

TRANSLATION AND IDEOLOGY:
A STUDY OF PARATEXTS OF TURKISH TRANSLATIONS OF THE KURDISH
MESNEVI *MEM Ū ZİN* IN THE REPUBLICAN PERIOD

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BOĞAZIÇI UNIVERSITY

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Translation and Ideology: A Study of Paratexts of Turkish Translations of
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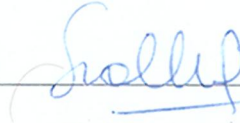
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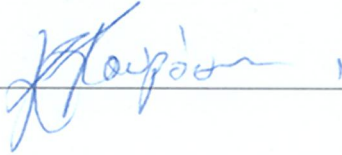
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ABSTRACT

Translation and Ideology: A Study of Paratexts of Turkish Translations of the Kurdish Mesnevi *Mem û Zin* in the Republican Period

Mem û Zin, the masterpiece of the seventeenth-century Kurdish poet Ehmedê Xanî, was translated into Turkish in both the Ottoman and Republican periods. The purpose of this thesis is to analyze the paratexts accompanying the Turkish translations of *Mem û Zin* that were produced from Kurdish source-texts in the Republican period, so as to examine the impact that ideology can have on translation. Translations of *Mem û Zin* in much of the Republican period encountered censorship and repression. However, the same text was translated by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, a representative of the state, in 2010, thus suggesting the strong relationship between ideology, politics and translation. To examine this relationship, the thesis retrospects the Kurdish issue in Turkey in its various linguistic, social, academic and literary dimensions. After that, the theoretical framework is presented and, in particular, the salience of Lefevere's concept of rewriting is emphasized. As for the methodology, paratextual analysis and critical discourse analysis are deployed in an attempt to reveal the ideological motives behind the translations. With these methodological tools, I analyze the book covers and prefaces of Mehmet Emin Bozarlan's translation (1968, 1975 and 1990), Namık Açıkgöz's translation (2010) and Kadri Yıldırım's translation (2010) and book-length translation criticism (2011). The thesis concludes that the Turkish adventure of *Mem û Zin* offers a striking case of the link between ideology and translation, while analysis of the paratexts for

various Kurdish-Turkish translations demonstrates the role that paratexts can play in creating new images of authors and works.

ÖZET

Çeviri ve İdeoloji: Kürtçe Mesnevi *Mem û Zin*'in Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türkçe Çevirilerinin Yan Metin İncelemesi

17. yüzyılda yaşamış olan Kürt şair Ehmedê Xanî'nin en önemli eserlerinden olan *Mem û Zin* mesnevisi, hem Osmanlı hem de Cumhuriyet döneminde Türkçe'ye çevrilmiştir. Bu tezin amacı, Cumhuriyet döneminde Kürtçe'den Türkçe'ye yapılan *Mem û Zin* çevirilerinin yan metinlerini incelemek ve bu sayede ideolojinin çeviri üzerindeki etkisini ortaya koymaktır. Cumhuriyet tarihinin büyük bir bölümünde, *Mem û Zin* çevirileri sansür ve baskıya maruz kalmıştır. Fakat 2010 yılında, Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, devletin bir temsilcisi olarak, *Mem û Zin*'in yeni bir Türkçe çevirisini yayınladı. Bu durum, çevirinin siyaset ve ideoloji ile arasındaki ilişkiyi gözler önüne sermektedir. Bu ilişkiyi incelemek için, çalışmada öncelikle Türkiye'deki Kürt meselesi dilsel, sosyal, akademik ve edebi boyutlarıyla tarihsel olarak ele alınır. Sonrasında, kavramsal çerçeve açıklanır ve özellikle André Lefevere'nin yeniden yazım kavramına vurgu yapılır. Çevirilerin ideolojik amaçlarını açığa çıkarmak için, yan metin incelemesi ve eleştirel söylem çözümlemesi yöntemleri kullanılmıştır. Bu yöntemler yardımıyla, Namık Açıköz'ün çevirisi (2010), Kadri Yıldırım'ın çevirisi (2010) ve çeviri eleştirisi kitabı (2011) incelenmiştir. Çalışma, *Mem û Zin*'in Türkçe'deki macerası üzerinden çeviri ve ideoloji arasındaki güçlü bağa dikkat çeker. Aynı zamanda, kaynak metni Kürtçe olan *Mem û Zin* çevirilerinin yan metinlerinin incelenmesi, yazar ve eseri için yeni bir imaj oluşturmada yan metinlerin ne kadar etkili bir rol oynadığını ortaya koyar.

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INTRODUCTION

Mem û Zin is a Kurdish *mesnevi*¹ written in the Kurmanji dialect by the Kurdish philosopher and poet Ehmedê Xanî² (1651-1707), who lived in Hakkari. He belonged to the Xanî tribe and could speak Arabic, Persian and Ottoman very well. The fact that Xanî's father was a judge might be the reason for his interest in law and later on in many different branches of science and the arts. He was educated in religious schools (madrassahs) and embarked on an unending quest for knowledge, studying Ancient Greek philosophy, Sufism, astronomy and Kurdish literature (Ceylan, 2011). His *mesnevi*, *Mem û Zin*, is based on a real love story that became a well-known saga in the fourteenth century, entitled *Meme Alan* (Mem of Alan), consisting of 2656 couplets. In that saga, Mem is a young boy who falls in love with Zin, a girl who is brought to his palace by some fairies. When Mem wakes up he cannot find Zin and starts searching for her desperately. The saga ends tragically with the death of the lovers. Ehmedê Xanî's *mesnevi* takes its name from these characters in the saga. In the *mesnevi*, Mem and Zin fall in love with each other during the Newroz festival, in which the arrival of spring is celebrated. Zin has a noble family and is the sister of the governor of Cizre. However, the antagonist Beko, the gate keeper of the governor, hampers the union of the two lovers with his insidious plans. His conspiracies result in the death of Mem, which is unbearable for Zin. The story, which is rich in elements of Kurdish culture and folklore, ends with the tragic death of the lovers. The shrine of Mem and Zin was constructed by Emir Abdal İbn-i Abdullah Seyfettin Boti in 1487 in Şırnak and it can still be visited there. However, written more than two centuries after the death of the lovers, Xanî's *mesnevi* goes

¹ A poetic form consisting of rhymed couplets in Sufi literature.

² Xanî is spelled like "Khani" in English.

beyond the love story of two young people and, as a representative of the genre of Sufi poetry, deals with love of God. What is significant is that Xanî did not write it in Arabic, Persian or Ottoman Turkish, which were the conventional languages for this genre in that time, but wrote it in the Kurmanji dialect of Kurdish. In his article “Kürt Ulusal Destanı: *Mem û Zin*” (The Kurdish National Saga: *Mem û Zin*), Mehmet Emin Bozarslan states that since Arabic was the language of Islam and Persian and Ottoman Turkish were the languages of the two dominant empires, only these languages were appreciated (Bozarslan, 2010, p. 51). Xanî gives his reason for writing in Kurdish in his *mesnevi* in the couplets 237-240:

Hasil ji înad eger ji bêdad
Ev bîd’ete kir xîlafê mu’tad

Safî şemirand vexwari durdî
Manendê durrê lîsanê Kurdî

Înaye nîzam û întîzamê
Kêşaye cefa ji boy ‘ amê

Da xelqî nebêjîtin ku “Ekrad
Bê me’rîfet in, bi esl û bunyad

(Yıldırım, trans. 2010, p. 157)

In short: stubbornly, albeit out of injustice
He [Xanî] embarked on this unusual novelty

Pouring limpid drink to the dreg
As the pearl of the Kurdish tongue

Bringing it into order and regularity
Suffering hardship for the sake of the public

So that people might not say: “The Kurds
Have no origin, knowledge and base

(Saadalla, trans. 2008, p. 33)

It is clear that Xanî wrote his piece in Kurdish for the specific reason of enriching his own culture through literary production. That is why some writers like Ferhad Şakeli, the author of *Mem û Zin 'de Kürt Milliyetçiliği* (Kurdish Nationalism in *Mem û Zin*), still identify this text as the origin of Kurdish nationalism (Şakeli, 1996). That may also be the reason why *Mem û Zin* is the most frequently published work of Kurdish literature (Ergül, 2015). Not only the language the text was written in but also the plot of the work have provided substance for nationalist readings and appropriations of *Mem û Zin*. The relationship between Mem and Zin has been interpreted as symbolizing the Kurds' struggle for unity and nationhood and the difficulty of achieving these (Galip, 2012, p. 171). The nationalist reading of the text is also underlined by Martin Strohmeier, who suggests that *Mem û Zin* "has become almost a 'Declaration of Independence' in Kurdish history" (Strohmeier, 2003, p. 27). The Kurdish-nationalist reading of the text appears particularly striking, and potentially problematic, when we consider *Mem û Zin*, its interpretations and translations, within the framework of the Kurdish issue in Turkey with all its political, linguistic, economic and social dimensions. That is why *Mem û Zin* can be regarded as a particularly relevant case for the study of ideology in translation.

A few key moments in the history of *Mem û Zin* in Turkish / Turkey reveal what a rich source of material this text offers for research on translation, and especially for research on the relationship between translation, ideology, politics and power.

Mehmet Emin Bozarslan, the first translator of *Mem û Zin* in the Republican period was sued for his endeavor to translate this text in 1968. Ideologically "problematic" parts were omitted but even this censorship did not rescue him from being tried. No less interesting is the subsequent evolution of the same text, in the same country. In

2010, the Ministry of Culture commissioned Namık Açıkgöz to translate *Mem û Zin* into Turkish within the context of the government's Kurdish initiative. The then Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan made use of this translation during his speech in Hakkari (Ehmedê Xanî's hometown) before the elections in 2011. This speech constitutes ample proof of the fact that translation is a "cultural political activity" (Venuti, 2010, p. 68). The transcription of the speech from the video is:

"Hakkari Ahmedi Hani'nin adı anılmıyordu. *Mem û Zin* tanınmıyor, yasaklıydı. Ama şimdi biz, Kültür Bakanlığı'mız vasıtasıyla bastık yayınladık ve hayata takdim ettik." (Erdoğan, 2011)

The name of Ehmedê Xanî from Hakkari was never mentioned. *Mem û Zin* was not known, it was banned. However, through the Ministry of Culture, we have now printed, published and revived it.³

The decision to translate the same text, Ehmedê Xanî's *Mem û Zin*, was once a reason for being tried and now it is presented a source of pride for political reasons. The total change in the position of the same source text requires an explanation from the perspective of Translation Studies.

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate various presentations of *Mem û Zin*, focusing on the translations from Kurdish into Turkish in the Republican Period. By "presentation", I mean how these translations are introduced to the target system and the role of paratextual elements like book covers and prefaces in that process. Thus, the aim is not doing textual comparisons between different translations. Indeed, since I do not know any Kurdish, this aim is not available to me. Instead of that, my primary goal is to see the differences between images of the work and author that are created by the paratexts attached to different translations. According to Genette, "the paratext ... is a discourse that is fundamentally heteronomous, auxillary, and dedicated to the service of something other than itself that constitutes

³ Unless stated otherwise, all subsequent translations from Turkish are by the current author.

its raison d'être” (Genette, 1997, p. 12). Thus, the major aim of this thesis is to reveal what exactly paratexts of different translations serve at different times. To the best of my knowledge, this will be the first time that a Kurdish literary work has been handled as a research topic within the field of Translation Studies, since most of the work produced on Kurdish literature is either highly comparative (i.e. comparisons with other literatures and languages are very common) or primarily motivated by a certain political agenda (e.g. the so-called academic works in the past that tried to show that Kurdish is not a language at all). Fortunately, we have the precious works of Clemence Scalbert-Yücel (2011), (2012) and Selim Temo Ergül (2015) on Kurdish literature; however, translation is not at the center of these studies. In his article titled “Specters of Kurdish Nationalism: Governmentality and Translation in Turkey”, Nicholas Glastonbury examines three translations of *Mem û Zin*, namely Mehmet Emin Bozarlsan’s translation (1968), Namık Açıköz’s translation (2010) and the TV series *Siya Mem û Zin*⁴ and discusses what he terms the “governmental logic” behind the production of these “transfigurations” (2015, p. 48). He asserts that, with its Kurdish initiative, the AKP government used Kurdish culture and language as “weapon[s] for counterinsurgency” and “expropriated the very terrain of the fields of Kurdish cultural production...” (2015, p. 63-64) in order to suppress Kurdish nationalist yearnings through the alternative offering of neoliberal (Turkish) multiculturalism. However, he does not approach these translations from the perspective of Translation Studies and does not employ the theoretical and methodological tools of that field. As an article, the study does not go into detail as this thesis offers. For instance, not much information about various translations of *Mem û Zin* is provided. On the other hand, this thesis focuses primarily on

⁴ In the shadow of *Mem û Zin*.

paratextual analysis of many *Mem û Zin* translations and aims to approach them through the prism of Translation Studies.

As for my methodology, I will concentrate on paratextual analysis, which Şehnaz Tahir Gürçağlar (2002) and others have shown to be a particularly fruitful method of translation research. Another example from Turkey of the use of paratextual analysis in translation research is Seyhan Bozkurt's MA thesis titled "Tracing Discourse in Prefaces to Turkish Translations of Fiction by Remzi Publishing House in the 1930s and 1940s" (2007). The major purpose of the paratextual analysis presented in this thesis is to portray the ideological differences in various Turkish translations of *Mem û Zin*.

For such an analysis, it is imperative to retrospect the context of the Kurdish issue in Turkey. This issue manifested itself in various fields, including the legal, linguistic, social, academic and political arena. Without doubt, translation activities were embedded in these contexts and were directly influenced by developments in such fields. A key turning point in the destiny of this work, namely the Ministry of Culture's publication of *Mem û Zin* within the framework of the Kurdish initiative, amply demonstrates the embeddedness of translational behavior in the broader social context. When we look at the legal field, it is possible to say that the Kurdish language was exposed to limitations or even bans, especially in the early Republican period. The reason for these linguistic restrictions may be the fact that the new state idealized a Turkish-speaking Turkish identity. Kurdish had its ups and downs throughout the history of the Republic, facing more strict legal regulations during politically sensitive times such as periods following coups d'état, and enjoying greater liberalization after 2000 in particular. The reflections of this liberalization can be seen in the accelerated pace of Kurdish publishing activities and specifically in the

publication of *Mem û Zin* translations, which gained an observable impetus in the last decade.

The linguistic contextualization of the Kurdish language shows that it too was the subject of hot debates concerning the (non-)existence of this language. Claims made concerning Kurdish have ranged from absolute denial of the existence of this language to the argument that there are multiple Kurdish languages. The claim that there is no such thing as Kurdish is not as prevalent as it used to be in the early periods of the Republic. However, the reference to a multiplicity of dialects raises another issue: Do they all fall under the Kurdish language or are they different languages? These ideas are supported by different groupings with different ideological stances, and this discussion will be covered detail in the first chapter.

Discussions on Kurdish language inevitably become tied up with demographic questions, namely the issue of how many people speak Kurdish and how many Kurdish people live in Turkey. However, there is no consensus on the calculations due to the differences in the ideological perspectives of the agents and the difficulty of defining what makes a person “Kurdish”. Most studies are based on the language criterion, i.e. if a person speaks Kurdish as a mother tongue, then we can assume him/her to be a Kurd. Nevertheless, this assumption has its intrinsic handicaps because some people are born to Kurdish families but do not speak Kurdish at all. When we look at the academic context, we see that in the past Kurdology was not recognized as a field in its own right. In fact, studies of the people many would claim to be Kurds often tried to show that Kurdish was not a language and that Kurds are originally Turks. We see that such studies were also promoted by the state, as can be seen in the example of *Doğu İlleri ve Varto Tarihi*. In recent years, however, Kurdish Language and Literatures departments have been

founded in some universities, even though their number is very few. The greater official recognition of Kurdish identity might be the reason for that step and for the impetus that Kurdish literary activities and the academic field of Kurdish Studies have gained in recent years.

When we analyze the literary context and translation activities related to Kurdish in Turkey, it is safe to say that they show a parallel trend to the political and social situation of Kurdish in the country. Even-Zohar's concept of the polysystem is very helpful for illuminating inter- and intra-systemic relations. On the other hand, we again face the difficulty of finding a "definition" for Kurdish literature, as its borders are so vague and arguably does not consist only of literary productions in the Kurdish language. There are those writers who are of Kurdish origin but write in Turkish, just as there are Kurdish authors in Turkey who write only in Kurdish. The drawing of borders around the Kurdish literary system becomes more problematic still when we consider literary production in different dialects of Kurdish. What is more, Kurdish literary activities are not limited to the borders of a single country, but take place across a wide territory, which makes the "definition" of this literature even more complicated.

Within the complex network of Kurdish literary activities, translation occupies a key position. Translations from Kurdish are carried out and there are also translations from other languages into Kurdish. The latter kinds of translations are mostly of canonized literary works. Through such translations, it is demonstrated that Kurdish is a language that is capable of reproducing great literature. In addition, these translated works may function as models for original production in Kurdish.

Having considered the status of the Kurdish language in Turkey from many angles, we can now start to explore the adventure of *Mem û Zin* in Turkish. The *mesnevi* was first translated in the Ottoman period, namely in 1730 by Ahmed Faik. The precise status of this translation is still the subject of debate. Some say that it was a translation of Xanî's *Mem û Zin*, while other suggest that it is a "Turkish *Mem û Zin*". Another translation was completed in 1919 by Müküslü Hamza. After the foundation of the Republic, this work was not translated for many years, until 1968, when Bozarşlan's translation came out. He was prosecuted for translating *Mem û Zin* and the reprintings of his translation were published in 1975 and 1990, with the addition of the court reports of Bozarşlan's trial. Sırrı Dadaşbilge translated Ahmed Faik's *Mem o Zin* in 1969, but unlike Bozarşlan he was not prosecuted, presumably the reason being that his was an intralingual translation of the "Turkish *Mem o Zin*", not an interlingual translation of Ehmedê Xanî's *Mem û Zin* in the taboo-ridden language Kurdish. The *mesnevi* was not translated into Turkish until the Ministry of Culture and Tourism commissioned Namık Açıkgöz as a translator and published *Mem û Zin* in 2010. After that, we see a remarkable increase in *Mem û Zin* translations into Turkish. Kadri Yıldırım published his translation in 2010, as well as a translation criticism on Açıkgöz's translation, which is a valuable material for discourse analysis. In 2013, Nihat Dağlı's prose translation was published by Gonca Books. Some intra-lingual translations of *Mem û Zin* also exist but they are excluded from the scope of this thesis, as my purpose is to focus on the translations from Kurdish into Turkish only. *Mem û Zin* also appeared on stage, the silver screen and TV, as a series on TRT-6, a state-run Kurdish-language TV channel.

Lefevre's notion of rewriting offers a fruitful framework for conceptualizing both the academic discourse on *Mem û Zin* in the Republican period and the

paratextual apparatuses (especially prefaces) of the Turkish translations of the saga. The factors of ideology and patronage play a crucial role in Lefevere's concept of rewriting, making it especially suitable for an analysis of *Mem û Zin*. As instances of rewriting, paratexts are very effective in potentially shaping and manipulating the reception of a work, and their manipulative power can be observed especially in book covers and prefaces. For this reason, the covers and prefaces will be analyzed with the help of the specific notions and terms introduced by Genette in his paratextual analysis, as well as with the tools of Critical Discourse Analysis.

As for the organization of the chapters in this thesis, the first chapter elaborates on the contextualization of the Kurdish language in Turkey, focusing on the legal, linguistic, social and academic aspects of the issue. The second chapter deals with Kurdish literary and translation activities in Turkey, employing the theoretical framework of Polysystem Theory. The contextualization of the case of *Mem û Zin* in the first two chapters should serve a better understanding of the environment in which *Mem û Zin* has been presented to the Turkish readership at different times. After that, in Chapter 3 I set out my theoretical framework and explicate the methodology used in my textual analysis. For this purpose, since the story of *Mem û Zin* in Turkey is a story of multiple translations, it is necessary to discuss the relevance to this story of the Retranslation Hypothesis and other theorizing and research on retranslations. After that, Lefevere's notion of rewriting will be summarized. As for the methodological tools, I will concentrate on critical discourse analysis and paratextual analysis. Chapter 4 presents the rewritings of *Mem û Zin* in the academic sphere, dealing first with the academic studies on Xanî and *Mem û Zin*. After that, *Mem û Zin* will be examined as a source text. In that part, a number of excerpts from the text will be used to highlight what makes this text so

significant and problematic for translation into Turkish. In the final part of the chapter, I will chronicle the Turkish translations of *Mem û Zin*, once again employing Lefevre's notion of rewriting in doing so. In Chapter 5, I will analyze the book covers and prefaces of Mehmet Emin Bozarslan's translation and its reprintings (1968, 1975, 1990), Namık Açıkgöz's translation (published by the Ministry of Culture in 2010), Kadri Yıldırım's translation (2010) and, finally, Yıldırım's translation criticism on Açıkgöz's translation (2011). The primary goal of this thesis is to see the differences in the way a work and its author can be presented and to trace the ideological motives behind these presentations. To conclude, Xanî wrote his *mesnevi* in Kurdish so that people might not say that "the Kurds have no origin, knowledge and base"; I analyze how his work has been presented to Turkish readers so that people might not say that translation is a mere transfer of words.

CHAPTER 1

CONTEXTUALIZING THE KURDISH LANGUAGE IN TURKEY

Mem û Zin can be considered an ideologically marked text not only because of its nationalist or religious readings but also for the language it was written in: Kurdish. The Kurdish language has always been a matter of debate in Turkey, and the debate surrounding it has been strongly related to the political macro-context. Actually, calling the political context the “macro-context” of the language issue and thus giving a hierarchically lower status to the language issue is problematic as the political context is itself often shaped by the language itself. Even the terms for referring to the political context, i.e. ‘the Kurdish issue’, ‘the Kurdish problem’, ‘the Kurdish question’, ‘the Kurdish rebellion’, ‘the Kurdish conflict’, etc., imply distinct perspectives on the issue. What is more, the ways these terms are defined and explained vary. Barkey and Fuller (1997, p. 60) suggest that some regard the Kurdish issue as one of “external terror”, which implies that the state should reinforce the military and security forces at the border line. On the other hand, some others think that it is a case of “internal terror”. In other words, there is an internal security problem that leads to criminal activity. Some people consider that it is primarily economic in origin; thus, the state should give more importance to economic investments in the Eastern part of the country in particular. However, there are many who claim that the Kurdish question is a cultural and ethnic issue, which raises the specter of cultural autonomy or even political independence (Barkey & Fuller, 1997, p. 60). As can be seen, it is very difficult to discuss this case using an ideology-free language.

Language thus turns out to be very problematic in the conceptualization of the issue. Not only is the language used when defining this case of critical importance; language rights have consistently been among the major demands of the Kurds. They have had many linguistic demands as part of their political struggle. The rights to receive education in their mother tongue, to use their language in court, to publish books, broadcast on TV/radio in Kurdish and to receive public services in that language appear as the most articulated demands. So, it is safe to assume that the substance of the Kurdish issue,⁵ as well as its presentation and conceptualization, are heavily shaped by language.

In this chapter, I will try to contextualize the Kurdish language and Kurdish literary and translation activities in Turkey. The contextualization will serve to foster a better understanding of the different presentations of the Turkish translations of *Mem û Zin* at different times by different agents. The aim of this chapter is to historicize and contextualize the use of the Kurdish language in Turkey and discuss the state of literary practices as well as translation activities. For this purpose, I will first deal with the use of Kurdish in Turkey, by focusing on the legal regulations. After that, I will attempt to demonstrate the publicization of Kurdish language; i.e. its use in political and social spheres. Then, demographic and linguistic studies in the field will be reviewed. In the next part, the academic discourse on Kurdish language will be analyzed. In the last part of the chapter, Kurdish literary and translation activities will be examined in the light of Polysystem Theory.

⁵Instead of the “Kurdish problem” or “conflict”, here the term “issue” is chosen to have a more neutral tone.

1.1 Legal context

In Turkey, the Kurdish language has been subject to restrictions, limitations and, mostly, wholesale bans. The underlying reason for this repressive approach can be counted as a state policy which can be dated back to the end of the Ottoman Empire and the foundation of the Republic. In this part, I will try to historicize the state approach towards the Kurdish language and its use in the public sphere.

In his article “The Kurdish Question in Turkish State Discourse”, Mesut Yeğen (1999) asserts that the roots of the Turkish state discourse (TSD) can be traced to the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. As a multi-national empire, the Ottomans had a different notion of “millet” or “nation” than we think of today. The axis of the “millet” was religion (Islam) in the Ottoman Empire; that is to say, there were not any ethnic categories but a religious-based hierarchy existed (Yeğen, *The Kurdish Question Turkish State Discourse*, 1999, p. 557). As Geoffrey Lewis puts it, “In the empire there was a Muslim millet, but no Turkish or Arab or Kurdish millets; there were Greek and Armenian and Jewish millets, but as religious communities, not as ethnic nations” (Lewis, 1965, p. 329). In the eighteenth century, it was realized that the Ottoman Empire had fallen behind Europe in many respects; thus, some reforms and innovations were made so as to modernize and westernize. In order to resist the West, Ottomans tried to resemble the West (Lewis, 1965, p. 329). This westernization and modernization process led to the entrance of nationalist views in the European sense into the Ottoman Empire. The notion of “millet” gained new dimensions.

In the 1920s, after the foundation of the Republic, the modernization and westernization process continued. The new regime searched for a new “nation” and made people adopt this new national identity (Aydın, 1995, p. 59, own translation).

“Turkishness” was the basis of the Republic which, in accordance with its secular stance, kept a distance from religion. Thus, the notion of “millet” altered after the Ottoman reign, where it had referred to Islam and Muslim people, and it gained a new dimension in the Republican period. To be sure, for some ideologues and policy makers the notion of “Turkishness” was intended to be inclusive and civic, but the marginalization and even denial of non-ethnically Turkish identities led to an ambiguity concerning the meaning of Turkishness. As a result, claims about civic nationalism did not always seem so sincere.

The fostering of Turkishness resulted in the ignoring or invisibility of other ethnic groups. What is more, these groups and their demands were mostly regarded as a threat to the unity of the state. It is also necessary to note that the Kurdish language generally comes to fore at this point as it is the mother tongue of “as many as one in five inhabitants of Turkey” (Ergil, 2000, p. 122). In other words, Kurdish is the second most widely used language in Turkey. Thus, its use was mostly associated with a risk or threat. As Doğu Ergil points out, sometimes *unity* was confused with *uniformity* (2000, p. 123). The nation-building process of the state resulted in standardizing the citizens in terms of nationality and language and secularizing them in orientation (2000, p. 123). By eliminating the differences and promoting a certain type of identity for citizenship, such standardization entailed many problems, including the Kurdish issue. The implications of standardization can be traced in the laws pertaining to the use of mother tongues and, specifically, to the use of Kurdish in the public sphere.

The desired uniformity for the sake of unity is clearly reflected in the language issue in Turkey. The state adopted monolingual policies and speaking in Turkish was considered as the main indicator of national identity (Kubilay, 2005, p.

56, own translation). Thus, the public sphere was homogenized linguistically. In her study, Kubilay firstly problematizes and conceptualizes the notion of “public sphere”. She discusses Habermas’ and Fraser’s conceptions of public sphere and criticizes the former’s notion of public sphere by drawing on the arguments of the latter. Adopting the theoretical tools of Fraser, she depicts the case of the Kurdish language in the public sphere in Turkey, making frequent reference to relevant legislation.

The constitution of 1924 defined Turkishness in Article 88 as follows:

“Without religious and racial discriminations, everyone in Turkey is a Turk in terms of citizenship”. Here, Turkishness is defined legally (Kubilay, 2005, p. 64, own translation). However, in the other sections (Article 12), we find the stipulation that, “Those who cannot read and write in Turkish cannot be elected as a representative”. So, as Yeğen points out, an ethnic dimension is added by mentioning literacy in the Turkish language (2003, p. 120).

Some other items of legislation that directly affect the use of Kurdish are the Law on the Adoption and Application of the Turkish Alphabet of 1928, the Law on the Unification of Education of 1924 and the Surname Law of 1934 (Zeydanlıoğlu, 2012, p. 103). With the alphabet reform, the new Turkish alphabet adapted from the Latin alphabet was made obligatory. Secondly, the education reform secularized and centralized the education system. Due to centralization, different types of educational institutions like *medrese* or religious schools were banned. In the Ottoman period, these institutions had provided education in different languages, including Kurdish. When they were prohibited, Kurdish was deprived of its institutions in the field of education (Zeydanlıoğlu, 2012, p. 103). Finally, with the Surname Law of 1934, all citizens had to adopt Turkish surnames. The Statute on Last Names (*Soy Adı*

Nizamnamesi) stipulated that last names ending with “*yan, of, ef, vic, is, dis, pulos, aki, zade, mahdumu, veled and bin*” could not be adopted (Bayar, 2011, p. 124). As a result, people of Armenian, Bulgarian, Macedonian, Serbian, Croatian, Slavic, Greek, Cretan, Persian, Georgian and Arabic origin could not register with the surnames of their nationalities (Çağaptay, 2006, p. 62). What was intended was the creation of a homogeneous nation through the adoption of Turkish surnames.

Another legal regulation was the Resettlement Law of 1934. Also known as Law no. 2510, the Resettlement Law aimed at creating an homogenized population throughout the country by distributing the non-Turkish population to certain regions of Turkey, where they could come together and fuse with the Turkish population. Also, the Resettlement Law set the condition that “those who did not speak Turkish could not establish a village or neighborhood, nor could they found workers’ or artisans’ groups/associations” (Bayar, 2011, p. 122). Thus we can safely infer that during the first decades of the Republic, the use of languages other than Turkish was perceived as a threat to national unity and Kurdish language and its speakers were exposed to severe practices including forced resettlement. Even though these practices were enforced on the speakers of all languages spoken in Turkey other than Turkish, the restrictions on Kurdish gain prominence as it is the most widely spoken language in Turkey after Turkish (Kubilay, 2005, p. 68). Another way of imposing Turkish on non-Turkish speakers was the campaign “Citizen Speak Turkish!” (Vatandaş Türkçe Konuş) of 1928. As a way of Turkifying minorities, this campaign aimed to teach Turkish to non-Turkish speakers by hanging up posters and distributing bulletins in the public sphere in order to encourage people to speak in Turkish (Sadoğlu, 2003, pp. 275-290).

Besides the activities of social engineering that included the deportation of the non-Turkish population and promoting the use of Turkish in the public sphere, non-Turkish district names were also proscribed. In 1959, Law No. 7267 stipulated that “village names that are not Turkish and give rise to confusion are to be changed in the shortest possible time by the Interior Ministry after receiving the opinion of the Provincial Permanent committee (Yıldız & Fryer, 2004, p. 26). Actually, 1959 was not the first time that village names were replaced with names of Turkish origin. In 1921, a bill about name changes had been brought to the Grand National Assembly of Turkey and found support. It envisioned that village names that are “irreconcilable with Islam and Turkishness” should be changed (Bayar, 2011, p. 113). One telling example is the change of Kırkkilise (forty churches) to Kırklareli. Also, while supporting the bill, Yasin (Kutluğ) Bey suggested changing the name of the province Rumköyü (Greek Village) for Islamic reasons (2011, p. 113). It is interesting that the name changes in 1921 were mostly for religious reasons whereas in Law No. 7267 of 1959, the emphasis on religion was removed and it was stipulated that “the village names that are not Turkish and give rise to confusion” were to be changed. As a result, it can be seen that the vision of the state had undergone some changes. The Bill of 1921 and the Law of 1959 show that a shift had taken place from a religious-oriented view to a nationalist view, as the secular stance of the state was reinforced in the course of time, whereas ‘Turkishness’ became more and more important.

When we come to the 1980s, we see that repressive language policies continued. In 1982, the use of mother tongues other than Turkish was banned by law (Kubilay, 2005, p. 71). In Article 3 of the Constitution promulgated in 1982, it was stated that the language of the state was Turkish.⁶ As Kubilay points out, the lack of

⁶“Türkiye Devleti, ülkesi ve milletiyle bölünmez bir bütündür. Dili Türkçedir” (Kubilay, 2005, p. 72).

the term “official”⁷ in this article makes the Turkish language both the official language of the state and the mother tongue of the citizens (p. 72). Thus, the official language and the mother tongue were equated. The ban on Kurdish was maintained in the Law No. 2932 promulgated by the military junta in 1983. In accordance with Article 2 of this law, the expression, dissemination and publication of thought in any language other than the primary official language of the states recognized by the Turkish State was forbidden.⁸ According to Baskın Oran, the article was prepared very meticulously, with special attention to wording. The reason for the insertion of the *primary* can well have been the fact that Iraq’s *second* official language then was Kurdish. Besides, as the Turkish State would never recognize the existence of a possible Kurdish state, the criterion of recognition by the Turkish State was added (Oran, pp. 14-15). Also, Article 3 reads that the mother tongue of the Turkish citizens is Turkish (Kubilay, 2005, p. 72).⁹ As a result, the Kurdish language was completely forbidden by law.

In 1990s, we see some turning points regarding the Kurdish issue, which had some repercussions for the use of language. The first turning point could be said to be the statement of the then-president Turgut Özal, who said that “we have to recognize the Kurdish reality”¹⁰ (Kubilay, 2005, p. 73, own translation). This was the first time that the state had accepted the existence of Kurdish people. In 1991, Özal suggested annulling Law No. 2932. After the repeal of this Law, the non-political use of local languages as well as singing and using audial and visual materials in these languages were no longer illegal “at least on the paper” (Zeydanlıoğlu, 2012, p. 110).

