was well-known as an active disseminator of the Anglo-Catholic faith throughout the East. On his many travels he "put into practice his theories about the self-evident reasonableness of the Church of England [...] (and was used) to translate the Catechism [...] in the local language, and leave it behind to speak for itself. He had a great devotion to the Catechism, and he was convinced that it contained the essence of the teaching of the Church of England".³⁷ Although the text we present here was the first Catechism in Turkish, it would soon be followed by the one made by William Seaman of John Ball's Catechism, entitled *Catechismus fidei Christianae, Turcicae* (1660/1661). According to Nabil Matar, that later Catechism includes also a long treatise in Turkish and, in Arabic, the essential Christian texts: the Lord's Prayer, the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed and the Ten Commandments.³⁸ An Arabic version of the Catechism would be made by Edward Pococke in 1671, with the same aim. Earlier on, around 1640, an attempt had been made to translate the Dutch Protestant Catechism into Arabic, but it is unclear what came of this project.³⁹ The fact that Basire had intentions to make this text known in Turkish is clear from his own remark:

³⁵ Personal communication by Dr. Jan Schmidt. On Shahin Kandi, cf. Jan Schmidt, "Between author and library shelf. The intriguing history of some Middle Eastern manuscripts acquired by public collections in the Netherlands prior to 1800," in *The Republic of Letters and the Levant*, edited by A. Hamilton, M. van den Boogert & B. Westerweel (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2005), 27-51, at 38; Jan Schmidt, *Catalogue of Turkish manuscripts in the library of Leiden University and other collections in the Netherlands*, vol. 4, Minor collections (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 13.

³⁶ Neudecker, 'From Istanbul to London?', 182.

³⁷ C. Brennen, *The life and times of Isaac Basire* (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Durham, 1987), 75-6.

³⁸ Nabil Matar, *Islam in Britain* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 142-3.

³⁹ A priest in the Greek Church in Damascus, Mūsā b. Mīkhā'īl (Moses Michaelis), travelled to Leiden in the early 1640s and remained there until 1649. He was employed by the States General to assist in translating the Catechism. Cf. Jan Schmidt, "Between author and library shelf. The intriguing history of some Middle Eastern manuscripts acquired by public collections in the Netherlands prior to 1800," in *The Republic of Letters and the Levant*, edited by A. Hamilton, M. van den Boogert & B. Westerweel (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2005), 27-51, at 33.

I passed over the Euphrates and went into Mesopotamia, Abraham's country, whither I am intending to send our catechism in Turkish to some of their bishops.⁴⁰

At the time Bobowski produced this translation, he was employed by the English ambassador in Istanbul, Sir Thomas Bendish, so he must then have undertaken the translation of the Catechism privately. This is a most interesting fact, because to all outward appearances Bobowski was a Muslim. It is clear from several Christian notions and phrases in the Turkish text that Bobowski considered this work not mainly as a source of additional income, but that the text was close to his heart. In fact, at that stage of his life he longed to move to England and return to his original faith.⁴¹ It is known that Basire visited Constantinople in the year 1653, so it is probable that Bobowski delivered his work to him on that occasion. What exactly happened afterwards we can only guess, but it stands to reason that Basire received a number of copies of the text, that he made good use of them during his travels and afterwards brought home this specific one. On his death his papers, including this text, were handed over to the Cathedral Library according to his will.

Another copy ended up in Glasgow, in the Hunterian Collection. How? It was acquired by Dr William Hunter (1718-83), anatomist, teacher of medicine, Physician Extraordinary to Queen Charlotte, and collector of coins, medals, paintings, shells, minerals, and anatomical and natural history specimens, as well as of books and manuscripts. Under the terms of Hunter's will, his library and other collections remained in London for several years after his death and finally came to the University of Glasgow in 1807. The Hunterian Library contains some 650 manuscripts, of which over 100 are classified as Oriental, largely Persian and Arabic. Hunter clearly took an interest in Turkish translations of diverse texts, for this Library happens to possess a manuscript of that other work by Bobowski which will be discussed shortly, his Turkish translation of Comenius's didactic work *Ianua Linguarum Reserata Aurea*.

