On transcribing Ottoman texts
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It is now generally agreed that Turkish texts originally written in Arabic script should be edited in transcription (in a Latin script). The last twenty years have seen a renewed interest in seventeenth-century Ottoman. The transcription problems encountered there have led some scholars to sigh 'Why transcribe at all[2]?'. Yet the answer is undeniably, in my opinion, in favour of transcriptions, because, as Sir Gerard Clauson said, it is the duty of the editor to search for solutions to the various problems, and not to pass the buck to the reader[3].

Problems of transcribing Turkish texts into suitable Latin alphabets have been discussed for a long time[4]. Much of the attention was taken up, not only with the devising of appropriate techniques for the analysis of actual transcriptions of speech[5], but with the transliteration of the Arabic alphabet[6].

Transliteration systems of the Arabic script, such as that of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, distinguish between consonants which are phonemes in Arabic but not in Turkish, whereas notation of consonantal phonemes in Turkish is deficient, such as postpalatal k (*köy*, *kābil*). In a variety of transliteration systems ($k — q$; $h — x$), scholars have tried to get round these problems. The danger of confusing phonology and orthography is ever present[7].

Almost sixty years have passed since the Turkish Republic adopted its official Latin alphabet. It is easy to understand why an increasing number of scholars and scholarly journals use it to transcribe Ottoman texts, or, as the case may be, the full transcription system established by the editors of the *İslâm Ansiklopedisi*. In this paper an attempt will be made to bring late Ottoman evidence to bear on the problem.

A great deal of the work of Turkologists has been taken up with arguing about the notation of vowels. Ottoman spelling was historical and therefore ambiguous. The use of plene writing and orthographic signs (*hareke*) varied through the centuries. Just as in Persian, a number of vowels existed, which was not represented in the Arabic script. On the other hand, Turkish vowels were represented, if only partly, in the Greek alphabet. As Mefkûre Mollova[8] rightly observed, '... la leçon des textes (turcs) en caractères grecs représente de même un problème, un Karaman orthodox d'Anatolie le lira à sa manière... un savant selon la méthode qu'il choisit.'

This brings us to the purpose of the present paper.

The Turkish language has undergone changes, and with it the phonology of native Turkish words and of foreign borrowings. Having become the language of a vast empire, Turkish was the native language of the Turks and the second language of many non-Turkish speakers.

The actual pronunciation of Turkish at any given moment is doubtful. Ottoman official writing, with Istanbul as its centre, was historical and conventional. Its historical spelling system obscures the relationship between the spoken and written forms of the language.

Nevertheless, the general lines along which Ottoman Turkish developed can be followed to a certain degree; we can say that by the second half of the seventeenth century Ottoman Turkish had developed most of the characteristics of the vowel harmony which are used in present-day Turkish. Authors like Evliyā Çelebi provide material for the change in vocalization from /u/ı/ to u/u resp. u/ü, as shown by H.E. Boeschoten in his paper.

The printed Turkish literature, in Greek letters, of the Turkish speaking Orthodox 'Karamanli' community contributes also to our knowledge of later Ottoman. Late Ottoman dictionaries which include the spoken language, such as R. Youssouf's *Dictionnaire Turc-Français en caractères latins et turcs*, Constantinople, 1888, are also of value. If we consider the publications of the Turkish-speaking Orthodox subjects of the Ottoman Empire (the Karamanlis), printed in their cultural centre Istanbul, the representation of the vowel harmony can be shown as follows[9]:

	u/ı	u/u
1707-1733 two Patriarchal circulars	—	*olunur, bulunur*
1818 religious pamphlet	—	*yokdur*
1853 *Robinson Krusos hikâyesi*	—	*bulunmuştur*
1865 religious pamphlet	—	*olunacak*
1870 Protestant pamphlet	—	*olundu*
1871/72 Karamanli novel	*olınamaz, bulınur*	rarely *bulunduğu*
1885 translated French novel	*oldığınız, bulınub*	*oluyor, dostluğumuz*
1898/99 work on religious history	*okudığı, oldığı, yokdır*	rarely *bulunan*
1900/01 guide-book of book-keeping	(rarely) *bulınan*	(currently) *oldukları, bulunmadıkları*
Turkish-French dictionary by R. Youssouf as the 'correct' pronunciation	—	*bulunabilir*

Given the fact that in 1876 Ottoman Turkish had been declared the official language of the state, and that Turkish had become compulsory in the schools,

the preference for the older *u/ı* over the more modern *u/ü* can only be explained by the influence of the Ottoman historical spelling. For guide-books for book-keeping (see above), serving purely practical needs, the spelling of spoken Turkish was preferred.