⁷ Resmi

⁸ “Türk Devleti tarafından tanınmış bulunan devletlerin birinci resmi dilleri dışındaki herhangi bir dille düşüncelerin açıklanması, yayılması ve yayınlanması yasaklanmıştır” (Kubilay, 2005, p. 72).

⁹ “Türk vatandaşlarının anadili Türkçe’dir” (Kubilay, 2005, p. 72).

¹⁰ “Kürt realitesini tanımalıyız” (Kubilay, 2005, p. 73).

Law No. 2932 was repealed and the Anti-Terror Law passed (p. 112). Although Kurdish was saved from a complete ban (its use was partially permitted by law), there have been some criticisms of the attempts by the state. First of all, some regard these attempts merely as part of the process of integration into European Union and claim that, by partially permitting the use of local languages (legalizing singing in these languages or the release of albums), the state tried to give the impression that human rights were being preserved in Turkey. The second criticism, as expressed in Zeydanlıoğlu's article, concerns Anti-Terror Law No. 3713. This "defined terrorism so vaguely that ... anyone involved in the promotion of Kurdish language or culture" could be defined as a terrorist according to the Law (Zeydanlıoğlu, 2012, p. 112). Even though Law No. 2932 was repealed, articles 26 and 28 of the Constitution, which indicate that "a language that is forbidden by law cannot be used in the expression and publication of ideas", were not annulled. They were, however, amended in 2002 within the framework of the European Union harmonization package (Kubilay, 2005, p. 75). This situation makes us consider that, just like in 1991, again in 2002, some "positive" steps regarding the language issue may have been taken with an eye to the EU integration process.

When we come to the 2000s, we can say that the last decade has witnessed particularly passionate discussions following the steps taken the government with regards to the Kurdish issue. Many reforms were made within the framework of the EU harmonization package, particularly in the fields of broadcasting and education. What is more, in 2009, the government launched the 'Kurdish initiative'. Although it is highly debatable to what extent these steps have satisfied the Kurdish population, they are worth analyzing to see the shifting attitude (or the seemingly shifting attitude) of the state.

As mentioned above, in 2002, Article 26 of the Constitution was amended and this opened the way for radio and TV broadcasting in languages other than Turkish (Kubilay, 2005, p. 76). The regulation prepared by RTÜK (The Supreme Board of Radio and Television) came into force on 18 December 2002 and stipulated that “the authority to broadcast in different mother tongues belongs only to TRT (Turkish Radio and Television Corporation)¹¹” (2005, p. 77). Also, the duration of broadcasts was limited and Turkish translation had to be provided. The broadcast could not aim at teaching any language and had to address only adults (2005, p. 77).

In 2003, within the framework of the sixth harmonization package, Law No. 3984 was amended and it stipulated that “... Also, *public* and *private* radio and TV corporations can broadcast in the different languages and dialects that Turkish citizens traditionally speak in their daily lives¹²” (2005, p. 77). This regulation made it possible for public or private radio and TV corporations to broadcast in different languages, just like TRT. However, as only ‘public’ and ‘private’ corporations are specified and no distinction or specification was made in the law between *local* and *national* radio and TV channels, the local channels were also allowed to broadcast in different languages. This led to much discussion and some circles argued that it would be almost impossible to control the content of the programs on local channels. In view of this ambiguity, RTÜK prepared another regulation which came into effect in 2004. This regulation specified that the right to broadcasting in different mother tongues be given only to *national* public and private Radio and TV channels, along with TRT (Kubilay, 2005, p. 78). The specification of *national* can be read as a way

¹¹“Radyo ve Televizyon Yayınlarının Dili Hakkındaki Yönetmelik’e göre anadilde yayıncılık yapma yetkisi yalnızca TRT’ye aittir” (Kubilay, 2005, p. 77).

¹²“... Ayrıca, kamu ve özel radyo ve televizyon kuruluşlarınca Türk vatandaşlarının günlük yaşamlarında geleneksel olarak kullandıkları farklı dil ve lehçelerde yayın yapılabilir” (Kubilay, 2005, p. 77).

to ease control over broadcasting activities. If the local channels had also been allowed along with the national ones, central surveillance might have been more challenging.

Until 2009, all the regulations and amendments were associated with the use of different languages and mother tongues other than Turkish and were not specifically related with Kurdish. The particular attempt to broadcast in Kurdish was made in 2009 when TRT-6, “a state-run channel ... broadcast[ing] exclusively in Kurdish” was launched (Zeydanlioğlu, 2012, p. 116). It has programs on “health, travel, nature, religion, cartoons for children, news and debates” (2012, p. 116). Even though it is apparent that, for the first time, the Kurdish language was made visible by the Turkish State, the channel entailed much controversy. The debate was not in the form of a simple dichotomy (i.e. Kurdish people supporting the channel and Turkish nationalists harshly criticizing it), but it became a more complex issue as there are both supporters and critics among the Kurds as well as detractors among Turkish nationalists. It might be illuminating to have a look at Ergin Öpengin’s study to see the reactions and responses of Kurdish people to TRT-6. Öpengin conducted a questionnaire among 76 speakers of Kurdish living in the East and Southeastern part of Turkey (Öpengin, 2012, p. 165). The media section of the survey reveals the respondents’ ideas about TRT-6. Even though Öpengin admits that the coverage of the survey is too limited to generalize to the whole Kurdish population living in Turkey, results might partly reflect the general inclination. The survey was conducted in Diyarbakır and Hakkari, and participants were able to respond in Kurdish or Turkish. It is important to note this, as there are many Kurdish people living in Turkey who cannot speak Kurdish.

According to the findings of Öpengin's study, more than half of the respondents never watch TRT-6. They have a negative attitude towards it because most of the respondents say that the channel does not use Kurdish properly, there is much state intervention, and its main purpose is to weaken Kurdish politics (Öpengin, 2012, p. 169). However, there are also positive views on the perception of Kurdish language. More than half of the respondents believe that TRT-6 will contribute to the recognition and development of Kurdish language by improving its prestige in the public domain and it will be more easily transferred to successive generations (2012, p. 169). Hence, it is clear that among Kurdish people there is not one single view about TRT-6, which makes the case even more complicated.

Not only broadcasting but also education was the subject of new legislation in the 2000s. The 2003 Law on Teaching Different Languages and Dialects Traditionally Used by Turkish Citizens in Their Daily Lives permitted private courses, but at the same time brought many restrictions (Zeydanlıoğlu, 2012, p. 115). To illustrate, "courses could only last for 10 weeks and no more than 18 hours per week and were for adult students only". Also, the teachers had to be native speakers of Turkish and have a diploma (Zeydanlıoğlu, 2012, p. 115). Zeydanlıoğlu questions how a native Turkish speaker can get a diploma in the Kurdish language in Turkey. Also, Kurdish native speakers are not allowed to teach Kurdish. Other restrictions are the high course fees and the noticeably rigid requirements that course buildings were supposed to meet (Zeydanlıoğlu, 2012, p. 115). It is clear that, just like in broadcasting, the educational regulations include so many restrictions that sometimes the regulations themselves make it impossible to teach Kurdish even though they seemingly aim at opening new avenues for the teaching of this language.

Another important development in the field of education was the acceptance of the application by Mardin Artuklu University to the Higher Board of Education (YÖK) to establish an “Institute for Living Languages”.¹³ The purpose of the institute was “to provide postgraduate education primarily in Kurdish but also in other regional languages” (Zeydanlıoğlu, 2012, p. 118). The application was accepted in 2009. As Zeydanlıoğlu claims, the initially planned name was “Kurdish Institute”; however, within a short time it turned into an “Institute for Living Languages”. Even though the opening of a postgraduate institute that will provide education in Kurdish might be promising, the change of “Kurdish Institute” to “Institute of Living Languages” can be interpreted as a trace of the conventional state view, which was highly effective in the first decades of the Republic as explained above. Even though it has lost the power it once had, it is still ‘living’ and can easily be seen in the change of the institute name.

In this section, we have seen that the state’s policies towards the Kurdish issue go back to the foundation of the Republic. As the concept of the “nation” changed in the Republican period, leaving its religious content and gaining an ethnic dimension, Turkishness was presented as the ideal identity for citizens, while the Kurdish language was perceived as a threat to national unity. It is important to note that ‘Turkish nationalism’ has never had a single definition. On the contrary, one can delineate at least three variants: ethnic nationalism, cultural nationalism and civic nationalism. The latter has been adopted by most Turkish political parties and it implies that ‘Turkish’ is a generic name or a primary identity which can be attributed to all the citizens of the Turkish Republic. It is possible to see this view in the

¹³ Yaşayan Diller Enstitüsü.

statements of Atatürk¹⁴, İsmet İnönü, Celal Bayar, Turgut Özal and Süleyman Demirel, Ahmet Necdet Sezer and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (Heper, 2007, pp. 123-132). Also, the views of some political parties on nationalism have changed in the course of time. To illustrate, the notion of nationalism advocated by MHP (Nationalistic Action Party) has partially changed, if not totally transformed. A shift towards civic nationalism can be observed in the recent discourse, even though still some ethnic notions are emphasized by the party. As Metin Heper suggests, in the 1960s MHP advocated an ethnic nationalism. Alparslan Türkeş, the founder of the party, once stated that if a person had an accent, then we cannot consider him/her a Turk (2007, p. 126). Thereafter, we see a shift towards cultural nationalism in the views of MHP and the party gave special importance to common cultural values and, in particular, to Islam, which could serve as a bond among people (2007, p. 125). When we come to the 1990s, a drift towards civic nationalism becomes apparent in Devlet Bahçeli's statements, in which patriotism is highlighted (2007, p. 130). Even though this view regards Turkishness as a generic concept or a primary identity that allows space for secondary identities, the actual practices have sometimes been inconsistent with the definition. Turkishness was directly linked to citizenship; however, there was no clarification on how people can live in line with their secondary identities. (The use of languages other than Turkish is at stake here). Thus, it can be concluded that multiple definitions of Turkishness, shifts in these notions in the course of time and contradictory practices can be considered as some of the factors feeding in to the Kurdish issue. Even though many political and public figures seemingly intended "Turk" to be inclusive, the 'Turkifying' process for the

¹⁴ One of Atatürk's statements about nationalism is "Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'ni kuran Türk halkına Türk Milleti denir" (1930). (The Turkish people who founded the Republic of Turkey are called Turkish nation) (Atatürk İlkeleri, 2005, own translation). This statement encapsulates Atatürk's civic nationalist position.

sake of unity sometimes turned into a uniforming process, as discussed above. These standardizing policies were not directed exclusively against the Kurdish language, and other languages were also affected, but the prominence of the issue resulted from the large population of Kurds living in Turkey. In fact, the size of the population may not be the only reason for the resistance to adopting a new identity, as there are other claims regarding the social and demographic structure of Kurdish population. This aspect will be analyzed in the section ‘Demographic Studies’.

Until the 1990s, repressive and restrictive policies were generally implemented towards the enactment and expression of Kurdish identity. In some periods, the existence of Kurds and the Kurdish language was completely ignored. Although there are many views on the sources of the Kurdish issue (i.e. economic, ethnic or cultural reasons), it is obvious that the constructed invisibility of this language played a major role in shaping the contours of, and responses to the Kurdish issue. Here, I use the word “constructed” in order to emphasize that invisibility did not mean that the language was simply ignored. On the contrary, “scientific” studies were undertaken with the aim of “proving” that Kurdish is not a language at all. In other words, an invisible status was designed for Kurdish, and numerous studies have endeavored to demonstrate the invisibility or even total absence of this language, which will be handled in subsequent sections.

Starting from the 1990s and gaining impetus in the 2000s, some steps were taken to solve the Kurdish issue. In particular, there have been reforms in broadcasting and education, but these have not been a panacea and have not always satisfied many Kurdish people. The most common criticism is that the government makes these innovations just on paper, as applying them is still very difficult. Also, it

is claimed that these regulations are only for the sake of integration into the European Union.

As can be seen, the Kurdish language has been problematic for decades. The contextualization of this language and the historical analysis of the legal dimensions of the issue will hopefully contribute to a better understanding of the case of the Turkish translations of *Mem û Zin* by portraying the environment in which these translations were presented.

1.2 Kurdish language in the public sphere

In the previous section, I tried to present the legal context in which the Kurdish language exists in Turkey, in other words, to paint the big picture on the use of Kurdish in Turkey. However, we should also concentrate on the use of this language in the actual public sphere, and this will be referred to as the publicization of Kurdish language, as suggested by Kemal İnal. İnal contributes to the analysis of the publicization of Kurdish language with his study “Language as an Important Dimension of Kurdish Question: Publicization of Kurdish Language During the AKP Rule” (2012).¹⁵ Firstly, İnal makes a distinction between publicized and socialized Kurdish language.¹⁶ The former refers to ethno-political endeavors which are all based on the assumption that mother-tongue usage is a human right. However, the latter is more associated with the cultural and folkloric aspects of the use of Kurdish. Thus, it lacks the political dimension (İnal, 2012, p. 82). İnal further notes that the Kurdish initiative which started in 2002 has contributed to the free usage of Kurdish, especially in the cultural arena, by eliminating the obstacles to its usage in the media, education, arts and politics/propaganda. The reason why so many Kurdish people are

¹⁵ Kürt Sorunun Önemli Bir Boyutu Olarak Dil: AKP Döneminde Kürtçenin Kamusallaşması.

¹⁶ Kamusallaştırılan ve toplumsallaşmış Kürtçe.

not satisfied with those steps is that they want Kurdish to be publicized in the political arena and to be used in The Grand National Assembly of Turkey, in the courts and in local administrations (p. 82). Hence, the purpose and basis of cultural and political publicization are completely different: cultural publicization underlines the cultural richness of the country, crystalized in the ‘mosaic’ metaphor often used by politicians. (One invocation of this metaphor can be found in Ertuğrul Günay’s preface to the Ministry of Culture’s *Mem û Zin* translation, which will be dealt with in the paratextual discourse analysis in Chapter IV.) On the other hand, the political publicization of Kurdish language is based on the conviction that Kurdish is the mother tongue of many people in Turkey and needs to gain visibility in the public sphere (İnal, 2012, p. 83). It is possible to say that these two approaches are prone to come into conflict with one another, as cultural publicization blends Kurdish into a cultural mixture, whereas political publicization struggles to maintain the distinctiveness of the language. According to İnal, the fields in which Kurdish language is getting publicized and thus getting more visible in the public sphere are the political-legal field, the field of education, and finally what İnal terms the social field.

In the political and legal field, we see that the use of Kurdish in the Great National Assembly of Turkey has always led to some problems and Kurdish has been referred to as an “unknown language”¹⁷ in assembly reports (İnal, 2012, p. 84). When we come to its usage in the legal field, we see that there is no standard practice. Some courts have rejected the demand to defend in Kurdish but some others allow defendants to defend themselves in Kurdish and commission courthouse staff to translate into Turkish (2012, p. 85). The last point İnal covers in his analysis of the

¹⁷ Bilinmeyen bir dil.

political and legal field is the bilingual or multilingual municipalities. Municipalities of some eastern cities of Turkey have carried out bilingual (Turkish-Kurdish) or even multilingual (Kurdish, Armenian, Syriac, English and Arabic) activities for communicating with the public more efficiently (2012, p. 86). The mayors of these cities argued that the use of these languages contributed to understanding the expectations of people and responding to them accordingly. However, they were removed from their positions and put on trial (2012, p. 86).

In the field of education, private Kurdish courses emerged in 2002, as a consequence of the reforms taken to conform with EU norms. However, these courses did not attract great numbers of people. İnal asserts that people reacted to the opening of these courses in two main ways. The first reaction was that no matter what the number of students was, these courses had to be available. The other approach is that learning a mother tongue in a private course makes no sense and the certificates given at the end of these courses are totally useless in social life (2012, p. 88). İnal categorizes the demands in the field of education as “radical demands”, “reformist demands” and finally “unitary demands” (2012, p. 90). The first set presupposes that Kurdish is a mother tongue and that people have a right to receive education in their mother tongues. Thus, Kurdish people must enjoy this right. The second “reformist” approach is milder and it suggests that Kurdish can be an elective course and people can take these selective courses both in schools and in private courses. The “unitary” approach, however, puts the emphasis on the strong bond between nation and language, thus regarding all other demands as separatist (2012, p. 91).

The place of Kurdish in higher education is another branch of the discussion. In 2008, the then president of The Council of Higher Education (YÖK), Yusuf Ziya

Özcan, announced that YÖK would henceforth assess applications for Kurdish Language and Literature Departments (2012, p. 92). Nevertheless, YÖK changed its mind and would only accept institutes named “Living Languages”. In these institutes, education and research on Persian, Arabic, Syriac and above all Kurdish languages would be carried out. Özcan noted that YÖK’s priority was not Kurdish language and that a prerequisite for the presence of Kurdology departments in a university was the existence of highly competent Turkish Language and Literature, Persian Language and Literature and Arabic Language and Literature departments (2012, p. 93).¹⁸ In so doing, Özcan seemed to echo the general conviction that Kurdish is a hybrid language or a mixture of the aforementioned languages. Three universities in Turkey, namely Mardin Artuklu University, Muş Alparslan University and Bingöl University, now have departments of Kurdish Language and Literature.

When we come to the social field, we see that many reforms have been undertaken, such as those pertaining to district names, the use of the previously ‘forbidden’ letters “q”, “w” and “x”, the giving of Kurdish names to babies, publication in Kurdish language and bilingual worship. Some of these issues, e.g. changing the names of districts, have already been analyzed in the section on the legal context. As for bilingual worship, İnal reminds us that in 2009 the Presidency of Religious Affairs contemplated the use of Kurdish in sermons, appointing Kurdish-speaking imams to Eastern cities, preparing religious programs for Kurdish TV, publishing the Quran in Kurdish and translating religious texts into Kurdish (2012, p. 101). Another point is the domain of publications in Kurdish and Kurdish

¹⁸ “Kürt dili ve edebiyatı araştırması enstitüsü veya bölümünün açılabilmesi için çok güçlü bir Türk dili ve edebiyatı bölümü lazım. Aynı şekilde çok güçlü bir Farsça dil ve edebiyatı bölümü ve yine çok güçlü bir Arapça dil ve edebiyatı bölümü lazım. Bunlar olmaksızın zaten Kürdoloji ile ilgili herhangi bir bölüm, enstitü veya anabilim dalının başarılı olacağını zannetmiyorum. Çünkü Kürt diline bakarsanız, tespitlere göre, yüzde 60-70 Farsça’dan ödünç aldığını, yine yüzde 20-25 arasında Arapça’dan ödünç aldığını ifade ediyorlar. Türkçe’den de kelimeler olduğunu biliyoruz. Bütün bölümler hazırlanırsa orada bu bölümler arasındaki etkileşim daha güçlü olur. Daha iyi sonuç elde edilebilir” (Özcan'a göre Kürtçe'den önce 3 dil var, 2009).

literary activities, which will be covered in depth below when we turn to consider literary and translation activities.

To sum up, it is clear that the Kurdish language has not completed its publicization process. Remembering Inal's distinction between cultural and political publicization, we can assert that political publicization is still a contentious matter, even though cultural publicization has been relatively smooth. Indeed, it is possible to problematize the distinction between these two types of publicization. They should not be regarded as separate but as supplementary of each other. When we consider the restrictions regarding the Kurdish language in the past, the publicization in the cultural arena can well be considered "political" to some extent.

1.3 Defining an ethnic group and its language: demographic studies and linguistic classifications

1.3.1 Demographic studies

There have been numerous attempts to estimate the Kurdish population living in Turkey, with the purpose of illuminating the scope of the Kurdish problem. Even though national censuses may seem a good solution at the outset, they have their intrinsic handicaps in terms of estimating the number. We should also point out that, because of the tabooisation of the Kurdish issue and Kurdish identity (and, in fact, other kinds of 'otherness'), censuses in Turkey did not include questions about ethnicity after 1965. The first and foremost problem is the definition of Kurdish identity. The general tendency is to equate ethnic identity with the mother tongue. Hence, in line with this definition, a Kurd is a person who speaks Kurdish as his/ her mother tongue. However, there is no single 'Kurdish language' and it is possible to mention multiple 'Kurdish languages', owing to the plurality of dialects or

(sub)languages of Kurdish. What is more, ideological perspectives impact on the issue; i.e. both the population estimates and the definition of the Kurdish language or 'languages' are marked ideologically. As Servet Mutlu asserted back in 1996, estimates vary between 3 million to 15 million and these "reflect pro-Kurdish or pro-Turkish sympathies and attitudes rather than scientific facts or erudition" (Mutlu, 1996, p. 517). My aim here is not to offer a 'scientific' or 'accurate' estimation, but to present the multiplicity of views both on the population estimates and the linguistic classifications of Kurdish language, which only add to the complexity of the issue.

The exact size of the Kurdish population in Turkey has long been an issue of interest for academics. In his study "Ethnic Kurds in Turkey: A Demographic Study", Servet Mutlu (1996) tries to offer a more accurate, objective and scientific estimation of the size of the Kurdish population and to give an overview of the Kurds' geographical distribution in Turkey. Mutlu employs the 1965 census results in particular, since that census was the last one which included an item about the mother tongue. Employing the 1965 census, Mutlu affirms that equating the mother tongue with ethnic identity has inherent problems, such as excluding people who are Kurdish by origin but do not speak Kurdish. Nevertheless, he maintains that language is a solid marker of identity for Kurdish people. The ethnic markers might be categorized as "emic" or "etic"; the former refers to the "internal view of a group by the insiders" and the latter means the view of outsiders regarding the group. In the case of Kurdish people, language has always been an emic marker as an important part of their cultural existence. Besides, it is an etic marker as the majority of Kurds are Muslim and language is the distinctive marker for outsiders (1996, p. 518). Thus, despite the problems this approach brings, language is taken as the identity marker in

Mutlu's study, which concludes that the Kurdish population increased from 3.132 million in 1965 to 7.046 million in 1990 (1996, p. 532). Due to its high fertility rates, the Kurdish component of the population has a higher rate of increase than the non-Kurdish one. Also, in 1965, about one-fifth of Kurdish people were living in the west, whereas this ratio had climbed up to one-third by 1990 (1996, p. 532).

Another study on the Kurdish population living in Turkey was conducted by Civelek, Coşkun and Zeyneloğlu in 2011. The distinctive feature of the study is that it concentrates on the anthropological and demographical differences between Turkish and Kurdish populations living in Turkey rather than dealing merely with quantitative census results. The question raised is why other ethnic groups living in Turkey apart from the Kurds did not face troubles in the process of Turkification or accepting the Turkish identity. The point is that associating the issue only with the terms of economics, ethnicity or terror is a flawed approach and anthropological differences might be at stake in the emergence of the problem. In search for an answer to the question above, Civelek (et al.) analyze the processes of demographic transition for Kurdish and non-Kurdish population.

Demographic transition can be defined as the transition process of a population from high fertility and mortality rates to low fertility and mortality rates. In the pre-stage of demographic transition, firstly the literacy rates of the male population increase (Zeyneloğlu, Civelek, & Coşkun, 2011, p. 347). Afterwards, the literacy of the female population rises and consequently fertility rates decrease. As Civelek (et al.) state, Turkey followed a similar path in the process of demographic transition, albeit with different paces in different regions and ethnic groups. Civelek and her colleagues dwell on the rates of literacy, fertility and endogamy. The study clearly demonstrates that the Kurdish population living in Turkey followed different

patterns in the demographic transition process. When the literacy rates, fertility and live birth rates are analyzed, we see that Kurdish people did not pursue a parallel path to the other ethnic groups. Endogamy is another factor in the analysis of demographical transformation. The prevalence of endogamy shows that Kurdish people are also very closed to interaction with other groups through marriage (Zeyneloğlu, Civelek, & Coşkun, 2011).

In conclusion, we can say that it is not possible to categorize people as Kurds or Turks depending on the mother tongue usage. Other factors that affect demographic transition must be taken into account as well. In fact, we can talk about varying levels of being a Kurd or a Turk considering the other factors leading people to feel that they belong to an ethnic group without speaking its language at all. Obviously, is not appropriate to equate mother tongue with ethnicity and base population estimations on such assumptions. No matter what the exact population is, it is obvious that those Kurdish people that speak Kurdish as a mother tongue and do not speak Turkish have displayed completely different trends in literacy, fertility and endogamy rates, which are the key factors in the demographic transition process. Thus, it is safe to assume that different ethnic groups are at different stages of the demographic transition process. This might be another reason for the “issue”, besides the economic, geographic and political ones. Cultural isolation and resistance to cultural transformation may result in conflicts between different groups. So, for a better understanding of the problem, it is vitally important to take demographic and anthropological factors into account.

1.3.2 Linguistic classifications

In the previous section, we have seen that it is problematic to make ethnic categorizations in Turkey purely on the basis of mother tongue use and that it is better to discuss different levels of ethnic identities, instead of positing dichotomies. When we analyze the linguistic aspect, we come across similar ambivalences. The definition of the Kurdish language or the recognition of Kurdish as a language has been another matter of discussion not only in Turkey but also in other countries where Kurdish is spoken. So, what is Kurdish? Kurdish belongs to the Indo-European family of languages and, more specifically, to the Western Iranian language family (Edmonds, 2012, p. 2). It has many dialects, the precise status of which is a matter of disagreement among scholars. Some regard them as distinct languages and some others think they all fall under the umbrella of Kurdish. There have also been some academic studies in Turkey which question whether Kurdish is a language at all, arguing that it is a dialect of Persian. In this part, we will dwell on Kurdish language and dialects and then analyze the academic discourse in Turkey with regards to Kurdish linguistics. Such an analysis is necessary to have an overview of the academic sphere, to position Kurdish within an academic context and to assess the (im)partiality of academic research about Kurdish.

Kurdish is mainly said to have three sub-branches, namely Kurmanji (Northern group), Sorani (Central group) and Southern group (Edmonds, 2012, p. 2). These groups have further sub-divisions as well. As Edmonds maintains, “the differences between the main dialects are in some cases so wide that it has been a matter of dispute over whether in fact they constitute separate languages in their own right” (2012, p.2). Edmonds also points out that Zazaki and Gorani are often regarded as separate languages, not dialects of Kurdish. There are also some who

consider Sorani and Kurmanji two distinct languages which are as far apart from one other as German and English (Edmonds, 2012, p. 3). These different views may have ideological underpinnings; however, what is certain is that these conceptions of Kurdish have political consequences. The point is that if all these dialects or languages are called separate languages, then the idea of a unified Kurdish nation speaking unified Kurdish is hampered. So, some Kurdish nationalists reject such divisions and tend to place these dialects or languages under the umbrella of Kurdish. Allison (2007) has suggested the use of the term “Kurdish languages” to avoid upsetting political sensitivities (Edmonds, 2012, p. 3).

To sum up, we can say that, like everything related to the Kurdish issue, the conceptualization of the Kurdish language and its dialects is so complex an issue that it is impossible to propose exact ‘scientific’ categorizations to which everyone would agree. Some believe that Kurdish is an umbrella language group that holds within it a large number of dialects, whereas some other scholars contend that these dialects are too distinct to be gathered under a single language and that, indeed, they are distinct languages themselves. However, as mentioned above, these two approaches have different political implications with respect to the unity of language and nation. We have also seen that ideology plays a part in defining these languages and dialects; definitions, conversely, shape people’s ideologies.

1.4 Academic context

The very first Turkish-language study on Kurdish language dates back to 1655, when Evliya Çelebi visited a number of Eastern cities. The notes from his journey can be found mainly in the fourth and fifth volumes of his *Seyahatname* (Van Bruinessen, 1985, p. 13). This comprehensive work deals with many aspects of social and cultural life in the region, and most importantly on Kurdish language as well. Evliya

Çelebi's work is an invaluable source in terms of providing us first-hand insight into the use of Kurdish language. Actually, Evliya Çelebi talks about many "Kurdish languages", drawing attention to the multiplicity of dialects and their distinctiveness. What is more, he gives some historical information on the roots of Kurdish. Evliya Çelebi asserts that the Kurdish language goes back to as early as 3000 BC and it has 16 dialects, which are sometimes unintelligible to each other (p. 17-18). Evliya Çelebi's note on the history of the Kurdish language differs markedly from the conventional state discourse in Turkey since he recognizes Kurdish as a very old and well-established language. Conversely, the state discourse which was prevalent for so many years in Turkey is reflected in works trying to 'prove' that Kurdish is not a language at all. Now that we have examined the legal, demographic and linguistic aspects of the Kurdish issue in Turkey, it is easier to understand how academia in Turkey served some ideological purposes regarding the issue. In this part, I will try to concentrate on the position and function of academia in the evolution of the Kurdish issue.

In their comprehensive study "Knowledge, ideology and power. Deconstructing Kurdish Studies", Scalbert-Yücel and Le Ray (2006) present a diachronic analysis of Kurdish studies not only in Turkey but on a global scale. Throughout the paper, they argue that academia in Turkey catered to the official state ideology. Thus, it is safe to claim that the academic context was formed under the limitations of politics and certain ideologies. To give a very brief account of such studies, we can say that they analyze the Kurdish 'problem' without mentioning the factor of ethnicity. The 'problem' was considered to emerge merely from economic reasons, backwardness and banditry. Uttering the ethnic factor was regarded as a separatist approach. In reaction to this, the scholars rejecting the orthodox approach

have employed concepts from Europe and based their arguments on the works of outsiders. Thus, the question of the autonomy of the field of Kurdish studies must be taken into account. As Scalbert-Yücel and Le Ray point out, the field must gain its autonomy in two aspects: first, the field must be freed from inner limitations, the prevalent academic discourse reflecting the state ideology and, secondly, from the effect of the Orientalist perspective, which becomes more visible in the works of European provenance.

The history of Kurdish Studies can be divided up into three main phases. The first phase was dominated by Orientalist works, including those by Basil Nikitine, who studied the Kurdish issue extensively; the second stage consisted of works in the service of Kurdish nationalism, after the 1960s. In the final stage, we can see the comparative and theoretical works of the 1980's and 90's (Scalbert-Yücel & Le Ray, 2006). It is not a coincidence that the emphasis on the national aspect of the issue emerged in the 1960's, when, for instance, the first translation of *Mem û Zin* by Mehmet Emin Bozarslan was published. As mentioned by Scalbert-Yücel and Le Ray, the 1960's were politically highly active years and the echo of these restless times can be perceived in the academic sphere and in translational activities as well.

During the first decades of the republican period, all the institutions of Turkish academia were expected to serve a pre-set agenda. To illustrate, the Turkish History Thesis declared in 1932 was designed to foreground Turkish identity and legitimize the notion of a Turkish nation, all for the benefit of the Turkification process. In her doctoral thesis, Derya Bayır (2010) asserts that,

[w]hile describing the Turks as an ethnically distinct people linked to Central Asia, the thesis legitimized the use of the concept of race in the definition of the nation, national identity and Turkish nationalism. It claimed that the ancient residents of Anatolia, the Hittites, were Turks, thus aiming to

establish Anatolia as the Turks' ancient homeland and that its past and present inhabitants were ethnically Turk. (Bayır, 2010, p. 129)

The Turkish-History thesis was first outlined in the book titled *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları* (The Main Features of Turkish History) in 1928 (Bayır, 2010, p. 130).

Afterwards, it was deployed in the course book *Vatandaşlar için Medeni Bilgiler* (Civic Knowledge for Citizens) prepared by Afet İnan (2010, p.130).

Scalbert-Yücel and Marie Le Ray use the term “pseudo-scientific” to describe these studies, which attempted to reproduce the state's position that Kurds were actually Turks but to do this in a seemingly scientific manner. Another example is Mehmet Şerif Fırat's book titled *Doğu İlleri ve Varto Tarihi* (Eastern Cities and the History of Varto). The second edition of the book was presented with a preface written by the then-president Cemal Gürsel. There is hardly any need for a sophisticated critical discourse analysis to expose how the state intervenes in these so-called academic studies. Even though the word “intervention” has negative connotations, here “intervention” occurs not in the form of censorship or confiscation but as the promotion of a certain work. The book was first published in 1948 by Saka Publishing and in 1961 by a state organ, namely, the Ministry of Education. It is noteworthy that the second edition appeared right after the military coup of 1960 and this time was published by an agency of state, with the express blessing of the then-president. Being of Kurdish origin himself, Fırat tried to demonstrate that Kurds are originally Turks. According to some accounts, he was murdered by his uncle in 1949. His death triggered much speculation, as some circles consider that the uncle was only a mask and he was assassinated because of his views. Cemal Gürsel also appears to have believed in the latter possibility, as he notes in the preface. (See Figure 6 and Figure 7 in Appendix A for Cemal Gürsel's preface)

In the first paragraph, Gürsel (1961) draws attention to the family roots of Mehmet Şerif Fırat without uttering the word ‘Kurdish’ and, instead, says Fırat was idealistically trying to illuminate the darkness of the region in which he was born. He continues that he became a martyr as he was insidiously murdered by those people whom he was trying to enlighten. Gürsel also points out that the murderers and their supporters bore such hostility that they annihilated all the copies of the book after they murdered the writer. The critical part appears in the third paragraph where Gürsel claims that the purpose of the book is to prove scientifically that the citizens who reside in the Eastern Anatolia, who speak a language dissimilar to Turkish, and thus who consider themselves non-Turks, are actually Turks. It is interesting that the terms ‘Kurd’ or ‘Kurdish’ were not used in this description. Gürsel says that some of ‘us’ also agree with them because of ignorance. So, being a ‘Kurd’ or accepting this identity could result from ignorance, but the scientific knowledge presented in this book could clear up any misconceptions. He further notes that there is no such race as the Kurds and that this myth was contrived by enemies who want to split up Turkey by demolishing national unity. It is under these circumstances that Gürsel appeals to Turkish intellectuals and suggests that “Eastern Turks” read and internalize this book.

