

## WHAT WAS A RELEVANT TRANSLATION IN THE 18TH CENTURY? \*

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### **Abstract**

The paper applies RT to analyse an 18<sup>th</sup> century translation of a Latin text by the preeminent Romanian scholar Demetrius Cantemir. The translation diverges significantly from the original and was met with harsh criticism. Using the conceptual toolkit of RT, I argue that the differences between the original and its English translation were motivated by the translator's desire to yield the same cognitive effect without putting the audience to unnecessary processing effort. Both effects and effort need to be evaluated by taking into account the respective cognitive environments of the source-text and the target-text audiences. The intertextual dimension of the text under scrutiny adds to the difficulty of communicating the same message in different languages and cultures.

**Keywords:** 18<sup>th</sup> century, cognitive effects, intertextuality, processing effort, relevance theory, translation

### **1. Introduction**

The present paper offers an analysis of an 18th-century Latin text and its English translation from a relevance-theoretic perspective. The Latin (source-)text was written by Demetrius Cantemir, who is considered to be the most outstanding writer in old Romanian culture. The English translation of his most famous work turned this book into the main treatise on Oriental matters used until the mid-19th century (Hammer, 1824: 32). However, the great differences between the Latin original and the English version have recently attracted strong criticism: the English translation was condescended to be “just a sort of remake” and the translator was deemed responsible for some of the harsh criticism levelled against Cantemir's work in later reviews (Cândea 2010: 6, my translation).

I believe that this unusual corpus made up of the Latin original and its English translation can be analysed in relevance-theoretic terms, with a two-fold profitable outcome. Firstly, this analysis will permit shifting from an emotional attitude to a deeper understanding of the reasons and even the benefits of an “unfaithful” translation. Secondly, it could shed new light on some issues of

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early modern translation practice, a period that has been rarely taken into account in translation studies and hardly ever in cultural history research (Burke and Hsia 2007: 2–3). The main goal of the paper is to show how relevance guides translation techniques.

In the following section, I define the main concepts used in my analysis. In the third section I give some historical information about the two texts, which is necessary for assessing the two different contexts. The fourth section contains the analysis proper, and in the fifth section the conclusions are summarized.

## **2. Relevance in translation**

According to Gutt (1990; 2014), the relevance-theoretic framework of communication and cognition, developed by Sperber and Wilson (1986; 1995), can account for the various phenomena of translation better than any theory designed specifically for this purpose.

Translation can be distinguished from other forms of communication by two features: firstly, a translated text stands for an original one; secondly, the language of the translated text has to be different from the original. These two features are comprised in the general definition of translation as “interpretive use across language boundaries” (Gutt, 2014: 105). Interpretive use of language is defined in terms of resemblance: an utterance is used interpretively when it represents another utterance “in virtue of resemblance between the two propositional forms” (Sperber and Wilson, 1995: 229). Complete resemblance between two propositional forms means that both propositional forms should entail the same explicatures and the same implicatures. Both are derived from processing the utterance in a context. Most likely, a translation is processed not in its original context, but in a different one, therefore the explicatures and implicatures may be different such secondary communication situations (Gutt, 2014: 76–79). Resemblance is, then, a matter of degree, and it will rarely happen to be complete.

Since translation is a form of communication, it follows that it is constrained by the (second) Principle of Relevance: “Every act of ostensive communication communicates a presumption of its own optimal relevance” (Sperber and Wilson, 1995: 158). Therefore, in order to be successful, a translated utterance should also respect the conditions of relevance: large cognitive (or contextual) effects with small processing effort (Sperber and Wilson, 1995: 125). Resemblance has to be achieved taking into account both factors that increase or decrease relevance:

[T]he principle of relevance heavily constrains the translation with regard to both what it is intended to convey and how it’s expressed. Thus if we ask in what respects the intended interpretation of the translation should resemble the original, the answer is: in respects that make it adequately relevant to the audience – that is, that offer adequate contextual effects;

if we ask how the translation should be expressed, the answer is: it should be expressed in such a manner that it yields the intended interpretation without putting the audience to unnecessary processing effort. (Gutt, 2014: 107)

Gutt formulates a similar principle of translation, which he calls the presumption of *optimal resemblance*:

[W]hat the reporter intends to convey is (a) presumed to interpretively resemble the original – otherwise this would not be an instance of interpretive use – and (b) the resemblance it shows should be consistent with the presumption of optimal relevance, that is, is presumed to have adequate contextual effects without gratuitous processing effort. (Gutt, 2014: 106)

Therefore, in evaluating the degree of resemblance of a translation (isn't it what we used to call *faithfulness*?), two main factors should be taken into account: cognitive effects and processing effort. Since they are context-dependent, I present in section 3 a few details about the contexts in which both texts were written.

