

Some Observations on the State -and Curiosities- of Shakespeare Translation in Turkey

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ABSTRACT

Shakespeare's English may be difficult for the present day reader. However, the language of the early Turkish translations of Shakespeare's plays and poetry is virtually unintelligible for the Turkish reader today. Because early translations are in Ottoman (i.e., Arabic) script and their vocabulary has become hopelessly obsolete.

Translation of Shakespeare's plays gained a great impetus in 1940s and 1960s when the state commissioned academics, intellectuals and writers for the task.

As of fall 2003, Shakespeare's complete plays (except *The Two Noble Kinsmen*) and *The Sonnets* have been translated into Turkish. Altogether, there are over 110 published translations of the plays, some plays appearing in more than half a dozen translations. The list is headed by *Romeo and Juliet* with eleven translations.

The list of Shakespeare translators includes, along with academics and writers, jurists, language teachers, an insurance man, a one time political activist, and a private secretary to three Presidents of the Turkish republic.

A number of the plays was translated from French and some of those translations retained the French title, a significant case in point being *Julius Caesar*. For instance, from 1960s onwards audiences and readers have got to know Shakespeare's major plays through the translations of Sabahattin Eyüboğlu, who used French translations as his source texts.

An adaptation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* called *The Spring Equinox* has played a significant role in "popularizing" Shakespeare. A question: Could it be that some people like Shakespeare for the wrong reasons?

Shakespeare's fondness for figurative language often poses a particular kind of difficulty for the Turkish translator: Since Turkish language itself is so rich in figures of speech, the translator often faces the task of finding "literal" equivalents for Shakespeare's non-figurative expressions.

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KEY WORDS: Translation theory, the process of translation, the role of the state in the translation of classics, adaptations and renderings vs translations, translating a translated text, the “aging” of a translated text, Shakespeare and translators, the “popularity” of Shakespeare in Turkey, rendering figurative and non-figurative language

ÖZET

Shakespeare’in İngilizcesinin günümüz okuru için zor olduğundan söz edilir. Oysa, Shakespeare’in oyun ve şiirlerinin erken dönem Türkçe çevirilerinin dilini günümüz Türk okurunun anlaması hemen hemen imkânsızdır. Çünkü, bu çevirilerin “eski yazı” denen Osmanlıca (Arapça) karakterlerle yazılmış olması bir yana, çevirmenlerin kullandıkları kelimelerin çoğu da artık kullanımdan kalkmıştır.

Shakespeare’in oyunlarının Türkçe’ye çevrilmesi, 1940’larda ve 1960’larda, devletin bu amaçla seçkin akademisyenlere, aydınlara ve yazarlara görev vermesi sayesinde büyük bir ivme kazanmıştır.

2003 sonbaharı itibarıyla, *The Two Noble Kinsmen* (İki Soylu Akraba) hariç, Shakespeare’in tüm oyunları ve soneleri Türkçe’ye çevrilmiştir. Bugün, Shakespeare’in oyunlarının yayınlanmış Türkçe çevirilerinin sayısı 110’u aşkındır. Oyunlardan bir bölümünün yarım düzineden fazla ayrı çevirisi bulunmaktadır. Bu bağlamda, listenin başında on bir çeviri ile *Romeo ve Jülyet*’i görüyoruz.

Shakespeare çevirmenleri arasında, akademisyen ve yazarlar yanında, hukukçular, dil öğretmenleri, bir sigortacı, bir eski siyasetçi, ve üç cumhurbaşkanının özel kalemligi görevinde bulunmuş bir kişi dikkati çekiyor.

Oyunların bir bölümü Fransızca’dan çevrilmiş ve, en azından bir süre, örneğin bir *Julius Caesar* çevirisinde olduğu gibi, Fransızca adını korumuş. Bu arada, 1960’lardan bu yana seyirci ve okurlar Shakespeare’in başlıca oyunlarını, kaynak metin olarak Fransızca çevirileri kullanan Sabahattin Eyüboğlu’nun çevirileriyle tanımış.