When we retrospect Turkish academia regarding the Kurdish issue, İsmail Beşikçi appears as a particularly important figure. In contrast to Mehmet Şerif Fırat, who was himself of Kurdish origin but advocated the mainstream state view, İsmail Beşikçi has particularly supported the rights of the Kurdish, even though he is not Kurdish by origin. At the cost of being fired from his position in the university and staying in prison for more than 17 years, he acknowledged the existence of Kurds and worked for their rights throughout his life. Barış Ünlü presents an academic and

political account of Beşikçi's life, employing the Ancient Greek term "parrhesiastes" to characterize Beşikçi (2012, p. 3). *Parrhesiastes* is defined as a person who tells the truth outright, even when it is very risky to do so. However, someone who criticizes the weak cannot be considered a *parrhesiastes* because the criticism must be directed towards the powerful (Ünlü, 2012, p. 3). Ünlü regards Beşikçi as a real *parrhesiastes* for the reasons that will be summarized here.

İsmail Beşikçi's intellectual career goes back to the 1960s, since when he has stood against state ideology. Deploying Malmisanij's formulation, Ünlü categorizes three strategies of the state towards Kurdology (2012, p. 5). These are Anti-Kurdology, Secret Kurdology and Kurdology. The first one, Anti-Kurdology, refers to a heavily legitimized research field in Turkey. The research that falls into this category does not recognize the existence of Kurds and Kurdish language. The second one, secret Kurdology, refers to work by people who produce more realistic information for the use of the state and government. Finally, Kurdology refers to studies about Kurdish people, their language, culture and movements. This, suggests Ünal, is the field which the state wished to block. In this sense, *Doğu İlleri ve Varto Tarihi* may be rightfully considered to be a study in the field of Anti-Kurdology. On the other hand, Beşikçi's works fall within the Kurdology field, which resulted in many troubles for Beşikçi.

Scalbert Yücel and Le Ray discuss the autonomy of institutions of higher education in Turkey and cite the law 2547 of 1981 on higher education (2006). In brief, the law stipulates that the aim of a university is to develop a sense of loyalty to Atatürk nationalism, his reforms and principles, as well as to prioritize the common good of the country above personal benefits. Concordantly, mainstream academia produced the Turkish History Thesis and the Sun-Language Theory, both of which

proposed that Turks are the source of civilization. Thus, any resistant work could receive no approval from academic authorities. As an exemplary case, İsmail Beşikçi was blamed for “‘poisoning’ his students with Marxist and ‘Kurdist’ ideas” (Ünlü, 2012, p. 9). What is meant by ‘Kurdist’ ideas is reversing the progress of modernizing Turkey with “feudal” and “reactionary-Islamist” demands, which are all “deceitful traps of imperialist world powers trying to divide the Turkish Republic” (Ünlü, 2012, p. 1). In 1969, Beşikçi published his major work *Doğu Anadolu’nun Düzeni* (The Order of Eastern Anatolia), and one year later he was fired from his position as a research assistant in Erzurum’s Atatürk University. He underwent forensic procedures as well, was prosecuted and sentenced to jail. As Ünal notes, through these experiences Beşikçi realized that Turkish academia did not promote freedom of expression but was more interested in maintaining the state ideology (2012, p. 11). After everything he had suffered, Beşikçi became even more fervent and this resulted in a shift in the tone of his works. So, he also underwent a personal transformation, with an increasing level of determination. Ünal states that, “What made Beşikçi an exception within Turkish intelligentsia is that he underwent self-examination and an ensuing personal conversion. In sum, he “altered his life style, his relations to others, and his relation to himself” (2012, p. 14). That is why he was a “discomforting intellectual”, as Ünal suggests in the title of his study.

Despite the efforts of Beşikçi and other “discomforting intellectual[s]”, studies trying to show that Kurds are originally Turks are still carried out to this day. Such a study on Kurdish language was written by Ahmet Burhan and published in *Turkish Studies*, an international periodical for the languages, literature and history of Turkish or Turkic. Burhan (2011) first dwells on the definition of the Kurds and then discusses the Kurdish language. As for the former, Burhan states that the term “Kürt”

(Kurd) has been used with different meanings throughout history, both as a common noun and proper noun. As a common noun, it means various things such as a beech tree and piled snow or sand (Buran, 2011, p. 44). As a proper noun, however, it refers to “one of the Turkish-origin tribes” (2011, p. 44). Another definition provided by Burhan is that, “the term Kurd has become the name of a Turkish community who are forming a new and hybrid society and whose language has become quite similar to Persian” (2011, p. 46).¹⁹ This definition blatantly presumes that Kurds are Turkish in their origin and that their language underwent some changes through the influence of Persian. Burhan also admits that there are many speculations on the origin of Kurds, such as Mesudi’s thesis that the Kurds were of Arabic origin. At the end of this section, Burhan concludes that Kurds are heterogeneous and hybrid and both their language and geography have changed in time (2011, p. 47). A similar approach can be observed in the section where Burhan deals with the Kurdish language. He asserts that the language of the community called Kurds was originally Turkish. However, it might have transformed in the course of time by merging with Arabic and Persian (2011, p. 49). He further notes that the dialects of Kurdish are so disparate that the endeavor to consider them as one language must have some political motivation behind it (2011, p. 51). As a result, when we analyze its phonetic, syntactic, lexical and accent qualities, Kurdish turns out to be a hybrid language (2011, p. 51). As can be seen clearly, Burhan emphasizes the notion of hybridity, both in the origin of the Kurds and their language, a pattern which can be traced in many works by Turkish academics. Considering Malmisanij and Ünlü’s taxonomy, it is safe to say that such studies fall under the category of “Anti-Kurdology” as they try to show that Kurdish people were once Turks and their

¹⁹ “Dilleri Farsçalaşan Kürt adındaki bir Türk topluluğunun adı, bölgede oluşan karma ve yeni toplumun adı haline gelmiştir” (Buran, 2011, p. 46).

language is a combination of other languages. It is interesting that such examples of “Anti-Kurdology” could still emerge as recently as 2011.

Without doubt, there have been other studies on Kurdish language and society; however, the samples have hopefully given an idea about the discourse on things Kurdish within the Turkish academic sphere. It is clear that there is a tension in academia. The tension takes place between those scholars who accept the existence of Kurdish language and who thus run the risk of being considered separatist and those who do not recognize the Kurdish language. As is to be expected, these dichotomist attitudes impair the quality of academic works. One should also note that the academic sphere undergoes some changes in time. Due to the changing political context, more works have emerged since the 2000s and the ‘tone’ of these studies has become less harsh and more reasoned. More works of “Kurdology” have been produced and gained acceptance. With the emergence of new ideas and a less repressive atmosphere for debate, there is no longer such a rigid dichotomy between the total acceptance or rejection of Kurdish language and identity. To illustrate, some people now acknowledge the existence of Kurdish language but emphasize that it is only a combination of other languages and not very rich in terms of vocabulary. (As an example, we can refer to Yusuf Ziya Özcan’s statements that were covered previously and Namık Açıkgöz’s ideas on Kurdish language, to which we shall return in the analysis chapter.) This reflects the blossoming of ideas and data from around the turn of the twenty-first century, ideas and data which seem less designed to serve a set political function than their predecessors had been.

CHAPTER 2

KURDISH LITERARY AND TRANSLATION ACTIVITIES

2.1 Kurdish literary activities in Turkey

In the previous chapter, I tried to offer a diachronic analysis of the linguistic, academic and legal contexts in which Kurdish literary activities have emerged in Turkey. In this chapter, I will deploy Polysystem Theory as a theoretical framework to uncover the complex links between literature (Turkish and Kurdish literatures), politics (Kurdish politics and state policies), language (considering the multiplicity of Kurdish dialects and languages) and territory (Kurdish literary activities in other countries) and to discuss what Kurdish literature is, what its limits are, and what the role of translation has been in the development of this literature.

In his seminal work, Even-Zohar starts by explaining why literary works or literatures in general should be analyzed in systems. He asserts that a systemic perspective shifts the focus from substance to relations (Even-Zohar, 1990, p. 9). Once we are able to observe these relations, we can realize what has remained implicit. Furthermore, as the theory elaborates on the relations, the historicity of works turns out to be critically important, leading the researcher to a diachronic study. Thus, Polysystem Theory may prove very fruitful for analyzing Kurdish literature as it opens the door to historical and descriptive research that aims to highlight the relations within and beyond the literary domain. Even-Zohar defines polysystem as “a multiple system, a system of various systems which intersect with each other and partly overlap, using concurrently different options, yet functioning as one structured whole, whose members are independent” (1990, p. 11). Each system is in a constant interaction with other systems and this interaction appears in the form

of a conflict or struggle for power. When we apply this to our case, we can posit the existence a number of sub-systems between which the tension is very clear.

When the term “Kurdish Literature” is considered as a single system, it is imperative to consider its components, sub- and co-systems. As for the sub-systems, a territorial classification and a linguistic categorization can be made. Because the use of Kurdish extends to different countries like Turkey, Iraq and Syria (not to mention countries like Sweden where members of the Kurdish diaspora live), it is difficult to delineate this literature in geographical terms. So, is Kurdish literature the accumulation of works written solely in Kurdish? If the answer is positive, then it is necessary to consider the diversity of Kurdish dialects and languages. Even though most of the literary production has been carried out in Kurmanji, there are also some texts produced in different dialects and in scripts. However, if Kurdish literature is not counted purely as literature produced in Kurdish, a wider perspective is required in order to perceive the relations of this system with other literary systems – here, in our case, the Turkish literary system is the indispensable co-system with which the Kurdish literary system interacts. Scalbert-Yücel (2011) notes that the form of this interaction is a kind of “conflict” and this “linguistic conflict is characterized by the confrontation of two clearly distinguished languages: one is politically dominant (the official language, the language of the public sphere and of the market), and the other one is clearly dominated ...” (Scalbert-Yücel, 2011, p. 173). As a result, in considering Kurdish literature in the Turkish setting, it is crucial to remember that these two literary systems are inseparable. Even-Zohar affirms the interdependency of systems by saying that any issue under analysis must be handled together with the other issues to which it is linked. For instance, to study children’s literature, we also need to have a good understanding of adults’ literature and see its interrelations

(1990, p. 13). It leads us to the conclusion that the discussion or analysis of the phenomenon of Kurdish literature can be made only when we consider Turkish literature as a co-system as well.

In his systemic approach, Even-Zohar discusses the positions of literary texts within the literary system. He notes that literary systems have centers and peripheries held by canonized and non-canonized texts respectively (1990, p. 15). Canonicity is not an inherent quality of texts; rather, it is attributed to texts and what dominate the whole literary system are canonical texts, which hold central positions (pp. 15-16). It must be emphasized that there may not be a single center or a single periphery. On the contrary, we can point to the stratification of literary texts in a hierarchical manner and the constant competition between texts to assume a central position (Even-Zohar, *Polysystem Studies*, 1990, p. 14). In the case of Kurdish literature, it is possible to delineate various centers and peripheries, depending on the point of view. Firstly, the conflict between different dialects affects the literary production, without doubt. Literary output cannot be limited to just one dialect of Kurdish; thus, there is a conflict between the literary systems of these dialects. Similarly, the language choice at the upper level, i.e. the choice between writing in Kurdish and Turkish, is another question to be addressed. In the Kurdish literary milieu, there are some writers writing solely in Turkish, in Kurdish or in both. This choice may result from ideological motivations, the targeted audience or simply the writer's level of competence in these languages. When attempting to explore the language choices of writers and their subsequent effects on the recognition of writers within the Kurdish literary arena, Scalbert-Yücel refers to Arjen Arî, Suzan Samancı and Mehmed Uzun. To start with Arjen Arî, he is a poet from Diyarbakır and he never publishes in Turkish. Even though the genre of poetry is not very popular among modern Kurdish

literary circles (because it is the genre of pre-modern Kurdish literature and commonly paired with a Sufi outlook), Arjen Arî has gained considerable fame. His use of Arabic script has enabled him to be recognized beyond the borders of Turkey (Scalbert-Yücel, 2012, p. 367). Another example is Suzan Samancı, who defines herself as a “female Kurdish writer” but who produces her texts only in Turkish since she has not been able to master Kurdish. She has been published by well-known publishers like Can, İletişim and Metis. What makes her work *Kurdish* is the themes, atmospheres and scenes, all of which are drawn from Diyarbakır. In her works, she also articulates the problems of women in this region and employs Kurdish names. The sentences that appear in Kurdish are all translated into Turkish in footnotes (Scalbert-Yücel, 2012, p. 368). She applies some foreignizing strategies like keeping some sentences in Kurdish in the text, and at the same time takes the Turkish readership into account by providing translations. Even though she writes in Turkish, she is presented as a Kurdish writer because of her self-definition, her source of literary inspiration and her literary strategies. Considering Arjen Arî and Suzan Samancı, it can be claimed that the recognition of a writer in the Kurdish literary milieu does not depend on language use as the field is not limited merely to literature in Kurdish and is quite open to Turkish-writing writers.

Apart from writers writing either in Kurdish or Turkish, there are also some others who use both languages. A remarkable example was Mehmed Uzun, a distinctive figure in the world of Kurdish literature as he was the creator of the Kurdish novel. As he introduced this modern genre to Kurdish literature, he has a very prestigious position within this field. However, Uzun is not restricted only to Kurmanji; he also wrote in Turkish. He has written his essays and criticism in Turkish, which has led him to be accepted in the Turkish literary arena as well. His

use of Kurmanji in his novels and Turkish in his essays resulted in his recognition as an esteemed writer in both fields (Scalbert-Yücel, 2012, p. 367). However, this does not mean that Turkish and Kurdish literary systems have accepted him simply for the fact that he wrote in one or both languages. To illustrate, the Vesta publishing house – a well-known publisher in the field of Kurdish literature – assigns great importance to the content of works. In Vesta’s vision, if the work is about the upper class of Kurdish society (land owners, or chiefs), it does not serve Kurdish literature, even if it was written in Kurdish. At this point, another function is attributed to literary works: they have to voice the problems of the working class and lay-people and portray their struggle (Scalbert-Yücel, 2011, p. 180). As a result, some literary circles like Vesta do not consider Mehmed Uzun’s works to be contributions to Kurdish literature, even though his literary achievements in the field of Kurdish literature have been highly praised by others. It can be maintained that systems are not only in conflict or competition; intra-systemic disagreements characterize the field too. What is more, in view of the cases of Arjen Arî, Suzan Samancı and Mehmed Uzun, we can say that there is not a single center or single periphery in a given literary system. In the Kurdish literary system, for instance, all these writers hold central positions in different sub-systems. To illustrate, Arjen Arî is at the center of the sub-system of Kurdish poetry, even though this sub-system may not occupy a very central position compared to other sub-systems of modern Kurdish literature. It is also probable that some opposing circles want to push them towards the periphery, which leads to intra-systemic conflicts. Indeed, it is intra- and inter-conflicts like these that make literary systems survive.

Another form of conflict takes place between “primary” and “secondary” models, as Even-Zohar puts it, in a given literary system. Secondary models refer to

conventional literary practices in established literatures, which do not need any innovation (1990, p. 21). In contrast, primary models contribute new options for literary production (new genres, new texts) and they are quite innovatory. When Kurdish literature is viewed in terms of the dichotomy between primary and secondary models, it is clear that it is more open to the primary type as it has never been considered as an established literature. The introduction of new models, new genres and new texts, either through original writing or translation, has been indispensable for this literature.

Scalbert-Yücel places Kurdish literary figures in the Turkish-Republican era in three main groups. Prior to this period, Kurdish literature had revolved around poetry, and particularly around Sufi poetry. After that, parallel to the nationalist ideas of the nineteenth century, literature started to be affected by nationalist movements, and new literary genres like the short-story and the novel emerged (2012, p. 361). With regards to contemporary Turkey, the first generation of writers, including Mehmet Emin Bozarslan and Musa Anter, appeared in the 1960s. Their works, which attempted to foster innovations in Kurdish literature by introducing short stories and plays, were mostly guided by their political commitment (2012, p.362). The second generation of writers emerged in the post-coup period in the 1980s. In this period, most writers had to flee and they continued their literary activities mostly in Sweden. The works of this period reflected literary concerns more than political commitment. The shift in the writers' orientation may have resulted from the conditions they were facing in a different country; they had the opportunity to write in a freer atmosphere, yet at the same time they had to cope with their longing for the homeland. The major purpose of these writers was to create new genres like "the Kurdish short story" and "the Kurdish novel" (Scalbert-Yücel, 2012, p. 362).

In Even-Zohar's terms, it can be said that the writers of the second generation were engaging more with primary models, trying to renew the literary system. The third and last generation of writers appeared in the 1990s. As Scalbert-Yücel notes, these writers were mostly sympathetic to the Kurdish political cause; however, this was not the only decisive point that made them Kurdish writers. The main purpose of most of them was to contribute to the development of Kurdish literature rather than supporting the ideologies of the financiers of journals, which are mostly political parties (2012, p. 363). From a systemic view, it is possible to say that Kurdish literature as a system is experiencing an ongoing conflict within and outside of its own borders. Indeed, its borders are not definite, which is a characteristic of the field. It is adjoined to, and in an interaction with, the Turkish literary system. As a non-established field, it mainly uses primary models, i.e. it is open to innovations in literature. Without doubt, this openness triggers translation activities both to and from Kurdish. Translation serves as a mediator between Kurdish and other literary systems and is considered to be a contributor to Kurdish language and literature.

2.2 The role of translation in the Kurdish literary system

In "The Position of Translated Literature within the Literary Polysystem", Even-Zohar handles translated literature as a system in its own right. (Even-Zohar, 1990, p. 45). Within the literary system as a whole, translated literature may hold peripheral or central positions, depending on the models adopted by literary systems. In other words, if a literary system adopts primary models in literary production, it is more open to literary innovations and thus translation, which is the main channel through which new models are introduced to a literary system. However, if the literary system adopts secondary models and attempts at sustaining its own existing models, then translation has a peripheral position and tends to follow the same path as

original writing. It does not introduce new genres/models and tools. Adopting either primary or secondary models is not a random decision, as it depends strongly on the historical and cultural evolution of a literary system, as well as its position in relation to other literary systems. Even-Zohar clarifies that translation will enjoy a central position especially when a literature is “young”, “weak” (in comparison to other literary systems) and in a “turning point” or “crisis” (1990, p. 46-47). When the Kurdish literary system is considered, it is possible to say that all three apply to Kurdish literature. Although Kurdish literature is not very “young”, its historical roots mostly go back to the oral tradition and endeavors to create a written Kurdish literature are not very old. As discussed in the linguistic classifications part, written Kurdish has its own problems like the non-uniformity in script and variety in dialects. It is also possible to say that Kurdish literature is “weak” because it does not have its established autonomous institutions and most of the literary institutions like publishing houses are either owned or financially supported by political parties. It is easier to carry out literary activities independently abroad (e.g. in Sweden), while in Turkey there are few examples of independent Kurdish publishers (Scalbert-Yücel, 2012, p. 363). Thus, the translation activities which mainly evolve around the personal efforts of translators in this field are not institutionalized either. Kurdish literature can also be considered to have undergone a “crisis” or “turning point” as limitations on the use of this language were lifted and Kurdish entered a new phase in terms of literary production. On this point, Mehmed Uzun has underlined the vital role of translation in the development of Kurdish literature. Uzun suggests that translation is critically significant as it enriches and strengthens Kurdish literature by introducing new worlds, cultures and models. Parallel to Even-Zohar, Uzun claims that translation will also serve original writing and contribute to the enhancement of

literary activities. He also regards translation as a mission and suggests that the Kurdish writers who are not able to write in Kurdish must contribute to this literary world by translating pieces. He further notes that it is necessary to translate technical texts, to enrich Kurdish terminology and lexis (Uzun, 2005, pp. 129-130).

Even though there seems to be a consensus among Kurdish intellectuals concerning the importance of translation (both to and from Kurdish), there is no institutionalized translation movement and translations have generally been carried out thanks to the personal endeavors of translators. To give an example of personal endeavors in translation, we can consider an interview with Kawa Nemir, a very productive Kurdish literary translator. Nemir has translated Shakespeare's sonnets into Kurdish and now he is translating James Joyce's *Ulysses*. In his interview he explains how he chooses source writers and texts and says that translation is a vital activity for making the target language more effective as a means of expression. He further notes that no national literature is able to progress without having access to world literature. He describes his Kurdish translation of Shakespeare as a "little present" to his language (Nemir, 2010). It can be inferred that Nemir, as a translator, thinks that translating is a contribution to home literature and thus the selection of the source text is very important; i.e., what is imported must enrich the target system. This is the reason for Nemir's selection of highly canonized writers, besides his personal interest in their work. Other than contributing to the home literary system, another purpose of translating these highly prestigious works is to demonstrate that Kurdish is a language which is capable of reproducing Shakespeare, Joyce and other canonical names.

Attempts at improving the quality of Kurdish through translation are not confined only to translation from other languages. As Scalbert-Yücel points out, a

number of anthologies have been prepared by Kurdish writers, such as Bali's *Antolojiya Helbestvanên Kurd*²⁰ (Anthology of Kurdish Poets), Mehmet Uzun's *Antolojiya Edebiyata Kurdî*²¹ (Anthology of Kurdish Literature), and Fırat Ceweri's *Antolojiya Çirokên Kurdî*²² (Anthology of Kurdish Short Stories) (2011, p. 175).

These anthologies were in Kurdish. Selim Temo Ergül's *Kürt Şiiri Antolojisi*²³ (Anthology of Kurdish Poetry) is a bilingual work which presents both Turkish translations and original Kurdish texts. Another example is Muhsin Kızılkaya's *Sürgün Göç ve Ölüm: Çağdaş Kürt Edebiyatından Seçme Hikayeler*²⁴ (Exile, Migration and Death: Collected Short Stories from Modern Kurdish Literature), which provides only the Turkish translation of short stories without original texts (2011, p. 175). Such anthologies help in the creation of a Kurdish literary canon by presenting the most prestigious works of Kurdish literature. They are sometimes presented along with their Turkish translations, which open the gate to the Turkish literary arena. Even though some texts are not translated into Turkish and are presented only in Kurdish, the very process of anthologizing can be seen as a form of rewriting, aiming at the creation of a Kurdish canon. Lefevere's notion of rewriting can be very illuminating in explaining such works, as will be shown in detail in the Theoretical Framework and Methodology chapter.

So, what is the situation with translation in the opposite direction? What of Turkish translations from Kurdish? According to Kawa Nemir, there are insufficient literary translations from Kurdish into Turkish, with Mehmed Uzun being the only Kurdish author whose works have been translated to a considerable degree. Nemir

²⁰ 1992. Istanbul: Pelê Sor.

²¹ 1995. Istanbul: Tüzmamanlar Yayınları.

²² 2003. Stockholm: Weşanên Nûdem.

²³ 2008. Istanbul: Agora.

²⁴ 2004. Istanbul: İletişim.

objects to the equation of Kurdish literature to any single writer and thinks that more works should be translated into Turkish, so that the Turkish literary field can make new discoveries.

Selim Temo Ergül also deals with the translations from Kurdish to Turkish. He provides a diachronic analysis of the translation activities in that direction and presents the common features that could be observed in translations in certain periods. According to Ergül, the first phase of translations largely consists of translations of classical texts such as *Mem û Zin* –the Kurdish work most frequently translated into other languages (Ergül, 2015). He draws on the prefaces written by the translators to have an insight into the context in which these translations were carried out. Ergül identifies some features as being common characteristics of early translations from Kurdish. Firstly, he states that “overinterpretation” is one of the most common problems in translations, particularly in *Mem û Zin* translations (Ergül, 2015). The reason for this can be the fact that the translators were generally “missionaries” who had a political and/or military background (Ergül, 2015). Thus, we can easily infer that the early translators were interested more in the ideology of translation than the poetology, an attitude which is reflected in their works. The “mission” they assumed led to the overinterpretation of the content and the subsidiary importance attributed to literary form.

Self-censorship appears to be the most remarkable property of the first phase of Turkish translations of Kurdish literature. The earliest Turkish translation (1695) by Ahmet Faik can be regarded as an example of translatorial self-censorship. As Ergül points out, Ahmet Faik failed to include Xanî’s “Reason for Writing” and “Epilogue”, in which Xanî had articulated his reason for writing in Kurdish. Similarly, Abdülaziz Halis Çıkıntaş’s translation (1906) omitted some parts from

these two chapters (Ergül, 2015). After the Ottoman Period, self-censorship continues into the Republican Period, as can be seen in Mehmet Emin Bozarslan's translation, which resulted in his prosecution.

Ergül (2015) states that, in the 1970s, Kurdish Literature's quest for legitimacy continued and some translators tried to translate in a "legitimate" way. Ergül notes that a translated work "could only gain legitimacy so long as it followed certain criteria" (2015). To explicate what he means by "legitimacy", Ergül gives the example of the transcription of Kurdish proper names and using the Kurdish alphabet in translations. Almost all translations produced in this period had Turkicized letters and place names. However, this was not always the deliberate choice of the translator, since editorial intervention was likely to have taken place. In the 1970s, the translators perceived themselves as cultural "carriers" and in order to maintain their translation activities they sometimes had to "tone down" (Ergül, 2015).

As can be seen in Ergül's study, Kurdish translation activities suffered in the 1980s from the pressure which intensified after the coup d'état. Only after the 1990s were some publishing houses established and translation activities carried on, under the condition that they operated "legitimately". In the 2000s, and particularly after 2010, Kurdish translation activities gained a remarkable impetus in parallel to the government's Kurdish initiative. A translation of *Mem û Zin* was commissioned by the Ministry of Culture, and this bold state approach provoked other translations by private publishing houses.

To sum up, translations into and from Kurdish served distinct purposes. Firstly, translations into Kurdish served the enrichment of the target system. Furthermore, Kurdish translation of canonical texts could demonstrate that Kurdish is

a language that is capable of reproducing these highly-esteemed texts. As for the translation activities from Kurdish to Turkish, we can say that, until 2000s, they were mostly carried out in a repressive environment. Conveying the (ideological, social and political) message was prioritized, rather than the presentation of the literary features of texts. To conclude, translation occupies a central position within the Kurdish literary system as it is an innovative force and broadens the horizons of the Kurdish literary field and opens it to other literary fields. However, translation activities are not undertaken in a systematic and institutionalized manner; thus, translation is in the hands of volunteer translators.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

The dual aim of this chapter is to present a theoretical framework within which the Turkish (re)translations of Ehmedê Xanî's work *Mem û Zin* can be approached and to explicate the methodological tools that will be helpful in the analysis of the Turkish translations. The fact that *Mem û Zin* was translated many times into Turkish leads us to consider these translations through the prism of retranslation theory. Thus, firstly the retranslation hypothesis will be revisited. After that, I will discuss André Lefevere's concept of rewriting. In the third part, we will consider the use of paratextual analysis as a method for tracing ideological variations in different translations of the same source text. The last part of this chapter will discuss Critical Discourse Analysis and its implications for the examination of discourse in the prefaces of the retranslations of *Mem û Zin*.

3.1 Retranslation hypothesis

In its basic sense, a retranslation can be defined as a translation that is produced after the initial translation of a certain source text. Given the existence of multiple translations of *Mem û Zin*, it would seem fruitful to dwell on the concept of retranslation and the assumptions and theories that have been associated with it.

The primary question translation scholars have asked about retranslations is why texts are retranslated in the first place. There are some suggested motives for translating a source more than once. In what has come to be known as the Retranslation Hypothesis, Berman (1990) claimed that the earliest translations of a source text were generally considered lacking or insufficient, a view later challenged (Koskinen & Paloposki, 2010). This view envisages that subsequent translations are higher quality and generally closer to the original text (even though this "closeness"

cannot be defined easily). This brings us on to the dichotomy between domesticating and foreignizing strategies applied in translation. The Retranslation Hypothesis assumes that first translations are more domesticating, while later translations are more likely to include foreignizing elements that bring the translation closer to the original text. Koskinen and Paloposki (2010), however, state that this scheme does not apply to all retranslations, making this theory problematic.

Another reason for retranslation could be the ageing of texts and the need to update or renew the language or to cater to changes in the target audience. Translating adults' literature for children could be a fine example of such shifts in purpose. Changing literary norms and conventions can also be a valid cause for retranslation. We must also consider the various agents involved in the translation and publication of works, their diverse perspectives on the same source text and the individual approaches and styles that they reflect in retranslations. Finally, attributing a canonical position to a text in the target system may be a motive for retranslation. Indeed, according to Venuti (2004), texts are retranslated to become canonized and canonized texts are retranslated even more, in order to maintain their canonical status (Venuti, 2004, pp. 25-38).

Even a cursory look at the Turkish retranslations of *Mem û Zin* suggests that the Retranslation Hypothesis does not hold water in this case. To begin with, the assumption that first translations are always lacking and incomplete does not hold true. The first translation of *Mem û Zin* in the Republican Period was done by Mehmet Emin Bozarlan in 1968, but this translation is still considered as a valuable source for newer translations. In the prefaces of more recent translations, some translators (including Namık Açıkgöz, the translator commissioned by the Ministry of Culture) acknowledge that they benefit from Bozarlan's translation. However, we

should note that the Retranslation Hypothesis is partly proven valid by the fact that Açıkgöz and Yıldırım's translations compensated for Bozarslan's 1968 translation's deficiencies by including the parts that had been censored in it.

Mem û Zin retranslations can also be discussed in terms of the domesticating or foreignizing strategies that are adopted by translators. In accordance with the aim of this thesis, which is to focus on how these translations are presented to the target system, we can say that, in the first translations, *Mem û Zin* and Ehmedê Xanî are presented as cultural elements of an 'alien' literary and cultural system. However, in more recent translations (such as Açıkgöz's translation), the work and the author are presented as part of a rich Anatolian cultural heritage. Judging at least from the paratexts, we can assume that the first translations were foreignizing and the latter domesticating, i.e. the reversal of the expected pattern. The in-depth analysis will be given in the case study chapter.

As for the ageing of texts and the need to have updated translations, we can say that the ageing of language has not been a major motivation behind *Mem û Zin* retranslations, since the majority of translations were done in the last decade, in association with the changing political and social context. As important as the change of context, the agent factor becomes visible in *Mem û Zin* retranslations. To illustrate, what makes Namık Açıkgöz's translation noteworthy is that it was commissioned, published and promoted by the Ministry of Culture, a representative body of the state. Thus, for retranslations of *Mem û Zin*, we can infer that it is not always textual concerns that promote a newer translation but the desire of a new agent to have a new representation of the work and author. This certainly seems to be the case with Kadri Yıldırım's translation, which was published a year before he published a book-length criticism of Namık Açıkgöz's translation. In his critique,

Yıldırım asserts that Açıkgöz's translation has many "errors" due to his lack of competence in the Kurdish language. Thus, his retranslation can be considered as a model of "ideal" translation. (In this sense, in fact, it does concur with the assumption in the Retranslation Hypothesis that retranslations are done to compensate for earlier insufficient translations.)

Another problematic aspect of the theories of retranslation that have been proposed to date is that they tend to imply there is a single source text. By its very definition, "Retranslation" has to refer to the subsequent translations of the same source text. Nevertheless, the Turkish translations of *Mem û Zin* are have been translated from various source texts, including ones in other languages (French, Arabic) and in other literary forms, such as the novel. (Here, I use the term "source text" to refer to the text which is the basis of a newer translation. However, these texts themselves are also often translations from Kurdish into other languages.). In view of the majority of scholarly discourse on retranslation, one could in fact argue that each Turkish text that is translated from a different source text for the first time is not actually a retranslation but a translation. In other words, the existing definition of a retranslation prevents us from considering these translations as retranslations. Inevitably, the connections between various translations become looser, since they are considered as single translations of different source texts, whereas they are not. Last but not least, most retranslation theory tends to view only written texts as a source of translation. However, Xanî's *Mem û Zin* (which is the source text in our case) itself depends on another literary product, an oral saga. We can also regard Xanî's *Mem û Zin* as a rendering or translation of this oral tale. However, conventional retranslation theory fails to provide a satisfying explanation for this case as all arguments are based only on written materials as source texts.

Due to the factors explained here, conventional retranslation theory on its own falls short of enlightening the relations between various translations of *Mem û Zin*. To explain these translations, we need a more comprehensive and flexible concept which also foregrounds the factor of ideology. For that reason, Lefevere's concept of rewriting can be suggested as an instrumental tool for the analysis of *Mem û Zin* translations in Turkish.

3.2 Lefevere's concept of Rewriting

In his book *Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*, André Lefevere brings a new insight to translational phenomena. First of all, he regards translation as a form of "rewriting" and explicates the concept of rewriting by indicating the codification of "ideology" and "poetology" in literary systems at certain times. In this chapter, I will introduce his concept of rewriting and in Chapter 3, analyze the Turkish translations of *Mem û Zin* within the theoretical framework provided by Lefevere.

According to Lefevere, the value of a literary piece is not "intrinsic" but is loaded onto the original piece by its rewritings. Some literary works gain their reputation only slowly and come to be accepted as "classics" decades after the time when they were created. If such works had an "intrinsic value", it would have been discovered as soon as the text were released. So what is generally praised as the "intrinsic value" of a work, "plays much less of a part" than we assume (Lefevere, *Translation, rewriting and the manipulation of literary fame*, 1992, p. 1). The value attributed to a text is created outside of it, by its rewriters.