It is not known where Hunter bought these manuscripts, but the manuscript containing the Catechism (Hunter 352) gives us a clue, because of the dedication to John Bendish. As we have seen before, John, the eldest son of Thomas Bendish, at first took up a post at the embassy in Constantinople, but returned to London to work for the Levant Company there and to manage his father's estate. This may explain how the item got back to England, where Hunter may have bought it from Ames or another seller.⁴² No printed editions of the text are known. In Basire's papers no indications are found that he intended to have the text printed, either.

Now, at least one question remains: Why did Bobowski use a Latin version of the text, instead of the English as the basis of his translation? The first Latin edition of the *Book of Common Prayer* - of which the catechism forms a part - dates back to 1560. This translation was made on the basis of the first edition of the English BCP, which was published in 1549 after the English Reformation following the break with Rome.⁴³ The use of the prayer book in Latin

⁴⁰ Anthony à Wood, *Fasti Oxonienses* (Oxford, 1691), vol. 1, p. 903-904. C.f. as well P.G. Stanwood, 'Lives of devotion: The correspondence of Isaac Basire and Frances Corbett: 1635-1660', *Early Modern Literary Studies* 5.1 (May, 1999) <http://purl.oclc.org/emls/05-1/stanlive.html>, paragraph 5 and n. 2.

⁴¹ See my forthcoming contribution "Wojciech Bobowski" to *Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History* (17th c.).

⁴² Personal communication of the staff of the Hunterian Collection.

⁴³ E.C. Ratcliff, *The Booke of Common Prayer. Its making and revisions, 1549-1661* (London: Societatis pro Christiana fide propaganda, 1949), 93.

was granted to the universities of Oxford, Cambridge, Winchester and Eton. It is easily understood why Latin speaking communities like universities would use this version, but why Bobowski? Why was this version given to him? Bobowski's English was as good as his Latin, as is witnessed by works by him in both languages.⁴⁴ Difficulties with the English language must therefore be ruled out, and at present no obvious other reason presents itself.

The *Ianua linguarum*

The manuscripts

As far as is known, two copies of this text have been preserved, both in manuscript. The first one, upon which we will base our discussion, is kept in Glasgow University Library⁴⁵, the other one is in Paris, in the Bibliothèque Nationale.⁴⁶ The title of this work is to be found on the first free fly-leaf (see image 'firstflyleaf'):

Ianua linguarum D. Comenij ex Lingua Latina in Linguam Turcicam versa.

("The Door of Languages by Mr. Comenius, rendered from the Latin language into the Turkish language")

As we see, the title here is in Latin only, whereas the text of the MS is for the most part in Latin and Turkish. The Turkish title, however, can be found at the beginning of the actual text (page "1")⁴⁷:

زَرِينُ وَكُشَادَه / دِللِرْگِ قَپِ سِي / تُورْکِي وَ اَفْرَنْجِي

(*Zerin ve küşade / dillerin kapısı / turki ve efrenci*, "The opened and golden gate of languages, Turkish and European")

MS Glasgow is undated, unfortunately. However, MS Paris is dated "Constantinople, 1658," so we may assume that the text in Glasgow is from around the same period. This is also supported by evidence in the manuscript, from which we learn that in the year 1663, on the 15th of July, the manuscript was bought from a certain "Mr. Thompson Cook." A remark to that effect, in a seventeenth-century hand, is to be found on the same page as the title:

Emi hunc librum 15 die Julij 1663 a Dom. [blank] Thompson Coquo cive Londinensi prope Cambrium Regium habitanti cui (pro eo) numeravi Duas libras sterlinas

("I bought this book on the 15th of July 1663 from Mr. [blank] Thompson Cook, a citizen of London, living near Cambrium Regium⁴⁸, to whom I have paid (for it) two pounds sterling")

The inscription, which is not in the same hand as the Latin text in the main part of the manuscript, indicates an English buyer, and the item is considered to have been in London (or England) since 1663. It is not quite clear who this Mr. Thompson Cook was. The *British Book*

⁴⁴ Cf. his *A true relation of the designes managed by the old queen [...] in English*, undated, but relating incidents of the year 1651 [H. Neudecker, "An Ottoman palace revolution as witnessed by a court musician," *Dutch Studies in Near Eastern Languages and Literatures*, 3 (1997), 163-92] and his *Grammatica Turcico-Latina* and letter to Basire in Latin (see H. Neudecker, "From Istanbul to London?"), both dated 1666.