A Midsummer Night’s Dream oyununun *Bahar Noktası* adlı uyarlaması, Shakespeare’in nisbeten geniş halk kitlelerine ulaşmasında, bir ölçüde “popülerleşmesinde,” önemli rol oynamış. Burada akla şu soru geliyor: Acaba bazı okur ve seyirciler Shakespeare’i yanlış nedenlerle beğeniyor olabilir mi?

Shakespeare’in söz sanatlarına düşkünlüğü, oyun ve şiirlerini Türkçe’ye çevirenler için özel bir güçlük yaratıyor: Türkçe’nin kendisi söz sanatları açısından çok zengin olduğundan, bazen çevirmen Shakespeare’in sanat içermeyen ifadeleri için yine “sanatsız” karşılık bulmakta zorluk çekebiliyor.

Recently, during a discussion of *Othello*’s identity and origins in a Shakespeare class, I asked my students (all Turkish) whether they knew the meaning of two somewhat oldish Turkish terms for “west” (“garb”) and “east” (“şark”). It turned out that not a single student in a class of 23 had a clear idea of what these terms meant.

That was disappointing for me because I had expected to share with my students the pleasure of how “garb” was related to “magrib” (in Arabic, “west,” used in reference to the northwestern countries of Africa, i.e., Algeria and Morocco), and how the term “Magribi” or “Magripli” used for the “Moor” by Turkish translators of *Othello* could be taken, not without a touch of irony, to mean “the westerner” with connotations, by way of the word’s Arabic roots, of separation, isolation and alienation.

The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, has this reference on the complexion of the Moors: “as late as the 17th c., the Moors were supposed to be mostly black or very swarthy

... and hence the word was often used for Negro". So, there was some confusion there; a confusion which is reflected in Shakespeare's depiction of *Othello*. In Ottoman Turkish, however, (I had hoped to explain to my students) it was unlikely that the term "Magribi" would have been confused with "negro," for people would know where "Magrib" was, and what type of people lived there, and that consideration could have a bearing on the appreciation of Shakespeare's play from a Turkish point of view.

That notwithstanding, some early translators who adapted *Othello* for stage performance preferred to use the term "arap" ("dark skinned, black") for the "Moor" thereby avoiding any specific reference to the origins of *Othello* and perhaps simplifying the matter by doing away with the ambiguity inherent in the "Moor" with "thick lips," for "arap" meant "black" and not "Arab" in that context. In our day, when prejudice hunting has almost become an occupation in its own right, it is unlikely that the term "arap," an "innocent" term in a particular context, would be used, in print or on stage, for the Moor because of its racist implications and association with the Arabs.

Anyway, I soon realized during that Shakespeare session that my students, who represented a large cross section of the present day Turkish society, knew less about the term "Magribi" than the Elizabethan audience would have known about Moors. As a matter of fact, by being called "Magribi," *Othello* has now acquired in this country a more exotic and translucent personality than he had about a century ago, whether he was called "Magribi" or "arap" at the time.

Perhaps it is a proof of this play's popularity in Turkey at one time that a Turkish actor named Kamil Rıza became so famous in the title role in a touring company that he was called "Otello Kamil" in 1920s. Although he fits in Macbeth's definition, in Act V, Scene 3, of

... a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more,

a street in İstanbul has later been named after him and his share has now been acknowledged in introducing Shakespeare to the Turkish public.

Othello is among the earliest Turkish translations of Shakespeare's plays. Apparently, the fact that it contains some of the most strongly worded references to the Turks (such as *Othello*'s "a malignant and a turban'd Turk," and "the circumcised dog" in V.i. 354, 356) found in Shakespeare's plays did not deter some enterprising people in the last quarter of the 19th century from exploiting the dramatic potential of the play's universally appealing plot and central characters.