Lefevere makes a distinction between professional and non-professional readers. As Lefevere puts it, these terms do not "imply any value judgment" but they are used to refer to different reading groups (1992, p. 6). Professional readers are the teachers

and students of literature and non-professional readers constitute the larger group of readers who do not deal with the books with the concerns of professional readers. When non-professional readers say they read a book, “what they mean is that they have a certain image, a certain construct of that book in their heads” (1992, p. 6). These images are not created by the source writer but by the rewriters of the original work. Lefevere says that “[t]he non-professional reader increasingly does not read literature as written by its writers, but as rewritten by its rewriters” (1992, p. 4). Thus rewriting allows works of literature to escape from the “charmed circle of professional readers” and reach non-professional readers who constitute the majority of readers (1992, p. 4). Rewriting can be seen in various forms like “literary histories or reference works, reviews in newspapers, magazines, or journals, some critical articles, performances on stage or screen, and, last but not least, translations” (1992, p. 7). The images of a source text or a writer created by these rewritings stand “side by side with the realities they compete with, but the images always tend to reach more people than the corresponding realities ...” (1992, p. 5). If rewriting is so highly effective, then we need to discuss the motivations and constraints behind it.

Lefevere adopts the concept of “system” from Russian Formalists and uses the term to refer to literature. The system of literature is controlled both from the “outside” and “inside” (1992, p. 14). Inside the system, there are “professionals” (critics, reviewers, teachers, translators) who determine the “poetics” of the system. Poetics is about the norms of literature, which clarifies “what literature should (be allowed to) be” (1992, p. 14). That is why professionals are involved in shaping the poetics. The second factor controlling the literary system from outside is “patronage”. It is “usually more interested in the ideology of literature than in its poetics” (1992, p. 15). The term “patronage” refers to power held by persons or

institutions. The focal point of the patronage system is ideology and the patron “delegates authority” to the professionals where poetics is concerned (Lefevere, 1992, p. 15). It should be noted that the system of patronage is not static, thus very inclined to change in the course of time and due to changing political, social and ideological factors. It is very important not to take the term “patronage” in a negative sense, i.e. not as a “repressive force” only, but it should also be taken into account that patronage can both “*further* or hinder the reading, writing and rewriting of literature” (1992, p. 15, emphasis added). In short, patronage is interested in the ideology and professionals in the poetology of a literary system.

Lefevere’s concept of rewriting and the terminology he employs to explain the workings of the literary system are very illuminating for defining the case of *Mem û Zin* in Turkish as the concept allows us to handle all Turkish *Mem û Zin* translations, regardless of the variety in source texts and the change in the literary form. Additionally, we can take the factor of “ideology” into account when analyzing the different presentations of *Mem û Zin* in Turkish.

3.3 Paratextual analysis

In his book *Seuils* (1987), translated into English as *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* (1997), Gérard Genette elaborates on the concept of “paratext” – a space that is “not quite container nor contained” and mediates the texts to the outer world (Macksey, 1997, p. xvii). In other words, as Genette himself defines it, “a paratext is what enables a text to become a book and to be offered as such to its readers” (1997, p. 1). So any item supplementing the text is a paratext and the very existence of a text depends on the paratext. We can perceive paratexts as “thresholds” which determine the reading of the text. Implicitly or explicitly, paratexts serve to a certain reading of a text or “a better reception” and “more

pertinent reading of a text” which is desired by “the author and his allies” (1997, p. 2). It is thus safe to assume that paratexts have a directing nature; they both serve to impose the “desired reading” of a text and also give a “desired image” to the text and/or the writer. As the reading of the text and the image of the work and the author are constructed by the presenters of the texts, it is highly probable that paratexts are inclined to represent ideological perspectives. Here, the term “ideological” does not necessarily refer to any political tendency but it covers any sort of “desired function” attributed to the text or the author.

It is important to note that paratexts may undergo changes “depending on the period, culture, genre, author, work, and edition, with varying degrees of pressure” (Genette, 1997, p. 3). Keeping this statement in mind, it is easier to understand why Turkish translations of the same source text (in our case the Kurdish mesnevi *Mem û Zin*) are presented differently at different times. The image of the source “culture”, “author” and “work” have undergone changes and publications related to this culture, author and work have certainly also been subject to “varying degrees of pressure”. In the paratextual analysis in Chapter 4, it will be highly evident that, just like texts, paratexts are not static and always subject to change.

Genette develops his own terminology to describe the characteristics of paratexts. A paratext has “spatial, temporal, substantial, pragmatic, and functional” features (1997, p. 4). These categories help us classify and name different types of paratext in a paratextual analysis. The first characteristic of paratexts is spatial, i.e. it is about the place they exist. Here, Genette distinguishes between two kinds of paratexts: “peritext” and “epitext” (1997, p. 5). Peritexts appear “within the same volume” and “around the text” (1997, p. 4). Covers, titles, prefaces, forewords and all other elements that complement the main body of texts are peritexts. Epitexts, on

the other hand, “are located outside the book” and interviews, comments, and criticisms can be considered under this category (1997, p. 5). In the analysis part of the thesis, I will deal with “peritexts” in the form of covers, titles, author/translator’s names, prefaces, biographies and, interestingly enough, the court reports that accompany some of the Turkish translations of *Mem û Zin*. What is more, the discourse in Kadri Yıldırım’s translation criticism, which can be considered as an epitext, will be analyzed.

The second feature of paratexts is temporal. As Genette delineates them, there are “prior”, “original”, “later” and “delayed” paratexts. Prior paratexts function like announcements and they inform the public about forthcoming publications (1997, p. 5). Original paratexts “appear at the same time as the text”. (1997, p. 5) Thus, in our analysis all the peritextual material can be counted as original paratexts. There is a slight difference between a later and delayed paratext. If a work has a second edition and a new paratext appears at the same time as this second edition, then this new paratext is called a later paratext. However, when a work is republished (maybe by another publisher) and a new paratext is used in this new edition, then this paratext is a delayed paratext. Given this, we can say that the court reports added to the 1975 and 1990 editions of Mehmet Emin Bozarslan’s translations are examples of delayed paratexts. Time is a crucial factor in discussing paratexts because paratextual material is time- and context- dependent. Therefore, a paratext can appear at any time but it may also disappear any time “by authorial decision or outside intervention or by virtue of the eroding effect of time” (1997, p. 6). As we shall see in Chapter 4, in *Mem û Zin*’s case, the (dis)appearance of paratexts has depended mostly on outside intervention.

Another characteristic of paratexts is their “substantial” features. They can be “textual”, “iconic”, “material” and “factual”, in Genette’s words (1997, p. 7). The textual category includes titles, prefaces, interviews and all other written material around and about the text. Also there may be “iconic” paratexts like illustrations or a cover design. “Material” paratexts include typographical choices, which are crucial in our case as the name of the author of *Mem û Zin*, Ehmedê Xani, is originally a Kurdish name and writing it in its original Kurdish form or in Turkish transcription “Ahmedi Hani” is a decision made by the publisher. There are also “factual” paratexts which influence the reception of the book by inserting a piece of factual information like the name of the prize that the author won. Even genre indication can be considered as a factual paratext as it determines the way the work should be read.

Another feature of paratexts is their “pragmatic” status. All paratexts serve a certain type of communication between the text and its readers. Genette classifies the actors of these communication; i.e. senders and receivers. Since my analysis will focus on how the translated texts are presented to the readers, rather on how they are received, here I will deal only with the terminology on the senders of paratexts.

According to Genette, a paratext can be “authorial”, “publisher’s” and “allographic” (1997, p. 9). With “authorial” paratext, Genette is referring to the paratextual material provided by the author. Most often we come across “publisher’s paratexts” which are supplied by the editor or the publisher. One last category related to the senders of paratexts is “allographic”. When a third party provides a paratextual material, e.g. a preface by a well-known author for a work of another writer, this kind of paratext can be called “allographic” (1997, p. 9). As another aspect of the communicative characteristic of paratexts, Genette discusses the “illocutionary force” of the message of a paratext (1997, p. 10). The illocutionary force is a very

decisive factor and refers to communicative aspect of the discourse. Even the genre indication like “novel” leads us to accept the text as a “novel” and shape our perception of the text accordingly. Such defining features of paratexts create an illocutionary force that leads the readers towards a specific way of thinking. Any piece of information can in fact represent the “intention or the interpretation [of] the author or the publisher” (1997, p. 11). The illocutionary force of the message goes hand in hand with the function of a paratext, which Genette discusses as the last characteristic of paratexts.

The “functional” aspect of paratexts underlines the fact that each paratext is supposed to serve a certain function, and it is the function indeed that determines the very existence of a paratext. As Genette puts it, “[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*” (1997, p.12).

According to Genette, paratexts have a subsidiary role and their function “determines the essence of [their] appeal and existence” (1997, p.12). Our main concern in the current study is the “function” attributed to the paratexts that appear and disappear in different translations and editions of *Mem û Zin*. The ideology traced in the paratexts can be thought of as the motor driving the “function”, which changes according to context and time. In this thesis, the term “ideology” will be used in the sense of a “defined function” that is to be expressed and promulgated by the paratexts of the translated texts. In other words, “ideology” does not have to mean a political view alone; in this thesis, it can stand for the motivation behind the production and selection of paratexts, that is, the desire to direct readers to adopt a certain perspective towards the text and its author.

3.4 Critical discourse analysis

In the analysis of the paratexts of *Mem û Zin* translations in Turkey, Teun A. Van Dijk's model and concepts for CDA will be instrumental, especially in dealing with the prefaces and notes of translators. Thus, in this section I will try to offer an overview of the relevant tools of CDA.

In his article "Discourse as Interaction in Society", Van Dijk treats discourse as a form of "interaction", thus as an "action" (Van Dijk, 1997, p. 2). This action has "practical, cultural and social" dimensions" (1997, p. 2). For this reason, texts are not sterile units but they are located at the middle of complex networks. The producers of these texts are not only "writers" but also they are "members of social categories" (1997, p. 3). In the production of discourse, "social and cultural roles and identities" play a major role and define the way the discourse is produced (1997, p. 3). The relationship between the discourse and the identity of the producer is dialectical: social and cultural identity defines the discourse, while language users "at the same time actively *construct* and *display* such roles and identities" (1997, p. 3). In the analysis of the paratexts, I will try to trace these "roles and identities" as reflected in the linguistic choices.

Teun van Dijk elaborates on some concepts which are essential for discourse analysis. These are "action", "context", "power" and "ideology" (1997, p. 7).

3.4.1 Action

When we say that discourse is action, we imply that it has a "goal" and thus its actor is "purposeful" (1997, p. 8). With respect to this "intentionality", we can say that discourse serves a pre-defined function and is controlled by the text producer to

fulfil this function (1997, p. 8). This subjective intentionality makes discourse an “action” which has ideological dimensions.

3.4.2 Context

Context is a key factor and has direct influence on the production and reception of discourse. Van Dijk defines context as “the structure of [some] properties of the social situation that are systematically (that is, not incidentally) *relevant* for discourse” (1997, p. 11). It is also necessary to state that Van Dijk deals mostly with “talk” rather than “texts”, thus dwelling on the context of speeches and considering variables such as participants, settings, and so on. Van Dijk affirms that “[M]ost work on discourse as action focuses on conversation and dialogue, that is, on talk” (1997, p. 4). However, in my analysis of the discourse of written material, such as prefaces, translators’ notes, and works of translation criticism, the “systematically relevant properties” are the history of a Kurdish literary text in Turkish and all the other legal, political, cultural and social dimensions that constituted the environment in which these translations emerged.

It is also important to note that there is a dialectical relationship between discourse and context, just like the one between discourse and identities. Discourses are conditioned by contexts but also “influence and construct them” (Van Dijk, 1997, p. 15)

3.4.3 Power

Van Dijk elaborates on the notion of “power” in its social sense, referring to a “social power” which is a “specific relation between social groups or institutions” (1997, p. 17). After emphasizing the social aspect of power, he moves on to the relation between discourse and power.

Power can be considered as “control” and “one group has power over another group if it has some form of control over the other group” (1997, p. 17). We can assume that discourse is an attempt to gain power or take control. It is one of the means “used to influence other people’s minds so that they will act as we want” (1997, p. 17). Thus we can say that power is persuasive and discourse “enacts power if it presupposes control over a material or symbolic power resource” (1997, p. 18).

3.4.4 Ideology

Van Dijk defines ideology as “a link between discourse and society”. It is ideology that determines the “acts or practices of individual social members of a group” (1997, p. 26). Other than managing coordination within a group, ideologies also “coordinate social interaction with the members of other groups” (1997, p. 26). By regulating actions, values, aims and positions within a group, ideologies define group identity. As for discourse, it is “the medium by which ideologies are persuasively communicated in society” (Van Dijk, 1997, p. 25). Thus, different groups create their own discourse to reflect their distinct ideologies. During the creation of the discourse there appears the distinction between “knowledge” and “ideology”; i.e., “what is knowledge for one group may be seen as an ideology by others” (1997, p. 28).

I will draw on Van Dijk’s notions of “action”, “context”, “power” and “ideology” in my examination of the paratextual apparatus of the Turkish translations of *Mem û Zin*. As I do so, their value as analytical tools should become all the more evident.

CHAPTER 4

REWRITING MEM Û ZİN IN TURKEY / TURKISH:

ACADEMIC STUDIES AND TRANSLATIONS

One of the aims of this chapter is to survey the existing academic studies on Xanî and *Mem û Zin* in Turkey, with the purpose of examining the approaches towards the Kurdish poet and his work that Turkish scholars have promulgated. In addition, I will focus on *Mem û Zin* as a source text and explore the reasons for writing a *mesnevi* in Kurdish, as explained by Xanî himself in his work. After that, I will move on to chronicle the Turkish translations of *Mem û Zin* from the Ottoman to the Republican period. At this point it is opportune to mention Ahmed Faik's *Mem o Zin*, which was written in Turkish in 1730, just a few decades after Ehmedê Xanî wrote Kurdish *Mem û Zin*. Even though I will deal separately with Ahmed Faik's *Mem o Zin* in my overview of the Turkish translations of *Mem û Zin*, I have to acknowledge its existence from the start, as the scholarly papers I will analyze now refer to Ahmed Faik's version either as an original text or a translation of Xanî's work. This distinction is important as it gives us clues about the ideological inclinations of the writers. In the last two parts of the chapter, where I give information on the source text and the Turkish translations, I will deploy Lefevere's notion of Rewriting as a theoretical framework.

4.1 Academic studies on Xanî and *Mem û Zin* in Turkey

In Chapter 1, I offered an overview of academic studies on the Kurdish language in Turkey, as part of my sketch of the environment in which the translations of *Mem û Zin* were produced and received. When it comes to studies particularly on *Mem û Zin* and Ehmedê Xanî, we see that they are hardly numerous in Turkey and they have

mostly been produced after 2000. These studies are largely comparative in their nature, and there has been an obvious inclination towards comparing *Mem û Zin* with other *mesnevi* examples. In this part, I will try to analyze articles by Turgut Karabey, Namık Açıkgöz and Ayhan Tek articles in chronological order. The reason for concentrating on these articles is that they are specifically on *Mem û Zin* and Ehmedê Xanî and they were all published in well-known academic journals and literary periodicals.

The analysis of these academic studies will be based on the theoretical framework of rewriting. To see how the concept of rewriting could be instrumental in analyzing the academic studies about Xanî and *Mem û Zin*, we can refer to André Lefevere's article "Mother Courage's Cucumbers: Text, System and Refraction in a Theory of Literature".

In his article, Lefevere examines the English translations of Bertolt Brecht's *Mother Courage's Cucumbers* and thus the ways in which Brecht was introduced to the Anglo-Saxon readership. He uses the term "refraction" to describe the effect not only of translations but also of other forms of rewriting like criticism, review or interpretation. A literary work gains reputation as it is rewritten and it "gains exposure and achieves influence mostly through 'misunderstandings and misconceptions,' or to use a more neutral term, refractions" (1982, p. 4). Thus, we can infer that all refractions or rewritings depend on a certain "understanding" of a writer and a work, which may sometimes misguide. As for Brecht, for instance, his works are translated into English in the way that Anglo-Saxon readership would expect and be familiar with. Therefore, his works were mostly domesticated in English translation and do not reflect the ideological stance of the writer and its reflection on the work. As Lefevere asserts, the strategies to acculturate Brecht and

canonize him in English are applied not only in translations, but also in other forms of rewritings such as criticisms and reference works (Lefevere, 1982, p. 113). When it comes to studies on *Mem û Zin*, these too can all be considered as rewritings in the target system, serving to create different images of Xanî and his work. Besides translations, other forms of rewriting like criticism, review of other reference works create an image for the author and the work, which is presented as a reality to the readers and actually based on “(mis)understandings”. Now, I will dwell on the rewritings of Xanî in the academic sphere.

To start with, Turgut Karabey’s article, “Ahmed-i Hânî (1651-1707) Hayatı, Eserleri ve Mem o Zin Mesnevisi”²⁵ was published in 2006 in *A.Ü. Türkiyat Araştırmaları Enstitüsü Dergisi* (Ankara University, The Journal of the Institute of Turcic Studies). Throughout his paper, Karabey highlights the religious and sufi aspects of Xanî and his work. He presents a biographical and bibliographical account of Xanî, introducing him as “an important Ottoman sheikh, scholar and poet” (Karabey, 2006, p. 57). We also see learn that Xanî received a good education in the fields of Islamic theology, poetry and Sufism and worked as both an *imam* and an Ottoman clerk (2006, p. 58). These points emphasize Xanî’s religious personality and his loyalty to the Empire respectively. It is also stated that Xanî taught courses about Islamic culture and wrote *Nûbahârâ Biçukân* and *Akîdaya İmân* in order to provide beneficial religious sources to children in their mother tongue (2006, p. 59). Thus, the underlying reason behind Xanî’s choice of Kurdish (despite his advanced competence in Arabic, Persian and Turkish) is to help Kurdish-speaking people (2006, p. 59). As for *Mem û Zin*, Karabey states that it is an example of a Sufi work, similar to *Leyla vü Mecnun*, *Ferhat u Şirin* and *Hüsn ü Aşk* (2006, p. 60). With

²⁵ Ehmed-ê Xanî’s life, works and *mesnevi* Mem û Zin.

respect to Ahmet Faik's work, Karabey states that Faik wrote the *mesnevi* in Turkish in 1730 (2006, p. 62); that is, he presents Faik's version of Xanî's work as a 'Turkish *Mem û Zin*', not a translation of the original Kurdish *mesnevi*.

At this point, it is necessary to clarify what I consider to be the difference between a 'Turkish *Mem û Zin*' and a 'Turkish translation of *Mem û Zin*'. The former implies that the story is universal, so that there exist versions of it in both Turkish and Kurdish. For this reason, the Turkish *mesnevi* is as original as the Kurdish one. However, the latter phrase implies that there is one original and that is the Kurdish text. Without doubt, this does not mean that the translation is less valuable than the original or that is just a mere reflection of the original in another language. The distinction here is made in order to demonstrate how ideological inclinations can impact on the way a text is perceived, even to the level of determining whether it is presented as an original or a translation.

Karabey concludes that Xanî's religious side has always been ignored by scholars studying in this area. They somehow turned a blind eye to his traditionalist personality and his stance as a religious leader who was firmly bound to Islamic values and who adopted Islam as a supra-identity (2006, p. 63-64). The nationalist readings of his works, argues Karabey, are a consequence of political manipulation, because the notion of 'Kurdishness' was then different from its current meaning (2006, p. 64). In conclusion, we see that the religious side of Xanî and his works has been accentuated by Karabey.

Secondly, we will have a look at Namık Açıkgöz's study, titled "Türkçe ve Kürtçe *Mem û Zin* ile *Leyli vü Mecnûn Mesnevisinin Mukayesesi*" (A Comparison of the Turkish and Kurdish *Mem û Zin* and the *Mesnevi Leyli vü Mecnûn*). As the title

itself suggests, Açıkgöz is of the opinion that there are two *Mem û Zin mesnevis*, one in Kurdish and the other in Turkish. The latter was written 35 years later than the Kurdish one, but we do not know whether Ahmet Faik was aware of the existence of the Kurdish version. The reason for this is that the very first pages of Ahmet Faik's script are lost so we do not have the preface of this version, as Açıkgöz points out (2007, p. 49). Açıkgöz compares the two *Mem û Zins* with each other and then extends the comparison to another *mesnevi*, *Leyli vü Mecnûn*. The Turkish and Kurdish *Mem û Zin* are compared with respect to story, characters, plot, time, social backgrounds, language, style and finally structure. The remarkable points made by Açıkgöz are that, with regards to the social backgrounds of the protagonists, both *Mem û Zins* reflect the features of a tribal community, and Sunni-Muslim values are prevalent in the society (2007, p. 38). In other words, Açıkgöz highlights the fact that both texts have a religious emphasis and that tribal living is depicted. As for the language used, Açıkgöz asserts that the language that is used in the Kurdish *Mem û Zin* is so similar to Persian that sometimes it is even possible to think that it was written in Persian. On the other hand, the Turkish *Mem û Zin* exhibits a simple and plain use of language (2007, p. 39). Thus, emphasis is placed on the 'impure' nature of the Kurdish language; however, there is no such concern about the Turkish version. It is also significant that, similarly to Turgut Karabey, Açıkgöz does not perceive the Turkish version as a translation. He thinks that it is another original text derived from the universal story of *Meme Alan*.

In the second part of his article, Açıkgöz compares *Mem û Zin* and *Leylü vü Mecnûn mesnevis* in terms of the abovementioned points. In his comparison of the sections entitled "Sebeb-i Telif" (Reasons for Writing), Açıkgöz claims that both writers, Ehmedê Xanî and Fuzuli had the same reason for writing, i.e. to unveil the

truth through a story (2007, p. 42). There is no mention of the couplets where Xanî gives his reasons for choosing Kurdish instead of Persian or Arabic. In the final part, Açıkgöz concludes that these three *mesnevis* portray the same socio-cultural environment and conceptions.

In his article “Mem û Zin ve Hüsn ü Aşk Karşılaştırması Bağlamında Klasik Kürt ve Türk Edebiyatı Üzerine Notlar” (Notes on Classical Kurdish and Turkish Literature, Prompted by a Comparison of Mem û Zin and Hüsn ü Aşk), Ayhan Tek starts with the position of Kurdish literature. His analysis shows that the Kurdish literary field has been mostly considered outside of the borders of canonized literature (kanon-dışı) and, what is more, outside of the borders of the law (kanun-dışı). That is why it has not been the object of much research and has not had the chance to thrive in the course of time. Tek exemplifies the situation with the case of *Mem û Zin*, focusing on the Arabic manuscripts that were used in *medreses*²⁶ during the late Ottoman Empire. Then, the hodjas and scribals changed the title from *Mem û Zin* to *Mizanü'l-Edeb* (The Measure of Decency), which Tek dubs a ‘safer’ name for the publication (Tek, 2011, p. 3). As Tek maintains, a similar sort of self-censorship can well be seen in later publications, such as Mehmet Emin Bozarslan’s translation in 1968, not in the title this time but in certain couplets. Thus, Kurdish literature and *Mem û Zin* in particular remain sensitive subjects. Tek also notes that *Mem û Zin* is generally counted as the first Kurdish *mesnevi*, which suggests that this genre was not preferred by Kurdish literati. As Tek suggests, this might be related to the audience of the *mesnevi* and the patronage system. In other words, the Kurdish literary figures did not have the chance to present their *mesnevis* to any “patron” (2011, p. 4). On the other hand, with Persian and Turkish literatures, the case was

²⁶ Islamic religious school.

quite different as they could present their works to a “patron” who supported them in turn. In the analysis part of the study, Tek compares *Mem û Zin* with *Hüsn ü Aşk*, a well-known Turkish *mesnevi*, in terms of the motivations behind the production of these works, the socio-political and literary contexts from which these works emerged, and their sources of inspiration. Tek concludes that *Mem û Zin* is an original work and not just the written rendition of the oral saga of Meme Alan. However, he adds, political factors may have led to it being subject to reductive nationalist interpretations. It is significant that Tek mentions the Ottoman translation of *Mem û Zin*, which was published in 1865 and translated by Ahmed Faik. Even though the translation is shorter than the original Kurdish *mesnevi* (Faik omitted 734 couplets), and there are some changes in the story in Faik’s translation, Tek still conceives this as a translation of the Kurdish work, not as “Turkish *Mem û Zin*”. The idea of two *Mem û Zins*, one Kurdish and the other Turkish, is also articulated by Namık Açıkgöz, as will be discussed later on.

As can be seen, diverse approaches towards *Mem û Zin* are manifested in the academic field. Some circles consider the Kurdish version as the original text and thus Ahmet Faik’s version as a translation. We see that there are objections in some other studies. For instance, Turgut Karabey and Namık Açıkgöz claim that there are two *Mem û Zins*, one in Turkish and the other in Kurdish. We also see that in some studies there is a special emphasis on the religious side of Ehmedê Xanî and his work. Underlining the religious side of Xanî can be interpreted as a response to the nationalist readings of *Mem û Zin*. Such readings have been proposed by many writers, such as Faik Bulut, who asserts that Xanî was a Kurdish nationalist who questioned the situation of the Kurdish people and language (Bulut, 2003, p. 59). As will be shown in Chapter 5, Mehmet Emin Bozarslan also foregrounds the social and

political motives in *Mem û Zin* in his preface to his translation. However, the ‘academic’ studies presented in this section suggest a different image of Xanî and his work. They project an image of the author that differs from, and even throws into question previous representations of the author and his work. Xanî is introduced as a religious poet whose work has a universal theme. Thus, we can easily infer that, in *Mem û Zin*’s case, the academic field adds to the complexity of the issue as different studies manifest diverse or even opposing ideas with regards to the text, dependent on the ideology of the writers and/or institutions. We are exposed to various presentations or representations of the same work or author. Thus, even in the scientific sphere, concepts such as objectivity or impartiality end up rather empty.

4.2 *Mem û Zin* as a source text

As introduced above, *Mem û Zin* was the masterpiece of Ehmedê Xanî. The exact date of the original text is not known, but roughly we can say that it belongs to the late seventeenth century. Xanî adopted the characters of the popular Kurdish folk legend *Meme Alan* (Mem of Alan) and produced a *mesnevi* based on this story, which dated back to the fourteenth century. The saga, a love story about Mem and Zin, originally became known in its oral form. Xanî made various changes when writing his *mesnevi*. According to Martin van Bruinessen, Xanî changed “the basic narrative, overlaid the story with layer upon layer of symbolic meaning, enriched it with mystical and metaphysical ideas and his views on politics” (Van Bruinessen, 2003, p. 45). First of all, by converting the oral tale into a written form, Xanî perpetuated the oral story and granted it a longer literary life. *Meme Alan* was a source of inspiration for Xanî and he reproduced the work in a different (written) form, in the *mesnevi* genre. Thus, we can accept *Mem û Zin* as a rewriting of the saga of *Meme Alan*. It can be classed a “rewriting” because it does not only make use of

the saga as the basis for its plot but also contributes to the saga. If Xanî had not written *Mem û Zin*, the story of *Meme Alan* would have been known only by relatively few Kurdish people or forgotten entirely. Xanî's contribution to the saga was to give it a longer life and make it known by a larger audience. According to Lefevere, through rewriting, literary works can be circulated among "non-professional readers", and these works go beyond the "charmed circle" of "professional readers" (Lefevere, 1992, p. 4). Xanî's rewriting does just the opposite: as he turns the popular folk tale (well-known by non-professional readers) into a written, *mesnevi* form, he opens the gate for "professional readers". In a sense, he elevated his cultural material in order that it could be read or studied by professional readers. This new audience is not confined to his time only, but his rewriting enables us to analyze this text, its translations and various presentations. He confirms the idea of rewriting in the couplets 321- 322:

Şerha xemê dil bikim fesane
Zinê û Memê bikim behane

Nexmê we ji perdeê derînim
Zinê û Memê ji nû vejînim

(Yıldırım, trans. 2010, p. 197)

In these couplets Xanî says,

Making a legend of the tragic explanation
Making Mem and Zin a justification

Getting such a thrilling tune out of screen
Giving new life to Mem and Zin

(Saadalla, trans. 2008, p. 39)

As Xanî maintains in the *mesnevi*, his is an endeavor to revive the old, famous saga and to create a new work by loading his ideas and feelings into it and

attributing a new function to the text. That is why *Mem û Zin* can itself be considered a rewriting of *Meme Alan*.

Another important issue is the choice of language. Xanî wrote the *mesnevi* in the Kurmanji dialect of Kurdish, opposing the conventions of his time. He did not opt for Arabic (the language of religion), Ottoman Turkish or Persian (languages of Ottoman and Safavid Empires) but Kurdish. We can say that Xanî opposed the system by,

... operat[ing] outside of its constraints, ... by writing works of literature in ways that differ from those prescribed or deemed acceptable at a particular time in a particular place; or by rewriting works of literature in such a manner that do not fit in with the dominant poetics or ideology of a given time and place. (Lefevere, 1992, p. 13)

In short, it is safe to assume that what we take as the “source text” is a rewriting of another text. In this sense, a text does not have to be in written form, and an oral legend can be accepted as a “text” within the framework of rewriting. The concept of rewriting also pushes us to analyze consider the broader context, especially the political setting, when examining different types of translation carried out at different times.

4.3 Translations of *Mem û Zin* in the Ottoman period

In 1730, Ahmed Faik wrote *Mem o Zin* in Azeri Turkish. In fact, it is still debatable whether Ahmed Faik’s version is an original work or a rewriting of Ehmedê Xanî’s *Mem û Zin*. Some scholars distinguish between these two works as the “Kurdish *Mem û Zin*” (Ehmedê Xanî’s) and the “Turkish *Mem û Zin*” (Ahmed Faik’s) as they claim that they derive separately from the same saga of *Meme Alan*, whereas others claim that Faik’s is a translation of Xanî’s. Ahmed Faik (re)wrote his work in *mesnevi* form with some differences in comparison to Ehmedê Xanî’s work.

Whereas Xanî's version consisted of 2364 couplets, Faik's comprised 1056 couplets (Açıkgöz, 2007, p. 37). Faik wrote his *Mem o Zin* 23 years after Xanî's death, in the same genre but with considerable reduction. Because of the widespread restricted conception of translation, Faik's version of *Mem û Zin*, with its significant shortening, is often categorized not as a translation but as an independent text which has no link to Xanî's version. For example, in his article "Kürtçe ve Türkçe *Mem û Zin* ile Fuzuli'nin *Leyli vü Mecnun Mesnevisinin Mukayesesi*", Namık Açıkgöz differentiates between the two works even in his title and throughout the article he approaches them as two original texts. Açıkgöz compares Xanî's and Faik's works with respect to content, time, plot, use of language, style and structure. As he maintains, these two texts are parallel to each other except for the number of couplets and the very slight addition to content in Faik's version. Açıkgöz says that "the only difference is that in the Turkish *Mem û Zin* a young boy called Yahya sees the lovers after they pass away. In his dream, Mem is the sultan and Beko is the doorman of paradise" (Açıkgöz, 2007, p. 38, own translation).²⁷ It is also interesting that Ahmed Faik's rewriting was translated into modern Turkish in 1969 by Sırrı Dadaşbilge and the name of Ehmedê Xanî is not mentioned in this publication at all. We will discuss this translation in subsequent sections. As for Ahmed Faik's *Mem o Zin*, we can say that the decision whether to accept it as an original text (inspired by the saga of *Meme Alan*) or as a translation of Ehmedê Xanî's *Mem û Zin* is heavily determined by the ideology of the observer.

Another rewriting of Ehmedê Xanî's *Mem û Zin* was carried out by Abdülaziz Halis Çıkıntaş in 1906. However, this translation has never been published and thus

²⁷ "Sadece, Türkçe Mem u Zin'de aşıkların ölümünden sonra, gençleri Yahya adlı birisinin, rüyasında, Mem'i cennet ülkesinin padişahı, Beko'yu da kapıcısı olarak görmesi farklılığı vardır" (Açıkgöz, 2007, p. 38).

we do not have much information about it (Alakom, n.d.). The first printed translation of *Mem û Zin* in Ottoman Turkish came out in 1919. It was prepared by Müküslü Hamza. Martin van Bruinessen tells the story of this rewriting briefly:

The first complete edition is associated with the next phase in the Kurdish movement, the years following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in World War I, when for a brief period the establishment of a Kurdish state appeared feasible. Following the ceasefire in 1918 and the occupation of Istanbul by the British and French, Kurdish aristocrats and intellectuals established the nationalist association, *Kürdistan Te'ali Cemiyeti*. This association had several affiliated organizations, one of which was the *Kürd Ta'mim-i Ma'arif ve Neşriyat Cemiyeti*, which took care of educational and publishing activities. The first book published by this association, in 1919, was Ehmedê Xanî's *Mem û Zin*. (2003, p. 51)

It is clear that rewriting *Mem û Zin* ran parallel to the political changes in that period. Rewriting took the stage when there was the possibility of the emergence of a new (Kurdish) state, for which rewriters were endeavouring to create a literary canon. It is no coincidence that translations in the Republican period emerged at similarly critical moments in the political and social development of Turkey. Table 1 displays the Turkish translations of *Mem û Zin* in the Republican Period, their dates of publications and distinctive contextual features of their time. These translations will be examined in-depth in the next section.

