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Translating Turkish Literature into Turkish? The Ambiguous Positioning of German-Turkish Literature in Turkey

Abstract

The present contribution examines the promotion of German-Turkish literature in Turkey by analyzing three selected novels. It is based on exploring systemic/field-oriented ambiguity in situating German-Turkish literature both in the source (German-speaking) literary field and in the target (Turkish) book market. The three texts chosen are Emine Sevgi Özdamar's Life is a caravanserai, Feridun Zaimoglu's Leyla, and Selim Özdoğan's The Blacksmith's Daughter. By discussing covers, blurbs, and the homepages of a few publishing houses, a paratextual analysis is carried out to explore the presentation of these novels to readers in Turkey.[1]

Keywords: German-Turkish literature, promotion of literary translations, paratextual contextualization, Emine Sevgi Özdamar, Feridun Zaimoglu, Selim Özdoğan

1. Introduction

Emine Sevgi Özdamar's highly acclaimed long-seller Life is a caravanserai (hereafter abbreviated as Caravanserai) has been published in the "Turkish-language literature"[2] series ("Türkçe Edebiyat") by its current publisher in Turkey, İletişim Yayınları. The novel was written in German and translated into Turkish, and the name of the translator Ayça Sabuncuoğlu is included on the cover. It is the fact of the novel's having been translated that makes the presentation of the novel as a Turkish-language literary text worth examining.

This fact poses the question of how translations of literary works produced by writers of Turkish origin in Germany are promoted and received in Turkey. In order to find an answer to this question, I will analyze the Turkish editions of Caravanserai alongside two other novels, namely, Feridun Zaimoglu's Leyla (2006) and Selim Özdoğan's Die Tochter des Schmieds (2005). These three works have been selected since, on the one hand, they are available in Turkish translation and because, on the other hand, all three novels have very similar settings, which depict Anatolian women who migrate to Germany at the end of each novel. Therefore, for many Turkish readers, these novels may not be perceived as 'foreign' novels in translation but as works dealing with familiar subjects that readers can identify with.

The paper addresses the ambiguous position of German-Turkish authors both in the source and in the target cultures. I will first provide an overview of the position of German-Turkish literature in the source literary field. Then, I will scrutinize how the Turkish translations of the three novels are presented to their readers by analyzing the covers. The aim is to see whether they are perceived as national or foreign literature. Moreover, the present article then questions the plausibility of the positioning of authors and literary works.

As interlingual translation is inevitably based on the interchange of texts in at least two different languages, every translation practice and research focus involves both source and target concepts. In spite of the multitude of global, local, postcolonial, anthropological, etc. debates and the political, economic, and commercial mobility of recent years many people still tend, consciously or unconsciously, to imagine source and target cultures as homogeneous wholes. For instance, it is sometimes assumed that a text written in language A also belongs to the traditional cultural context of language A. However, although the texts to be analyzed here are in close contact with the source cultural background of the German language, in which they are placed through their being written (to illustrate this point, one may remember that German-Turkish literature includes literary productions of post-war Germany, see Adelson), they also challenge the validity and appropriateness of such conceptual pairs as "source" and "target."

In the novel translations discussed in the present paper, the themes, characters, and the portrayal of these characters, including their everyday lives, are delivered through the target culture (Turkish) rather than the cultural background of the source language (German) of the original

novels. At this point, the notion of “target culture” can be defined more precisely by describing it as a target culture in practice or the presumed target culture. What is concretely meant is the target culture in which the text exists on the linguistic plane through translation.

Already because of their mixed cultural background, the novels analyzed here tend to unsettle the widely accepted duality of “source” and “target.” In contrast to such traditional binary views, authors, languages, and national contexts are known to be transient if looked at against the backdrop of the difficult geography of the World Republic of Letters as it has been systematized by Pascale Casanova. As a matter of fact, it even seems to be unclear in which neighborhood of the World Republic of Letters the aforementioned novels and their writers should be assumed to reside. While the source and target languages give us some kind of idea of the cities in which these texts reside, they do not provide postal addresses. Actually, these texts have more than one residential address.

If we are going to search for the ‘residential address’ we are looking for by means of data from open sources, we will look for paratexts directly linked to the person or the text we are thinking about. Following Gérard Genette, I consider the paratextual information on the book covers to be open sources for the author and the explicit address of the novel. A literary text has been said to be accompanied “by a certain number of verbal or other productions, such as an author’s name, a title, a preface, illustrations.” These kinds of “productions” are paratexts, which surround a literary text “to ensure the text’s presence in the world, its ‘reception’ and consumption in the form (nowadays, at least) of a book” (Genette 1). What is crucial to the present paper is the reference to reception and consumption that these quotes comprise. Although the notion of paratext offers us ways to receive and consume a literary text, it leads us neither to definitive and univocal reading practices nor to a clear “world’s discourse about a text,” because paratext as a zone of “transaction” is “a privileged place … of an influence on the public, an influence that … is at the service of a better reception for the text and a more pertinent reading of it.” (2) Regardless of whether paratexts are designed with or without guiding potential readers toward a clearly defined mode of reception, they carry “messages” (3): “[T]he paratext in all its forms is a discourse that is fundamentally heteronomous, auxiliary, and dedicated to the service of something other than itself that constitutes its raison d’être” (12). Paratexts are important to the present study not necessarily

as elements that affect reception by offering information and various interpretations but rather as elements that contextualize the novels within the target cultural frame even before the readers' response.