That the derogatory references to the "Turk," a term which appellatively meant so much as an "infidel" or "unbeliever" for the Elizabethans, would be lost in translation at that time, either by being omitted or modified should be self-evident. As a matter of fact, it is not uncommon to find such seemingly offensive references deleted or altered even in modern

translations of Shakespeare's plays. For example, in a recent translation of *Othello*, "a malignant and a turban'd Turk" becomes "a turbaned ruffian."¹ The reason for that alteration is not clear, for, to my experience (as a translator of Shakespeare's plays), neither state officials nor publishers exert any pressure upon the translator to tamper with such references.

However, it must be said in fairness that in modern translations of Shakespeare's plays and poetry, deliberate censorship or modification of potentially offensive references, whether political, sexual, or otherwise, appears to be the exception rather than the rule.

As of fall 2003, Shakespeare's *Sonnets* and his complete plays, with the exception of *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, a joint work with John Fletcher, have been translated into Turkish. Translations of some of his poems, too, have appeared in various journals. And a CD recording of selected sonnets read by Talat S. Halman and Defne Halman, which accompanies a recent reprint of Talat S. Halman's translation of the *Sonnets* is a first in the field.

Ordinarily, sustained state support for arts and humanities is not taken for granted in this country. Significantly and fortunately for us, however, in the case of Shakespeare translations, that is exactly what has happened. It was to a large extent thanks to the efforts and encouragement of the Education Ministry, especially in 1940s and 1960s, that Shakespeare has come to be widely known and appreciated in this country. During the periods of 1943-7 and 1964-7, no less than 22 of over 110 translations of Shakespeare's plays were published through state support. And a number of these translations were commissioned to some well established scholars and academics in English literature, such as Orhan Burian, İrfan Şahinbaş and Berna Moran.

The prevailing idea among intellectuals, critics, and scholars in Turkey is that the way Turkish people have embraced Shakespeare, especially over the last sixty years or so, is nothing short of phenomenal. Arguably, no other dramatist and, indeed, poet has been accorded such an astonishing, and perhaps perplexing acclaim in this country, where not only Shakespeare, but English language itself, not to say English literature and literature in English are relatively recent occurrences, having caught up in a substantial manner with the influence of French language and literature, and Russian literature, only after 1950s.

Earlier translations of Shakespeare's plays, mostly abridged renditions and adaptations from French translations, date back to late 19th century. These early translations, which often took the form of play scripts include *Othello*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Comedy of Errors*, and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*.

Today there are two major difficulties for a Turkish student or scholar who might want to refer to or study these early translations. Firstly, the texts are in Ottoman (i.e., Arabic) script and secondly, the language used is Ottoman Turkish, both constituting insurmountable obstacles for a great majority of people in present day Turkey.

¹ William Shakespeare. *Othello*. Translated by Özdemir Nutku. İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1985.

Although it has not been that long since Latin characters were officially adopted (in 1928) in this country, few people, with the exception of those who have especially studied the Ottoman language and Arabic script, can now read texts written in what is popularly known as “eski yazı,” “old script.” Photocopies (see: appendices 1 and 2) of the cover titles of two early translations of *Julius Caesar* and *The Merchant of Venice* may give us an idea as to how that script looked.

Furthermore, the Turkish language itself, too, has undergone such radical and extensive changes during the twentieth century that the language used in late 19th and early 20th century has already become hopelessly antiquated and virtually unintelligible for the masses. In fact, one could say that the difference between modern Turkish and the language of the late Ottoman and even early republic (up to 1950s) period is far greater than the difference between Shakespeare’s English and modern English.

For instance, below is the second quatrain of Shakespeare’s Sonnet No. 104 in an early (1888) Turkish translation. While the underlined words and expressions are somewhat outdated, **bold italics** would be generally unintelligible for the reader except for a small minority of the older generation and specialists.

Seninle mülâkat edeli müşâhedesiyle **ibret-gîr** olduğum **tebellüdat-ı fusûl** esnâsında üç bahar-ı **erguvân-ârâ üç harîf-i sūfret-nümaya mübeddel** oldu, üç nisan-ı **hoş-bû** üç haziran-ı **hararet-efşâne ser-furû eyledi**. Bu **tahavvûlatdan** evvel sendeki **taravet-i nevcivâniyi ber-kemâl** görmüş idim, şimdi yine öyle görüyorum. Daima latîfsin.²

(Three beauteous springs to yellow autumn turned
In process of the seasons have I seen,
Three April perfumes in three hot Junes burned,
Since first I saw you fresh which yet are green.)