I do not propose to present the matter in great detail. But there is still another aspect of this problem which we should not overlook. Turkish culture was and is by no means homogeneous; the language even now differs in various parts of the country and in the various levels of society. The use of words, spelling, and pronunciation can all be the expression of different 'world-views'; take the idiosyncratic spellings deliberately devised by Ibnülemin Mahmud Kemal Inal[10], Ekrem Hakkı Ayverdi and others in order to protest against the Turkish of the Republic. Deliberately, a conservative printing-house spelled its name *Inkılab* and not *Inkılap*; deliberately *ictihad* was used in place of *içtihat* and *Rasûl* in place of the expected *Resul*[11].

I will limit myself to some examples. Youssouf has *için* as well as *içün*, but he seems to know only *kapu* (1888). Thirty years later Bergsträsser[12] gives *qapu* und *qapy* as examples for words which are pronounced in various ways; the older pronunciation *gelür, açılsun, alub* as against the more common *gelir, açılsın, alıb*. The pronunciations *kendü, içün, kapu* have survived, in the background, until the early years of the Republic[13]. I myself can swear to having heard *kapu* in or around 1935, but this is contradicted by Vedat Günyol, who is of my age and should know; other persons of mature age whom I consulted gave varying answers.

Consonants, too, can cause difficulties. Youssouf (p. 18) discusses the pronunciation of /ḥ/. He points to the fact that, according to Bianchi, the Osmanlıs of the capital tended to a 'soft' pronunciation of this consonant, whereas, according to others, no difference could be heard in the pronunciation of /ḥ/ and /h/. This, in his opinion, applied to vulgar speech; otherwise the /ḥ/, for instance in *harab, hoş, hamur, anahtar*, would not be pronounced as 'soft' as a /h/, but not as guttural as with the Arabs.

The /ñ/ has for him still a slightly nasal character, but, he adds in a carefully worded observation, 'dans la langue usuelle la lettre peut parfaitement se prononcer comme un simple n' (p. 6 f.). He points to the fact that the nasal /ñ/ was /n/ in the colloquial (p. 6).

Thus, until a general consensus is reached, every editor will have to decide for himself how to transcribe in these cases. This applies especially to the so-called *ç-p-t* rule[14]. Youssouf sometimes gives two spellings, the 'official' one and the 'colloquial' one,

agac	*agaç*
bulumac	*bulumaç*
kükürd	*kükürt*

On the *'ayn* Youssouf remarks, 'ordinairement, en turc, le son de cette lettre est à peine sensible' (but not

wholly disappeared). The educated of the capital, he continues, 'font sentir le son de l'ayn' to distinguish words which would otherwise sound alike, and he gives some examples:

'adem	*adem*
'arz	*arz*
ibda'	*ibda'* (p. 16)

In 1918 Bergsträsser[15] observed, 'Zwischen Vokabeln schwindet er [the *'ayn*] bei ungezwungenem Sprechen wohl stets, sonst, z.B. beim Lesen, wird er von manchen Personen gelegentlich bewahrt'.

An immense Arabic and Persian vocabulary was in use in colloquial and written Turkish. Some of these words were used only occasionally, whereas a great number of loan words became part of the basic vocabulary of Ottoman Turkish and — to a much lesser degree — of the Turkish of today. The existence of a massive volume of Arabic words sometimes evoked protests such as that by Namık Kemâl: '*Iki sahifelik bir yazı okumak için seksen defa Kamus veya Burhan'a müracaat mecburiyetinde bırakmak bir marifet midir?*'[16] E. Prokosch in his *Vorstudien*[17] studied some of the changes which Arabic loans underwent in Ottoman Turkish.

Generally speaking, the pronunciation of loan words changed considerably in the borrowing process. The transcriber has to decide whether to indicate vowel length in loan words as opposed to the short vowels of native Turkish words, depending on whether the speech of educated Istanbulis is recorded. It is of secondary importance whether these vowels are a full length[18] or half length. In Turkicized words such as *dost* the context will help decide whether vowel length is to be indicated or not.

An attempt must be made to separate words which, in the Latin script, are orthographically identical, but distinct in meaning or grammatical function. These should always be marked in order to avoid misunderstandings, such as *mütebâki* and *mütebâkî*.

Some of these phonetic, morphological and semantic changes have entered the language of the educated, many have not. A. Tietze has stressed the significance of the colloquial — I dislike the term 'vulgar' — for our knowledge of Turkish[19].

In our search for the actual pronunciation we are assisted by the *Dictionnaire Turc-Français en caractères latins et turcs*. Its compiler, R. Youssouf, listed the occurrence of the following pairs:

bazar	*pazar*
datlı (also *datlu*)	*tatlı*
adam	*adem*
agac	*agaç*
'anber	*'amber*

In the *Dictionnaire* he listed *matbah* and *moutvak*. In

datlı both pronunciations are justified, although I would, starting out from actual Turkish, prefer *tatlı*. By the way, Youssouf is one of the first to use the colloquial *moutvak* (*mutfak*), whereas in written texts *matbah* is taken for granted.