2. Changing Classifications of German-Turkish Literature

In her acclaimed study on the German-Turkish literature, the US-American Germanist Leslie A. Adelson observers "stylistic turns [that] signal the emergence of something new in German literary history" and draws attention to "emergent literatures associated with minority populations in liberal nation-states" in "a demographically altered landscape" (14). German-Turkish literature, which is the leading "emergent literature" in the German-speaking literary scene, is a literary phenomenon whose position in contemporary Germanophone literatures has been debated and discussed under different headings. These headings vary according to profession, theme, and social events, and, if we take a closer look, also according to the political stance of researchers. The artistic production of writers of Turkish origin, together with other migrant writers who produced works in Germany in the 1960s and 1970s, were categorized, among other things, using such headings as "literature of foreigners," "guest worker literature," or "migrant literature." It was categorized as "literature of concern" or "migration literature/literature of migration" during the 1980s and 1990s. As of today, the same kind of literary production by German-speaking writers of Turkish origin still provides data for various fields of study, such as "multicultural literature," "multilingual literature," "minority literature," and "diaspora literature." For the most part, it seems to have been considered as "German-Turkish literature" under the category of "intercultural literature" approximately over the past two decades (for a compact summary of such categorization, see Schmitz). The dual-named literature, such as German-Turkish literature, is incidentally a nomenclature that challenges the idea of national literature that still casts a shadow over research, prizes, and even the authors' own fields of action.

As Hofmann and Patrut befittingly point out, "German-Turkish literature is not simply German and not simply Turkish." Instead, they describe it as German literature that has been created as a result of foreign cultural perspectives and has the potential to "overcome constructions of stereotypical cultural identity" (my trans.; 71). The German-Turkish literature, as an attempt to overcome

stereotypical images of the German and the Turkish, rejects clichéd images and the idea of homogeneous cultures with clearly defined characteristics (Hofmann 196). According to Harald Tanzer, German literature by Turkish authors is multilayered and not homogeneous (301). Guest worker literature is not a homogeneous phenomenon either but only a part of a wide-ranging intercultural and transcultural landscape. A literature "with a migration background" is also a challenge for departments of national philologies with a traditional essentialist understanding, such as German studies, because such literatures are not national phenomena but refer to global situations (Parry 112). That is to say, such branches of literature as German-Turkish literature not only push the boundaries of the "World literary space, as a history and a geography-a space constituted by writers, who make and actually embody literary history" (Casanova 4), but even mock such boundaries. Following David Damrosch, the leading scholar of World literature, today we define the term WL as "all literary works that circulate beyond their culture of origin, either in translation or in their original language" (4). In the most general frame, "any work that has ever reached beyond its home base" may be classified as part of WL" (4). The "active presen[ce] [of a work] within a literary system beyond that of its original culture" (4) is the most basic requirement to belong to WL.

In our case, we have literary texts that circulate internationally through translation, while the origin of the novels cannot be easily identified. The German-language literature by Turkish writers began to appear gradually after the first workers from Turkey migrated to Germany in 1961. The impetus behind labor migration lies in the post-war economic reconstruction of West Germany. If the language in which these texts were written would be assumed to define their origin, these novels would belong to the German literary tradition. If, in contrast, the literary traditions in which the authors were nourished were assumed to constitute their poetic origins, then Turkish literary traditions and the worldviews of German Turks would be meant. As Azade Seyhan befittingly emphasizes, "[t]he tales of transnational Scheherazades like Özdamar recover the centrality of fiction and self-translation to our understanding of how cultures get interpreted as they move from geography to geography and generation to generation" (92). Therefore, it would be inappropriate to regard cases such as Özdamar's as unique.

The singularity of individual literary works … becomes manifest only against the background of the overall structure in which they take their place. Each work that is declared to be literary is a minute part of the immense 'combination' constituted by the literary world as a whole." (Casanova 3)

Since German-Turkish literature has a culturally very distinct Turkish edge, I will argue that it is promoted in Turkey because of its Turkish elements rather than being part of a 'literary world as a whole.'

3. Analyzing German-Turkish Literature in Turkish Translation from a Translational Perspective

Even if one takes a quick look from afar at the case of German-Turkish literature in Turkish translation under the premises of the concepts and approaches of translation studies, it becomes apparent how confusing the origin – or culture of origin – of this kind of literature can be. Because the identity of the literature of origin it belongs to, in terms of thematic, stylistic, and cultural content, is questionable and open to debate. Therefore, despite the existence of a translated text, similar translations are difficult to deal with in terms of the most basic distinction of translation studies: source and target.[3]

Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS), a seminal paradigm in modern translation studies and a comprehensive conceptual framework for the broader domain of translation research, views "[t]ranslations [as] facts of target cultures" (Toury 23). Itamar Even-Zohar, a prominent scholar of DTS, introduces the concept of literature as a polysystem and directs attention to the roles of literary translations within the target literary system. In contexts where a literary tradition is yet to be "crystallized," particularly if it is situated at the periphery as a relatively "weak" entity, and has experienced "turning points, crises, or literary vacuums," translated literature gains a central position (Even-Zohar 47).

Most potential readers in Turkey obviously cannot read the novels under scrutiny, as well as the wider collection of German-Turkish literature, unless someone translates them in advance. Although they are classified as translations, they have been positioned as if they naturally integrate

into the established Turkish literary corpus. Building on Even-Zohar's framework, the integration of these novels into the domain of Turkish-language literature implies that the target literary landscape can be conceived as a cohesive system devoid of any "vacuum" requiring supplementation from foreign literary imports. Instead, translation functions as a literary solvent. The primary rationale behind integrating these works into the Turkish literary context lies in the novelty they introduce to their source literary sphere, surpassing the impact of the literature into which they are transposed. These works do not disrupt the continuum of Turkish literary tradition; instead, they catalyze a substantial transformation within the realm of German literary discourse. Therefore, the paratextual packaging of these works, which presumably influences their reception in Turkey, is not rooted in the ambiguous nature of the original (German-speaking) literature itself. The considerable challenge presented by these kinds of literary works stems from their inherently intercultural and transnational nature. Seyhan illuminates this phenomenon, characterizing "transnational literature as a genre of writing that operates outside the national canon, addresses issues facing deterritorialized cultures, and speaks for those in … 'paranational' communities and alliances" (Writing Outside the Nation 10). Yet, when a translation is being promoted in the target market as an integral component of the national literature, it necessitates a practical assessment that transcends considerations of the "national canon," "deterritorialized culture," or "paranational communities"; the intricacies of the publishing market should also be factored into the analysis. It is precisely within this context that Damrosch directs our focus:

We will gain a better sense of the real shape of national literatures if we think of them less in terms of national languages than of national markets. In these markets, foreign and local products alike share space in bookstores, readers' libraries, and writers' awareness. Seen in this way, national literatures should not be construed simply on the basis of a fatherland's Muttersprache, or on authors' passports, but on their works' effective presence within a nation's literary culture, whatever their land and language of origin. ("Translation and National Literature" 351, emphasis in original)

Upon being translated into Turkish, the reception dynamics of German-Turkish literature diverge markedly from those that might transpire within any international literary arena. Damrosch underscores that a work achieves recognition as WL by first "being read as literature" in its own right and then "by circulating out into a broader world beyond its linguistic and cultural point of

origin" (What is World Literature 6, emphasis added). In the case of Caravanserai, the novel's linguistic and cultural origins operate somewhat independently. The narrative's intricate intertwinement with the Turkish oral tradition and its German-language composition, stemming from a direct Turkish translation, align with Damrosch's notion of "effective presence within a nation's literary culture," as outlined in the aforementioned excerpt. These elements, however, do not precisely conform to the concepts of "fatherland's Muttersprache" or the notion of an "author's passport," as observed and emphasized by Damrosch. In a straightforward interpretation, following Damrosch's perspective, Caravanserai may actually be deemed a quintessentially Turkish novel. Furthermore, Damrosch extends this assessment to foster a broader interpretive spectrum and contends that "the national and the transnational are by no means opposed spheres. Instead, the 'national language' itself is the medium through which original and translated works circulate together to form our ineluctably international national literatures" ("Translation and National Literature" 359). In this light, one could posit that the prevalence of Turkish oral traditions in the narrative corresponds with the notion of "the national." This fusion not only enriches German literature with Anatolian folkloric motifs but also positions Caravanserai as an "international national literature."

Can Leyla and The Blacksmith's Daughter also be classified as international national works? Conversely, Zaimoglu emerges as an author whose characters cast their gaze from Germany not only toward Turkey but also toward the global panorama, reflecting a perspective distinct from an exclusively internal Turkish viewpoint. In his novel Liebesbrand, for instance, the protagonist David scrutinizes Turkey from Germany, embodying a German-Turkish lens even while situated in Turkey. Contrarily, Leyla unfolds within Turkish terrain. Despite its Anatolian narrative backdrop, the story neither appears as foreign to the German reader as Caravanserai nor as familiar to the Turkish reader as Caravanserai, spanning both narrative style and the fluency of its German expression.

Distinct from Özdamar's oeuvre, Özdoğan's literary works do not constitute a constellation of narrative fragments perpetually engaged in dialogue with Turkey. He occasionally introduces German-Turkish characters, such as Krishna Mustafa in Wieso Heimat, ich wohne zur Miete.

Particularly conspicuous in The Blacksmith's Daughter, Özdoğan presents a narrative perspective that gazes at Anatolia from a vantage point within Anatolia itself.

Below, the paratexts of the translations under scrutiny are used to further explain the literati's positioning in the target-cultural context.

4. Paratextual Analysis

4.1. Life Is a Caravanserai in Turkish Translation

Caravanserai was published in Turkish by three different publishers.