Table 1. Turkish Translations of *Mem û Zin* in the Republican Period

TRANSLATOR	SOURCE TEXT	SOURCE LANGUAGE	YEAR	HISTORICAL CONTEXT
Mehmet Emin Bozarslan	Ehmede Xani's <i>Mem û Zin</i>	Kurdish	1968	World-wide student movement of 1968.
Sırrı Dadaşbilge	Ahmet Faik's <i>Mem û Zin</i>	Azeri Turkish	1969	A year after Bozarslan's first edition.
Mehmet Emin Bozarslan	Ehmede Xani's <i>Mem û Zin</i>	Kurdish	1975	Aftermath of Bozarslan's acquittal.
Mehmet Emin Bozarslan	Ehmede Xani's <i>Mem û Zin</i>	Kurdish	1990	1990s: The first official recognition of the Kurdish reality (by Özal) and the annulling of Law No. 2932, enabling the use of Kurdish to a certain extent.
Sadık Yalsızuçanlar	A manuscript based on Ahmet Faik's <i>Mem û Zin</i>	Ottoman Turkish	2001	2000s: turning point for the Kurdish language with the legal regulations and the launching of the Kurdish initiative.
Abdülhadi Timurtaş	M. Sadi Ramazan El Buti's novel <i>Mem û Zin</i>	Arabic	2006	2000s: turning point for the Kurdish language with the legal regulations and the launching of the Kurdish initiative.
Namık Açıkgöz (Ministry)	Ehmede Xani's <i>Mem û Zin</i>	Kurdish	2010	A year after the launch of the Kurdish initiative.
Kadri Yıldırım	Ehmede Xani's <i>Mem û Zin</i>	Kurdish	2010	A year after the launch of the Kurdish initiative.
Nihat Dağlı	Kadri Yıldırım's translation (change in form-rewritten as prose)	Turkish	2012	Aftermath of the starting of the Kurdish initiative.

4.4 Translations of *Mem û Zin* in the Republican period

4.4.1 Mehmet Emin Bozarslan's translation

Mehmet Emin Bozarslan translated Ehmedê Xani's *Mem û Zin* into Turkish in 1968. It was published by Gün Yayınları. He "published it in latinized Kurdish, together with a Turkish translation" (Van Bruinessen, 2003, p. 53). It was the first translation of *Mem û Zin* after the foundation of the Turkish Republic. As Bruinessen states, "the re-emergence of the Kurdish movement in Turkey in the 1960s was also marked by the publication of a translation of *Mem û Zin*". Again, the rewriting activity ran parallel to the political activities of the time. This rewriting addressed a larger audience as it also made it easier for Kurdish readers to read the latinized Kurdish on the pages on the left. Xani's original text had been written using the Arabic alphabet and that is why Mehmet Emin Bozarslan's version constituted a rewriting both for Turkish readers and for Kurdish readers who could not read the Arabic alphabet. The publication makes it plain to see that he omitted the politically sensitive parts. However, the omitted couplets are not invisible but are indicated with dots, both in the Kurdish transliteration and Turkish translation. Thus, the reader is made aware of the censorship. Here I have to note that this censorship may have been applied to the text by the editor, publisher or another patron and not by Bozarslan directly. Although Bozarslan's text was censored, "the book was soon banned, and the authorities destroyed all copies they could find" (Van Bruinessen, 2003, p. 53). Bozarslan was prosecuted for "violating the press law by making propaganda to weaken national feelings" (1990, p. 574).²⁸ In the end, Bozarslan was acquitted and the ban on the book was lifted. Later on, Bozarslan's translation was reprinted in

²⁸Basın Kanunu'na muhalefet olarak milli duyguları zayıflatıcı pr[o]paganda yapmak.

1975²⁹ by Koral and in 1990 by Hasat Yayınları. Even though the ban was lifted, at the end of the books both publishers added the court reports, expert reports and document of acquittal, all of which can be considered in part as a preemptive self-defense mechanism to ward off another prosecution. What is more, the omitted parts were not included in the reprintings; they remained invisible even in the final reprint in 1990.

Mehmet Emin Bozarslan's translation crystallizes the relation between ideology and rewriting. The system of patronage, as exemplified by the publishers and editors who went to such lengths to construct an apparatus of self-defense and who may have initiated the censorship of the text, intervenes in the production of rewritings in the literary system when it senses a threat. In Bozarslan's case, the "threat" was the language/culture of the source text. As the politically sensitive parts were censored in any case, the underlying reason for Bozarslan's prosecution could have been the very choice of source text, source author and/or source culture. It is worth pointing out that the same year that Bozarslan's translation was first published saw the publication and then banning of another controversial work of his, *Alfabe*, the first Kurdish alphabet written in Latin letters, which was brought out by Sim Matbaacılık. As the name indicates, the content of the book was nothing more than an "alphabet"; Chapter 1 showed, however, that throughout much of the history of Republican Turkey, even something as seemingly innocent as letters like 'W', 'X' and 'Q' could be politically problematic. Bozarslan's case amply illustrates Lefevre's assumption that professionals are interested in the texts themselves whereas patronage deals with the ideology behind texts (1992, p. 15). The purpose of the intervention of the "ultimate" patronage (which could result in a state

²⁹ In some sources, the publication date of the second edition is indicated as 1973. However, in the version I have, the publication date for the second edition is 1975.

intervention) was to hamper the reading of this translation and to prevent it from reaching its target audience, which could be an example of the repressive force of patronage.

4.4.2 Sırrı Dadaşbilge's translation

Sırrı Dadaşbilge translated Ahmed Faik's *Mem o Zin* (1730) into modern Turkish in 1969, and it was published by Matbaa Teknisyenleri Basımevi. As discussed before, some scholars regard Ahmed Faik's version as an independent text, not as a translation of Ehmedê Xanî's *Mem û Zin*. I consider this text as a rewriting of Xanî's work because it was written after Xanî wrote his piece and is very similar to Xanî's version in many respects. They have the same content, the same characters, the same plot and both are in *mesnevi* form. However, when Faik's translation is not considered as a translation of a Kurdish work but an original work in Azeri Turkish, the tale of *Mem û Zin* becomes a more "innocent" text. Evidence for this is the fact that, whereas Mehmet Emin Bozarslan faced considerable hardship for his translation from Ehmedê Xanî's Kurdish *Mem u Zin*, Sırrı Dadaşbilge's modernizing rendition of Ahmed Faik's version only a year later brought no negative consequences. In the preface to his translation, Sırrı Dadaşbilge presents Ahmed Faik as the writer of the saga, "an old, Mesopotamian folk story that could have been written in various languages just like Leyla and Mecnun" (Dadaşbilge, 1969, p. VIII, own translation). In other words, Dadaşbilge asserts that the source of Ahmed Faik's work is not Ehmedê Xanî's *Mem û Zin* but the ancient legend that induced many literary works in different languages. Thus, the Turkish translation of Ahmed Faik's *Mem o Zin* in 1969 did not result in any trouble for the translator or publisher, whereas the Turkish translation of Ehmedê Xanî's *Mem û Zin* in 1968 led to Mehmet Emin Bozarslan's prosecution. The story was the same but the "original" languages differed. That is

why the translators were treated differently. Even though it was published just a year after Bozarslan's translation, Dadaşbilge's translation did not face the repressive force of patronage. Having a Turkish source text, his translation was not viewed as an ideological threat to the state. On the contrary, it is safe to assume that Dadaşbilge's translation was a response to Bozarslan's translation and aimed to show that the story was universal, not solely Kurdish.

4.4.3 Namık Açıkgöz's translation

Within the context of the government's Kurdish initiative, in 2010 the Ministry of Culture published the Turkish translation of Ehmedê Xanî's *Mem û Zin*. Namık Açıkgöz was the translator but his name is mentioned as "hazırlayan/amadekar" on the inner cover, which means "the one who prepares the book". This translation was the first Kurdish publication by the Turkish Ministry of Culture. Like the previous rewritings, this rewriting can, indeed should, be seen in parallel to political developments. After the AKP government launched the Kurdish initiative in Turkey, the Kurdish language became more visible, especially in the discourse of the state. TRT, the official TV channel of the state, began broadcasting in Kurdish and the Ministry of Culture translated Ehmedê Xanî's work. In the case of the Ministry of Culture's publication of a translation of *Mem û Zin*, it is obvious that the decision to rewrite and republish the text was motivated by much more than the individual choices of the translator or publisher; it depended on other ideological and political factors, which are all interrelated. In the Ministry's translation, the politically sensitive parts that Mehmet Emin Bozarslan had omitted were translated into Turkish. There is not any *explicit* censorship in this translation, which makes this case even more remarkable; once, the censored text had been brought to court by the state, but in the course of time the same text came to be published without *explicit*

ensorship by the state itself. By *explicit*, I mean a similar sort of censorship to that found in Mehmet Emin Bozarslan’s translation. Another difference of this new rewriting is that it also includes the copy of the original manuscript. The manuscript in Arabic letters is printed on the left page, while on the right page there appear a Kurdish transliteration and a Turkish translation. This translation was also used as political material during the election campaigns in 2011, in the then prime minister Tayyip Erdoğan’s Hakkari meeting. There could hardly be better evidence for Lefevre’s claim that texts do not have an “intrinsic value” which is definite and valid at all times but that their position in the target systems is defined by their rewritings. What is more, the position of these rewritings is determined to a large extent by the rewriters, who are mostly at the mercy of the system of patronage. This time, the influence of patronage was not wholly negative and restricting. The translation was introduced in political meetings, as an indicator of the changing attitude of the state. Thus, the patrons promoted the reading of this text or at least intended to make the target audience know that *Mem û Zin* had been translated by the state itself. They delegated responsibility for the actual job to Namık Açıkgöz since, as Lefevre puts it, patrons delegate their authority to professionals when it comes to poetics (1992, p. 15). Thus, Namık Açıkgöz was chosen as the “professional”, which evoked much discussion afterwards. The criticism against the commissioning of Açıkgöz will be discussed in Chapter 5.

4.4.4 Kadri Yıldırım’s translation

In 2010, Avesta Yayınları published Kadri Yıldırım’s translation of *Mem û Zin* together with his theoretical analysis of the text. This rewriting was published in the same year as the Ministry’s translation, in October. As we understand from the interviews of Namık Açıkgöz, the Ministry’s translation was published towards the

end of November and it was introduced to the public by Ertuğrul Günay on December 1. Thus, Yıldırım's is an earlier translation. The publishing house, Avesta, is one of very few independent publishing houses specializing in Kurdish works and has "a good economic and symbolic position in the [Kurdish] editorial field" (Scalbert-Yücel, 2012, p. 363). In this rewriting, Kadri Yıldırım firstly discusses Xanî, his life and works. In the second chapter, he deals with the terminology in *Mem û Zin* and explains the terms related to love, Sufism, music, etc. In the last part, he presents his own translation of *Mem û Zin*. Kadri Yıldırım also later brought out another book, *Kültür Bakanlığı'nın Mem û Zin Çevirisine Eleştirel Bir Yaklaşım* (A Critical Approach to the *Mem û Zin* translation of the Ministry of Culture), which was published by Avesta Yayınları in 2011. This critique will be analyzed as a meta-text on a Turkish translation of *Mem û Zin* in Chapter 5.

4.4.5 Nihat Dağlı's translation

Gonca Publishing published a prose version of *Mem û Zin* in 2012. The book belonged to the series "Selections from Turkish and World Literature". Nihat Dağlı is presented as "hazırlayan", the person who has prepared the book for publication, and it is acknowledged in the preface that this prose version of *Mem û Zin* is based on Kadri Yıldırım's translation. That is why it is possible to conceptualize this text as a new rewriting based on another rewriting of *Mem û Zin*.

4.5 Indirect translations of *Mem û Zin*

Mem û Zin has been translated into Turkish not only from its source language but also through other languages like Arabic and French. One of the indirect translations was the work by Abdulhadi Timurtaş. Timurtaş's source was written in Arabic by M. Sadi Ramazan El Buti and published in 1982. Although El Buti's text bore the title *Mem û Zin*, it was not in the poetic *mesnevi* form but was rewritten in prose, in the

novel genre. Timurtaş's Turkish translation of the novel was published by Kent Yayınları in 2006. This translation can be seen as a rewriting of another rewriting of *Mem û Zin*.

The same can be said of another translation by Ömer Sudaüzen, which was published by Yeryüzü Yayınevi in 2004. Sudaüzen's version of *Mem û Zin* was based on a French rendition of the Kurdish source.

There might also be grounds for considering Sırrı Dadaşbilge's rendition of Ahmed Faik's *Mem o Zin* as an indirect translation. However, I will not deal with this translation in this section because it is an intralingual translation of a text in Azeri Turkish. As the source text is a dialect of Turkish, I do not see it as a totally indirect translation but as a rewriting of a Turkish text intended to renew the language and make the text easier to read.

4.6 *Mem û Zin* on the silver screen and stage

Mem û Zin has also appeared on screen and stage in Turkey in the shape of a movie, play and dance performance. The movie was made in 1991 by Ümit Elçi, the first movie in the Kurdish language ever to be shot in Turkey. The scenario was written by Hamza Özbal and Ümit Özbay. It is more about the love story of Mem and Zin; that is to say, it dwells on interpersonal love rather than mystic or Sufi love. This aspect of film has been criticized by some Kurds. As Ümit Elçi states in an interview with Bahar-Nihat Gültekin, moreover, some Kurds objected that the movie should have been more political and agitative (Gültekin & Gültekin, 2011, p. 233). He asserts, however, that even though they expected a more visible political stance in the film, they appreciated Elçi's efforts in placing Kurdish culture on the screen. The movie was released in 1991 only in Gaziantep and Ankara, with Turkish dubbing. In

this period, a state of emergency was in force and the use of the Kurdish language was banned. The movie was released with special permission from the then president Turgut Özal, under the condition that it would be dubbed in Turkish. The condition of dubbing needs to be highlighted, since dubbing erases the original sound track, in contrast to subtitling. This means that there is more space for manipulation in dubbing, as studies on Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy have amply demonstrated.³⁰ The film was also due to be released in Istanbul but the producer changed his mind after the bombing of a large store in Istanbul. However, 20 years later the film was released once more. In February 2002, it appeared on the screen again, this time also in Istanbul (Kaya, 2009).

Another rewriting of *Mem û Zin* was in the form of a play, written by Cuma Boynukara. He rewrote the *mesnevi* in the form of a play in Turkish and it was published by Berfin Yayınları in 1995 under the title *Mem'le Zin*. In the same year, the play was staged by Veysel Öngören in the Diyarbakır City Theatre. In 2005, it was directed by Bülent Emin Kapar and Işın Kasapoğlu and put on stage by the Semaver Kumpanya Theater. Also, in the same year it appeared at the 14th International Theatre Festival in Istanbul. The play was translated back into Kurdish in 2008 and published by Evrensel Yayınları. These rewritings before 2010 (when the Ministry of Culture published the *mesnevi* in Turkish) had all been the fruit of individual endeavors or the efforts of private institutions. However, the state staged this play as well: in 2011, a Kurdish version of the play of *Mem û Zin* was staged by Van State Theatre. Thus, it can be said that the Turkish translation of the *mesnevi* triggered other rewritings, at least one of which was patronized by the state. Finally, it should be pointed out that *Mem û Zin* also appeared as a dance piece, directed by

³⁰ See Martin Danan's article "Dubbing as an Expression of Nationalism (1991).

Apo Kaya and performed by the Mesopotamia Cultural Centre Folk Dances Group in 2004.

In conclusion, the concept of rewriting enables us to deal with various refractions of *Mem û Zin* in different forms such as the novel, movie, etc. Additionally, its emphasis on ideology and the system of patronage pushes us to consider these translations in the socio-political context from which they emerge. Patrons have changed in the course of time but their intervention has always been substantial and effective. To illustrate, Mehmet Emin Bozarlsan's translation faced legal proceedings and the political patrons intervened to prevent this translation from meeting its readers. However, in parallel to socio-political changes, in 2010 the same text was published and presented by the state itself. This time the intervention was not restrictive but promoting. The significant increase in the translations of *Mem û Zin* in the last decade can be associated with that changing political context and the attitude of patronage. Thus, the system of patronage should not be regarded as a static and always restrictive force as it is very open to change in time and dependent on social, political and ideological factors. It is also obvious that the concept of rewriting enables us to deal with many types of texts, not only textual translations. In addition, with its emphasis on ideology and patronage, the concept of rewriting encourages us to consider different translations and other texts in their historical contexts and observe their relations with each other.

CHAPTER 5
PARATEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF
TURKISH TRANSLATIONS OF *MEM Û ZİN*

In the previous chapter, I tried to give an overview of academic studies which were specifically on Xanî and *Mem û Zin*. Furthermore, I discussed the Kurdish source text of *Mem û Zin* and sketched the history of its Turkish translations in both the Ottoman and Republican periods. The purpose of this chapter is to describe how these translations were presented to the target system, i.e. Turkish literary system, by focusing on the paratextual elements such as book covers, prefaces, translators' notes. The chapter aims to depict the journey of a Kurdish text in Turkish and to demonstrate how the image of the text and author was transformed in the course of time. For this purpose, I will try to analyze paratexts of the Republican period translations from Kurdish to Turkish, in chronological order. As shown in the previous chapter, indirect translations of *Mem û Zin* also exist based on French and Arabic translations of *Mem û Zin*. However, these indirect translations will not be included in the analysis, since my primary concern is to look at the translations from Kurdish into Turkish. Furthermore, the intralingual translations (from Kurdish into Kurdish or from Turkish to Turkish) will remain out of the scope of this chapter as only the translations from Kurdish to Turkish in the Republican period will be the subject of the analysis. Thus, I will firstly analyze Mehmet Emin Bozarslan's translation and its 1968, 1975 and 1990 editions, Namık Açıkgöz's translation (2010), Kadri Yıldırım's translation (2010) and finally his translation criticism to Namık Açıkgöz's translation (2011).

5.1 Mehmet Emin Bozarslan's translation – 1968 Edition

Being the very first *Mem û Zin* translation of the Republican period, the 1968 translation by Mehmet Emin Bozarslan was a milestone in the adventure of *Mem û Zin* in Turkish as it ended the non-existence of the work in the Turkish literary system. As can be seen in Figure 1, on the cover of the first edition a girl and a boy appear in traditional costumes, referring to the epic love story of Mem and Zin. When the reader first sees this cover, it is more probable that s/he will perceive this as a romantic love story rather than as a *mesnevi*, the genre of the original work. The title remains in its Kurdish original form, and it is not translated into Turkish as “Mem ve Zin”. The name of the author is also written using Kurdish letters as “Ehmedê Xanî” and not as “Ahmedi Hani”. This choice may be categorized using Genette's terminology as a “material” kind of paratext, concerning typographical choices (Genette, 1997, p. 7). However, the linguistic and typographic choice here can also be seen as signaling the ideological perspective of the publishers. It indicates that the work belongs to another literary and cultural system. It is particularly significant that the language of the title and author's name is Kurdish, a pretty much forbidden language in the Turkish context, making the publisher's choice all the more striking when we consider the 1928 Act on Adaption and Application of Turkish Letters. The name of the translator is not mentioned on the cover; we can only see the name of the publishing house at the bottom.

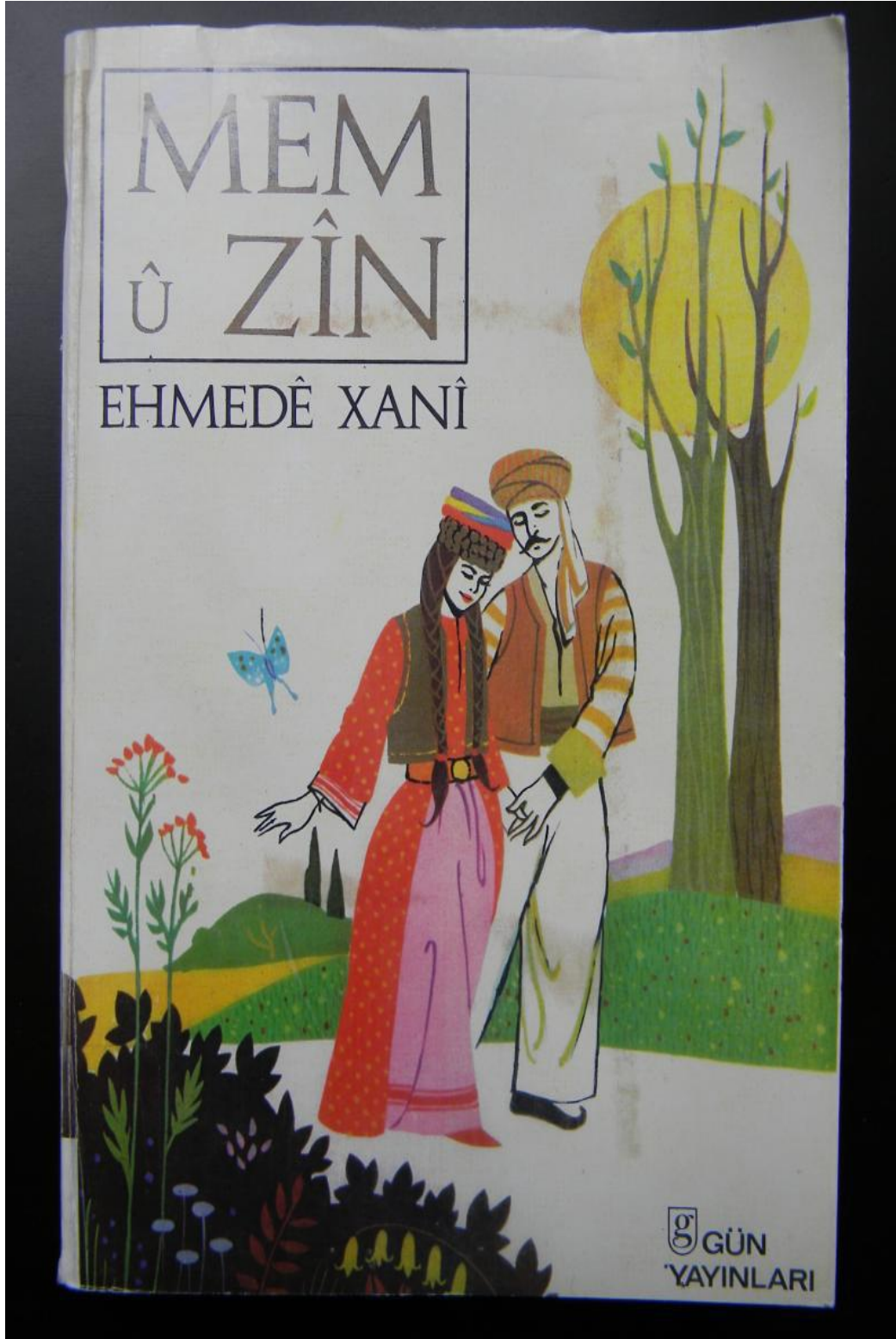


Fig. 1 The cover of the first (1968) edition of Mehmet Emin Bozarslan's translation

On the title page, the name of the translator appears as “Türkçesi: Mehmet Emin Bozarslan”. Also, the series title is indicated as “Büyük Ozanlar Dizisi 1”. Putting these together, we understand that this work was written by a “great bard” who did not write in Turkish.

After the title page, we find the preface, titled both “Peşgotin” and “Önsöz”. The preface appears in Latinized Kurdish on the left, while the righthand pages give the Turkish version. Not only the preface but also the work itself is presented bilingually in this form. The preface was written by the translator himself. Genette considers translated texts as paratexts; however, in this thesis, translated texts are regarded as texts themselves and the paratexts that accompany them are under analysis. Thus, we can consider Mehmet Emin Bozarslan as the author of this text, a view which enables us to consider this preface as an example of “authorial paratext” in Genette’s words (1997, p. 9).

It must also be noted that some couplets in both Kurdish and Turkish texts of *Mem û Zin* are censored, with the relevant locations indicated with black dots. (For a sample page, see Figure 8 in Appendix B) The censorship applied either by Bozarslan or the editor did not prove to be sufficient for sparing Bozarslan from trial.

Bozarslan begins the preface by saying that, “MEM U ZİN dünyanın ölmez edebi eserleri arasında ön safta yer almıştır. Bu dev eser konusuyla Şekspir’in ROMEO VE JULİYET’inin, Fuzuli’nin LEYLE İLE MECNUN’unun bir dengidir” (1968, p. 9).³¹ Here, Bozarslan wants to show the canonical position of the work, by comparing it with other canonical works like *Layla ile Majnun* and *Romeo and Juliet*. The capital letters, as the “material” choice of the paratext, also emphasize the

³¹ MEM Ū ZİN is one of the foremost timeless works of the world. In terms of its subject, it can be compared to SHAKESPEARE’S ROMEO AND JULIET and FUZULİ’S LAYLA AND MAJNUN (1968, p. 9).

canonical position of these *three* works. The other works Bozarslan refers to are likewise love stories, which in a sense places *Mem û Zin* within a narrower canon of love stories. After mentioning the importance of the original work, Bozarslan explains why he translated this text:

Ne yazık ki ülkemizin Kürtçe ve Türkçe konuşan okuyucuları bugüne kadar bu değerli eseri okumaktan yoksun kalmışlardır. Çünkü eser Arap harfleriyle yazılmış, Türkçe'ye de çevrilmemiştir. Bunun için, hem Kürtçe'yi hem de Arap harfleriyle okumayı bilen kimseler ancak okuyabilmektedirler. Bunların sayısının çok az olduğu aşikardır. İşte bu ihtiyacı karşılamak için MEM Û ZİN'i hem Latin harflerine, hem de Türkçe'ye çevirdik. Böylece Kürtçe de konuşan, Türkçe de konuşan okuyucular için bu kitabı okuma fırsatı doğmaktadır. (1968, p. 9)

Unfortunately, Kurdish- and Turkish-speaking people in this country have until now been deprived of the opportunity to read this valuable work. The reason is that the work was written in Arabic script and it was not translated into Turkish. That is why only those people who knew Kurdish and could read Arabic letters were able to read this text. It is obvious that there are not many of such people. To address the resultant need, we have transliterated MEM Û ZİN into the Latin alphabet and translated it into Turkish. So, both Kurdish speakers and Turkish speakers will have a chance to read that book. (1968, p. 9)

In other words, the main expressed purpose of Bozarslan's translation is to make this precious work accessible to those readers who do not speak Kurdish and cannot read Arabic. According to Bozarslan, the work is so precious that in order to make it known he carried out a "double translation process" of both transliterating the original manuscript from Arabic into Latin alphabet and translating the whole work into Turkish. After stating the purpose of his translation, he deals with the strategies he used in translating:

Bu eser XVII. yüzyılın sonlarında yazıldığı için, çağdaşı olan diğer bütün eserler gibi onda da birçok Arapça ve Farsça kelime vardır. Tabii Türkçe çevirisinde bu kelimeleri de Kürtçe kelimeler ve cümleler gibi aynen çevirdik. Fakat kitabın orijinalindeki bu yabancı kelimeleri değiştirmedik, olduğu gibi yazdık. Ancak herkes bunların anlamını bilmemektedir. Bunun için kitabın

sonuna bir Sözlük ekledik ve bu kelimelerin açıklamasını o sözlükte Kürtçe ve Türkçe yazdık. (1968, p. 11)

Since this work was written towards the end of the seventeenth century, it contains many Arabic and Persian words, as do all other contemporary works. We have translated these words into Turkish in the same way as we have the Kurdish words and sentences. However, we did not change these words in the original text and kept them as they are. Not all people know the meanings of these words, so we have added a glossary at the end of the book. We have written the Kurdish and Turkish definitions of these words in the glossary.

Bozarslan says that his translation is very “faithful” as he tries to make a “word for word” translation. However, some words are Persian, so he has prepared a glossary which will ease the reading of the text. The important point he is making is that Kurdish, Turkish and Persian are totally different languages and even a glossary is needed for speakers of one language to understand the others. The glossary is another paratextual element which underlines the “functional” aspect of paratexts (Genette, 1997, p. 12). The function of this glossary can be interpreted as an emphasis on the uniqueness and distinctiveness of the Kurdish language, comparable to that of Turkish and Persian. After mentioning the strategies he has employed in his translation, Bozarslan dwells on the work itself:

Hani bu eserde Memo ve Zin’in aşkı etrafında çağının yaşantısını, o zamanın sosyal, kültürel ve idari durumunu güçlü bir maharetle ... gözler önüne sermiştir. ... Bundan başka o çağda yöneticilere, devletin siyasi ve idari çarkına hakim olan anlayışı usta bir üslupla anlatmış; bu geri, zalim, çarpık ve küflü anlayışı yerden yere vurmuş; yöneticilerin davranış ve anlayışını, özellikle onların kötü niyetli, kinci, çıkarıcı ve dalkavuk kimselerin sözüyle oturup kalkmalarını ortaya koyarak kötölemiş, bu çürük ve haksız düzene karşı adeta isyan etmiştir. (1968, p. 11)

In this work, Xanî skillfully portrayed life at that time and revealed the social, cultural and administrative conditions amidst which Memo and Zin’s love. Besides, with a masterful use of style, he exposed to the rulers of his time the mentality that prevailed in the political and administrative circles of the state. He castigated that backward, cruel and fusty mindset; revealed and harshly condemned the behaviors and mindset of the rulers, particularly the fact that they acted according to their toady people around them, who were malevolent, vengeful and very selfish. Xanî, in fact, rebelled against the corrupted and unfair system.

This paragraph may be the most telling part of the preface in terms of directing the perspectives of the readership and creating the “desired reading”. Here, Bozarslan positions the text within a certain historical context and assigns a rebellious role to the author. Therefore, the reader is expected not only to read the text as a love story but also to be aware of the allusions to the social and political context.

After the preface, Ehmedê Xanî’s biography is presented. There is no indication of the author of this section, but most probably it was also written by Mehmet Emin Bozarslan. In this biography we are informed briefly about Xanî’s life, works and literary merits:

NÛBARA BIÇÛKAN (Küçüklerin Turfandası) da değerli bir eserdir. Bu kitap Arapça-Kürtçe sözlüktür, o da MEM Û ZİN gibi manzumdur. Her bölümünün başında da okuma, çalışma, doğruluk ve bunlara benzer sosyal konular hakkında bir öğüt yazmıştır (1968, p. 15).

NÛBARA BIÇÛKAN (The Spring of Children) is also a very valuable work. It is an Arabic-Kurdish dictionary and was written in verse, just like MEM Û ZİN. Each part begins with a piece of advice regarding social issues like reading, studying, being honest, etc. (1968, p. 15).

While introducing the author, Bozarslan says that not only *Mem û Zin* but also other works by Xanî are about social issues.

Xanî çağında çok ileri görüşlüydü; MEM Û ZİN’den de anlaşılacağı gibi haksızlığa, zulme, gericiliğe, feodal düzene karşı cephe almış, bu yolda hayli mücadele etmiştir ... Kısacası: her zaman halktan yana olmuştur. Örneğin NÛBARA BIÇÛKAN’ın önsözünde şöyle demiştir:

Ben bunu revaçtakiler için değil,

Kürt çocukları için yazdım. (1968, p. 17)

Xanî had great foresight. As can be understood from MEM Û ZİN, he stood against injustice, cruelty, backwardness and the feudal system, and struggled a lot. ... In short, he was always on the side of the people. For instance, he says in the preface of NÛBARA BIÇÛKAN:

I did not write this for those people who are in demand
But for Kurdish children. (1968, p. 17)

With this invocation of another paratext (Xanî's preface to *Nûbara Biçûkan*), Bozarslan underlines the nationalist views of Xanî as well as his affiliation with his people and his rebellious position.

All in all, in Mehmet Emin Bozarslan's preface *Mem û Zin* is presented to us as classical, even canonical piece of Kurdish literature. Bozarslan acknowledges that it is essentially a love story but that through this love story Xanî criticizes the system and creates an allegorical work through the addition of social and political allusions. Likewise, Ehmedê Xanî is presented as a very rebellious author who is against injustice and always on the side of his people.

5.2 Mehmet Emin Bozarslan's translation – 1975 & 1990 Editions

In the second and third editions of the book, the preface written by Mehmet Emin Bozarslan and Xanî's biography remained the same. What were added were the court reports related to Mehmet Emin Bozarslan's prosecution. As he carried out Kurdish publishing activities, he was sued for violating the press law. In the second and third editions of *Mem û Zin*, the court reports and expert's reports are added at the end of the book. So, in this section, we will analyze only the covers (that can be seen in Figure 2 and Figure 3), titles, author/translator names and then these court reports, which have certain paratextual functions.

