

The *meâl* Trend: The Rising Popularity of Qur'an Translations in Turkey in the 1990s and the Reactions of Turkish Academic Theologians

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Introduction

Turkish-speaking Muslims today benefit from a great variety of Turkish Qur'an translations which are available online. Several websites offer the opportunity to compare different translations of suras, verses, key words, and passages. Often, they also provide some background information on the translation, audio material, and other services.¹ While some sites contain more than 20 different Turkish translations, others limit their services to a handful of selected versions.² They usually emphasise their noncommercial character but at the same time do not give any information about the operator(s) of the site.³ Users who do not find these unauthorised websites trustworthy may refer to the Kuran-i Kerim Portalı of the Directorate for Religious Affairs (Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı) which offers four different *meâl* texts, reproductions of the Qur'an's meaning as opposed to 'translations', to compare.⁴ This official website, which has been hosted by the Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı since 2012, is a very professional, user-friendly, and clearly structured service-oriented portal that strives to avoid any impression of being biased in its approach to the message of the Qur'an, as is reflected in its selection of rather officious translations. The more controversial translations that are currently circulating around the Turkish public are neither displayed nor mentioned on this site.

Given the as yet largely unexplored variety of translations into Turkish during approximately the last 100 years I will first try to provide a general overview of the sheer number of existing translations and analyse their quantitative development by bringing them into a chronological order.⁵ In a second step I will give a brief insight

into the way in which the *meâl* trend in Turkish society, which seems to have been a phenomenon that gained importance in the mid 1990s, has been taken up and discussed in the field of Turkish academic theology. I will give a short survey of the protagonists within this academic discourse, the main issues discussed, and the proposals that were advanced as solutions for some of the problems concerning theology, linguistics, translational methodology, and quality control identified by these scholars.

Turkish Qur'an Translations in the Republican Era: A Survey

Obtaining reliable information about existing and/or available Turkish Qur'an translations is not as easy as one might expect given the above-mentioned abundance of such translations.⁶ A book of keywords was published by Ertuğrul Özalp in 2012 in order to facilitate a better grasp of existing Turkish Qur'an translations,⁷ but a complete bibliography of translations of the Qur'an into Turkish is still lacking. Nevertheless one may find scattered information on the number of existing translations, but also on individual translators, titles, publishing dates, and publishing houses in several sources. Since the sources coincide neither in time range, nor in methodology or criteria for selection,⁸ the information varies considerably.

In his *Kur'an'ın Tercümesi ve Tercüme ile Namaz Meselesi*, Halil Altuntaş lists 23 'separate translations with individual titles, in new letters' that have been printed since the introduction of the Roman alphabet in 1928.⁹ He begins with Ömer Rıza Doğrul's *Tanrı Buyruğu* in 1934¹⁰ and ends up with Abdullah Yücel's undated translation, which Altuntaş considers to be of later origin than the one by Yaşar Nuri Öztürk published in 1994.¹¹

As an answer to a written enquiry by the Member of Parliament Emin Şirin (AKP) in 2005, the Turkish Parliament published a list of 50 Qur'an translations printed between 1926 and 2004 (five of them with unknown publishing dates).¹² While the first half (items 1-23) of this listing corresponds with Altuntaş's list, the second half does not follow any obvious chronological or alphabetical order. The oldest title listed here is *Kur'an-ı Kerim Çevirisi* by Süleyman Tevfik Zorluoğlu (1926, Arabic letters), the newest one *Kur'an-ı Kerim ve Açıklamalı Meâli* by Ümit Şimşek (2004).

Also in 2005, Murat Sülün mentions 130 existing Turkish Qur'an translations in his work *Türk Toplumunun Kur'an Kültürü* ('The Qur'an Culture of Turkish Society') and lists a selection of those 73 of them that 'were in relatively great demand' in alphabetical order according to the surname of the translator.¹³ Since Sülün includes publications from the 1920s, before the introduction of the Roman alphabet, the oldest translation in his list is Cemil Saîd's *Kur'ân-ı Kerîm Tercümesi*, printed in Istanbul in

1925.¹⁴ The most recent translation listed here is Nedim Yılmaz's *Açıklamalı Kur'an-ı Kerim Meâli*, published in Istanbul in 2002.