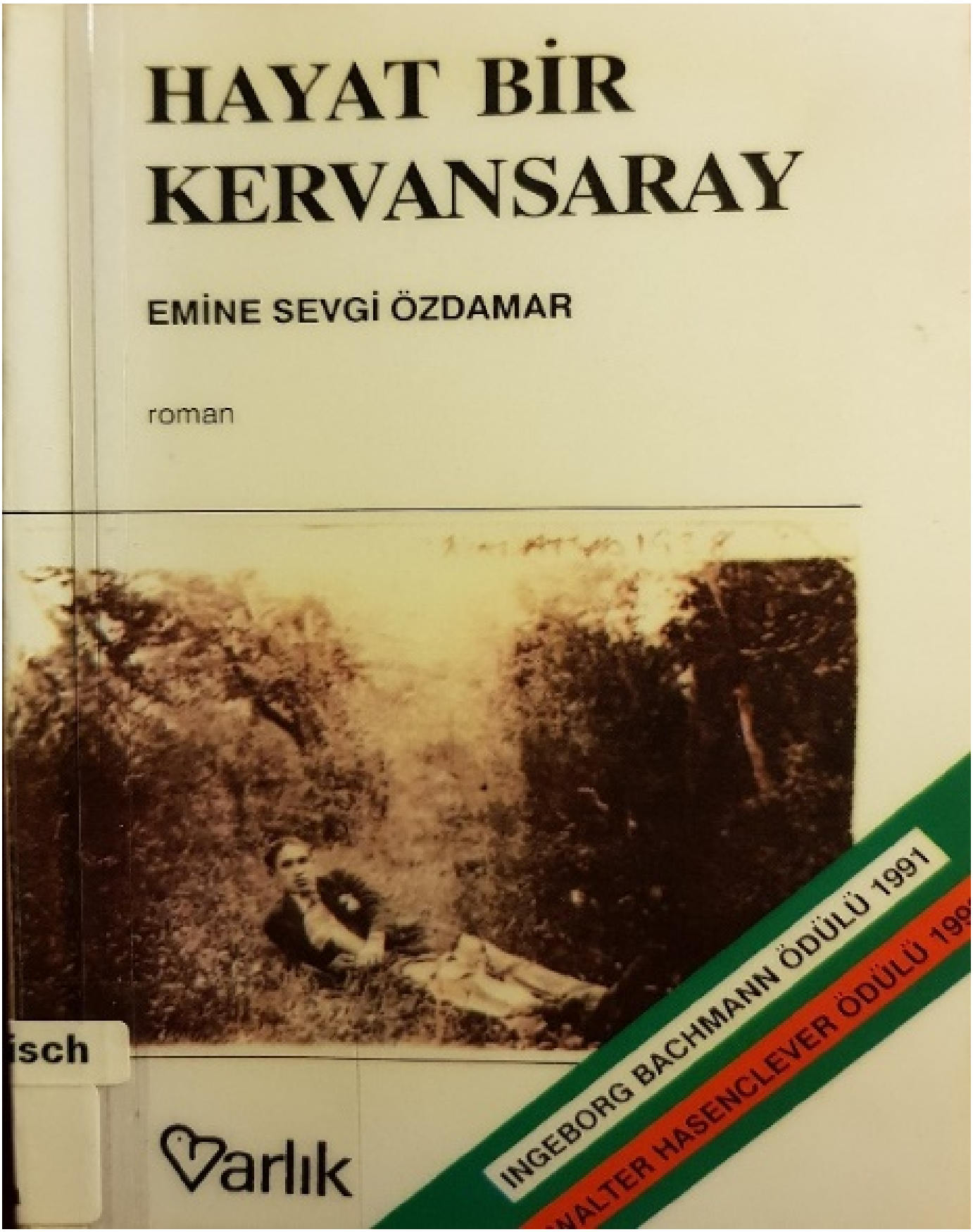


Figure 1. 2015 Iletişim

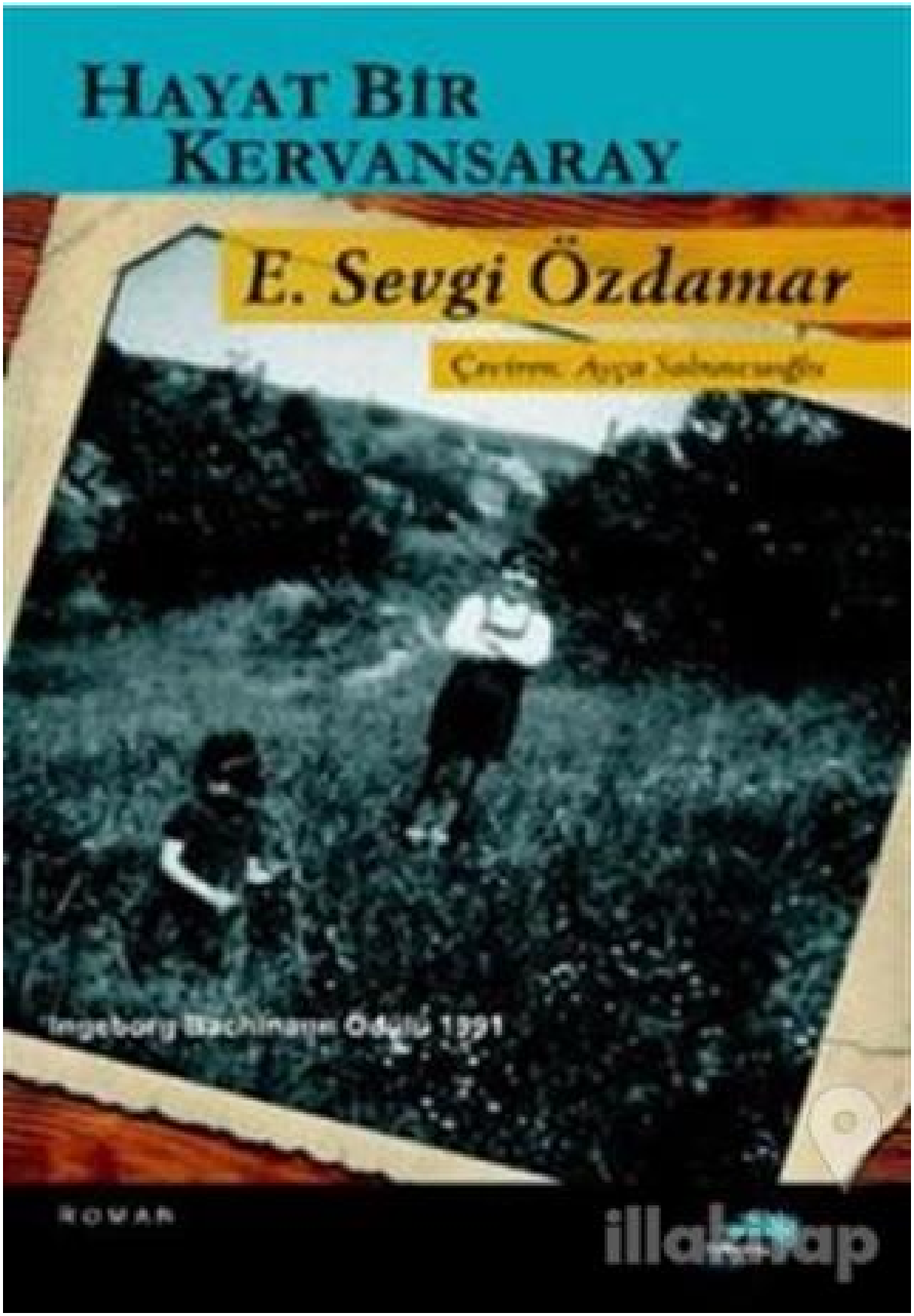


Figure 2. 2008 Turkuvaz



Figure 3. 1993 Varlik

[4] All three editions contain the same translated text, i.e., they are not retranslations but reprints. The first (Fig. 1) of these was published by Varlık publishing house in 1993, the year after the book was published in Germany. If we examine the cover visually, we see that it contains almost no information that would indicate that this is a translation. The title and author's name are in Turkish. The genre ("Roman") and publishing house ("Varlık") can be read on the cover, but the translator's name is not mentioned. At the time, there was obviously no particular sensitivity in this regard, as opposed to the current #NameTheTranslator movement. What implies the foreign roots of the work is that the cover mentions two awards the novel has received: the Ingeborg Bachmann Prize (1991), given by the municipality of Klagenfurt, and the Walter-Hasenclever-Literaturpreis (1993), awarded by the municipality of Aachen. Therefore, an attentive person might infer that the book has either been translated into or translated from German.