### 3. An unusual corpus

The source-texts I have chosen have a complicated story. Demetrius Cantemir (1673–1723), former prince of Moldavia, is considered the most outstanding writer in old Romanian culture (up to 1780). He was the first Romanian to become a member of a European academy and he authored the first original novel and the first academic treatise written in Romanian. Cantemir was born in Moldavia, but spent most of his youth at Istanbul as a hostage. In 1711, when he was appointed prince of Moldavia, he betrayed the Ottoman masters and joined the Russian Empire in a war against the Turks. After Peter the Great lost the war, Cantemir lived in exile for the rest of his life, and held several offices in the Russian Empire, writing most of his works in Moscow and in St. Petersburg.

His most famous writing, a treatise on Ottoman history, was completed in 1716 in Moscow. But he had begun the work a few years before, as shown in the correspondence between several members of the Academy of Berlin in 1714, where Cantemir's admission in the German scientific society is proposed (Eşanu and Eşanu, 2008: 259). After Demetrius Cantemir's death in 1723, his son, Antioh Cantemir, brought the Latin manuscript to England, and had it translated by Nicholas Tindal. The translation was published in 1734–1735. Afterwards, the Latin manuscript was bought and sold several times, and for some 300 years there was no trace of the original text. The book continued to be translated from English into French (1743), German (1745) and other vernaculars, including Romanian (1876–1878). It was read and quoted until the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, and made Cantemir famous throughout Europe, as acknowledged even by his critics (Hammer, 1824: 32).

It was only in 1984 that Virgil Căndeă, a member of the Romanian Academy, found the Latin manuscript at Houghton Library, at Harvard. The first edition of the Latin text appeared in 2001, and the second edition in 2015. The discovery of this manuscript came with enormous surprise: the Latin text was in many respects so different from the English version (and therefore all the other vernacular ones), that Căndeă concluded, not without indignation, that the work “has never been ... translated” (Căndeă, 2010: 6, my translation). At first glance, it was apparent that many pieces of the source text were missing (Căndeă, 1999: LVI). Căndeă began a thorough comparison of the Latin original and the English version, but accomplished only approximately 5% of the work.

Why could it be affirmed that the English version is not a translation of the Latin original? Căndeă’s arguments represent a series of ‘charges’ against the translator. First of all, Tindal is accused of redesigning the entire work. The Latin original comprised three books, in which Turkish history is narrated, and three books of so-called annotations. The three books of Turkish history are only a compilation of sources presented in an objective tone. The annotations are conceived as endnotes that explain, complete and sometimes undermine the information of the main books. They rely mainly on Cantemir’s personal experience at the Ottoman Court and are often written in the first person. Tindal grouped the material into four books instead of three and consequently changed the title of the book, from *Incrementorum et decrementorum Aulae Othmannicae sive Aliothmannicae historiae a prima gentis origine ad nostra usque tempora deductae libri tres* (i.e. ‘The history of the increase and the decrease of the Othman or Alothman Court, carried out from the very beginnings of the nation until our times, in three books’, henceforth abbreviated IDAO) into *The History of the Growth and Decay of the Othman Empire* (henceforth HGD). He placed the annotations inside the book, turning the endnotes into footnotes and thus blurring the difference between the objective account of history and personal experience matters.

Secondly, Tindal omitted several fragments or merely summarized them; moreover, he left aside the tables and drawings made by the author. Finally, the translator did not insert the words and fragments written with Arabic characters (which was at the time the current alphabet used by the Turks) and also the Greek ones. Those are the main points of the ironically called “liberties” that have been the subject of criticism (Căndeă, 2010: 6).

To these, other obvious changes can be added. Tindal chose to use different transliteration rules in spelling words from Oriental languages. At a lower level, it can be noticed that redundancies and many rhetorical features (such as litotes or directly addressing the reader) were omitted.

All these “unjustified changes” (Căndeă, 2010: 6) will be discussed in the following section.

#### 4. From Latin to English: a different context

In this section, I take the term ‘context’ as “a psychological construct, a subset of the hearer’s assumptions about the world” (Sperber and Wilson, 1995: 15), namely those that are accessed at the time of processing a stimulus. Context features such as age, place, time or social status do not matter unless they are mentally represented and integrated into assumptions used in comprehension. The context so understood is a part of a person’s cognitive environment, *i.e.* “the set of all the facts that he can perceive or infer: all the facts that are manifest to him” (Sperber and Wilson, 1995: 39).

Although we do not have access to the context or the cognitive environment of people who lived 300 years ago, we can partly reconstruct these sets of assumptions from direct testimonies. In this section, only one aspect of the cognitive environment is relevant, namely previous knowledge on Turkish history and culture. In other words, the question has to be asked about the author’s, the translator’s and their intended audiences’ experience in dealing with Oriental matters.