In 2009, Adem Demir published an article in *Newsweek Türkiye* entitled “Mealini Söyle, Sana Cemaatini Söyleyeyim.” Cemaatler Arası Kur'an Meâli Savaşı' (“Tell me your Qur'an Translation and I'll tell you which Community (*cemaat*) you Belong to”: The Struggle over Qur'an Translations (*meâl savaşı*) between Religious Communities'). Demir writes that ‘according to unverified information’,¹⁵ 115 different translations of the Qur'an into Turkish have been published during the last 50 years.¹⁶ According to him, of the 2,672 translations into 65 different languages available worldwide, ninety-five percent were translations into Persian, Turkish, and Urdu. This shows, as Demir states, how widespread and intense the effort to translate the Qur'an into Turkish is today. Demir also singles out the best-selling Turkish Qur'an translations of the twentieth century, i.e. those that have sold more than one million copies; according to him these are Elmalılı Muhammed Hamdi Yazır's (1935)¹⁷ and Ömer Nasuhi Bilmen's (1956), both of these having been on the market for a relatively long time.¹⁸ More than 500,000 copies were sold of Muhammad Asad's *The Message of the Qur'an*, first published in Turkish under the title *Kur'an Mesajı* in 1996, and of Yaşar Nuri Öztürk's *Kur'an-ı Kerim Meâli (Türkçe Çeviri)*, first published in 1994, which has been reprinted 150 times. Translations by Suat Yıldırım (2002) and by Süleyman Ateş (2002),¹⁹ that edited by the Diyanet Vakfı (1982),²⁰ and the latest official translation of the Directorate of Religious Affairs by Halil Altuntaş and Muzaffer Şahin (first published in 2003) were also bestsellers. Demir estimates that between 650,000 to 700,000 copies of Qur'an translations are sold each year on the Turkish book market; prices vary between 25 and 100 Turkish lira depending on the layout.²¹ These numbers give an idea of the significant economic importance that the field of Turkish Qur'an translations has gained since the mid 1990s.

The most detailed and reliable assessment of Turkish Qur'an translations of the twentieth century is to be found in *Cumhuriyet Türkiyesi'nde Meâl ve Tefsirin Serencamı* ('The Occurrence of *Meâl* and *Tefsir* in Republican Turkey') by the 1965-born Professor for Islamic Theology at Çukurova University Faculty of Divinity (İlahiyat Fakültesi) in Adana, Mustafa Öztürk.²² After providing an elaborate explanation of the Qur'an translations that have been published since the 1920s, arranged according to decades, he makes some remarks on current numbers:²³

As a result, discussion of 'Qur'anism' (*Kurancılık*) with its different sounds and versions (*ton ile versiyonlarıyla*) has made a very important contribution to the enrichment of the *meâl* culture all over the country, and in fact more than 100 Qur'an translations found their readers in the last 50 years; hence the total number of Qur'an translations nowadays reaches 200.

The *meâl* of Yaşar Nuri Öztürk from 1994 is the latest translation Mustafa Öztürk discusses in detail. As for the translations published more recently, he only makes some general remarks:²⁴

The increase in the number of translations during recent decades can be related to an increased interest in reading translations as well as the growing number of translation readers, which in turn is connected to the popularity of the discourse of 'the Islam of the Qur'an' (*Kur'an İslamı*). In this matter, a balance of supply and demand emerged. Besides, one can say that writing and distributing Qur'an translations as a result of the considerable increase of demand in society in the recent past is strongly related to financial interests. The fact that almost every publishing house engaged in religious literature [had] edited its own Qur'an translation sheds light on the economic dimension of this issue.

Yet the mere numbers do not necessarily reflect a general improvement of the quality of the translations available, as Öztürk states in his conclusion:²⁵

In Turkey up to 200 separate Qur'an translations have been produced; but this quantity does not necessarily reflect quality. Speaking frankly, in terms of aspects such as scientific reliability or accuracy in terms of meaning, the translations of Elmalılı Hamdi Yazır and Hasan Basri Çantay²⁶ have been unsurpassed until now. Despite the production of high quality translations in the recent past, most of the existing translations are produced by copying from or harmonising with former translations, mostly the translations by Elmalılı and Çantay, which came to be seen as a kind of public property.