In the second Turkish edition (Fig. 2) of the novel, which was published by Turkuvaz publishing house in 2008, both the Ingeborg Bachmann Prize and the name of the translator were mentioned. The same translation, published by İletişim publishing house in 2015 (Fig. 3), is commercially the most accessible edition. This means that this is the edition that readers can currently find most easily on the market in Turkey. The cover does not mention the awards the book has received, but the name of the translator is given and underlined. On the covers of the last-mentioned two publications (see Figures 2 and 3), the name of the translator is indicated in the form "translated by: Ayça Sabuncuoğlu." Therefore, despite the Turkish name of the author, these two covers tell us that the novel was not originally written in Turkish. In these two latter publications in Figures 2 and 3, the author's name "Emine" is abbreviated or enclosed in quotation marks. In fact, "Emine" is not Özdamar's citizen name. It is a pseudonym given jokingly to her by the twentieth-century Turkish poet Ece Ayhan, with whom she was close friends. For this reason, even though the name "Emine" has become established in her career over the years, the author refrains from using this name. The fact that the true given name is not used on the covers makes us think that the author's opinion was taken on the cover design.

On all three covers, the title of the novel is written in larger font size than the author's name, which is presumably a design choice of the publishing houses. The word "Kervansaray" is not foreign or exotic to Turkish readers. It is necessary here, in this sense, to mention the cultural connotations of

the word “Kervansaray” in the title of the novel. Even in the German original, the title directly describes a place of accommodation and trade that readers from the Middle East, Iran, North Africa, and even the Ottoman-Balkan region can visualize. For Turkish readers, the word directly evokes Aşık Veysel. Aşık Veysel Şatıroğlu (1894-1973) is one of the most recognizable folk poets of the twentieth century, and the folk songs he wrote pursuant to the Anatolian oral tradition have embedded in the minds of the people many expressions that are still used in everyday language. One of Aşık Veysel’s most-known song-poems, “Uzun İnce Bir Yoldayım” [I am on a long, narrow path];[5] contains the following stanza, which would come to the mind of an ordinary Turkish reader as soon as s/he sees the title “Hayat Bir Kervansaray”: “Since I came into this world / I began to walk at the same time / In an inn with two doors / I am wandering on day and night.”[6] Indeed, the full title of the novel “Life is a caravanserai has two doors I came in one I went out the other” seems to have an intertextual relationship with “Uzun İnce Bir Yoldayım.” On all three covers, the title of the original is not translated in full but shows only the first part. Notwithstanding, the sentence “life is a caravanserai” associates the metaphor “life is an inn with two doors.” Considering the words “kervansaray” (caravanserai) in the title of Özdamar’s novel and “han” (inn) in Aşık Veysel’s poem together clarifies this intertextual relationship. Although the analogy that the world is a place of temporary accommodation and life is a road going through this place may be a universal metaphor, the words “kervansaray” and “han” in Turkish have a traditional, semantic, and phonetic connection rather than a universal one. In the dictionary of architectural terms (Ansiklopedik mimarlık sözlüğü), the articles “kervansaray” and “han” are given as references to each other. While “han” (201) is defined as a building with rooms, courtyards, and warehouses where travelers are accommodated on the road, “kervansaray” (261) is defined as a large han, established for the accommodation of caravans/trains/parades on trade routes. Seljuk caravanserais, with their rooms, halls, baths, and masjids, were used as bazaars in times of peace.

If one analyzes the covers by means of the details given above, it can be argued that the presence of the translator’s name on the cover is alienating. However, this alienating effect does not negate the necessity of discussing the fact that the novel’s translation was published in the “Turkish Literature series.” Genette also mentions series among the paratextual elements. In the nineteenth century, he says, book format, which is “based on technical and commercial features,” was

"standardized or stereotyped" and chosen according to the publisher or series (19). In fact, Genette implies that the format is the precursor of the series. Today, the pocket size "is basically no longer a format but a vast set or nebula of series" (21). For Genette, the series is now the "publisher's emblem," demonstrating "the diversification of their activities" and has a "symbolic power" (22). The function of the series is as follows:

> *The series emblem, even in this mute form, … amplifies the publisher's emblem, immediately indicating to the potential reader the type of work, if not the genre, he is dealing with: French or a foreign literature, avant-garde or tradition, fiction or essay, history or philosophy, and so forth. (22)*

Following Genette, one may say that the presentation of Caravanserai as Turkish-language literature through a series is a publishing trick that directs potential readers. However, it cannot be said that readers in Turkey prefer Turkish literature over foreign literature so distinctly that it would provide a huge profit to publishing houses. An element that makes this promotional choice particularly striking is the distinct left-wing liberal inclination of İletişim publishing house, as opposed to a nationalist orientation. As a consequence, one might assume that the decision of this particular publishing style was presumably not intended to orientate readers toward nationalist ideas, although it might actually have had such an effect due to the current political atmosphere in Turkey, which is marked by a rise of neo-nationalist movements.

İletişim publishing house has a large number of series, which do not have to be named in extenso for the purposes of the present paper. In order to provide some idea of the publisher's publishing policy, I will briefly outline the World Literature series and the Turkish-Language Literature series. The World Literature series ("Dünya Edebiyatı") includes translations of works by Ivo Andrić, John Steinbeck, Halldór Laxness, Abdulrazak Gurnah, Bernhard Schlink, Dino Buzzati, Virginia Woolf, Jack London, Rainer Maria Rilke and Vladimir Nabokov, among other writers from all over the world. The Turkish-Language Literature series ("Türkçe Edebiyat"), in which the novel Caravanserai was published, includes contemporary works of many well-known and also hype young Turkish authors. Özdamar's other three books that have been published by İletişim ("Emine Sevgi Özdamar") were also released in this series. All of Özdamar's books that came out at İletişim are translations from German, and they are the only translated books in the Turkish-language

Literature series. At first sight, Özdamar's case seems to be unprecedented. However, two books by Elif Şafak/Shafak, who would later write all her novels in English, were also published in the same series.

The overall content of the series seems to indicate that Özdamar is perceived and presented as a writer of contemporary Turkish literature by İletişim. Therefore, although the books are translations from German, the source culture of these works is the multilayered, multilingual, multiethnic culture of Turkey. A contextualization materialized on the back cover of the work supports this observation. There, the blurb does not mention that the author is a well-known, award-winning, and sensationalist figure in Germany, nor that the book is a translation. Instead, a panorama of Turkey set on the streets of Istanbul, Ankara, and Bursa is visible. The novel is summarized as being close to magical realism, and its author is framed as someone who draws from fairy-tale roots, as she is referred to as Scheherazade's relative, even her sister. So, anyone who picks up the book sees the author's name and the title, and reads the information on the back cover must believe to encounter a novel that entirely belongs to Turkish literature.