⁴⁵ MS Glasgow, Hunterian Collection 160; Young & Henderson Aitkin, *Catalogue*, p. 479; Neudecker, 'Bobowski and his Turkish grammar', 176.

⁴⁶ MS Ancien Fonds 216. See E. Blochet, *Catalogue des manuscrits Turcs* (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, 1932), 89-90.

⁴⁷ This is actually p.19; therefore, it is rendered here as '1', and so forth.

⁴⁸ This place name could not be identified (Cambridge is Cantabrigia).

Trade Index yields a number of persons of the name Thompson working in London around that year.⁴⁹ But if we consider the addition “Coquo” as the second part of this person’s surname, as we probably should, and look for this combination, it is not found in the index, and neither is there for Thompson Cook.⁵⁰

How the manuscript got to Hunter is not known, although the bookseller Joseph Ames and bibliophiles Joseph Letherland and John Channing had interests in Oriental manuscripts and items from their libraries were later bought by Hunter, as we have seen above.⁵¹

The text of the manuscripts starts on the page which is indicated as ”1” and it is written in two columns. The column at the right-hand side contains the Turkish text, in the hand of Petri, the column to the left contains the Latin version. The hand of the latter is unknown, but in any case, it is different from the one used in the Turkish translation of the Catechism (see above). The ink used for the Turkish text is darker (or applied more thickly), than for the Latin.

From the way in which the Latin text has been placed on the pages it can be inferred that it was added after the Turkish (see image ‘page1’, ‘page2-3’). This is also evident from the fact that the text is in two languages, Latin and Turkish, until chapter 84 (out of a total of 100) only. From there it is in Turkish only (see e.g. image ‘lasttextpage’).

Note, however, that the Latin text has not been added everywhere without interruption. In fact, in many chapters the Latin is partly missing. For instance, in chapter 11, paragraphs 105-110 are presented in two languages, but the remainder of the chapter, 111-124, is in Turkish only. This happens more often, e.g. in chapters 14, 15, 16, 23, 24, but many more examples can be given. The reason for this is unclear, after all, the complete Latin text must have been readily available to the translator, as he had already completed the whole Turkish text. We must therefore assume that a draft translation was made first and that it was copied afterwards, resulting in this (neat) version. The beautiful outward appearance points to the fact that this was supposed to become the neat version (see images “page1”, “pp2-3”, “pp4-5” and “lasttextpage”), although it was never completed.

The *Ianua linguarum*

The *Ianua linguarum* or to use the full title *Ianua linguarum reserata aurea, sive Seminarium linguarum & scientiarum omnium, hoc est compendiosa Latinam (et quamlibet aliam) linguam una cum scientiarum artiumque fundamentis perdiscendi methodus sub titulis centum, periodis mille comprehensa* (*The Door of Languages Unlocked, or the Seedbed of All the Languages and Sciences, etc*) is the famous work by Johannes Amos Comenius. It was first published in Leszno (Poland) in 1632 and with this book Comenius tried to do two things at the same time. First, to teach language (Latin or any other language), and second, to make

⁴⁹ There is a John Thompson, around 1657 (‘stationer’), another John Thompson, around 1660 (‘bookseller’), a Samuel Thompson, also called Sam, before 1668 (‘bookseller’) and a Nathaniel Thompson, before 1688 (‘printer, bookseller’). <http://bbti.bham.ac.uk/> and Henry R. Plomer, *A dictionary of the booksellers and printers who were at work in England, Scotland, and Ireland from 1641 to 1667* (Mansfield Center, CT: Martino Publications, 2006², first edition London: Bibliographic Society, 1907), 52, 178.

⁵⁰ There existed a certain Thomas Cooke (or Cook), who was a bookseller in London around 1642. But if we want to identify this person with the one we are looking for, we will have to suppose that ‘Thompson’ in the MS is an error for ‘Thomas’, and that this person was still in business over twenty years after 1642, the year mentioned by Plomer.

⁵¹ 8-9; personal communication of the staff of the Hunterian Collection.

pupils familiar with the entire world, with every single element in its proper place and in relation to the universe. Language was only a means to the end of the knowledge of the world.⁵² This should be seen in the light of Comenius's ideal of universal education, which comprised three main elements: learning, morality and faith.