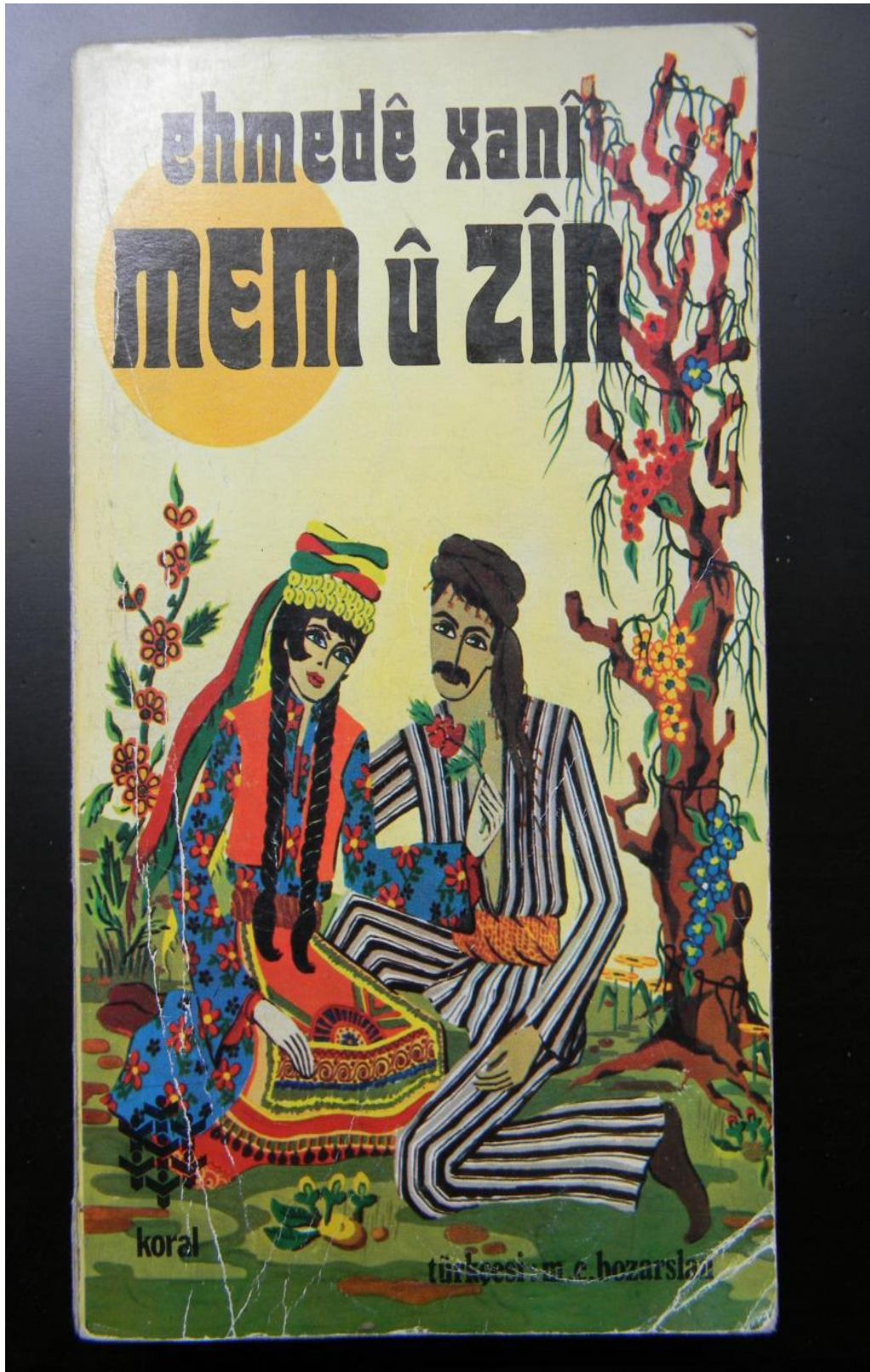


Fig. 2 The cover of the second (1975) edition of Mehmet Emin Bozarslan's translation



Fig. 3 The cover of the third (1990) edition of Mehmet Emin Bozarslan's translation

On both covers, as in the first edition, we see the picture of a girl and a boy, which implies the love theme of the work. The use of the colors red, green and yellow signal the “Kurdishness” of the text in the second and third editions (in the hat of the girl in the second edition and throughout the cover design for the third edition).³² The name of the work is again written in its Kurdish original form. The name of the writer is also written with Kurdish letters. At the bottom of the cover pages, we see the names of the publishing houses. With respect to these features, the second and third editions resemble the first edition. The main difference in these later editions is the indication of the name of the translator. These editions were published after Mehmet Emin Bozarslan had been sued, jailed and then acquitted, as we understand from the court reports at the end. This legal procedure underlined the “visibility of the translator”, and presumably motivated by this, beginning with the second edition Mehmet Emin Bozarslan’s name was included on the cover.

Here the notion of “visibility” should be discussed in a different context. In his book, *The Translator’s Invisibility*, Lawrence Venuti elaborates on the concept of the “visibility” of translators as agents and translations as products. Basing his arguments on the case of translations in the Anglo-American world where the dominant language is English, he claims that translators become “invisible” because they use “fluent discourse” when translating into English and the translated texts seem to have been written originally in English. The success accorded to translations by critics, moreover, seems to depend largely on the translator’s apparent

³² The significance of red, yellow and green colors dates back to the Persian poet Ferdowsi’s epic poem *Shahnameh*. Written between 977 and 1010, *Shahnameh* is accepted as the longest poem written by a single author (Lalani, 2010). The three colours feature in the legend of the blacksmith Kawa in *Shahnameh*. Even though there exist different versions of that legend, the basic theme is that the blacksmith Kawa rescued his son from the cruel ruler Dahhak, who kills young men and feeds their brains to the snakes on his shoulders. Dahhak also prevents the arrival of spring. However, the blacksmith Kawa beats Dahhak and saves his son’s life. His apron, which is in red, green (violet in some sources) and yellow is accepted as the flag of Kawa, standing for resistance to cruelty and the beginning of Newroz (Aydın, 2005).

achievement of fake “fluency” (Venuti, 2004). In other words, Venuti says that translators become invisible by eliminating the foreignness of the texts and producing “fluent” texts in line with the expectations of the Anglo-American readership.

If we come back to Mehmet Emin Bozarslan’s case, we will see that his “in/visibility” is somewhat different from Venuti’s conception. In the first edition, his name does not appear on the cover and we may assume that the translator is made “invisible” in this edition. However, all other elements on the cover imply the foreignness of the work; i.e. the name of the author is written as *Ehmedê Xanî* and the name of the work is written as *Mem û Zin*, in the original Kurdish form. It is safe to assume that while the actual translator is rendered invisible, the fact that this text is translated is made very visible. So, the invisibility of the translator in the first edition is not for the sake of presenting the work as if it had originally been written in Turkish. On the contrary, as we saw in the analysis of the preface, there is an emphasis on Kurdish culture and on the status of the work as a piece of Kurdish literature. When we come to the second and third editions, we see the translator’s name on the cover as the provider of “Türkçesi”³³ in the second edition and “Çevirmen”³⁴ in the third edition. Thus we may claim that the translator too is also rendered “visible”. However, this visibility is most probably a consequence of the legal procedures Mehmet Emin Bozarslan underwent, not a symbolic gesture intended to highlight the role of the translator by making the translator visible on the cover. Especially after the prosecution, he appears to be presented as the rightful owner of the text.

³³Turkish text by

³⁴ Translator

What makes the last two editions of Bozarslan’s translation particularly worthy of analysis in terms of paratexts is the court reports and expert’s reports added at the end of the books. In addition, on the back covers of these two editions, there is a reference to these court reports and it is stated that Bozarslan was acquitted and that all documents related to the case are incorporated into the book (See Figure 9 and Figure 10 in Appendix C). At the end of the book, we find “Bilirkişi Raporu”³⁵, “İstanbul Toplu Ceza Mahkemesi’nin Kitap Hakkındaki Birinci Beraat Kararı”³⁶, “İstanbul Toplu Ceza Mahkemesi’nin Kitap Hakkındaki İkinci Beraat Kararı”³⁷ and “İstanbul Toplu Ceza Mahkemesi’nin Kitap Hakkındaki Üçüncü Beraat Kararı”³⁸. In the expert’s report written by Prof. İ. Kafeslioğlu, Prof. İ. Giritli and Prof. Öztekin Tosun, we see the reason why Mehmet Emin Bozarslan was prosecuted. He was accused of violating the 142/3 article of the Turkish Penal Code. In this report, the experts begin by summarizing the preface written by Bozarslan, the biography section and also the content of the book. After that they state their “expert view” about the accusation:

Yazar, kitabın baş tarafında Kürtlerden ve Kürtçeden söz etmektedir. Özellikle 57-59. uncu sahifelerde Kürtlerin ne için mahkum bir kavim oldukları üzerinde durulmuştur. Kitabın çeviricisi bu kısımlarda bazı pasajları atlamıştır. Bunun gibi, 61-67. inci sahifeler arasında kitabın ne için Kürtçe yazıldığı anlatılmıştır. Yazar yabancıların Kürtlere irfansız, asılsız temelsiz dememesi için Kürtçe yazdığını belirtmektedir. 77. sahifede yazar Kürtçe kullanmış bulunmasının bağışlanmasını rica etmekte, 79. sahifede aynı şekilde kendisinin dağlı olması sebebiyle kusurlarının mazur gösterilmesini istemektedir. Kanımızca, tercüme edenin bazı kısımları atlama bir kere onun suç teşkil edecek fiilleri işlemek niyetinde olmadığını kabule sevk etmektedir; ayrıca atlanmayıp tercümesi yapılmış kısımlarda da 142. Maddeyi ilgilendiren bir yöne rastlanmış değildir. Tarihe mal olmuş bir yazarın eserinin aynen tanıtılması dışında milli duyguları zayıflatmak kasdı ile hareket edildiğini gösterir bir emareye rastlanabilmiş değildir. (1990, p. 573)

³⁵ Expert’s report.

³⁶ The first absolution regarding the book by Istanbul Combined Criminal Court.

³⁷ The second absolution regarding the book by Istanbul Combined Criminal Court.

³⁸ The third absolution regarding the book by Istanbul Combined Criminal Court.

The author refers to Kurds and the Kurdish language in the initial pages of the book. Especially on pages 57-59, he focuses on the reason why the Kurds are a captive tribe. The translator of the book skipped some paragraphs in these parts. Likewise, between pages 61 and 67, the reason for writing the book in Kurdish is explained. The author notes that he wrote his book in Kurdish so that foreign people would not say Kurds lack wisdom, that they are rootless and baseless. On page 77, the author apologizes for writing in Kurdish, and on page 79 he asks to be excused for the errors he makes as he is a mountain man. In our opinion, the fact that the translator skipped some parts when translating is an indication that he did not intend to become involved in a criminal activity. What is more, there is no relevance to Article 142 in the parts that he translated. There is not any indication of weakening national feelings as the book serves to introduce the work of an author who is historically very important. (1990, p. 573)

The expert's report thus stresses that the author himself was aware of the supposed errors or deficiencies of his work. Likewise, the translator Mehmet Emin Bozarslan is aware of the "problematic" parts and he omits them in his translation. The only counterargument deployed against the accusation of weakening national feelings is that Bozarslan omitted some parts in translation.

If we analyze these paratexts in terms of their "functions", in Van Dijk's terms, their presence serves to "spare" the second and third editions from further prosecutions. Also, in these editions the parts that Bozarslan omitted in his translation still remain censored. However, this is a different type of censorship. As stated at the beginning of the analysis, the Kurdish version appears on the left and the Turkish translation on the right; the reader can see the omitted parts in both Kurdish and Turkish, because they are shown with consecutive black dots in the text. This "visible censorship" is also retained in the second and third editions, and the court reports supplemented these editions, thereby contributing to the creation of the image of an "innocent text". The inclusion of the expert reports can also be seen as a very clever way of sidestepping censorship. The reports tell the readers roughly what has been omitted from the translation; if these comments had not been included, the

reader would not have had any idea about what had been left out. In the second and third editions the court reports were added in order to show that this translation was “innocent” and to signal the censorship imposed by the repressive environment.

All in all, when we analyze the paratextual elements of Mehmet Emin Bozarslan’s translation of *Mem û Zin*, we see that the work was introduced as a piece of Kurdish literature, a canonical love story with social and national dimensions, and Ehmedê Xanî was presented as an author always on the side of his people. Similar images of the work and the author were presented in the second and third editions. However, in these editions the strategic measure was taken of including the court reports and expert’s reports related to Mehmet Emin Bozarslan’s prosecution. We may conclude that these reports, paratexts, helped the publishers protect their books from further legal proceedings while alerting the reader to the existing censorship.

5.3 Namık Açıkgöz’s translation – 2010

Within the framework of the Kurdish initiative, the Turkish Ministry of Culture commissioned Namık Açıkgöz to translate *Mem û Zin* into Turkish and this translation was published in 2010. As a part of the paratextual analysis, the cover, author/translator names, prefaces and biography of Xanî will be examined to see how *Mem û Zin* and Ehmedê Xanî are presented by the Ministry of Culture. As the book was once banned and the previous translator was prosecuted, one would presume that paratexts would have been used by the Ministry to convey its approach to the text. However, we will start by first examining the translator Namık Açıkgöz’s statements about *Mem û Zin* and about what he saw as the ideal reading of it, as well as his views on Kurdish language.

The ongoing debate on whether Kurdish is a language in its own right or a dialect of Persian was touched on in the first chapter. Before analyzing the paratexts of Açıkgöz’s translation, it is instructive to examine Açıkgöz’s position in this

debate, not least because he was the translator of the first Kurdish-language work published by the Turkish Ministry of Culture. In an interview with Fatih Akkaya, Açıkgöz states that Kurdish is not a language in its own right but a dialect of Persian, showing some examples of phonetic similarities between the two languages (Açıkgöz, 2010). He maintains that,

In my investigations, I saw that Kurdish and Persian overlap mostly in morphology, syntax and with respect to many grammatical features. They show similarity in vocabulary and especially in verbs, which are the defining features of a language. As a result of my investigations, I think that Kurdish is a dialect of Persian. (2010, own translation)³⁹

Açıkgöz further notes that *Mem û Zin* is not an ideologically-marked text. In essence, it is no different from *Layla and Majnun* and other *mesnevis* in its purpose and content; only the medium is different. Xanî's purpose is to express the secrets of God. So, it is mainly a religious text, with similar objectives and content as other examples of the same genre. The only difference, claims Açıkgöz, is the use of Kurdish, but this is not intended ideologically because languages are just mediums of communication, not reflectors of ideology (Açıkgöz, Kürtçe Farsça Ağızı, 2010).

In another article, Açıkgöz repeats that *Mem û Zin* is a valuable element of our universal heritage, a reflection of our cultural richness. It is about common values like human love and divine love. It is no different from *Layla and Majnun* in terms of its content and sufi messages. Açıkgöz describes *Mem û Zin* as completely ours, emerging from our geography, cultural values and heritage, having a religious basis and being completely devoid of ideology. He again notes that literary works should not be associated with the languages they are written in, as they are universal

³⁹“İncelemelerim esnasında gördüm ki, başta morfoloji (yapı bilgisi) ve sentaks (cümle kuruluşu) olmak üzere pek çok gramer özelliği itibarıyla; kelime hazinesi açısından ve bir dilin en belirleyici özelliği olan fiiller konusunda, Kürtçe Farsça ile örtüşmektedir. Bu yüzden, benim tespitlerim çerçevesinde, Kürtçe Farsça’non bir diyalekti; yani ağzıdır” (Açıkgöz, Kürtçe Farsça Ağızı, 2010).

and common for all people (Açıköz, Mem u Zin Yayınlanırken, 2010).⁴⁰ In summary, Açıköz believes that, as a literary work, *Mem û Zin* is ideologically pure and even the choice of language is just coincidental as language is nothing more than a medium of communication.

In his article, “Specters of Kurdish Nationalism: Governmentality and Translation”, Nicholas Glastonbury notes that, “[l]anguage, for Açıköz, is therefore a sterile set of traffic signs that direct a reader toward the intention of the author, which in his reading is a message of Sufic love” (Glastonbury, 2015, p. 57).

Açıköz’s conception of language can be contested in many ways. First of all, language may not be considered *sterile* as it necessarily bears the impact of ideology and in turn shapes ideology. Secondly, as readers, we can just speculate on the purpose of an author or a text as it may gain new dimensions in the course of time or people may load various meanings onto texts. What is more, suggesting that language had nothing to do with ideology and that the choice of language for a publication was inconsequential appears to run counter to the Ministry’s own action of publishing this work. *Mem û Zin* was published within the framework of the Kurdish initiative and promoted as ‘the first Kurdish work published by the state’. That is why it is impossible to consider this work independent from ideology in such an environment. It should also be noted that the seemingly ‘neutral’ tone of Açıköz’s discourse reflects his own ideology. His claim that his reading of the text is free of ideology, as he has not loaded it with any political sentiment, displays his unwillingness or inability to see his own religious perspective as a form of ideology.

⁴⁰“Mem u Zin’de anlatılan hikâye, bu coğrafyanın hikâyesidir. Beşerî aşkı da bizimidir; ilahî aşkı da bizimidir. Zaten Mem u Zin, bir bütün olarak ele alındığında, insan tipolojisiyle, olay örgüsüyle ve tasavvufî mesajlarıyla, Fuzûlî’nin Leylâ ile Mecnun’undan farklı değildir. ... Edebî metinler elbette birilerinin kullandığı bir dil ile yazılırlar fakat bu tür eserlerde, dil, basit bir iletişim aracı olmaktan öte gidemez. Yani, aslında edebî metinlerin dili yoktur; o insanlığın ortak malıdır. Çünkü o metinlerde anlatılanlar, insanlığın ortak meselesidir. Mem u Zin’e de böyle bakmak gerekir” (Açıköz, Mem u Zin Yayınlanırken, 2010).

He does not accept Kurdish as a language, a position which prompted opposition about the state's commissioning of Açıkgöz for the translation of *Mem û Zin*. Kadri Yıldırım (2011), for instance, voiced his opposition in the preface of his book *Kültür Bakanlığı'nın Mem û Zin Çevirisine Eleştirel Bir Yaklaşım* (A Critical Approach to the Mem û Zin Translation of the Ministry of Culture). Yıldırım states that some Kurdish scholars and researchers were suggested to the Ministry as translators; however, the reason why they eventually opted for Namık Açıkgöz may have been that he once said that “This story had been presented with an ideological overlay”⁴¹ (Yıldırım, 2011, p. 8). This may imply that Açıkgöz presented the new translation without any ideological dimension (if such a thing is possible). Kadri Yıldırım notes that Açıkgöz's presentation of Xanî and his work mostly focusses on religious dimensions of the two. As mentioned before, according to Açıkgöz the function of this work is to express divine love and the fact that it was written in Kurdish does not matter in this sense.

It is in fact striking that the Ministry commissioned a translator who thinks that the language of the source text is not a language at all. Here we should note that, despite his claim that he prepared the text for publication without any ideological influence, Açıkgöz inevitably projects his ideology onto the text. His action of erasing the previous connotations and ideological baggage of *Mem û Zin* and adding a religious dimension is nothing other than the reflection of a different ideological perspective. After this discussion of Açıkgöz's views on Kurdish language and the function he attributes to *Mem û Zin*, we can now look at the paratexts of his translation, starting from the cover, which can be seen in Figure 4.

⁴¹ “[B]u hikaye, üzerinden yapılan bir ideoloji ile takdim ediliyordu.”

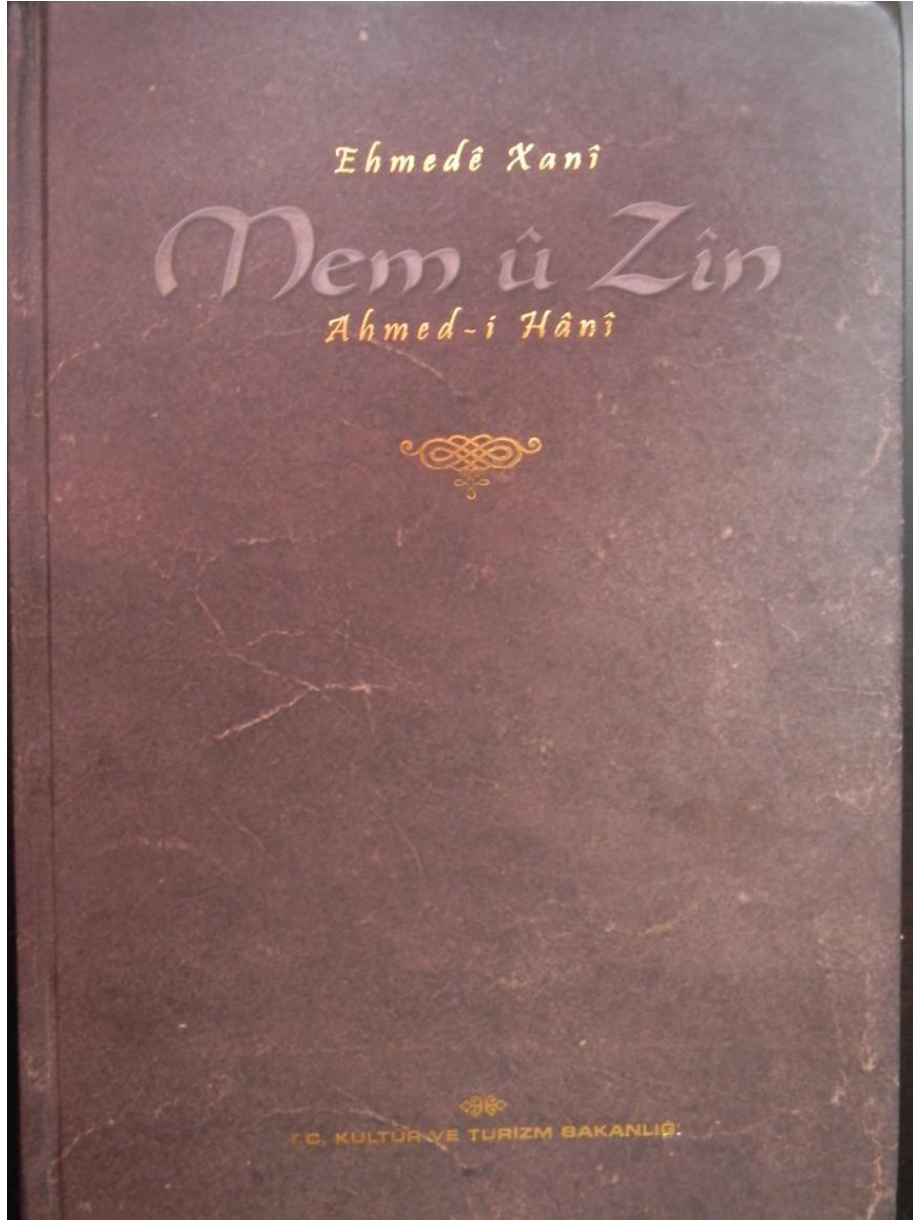


Fig. 4 The cover of Namık Açığöz's translation published by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in 2010

There is no illustration on the hard cover, which is a general tendency in the publications of classics in Turkey. The choice of plain covers for canonical and classical works has been a convention since the Translation Bureau of 1940s (Tahir Gürçağlar, *What Texts Don't Tell. The Uses of Paratexts in Translation Research*, 2002, pp. 48-49). The title of the work is given in its original Kurdish form (*Mem û Zîn*), not in Turkish translation. However, the name of the writer is written both in Kurdish (Ehmedê Xanî) and in Turkish (Ahmed-i Hânî), the former above and the latter below the title. Golden letters on a dark brown hard cover signal to the reader that this is a piece of prestigious literature, a classic. The name of the translator is not mentioned on this cover but the name of the publisher, Ministry of Culture appears at the bottom: “T.C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı”. The indication of the publisher and not the translator on the cover can be interpreted as follows: what makes this translation important is not the fact that it is *translated by* Namık Açıköz but that it is *published by* the Ministry of Culture, as the representative of the state. On the back cover, the name of the publisher is given once more, in the very middle, and this is the only textual item on the back cover. Judging from the front cover alone, we can say that this is a canonical piece of literature not presented specifically as a love story), written by Ehmedê Xanî *or* Ahmed-i Hânî and published by the Turkish state. The name Namık Açıköz appears on the title page as “Hazırlayan/Amadekar Namık Açıköz”.

There are two prefaces to this translation; one was written by the then Minister of Culture, Ertuğrul Günay, and the other by Namık Açıköz. Namık Açıköz’s preface can be considered as an “authorial paratext” as in this thesis translations are perceived as texts on their own, not a mere commentary on the source text. However, Ertuğrul Günay’s preface can be categorized as both a

“publisher’s preface” and an “allographic preface”, in Genette’s terms. As the publisher is the Ministry of Culture, Ertuğrul Günay may be considered as the “publisher”. However, as he does not write prefaces to all the publications of the Ministry and he writes a preface specifically for the translation of this Kurdish work, he can be considered as the writer of an “allographic preface”. He is the third party, not the author or the publisher, but the presence of his preface is very important in terms of representing the state’s approach to text. After these prefaces, we find Xanî’s biography and a table of contents. Then the translated text appears. This translation is unique in terms of containing three versions of the same text: on the left hand side, we see the facsimile of the original Kurdish manuscript written in Arabic letters. On the right hand side, there are two columns, one presenting the Kurdish transliteration into the Latin alphabet and the other presenting the Turkish translation. The inclusion of the original Arabic manuscript may be a device intended to advertise the superior “faithfulness” of this publication, with the original text being documented without any “translational intervention”.

Unlike Bozarslan’s preface, which is in both Kurdish and Turkish, the prefaces by Ertuğrul Günay and Namık Açıkgöz appear only in Turkish. To begin with the analysis of Ertuğrul Günay’s preface we can have a look at the first paragraph:

Dünya uygarlık birikiminin başlıca kaynağı olan Anadolu, görkemli kültür ve sanat değerlerinin yaratılmasına da ortam hazırlamıştır. Uzun tarihsel birliktelik içinde birbirleriyle etkileşen çok renkli Anadolu halkı, inanç, duygu ve yazgı birliğinin de katkısıyla, gökkuşağını oluşturan renklerin çeşitliliği ve uyumu gibi, farklı ancak uyumlu kültür ürünleri vermiştir. Anadolu’da büyük ölçüde Türkçe olarak üretilen ve kalıcılaştırılan kültür birikimi, Kürtçe ile üretilen düşünce ve edebiyat ürünlerini hem özendirmiş hem de bu ürünlerle zenginlik ve renklilik kazanmıştır. (2010)

Anatolia, the chief source of world civilization, provided a fruitful environment for the production of magnificent cultural and artistic values. Having lived together and influenced one another for many centuries, the manifold people of

Anatolian created many cultural products, with the help of their shared beliefs, sentiments and destiny. These products were at the same time distinct and in harmony with one another, just like the colors in a rainbow. The cultural heritage of Anatolia, which was mostly produced and perpetuated in Turkish, provided a stimulus for the production of literary and intellectual works in Kurdish, as well as lending quality and color to these works. (2010)

In this paragraph, and throughout the preface, Günay emphasizes the metaphor of the “mosaic”, which is very frequently used to describe Anatolia. There is the theme of a “harmony of differences” in a cultural sense. Günay also points out that Turkish plays the major role in leading this cultural unity. Through the accumulation of cultural wealth that is mainly carried out through Turkish works, other works begin to be created in other languages, which in turn contributes to cultural unity. He goes on:

Türkiye’de ve yurt dışında bulunan kütüphanelerde pek çok yazma nüshası bulunan “Mem û Zin”, 1968’de yeni harflerle Türkçeye çevrilerek yayımlandığında yasakçı zihniyetin bir sonucu olarak uzun süre yargılanmıştır. İnsanlığın eriştiği ortak akıl ve yetkinlik, artık tarihe mal olmuş yapıtların yargılanmasının, evrensel ve çoğulcu demokrasi ve uygar bir birliktelik bilincine uymadığını gösterir. ... Türkiye’nin köklü, çoğulcu, tarihsel, yazınsal ve düşünsel birikimini yansıtmak ve belgelemek bakımından, “Mem u Zin”in hazırlanması ve yayımlanması için emek veren herkese teşekkür ederim. (2010)

“Mem û Zin”, of which many manuscripts can be found in libraries in Turkey and abroad, was first transliterated and translated into Turkish in 1968. For a long time after this, it was the subject of litigation, as a result of a prohibitive mindset. The shared wisdom and competence that human kind has managed to achieve shows that the criminalization of historical works is incompatible with a universal and pluralist democracy and with the notion of a civilized togetherness. ... I would like to thank all those who, by contributing to the preparation and publication of “Mem û Zin”, have reflected and documented Turkey’s deep-rooted, pluralist, historical, literary and intellectual heritage. (2010)

In this paragraph, by referring to Bozarslan’s prosecution, Günay criticizes the old perspective regarding *Mem û Zin*. He again fosters the pluralist view by frequently using words like “evrensel”⁴², “çoğulcu”⁴³, “birliktelik”⁴⁴, etc. He also states the purpose of this translation in the final sentence as “reflect[ing] and document[ing] Turkey’s deep-rooted, pluralist, historical, literary and intellectual heritage”.

⁴² Universal

⁴³ Pluralist

⁴⁴ Togetherness

Thus, this purpose is different from that of Mehmet Emin Bozarslan, whose aim was to make this Kurdish work known by and accessible to readers. According to Günay, the motive behind the 2010 publication was to reflect Turkey's cultural richness. At this point, we can employ Van Dijk's notion of "action". He asserts that all paratextual materials serve certain function, so they can be considered actions too (Van Dijk, 1997, p. 8). Günay's purpose in this paratext is to emphasize unity through the mosaic metaphor, an aim he attempts to realize with this words. The same motive may have lied behind the decision to refer to Namık Açıköz as "Hazırlayan" instead of "Çeviren" or "Tercüme Eden", signaling that the text is not "too foreign" to be translated. Here, the invisibility of Namık Açıköz concurs with Venuti's conception: in order to eliminate the foreignness of the text, the presence of the translator and the process of translation are downplayed.

The second preface is written by the translator, Namık Açıköz. In this preface, Açıköz briefly introduces Ehmedê Xanî and the translations of his works into not only Turkish but also other languages like Russian. He explains his translation strategies as follows:

Bu çalışmada, İstanbul Arkeoloji Müzesi Kütüphanesinde bulunan bir el yazması nüsha olarak kullanılmıştır. Metin oluşturulurken Rudenko'nun [Rusça] yayınıyla mukayese de yapılmıştır. Tercüme yapılırken bire bir tercüme esasına sadık kalınmaya çalışılmış, sembolik söyleyişin yoğun olduğu beyitlerde, öze dokunmadan anlamlandırmalar yapılmıştır. Anlam verilmesinde sorun olan beyitlerde M. E. Bozarslan yayımından istifade edilmiştir. Yayına esas alınan nüshada, pek çok kelimenin altında Türkçelerinin de bulunması, tercümeyi kolaylaştırmıştır. (2010)

A manuscript stored in the Istanbul Archeology Museum was used in this project. While producing the text, some comparisons were also made with Rudenko's [Russian] publication. During the translation, the attempt was made to apply the principle of word-for-word translation. In couplets where the symbolic expressions are very intense, interpretations were undertaken without changing the core. For those couplets that proved difficult to interpret, reference was made to Mehmet Emin Bozarslan's publication. Turkish equivalents of most of the words were given in the original manuscript, which made the translation easier. (2010)

Namık Açıkgöz states that he tried to do a “faithful” translation without interfering with the core meanings. This strategy complies with the measure of presenting the original manuscript on the left-hand pages. Both the existence of the original manuscript and Açıkgöz’s preface show the efforts to be “faithful to the source”. It is obvious that the conception of translation is very conventional and restricted; in other words, the main concern is to reflect the original as faithfully as possible. Namık Açıkgöz also says that he made use of Bozarlsan’s translation. However, this led to criticisms against Açıkgöz, which claim that Açıkgöz plagiarized Bozarlsan’s translation. Kadri Yıldırım, another translator of *Mem û Zin*, wrote the translation criticism book titled as *Kültür Bakanlığı’nın Mem û Zin Çevirisine Eleştirel Bir Yaklaşım*, which was published in 2011 by Avesta. Yıldırım claims that Namık Açıkgöz plagiarized Mehmet Emin Bozarlsan’s translation by “copying the lines” (2011, p. 113), “changing only a few words with their synonyms” (p. 179), and “by changing the places of some words or phrases” (p. 189). He gives many examples from Namık Açıkgöz’s translation where he allegedly used these “plagiarism methods”. This criticism will be analyzed further in the following parts of this chapter. Glastonbury asserts that most of the lines in Namık Açıkgöz’s translation are identical to those in Mehmet Emin Bozarlsan’s translation. In addition, however, “Açıkgöz also fills in the lines that had been censored in Bozarlsan’s translation” (2015, p. 56). Given that Açıkgöz had not translated a Kurdish text before, he may have received help from Servet Şahin, one of Açıkgöz’s students. Açıkgöz says that he is grateful to Servet Şahin whom he consulted about Kurdish language and the text (2010).⁴⁵ Analysis of the excerpt above reveals, interestingly, that most sentences are in the passive voice and thus the subjects are not stated clearly. In the

⁴⁵ “Çalışmalarım esnasında, Kürtçe ve metinle ilgili görüşlerine başvurduğum ve bu görüşlerden çok istifade ettiğim sevgili öğrencim Servet Şahin’e müteşekkirim.”

gloss translation, I tried to keep the same structure (even though it sounds odd in English) to show the frequency of passive structures. The use of passive voice is very common in Turkish academic writing (Aktaş & Uzuner Yurt, 2015, p. 90). However, we can interpret Açıkgöz's over-use of passive as an acknowledgement that he was not solely responsible for the translation.