This overview of the sources providing information on existing Turkish Qur'an translations gives the impression that translation activities have been conducted in every decade since the beginning of the twentieth century. In reality they have intensified significantly since the mid 1990s: apparently up to three quarters of the translations available today were published between 1998 and 2008.²⁷ An increasing demand and interest on the part of the Turkish public, as well as new technical means, seem to have led to a boom of Qur'an translations. Buying and reading the Qur'an in Turkish has become a habit of the average Turkish Muslim believer. This does not only indicate the emergence of a book-buying and book-reading social class in general, but also a growing interest in books on religious issues specifically. Within the group of religious readers or reading Muslims there seems to exist a tendency to concentrate on the Qur'an as the only reliable and most important first-hand source of religious knowledge.²⁸

One could consider these developments a positive trend in the sense that they reflect the quest for an individual access to the message of the Qur'an and constitute an emancipatory act on the part of believers. At the same time, the growing number of Turkish Qur'an translations raises some problematic aspects: questionable, often monetary, interests on the side of the translators and publishers; insufficiently qualified translators; a hasty, inaccurate, and cursory working style that makes use of modern technical opportunities such as the re-use of older, electronically available texts; and a lack of quality standards.

Given the popularity and growing number of Qur'an translations, these questions and problems were picked up almost immediately by Turkish academic theologians and a vivid debate emerged among scholars, be it on conferences and in scientific publications or in the public media.

The Academic Response to the Popularity of Qur'an Translations

In contrast to the discussions over the necessity and legitimacy of Qur'an translations that were paramount during the first decades of the Republic,²⁹ the debate that arose in the end of the 1990s concentrated on the question of how the Qur'an could be translated properly and in what way quality standards for translation could be set and supervised:³⁰

That the discussions about questions like 'Should the Qur'an be translated or not?' or 'Is it possible to translate the Qur'an at all?' today are replaced by the idea of 'What should a translation be like?' illustrates the progress we have made on this issue.

In response to the popularity of Qur'an translations among Turkish believers the academic community, mainly represented by the faculties of divinity at Turkish universities as well as by the Directorate of Religious Affairs, started to reflect on and research into the subject of Qur'an translations in every aspect. Much of this academic exchange took place in conferences held all over the country. Since Ramađān 1995, a conference called Qur'an Haftası or Qur'an Sempozyumu has been held each year in different Anatolian cities. The conference volumes are published by Fecr publishing house, which seems to host this conference series.³¹ Each conference has had an individual title, for example 'The Qur'an and the Muslims' or 'Ethical Values in the Qur'an' or 'The Qur'an and Education'. The contributions to these conferences do not explicitly deal with questions on translating the Qur'an but place special emphasis on 'new approaches' towards understanding the Qur'an in Turkey. They generally seem to pursue a missionary agenda.³²

In 2001 a conference entitled 'Qur'an and Language: Conference on Grammar and Hermeneutics' took place, organised by the Faculty of Divinity at the Yüzüncü Yıl

Üniversitesi in Van.³³ Two out of thirty contributions to this conference dealt directly with questions of translating the Qur'an into Turkish.³⁴

However, the most important academic answer to the popularity of Qur'an translations was the Kur'an Meâlleri Sempozyumu held in April 2003 in Izmir, organised by the Directorate of Religious Affairs together with the Faculty of Divinity at Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi in Izmir.³⁵ This conference, focused on the translation of the Qur'an into Turkish, at that time aroused great interest among the academic community as well as the general public.³⁶ Many of the contributions dealt with practical questions concerning theories of translation, conditions to be fulfilled by translators, and linguistics. The majority of the contributors dedicated their presentations to a critical discussion of one or several examples of translations, mostly very popular and controversial ones, sometimes comparing several of them in certain aspects. All speakers agreed on the recognition of the necessity of Qur'an translations for educational purposes as well as on the need to employ 'scientific methods'³⁷ (*bilimsel metodlar*) of translation. The *meâl*, they maintained, could never be more than a helpful tool; nevertheless, it should conform to the highest quality standards. One of the suggestions that emerged from the conference was that people should concentrate on the production of a 'classical' or 'canonical' standard translation in order to stop uncontrolled proliferation of low quality translations.³⁸