The author, Demetrius Cantemir, had spent his youth in Istanbul, from the age of 15 until 27, with short interruptions (Panaitescu, 1958: 37–46). Although it is not clear whether he studied in a formal institution or not, all sources point to his familiarity with the Greek and Turkish academic environment of the time (see his own confession in IDAO Ann. II, I, k, 85–88<sup>1</sup>) and also with other learned men, such as ambassadors of France or the Netherlands at Istanbul (Panaitescu, 1958: 41). He had access to the histories of the Turkish nation and he bought Turkish books for his private library (Panaitescu, 1958: 42). About his cognitive environment it can be stated that his experience with Oriental history and culture was wide, both from personal encounters and from literary sources, although many details remain unclear.

It is not possible to make any definitive claims about the intended audience of Cantemir’s book, since he never indicated it explicitly in his treatise. However, there are documents that attest a vivid interest from the members of the Academy of Berlin regarding the fate of this book after Cantemir’s death (Eşanu and Eşanu, 2008: 263). All documentary evidence shows that the German society of sciences played a great part in the conception of this treatise.

Even if the book’s audience was not confined to his peers in Berlin, there are more arguments that indicate that an academic public was intended. Cantemir was a polyglot – besides Romanian, he was fluent in Greek, Turkish, Russian and Latin, and had some knowledge of French and Persian, which he could at least read, since he quotes authors and fragments in these languages. Still, he chose Latin for his treatise. This choice tells us much about the intended audience (Waquet, 2001: 90) and their cognitive environment: Cantemir’s target

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<sup>1</sup> Reference is made to the book, the chapter, the annotation (if necessary), and the page of the manuscript.

readers belong not to a specific language group, but to an intellectual community of the Western world, where Latin was the language of scholarship (Waquet, 2001: 87; Burke, 2004: 53), though its decline had begun since the mid-17th century (Burke, 2004: 58).

Any translation into a vernacular is determined by the choice of a different audience, not necessarily more numerous. It is obviously a non-academic environment that is envisaged, since the academics would have read it in Latin. Moreover, their cognitive environment can be (partly) inferred from the translation itself. In this, we can rely on the translator's ability to metarepresent the context of his readers (Gutt, 2004: 9). It is quite likely that the audience had little experience with Oriental matters and that their knowledge was less specialized.

My claim is that most of the transformations undergone by the Latin original are aimed at adjusting the text to the cognitive environment of the intended audience, constrained by the principle of relevance and the presumption of optimal resemblance. I will distinguish two main goals of these transformations: increasing cognitive effects and decreasing processing effort, although in fact the two work together.

#### **4.1. Increasing cognitive effects**

In assessing the strategies aimed at increasing cognitive effects, I consider these strategies a remedy to a possible failure in communication. These possible failures have been grouped by Sperber and Wilson under three typical situations:

- a. the assumption may bring new information, but this information does not connect up with any information present in the context;
- b. the assumption is already present in the context and its strength is unaffected by the newly presented information;
- c. the assumption is inconsistent with the context and is too weak to upset it (Sperber and Wilson, 1995: 121).

In my opinion, most of the changes undergone by the Latin original fall under situation a. (see section 4.1.1). I have not found yet any instances of situation b. and only a few examples of c. (section 4.1.2.).

##### **4.1.1. Providing connections with the information present in the context**

Relevance theory states that any utterance, in order to achieve relevance, should yield cognitive effects. The assumptions conveyed by that utterance must bring some new information, or at least increase or decrease the strength of assumptions already in the context. But the new information should connect to some assumptions already represented in the cognitive environment, otherwise no cognitive effect will occur.

I think that most of the transformations introduced by Tindal are aimed at increasing relevance by finding connections to the context. For instance, the fact that he put together the main body of the text and the annotations was said to

have resulted in blurring the differences between “objective” history and personal experience. But how relevant is this distinction? For the academic environment, it is vital: the source of an assumption may validate or invalidate it. The assumption “the source of information is important” was strong in the cognitive environment of a scholar even in the 18th century (Cantemir himself stated it in one of his Romanian works), whereas for a non-academic it would either be weak or non-existent. This idea can find support in the fluid concept of authorship in early modernity (Burke, 2007: 37). Therefore, this dramatic transformation of the book is relevance-oriented.

Another point of Căndeia’s criticism is the omission of words and paragraphs in Greek and in Turkish (spelled with Arabic and with Latin characters) used by Cantemir whenever he quoted from a Turkish author or introduced a Turkish word. In such cases he first rendered the word or the fragment in its original alphabet, then transliterated it (in his own way) and finally translated it into Latin. Tindal assumed that his readers had no knowledge of Arabic alphabets or of the Turkish language, so he omitted all the fragments in *ductus Arabicus* and applied different principles in transliteration (see below). Example (1) shows how the three-fold manner of expressing the same meaning is reduced, in an effort to select only the relevant information, to the one that would be recognizable and yield effects to the reader. (1a) includes a quote from a Turkish historian. The fragment is presented in Turkish first, spelled with Arabic characters, then it is transliterated and in the end it is translated into Latin. In (1b), the translator chooses to give up the Turkish fragment and render the meaning in English translation:

- (1) a. Saadi (...) Principes, qui ex Chinensibus Provinciis ad Temurleng accesserant, illique contra Othmanum Imperium arma iunxerant ex Tiurkistan venisse expressis verbis affirmat: خانان ترکستاندن یکریمی نامدار شهریاری اول ستمکاره یارویاور اولوب امداد موقفنده قیام و عسکرگاه تیمورده ضرب خیام ایتدیلر, “Chanani Türkistan den igirmi namdar shehriarol sitemkiare jaru javer olup imdad mevkufinde kyiam, ve askiergiahi Tymurde zarb chyiam ittiler”, id est “Ex Turkistani Regibus, viginti Principes fama celebres illi tyranno in praestando adiutorio facti sunt socii et copias suas Tymuro adiunxerant, et tentoria sua in castris illius fixerant. (IDAO P. 24)
- b. Saadi (...) affirms, that the Princes who from the Chinese Provinces join’d Tamerlan, came from Turkistan. His words are: “Of the Kings of Turkistan, twenty famous Princes join’d their forces with Timur, and pitch’d their Tents in his camp”. (HGD VIII)

Even so, the translator omits part of the original text: “illi tyranno in praestando adiutorio facti sunt socii”, literally “allied to help that tyrant”. This mismatch is part of Tindal’s practice to avoid redundancies, possibly in order to decrease processing effort (see 4.2, and 4.4).

However, when Cantemir introduces and explains Turkish words, Tindal cannot just omit the transliteration. This is done most frequently in the annotations, which often look like a dictionary:

- (2) a. Chutbè, خطبه] Acclamatio est, sive, in precibus, votum pro salute, et divino dominatu Imperatoris, et in hostes, praecipue Christianos, victoria. (IDAO, Ann. I, II, I, 11)
- b. Chutbe ] By this is meant an acclamation or petition in the publick prayers for the health and sacred Majesty of the Emperor, and for victory over his enemies, particularly the Christians. (HGD 11)

Words and phrases from Greek were quoted by Cantemir in their original alphabet and sometimes left without translation, for Greek was also a language of scholarship, especially in the Orthodox world. In the English text, Greek words and fragments are translated (only rarely transliterated) or explained, for the same reason:

- (3) a. Haec legenti ιστοριοφιλω dubium quoddam suboriri vix dubito. (IDAO P 24)
- b. Very probably to a Reader, vers'd in History, a doubt will here arise. (HGD VIII)

The Greek *ιστοριοφιλος* (*historiofilos*, lit. “a history lover”, “a person fond of history”) is glossed by “versed in History”, a translation which shifts focus from “love” to “skill”, from cause to consequence.

The philological principles underlying the adaptation of non-Latin words and names in the text are guided, in my opinion, by the necessary condition of the new assumption/information connecting with the information in the context, thus avoiding a possible communication failure, as described by Sperber and Wilson (see above 4).

Since at Cantemir’s time Turkish writers used Arabic characters, transliteration in the Latin alphabet was obligatory; however, transliteration rules were not standardized. Moreover, Romanian was spelled with the Cyrillic alphabet, and transliteration was also problematic. Some particular phonemes of the two vernaculars lacked a corresponding letter in the Latin alphabet: /tʃ/, /ʃ/, /tʃʃ/, /dʒ/, also the vowels /ə/, /i/, /y/, /ø/. I shall refer only to the consonants, because the translator’s options regarding them are expressed in a paratext called *The Translator to the Reader* (HGD III).

Cantemir chose to approximate the consonants mentioned above according, most of the times, to the Polish orthography. For instance, /ʃ/, /tʃʃ/ and /dʒ/ are rendered by *sz*, *cz* and *dz*: *Szah*, (‘leader’, ‘prince’), *czelebi* (‘noble’), *Dzami* (‘temple’). The group *cz* is, however, ambiguous, for, in some cases, it can stand for /tʃ/, following the Hungarian spelling of the 17<sup>th</sup> century: *czar*, *Creczulescul* (a Romanian name). But the same sound could be rendered by a mere *c*, also with the Polish model in mind: *Cepalusz*, by *z*, with the Italian model: *Ancuza*, or by *ti*, like in mediaeval Latin: *Galatium*.

Tindal decided to follow other transliteration principles. Since the norms employed by Cantemir “would breed confusion to an English Reader” (HGD III), he chose to convey /ʃ/ by *sh* (*Shah*), /dʒ/ by *j* (*Jami*), and /tʃʃ/ by *ch*



(*Chelebi*\*, where the asterisk is supposed to distinguish these words from the ones pronounced with /k/, as in *Orchan*). The translator is aware that his approximations might not be accurate: “If this be not exact, ‘tis however the nearest found we have to it” (HGD III). Therefore, one can say that he gives up accuracy for consistency with the cognitive environment of his intended English readers: they might have not known how to interpret *sz*, *dz*, *cz*, but would have surely known how to read *sh*, *j*, and most likely also *ch*. Out of Cantemir’s choices, Tindal preserves all the graphic equivalents of /ts/: *Czar*, *Creczulescul*; *Capalush* (with a surprising vowel change, most likely unintentional), *Ancuza*, *Galatium*. This is not surprising, since most of the words which contain this sound were Romanian names. For Turkish words, transliteration had been employed before by other English writers, even if it wasn’t standardized, so Tindal was relying on a certain tradition. But for Romanian, he had no such tradition.