An additional difficulty for the student and scholar in this context is that only a handful of these early translations are intact and available in the libraries of a few universities and institutions, mainly in İstanbul and Ankara, or in some private collections.

Fortunately for the Turkish reader and theatregoer, from the late 19th century onwards there has been no scarcity of people, from a variety of professions, willing to translate Shakespeare’s plays, including the ones that had already been translated. Such has been the zeal of the enthusiasts wishing to tackle Shakespeare’s works that, currently there are eleven translations of *Romeo and Juliet*, eight translations each of *Hamlet* and *The Merchant of Venice*, seven of *Othello*, six each of *Macbeth* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, and still counting.

² Mehmet Nâdir, *Tarîk*, nr.1482, 27 Nisan 1304/9 Mayıs 1888. Quoted by İnci Enginun in *Tanzimat Devrinde Shakespeare*. İstanbul: Edebiyat Fakültesi Basımevi, 1979.

Shakespeare seems to have a special, hitherto not convincingly accounted for, lure for would be translators in Turkey, for some of whom neither financial concerns, nor lack of demand, nor the sheer daunting task of grappling with Shakespeare's language seems to be a deterrent.

The list of translators of Shakespeare's plays is headed by academics, mostly from the field of literature. But the occupation is by no means the exclusive territory of people who are by profession engaged in writing or scholarly work on Shakespeare or in a related field. Included in the list are, for example, a medical doctor and one time political activist who was associated with the Young Turks movement early in the 20th century; a former member of parliament and Turkish press attaché in Paris and London; a one time private secretary to three presidents of the Turkish Republic, an actor, a jurist, and an insurance man.

Whatever his profession may be, a keen, and, not infrequently, selfless enthusiasm seems to be the distinguishing mark of the Shakespeare translator. Selfless, because in material terms translating a play by Shakespeare is a thankless task. It requires, obviously, a long, persistent, frustrating work, and the reward, assuming there is a reward, might be minimal by comparison.

By no means a small number of translators start off with a faint prospect of eventually publishing their product, and some end up by paying up for the printing and publication, perhaps only for the dubious reward of seeing the result of their precious work in print. That is not to deny that the lucky ones do happen to find a publisher to finance them for a second printing, and are even rewarded by a small but no doubt deeply satisfying fee.

A considerable number of the translations of Shakespeare's plays were made from French, even as late as 1960s. Especially the rendering of the titles of some of these translations shed light on the present state of Turkish cultural heritage and on some of the problematic areas waiting to be addressed in Turkish language. A notable case in point is "Julius Caesar," both as the title of the play and the name of the Roman leader.

That title has been rendered in two early translations of the play respectively as *Julsezar* in Arabic characters (The cover of the same translation also bears the title JULIUS CÉSAR in Roman letters.), and *Jules César (Jül Sezar* in a later printing of the same translation).³ More recent translations, appearing in 1942, 1996 and 2002, keep the original title, *Julius Caesar*, unchanged.

"Jül Sezar," the approximate Turkish pronunciation of "Jules César," is the formally adopted written and oral version in this country of the name of Julius Caesar, the historical figure. During the period when French influence upon Turkish intellectual life was still considerably strong, translators either retained the French title of the play, or used the Turkicized form of it, with the oddly hybrid form "Julius César," apparently a concoction of English (Latin?) and French ingredients, somehow appearing at least in one edition.

³ William Shakespeare. *Julsezar*. Çev. Abdullah Cevdet. Mısır: Matbaa-i ictihad, 1908.

William Shakespeare. *Jules César (Jül Sezar)*. Çev. Mehmet Şükrü. İstanbul: Cumhuriyet Matbaası, 1930.