The acquisition of this kind of knowledge should commence as soon as the child learns his first words in the mother tongue. Next should follow the 'foreign languages', and finally Latin, as a *lingua franca* for understanding other nations (the study of Latin, therefore, was not primarily prescribed as part of a humanistic education or for the study of antiquity, as in most Latin schools of that age). The Latin Comenius wanted to teach was intended for everyday use. Accordingly, the vocabulary in this textbook, as well as the subject matter, was rather elementary. Still, the work contained over 8000 words and more than 1000 sentences. According to Comenius, all language learning should be grounded in experience and should go hand in hand with a full understanding of the things which the language signified. His emphasis on the experience of the pupil was new and radical.

In the *Ianua*, the pupil is being led through God's Creation. Under 100 different headings a plethora of subjects were presented, including the elements, minerals, plants, animals, human beings, work, spiritual and social life, virtues, the End of Days, and so forth.⁵³

Contents of the text

In both MSS, the *Ianua* is divided, as in most known editions⁵⁴, into one hundred chapters, which are again subdivided into thousand paragraphs. Each chapter has a title, thus e.g. *Caput primum. Introitus*, and in Turkish:

اولكى باب مدخله

(*Evvelki bab, medhal*⁵⁵ "First chapter, Introduction")

The contents of the chapters in both MSS are the same as in the printed editions.

In order to give an impression of the structure of the text, we will list the titles of the first twenty chapters here, in Latin and in Turkish translation:

4 Caput secundum. De ortu & creatione mundi.

بداية وخلق عالم بياننده نر

(*Beda`at ve hilkat-i `alam beyanında dur*, "Explanation of the beginning and the creation of the world")

⁵² A thorough introduction to this work is given by M. Blekastad, *Comenius. Versuch eines Umrisses von Leben, Werk und Schicksal des Jan Amos Komenský* (Oslo-Prague: Universitetsforlaget, 1969), 170-176 and D. Murphy, *Comenius. A critical reassessment of his life and work* (Dublin: Blackrock Co., 1995), esp. 16, 29, 79.

⁵³ Murphy, *Comenius*, 79; *Didaktika X; Veškeré spisy J.A. Komenského IV*, 124 (quoted from Blekastad, *Comenius*, 172-3).

⁵⁴ Contemporary editions include the following: *Ianua linguarum reserata, cum Graeca versione .. et Gallica nova* (Amsterdam: Elzevier 1643), with Greek transl. by Theodore Simon. 2nd corr. ed. with French transl. by Etienne de Courcelles; *Ianua linguarum reserata aurea; sive Seminarium linguarum & scientiarum omnium ... Latine & Belgice* (Arnhem: Jan Jacobsz., 1648), with Dutch transl., "Index Titulorum" and "Index Vocabulorum"; *Ianua aurea linguarum et auctior & emendatior, quam unquam antehac, cum adjuncta Graeca versione* (Amsterdam: Elzevier 1649), re-impression of ed. 1643, but confined to Greek and Latin; with "Index vocabulorum".

⁵⁵ The ending -a in مدخله is probably an error.

5 Cap. tertium. De elementis.

عناصر بیاننده دُر

(*Anasır beyanında dur*, “Explanation of the elements”)

7 Cap. quartum. De firmamento.

فلك الفلوك بیاننده دُر

(*Felek el-füluk-ın beyanında dur*, “Explanation of the sphere of the spheres”)

11 Cap. quintus. De Igne.

اتش بیاننده دُر

(*Ateş beyanında dur*, “Explanation of fire”)

12 Cap. sextum. De meteoris est (in margin)

اثر علویه نڭ بیاننده در

(*Aṭar-i ulviye-nin beyanında dur*, “Explanation of the traces from the higher regions”)

16 Cap. septimum. De aquis.

ابلر بیاننده در

(*Ablar beyanında dur*, ‘Explanation of the waters’)

19 Cap. octavum. De terra.

ارض نڭ بیاننده در

(*Arzın beyanında dur*, “Explanation of the earth”)

20 Cap. novum. De lapidibus.

احجار نڭ بیاننده در

(*Ahcarın beyanında dur*, “Explanation of the stones”)

23 Cap. decimum. De metallis.

... بیاننده در

(*... beyanında dur*, “Explanation of ... (?)”)