This brings to mind the anecdote of the use of the *'ayn* as a criterion to detect political opponents. When in 1909 the reactionary revolt of pro-Islamic groups (the 31 March Incident) had been put down and the rebels were collected, they were asked to pronounce a word with *'ayn — şer'an, kat'-i nazar, va'd —* and those who pronounced the *'ayn* correctly — who but a cleric could pronounce the *'ayn?* — were arrested immediately ... The *'ayn* is of course remembered in the inflection of *cami*; a construction ending in *camisi* is still regarded as sub-standard[20].

To continue with R. Youssouf's listings: he shows that among the relatively uneducated there were, of course, regional differences, too; compare some examples in Turkish Latin script:

'correct'	'vulgar'
mübaşir	*mubaşır*
müjde	*müşto*
peşiman	*pişman, püşman*
terceme	*tercüme*
mucebince	*mücibince*
mübarek	*mubarek*

Next to each other we find:

muhtasar	*mühtasar*
muktedir	*müktedir*
mumin	*mümin*
mutale'a	*mutala'a, mütale'a*
mutantan	*mütentan*
muvakkat	*müvakkat*

Uncertainties still persist in the pronunciation of Arabic borrowings. Recently I read in a journal that a pupil asked his teacher whether it should be *bazen* or *bazan*, whereupon another pupil answered '*bazan bazan, bazen de bazen*'.

To sum up: Those for whom the Arabic script is no obstacle will take the spelling of an Ottoman Turkish text to represent a specific pronunciation. For the scholar this will depend on his knowledge. For the Turkish reader it will be much as in his present-day pronunciation (see the remarks by M. Mollova quoted above).

To the general reader interested in the contents of Ottoman texts the Arabic script will be an unnecessary hindrance. He will be grateful for a transcription (and not a transliteration)[21]. 'Even an indifferent transcription', to quote Sir Gerard Clauson again, 'is more useful than a perfect transliteration.'[22]

The guiding principle should be to produce a transcription which is as easy as possible to follow. To this end Turkicized loan words of Arabic or Persian origin should be treated as Turkish words.

Our knowledge of the phonetics of Turkish in its various phases is so imperfect that our reconstruction has to be approximate[23]. The relationship between language and the background and environment of the individual speaker must be taken into account.

Without going into (contemporary) transcription texts, I only wish to remind the reader that many vocalized texts represent popular and colloquial Turkish, which will not necessarily correspond to the speech of well-read and educated circles. I would propose to use the Turkish of these circles, of the first quarter of the twentieth century, as a starting-point, since it served as standard for the simple *kātib*, too[24].

The principle for the transcription of Ottoman Turkish texts should be: as little diacritics as possible and as many as necessary. For Turkish words some diacritic signs will have to be added, for example for, the palatalized /k/ in *k'öy* or Arabic *k'ābil*[25]. As has been said above, until a consensus is reached, every editor has to decide for himself, according to his text material, if and when he will change from /u/ /ı/ to /u/ /u/, how long he considers /ñ/ and /h/ as different sounds from /n/ and /h/, and how he treats the so-called *ç-p-t* rule.

We need word indexes or concordances of various stages of Ottoman. These are still only available for a small number of works in Old Ottoman. The *Tarama Sözlüğü* produced by the Türk Dil Kurumu is still of considerable value. We are also in urgent need of an abbreviated index of the Ottoman spellings in the New Redhouse Dictionary, which R. Avery promised us in 1968[26].

NOTES

[1] Enlarged version of the paper read at the Symposium on Textual Tradition and the Edition of Persian and Turkish Texts, Leiden, 16-18 October, 1986; with thanks to Barbara Flemming for suggestions and the translation from the original German.

[2] See H.E. Boeschoten's paper 'Why transcribe Ottoman Turkish texts?' read at the same symposium and published in this same volume.

[3] Sir Gerard Clauson, 'The Transcription of Turkish Languages', *Turkish and Mongolian Studies*, London, 1962, pp. 55-61; for a description of editions in transcription, beginning with A. Zajączkowski, see G. Hazai, *Kurze Einführung in das Studium der türkischen Sprache*, Budapest, 1978, pp. 26-30.

[4] Sir Gerard Clauson, *An Etymological Dictionary of Pre-Thirteenth Century Turkish*, Oxford, 1974, introduction.

[5] G. Hazai, *Das Osmanisch-Türkische im XVII. Jahrhundert. Untersuchungen an den Transkriptionstexten von Jakab Nagy de Harsány*, The Hague/Paris, 1973; the same author's *Kurze Einführung in das Studium der türkischen Sprache* contains a comprehensive chapter on 'Transkriptionsdenkmaler', pp. 30-35; cf. also M. Adamovic, *Konjugationsgeschichte der türkischen Sprache*, Leiden, 1985.