The problem most frequently encountered by the translator, namely the lack of connection between the new assumption/information and the cognitive environment, could be solved in two different ways. As examples (1) and (2) show, it was more economical to omit irrelevant details than to supply additional information, but the latter solution was also practiced by Tindal. What was implicit in the Latin text could sometimes become explicit in the English one. Nicolas Tindal usually marked his additions by parentheses []. For instance, in the first notes, Cantemir argued in favour of a certain way of spelling the word *Othman*, by stating a correspondence between an Arabic sound and a Greek one (4a). Tindal added the English equivalent, in order to make better connections with the readers’ background information (4b). In (4c) I offer a literal translation of (4a):

- (4) a. Arabice enim *th* illud per  $\text{ث}$ , quod Turcis vocatur *Tshei Arebi*, id est ‘s Arabum’ notatur, qui character cum accurate  $\text{τϑ}$   $\theta$  Graecorum respondeat, literae, ut ita dicam, interdentali, lingua dentibus intercepta tenuet et obtusum *s* protrudente, nullum est dubium, quin, uti Graece  $\text{ὸθμᾶν}$ , ita Latine ‘Othman’ scribi debeat. (IDAO Ann. I, I, 1–2)
- b. For the Arabic *Tse* or (*th*), called by the Turks, *Tshei Arebi*, exactly answering to the Greek *Theta* [or the Saxon  $\text{Ð}$ ] doubtless to be pronounced in Latin [or English] as in Greek *Othman*. (HGD 1–2)
- c. For the Arabic *th* is noted by  $\text{ث}$ , which is called by the Turks *Tshei Arebi*, that is ‘Arabic s’, a character which corresponds exactly to the  $\theta$  of the Greeks, an interdental letter, to call it so, with the tongue slightly caught between the teeth, uttering a weak and blunt *s*.

It is also evident how various strategies intertwine. The English fragment does not only add information necessary for establishing a connection with the context, but also omits some information comprised in the fragment “literae, ut dicam, interdentali, lingua dentibus intercepta tenuet et obtusum *s* protrudente” (“an interdental letter, if I can call it so, with the tongue slightly caught between

the teeth, uttering a weak and blunt s”). The book was not intended for a highly specialized academic audience, who would have been able to read it in Latin anyway, but for people that allegedly lacked knowledge on sound classification. Therefore, the description of the consonant  $\theta$  as an “interdental” sound would have yielded no cognitive effects and remained irrelevant to them.

#### 4.1.2. Increasing consistency with the context

Another danger that Tindal avoided when introducing alterations to the text is inconsistency of the translated version with the (presumed) cognitive environment of the audience. The original fragment (5a), translated literally in (5c), is truncated by Tindal in (5b). A comparison between (5b) and (5c) shows that the translator chose to modify two important points. Constantinople is described in the Latin original as “the second eye, the most significant one” of Christendom, and the fall of Constantinople is considered a deadly danger for the whole Christianity:

- (5)
- a. Nihil post translatum ad Graecos Imperium accidit memoratu dignius, quam Constantinopoleos expugnatio, qua totus Christianismus altero, eoque praecipuo, oculo orbatus et in ultimum exitii periculum fuit adductus. (IDAO P 2)
  - b. Nothing certainly, since the removal of the Imperial Seat to Constantinople, has happen’d more memorable than the taking of that City by the Turks, whereby all Christendom was in danger. (HGD IV)
  - c. Nothing has happened more worthy of remembering, after the removal of the leadership to the Greeks, than the taking of the Constantinople, by which the whole Christendom was blinded by its second eye, the most significant one, and was pushed in deadly danger.

Utterance (5a) entails several assumptions, such as:

- (6)
- a. Constantinople is the most important city of Christendom.
  - b. If Constantinople is conquered (by the Turks), the neighbouring countries are in deadly danger.
  - c. If Constantinople is conquered, the whole Christendom is in deadly danger.

These implications, however, may be inconsistent with other assumptions in the cognitive environment of the presumed audience:

- (6)
- d. The most important city of Christendom is X (perhaps Rome, certainly not Constantinople).
  - e. If Constantinople is conquered, only the neighbouring countries are in deadly danger.
  - f. England is far from Constantinople.
  - g. England is not a neighbour of Constantinople.
  - h. England is not in danger.
  - i. England is Christian.
  - j. It is not the whole Christendom that is in deadly danger.