26 Undecimum. De arboribus & Fructibus.

(No Turkish title)

31 Cap duodecimu[m]. De Herbis.

نباتات بیاننده در

(*Nebatat beyanında dur*, “Explanation of the plants”)

40 Cap 13. De Fruticibus.

غریفات بیاننده در

(*Ġarifat beyanında dur*, “Explanation of the thickets”)

41 Cap 14. De animalibus & primo de avibus.

حیوانات واولا طیور نڭ بیاننده در

(*Hayvanat ve-evvelâ tuyurın beyanında dur*, “Explanation of the animals and firstly the birds”)

46 Cap 15. De aquatilibus.

مايي حيواناتي بياننده در

(*Mayi hayvanatın beyanında dur*, “Explanation of the aquatic animals”)

48 Cap 16. *De Jumentis*.

دوابي بياننده در

(*Devabın beyanında dur*, “Explanation of the saddle beasts”)

51 Cap 17. *De Feris*.

وحوشي بياننده در⁵⁶

(*Vühuşın beyanında dur*, “Explanation of the wild beasts”)

56 Cap 18. *De Amphibijs & Reptilibus*

هم ابي هم ترابي حيواناتك ودوابه نكي بياننده در

(*Hem abi hem türabi hayvanatın ve-devabbe-nin beyanında dur*, “Explanation of the animals that live both in the water and on the earth, and of saddle-beasts”)

57 Cap 19. *De insectibus*

حشرات بياننده در

(*Haşerat beyanında dur*, “Explanation of the insects”)

60 Cap 20. *de Homine, seu de filio hominis*

بني ادم بياننده در

(*Beni adam beyanında dur*, “Explanation of mankind”)

If we compare this with the text in the print by Elzevier (Amsterdam, 1643) and Jan Jacobsz. (Arnhem, 1648) we find that the texts are very similar, but that there are minor differences in wording in a few cases. Besides, the manuscript does not contain the “Praefatio (ad Lectores),” the “Index Titulorum,” nor the subject index at the end and the ‘Index vocabularium’, which both printed edition do have. We can therefore rule out that either of these prints of the text have been used by Bobowski, without being able to establish which text (presumably printed) he could have used.

There is a concluding remark in Turkish on the last page:

تمت الكتاب بهذا الاوارق / بعون الله الخلاق / في شهر فسطاطنيه حمها الله عن / جميع آفات وبلييه / تمت تمام

Temmet el-kitab bi-haz[a] l-evrak bi-avni 'llahi l-hallak fi sehri Kostantiniye h[a]ma-

ha 'llahu ane cemi 'i afat ve belliye[.] Temmet tamam, “The book is finished with these pages with the help of God the Creator in the city of Constantinople, may God protect her against all calamities and disasters. Finished, complete.”

The translator

The question about who made this translation can only be answered on the basis of MS Paris, as unfortunately the name of the translator is not mentioned in the other manuscript. The description in the catalogue⁵⁷ is rather vague: “Recueil de traités de philologie, écrits par un auteur européen.” Annie Berthier, however, has already pointed out in 1992 that one of these ‘traités’ is the *Ianua Linguarum* and that the translation was made by Bobowski. The other

⁵⁶ In the MS the *kef* is not connected.

⁵⁷ Blochet, *Catalogue des manuscrits Turcs*, 89-90.

tracts are two letters in Latin by Constantijn L'Empereur⁵⁸ from 1643, and a collection of words in Arabic and Persian, accompanied by examples of their use.⁵⁹ Earlier on, in 1976, Şükrü Elçin had already identified Bobowski as the translator. However, what he referred to as Bobowski's *Türkçe Sözlük (Turkish Dictionary)* in the same Paris manuscript, the reference to which was repeated by Cem Behar, is in fact his Turkish translation of Comenius's glossary to the *Ianua*.⁶⁰

Historical background: why a *Ianua Linguarum* in Turkish?