This seemingly hybrid combination might have been the result of an attempt to keep the play's title in its original form. The "ae" of "Caesar" was nevertheless changed into "é" in an attempt to prevent a mispronunciation (by separately articulating the "a" and "e") of "Caesar" by the Turkish reader.

Yet, in a sense, retaining the full original title in the translation seems to have complicated the matter even further. The major problem has to do with the pronunciation. If the name is meant to be in Latin, then it should be pronounced, approximately, "Yulyus Kesar" in Turkish. But that sounds rather unfamiliar and somewhat funny, and it would be too awkward to replace the commonly accepted "Jül Sezar" with it. Although there does exist a small group of classics scholars who prefer the pronunciation "Kesar" or "Kezar," even those scholars do not feel themselves comfortable with "Yulyus".

Adopting the English pronunciation, too, would obviously not do, since that would mean rejecting one foreign tradition in favour of another, and even more unfamiliar one. Therefore, the title "Julius Caesar" has now the awkward distinction of being written in English (or Latin) and pronounced "Jül Sezar" in Turkish. When I, too, after much thought, decided to retain the original title of the play in my translation, I wondered whether I should have explained with a footnote how the reader is supposed to pronounce it. On second thoughts, however, I chose to leave that to the discretion of the reader, mainly because I was not sure whether what I had to say would clarify the matter at all.

From 1960s onwards, a large number of playgoers and readers have watched, read and appreciated Shakespeare's major plays, including *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Julius Caesar*, and *Antony and Cleopatra* through the translations of Sabahattin Eyüboğlu, a prominent man of letters of the period, and an academic who taught French language and literature at İstanbul university between 1933-9 and again in 1950s. Yet, it is only when I started doing translations myself and studying translation theory that I found out that Sabahattin Eyüboğlu's English was, as he writes under "Translator's Note" appended to his translation of *Hamlet*, "self taught and rudimentary," and that, while working on the translation of this play, he had "consulted whatever other Turkish or French translations I could lay hands on".⁴

Although he adds in the same note that he is indebted to Mina Urgan and Cevat Çapan, both academics specializing in English literature and drama, in coping with some of the difficulties in the text, the discovery that some of the well established and authoritative translations of Shakespeare's plays were made not from English and by a person not otherwise actively involved in Shakespeare studies was a minor shock for me.

Sabahattin Eyüboğlu states, perhaps on a faintly apologetic tone, at the start of his note referred to above that, although he was reluctant at the outset to attempt to translate *Hamlet*, he had decided to do it upon the urging of Remzi Kitabevi (a leading publisher in Turkey) and upon persistent exhortation by a friend of his.

⁴ William Shakespeare. *Hamlet*. Çev. Sabahattin Eyüboğlu. İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1965. P. 210, "Translator's Note".

I must hasten to add, however, that it is by no means my intention to underplay the achievement of Sabahattin Eyüboğlu, whose command of Turkish language, and skill in using Turkish idiom and colloquialisms I have always appreciated and envied. Indeed, I find both the publisher's initiative in proposing to him to translate a Shakespeare play and his own efforts laudable.

What sounds particularly surprising and significant here is that in this country there have always been publishers which thus commission the translation of an even minor Shakespeare play, or agree to publish a translation offered to them by an individual, with the full knowledge that the profit margin for such a book is sure to be negligible.

Obviously, that is not a rare occurrence and it is common knowledge that some publishers have a "prestige" quota for serious books. Still, it is quite heartening to see that the case for *Hamlet* translation is by no means an exception, and, amazingly, Shakespeare translations, even of minor plays, or some of the histories that would perhaps have little interest for the Turkish reader, have often found a route to the bookstores, if not always to a large body of readers. It is true, again, that such translations bring little material reward for the translator, and not a small number of them are self financed by the translators, who are content with the satisfying feeling of having published their translation of a Shakespeare play.