It is noticeable that the translations that were most frequently referred to during the conference are 'secondary' translations in the sense that they were not translated directly from the Arabic original but from western foreign languages, mostly French or English.³⁹ Despite this fact, the stipulation that the translators must master both Turkish and Arabic perfectly is very much emphasised.⁴⁰ The only researcher at the conference who spoke on the social functions that a Qur'an translation could or should fulfill is the Professor for Theology at Marmara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi in Istanbul, Murat Sülün.⁴¹ Born in 1962 and a specialist on *tefsir*, he published his own Qur'an translation *Kur'an-ı Kerîm ve Türkçe Anlamı* in 2012. Sülün analyses some reasons for the, as he calls it, 'failure' of existing translations and makes several suggestions, the most important of which is the realisation of a *meâl* project in order to produce an official translation by bringing together the cumulative expertise of the relevant representatives of all faculties of divinity.⁴²

Together with Murat Sülün, the abovementioned Mustafa Öztürk, Professor for Theology (*tefsir*) in Adana and author of the monograph on the occurrence of *meâl* and *tefsir* in Republican Turkey, is another researcher from the younger generation of professors at Turkish faculties of divinity who have received their entire education in Turkey and who are interested in social topics related to the Qur'an. Mustafa Öztürk's Qur'an translation *Kur'an-ı Kerîm Meâli* was published in 2011. Currently Öztürk and Sülün seem to be the leading experts on the role of Qur'an translations in

contemporary Turkish society. Both place emphasis on reader orientation, and both aim to more explicitly take into account the aims and purposes a Qur'an translation wants to and is able to fulfil. Both of them take into consideration other existing types of publications intended to win over the reader and provide religious knowledge, such as *ilmihal* and *akaid* books that deal with the basics of belief and rules for behaviour. They propose to develop new types of appropriate publications to meet the readers' religious needs without claiming that the *meâl* should be dispensable.

Conclusion

The question raised in the discussions about the translation of the Qur'an in Turkey in the late 1990s was no longer *if* the Qur'an can and should be translated at all, but rather *how* this should be done and how one could guarantee that the translations entering the market fulfill certain quality standards. Furthermore, new questions arose, among them the question 'what for?', in the sense that, while no one questions the value of a *meâl* as a helpful tool that, of course, can never replace the original Qur'an in any way or function, the aims and the addressees of the translation must be taken into account more systematically.

Even without delving deeper into the issues discussed in the academic debate on Qur'an translations in Turkey today, it is possible to notice two important points. First, the large number of participants, the high quality of the contributions, and the variety of aspects encompassed by this scholarly debate are evidently a result of Turkey's efforts to build up new, kemalist or secular structures and institutions for religious education up to the academic level. Although or maybe precisely because those institutions, namely the faculties of divinity, are controlled by the Ministry of Education and not by the Directorate of Religious Affairs, the relationship between them, secondly, does not seem to be one of tension and competition but of respect and cooperation. Some theologians have petitioned the Diyanet to assume the authority to centrally and officially control all Qur'an translations to be published in the future. At the same time, Turkish academics agree that the experts who could produce a canonical translation are to be found at the universities, not in the government.

NOTES

1 See for example www.kuranmeali.com (24 Turkish and 2 English translations to compare; accessed 17/05/2015). Information given here on 'all existing' 37 Turkish Qur'an translations printed between 1926 and 1987 is quoted from the French translation of Muhammad Hamidullah, *Le Noble Coran*, printed in Turkish under the title *Aziz Kur'an* in 2000. See secondly www.kuranmealleri.net (32 translations to compare and information on the translators, accessed 17/05/2015), www.kuran.gen.tr (Turkish), and www.theholyyquran.org (English), the 'world's largest Quran portal' (6 Turkish Qur'an translations and about 25 translations into other languages; accessed 17/05/2015).