Of course, the blurb, which may be described as an attempt to contextualize the work and the author's aesthetic style rather than a short promotional text, relies on the plot and narrative technique of the novel. Özdamar is a writer who has attracted the attention of a German-speaking readership and Germanists through her unique language. As a matter of fact, when she received the Georg-Büchner-Preis, one of Germany's most prestigious literary awards, which is bestowed by The German Academy for Language and Poetry, in 2022, the jury also drew attention to Özdamar's "unusual literary stylistic devices and ways of speaking inspired by Turkish" and introduced the writer as "an outstanding author to whom the German language and literature owe new horizons, themes, and a highly poetic sound" ("Büchner-Preis 2022 an Emine Sevgi Özdamar"). Leaving all literary, stylistic, and narrative elements aside, reading Özdamar in Turkish is like reading a completely authentic text (of course, the translators' diligent work contributed to this). It is precisely for this reason that Özdamar's works never create the impression that they are literary texts translated into Turkish.

Probably the most accurate observation about Özdamar's style was made by Azade Seyhan. According to her, Özdamar's writings are translations, self-translations, and cultural translations,

since Özdamar writes “in and as translation,” “in German translation of her native language” (“Crossing Borders in Perilous Zones” 82) and “in the transnational and translational mode, in bi- and multilingual registers” (90). Seyhan argues that Özdamar’s experience was marked by her belonging to an ethnic minority in Turkey, although she was never considered a political refugee or in exile (85). Apart from this political approach, Seyhan considers Özdamar to be one of “those [writing] outside the comfort zone of their own language” as one who “meets other masters of linguistic cross-fertilization” (89). She refers to “Özdamar’s conscious translation of the metaphoric world of Turkish into an exoticized German” (84) and defines Caravanserai as “a showcase of linguistic memory as a formative dimension of writing outside the nation” (Writing Outside the N ation 142). In this sense, Özdamar’s insistence on remaining like and unique is detected. Tim Parks observes a kind of homogenization on the linguistic level of world literature. According to him, the “global novel” simplifies its language and softens its local characteristics in order to sell on the world market (Where I'm reading from). Özdamar’s style seems to be the opposite of such new styles in the global market.

If we return to the topic of the author’s promotion in Turkey, an extratextual evidence of Özdamar’s challenging position in the target culture, the Turkish one, is that she has been represented in the anthology Turkish Novelists Since 1960 (252-59). In Stephanie Lethbridge’s words, the characteristic feature of anthologies is the selection of texts from a larger body and their reassembly as a compact collection (179). Lethbridge notes that text selection in anthologies is often text-extrinsic because anthologies function as articulations of national self-understanding (181). It is true that Turkish Novelists Since 1960 does not claim any kind of nationality. Yet, the mere fact that Özdamar is regarded as one of Turkey’s contemporary writers is a remarkable positioning, completely independent from the content of the anthology article. Thus, this epitextual context – to be included in the anthology – indicates that Özdamar, as an author who originates from Turkey but does not (always) write in Turkish, is contextualized to belong to the Turkish literary scene. Here, a skepticism about the notion of source culture as well as source literature comes to mind. As a result, it becomes evident that a source language or a textual template for a future translation may not necessarily serve the image of a supposedly homogeneous source culture. The positioning of Özdamar’s work does not occupy a fixed, predetermined position. The

target cultural reception mediated by paratextual implications, among others, does not serve to make her known but rather to position her as a Turkish woman literary figure. Therefore, the Turkish literary scene and book market do not perceive Özdamar as a foreign writer who would be completely independent of Turkish literature. This is mainly due to the subjects she deals with and especially her style.

As for the remaining two sample texts, Leyla and The Blacksmith's Daughter, their subjects are akin to Özdamar's book in theme and setting. However, unlike Özdamar's style, the authors' linguistic expression is not based on traditional Eastern narrative styles. The German originals of the novels do not look like translations, although they describe an unfamiliar and exotic world. In fact, in the sense that Seyhan calls Özdamar's style a total translation, these texts are not translations.

4.2. Leyla and The Blacksmith's Daughter in Turkish Translation

Like Özdamar's Caravanserai, Leyla by Feridun Zaimoglu, and The Blacksmith's Daughter by Selim Özdoğan have been published as translations in Turkey, yet they could easily be mistaken for Turkish novels by readers who do not pay close attention to the translators' names on the covers.