No irony is meant here. For, when I and Saadet Bozkurt translated the *Sonnets* in 1979, we thought some discerning publisher would surely grab our manuscript. We realized soon, however, that those publishers were not readily forthcoming, and we had to finance the first printing of our translation. The good news is that, it was later accepted by a publisher and went into several printings and, in the meantime we were fortunate enough to find the opportunity to revise it a couple of times.

Then, there are also translators who get commissioned by a publisher to translate a Shakespeare play, complete the task, see their translation published, get paid for it, but are ultimately dismayed to see the sad fate of their precious work.

For instance, some years ago, Hamit ÇalıŖkan, a colleague of mine, translated a screen version of the three parts of *Henry VI* for a private television channel. It occurred to him that that might be a good opportunity to translate the full text of the play into Turkish. He found a publisher who accepted his translation and agreed to pay him a modest sum for the job. The translation was duly published in 1994. However, when Hamit ÇalıŖkan called the publisher in a year or two to see how the book was selling, he was told that since only a few copies were sold over a long period, the publisher had had to destroy the remaining copies in stock.

The chance of *Henry VI*'s being reprinted is next to nil, and, one suspects, a similar fate awaits the translations of, for example, *King John*, *Henry V* and *Henry VIII*, among others. Probably it will not be long before these translations disappear from the bookstores, to be available for the public only in some libraries. It is true that few people, with the exception of scholars and students engaged in the field of translation theory and practice, would need

to consult these plays in Turkish. On the other hand, there is no doubt that these translations usefully complement the series of Shakespeare's plays and poems which has already been translated and will help enrich the field of Shakespeare studies in Turkey.

Shakespeare's reputation as a dramatist rests in this country mainly on his major tragedies and comedies. Among the renditions of his perennially popular comedies an adaptation by the late poet Can Yücel deserves special mention. In his rendering of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* titled "Bahar Noktası" ("Spring Equinox"), his skilful and often idiosyncratic use of popular phrase, colloquialism and slang makes the play remarkably entertaining, and has won Can Yücel a faithful and jealous following. It might be said that this least Shakespeare-like of the renderings of Shakespeare's plays in Turkey has done more than many other translations of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in familiarizing people with Shakespeare's name and some aspects of his art.

The obvious question is, "How much of Shakespeare's art and genius could filter through such an adaptation and reach the reader or the theatre audience?" "Not much," one might be inclined to say. If so, might it be that those who get to know Shakespeare through adaptations admire him for the wrong reasons?

Perhaps; but, for that matter, it is open to question whether even the most skilful translation, itself by virtue of its very nature a form of adaptation, would come anywhere near the original work of a poet and dramatist who was so concerned with the subtleties of verbal expression and who delighted in quibble, irony, alliteration, and play on meaning, and who attached special importance on form and sound, and rhythm and melody; elements that, especially with Shakespeare, are notoriously difficult to render without distortion in another language.

And, of course, judging by Shakespeare's world-wide reputation, it seems that non-English speaking peoples have not found it difficult to appreciate his greatness through the medium of their respective languages. Shakespeare's readers and audiences somehow seem to perceive and feel his powers of stimulation, evocation and, especially, inspiration. Let me allow myself an "anachronistic conceit," not unlike what we sometimes find in Elizabethan poetic and dramatic tradition, and say that in terms of their inspirational powers Shakespeare's plays have had a "radioactive" impact for his translators, commentators, audiences and enthusiasts.

Perhaps one secret of why the Turkish public has found Shakespeare's plays and poetry so endearing lies in the poet's special skill in, and fondness for using imagery and figurative language. Those elements have always been an integral and natural part of both everyday and scholarly language in this country. So much so that even Shakespeare's, to contemporary British ears, occasionally embarrassing overindulgence in non-literal expression turns out to be less disconcerting in Turkish. That felicitous common ground between Turkish and Shakespeare's English, coupled with his universally appealing and infectious creativity seem to have triggered the imagination and stimulated many a translator, poet and scholar.