2 See, for example, www.turkcekuran.com (3), www.kuranikerim.gen.tr (6) (both accessed on 17/05/2015).

3 www.kuranmeali.org used to offer services based on 31 translations at least until March 2015, but received bad press on YouTube and was closed down because it was run by the 'Imam İskender Ali Mihr', alias İskender Evrenosoğlu. According to the website of *karşı gazete*, the Directorate of Religious Affairs warned the public about the defective Qur'an translation presented on this website by İskender Evrenosoğlu, also known as 'the false prophet', but did not have the opportunity to prohibit its distribution. See <http://www.karsigazete.com.tr/ozel-haber/kuran-denetimi-basvurusuna-diyanet-oyle-bir-yanit-verdi-ki-h40620.html> (accessed 22/05/15)

4 <http://kuran.diyanet.gov.tr/meal.html> (accessed 16/05/2015). *Meâl* is the term generally used in Turkish to indicate that a translation is not the Qur'an itself but the reproduction of its meaning in a language other than Arabic. In this text I will use the term *meâl* as a synonym for translation despite the fact that some Turkish authors who have recently started to systematically discuss the semantic difference between terms related to translation refute this usage. I will spell the term consistently with an *â* even if Turkish texts do not always do so. The Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı Kur'an Portalı offers the *Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı Kur'an ı Kerim Meâli* (2003) provided by Halil Altuntaş and Muzaffer Şahin, the *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Meâli* (1993 edition) by Hayreddin Karaman, Ali Özek, İbrahim Kâfi Dönmez, Mustafa Çağrıç, Sadrettin Gümüş and Ali Turgut, the *Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı Kur'an Yolu Meâli* (2006) by Hayrettin Karaman, Mustafa Çağrıç, İbrahim Kâfi Dönmez, and Sadrettin Gümüş, and the *meâl* entitled *Hak Dini Kur'an Dili* by Elmalılı Muhammed Hamdi Yazır (1935) in its original version, not one of the later editions in modernised Turkish (sadeleştirilmiş).

5 https://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kur%27an_mealleri (accessed 17/05/2015) gives a list of 36 translations published between 1924 and 2012, in addition to 13 undated texts. A previous version of the website, accessed in March 2015, listed as many as 73 translations! In that version they were listed in alphabetical order according to the first name of the translator. The new version enables users to rearrange the list according to publishing year, alphabetical order of the title, or even name of the publishing house, which was not possible in the earlier version.

6 A search for the term *meâl* in the catalogue of the Turkish National Library in Ankara yields 218 results, but this contains a high number of duplicates. Furthermore, no records are displayed at all for the years between 1984 and 2001. See <http://www.mkutup.gov.tr/tr/Sayfalar/default.aspx> (homepage of the Millî Kütüphane) and <http://mksun.mkutup.gov.tr/F/K5C2D9E2IIB4YNCUXVEEE6A54Y57FXRU29HC4TE35N6QDEMYF100963?func=short> (for a list of results for *meâl* as part of the title) (accessed 20/03/15). A search for the term *meâl* as part of the title of books in Turkish language in the catalogue of the library of the Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Araştırmaları Merkezi (İSAM) in Istanbul yields 252 results, containing a high number of duplicates. The İSAM library seems to hold the most comprehensive inventory of Qur'an translations in Turkey. See www.isam.org.tr and ktp.isam.org.tr to start a search.

7 Özalp, *Türkçe Meâller için Alfabetik Fihrist*.

8 Some display an alphabetical order according to name or surname of the translators, some a chronological order of printing years which sometimes are unknown.

9 Altuntaş, *Kur'an'ın Tercümesi ve Tercüme ile Namaz Meselesi* ('The Translation of the Qur'an and the Question of Ritual Prayer Using a Translation), p. 130f. Together with Muzaffer Şahin, Altuntaş produced the official new translation of the Directorate of Religious Affairs printed in 2002. His book is the first monograph on the issue and (only) his list seems to include all the translations published in the 1980s.

10 First printed in 1934 under the title *Tanrı Buyruğu. Kur'ânı Kerîm'in Tercüme ve Tefsir i Şerîfi* without the Arabic text. Arabic was added in the second and third editions, in 1947 and 1955 respectively. See Akpınar, art. 'Tanrı Buyruğu'.

11 Abdullah Yücel, born 1950 and working for the Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı since 1978, published his own *Kur'an ı Kerîm Meâlî*. Information about the printing date is not available. See <http://www.hasekidiyanet.gov.tr/?Syf=15&cat id=21&baslik name=QWJkdWxsYWgg WcO8Y2Vs> (accessed 21/08/2015).