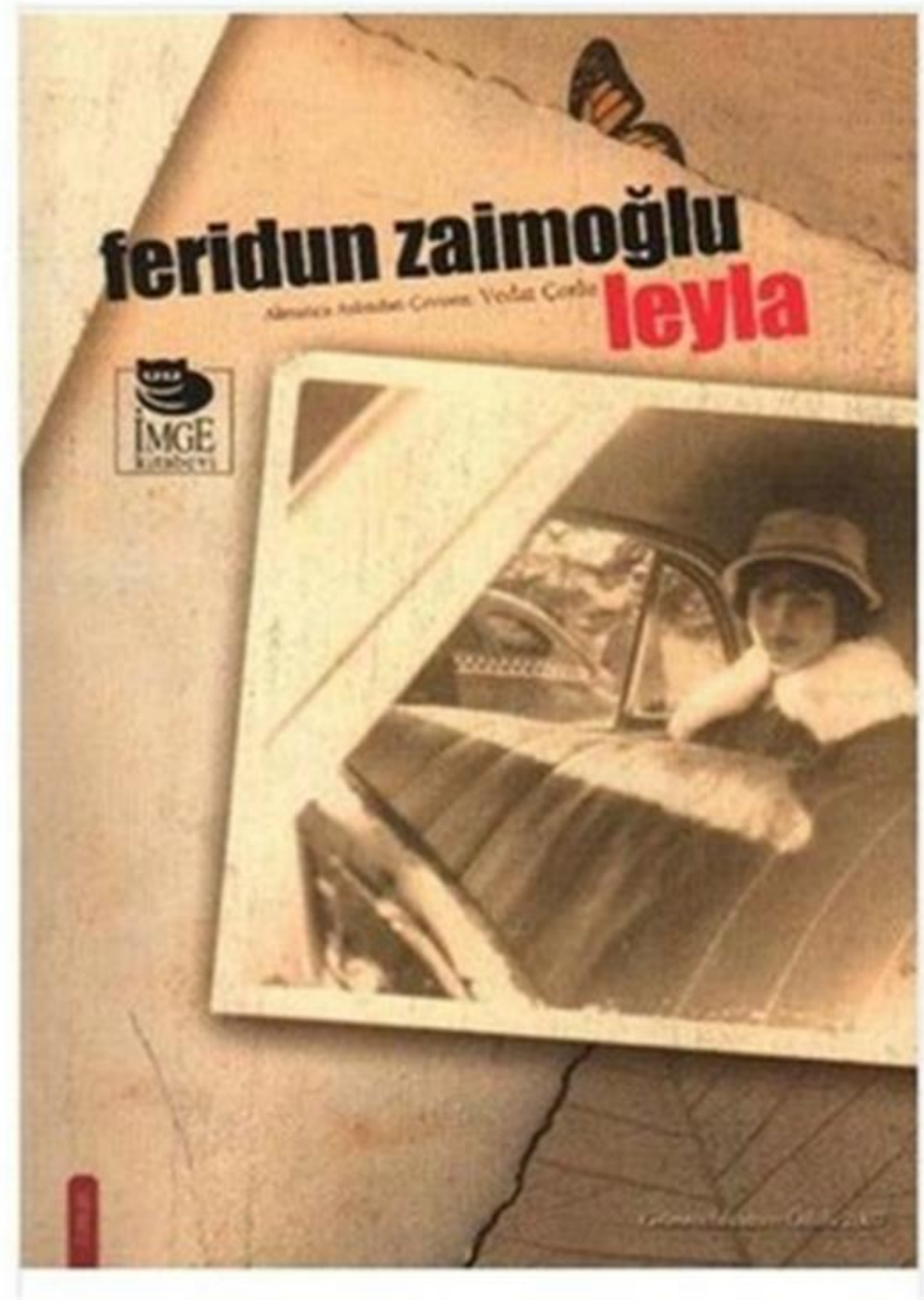


Figure 4. 2007 Istiklal

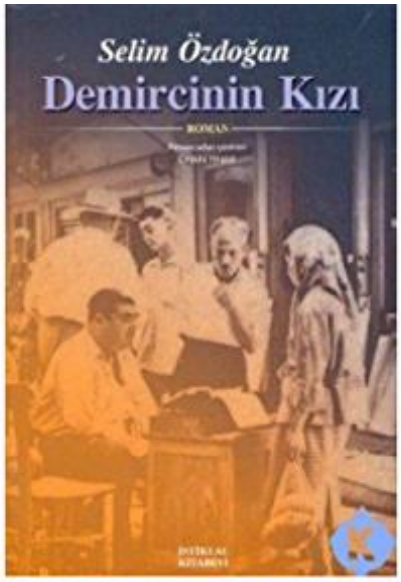


Figure 5. 2009 Imge

Zaimoglu, in particular, is sensitive about his name and prefers it to be spelled without the Turkish letter ğ. However, in Leyla and The Blacksmith's Daughter in Figures 4 and 5, the authors' names are spelled with the Turkish letter ğ, which implies the publishers' desire to appeal to Turkish readers. I have already mentioned that in the new editions of Caravanserai (Figures 2 and 3), the author's appointed name, Emine, has been shortened or separated from the whole by quotation marks, presumably due to the author's agency. In the novels in Figures 4 and 5, there is no such authorial agency.

The book featured in Fig. 4 bears the original German title Leyla, written according to Turkish transliteration. This title is a female name of Arabic origin commonly used in Turkey. However, in the Western world, the title may evoke the song "Layla" by Eric Clapton, an American singer and songwriter who was inspired by "Layla and Majnun," one of the most renowned love stories in Persian and Azerbaijani early medieval poetic traditions. This epic love story holds a shared significance in the Middle East and the Caucasus, similar to the familiarity effect of Caravanserai among Turkish readers. Leyla, however, is not a love story like "Layla and Majnun," but rather the story of a persecuted woman's life in Turkey before she grows up, marries, and emigrates to Germany. So, although the title Leyla carries a certain and fixed connotation and is not unfamiliar

to Turkish readers, the plot of the novel does not have any connection to this connotation. Özdoğan's novel (fig. 5) does not have such intertextual associations. Yet, the cover image of The Blacksmith's Daughter most closely relates to life in rural Turkey among the publications discussed here. Thus, both of these novels may be initially mistaken for indigenous works at first glance.

The novel Leyla is not explicitly identified in a series on the cover, interior cover, or back cover. However, the website of İmge, a prominent publishing house in Ankara, categorizes it under "Çağdaş Türk Edebiyatı" [Contemporary Turkish Literature]. The introductory information on the website is noteworthy, proclaiming the novel as "both a translation and a Turkish novel, both a foreign and a local novel." This brief introduction is identical to the blurb of the novel, identifying Zaimoğlu as "our author who was born in Turkey, grew up in Germany and writes in German" ("Leyla – Feridun Zaimoğlu"). According to the blurb, Leyla is Zaimoğlu's first novel in which he employs "normal" German, without resorting to a peculiar blend of Turkish-German slang. The website and back cover of the book provide a summary of the plot, concluding with an extraordinary anticipation of Zaimoğlu's success in Turkey, mirroring his prominence in Germany: "We believe that Zaimoğlu will be a star in Turkey as he was in Germany." In contrast to the promotion of Caravanserai, these peritexts explicitly state that the novel was written in German. They also provide details about the novel's divergence from the author's previous works, as well as how it will presumably appeal to readers in Turkey.