At first the *Ianua* appeared in Latin only, shortly after followed by a Czech version in 1633, and versions in several European languages.⁶¹ An Arabic translation appeared in or shortly after 1642. It was made by Peter van Gool, the brother of the Leiden Professor of Oriental Languages, Jacobus Golius.⁶² Peter (who had converted to Catholicism) was a Carmelite friar living in Aleppo. Comenius met Jacobus Golius in Leiden in 1642, during a visit to the university and its professors, and he recorded this visit in his diary.⁶³ On that occasion Jacobus mentioned a letter that Peter had sent him. In this letter, Peter thanked his brother for the copy of the *Ianua Linguarum*, which he had sent and tells him “that he had set about to translate it into Arabic. When he had finished half of the translation, he had shown it to Moslem friends [in Aleppo] who approved of the scheme so much that they apportioned among themselves the task of translating the work into Turkish, Persian, and Mongolian.”⁶⁴ Unfortunately Peter does not mention any names of translators, so we do not know if the Turkish translation he had in mind is the same as our translation by Bobovius or a different one. To the best of our knowledge, Bobovius never was in Aleppo.

It is not known what came of this Aleppo initiative, which occurred, anyhow, around 1642, whereas our text is only from 1658. It is possible that the initiative came to nothing, but that Jacobus felt responsible for the project and asked the translator he already knew from the other project mentioned above, the Turkish Bible translation⁶⁵, to embark on this one too.

Comenius's report of his visit to Jacobus continues, saying that these same friends were also interested in other works by him (Comenius). Jacobus comments: “You see, Comenius, how happily your *Ianua* opens a gate to the Gentiles,” which makes Young conclude that

⁵⁸ Constantijn L'Empereur, prominent Dutch Hebraist, distinguished Orientalist and doctor of theology, lived 1591–1648. Cf. Peter T. van Rooden, *Theology, biblical scholarship, and rabbinical studies in the seventeenth century: Constantijn L'Empereur (1591–1648), professor of Hebrew and theology at Leiden* (Vol. 6 of *Studies in the history of Leiden University* (Leiden and New York: Brill, 1989).

⁵⁹ Annie Berthier, “À l'origine de l'étude de la langue Turque en France. Liste des grammaires et dictionnaires manuscrits du fonds Turc de la Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris,” in *Mélanges offerts à Louis Bazin par ses disciples, collègues et amis*, edited by Jean-Louis Bacqué-Grammont et Rémy Dor et alii (*Varia Turcica* 19, 1992), 77-82, at 81.

⁶⁰ Şükrü Elçin, *Ali Ufkî hayatı, eserleri ve Mecmuâ-i saâ ü söz: tıpkıbasım* (İstanbul: Kültür Bakanlığı, 1976), xii and xiv; Cem Behar, “Ali Ufkî'nin bilinmeyen bir musiki elyazması *mezmurlar*,” *Tarih ve toplum*, 8 (1987), 300-3, at 301.

⁶¹ Murphy, *Comenius*, 17.

⁶² Jacob van Gool, 1596-1667.

⁶³ On the basis of his *Diarium*, Comenius later on published *Continuatio admonitionis fraternae de temperando charitate zelo ad S. Maresium* (Amsterdam, 1669). This work has been reprinted by Kvačala (1913-1914) and partially translated by R. F. Young, *Comenius in England* (London: Oxford University Press, H. Milford, 1932).

⁶⁴ Young, *Comenius in England*, 48-9.

⁶⁵ Neudecker, *The Turkish Bible*.

Comenius hoped to spread Christianity and Western civilization among the Muslims of the Near East (as well as the Indians of North America).⁶⁶ This settles also the question of the aim of the translation into Oriental languages. His aim with this translation was the same as his aim with his well-known translation of the Bible: the conversion of Muslims to Christianity.

Context of the translations

We have seen that the person who commissioned the Anglican Catechism, Isaac Basire, did so with the view of disseminating the Anglo-Catholic faith throughout the East. In the same way, Comenius, with his *Ianua Linguarum*, hoped to spread Christianity and Western civilization among the Muslims of the Near East (as well as the Indians of North America). The aims of both texts are therefore the same. Moreover, they can be related to other texts that were written in the same period and with the same aim. In the following section, we will try to paint a broader picture of conversion activities among Muslims in the seventeenth century.