The clash between the two sets of assumptions is solved by the translator in a relevance-aimed omission of those elements that entail assumptions inconsistent with the context which are too weak to upset the context.

#### 4.2. Decreasing processing effort

The second criterion in assessing relevance is processing effort. Tindal's effort to decrease processing effort is evident at all levels. However, this strategy is hardly ever employed alone; it usually accompanies the "connection to the context" strategy, as described in 4.1.

One striking change made by the translator involves the method of calculating the dates of historical events. Since his treatise relies heavily on Turkish histories, Cantemir noted the date of major events according to the Muslim chronology. In the preface to his treatise, he described a method of calculating the correspondence between the Christian and the Muslim chronology by means of tables. Those tables are all (but one) omitted by Tindal. For instance, the fragment in (7a) is followed by the table in Figure 1. In this table, Cantemir notes the months of the Muslim year 699 and their correspondents in the Christian calendar. Using this table, he calculates the date when Othman's reign began. The results of his computation are to be found in the preceding paragraph. The table does not add new information, it only strengthens the assumption already presented by providing further evidence. For an academic, the process of arriving at a certain conclusion is as important as the conclusion itself. For a non-academic reader though, the source of an assumption is not that important, therefore processing the data from the table would require much effort with little cognitive gain.

- (7)
- a. *Initium anni Hegirae 699., qui primum Othmani Imperii annum proxime praecessit, secundum Tabulam Astronomicam incidit in Annum Christi 1299., Septembris 28., feriam 2. Sed, pro faciliori lectoris captu, integram subiiciamus Tabulam. (IDAO P. 10)*
  - b. [T]he beginning of the year of the Hejira 699, which preceeded Othman's reign, falls on Monday the 28<sup>th</sup> of September, 1299, which therefore is the first day of Muharrem. (HGD VI)
  - c. The beginning of the 699<sup>th</sup> year of the Hegira, which is the year that preceeded Othman's reign, falls, according to the astronomical table, in 1299 AD, September 28<sup>th</sup>. But for an easier understanding from the reader, we add the entire table below.

*Tabula anni Hegiræ 699, et Christi 1299.*  
*Menses Arabi.* *Menses solares*

30	Muharré 1. incidit in	Septembris 28
29	Feffer	Octobris 28
30	Rebiul ewel	Novembris 26
29	Rebiul ahyr	Decembris 26
30	Ze'maziul ewel	Januarij 24 An. 1300
29	Ze'maziul ahyr	Februarij 23
30	Redzeb	Martij 23
29	Saban	Aprilis 22
30	Ramazan	Maij 21
29	Rewwal	Junij 20
30	Zulcaade	Julij 19
29	Zyshidre	Augusti 18

**Figure 1.** Table of the correspondence between Muslim and Christian chronology

A constant change throughout the entire book can be assigned to this strategy of decreasing processing effort. Cantemir used the margins of the manuscript for some privileged information, such as noting the years of important events. Those dates on the margins are useful for retrieving information, just like titles. In the Latin original, these dates follow the Muslim chronology (year of the Hegira). Tindal took the time to calculate the corresponding year of the Christian Era, thus sparing the reader unnecessary processing effort. For instance, when Cantemir talks about Sultan Murad the First's death, the date is also emphasized as a margin annotation: "H. 824." (IDAO I, VII, 62). The English text contains both the Muslim and the Christian dates: "H. 824./Ch. 1421" (HGD 75).

This strategy of reducing processing effort can be traced at all text levels. Cantemir makes frequent use of litotes, but many of them fail to get translated, with some loss in effects. For example, in (8) and (9), 'not rarely' gets translated as 'frequently', and 'not few', by 'great numbers':

- (8) a. non raro (IDAO Ann. I 3)  
 b. frequently (HGD 3)
- (9) a. Multi interempti, haud pauciores capti. (IDAO I 20)  
 b. Many were slain, great numbers taken. (HGD 18)

Decreasing processing effort is also intended when summarizing, although this may negatively affect accuracy. In (10), the Latin text implicates that the precise time of a certain king's reign can be calculated; the English text gives no clue about how fine-grained is the information that may be retrieved:

- (10) a. Eadem ratione inveniendi sunt anni (et, si qui fuerint, menses et dies) Domini Erdogrylis. (IDAO P 13)
- b. So likewise may be found the time of Erdogrul's reign. (HGD VI)
- c. In the same way one can find out about the years (and, if any, the months and the days) of Erdogryl's reign.

In conclusion, processing effort is diminished usually with a certain loss – either in accuracy or in some other types of effects. It is not a major loss, however: the fundamental cognitive effects are still conveyed. The translator is responsible for finding the good balance between cognitive effects and processing effort, according to the cognitive environment of his audience.

### 4.3. Translation or remake?

In the previous section, I rejected Căndeia's criticism by considering each point in his argumentation. In the current section, I address the overall problem of translation vs. remake.