12 www2.tbmm.gov.tr/d22/7/7 4522c.pdf (accessed 18/03/2015). 20 *tefsir* works published in Turkish between 1947 and 2003 are listed there as well. Seven of them are undated; at least seven are translations.

13 Sülün, *Türk Toplumunun Kur'an ı Kerim Kültürü*, pp. 177 82, here p. 177: 'While more than 130 Qur'an translations compete to transfer the Qur'anic message to the Turkish reader, those that enjoyed greater interest are the following: ...'.

14 On early republican Qur'an translations see the publications by Brett Wilson, contributor to this volume, 'The First Translations of the Qur'an' and *Translating the Qur'an in an Age of Nationalism*. According to Cündioğlu, *Bir Kur'an Şâiri*, pp. 112 16, in 1924, immediately after the proclamation of the Turkish Republic, three Qur'an translations were published in short order. The translators were Seyyid Süleyman Tevfik, Hüseyin Kâzım Kadri (his translation was called *Nur'ul Beyan*), and Cemil Said (Dikel). The colonel (*albay*) Cemil Said (Dikel) based his translation on a French translation written by Albert de Bieberstein Kazimirski in the 1850s. All the three were severely criticised by the directors and other officials of the Directorate for Religious Affairs (Diyanet Reisliği). In their comments they warned believers about Turkish Qur'an translations in general.

15 'Kesin olmayan bilgilere göre' (Demir, "Mealini Söyle, Sana Cemaatini Söyleyeyim.").

16 This implicitly means that Demir starts counting in the mid 1950s.

17 Elmalılı's translation continues to have numerous new editions, mostly in modernised language (*sadeleştirilmiş*).

18 Ömer Nasuhi Bilmen (1883 1971) was Muftî of Istanbul and in 1960 became Director for Religious Affairs (Diyanet İşleri Başkanı).

19 Süleyman Ateş, born 1933, Diyanet İşleri Başkanı 1976 8, Professor at Samsun University and Istanbul University faculties of divinity.

20 Karaman *et al.*, *Kur'an ı Kerîm*.

21 At that time this equalled between 16 and 56 US dollars.

22 Öztürk, *Cumhuriyet Türkiye'sinde Meal*, p. 147; see especially a commented list of translations published between 1923 and 2004 in ch. 1, pp. 23 37. Part of this book was printed in 2011 in a volume of conference proceedings entitled *Kur'an'ın Anlaşılmasına Doğru. Tefsir ve Toplum*. The title of the speech Mustafa Öztürk gave at this conference was 'Türkçedeki Telif / Tercüme Tefsirlerin Tanıtılması'. See Sülün, *Kur'an'n Anlaşılmasına Doğru*, pp. 149 209).

23 Öztürk, *Cumhuriyet Türkiye'sinde Meal*, p. 37. My own translation.

24 Öztürk, *Cumhuriyet Türkiye'sinde Meal*, p. 38. My own translation.

25 Öztürk, *Cumhuriyet Türkiye'sinde Meal*, p. 73. My own translation.

26 Hasan Basri Çantay's (1887 1964) three volume *meâl Kur'ân ı Hakîm ve Meâl i Kerîm* was first printed in 1952 3.

27 This rate relies on the varying total numbers of existing translations given in the sources: 50 in 1998; 130 in 2005; almost 200 in 2009.

28 This tendency is not a specifically Turkish phenomenon, but seems to reflect a development within the Muslim community worldwide.

29 These discussions are widely documented and analysed in the publications of Dücane Cündioğlu. See, for example, Cündioğlu, *Kur'an, Dil ve Siyaset üzerine Söyleşiler, Türkçe Kur'an ve Cumhuriyet İdeolojisi*, and *Bir Kur'an Şâiri*, to name but a few.

30 Kur'an Meâlleri Sempozyumu, vol. 1, Introduction by Ömer Dumlu in the name of the organisation team, p. xiii (my own translation).