After Namık Açıkgöz's preface, we find Xanî's biography. There is no signature under this text but most probably Namık Açıkgöz wrote it as he is identified as the "Hazırlayan/Amadekar" or the one who prepares the book. Now we will see how the Ministry presents Ehmedê Xanî to the readers:

Asıl adı Ahmed olan şair, mensup olduğu Hani aşiretinin adını mahlas olarak kullanmıştır. ...Ahmed-i Hânî'nin iyi bir eğitim aldığı, saray katipliği yapmasından anlaşılmaktadır. Çünkü saray katibi olabilmek için, iyi bir yazı eğitimi almak şartı idi ve bu yazı eğitimi de ancak medreselerde öğrenim görmekle mümkündü. ... Şiirlerinden anlaşıldığı üzere, Ahmed-i Hânî, dini-tasavvufî şiirler söylemiştir. Bundan da onun tasavvufî ekollerden birine mensup olduğu anlaşılmaktadır. (2010)

The poet, whose original name was Ahmed, used the name of the Hani clan, to which he belonged, as a pseudonym. ... The fact that Ahmed-i Hânî worked as a palace clerk leads us to believe that he had received a good education. In order to work as a palace clerk, it was obligatory to be well trained in writing, and such training was only available in *medreses*. ... As can be understood from his poems, Ahmed-i Hânî produced religious – Sufi poetry, which shows that he belonged to one of the Sufi ecoles. (2010)

From this introduction to Xanî's biography, we learn that he belonged to a big and established clan, the Hani clan. He must have received good education (most probably in *medrese*) because he worked as a palace clerk. This means that Xanî held an official position in the Ottoman government. This is quite a different portrait from the one presented by Bozarıslan, who presented Xanî as a rebellious author who always voiced the problems of his people and stood by them by criticizing the corrupted system and officials. However, in this newer translation, Xanî is presented as an author who belonged to a well-known family, received good education in the

best institutions of the state and also worked in an official position for the state. The difference between the two images of Xanî is striking.

After this, the biography dwells on the works of Ehmedê Xanî:

Ahmed-i Hânî, bir şair olarak, edebi eserler yazmakla beraber, bazı dini kitaplar da yazmıştır. *Nubar-ı Biçukan*, onun çocuklara dini öğretileri aktardığı bir kitaptır. *Akide-i İman*, *Akide-i İslam* ve *Fi-Beyan-i Erkan-ı İslam* adlı eserleri de gene dini konularda yazılmış olan eserlerdendir. Kürtçe ilk mevlit de gene Ahmed-i Hânî tarafından yazılmıştır. (2010)

Besides writing literary works as a poet, Ahmed-i Hânî also wrote some religious books. *Nubar-ı Biçukan* is a book with which Hani taught religious principles to children. *Akide-i İman*, *Akide-i İslam* and *Fi-Beyan-i Erkan-ı İslam* are also works about religious issues. The first Kurdish *mawlid* was also written by Ahmed-i Hânî. (2010)

Xanî is portrayed as an author who mainly wrote about religion and Islam. What is quite striking is that *Nubar-ı Biçukan* is introduced as a religious book for children, whereas Mehmet Emin Bozarslan described it simply as a “Kurdish-Arabic dictionary” (1968, p. 15). While the difference between a dictionary and an informative religious book may seem little more than a matter of fact, the incorporation of these contrasting details in the respective biographies shows us the manipulative power of paratexts, since these paratexts may have a key role in reflecting and propagating different images of the same work/author. Further detailed information about *Mem û Zin* is also given:

Mesnevi 60 bölümden oluşmaktadır. ... 235 ile 285. beyitler arasında, şair kitabı yazış sebebini anlatmaktadır. Mesnevinin 286 ile 361. beyitleri arasında, kitabıyla ilgili bilgiler veren ve tevazu gösterip özür dileyen şair, 362. beyitinde hikayeye başlar ve 2376. beyte kadar olayı anlatır. ... Ahmed-i Hânî, bu mesnevisinde, sadece bir aşk hikayesi anlatmayı amaçlamamıştır. O, bir aşk hikayesini bahane ederek ruh yücelmesini anlattığını çeşitli beyitlerde dile getirmiştir. (2010)

The *mesnevi* is made up of 60 parts. ... Between the couplets 235 and 285, the poet explains his reason for writing in Kurdish. Between the couplets 286 and 361, he gives information about his book and apologizes modestly. He starts the story in couplet 362 and narrates the story until couplet 2376. ... Ahmed-i Hânî did not only aim at telling us a love story. In various couplets,

he articulates that he used the love story as a pretext to convey the elevation of spirits. (2010)

Mem û Zin is presented to us as a *mesnevi*, which is why it has Sufi or mystical elements. From this paratextual presentation, we learn that not the love story but these religious elements are the core of the work. One might argue that the cover design for the Ministry of Culture runs parallel with, or at least does not contradict, this characterization of the genre of *Mem û Zin*; in contrast to the previous editions it does not include any illustration of the story's eponymous lovers, which would suggest that the text was largely a love story. According to the writer of the commentary, the theme of personal love is employed by the author for the sake of transcendental love. This presentation is again different from Bozarslan's presentation, in which that translator focused on the social concerns of the work. What is more, in the course of the discussion of Xanî's decision to write in Kurdish, the radicalness of this decision is toned down through the characterization of Xanî as "tevazu gösterip, özür dileyen şair".⁴⁶ The part of the *mesnevi* where the issue of language was raised had been the main focus of the court reports and expert's reports. In these reports, Xanî was portrayed as a poet who apologizes for being a mountain man and writing in an inferior language. The harsh style of these expressions is toned down in Açıkgöz's translation. The reason for the apology is the humble character of the author, not the supposed inferiority of his language, as the court reports had suggested.

In conclusion, the Ministry of Culture and Namık Açıkgöz presented the book and its author in quite a distinct manner. First we can say that this book is made to appear not "too foreign to be translated" because it is part of the cultural wealth of Turkey. Besides the pluralist view articulated in the preface by Ertuğrul Günay, the

⁴⁶ Modestly apologizing poet

term “Hazırlayan/Amadekar” for Namık Açıkgöz instead of “çeviren” or “tercüme eden” seems to suggest that this book is “ours” and thus it is not “translated”. As for the content, the theme of personal love is framed as the medium through which Xanî furnished his texts with his Sufi or religious ideas. The biography conveys the message that not only *Mem û Zin* but also all the other works of Xanî are mostly religious in subject-matter. As can be clearly seen, the same author and the same text can be presented differently, by different agents at different times due to the functional uses and manipulative power of paratexts.

5.4 Kadri Yıldırım’s translation – 2010

2010 was a fruitful year in terms of *Mem û Zin* translations since both the Ministry’s and Kadri Yıldırım’s translations were published in that year. Yıldırım’s translation was published by the independent publishing house Avesta and the cover of this translation can be seen in Figure 5 below.

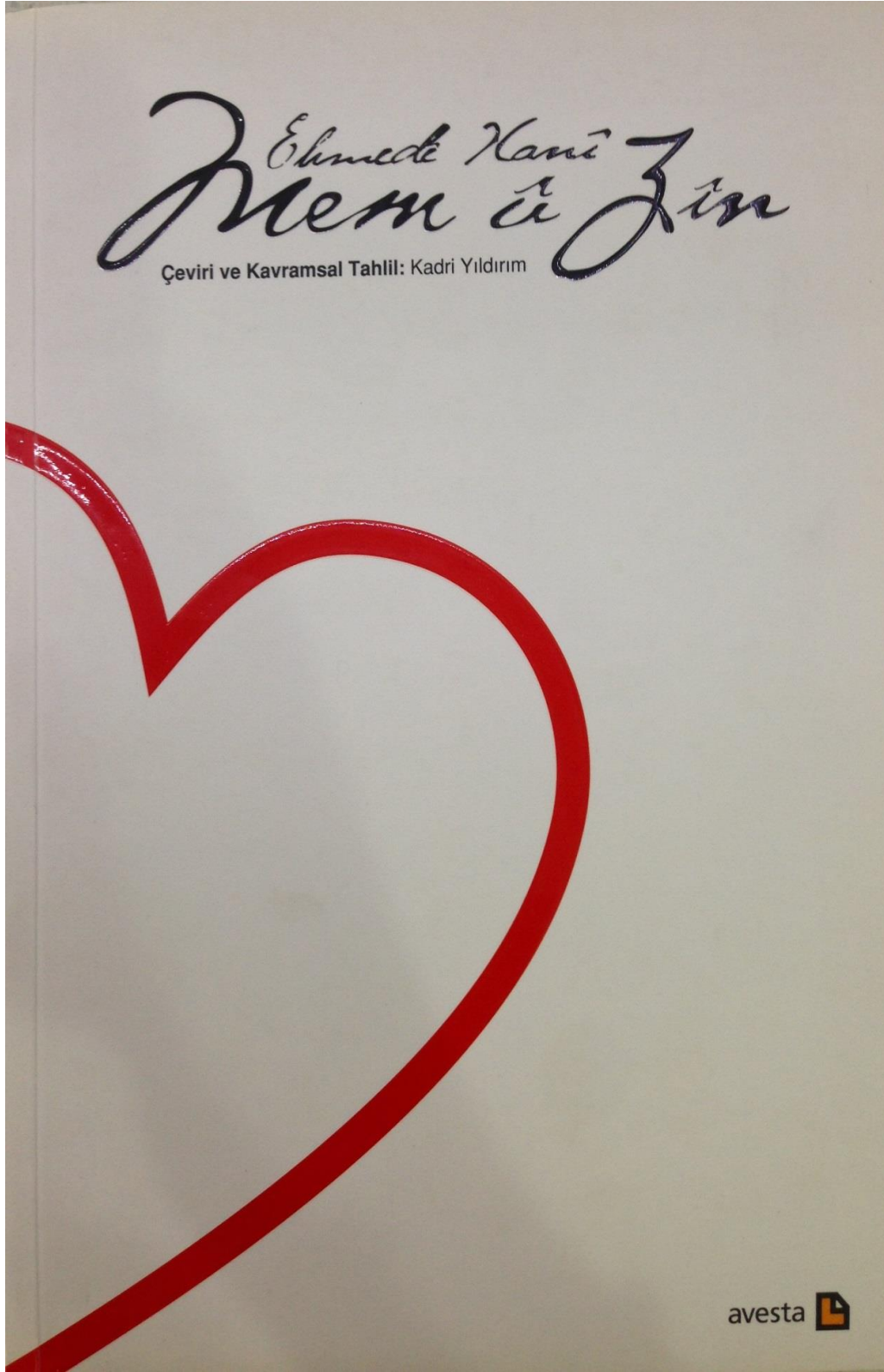


Fig. 5 The cover of Kadri Yıldırım's translation published by Avesta in 2010

The design of the cover is very plain, with the red borders of a half heart shape against a white background. The name of the author, translator and the title are all at the top of the cover and the name of the publishing house is in the bottom right corner. The author's name is written in Kurdish letters as Ehmedê Xanî, the title, in a similar vein, is written as *Mem û Zin*. Kadri Yıldırım is presented as the producer of the "Çeviri ve Kavramsal Tahlil" (Translation and Conceptual Analysis). The same description is given on the spine, which means the translator is made very visible in this publication. Significantly, Yıldırım's work is not limited to translation, as he also produced a "conceptual analysis". Given that this analysis is mentioned on the very cover of the book, which is remarkably thick (422 pages), the reader is likely to expect that a great deal is being offered in this publication. After the title page, we find a brief biography of Ehmedê Xanî and of Kadri Yıldırım, which contributes greatly to the visibility of the translator. The table of contents reveals that the work is divided up into three main parts: the first deals with Ehmedê Xanî and his works; the second examines the terminology in *Mem û Zin* under 10 categories (such as the terms used for love, Sufism, music, flora, sex, Kurdish reality, etc.); in the last part, Yıldırım presents his translation and conceptual analysis. The latter appears in the form of occasional footnotes. On every page, there are two columns of text. The Kurdish text in Latin alphabet appears on the left and the Turkish translation on the right side of the pages. On the back cover, we see the couplets in which Xanî expresses his reason for writing in Kurdish (See Figure 11 in Appendix D). This design fosters the impression that the author's choice of Kurdish is far from incidental; it was very deliberate.

In the preface prepared by Kadri Yıldırım, Ehmedê Xanî is introduced to the readers as follows:

Xanî Kürt halkının en büyük dini ve milli şahsiyetlerinden biridir. Zaten onu bütün Kürtlerin gözünde efsaneleştiren faktör onun birbirine zıt görmediği bu iki yönü kendinde birleştirmesidir. (2010, p. 13)

Xanî is one of the greatest religious and national figures for the Kurdish people. Indeed, what makes him legendary in the eyes of all Kurdish people is that he managed to combine these two dimensions, which he did not perceive as contradictory. (2010, p. 13)

Here we find a new image of Xanî, that of a great figure who masterfully combined in his character two features that are generally considered to be opposites. In Bozarlan's translation, the national and social aspects of Xanî's works were highlighted, whereas in Namık Açıkgöz's translation, readers were geared towards a more religious reading of the book. In this preface, these two (seemingly opposing) features are attributed to the author and this, in fact, makes him unique and legendary. The dual character of Xanî is elaborated on further:

Xanî günümüze kadar Kürt medreselerinde ders kitabı olarak okutulup ezberletilen "*Nûbehara Biçûkan*" ile Kürtçeyi "dilî dilî" yaparken, 1687 yılında yazdığı "*Eqideya Îmane*" (İnanç Risalesi) de bu dilî "dinî dilî" yapmayı başarmıştır. (2010, p. 13)

With his *Nûbehara Biçûkan*, a book that has been taught and memorized in Kurdish *medreses* down to the present day, Xanî made Kurdish "the language of language". With his work *Eqideya Îmane*, (Epistle of Belief), written in 1687, he succeeded in making Kurdish "the language of religion". (2010, p. 13)

The idea that Xanî has both religious and national sides is emphasized here, this time with a specific reference to his works. Yıldırım introduces *Nûbehara Biçûkan* as an academic work that is used as a course book in *medreses*, whereas Namık Açıkgöz presents this work as a book teaching religious beliefs to children. In order to devote more space to Yıldırım's criticism of Açıkgöz's translation, I will not go into the conceptual analysis regarding *Nûbehara Biçûkan*.

To sum up, we can say that Kadri Yıldırım's translation offers a new perspective on the author. In this presentation, Xanî as a literary figure is not restricted to dichotomies (such as being the father of Kurdish nationalism or the Kurdish representative of Sufism), but portrayed as an individual who intrinsically merged these values. Yıldırım also published a book-length critique of Namık Açığöz's translation. This is a valuable source for researching Yıldırım's notion of translation, since one would expect the faults he finds in Açığöz's translation to be absent from his own translation. In addition, the book is of great importance in terms of translation criticism as the field lacks such extensive studies. Now I will analyze the discourse of the preface of this criticism book.

5.5 Kadri Yıldırım's translation criticism on Namık Açığöz's translation

Kültür Bakanlığı'nun Mem û Zin Çevirisine Eleştirel Bir Yaklaşım (A Critical Approach to the Ministry of Culture's translation of *Mem û Zin*) was also published by Avesta Yayınları, in 2011. The study is very extensive, 204 pages in total, which makes a complete analysis impossible in a thesis of this length. That is why I have decided to focus only on the preface, which can be considered as a micro sample of the discourse of the whole work.

The first part of Yıldırım's criticism deals with the "errors" which Yıldırım detected in Açığöz's translation and categorized in his criticism. The second part concentrates on the plagiarism issue. Yıldırım asserts that Açığöz extensively plagiarized Bozarslan's translation and provides some textual evidence for his claim in the second part. The preface efficiently reflects Yıldırım's arguments and provides examples (of translation "errors" and plagiarism). The "Table of Contents" of the criticism book is given in the appendix so as to show how Kadri Yıldırım outlined his criticism. (See Figure 12 in Appendix E).

In my discourse analysis of the preface, I will not follow the same sequence as that deployed by Yıldırım when presenting his arguments and examples. Instead of that, I have reorganized the criticism focusing on (1) the references to the political macro-context (Kurdish issue), (2) self-image of the critic (positive self presentation vs. negative other (translator) presentation), and finally (3) the critic's the notion of translation criticism (translation criticism or translator criticism?).

5.5.1 References to the political macro-context

The preface by Kadri Yıldırım reflects his own ideological stance, since there are many references to the Kurdish issue. In line with his ideological stance, his “identity” and on a larger scale the “social group” he belongs to are revealed:

Şüphesiz devletin bir bakanlığının *klasik Kürt edebiyatının* başyapıtlarından olan *Mem û Zin*'i çevirtmesi ve böylece *şimdiye kadar inkar ve asimilasyon yoluyla hayat hakkı tanınmayan Kürt dilinin* resmi bir çeviriyle yeni bir mecraya girmesi önemli bir adımdır. (2011, p. 7, emphasis added)

Without doubt, it is an important step that a ministry of the state commissioned the translation of *Mem û Zin*, a masterpiece of *classical Kurdish literature*; with this official translation, moreover, *the Kurdish language which was subject to denial and assimilation*, has entered a new milieu. (2011, p. 7, emphasis added)

The first point is the use of the term “classical Kurdish literature”, which actually draws attention to the very *existence* of this literature. Even though the attempt had been made to assimilate the Kurdish language, it still retained its “classical literature” and now the existence of this literature is so obvious that it has been recognized with an “official translation”. Thus, the main purpose of the sentence is not only to inform people about the “official translation” but also to criticize the previous approaches towards the Kurdish language.

Çevirmenimiz yine sunuş kısmında, “Bozarıslan bazı beyitleri yayınına dahil etmemiştir” demektir. Herkes biliyor ki *Sayın Bozarıslan* aslında bunu dahil etmiş fakat *sistemin sansür baskısına maruz kalmıştır*. Zira Xani bu kısmın içerdiği beyitlerde Kürtlerden, onların sahipsizliğinden, *Kürt dili ve edebiyatından* ve Kürtlükle ilgili diğer olgulardan bahsetmektedir ki sansür için bunlardan bahsetmek yeterlidir. *Yani bu iş Bozarıslan’ın bir eksikliği değil, sistemin bir ayıbıdır*. (2011, p. 9, emphasis added)

In the preface, *(our) translator* says that, “Bozarıslan did not include some couplets in his publication”. As everyone knows, *Mr. Bozarıslan* included these couplets but fell victim to the pressure of the *system’s censorship*. In the couplets that included the censored part, Xani talks about the Kurds, their abandonment, Kurdish language and literature, and some other issues related to Kurdishness, all of which were enough to invite censorship. *Thus, the omission was not due to Bozarıslan’s incapability but was a shameful product of the system*. (2011, p. 9, emphasis added)

The manner in which Kadri Yıldırım refers to Namık Açıkğöz and Mehmet Emin Bozarıslan here differs markedly, which also shows his approaches to these translators. The name of Namık Açıkğöz is not mentioned; he is referred to rather disparagingly as “(our) translator”. However, Bozarıslan’s name is uttered with full respect: “Mr. Bozarıslan”. This use implies that “Mr. Bozarıslan” is the master of this translation whereas “(our) translator” (Namık Açıkğöz) is an amateur. A reference to the political macro context is Yıldırım’s comment on the censorship in Bozarıslan’s translation. Kadri Yıldırım claims that Mehmet Emin Bozarıslan translated those parts but the authorities did not allow them to be published, so external censorship had taken place. According to Yıldırım, Mehmet Emin Bozarıslan did not apply self-censorship but was censored. However, this might not be the case. When we analyze the experts’ report and the acquittal document at the end of the second (1975) and third editions (1990) of Bozarıslan’s translation, we see some information about the censored parts. In the expert’s report, it reads that, “in our opinion, the fact that the translator skipped some parts in the translation means that he does not intend to be

involved in criminal activity”⁴⁷ (1990, p. 573). Even though these expert reports were written in repressive political environment and thus may deliberately or unknowingly ignore the existence of external censorship, the reports identified Bozarslan as the person who censored the text. It is possible that the experts tried to be on the safe side by asserting that Bozarslan himself censored these critical parts. In this way, they saved the translator and at the same time explicitly expressed that if these parts had been translated it would have been a crime. As opposed to what Kadri Yıldırım suggests, we understand from these documents that Mehmet Emin Bozarslan omitted the “politically problematic parts” himself. His omission of such parts was the main reason for his acquittal, indeed. If he had not omitted those parts, he might not have been acquitted. As an alternative interpretation, we may surmise that Bozarslan omitted those parts under the “pressure” that Kadri Yıldırım criticizes. Another political comment appears on the next page:

Sayın Açıkgöz kendisiyle yapılan bir söyleşide “kitap yayınlanmadan önce redaksiyonunu yapan Ayhan Tek’e teşekkür ediyorum” demektedir. İşin doğrusu *TRT-6 kanalında Kürtçe programlar yapan ve edebiyatçı olan sayın Tek’in gözünden bu kadar bariz çeviri ve imla hatalarının nasıl kaçtığı merak ediyorum.*” (2011, p. 10, emphasis added)

In an interview, Mr. Açıkgöz stated that, “I would like to thank Ayhan Tek who did the proofreading before the book was published”. *To be frank, I really wonder how Ayhan Tek, a literary figure who makes Kurdish programs on TRT-6, could have overlooked such obvious translation and spelling errors.* (2011, p. 10, emphasis added)

In this paragraph, Yıldırım criticizes the proofreader Ayhan Tek, claiming that there are many mistakes in Namık Açıkgöz’s translation. By questioning the proficiency of Ayhan Tek, while referring to his position in TRT-6, Kadri Yıldırım puts question

⁴⁷ “Kanımızca, tercüme edenin bazı kısımları atlaması bir kere onun suç teşkil edecek fiilleri işlemek niyetinde olmadığını kabule sevketmektedir” (1990, p. 573).

marks in readers' minds about the quality of the TV programs. Thus, we can say that this is another reference to the macro context.

As seen from the examples, we can trace the ideology of the critic through his use of language. The references to the political macro-context of the Kurdish issue define the critic's ideological stance. As a reader, we are able to access his ideas through the discourse he created. His own identity affects his discourse and, in turn, his discourse presumably shapes the image that readers construct of Kadri Yıldırım in their minds. This shows the dialectic relationship between discourse and identity, and discourse and ideology, as van Dijk suggests (1997).

5.5.2 Self presentation vs. other presentation

Van Dijk states that "power" is a key notion in discourse because, besides its potential to reflect identity and ideology, discourse is also created for gaining power, in other words "to influence other people's minds so that they will act as [discourse producers] want" (Van Dijk, 1997, p. 17). We can conceive "power" as knowledge of the Kurdish language and the proficiency in Kurdish literature. In his discourse, Kadri Yıldırım always asserts himself as a competent person, and it is in this way that he attempts to gain "power". The power he gains will "influence other people's minds so that they will act as [Yıldırım] wants" and share the same perspective regarding Açıkgöz's translation (Van Dijk, 1997, p. 17). Conversely, he underlines that Namık Açıkgöz does not even know Kurdish. By reserving the power for himself, Yıldırım persuades readers that he is the expert on Kurdish literature, while Namık Açıkgöz is not even "a good translator". We can see the linguistic reflections of the struggle to hold power in the following excerpts:

Bu bağlamda biz *bu çevirinin mevcut büyük hatalarının* ikinci baskıda *düzeltilmesine katkıda bulunmak* ve başka bir Kürt klasiğinin *klasik Kürt*

edebiyatını ve Kürt dilini uzmanlık derecesinde bilmeyen kimselere çevrilmemesi gerektiğini şimdiden hatırlatmak amacıyla bu edebi tenkidimizi hazırladık. (2011, p. 10, emphasis added)

We prepared this literary criticism in the hope that, in the second edition, the *major errors present in the first edition could be corrected*. We also aimed to offer a reminder that *no other Kurdish classic should be translated by people who lack expertise in Kurdish classical literature and Kurdish language*. (2011, p. 10, emphasis added)

Firstly, Kadri Yıldırım says that there are “major errors” in Açıkgöz’s translation that should be corrected. In addition, Yıldırım presents himself as the “corrector”, which means that he has the authority and competence for detecting and correcting the “errors”. Again, by putting the accent on the “Kurdish language” and “classical Kurdish literature”, he states that only the experts of this language and literature (like himself) should translate Kurdish works. Namık Açıkgöz does not know Kurdish and he is not an expert in Kurdish literature, as Yıldırım claims. Kadri Yıldırım presents his own image positively and creates a negative profile for Namık Açıkgöz. Another example of image-construction is this:

Hepsi de Ekim-Aralık ayları arasında yayımlanan bu çalışmalar şunlardır:

- A. Ekim ayında Avesta Yayınları arasında çıkan *benim çevirim*
- B. Yine Avesta Yayınları arasında çıkan *Jan Dost çevirisi*
- C. Nubihar Yayınları arasında çıkan *Perwiz Cihani çevirisi*
- D. Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları arasında çıkan ve *Prof. Dr. Namık Açıkgöz’e yaptırılan çeviri*. (2011, p. 7, emphasis added)

These studies, all published between October and December, are as follows:

- A. *My translation*, which was published by Avesta Publishing in October
- B. *Jan Dost’s translation*, published by Avesta Publishing
- C. *Perwiz Cihani’s translation*, published by Nubihar Publishing
- D. *The translation that was commissioned to Prof. Namık Açıkgöz* and that was among the publications of the Ministry of Culture. (2011, p. 7, emphasis added)

At the very beginning of the preface, Kadri Yıldırım lists the translations of *Mem u Zin* published in 2010. The translations by Jan Dost and Perwiz Cihani are intralingual (Kurdish) translations, whereas Namık Açıkgöz's and Kadri Yıldırım's translations are interlingual translations into Turkish. What is important is that he sets a possessive relationship between the translators and their translations (e.g. "benim çevirim", "Jan Dost çevirisi" and "Perwiz Cihani çevirisi"). Thus, these translators to whom he ascribes an active agency are the owners of their texts. However, only in the case of Namık Açıkgöz does he not employ a possessive structure and by using a causative structure, he gives Açıkgöz a passive role: it is not "Prof. Açıkgöz's translation" but "the translation that was commissioned to Prof. Açıkgöz". As a result, the reader of this part of the preface may think that Açıkgöz did not play an active role in the translation by shaping it according to his own translation decisions but rather produced a text in accordance with the expectations of the commissioner, the Ministry of Culture.

It is striking that, when it comes to "errors", Yıldırım assigns a very active role to Açıkgöz and presents him as the sole person responsible for the "errors", as shown in the previous chapter. However, when it comes to fulfilling the demands of the commissioner, Yıldırım criticizes Açıkgöz for producing a text which is totally based on what the commissioner (the Ministry) demands. Thus, he is portrayed as a passive agent who cannot make his own decisions in the process of translation. We can argue that, Yıldırım criticizes the influence of the "patron" (the ministry) and the passive role adopted by the "professional" (Açıkgöz), in Lefevere's terms. This view is reflected explicitly in the language Yıldırım uses in this excerpt, which one finds at the very beginning of the preface and which presents Namık Açıkgöz in a quite

distinct role. Let us look at another example of self-presentation vs other presentation is:

Keşke sayın çevirmen Mem û Zin’ deki kelimelerin Kürtçe, Arapça ve Farsça oranlarını ispatlayacak kadar bu üç dile hakim olsaydı ve bu hakimiyet doğrultusunda bir tasnif yapsaydı da sonra bu iddiada bulunsaydı. (2011, p. 9, emphasis added)

If only the translator had a sufficient command of Kurdish, Arabic and Persian to be able to prove the ratio of the words appearing in Mem û Zin that belong to these languages. If only he had been able to carry out a lexical classification on the basis of such linguistic competence, and after this had made this claim. (2011, p. 9, emphasis added)

Here, Yıldırım refers to one of Açıkgöz’s interviews, where the latter had stated that *Mem û Zin* mostly contained Persian words and the number of Kurdish words was limited (Açıkgöz, 2010). He once more underlines Açıkgöz’s lack of competence in these languages and provides his view on the ratio of the words:

Yaklaşık kelime sayısı: 26560
Kürtçe kelime sayısı: 19601
Arapça kelime sayısı: 6015
Farsça kelime sayısı: 918
Türkçe kelime sayısı: 26 (2011, p. 9)

Approximate total number of words: 26560
The number of Kurdish words: 19601
The number of Arabic words: 6015
The number of Persian words: 918
The number of Turkish words: 26 (2011, p. 9)

Even though he does not explain how he counted the words or what criteria he used in categorizing the words under different languages, this quantitative data is presented so as to show Yıldırım’s competence in all mentioned languages. So here again, Kadri Yıldırım is the expert whereas Namık Açıkgöz is portrayed as an incompetent translator.

Positive self-presentation versus negative other presentation can be observed in Kadri Yıldırım's preface. Through these presentations, he gains the power and attempts to take control over people's minds so as to affect their ideas about Açıkgöz.

5.5.3 The notion of translation criticism

The use of language in the preface also gives us clues about Kadri Yıldırım's notion of translation criticism. Is translation criticism merely about finding the errors in translation? Can all the "errors" be attributed to the translator? Is the editorial process taken into account while criticizing the translation? We can search for the answer in Kadri Yıldırım's words:

Bu alt başlık çerçevesinde *çevirmenin yaptığı numaralamaya* göre beyitler sırasıyla incelenmiş ve tespit edilen çeviri hataları nedenleriyle birlikte yanlış ve doğru biçimleriyle beraber yazılmıştır. (2011, p. 10)

Under this sub-heading, the couplets have been analyzed following the *translator's numbering* and the detected translation errors have been identified, along with the reasons for them and inaccurate and accurate forms. (2011, p. 10)

Even though we do not have enough proof about who did the numbering of the couplets, Kadri Yıldırım directly criticizes Namık Açıkgöz for that. The use of the active voice (*çevirmenin yaptığı numaralamaya*) serves his intention of taking Namık Açıkgöz as the sole party responsible for the errors. He also says that Açıkgöz's translation errors have been detected and have been corrected and justified. In other words, Yıldırım does not just criticize the translated text but also Namık Açıkgöz, the person responsible for the errors allegedly made. The following statement illustrates his approach:

Oysa çevirmen muhtemelen bağımlılık anlamına gelen “teb’iyet” kelimesini yaratılış ve karakter anlamına gelen “tebi’et” kelimesi ile *karıştırmış*; *dolayısıyla yukarıdaki gibi yanlış bir çeviri yapmıştır.* (2011, p. 11)

Most probably, the translator *confused* “teb’iyet” (addiction) with “tebi’et” (disposition) *and as a result produced an inaccurate translation.* (2011, p. 11)

Again, Kadri Yıldırım directly criticizes Namık Açıkgöz for confusing the two similar but different words. His use of active sentence structures makes it absolutely clear who the chief object of his criticism is.

Bu başlık altında *Açıkgöz ’ün Bozarslan ’ın çevirisini aynen alıntılmasını* ele alıyoruz. (2011, p. 12)

In this part, we deal with how *Açıkgöz quotes Bozarslan ’s translation word-for-word.* (2011, p. 12)

Kadri Yıldırım directly accuses Açıkgöz of plagiarizing Bozarslan’s translation. Yıldırım also criticizes Açıkgöz not only for his erroneous translation decisions but also for other typographical errors that may not have been the “error” of the translator:

Beyitleri Sıralamada Yanlış Numara Verme: Örneğin aşağıda görüldüğü gibi 665. beyitten sonra 666 yerine 667 gelmiştir. (2011, p.12)

Incorrect numbering of the couplets: For instance, as can be seen below, after the couplet 665, there comes 667 instead of 666. (2011, p. 12)

The incorrect numbering of couplets may not be have been carried out in a similar manner to the translation process, as such errors could have taken place in the editing

stage. However, Yıldırım disregards the editorial process and criticizes only the translator for the numbering errors.

It is clear that Kadri Yıldırım directly criticizes Namık Açıköz for all the “errors” he can find. We can say that his notion of translation criticism is error-hunting and the sole responsible for these “errors” is seen as the translator. The active sentence structures render unmistakable his highly personalized, normative critical approach. Yıldırım deals with the “errors” one by one without relating them to a broader translation strategy.

A critical discourse analysis of Yıldırım’s preface also reveals his notion of translation and his perception of the phenomenon of translation. His ideas on translation can be traced in the following excerpts:

... tespit edilen *çeviri hataları* nedenleriyle birlikte *yanlış ve doğru* biçimleriyle beraber yazılmıştır. (2011, p. 10)

... the detected *translation errors* were written along with the reasons for them and *inaccurate and accurate* forms. (2011, p.10)

It is clear that Kadri Yıldırım sees translation as either “accurate” or “erroneous”, which is in line with the traditional view of translation⁴⁸. This view also entails that there can be only one accurate translation of a text (which is Kadri Yıldırım’s own translation, in this case).

... dolayısıyla yukarıdaki gibi *yanlış bir çeviri* yapmıştır. *Oysa doğru çeviri şöyle olmalıdır*: (2011, p. 11)

...so, he made an *erroneous translation* as seen above. *However, the accurate translation should be as follows*: ... (2011, p. 11)

⁴⁸ For this restricted and conventional view on translation, see Şehnaz Tahir Gürçağlar’s book *Çevirinin ABC’si* (2011, p. 119).

Again, we see the binary opposition between “accurate translation” and “erroneous translation”. The critic provides the “correct” version, as he is the “expert”.

Underlying Yıldırım’s words is the lay misconception about translation in general, and about translation criticism in particular. He discusses and assesses translation only as “good” or “bad”. Yıldırım is highly normative as he offers his own translation as the only correct version. In addition, according to Yıldırım, the foremost prerequisite for translation is knowledge of the source language. He criticizes Namık Açıkgöz for not being competent in Kurdish. Yıldırım expects “accuracy” and “faithfulness” from the translator without defining these qualifications. Mostly, he spots “errors” and does not consider them as “translation decisions”, ignoring the possible reasons behind them. Some of the “errors” may in fact not be related to Açıkgöz; the errors in numbering, for instance, might have happened in the editorial process. Accepting all deviations as “errors”, he provides his “accurate” translation in a prescriptive way. It is also striking that he assigns two quite different roles to Açıkgöz: on the one hand, he is very active as an error-maker, on the other hand he is very passive as a translator, who concurs with the underlying ideological strategy of the commissioner. As the first example of its kind in Turkey, a book length translation criticism, Kadri Yıldırım’s criticism draws attention to the fact of translation and the manipulative power of translation, but at the same time it embodies the ‘error-hunting’ approach to translation criticism that international translation scholars frown on today.