The definition of translation as “interpretive use across language boundaries” (Gutt, 2014: 105) covers a wide array of textual practices, leaving aside others. For example, what may be labelled as ‘covert translation’ (House, 2001: 250) falls out of the definition provided by relevance theory: covert translation is a case of descriptive use, since the target text fulfills some communicative goals regardless of the original text. The distinction between translation and non-translation lies mostly in “the way the target text is intended to achieve relevance” (Gutt, 2014: 210). It can be considered translation only if the target text achieves relevance by echoing the original. Therefore, the first condition of a translation is of being overt: the reference to an original is integrated in the translator's informative intention, explicitly or implicitly, and the informative intention is not fulfilled unless recognized as such by the audience (Gutt, 2014: 215).

Tindal did state, on the front page, the relation between his text and Cantemir's Latin original: “translated into English from the author's own manuscript by N. Tindal” (HGD front page). He states, from the beginning, that his intention is to report, in English, what Cantemir had communicated in Latin: therefore, in Tindal's own account, his text is an instance of interlingual interpretive use. Why should it not be considered a translation?

The two texts under scrutiny are by no means singular, and the 20<sup>th</sup> century criticism often fails to take into account historical facts, as well as the cognitive principles that underlie interpretation of those historical facts. Early modernity witnessed an important change in both religious and secular translations. Some French translators chose to make their texts natural and pleasant, and even better than the originals, by censoring them or even correcting factual errors of the originals. Such translations are known as *Les Belles Infidèles* (Salama-Carr, 2008: 406–407). British translators took over the French model and began using

those “liberal translative strategies” after the Restoration (Ellis and Oakely-Brown, 2008: 351).

In the relevance-theoretic terms, Căndea’s criticism is to be accounted for as a mismatch between intentions and expectations. Căndea was probably expecting a direct translation, *i.e.* a translation that would preserve all the communicative clues of the original, so that it purports to yield the same interpretation as the original text when processed in the original context (Gutt, 2014: 136). Communicative clues, the means of guiding the audience towards the intended interpretation, should be preserved in a direct translation. Among them, an important part is played by stylistic clues (Gutt, 2014: 134) and, therefore, resemblance in linguistic form is higher. However, Tindal’s translation should probably be seen as a case of indirect translation, *i.e.* one that preserved only a part of the communicative clues, presuming only “adequate resemblance in relevant respects” (Gutt, 1990: 156). Preserving all the communicative clues, even the ones relying on syntactic or phonetic devices, may result in a text that requires more processing effort than the original, so a selection of communicative clues is necessary in order to produce an accessible text. Therefore, an indirect translation resembles the original less with respect to the linguistic form. Criticism such as the one formulated by Căndea arise from the mismatch between the translator’s intention (of producing an indirect translation) and the audience’s expectation (of reading a direct translation).

Debates regarding the status of a translation attributed to a certain text have been numerous and inconclusive. Gutt points towards the sterility of such discussions:

[T]he question of whether a text is a translation or not seems the wrong kind of question to ask; it is not texts as such, as structured compositions in a particular language, that are translations or otherwise, it is the use of such texts with a particular intention that constitutes translation (Gutt 2014: 211).

In relevance theory, translation is seen as an act of communication. The translated text is just the stimulus, the token of communication. The stimulus itself has no relevance unless uttered in a context: the same stimulus may be used in different ways, in different contexts, descriptively or interpretively. Therefore, the question regarding the status of a certain text, as translation or remake, cannot be answered with absolute precision.

#### **4.4. A cross-cultural layer of relevance?**

In the present analysis, I attempted to show how the quest for relevance guides translation techniques. I appealed to some components of the cognitive environment of the intended audience, presuming that these features urged the translator to try to increase cognitive effects and decrease processing effort. However, the cognitive environment of the intended audience is different in any

situation of secondary communication (Gutt, 2014: 76-77), not only in communication across languages. Moreover, grammatical categories and lexical meanings do not match in two languages, so complete resemblance between source text and target text, achieved by reproducing the linguistic properties of the source text, is rare – and, when achieved, might actually turn the target text into an interlingual quotation (Gutt, 2014: 170). But the phenomena illustrated above do not represent the case of a linguistic mismatch. They illustrate conscious transformations of a text in search for an optimal balance between cognitive effects and processing effort. The balance was influenced by a secondary communication context, not necessarily by the language of expression. The same changes could, just as well, be performed by an editor who wishes to adjust some work to a new target-audience in the same language. However, the question still remains to what extent those changes are language-determined, or in more general terms, to what extent the effects/effort balance and the means of achieving it depend on the language of expression. This is the question that I try to answer in the present section.