31 See, for example, VII. Kur'an Sempozyumu 'Kur'an ve Müslümanlar', 14-15 Mayıs 2004, (Kayseri, Ankara: Fecr, 2005); IX. Kur'an Sempozyumu 'Kur'an'da Ahlaki Değerler', 14-16 Nisan 2006 (Konya, Ankara: Fecr, 2007); XI. Kur'an Sempozyumu 'Kur'an ve Risalet', 25-26 Ekim 2008 (Samsun, Ankara: Fecr, 2009). The owner of Fecr publishing house, Tuncer Namlı, wrote the introductions to these three volumes.

32 The only exception is Dücane Cündioğlu's 'Matbû Kur'an Çevirileri ve Kur'an Çevirilerinde Yöntem Sorunu Bir Giriş Denemesi' ('Printed Qur'an Translations and the Question of Method in Qur'an Translations Introductory Essay').

33 Kara *et al.*, *Kur'an ve Dil. Dilbilim ve Hermenötik Sempozyumu* ('Qur'an and Language. Conference on Grammar and Hermeneutics').

34 Boynukara, 'Çeviri, nasıl, ne kadar?' ('Translation, How and How Far?'), and İşler, 'Çokanlamlılık, Anlam Daralması ve Kur'an'ın Türkçe Çevirilerinde Yapılan Yanlışlar' ('Multiple Meanings, the Constriction of Meaning, and Mistakes Made in Turkish Translations of the Qur'an').

35 The two volume book of conference proceedings was first printed in Ankara 2007 and a second time in 2010 in the Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı Yayınları series. See Menekşe (ed.), *Kur'an Meâlleri Sempozyumu*.

36 80 participants from nearly every Faculty of Divinity in Turkey listened to 49 presentations held in eleven sessions over three days. See the review of the conference volumes by Koçoğlu, 'Kur'an Meâlleri Sempozyumu, Kitap Tanıtımı', which can also be found at <http://www2.diyaret.gov.tr/DiniYay%C4%B1nlarGenelMudurlugu/KitapTanitim/Kur%27an%20Mealleri%20Sempozyumu.pdf> (accessed 16/05/2013).

37 Koçoğlu, 'Kur'an Meâlleri Sempozyumu, Kitap Tanıtımı', p. 63.

38 Koçoğlu, 'Kur'an Meâlleri Sempozyumu, Kitap Tanıtımı', p. 64.

39 The phenomenon is not new: the 1841 French translation by Kasimirski was first published in Turkish translation in 1924; Muhammad Hamidullah's English translation of 1966 was published in Turkish under the title of *Aziz Kur'an* in 2000, and again in 2008; Abu'l Ala al Mawdudi's Urdu translation and Commentary from 1972 was printed in Turkish under the title *Tefhim'ul Kur'an. Kur'an'ın Anlamı ve Tefsiri* in 1986, and the English translation by Muhammad Asad (*The Message of the Qur'an*, 1980) was first published in Turkish as *Kur'an Mesajı* in 1996, and again in 1999, 2000, 2002, and 2004. It is remarkable that this last translation produced by Leopold Weiss alias Muhammad Asad (1900-92), a Jew who converted to Islam, lived in Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, and worked on his English translation for seventeen years, became popular to such an extent in Turkey.

40 The translations most commonly referred to that can be presumed to be translated directly from Arabic are the official Diyanet İşleri translation by Halil Altuntaş and Mustafa Şahin (2003), one by Yaşar Nuri Öztürk (1994), one by the 1942 born Professor for Theology Suat Yıldırım (2002), and one entitled *Mesaj* by Edip Yüksel (2000), a 1957 born 'Islamic reformer' (as he calls himself) who lives in the USA but since 1995 has frequently appeared in Turkish television talk shows to contribute to Kur'ancılık ('Referring only to the Qur'an movement') discussions.

41 The title of his presentation was 'Meâller Kur'an mesajını Türk toplumuna iletmede ne kadar başarılıdır?' ('How Successful are Translations in Transmitting the Qur'anic Message to Turkish Society?'). Sülün has also published *Türkiye Kur'an Makaleleri Bibliyografyası*, a bibliography of articles on the Qur'an in Turkey, together with Ömer Çelik, in 1999.

42 *Kur'an Meâlleri Sempozyumu*, vol. 2, p. 415. This project could be considered as put into practice by the Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı 'Kuran Yolu Meâli' of 2006.

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