CONCLUSION

The primary purpose of this thesis has been to trace ideology in the presentations of various Turkish translations of *Mem û Zin*, the Kurdish poet Ehmedê Xanî's masterpiece. For this purpose, I have limited the scope of this analysis to Republican period Turkish translations of Xanî's Kurdish text. It is striking that *Mem û Zin* was also translated into Turkish in the Ottoman period, in 1730 and 1906, and the first printed version in 1919 when the political situation was so unsettled, in the aftermath of World War I. The revival of this work through translation has always been bound to the political context and this pattern has not changed in the Republican era either. The first Turkish translation by Mehmet Emin Bozarslan was released in 1968, a distinctive historical point in Republican (and international) history, when the university students' movement for freedom emerged. It was also significant for the Kurdish movement. However, Bozarslan was sued for his translation and faced much hardship for carrying out literary activities involving a language which was still classified as "unknown" and, indeed, a threat to the unity of the state. After Bozarslan's acquittal, this translation was reprinted in 1975 and 1990 with the addition of court reports and expert reports showing that this text was "innocent". It is also noteworthy that another translation of *Mem û Zin*, based on a Turkish source text written by Ahmed Faik a few decades after Ehmedê Xanî's Kurdish *Mem û Zin*, was released in 1969 and did not encounter any of the difficulties and censorship that Bozarslan's translation had suffered. Released in the same period, two *Mem û Zin* translations, one from a Kurdish and the other from a Turkish source text, were treated completely differently. Even that is sufficient to show the ideological and context-based nature of translation; however we have more evidence. In 2010, within

the framework of the Kurdish initiative, a new *Mem û Zin* translation was published, by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, i.e. a representative of the Turkish state. This time, the state itself promoted the reading of the Kurdish *mesnevi*, and that translation functioned as political material. All in all, the remarkable transformation in the official reception of *Mem û Zin* and the changes in the ways that *Mem û Zin* has been presented to his readers have been the source of inspiration for this thesis.

Before I turned my attention to the translations of *Mem û Zin*, in the first two chapters I investigated the contexts in which the Kurdish issue in Turkey is embedded. I tried to examine the legal, linguistic, demographic, academic and literary aspects of the issue to see how Kurdish identity and language have been handled in these contexts. The contextualization of the “bigger” issue was essential before I dealt with *Mem û Zin* in particular. The investigation into the legal context revealed that use of the Kurdish language had been consistently subject to restrictions or prohibitions. After the 1990s, the legal regulations were partially mitigated and further steps were taken from the 2000s onwards, especially within the framework of the AKP government’s Kurdish initiative. These steps, on the other hand, did not satisfy everybody and were criticized on grounds such as that they had been instituted purely for the sake of compliance with EU criteria and were not sincere in their intention. We can explain these reactions more effectively by looking at the practices in the public sphere. İnal’s distinction between cultural publicization and political publicization of the Kurdish language in Turkey may help us understand what has been done by the state and what is expected by many Kurdish people. As İnal suggests, the steps taken have contributed more to the cultural recognition of Kurdish whereas the demand of opponent Kurdish and Turkish people is recognition in the political arena (2012, p. 83). As for the demographic studies concerning the

Kurdish population living in Turkey, we can easily see that these estimations are also not entirely reliable and objective and influenced by the ideological stance of the researcher(s). One of the biggest problems in demographic studies is that the definition of a Kurd is generally limited only to a person who speaks Kurdish. Nevertheless, the fact that a person may identify himself/herself as a Kurd without speaking this language (or just the opposite case) hampers the reliability and accuracy of these studies. Many of the studies in the linguistic field are also marred by political instrumentalization. The studies in the past were mostly intended to show that Kurdish was not a language. We also lack a consensus in the linguistic definition of that language, i.e. on the issue of whether to consider Kurdish as a single language or to speak of multiple Kurdish languages due to the marked variation in dialects.

With respect to linguistic studies, for much of the history of the Republic the academic sphere ignored Kurdology and produced works of Anti-Kurdology, which aims at showing that Kurds are Turkish people in their origin (Ünlü, 2012). Scholars who advocated the existence of Kurdish identity, e.g. İsmail Beşikçi, suffered in the Turkish academic world. In the light of all these factors, it is not surprising to see that Kurdish literary activities have mostly been the endeavors of some particularly committed people. As can be seen in *Mem û Zin*'s case, the writers/translators had to undergo some legal proceedings and the books were sometimes confiscated. In recent years, the pressure on literary and translation activities has mostly been alleviated and translation now plays a vital role in the formation of a Kurdish canonical literature. However, translational activities are not institutionalized yet. Kurdish literary system is scattered to a large geography and the multiplicity of dialects complicate the issue even more. In explaining the enigmatic case of the

(translated) Kurdish literature in Turkey, Even-Zohar's Polysystem Theory was particularly helpful.

In Chapter 3, I sketched the theoretical framework for this thesis and explained my methodological tools. In the first part of the chapter, I discussed the Retranslation Hypothesis and its salience to the *Mem û Zin* translations. According to that hypothesis, motives for retranslation include the incompetence of the first translation, the ageing of texts, and/or the desire to reflect the original more. Implicit in the hypothesis is the assumption that first translations are domesticating and subsequent ones are foreignizing. I claim that none of these assumptions are wholly valid for *Mem û Zen* translations. To start with, the first translation by Mehmet Emin Bozarslan is still regarded as a valuable source for newer translations and is not considered to be lacking quality. Maybe, as an "improvement" in subsequent translations, we can say that the censored parts in Bozarslan's translation were translated into Turkish in the later translations. Secondly, ageing cannot be a motive for *Mem û Zin* retranslations as most of them were produced in the 2000s, sometimes with very little time intervals in between. Finally, judging from their paratexts at least, in the later translations of *Mem û Zin* we cannot always see foreignizing elements; on the contrary, they present the writer and work as part of the Anatolian cultural heritage and an Islamic poet (as in the Ministry's translation). For such reasons, Lefevere's concept of rewriting appears more promising when explaining the Turkish translation of *Mem û Zin*, since it emphasizes ideology and the system of patronage, factors that have never been absent from the Turkish adventure of *Mem û Zin*. In addition, the concept of rewriting encompasses not only textual translations but also other forms of texts (e.g. academic studies, reviews, plays or movies). Thus

rewriting theory enables us to consider various types of rewritings as akin to translations.

As for the methodological tools that were presented in Chapter 3, I mostly benefited from Genette's paratextual analysis and Van Dijk's critical discourse analysis. Paratexts serve as thresholds to texts and, as such, are invaluable for seeing how a text is presented to its readers. In his foreword to Genette's book *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, Richard Macksey states that any items "that mediate the relations between text and reader" are paratext (1997, p. xi). According to that definition, translation can well be regarded as a paratext. However, I consider translations as texts themselves and focused on the covers and prefaces of *Mem û Zin* translations. In the analysis of the prefaces, in particular, I employed critical discourse analysis, concentrating on the concepts like "action", "context", "power" and "ideology".

In Chapter 4, I first explored the Turkish and English-language academic studies on Xanî and *Mem û Zin* and found that these studies are not just limited in number but also tend to be comparative in substance (i.e. the main purpose is to compare *Mem û Zin* with other *mesnevis* especially in Turkish language studies). As forms of rewriting, these academic studies offer images of the writer and his work. Clemence Scalbert-Yücel (2011), (2012) and Selim Temo Ergül (2015) have provided valuable overviews of the Kurdish literary field in Turkey, but translation is not at the center of these studies and is approached as a sub-field. Glastonbury does focus on *Mem û Zin* translations (namely, Bozarlan's, Açıkgöz's translations and the TV series *Siya Mem û Zin*), concluding passionately that translation has been deployed as a governmental tool to dominate and expropriate the Kurdish cultural field. However, this article-length study is naturally limited in its degree of detail,

does not deal explicitly with the paratextual apparatuses of the translations and discusses the translations primarily in terms of political discourse analysis. In its examination of the Turkish adventure of *Mem û Zin*, however, the current thesis draws on concepts and methodologies that have come to be accepted by the translation studies community as invaluable tools for the study of translational phenomena. In the next part of this chapter, I analyzed *Mem û Zin* as a source text and asked what makes it so significant in terms of Kurdish nationalism. Finally, I presented a commentated chronology of the Turkish translations of *Mem û Zin*.

In the analysis chapter, I focused on the paratextual elements of three direct translations from Kurdish into Turkish, by Mehmet Emin Bozarslan, Namık Açıkgöz and Kadri Yıldırım respectively, as well as looking at Kadri Yıldırım's translation criticism. The analysis demonstrated that in Bozarslan's translation of 1968, the image created of Xanî was of an activist, a rebel against injustice. Xanî's choice of using Kurdish language in his version was seen as very deliberate and nationalist, indeed. The use of Kurdish letters in the author's name and the title of the work signal that Bozarslan did not intend to domesticate the Kurdish author and his work, even though he was using the Kurdish alphabet in a repressive environment. The explicit censorship in the text also indicate that some parts have been omitted (presumably reluctantly and out of obligation), which in fact alerts readers to the existence of censorship. The 1975 and 1990 reprintings of Bozarslan's translation once more emphasized the Kurdishness of this text by using Kurdish letters on the cover and through the risky inclusion of the colors red, yellow and green. Interestingly enough, the court reports and experts' reports were added in these editions as a guard against further prosecution and again as a signal of censorship.

When we come to Namık Açıkgöz's translation (2010), commissioned by the Ministry of Culture, the image of Xanî is quite different from the one in Bozarslan's translation. In the first preface written by the then-minister Ertuğrul Günay, *Mem û Zin* is presented as a part of Anatolian culture, another color in the Anatolian mosaic. In the second preface, Namık Açıkgöz gives information about the translation strategies he used and reveals that he benefited from Bozarslan's translation, which would later lead him to be accused of plagiarism by Kadri Yıldırım. The biography of Xanî portrays him as an author mostly of religious works. The emphasis on his job as a palace clerk might have been intended to give the impression that he did not rebel against the system. The typographical choices on the cover also complement the discourse in the prefaces. For instance, writing Xanî's name both in Kurdish and Turkish underlines the Anatolian mosaic metaphor by presenting the author as not totally foreign.

Kadri Yıldırım's preface to his translation (2010), on the other hand, puts the emphasis on both the social and religious dimensions of Xanî's work. Thus, we can consider this translation as yet another rewriting of the writer, which is different from that in the previous translations. The conceptual analysis Yıldırım provides leads readers to believe that Yıldırım is an expert in that field and thus his translation is very competent. Yıldırım underlines his expertise also in his criticism of Açıkgöz's translation. In the thesis, just the discourse in preface of this criticism book was analyzed, as a micro-sample of the discourse in the whole book. Published in 2011, the book criticizes Açıkgöz for his "errors" in translation and for plagiarizing Bozarslan's translation. The critical discourse analysis shows that Yıldırım frequently refers to the political macro-context through *Mem û Zin* and condemns the past strict attitudes towards Kurdish. Additionally, he presents himself as an expert in

Kurdish literature whereas he portrays Açıkgöz as a very incompetent translator who even cannot speak the source language at all. We can also trace some clues concerning his notion of translation and criticism in his discourse and we can safely assume that his notion of translation and criticism is rather conventional. He spots the “errors” and, without relating them to any possible reason, he puts the blame directly on Açıkgöz. Yıldırım also provides his own translations for these “errors”, which again shows that his conception of translation is limited to the opposition between “good” and “bad” or “accurate” and “inaccurate” translation.

This study has hopefully shown that translation is an ideological action and that paratexts can serve as valuable material for tracing the ideological inclinations behind published translations. Paratexts are not simply complementary items but can play an active role in shaping readers’ receptions of works and manipulating the image of the author and work in the eyes of the readers. The analysis in this thesis has demonstrated that book covers and prefaces not only present the text to readers but actively guide them to a certain reception and interpretation of the work, which is sometimes associated with, and in the interests of, a certain patron. The study has shown that patrons are not necessarily publishers all the time, since a non-literary system like the state itself may intervene in the production and dissemination of translated literature. Thus the system of literature interacts with political and social systems and translation falls under the effect of that interaction. Critical discourse analysis, moreover, can be a fruitful tool in paratextual analysis, particularly in the examination of prefaces, which often reveal the attitudes of translators and publishers.

Of course, this study could be extended by involving textual analysis and looking into translated texts themselves, in order to see how the images of the author

and work presented in the paratexts compared with those conveyed in the translated text. However, my lack of knowledge of Kurdish would not allow me to carry out such a comparative and textual study. In addition, indirect translations and/or intra-lingual translations of *Mem û Zin* could be studied to observe the alterations in the image of the author and work in these translations. Thanks to the concept of rewriting, we can easily consider different forms of texts as parallel to translations, and further research could be done on these rewrites as well. By employing the concept of rewriting and benefiting from the methodological tools like paratextual analysis and critical discourse analysis, this thesis has hopefully demonstrated that translation is not a mere transfer of words but a context-based and ideological activity which contributes to the creation of author and work images in the target system. Indeed, the core message of this thesis could be said to be encapsulated in a single letter: û.⁴⁹ Seemingly a very humble letter, whether it is included or replaced in the title given to the Turkish translation of *Mem û Zin*, “û” foregrounds the strong relationship between translation û ideology.

⁴⁹ “û” is a Kurdish word for “and”.

APPENDIX A

CEMAL GÜRSEL'S PREFACE TO DOĞU İLLERİ VE VARTO TARİHİ

SUNUŞ

Bu eser, yalnız dikkatle değil, aynı zamanda ibretle okunmaya değer bir önem taşımaktadır. Bilgin ve idealist bir öğretmen olan yazarı doğup büyüdüğü bölgenin tarihi oluşunu karanlıktan kurtarmak gayreti ile kaleme sarılmış; fakat parlattığı meş'alenin aydınlığından korkanlar tarafından insafsızca şehit edilmiştir. İfade ettiği mâna bakımından Türk aydınlarının bu olay üzerinde dikkatle durmaları icabeder.

Neşrinden bir hafta sonra bu kanlı cinayeti işleyen gizli eller aldıkları intikam ile yetinmemiş; kitabı da piyasadan toplayarak yok etmişlerdir. Zavallı yazar'ın, hangi vatan köşesinde gömülü olduğunu dahi bilmiyoruz. Düşmanlığın derecesine bakın ki, kitapları gibi mezarı da ortadan kaldırılmıştır.

Bugün, Milli Eğitim Bakanlığımızca 2 ncı baskısı yapılan bu eserin, bütün Türk aydınları tarafından okunması büyük faydalar sağlayacaktır. Çünkü, bu eser, Doğu Anadolu'da oturan, Türkçeye benzemeyen bir dil konuştukları için kendilerini Türk'den ayrı sayan; bilgisizliğimiz yüzünden bizim de öyle sandığımız vatandaşlarımızın su katılmamış Türk olduklarını bir defa daha isbat etmektedir. Hem de inkârına imkân bırakmayan ilmi deliller ile..

Tarihin hiçbir devrinde, Doğu İllerimize bugünkü sâkinlerini tortu olarak bırakacak yabancı bir göç vâki olmanıştır. Dünya üzerinde "Kürt" diye adlandırılabilir müstakil hüviyetli bir ırk yoktur. Kürtler, yalnız vatandaşımız değil, soydaşımızdır da.. Fakat, asırlarca devam eden kötü idare ve ihmaller, onların da kapalı yaşama itiyatları maalesef bu neticeyi doğurmuştur. Türk Milletini ve Türk Vatanını parçalayarak yok etmek sevda-sında olanlar, bundan faydalanmanın peşinde koşuyorlar.

Bütün Türk aydınları, şunu kesin olarak bilmelidirler ki, "Kürtlük" tahriki düşman kaynaklardan fıskırmakta ve milli bütünlüğümüzü sarsarak bizi yıkmayı hedef tutmaktadır. Buna elbette müsaade etmemeliyiz. Çünkü, Doğu İleri vatanımızın hem kapısı, hem kalesidir. Biz ihmal eder, gerçekleri bu öz kardeşlerimize götürmez, onları aydınlatmazsak, düşman propagandası karşısında silâhsız ve müdafaasız kahırlar. Sonunda alçakça yapılan bu propaganaların tesiriyle ikiye bölünürüz. Doğu İleri elimizden çıkarsa Orta ve Batı Anadolu'da tutunmamız kolay olmaz. Bu dâva, Türk

Fig. 6 The first page of Cemal Gürsel's preface to *Doğu İlleri ve Varto Tarihi*

Vatanı ve Türk Milletinin istikbali bakımından son derece mühim, son derece ciddidir.

Bütün Türk aydınlarının bu durum karşısında vazifelerinin ne olduğunu tâyin etmeleri zamanı gelmiştir. Bilhassa, bu ve buna benzer aslı astarı olmayan propagandalara kanmış, aldanmış, neticede yollarını şaşır-
mış Doğu Türklerinin kendilerini aydınlığa çıkaracak bu kitabı dikkatle okumaları, can evine çekilip derin derin düşünmeleri lâzımdır. Bu takdirde hakikî ve doğru yolu bulacaklarına inanıyorum.

Tarihin karanlıklarına ilmin ışığını tutarak bize millî benliğimizi gösteren ve öğreten büyük Türk mütefekkeri Ziya Gökalp nerelidir? Tahrikçilerin, propagandacıların "Kürtlük"ün merkezi saydıkları Diyarbakır'lı değil mi? Bu gerçek, bizi, baş başına bu kitapta yazılı olanları kadar düşündürecek ve aydınlatacak bir vakıadır.

Doğulu, Batılı, Güney ve Kuzeyli bütün vatandaşlar, artık uyanmalı ve birbirimizi uyandırmalıyız. Büyük, önemli, ciddi ve hayati bir mesele olan bu dâvayı, Millî Birliğimizi ve toprak bütünlüğümüzü sağlayacak duygu, düşünce ve imkân beraberliğine ulaştırmadıkça istikbalden emin olmaya hakkımız yoktur.

Rahmetli ve büyük idealist M. Şerif Fırat'ın uğrunda can verdiği bu ülkü, Türk aydınları tarafından bekamızın teminat bayrağı olarak ebediyen dalgalandırılmalıdır. Hem de imkânlarının son haddi olan yüksekliklerde.

Devlet Başkanı ve Başbakan

Cemal GÜRSEL

Fig. 7 The second page of Cemal Gürsel's preface to *Doğu İlleri ve Varto Tarihi*

APPENDIX B

SAMPLE CENSORED PAGES FROM

MEHMET EMİN BOZARSLAN'S TRANSLATION (1968)

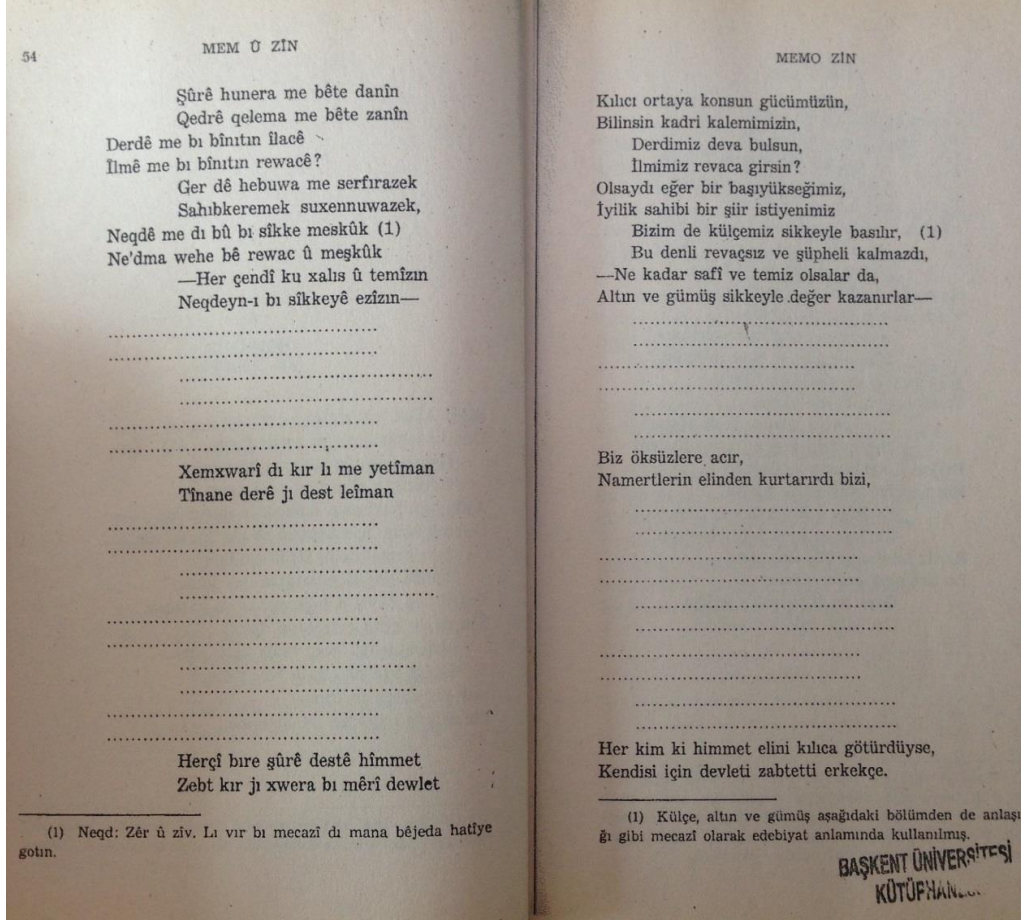


Fig. 8 Sample censored pages from Mehmet Emin Bozarслан's translation (1968)

APPENDIX C

THE BACK COVERS OF THE 1975 & 1990 EDITIONS OF MEHMET EMİN BOZARSLAN'S TRANSLATION

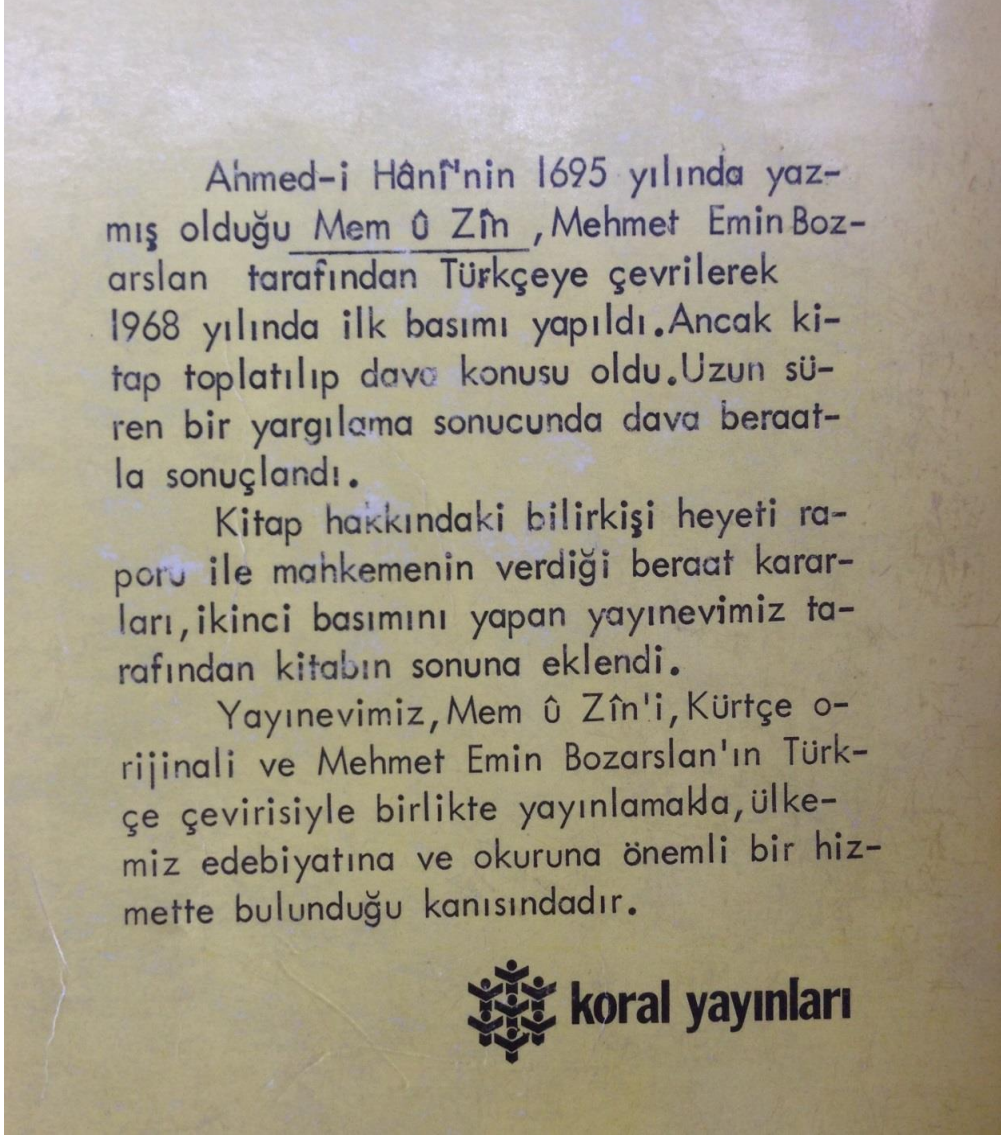


Fig. 9 The back cover of the 1975 edition of Bozarslan's translation

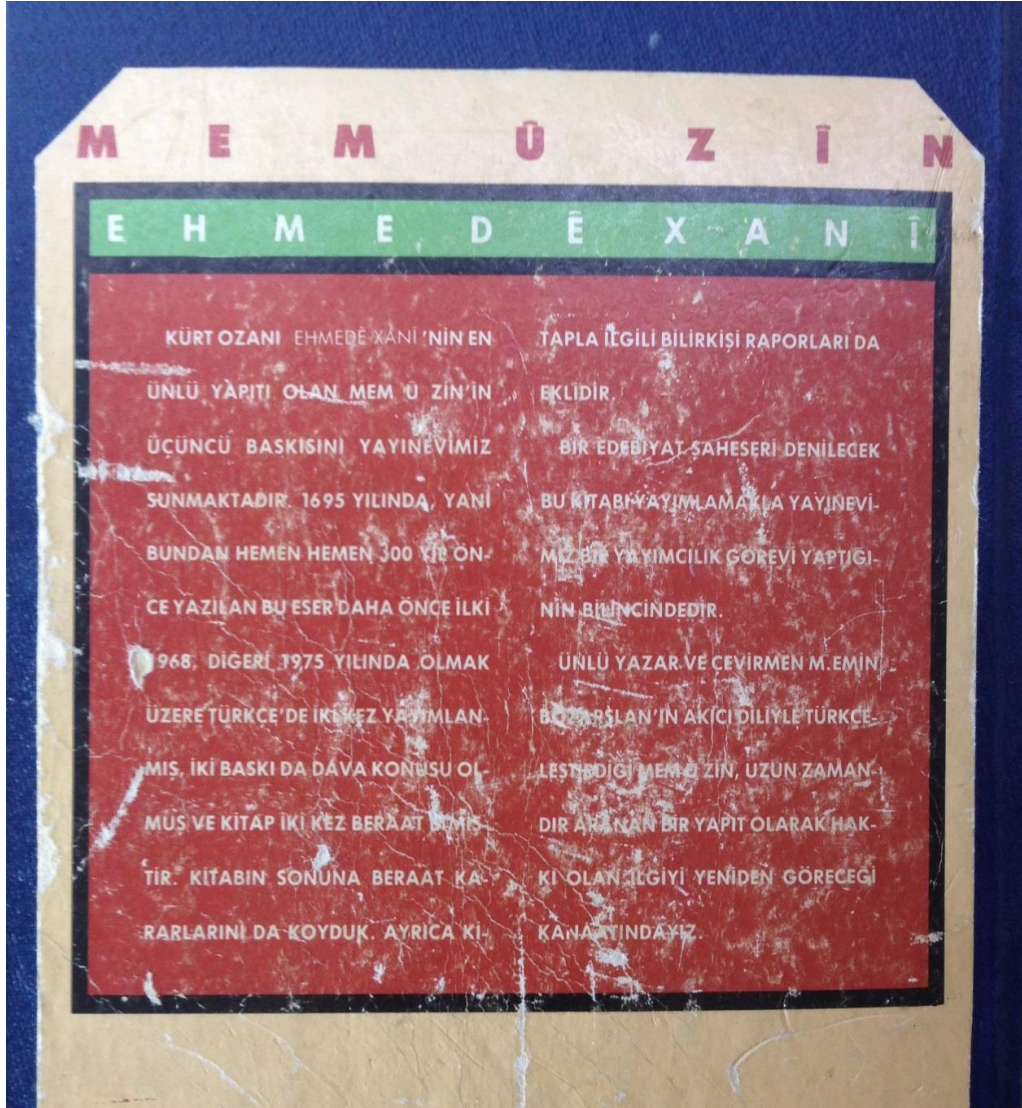


Fig. 10 The back cover of the 1990 edition of Bozarslan's translation

APPENDIX D

THE BACK COVER OF KADRI YILDIRIM'S TRANSLATION (2010)

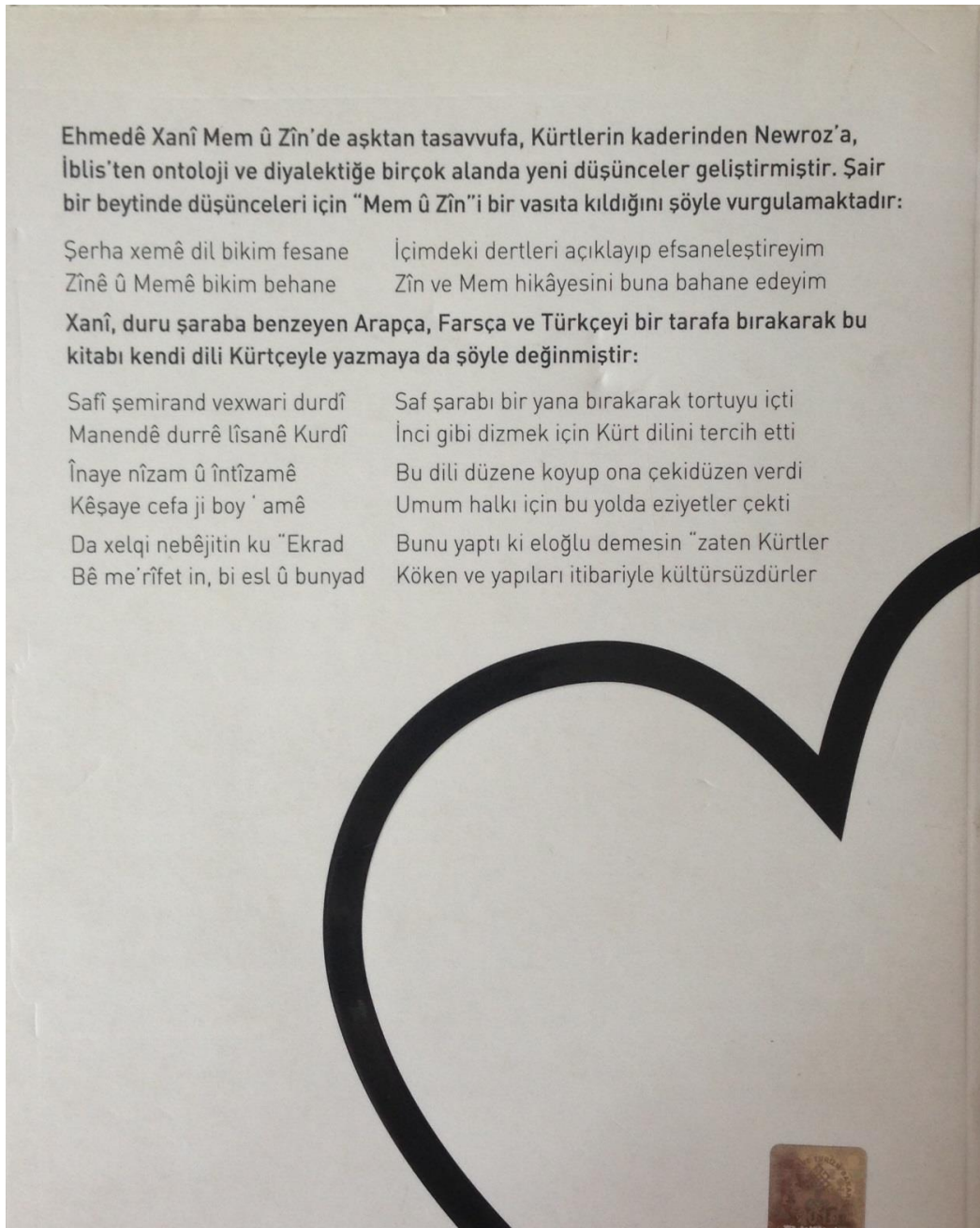


Fig. 11 The back cover of Kadri Yıldırım's translation (2010)

APPENDIX E

TABLE OF CONTENTS IN KADRI YILDIRIM'S KÜLTÜR BAKANLIĞI'NIN
MEM Ū ZİN ÇEVİRİSİNE ELEŞTİREL BİR YAKLAŞIM

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Fig. 12 Table of contents in Kadri Yıldırım's *Kültür Bakanlığı'nın Mem ū Zin Çevirisine Eleştirel Bir Yaklaşım*

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