My claim is that the balance between cognitive effects and processing effort depends on the language of expression insofar as language is intertextual, that is, it evokes its previous uses. Sperber and Wilson indirectly accommodate the intertextual dimension of language when they describe encyclopaedic entries (*i.e.* the information about a concept's extension and/or denotation) as open-ended, varying across speakers and time (Sperber and Wilson, 1995: 88). Experience adds new information to the encyclopaedic entry 'chunk' of assumptions associated with a lexical entry, be it a word or a phrase, and creates expectations. The encyclopaedic entry is never complete, new information is added all the time (Sperber and Wilson, 1995: 88). It may be viewed as an intersection of contexts that contribute to the enrichment of the meaning. This is why I consider that language has an intertextual dimension.

Intertextuality has rarely been studied in the realm of linguistics, and was applied mostly in the analysis of literary works (for instance, Koutrianu, 2009; Almazàn-García 2001). I believe that the intertextual dimension of language goes far beyond literary use, and, following Culler (2001: 112), I take intertextuality as a general property of a linguistic item, be it a word or a phrase or an utterance, to evoke and acquire meaning from previous language use (of that particular item and of other related ones). I do not wish to explore the limits of intertextuality (for longer debates, see Culler, 2001: 110–131; Koutrianu, 2009: 145–149). I shall only maintain that previous use of a lexical item contributes to its encyclopaedic entry and creates expectations about its use.

This intertextual dimension of language creates the premises for some culturally-determined communication patterns. These patterns were discussed in the relevance-theoretic terms by Martínez (1998), who considers inference a universal process, instantiated, however, in different ways, according to different cultural models:

Besides this intimate character of comprehension, there are also social patterns of inference, practically shared by all members of the same community, where expectations on certain messages and utterances are similarly grounded. We can then agree that the contextual effects of an utterance or sentence produced in a given language will vary profoundly if it is listened to or read by listeners or readers whose native language is different and with different expectations. In consequence, implicatures, ostension, linguistic and pragmatic features, the strengthening or weakening of the hearer's inferential processing of the original message will have to comply (...) with his linguistic and communicative expectations. (Martínez, 1998: 173–174)

The expectations are language dependent because they rely on previous discursive practice. Thus, the means of achieving relevance depend on the linguistic material insofar as it is the vehicle of a culturally-constrained speech habit. Martínez considers that the balance between cognitive effects and processing effort varies across languages (and cultures):

If we believe that different degrees of relevance are necessary for communicating the same message in different languages, then we might as well consider the idea of a contrastive or cross-cultural layer in the principle of relevance. (Martínez, 1998: 177)

Considering the intertextual dimension of Latin, it is not difficult to understand why a Latin text required higher processing effort for a message that could have been expressed more straightforwardly. Humanistic Latin followed the model of Cicero, with complex and studied sentences (Burke, 2004: 57). A reader of Latin was expecting a higher degree of processing effort in order to achieve relevance, as a result of his previous experience in dealing with Latin literature. For instance, symmetry was one important goal of a Latin writer and duplication by means of coordinating synonyms is frequent in Latin prose, for instance, in Cicero's orations (von Albrecht, 2003: 100–101). Cantemir, who began one of his works with a praise of Cicero, follows this model, creating binary synonymic structures. In (11a), he coordinates two synonyms, *molimina* and *consilia* (both mean 'plans'). The translator considers that one word is enough to render the meaning and substitutes the two words by *designs*:

- (11) a. Othmani vigilans Fortuna per exploratores ipsorum molimina atque consilia patefacit. (IDAO I, II 13)  
 b. Othman's watchful fortune discovers to him by scouts their designs. (HGD 16)

In the relevance-theoretic terms, synonymic doubling would put the reader to gratuitous effort. But this was part of the tradition of writing in Latin. It may be supposed that a simpler expression would have been dismissed as too simplistic, and, paradoxically, would have failed to achieve relevance.

Similar conclusions are reached by Sellevold (2012), in her analysis of Montaigne's *Essais* and their translation into English. Montaigne's attempts to imitate the 'classical Latin high style' contribute to the meaning of the text,



generating some effects that are not strongly implicated, but necessary for an understanding of the text (Sellevold, 2012: 310). Also, Montaigne's personal style, as a departure from the humanistic writing, is meaningful (Sellevold, 2012: 311). I take Sellevold's paper as an argument supporting my claim that style has an intertextual dimension, which is an important factor in achieving relevance.

## 5. Conclusions

My starting point was the claim that relevance theory offers an adequate way of explaining translation methods that are no longer in use, as can be seen in Căndeia's criticism of Tindal's translation. My analysis reveals how the translator subjected the original text to radical changes in the pursuit of relevance, advancing the hypothesis that relevance was achieved differently in the two languages. Criticism, such as the one formulated by Căndeia, illustrates the mismatch between expectations of the audience and intentions of the translator. Better understanding of human cognition and communication can prevent such mismatches.

Adopting a wider theoretic perspective for translation analysis – such as relevance theory – allows for drawing further conclusions that cross the border of translation studies. The interpretation of a translation in the relevance-theoretic terms offers insights into the cognitive environment of the presumed audience, insights that might be profitable to other fields such as literary studies and cultural history.

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