There is a peculiar downside, though, to that concurrence for translators. For Turkish is so rich in figurative expression and such a natural medium for it that, the translator often faces the challenging task of finding an appropriate equivalent not only for Shakespeare's figures of speech but also for his plain, literal statement. Especially if you are looking for a plain statement in trying to render an expression into Turkish, the plethora of figurative phrases and expressions in that language becomes, ironically, a hindrance rather than convenience.

When faced with such a difficulty while translating a play by Shakespeare one realises that one has been using figurative speech for years without knowing it, the way Monsieur Jourdain does in Molière's *The Would-Be Gentleman* when he says to the Philosophy Master: "Bless my soul! I've been talking prose for over forty years without knowing it," (II. iv).

In fact, when Shakespeare's own figures of speech are supplemented, in a translation, by the metaphors, similes and ironies inherent in Turkish language, at times Shakespeare sounds even more addicted to imagery and figurative language than he would do in the original English text. And not infrequently the translator finds it difficult to decide whether to warn the reader that a given figurative rendering does not correspond to what is found in the English text. But since that might entail other, unforeseen difficulties, ultimately, I think, the translator has to leave the final judgement to the discretion of the reader.

Below is a list of selected expressions and phrases I have used in my translation of *Richard III* to render into Turkish some figurative or literal expressions found in the original text. I have preferred to provide the literal equivalent of the Turkish expressions, rather than attempting to describe their meaning in English, in order to give an idea about their gist.

<u>Expression used in Richard III</u>	<u>Turkish rendering</u>	<u>literal equivalent of Turkish expression</u>
<i>Plots have I laid</i> (I. i. 32)	<i>Dolaplar çevirdim</i>	"Cupboards have I revolved"
<i>He hearkens after</i> (I. i. 54)	<i>Kulak veriyormuş</i>	"He lends ear to"
<i>Keep in favour with the King</i> (I. i. 79)	<i>Gözüne gir</i>	"Enter his eye"
<i>Myself disgraced</i> (I. iii. 78)	<i>Ben gözden düştüm</i>	"I have fallen from his eye"
<i>I did disdain to fly</i> (III. v. 82)	<i>Kaçmayı kendime yediremedim</i>	"I couldn't stomach flight"

<i>How far I am from the desire of this (III. vii. 235)</i>	<i>Bu işte ne kadar gönülsüz olduğumu</i>	<i>“How ‘unhearted’ I am in this business”</i>
<i>Thou troublest me; I am not in the vein (IV. ii. 117)</i>	<i>Canımı sıkıyorsun havamda değilim</i>	<i>“You crush my soul, I am not in my air”</i>
<i>The bloody dog</i>	<i>Bu kana susamış köpek (V. viii. 2)</i>	<i>“This blood thirsty dog”</i>

Henry IV, too, is a play in which figurative language, display of wit, connotation and innuendo are the essential elements of the overall effect. Therefore, it is dangerous ground for a translator. For he must know, when working on this play, exactly where he can be relatively flexible and where he must exercise great caution in trying to be creative.

Impressive though the record of Shakespeare translations and the history of the stage productions of his plays in this country might seem, there are still some significant missing links in that picture. A glaring one in this respect pertains to Sir John Falstaff, perhaps one of the greatest of all comic stage creations, Lord of Misrule, a man of well-spoken words and infectious high spirit. “I am not only witty in myself, but the cause that wit is in other men,” (I. ii. 11) he says. Any list of Shakespeare’s unforgettable characters which does not include Falstaff is an incomplete one.

However, the Turkish theatre audience has not yet met the Falstaff of *Henry IV* on stage, at least not in a major performance as far as I know; nor has he been noticed, with reference to his representation in the Turkish translation of the play, by scholars and critics in this country. In fact *Henry IV*, which appeared in Turkish translation in 1992, is a relatively late comer onto the Turkish intellectual scene, and this fascinating play is still to be noticed by theatre companies in Turkey. For that matter, it seems, over the last four decades or so theatre companies have not been too innovative and adventurous in their choice of Shakespeare’s plays. Although Turkish audiences already admire and appreciate Shakespeare, one assumes, they would do so all the more if they were exposed to a wider selection of his plays and characters.

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