The publishing house of The Blacksmith's Daughter, İstiklal, is comparatively less prominent than the other publishing houses examined in this study, and a website for this publisher could not be located. İstiklal's books are solely available through online bookstores. The imprint page of the novel features the word "Edebiyat" [Literature] in capitalized letters. If this emphasized expression indicates a series or classification, it can be inferred that this is the most impartial categorization among the three novels analyzed in this paper. The promotional blurb outlines the plot of the novel, centering on Gül, the female protagonist. The narrative explores her experience of the impact of modernization on individual lives in Turkey, as well as the "nightmares" in Anatolia that contribute to her transformation into a downtrodden female character. Unlike the blurb of Leyla, this promotion on the back cover omits details about the novel being translated from German, as well as the writer's identity as a German Turk and the book's reception in Germany. Yet, the blurb

mentions that Fatih Akın's road movie "In July" (Im Juli) is based upon Selim Özdoğan's novel Im Juli, and The Blacksmith's Daughter appears in "The Edge of Heaven" (Auf der anderen Seite), another critically acclaimed movie by the same German-Turkish director. Considering the immense popularity of both Fatih Akın and the two aforementioned films in Turkey, this back cover introduction establishes a direct connection between the novel and Germany for Turkish readers, even though the blurb positions the novel as a Turkish work.

5. Conclusion

This paper has presented sociological observations derived from translation publishing activities focusing on German-Turkish literature translated into Turkish. It has shown that the concepts "source" and "target" have become somewhat obsolete due to the emergence of new forms of literature. While situating "writers and their works in th[e] immense territory" of the World Republic of Letters (Casanova 3), German-Turkish literature has not only confused the German literary system it was produced in, but it has also failed to achieve a clear reception in Turkey. When examining German-Italian literature, for instance, Loredana Russo analyses the reception of some selected works in Italy and observes that these books appeal to readers unfamiliar with German culture who want to be familiar with it (82). However, this observation contrasts with the paratextual presentations of the three novels discussed in this paper. In the Turkish context, readers and some publishers are more likely to perceive these kinds of works as "Turkish" or "Turkish-language" literature, often overlooking their inherent connection to German literature.

Publishing houses do not position the novels analyzed in this paper as foreign literature. This raises pertinent questions for both translation studies and the sociology of literature. As new literary works and phenomena arise, the evolution of theories and approaches becomes necessary. Notably, disciplines like translation studies, rooted in the examination of interactions between at least two distinct entities, must adapt to handle such emerging cases. The novels analyzed were not translated to address a perceived vacuum in the Turkish literary system, and they did not attain a central position within Turkish literature. Contrary to the DTS perspective, these translations brought innovation to the existing source literature rather than altering the target literature. Their narrative realms were shaped by the poetics of the twentieth-century Turkish

literature. The Turkish literary system, in this case, does not inherently demand imported translations.

Considering the matter from a German perspective, following the coups of 1971 and 1980 in Turkey, writers who found residence in Germany, be it permanent or temporary, continued crafting literary works. Their linguistic expressions, artistic inspirations, and cultural influences exhibit a direct linkage to Turkey. Comparable instances can be perceived within the context of contemporary migration trends, in which specific writers have sought refuge and protection in Germany due to political reasons, thereby facilitating the continuation of their literary creations. These authors contribute to the body of Turkish literature 'continued' in Germany; a distinctive entity separate from the realm of German-Turkish literature. Consequently, if propelled by populist motives, the characterization of German-Turkish literature as 'Turkish literature emerging in Germany' not only obscures its position in the historical landscape of post-war Germany but also mingles it with Turkish writers who underwent political exile in Germany. In other words, it creates a situation where these two distinct categories (Turkish literature and German-Turkish literature) or groups (Turkish writers and German-Turkish writers) are blended, potentially leading to a lack of clarity between them.

Future research should study how this style of promotion affects readers and researchers. As a preliminary idea for future studies, I would like to note that there are some researchers from Turkish departments in Turkey who perceive German-Turkish literature as "Turkish literature in Europe" (e.g., Yücel) and scholars of Translation Studies who prefer this kind of classification (e.g., Ekiz). Considering that populist neo-nationalist movements are on the rise in the world, and also the abundance of introductory-level publications in Turkey, the interest in German-Turkish literature in Turkey may increase due to political motives rather than academic concerns such as literary traditions, textual features, authors' poetics, etc., which risks politicizing literary texts, ignoring their literariness, and ultimately misusing them.

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[1] This paper is a revised and extended version of a case presentation held in Turkish at the "NETWORK-1: International Conference on the Circulation of Ideas, Concepts, Works, and Other Things" at Ege University, Izmir, in October 2022.

[2] An ongoing debate, taking place most prominently in social media and sporadically also in book supplements, etc., surrounds the usage of the terms "Turkish literature" [Türk edebiyatı] and "Turkish-language literature" [Türkçe edebiyat]. The conceptualization of "Turkish-language literature" is supposed to refer to Turkey's multicultural society. However, categorizing Özdamar's works as "Turkish-language literature" may not seem to be entirely correct since they are written in German.

[3] In fact, translation studies is an academic discipline based on the discussion of source and target concepts, the application of these concepts in linguistic, textual, cultural, and functional terms, and the theoretical frameworks arrived at by evaluating all these concepts and applications. For a selection of key debates around the history of translation studies, see Venuti.

[4] This novel is a long seller in Turkey as well as in Germany, which is why new editions are constantly being published. I am referring here to the first editions in these three publishing houses. The cover images have not changed in the subsequent editions.

[5] In her study on topographical cultural spaces, Hilal Keskin focuses on traveling, using German-Turkish literature as her material basis. She also discusses Aşık Veysel's abovementioned song/poem and the intertextual reference to the caravanserai it contains. According to her, there is a connection between a life path and a particular space (204).

[6] "Dünyaya geldiğim anda / Yürüdüm aynı zamanda / İki kapılı bir handa / Yürüyorum gündüz gece" (Âşık Veysel 223). Since the bard's works are based on oral tradition, they are mostly remembered as songs. This stanza is translated by the author of the paper, and for the purpose of this study, no aesthetic concerns have been pursued in the translation, but conveying the meaning of the text has been prioritized.



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