Haki's and Bobovius' Turkish Bible

To start with probably the best-known project of this type, we mention the first Turkish Bible translation. It was initiated in the Netherlands by Johannes Amos Comenius in 1658, in the same year that Bobovius translated his (Comenius') *Ianua*. The translation was done, first by Yahya bin Ishak, alias Haki (finished in or after 1659) and was then reworked by Bobovius (finished 1664). Although the project came to nothing in the sense that neither translation was printed, it was Bobovius' translation upon which eventually the first printed Ottoman Turkish New Testament (1819) and complete Bible (1827) would be based. However, in England the project was more successful. There Comenius had two dedicated followers, Samuel Hartlib (d. 1662) and John Durie (d. 1680). They believed, as did Comenius, that the Messianic age would begin after Christianity spread to the ends of the world, including the Islamic world. William Seaman (1606/7-1680), the Orientalist who was also committed to the conversion of the Muslims and the propagation of Protestantism in the Levant and who was close to the circle of Samuel Hartlib, John Durie and Robert Boyle (d. 1691), was asked by Boyle to translate the New Testament. Robert Boyle, the famous scientist, also took a great interest in theology and missionary activities, especially the conversion of non-Christians to Christianity. Seaman had already translated the Epistles of John into Turkish in 1659 (see below). In 1666, Seaman's translation was published at Boyle's expense in Oxford. It was, however, not well received by Jacobus Golius, professor of Arabic at Leiden, who based himself on the judgment of his Armenian copyist Shahin ibn Kandi, originally of Aleppo. Incidentally, in the same year, Golius had already disapproved of Bobovius' translation, proposing that this same Shahin ibn Kandi should revise the text.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Murphy, *Comenius*, 29.

⁶⁷ M.E.H.N. Mout, "Calvinoturcisme in de zeventiende eeuw. Comenius, Leidse orientalisten en de Turkse bijbel," *Tijdschrift voor geschiedenis* 91 (1978), 576-607; B. Flemming, "Zwei türkische Bibelhandschriften in Leiden als mittelosmanische Sprachdenkmäler", *WZKM* 76 (1986), 111-8; Neudecker, *The Turkish Bible*; Alastair Hamilton, 'Seaman, William (1606/7-1680)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, May 2009 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/24986>, accessed 8 Aug 2016]; Schmidt, *Catalogue*, i, 84-92, 416-22, 435-7; ii, 267-8; iv, 12-27; cf. also note 3.

Pococke's Arabic translation of Hugo de Groot's (Grotius') *De veritate religionis Christianae*

Samuel Hartlib also took a great interest in all materials that could be used for the conversion of Muslims, among which was the Arabic translation of Hugo de Groot's (Grotius') *De veritate religionis Christianae*. In this text, Hugo de Groot expressed the same hopes for the conversion of the Muslims as Comenius and his followers had. It was translated by Edward Pocock(e) (1604 - 1691), the English Orientalist, biblical scholar and chaplain at Aleppo from 1630 onwards. He translated this work (as well as the Catechism in Arabic, see below) for Robert Huntingdon, who also was a Chaplain of the Levant Company in Aleppo, from 1670 onwards. Pococke must have been planning and working on this translation as early as 1641, because in that year he paid a visit to Grotius in Paris, on his way back from the East, in order to discuss the translation and ask his permission to make changes in the translation of parts of the book that were dealing with Islam, notably certain tales about Muhammad that were seen as later fabrications by the Muslims. Grotius agreed. A year later, Pococke wrote to Gerardus Joannes Vossius that he hoped to be able to publish the text, but that would almost take another twenty years. When it was completed, Pococke, on Huntingdon's request, sent him thirty copies of *De veritate*. Again, Robert Boyle had taken upon himself to finance the translation. To Hartlib's delight, the treatise had been published and was being distributed in 1660. He may, however, not have realized (and neither did Boyle, who financed it) among whom exactly it was being dispersed. According to Holt and Hamilton, Pococke had made the translation in order to convert the Muslims, but on receiving the text, Huntingdon "seems to have distributed it amongst his Christian acquaintances." Toomer, however, holds that Pococke's first concern was to strengthen Christians living under Turkish rule in their faith, or, once converted to Islam, converting them back from Islam to Christianity.⁶⁸ Only secondly was Pococke concerned about converting Muslims, and this concern had waned by the time his translation was published. The aims of the participants in this project therefore may have been different, as Boyle (the financier!) and Hartlib on the one hand, were concerned with converting Muslims to Christianity, while Pococke and Huntingdon on the other hand, might just have been trying to support Christians. In any case, whoever the intended audience was, Boyle's enterprise, according to Toomer, seems to have had little effect, despite his and Huntingdon's efforts in distributing the work.⁶⁹

Seaman's Catechism in Turkish

In the same year, William Seaman translated John Ball's *Short Catechisme* into Turkish (mentioned above, p. 8), also at the instigation of Boyle. It was aimed, according to Matar, at Muslims, and this seems to be supported by Boyle's active involvement. It was published in

⁶⁸ G.J. Toomer, "Edward Pococke's Arabic Translation of Grotius' *De Veritate*", *Grotiana* 33 (2012), 88-105, at 88-94.