[6] E. Birnbaum, 'The Transliteration of Ottoman Turkish', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 87 (1967), pp. 134-156; cf. the same author's introduction to *The Book of Advice ... Kabusname*, Harvard University Printing Office, 1981, pp. 12-13.

[7] R. Dankoff in collaboration with J. Kelly, (ed. and transl.), *Maḥmūd al-Kāşgarī. Compendium of the Turkic Dialects (Dīwān Lugāt at-Turk)*, Part I, Harvard.University, 1982, p. 53.

[8] M. Mollova, 'Sur le terme 'Karaman' et les recherches sur les Karamans de J. Eckmann', *Güneydoğu Avrupa Araştırmaları Dergisi* 8-9 (Istanbul, 1980), p. 203.

[9] R. Anhegger, 'Das Temaşa-i Dünya des Evangelinos Misailidis (1871/72) als Quelle zur karamanischen Sprach- und Kulturgeschichte'. To be published in *Ural-Altaische Jahrbücher.* [10] F. İz, Art. 'İnal', in *EI* III (1971).

[11] On this aspect of language reform see K. Steuerwald, *Untersuchungen zur türkischen Sprache der Gegenwart*, 3 vols., Berlin, 1963-1966; B. Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, Oxford, 1961.

[12] Gotthelf Bergsträsser, 'Zur Phonetik des Türkischen nach gebildeter Konstantinopler Aussprache', *ZDMG* 72 (1918), pp. 233-262; Id., review of the *Grammatik der osmanisch-türkischen Sprache* by Dr. Gotthold Weil, Berlin 1917, *ZDMG* 72 (1918), p. 271.

[13] Bergsträsser, 'Zur Phonetik des Türkischen', p. 244.

[14] G.L. Lewis, *Turkish Grammar*, Oxford, 1967, p. 11 f.

[15] Bergsträsser, 'Zur Phonetik', p. 259.

[16] Robert F.M. Anhegger, 'Weiteres zu Kemâl-i Zerd', in *Journal of Turkish Studies* 6 (1982), pp. 15-31; here p. 18.

[17] E. Prokosch, *Vorstudien zum arabischen Wortgut im Osmanisch-Türkischen: Grundsätzliches und Konsequenzen für die Osmanistik*, in *JTS* 7 (1983), p. 340.

[18] See Bergsträsser, 'Zur Phonetik', p. 238.

[19] A. Tietze, 'Die Erfassung des türkischen Wortschatzes und ein türkischer Roman von 1871/72', *Türkische Miszellen. Festschrift Robert Anhegger* (Varia Turcica IX), Istanbul, 1987, pp. 340-360; cf. R. Anhegger, 'Temaşa-i Dünya', Appendix I.

[20] Lewis, *Grammar*, p. 5.

[21] As early as 100 years ago Youssouf pointed out the use of a dictionary in Latin script for the learning of Turkish (p. x ff.). I also refer to what Gönül A. Tekin observed in her review of E. Ambros' *Candid Penstrokes. The lyrics of Me'âlī*, Berlin, 1982, in the *Journal of Turkish Studies* 7 (1984), p. 474 f.

[22] Sir Gerard Clauson, 'The Transcription of Turkish languages', (cf. note 3), p. 56. For a critical review of an editing job compromising between 'the general reader and the serious presentation of an Old Ottoman text' see G.M. Meredith-Owens in *Oriens* 18-19 (1965-66), p. 353 f.

[23] As late as in 1918 Bergsträsser observed in his review of G. Weil's grammar (*ZDMG* 72 (1918), p. 271): 'Über die in der Transkription zum Ausdruck kommende Aussprache will ich mit dem Verfasser [that is: Weil] nicht rechten: die Schwankungen in dieser Richtung sind ja so gross, dass, solange nicht genau präzisiert wird, was für eine Aussprache wiedergegeben werden soll, sich kaum je eine Schreibung als direkt falsch bezeichnen lässt.' See also G. Hazai, *Kurze Einführung in das Studium der türkischen Sprache*, Budapest, 1978, p. 25.

[24] Bergsträsser, 'Zur Phonetik', p. 237. He based himself on 'die gewöhnlichen Umgangsprache der gebildeten in Konstantinopel wohnenden einheimischen Kreise.'

[25] Bergsträsser, 'Zur Phonetik', p. 251, note 5: 'Wörter wie *al* 'nimm' und *al* 'rot, Familie, List' unterscheiden sich durch die Verschiedenheit des *l* so stark voneinander, dass bei Verhandlungen über die Schaffung eines offiziellen Transkriptionsalphabets für türkische Namen die Einführung zweier *l*-Zeichen von türkischer Seite verlangt wurde.'

[26] R. Avery, Preface to the *New Redhouse Turkish-English Dictionary*, Istanbul, 1968.