⁶⁹ Matar, *Islam in Britain*, 143; P.M. Holt, *Studies in the history of the Near East* (London: Frank Cass, 1973), 20; A. Hamilton, *William Bedwell, the Arabist. 1563-1632* (Leiden: Brill and Leiden University Press, 1985), 95; G.J. Toomer, "Edward Pococke's Arabic Translation of Grotius' *De Veritate*", *Grotiana* 33 (2012), 88-105, at 88-94; G.J. Toomer, 'Pococke, Edward (1604-1691)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/22430>, accessed 11 Aug 2016]; G.J. Toomer, *Eastern wisdom and learning. The study of Arabic in seventeenth-century England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press and New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 146, 216-7.

1660/1661, the first Turkish work published in Oxford. Copies were distributed by Robert Huntington, chaplain to the Levant Company in Aleppo.⁷⁰

Pococke's Catechism in Arabic

Pococke also translated the Anglican Catechism into Arabic in 1670/1671. He translated, and printed, this work (as well as Hugo de Groot's *De veritate*) for Robert Huntington (d. 1701), chaplain of the Levant Company in Aleppo from 1670 onwards. It is known that, on Huntington's request, Pococke sent thirty-six copies of the Catechism (as well as twelve copies of Seaman's Catechism, see above) to Aleppo. However, the aim of this translation seems to have been slightly different from the ones discussed above, for it was intended, in Pococke's own words "for the use of the young Christians in the East."⁷¹

Anglican liturgy in Arabic

Pococke translated the *Partes praecipuae liturgiae ecclesiae Anglicanae*, together with the Thirty-Nine Articles, into Arabic in 1674 (or 1675). The work was published at the expense of the university of Oxford. Two years earlier Huntington had asked Pococke to translate the chief prayers in the Anglican liturgy, offering him 20 pounds for the expenses. He intended the translation for the Greek Christians, to help them in their struggle against the influence of Roman Catholic missionaries. When the translation was finished, he distributed it among Christians accordingly.⁷²

Conclusion

To sum up, of the works and projects listed above, Pococke's Catechism and his Anglican liturgy were both intended for the use of the Christians in the East. On the other hand, the Turkish Bible, which was initiated by millenarian circles around Johannes Amos Comenius, Samuel Hartlib, John Durie and Robert Boyle, was intended for the conversion of the Muslims and the propagation of Protestantism in the Levant, whatever views the translators may have had. William Seaman was clearly committed to the conversion project and as to Bobovius, I have argued in this article that the Christian faith was, at least, close his own heart.

The Turkish translation of Hugo de Groot's *De veritate* originated from the same circles, namely Boyle and Hartlib, but Huntington was the one who eventually distributed the translation and his concern was to support Christians. So, the original aims of the initiators were not achieved. For Pococke, the translator, conversion of the Muslims may not have been the first objective, though he certainly was not against it.

⁷⁰ Matar, *Islam in Britain*, 142-3; Holt, *Studies in the Near East*, 20; Alastair Hamilton, "William Seaman"; Toomer, *Eastern wisdom*, 282.

⁷¹ A. Hamilton, *William Bedwell, the Arabist*, 95; "Edward Pococke", *New World Encyclopedia*, <http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/p/index.php?title=Edward_Pococke&oldid=913893> (accessed May 15, 2015); Holt, *Studies*, 21; Toomer, *Eastern wisdom*, 218.

⁷² Holt, *Studies*, 21; Hamilton, *William Bedwell, the Arabist*, 95; Toomer, *Eastern wisdom*, 218.

Finally, William Seaman's translation of John Ball's *Short Catechisme*, which was supported by Boyle, is without doubt part of the millenarian conversion project. The latter three texts, therefore, were all intended for the conversion of Muslims to Christianity and in this respect, they can be related to the central texts of this contribution, the Turkish version of the Anglican Catechism and of Comenius' *Ianua Linguarum*.

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RSV: *Revised Standard Version*.

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