

Shared Secrets: (Re)writing Urban Mysteries in Nineteenth-century Istanbul

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The cultural and literary interconnectedness of the communities that inhabited the nineteenth-century Ottoman imperial capital – Muslim Turks, Greek Christians, Armenian Christians, Sephardic Jews and others¹ – was partly effected by literary translation as a vector of ‘trans-communal’ contact. Juxtaposing a Greek novel published in Istanbul and inspired by the model of Eugène Sue’s (1804–57) *Les Mystères de Paris* (1842–3) with a translation of the same text into Greek-scripted Ottoman Turkish (Karamanlidika) published almost simultaneously in the same city, this chapter engages with translation, adaptation and circulation as both a cross-border phenomenon and a cross-community one. Setting two versions of a single, translated text – separated by language, but sharing the same script – side by side reveals nuances in cultural and intellectual relations between linguistic and ethno-religious communities. Moreover, by highlighting intra-lingual transliteration as an alternative form of translation, this case study challenges entrenched conceptual categories in the field of translation studies.

First serialised in Athens in 1888–9 in *Ephimeris*, the newspaper owned by its author, and later reprinted in book form in 1890,² Epaminondas Kyriakidis’ (1861–1939) *Πέραν Απόκρυφα* (‘The mysteries of Pera’) was one of many novels directly inspired by the works of French novelist Eugène Sue to appear in Istanbul, and in several local literary idioms, in the second half of the nineteenth century.³ Although Kyriakidis’ work was technically an ‘original’ novel, it was evidently an attempt to domesticate the narrative templates and conventions of urban popular fiction developed by Sue, investing them with new meanings shaped by cultural expectations and social anxieties specific to late-imperial Istanbul.

'Urban Mysteries' in Greece and in the Ottoman Empire

It is useful first to situate Kyriakidis' *The Mysteries of Pera*, and its Greek-scripted Ottoman Turkish (Karamanlidika) translation, *The Mysteries of Beyoğlu*, by Evangelinos Misailidis (1820–90), within the larger context of Greek reception of Western popular fiction – the French *roman de mystères* in particular – in the Ottoman environment. It would be incorrect to describe Eugène Sue as the sole inventor of the popular novel, a category that emerged gradually, integrating existing features of Western European prose fiction into new forms that reflected emerging social realities especially in evolving urban settings. But the importance of Sue's work in redefining the genre and fuelling its expansion in the mid-nineteenth century cannot be overstated. With 131 book-length translations (including reprints) between 1845 and 1900, Eugène Sue was the second most popular foreign author in the Greek world during the nineteenth century after Alexandre Dumas. Almost one in every twenty translated books published in Greek during the period, regardless of genre, was one of his novels.⁴ Sue's massive presence in Greek in the Ottoman Empire started with the translation of his two most famous works, *Les Mystères de Paris* (*The Mysteries of Paris*, 1842–3) and *Le Juif errant* (*The Wandering Jew*, 1844), both in 1845–6 and both in Izmir, translated by Isidoros Skylissis (1819–90) and Giorgos Rodokanakis (dates unknown) respectively. These first two Greek translations were reprinted several times before the end of the century and were followed, in the Ottoman Empire, by the translation into Greek of several of Sue's other novels, including the entire series of novels titled *Les Sept Péchés capitaux* (*The Seven Deadly Sins*, 1847–52), as well as some isolated *romans de moeurs* such as *Mathilde: Mémoires d'une jeune fille* ('Mathilde: a young girl's memoirs', 1841) and a few of his early works of maritime fiction such as *Atar-Gull* (1831).

In the wake of Sue's success on the Greek and Greek-Ottoman literary markets, a number of his followers and imitators in the genre of popular urban fiction also attained a level of fame that sharply contrasts with their position in the canon of the nineteenth-century French novel – at least as we conceive of it today. For instance, although his work has since fallen into relative obscurity, Xavier de Montépin (1829–1902) was, throughout Europe and beyond, one of the most-read authors of French popular literature in the late nineteenth century. His fame was particularly great in the Ottoman Empire, as evidenced by the fact that some of his most famous novels were translated into virtually all of the major literary languages in use in the Ottoman Empire in the 1880s and 1890s.⁵ With over thirty translations, Montépin came third, after Dumas and Sue, in terms of the

number of Greek translations published during the nineteenth century. Most of these Greek translations appeared in the Ottoman Empire rather than in the independent Greek state.

Equally forgotten today, but extremely popular both in France and abroad in the late nineteenth century, Emile Richebourg (1833–98) and Jules Mary (1851–1922) belonged to the same category of highly melodramatic fiction represented by Montépin. Richebourg's works achieved considerable success under the Third Republic, when they were serialised in the conservative daily *Le Petit Journal*, the newspaper with the largest readership in France until the First World War.⁶ His novels were very quickly translated into Greek, first in Athens in the late 1870s, but after that primarily in the Ottoman Empire, starting with a translation of his most famous novel, *L'Enfant du faubourg* ('The child of the faubourg', 1876)⁷ followed by numerous others in Istanbul and Izmir. These Greek translations were often reprinted in Cairo and Alexandria until the beginning of the twentieth century. The innumerable novels published by Jules Mary in the French popular press from the late 1870s until the early 1920s granted him the title of *roi des feuilletonistes* (king of serial writers). Mary's exploitative treatment of the topic of urban poverty through a form of bastardised naturalism made him immensely popular both in France and abroad, including in the Ottoman Empire where the first translations of his work started to appear in the early 1880s, with *La Faute du Docteur Madelor* ('Doctor Madelor's sin', 1878) and continued well into the twentieth century with over thirty volumes. Full of improbable plot twists and outrageous cliffhangers, the popular crime novels of Pierre-Alexis Ponson du Terrail (1829–71) started to be translated into Greek in the mid-1860s with the novel *Les Gandins* ('The dandies', 1860). But it is with the long series of novels dedicated to his recurring hero Rocambole, a criminal turned masked avenger, that the author became a household name both in France and in the Ottoman Empire. The success of his novels in Greek translation was such that, in the second half of the nineteenth century, no fewer than four editions (and at least three different translations) of the Rocambole cycle were published in Istanbul (starting in 1869), Izmir (starting in 1887) and Athens (with a first version starting in 1868 and a second one starting in 1883).

Finally, with more than twenty Greek translations, the novels of Paul Féval (1816–87) belonged to two distinct categories of popular fiction. A first group included imitations or unauthorised sequels of works by Eugène Sue, such as *Les Mystères de Londres* (*The Mysteries of London*, 1844⁸) or *La Fille du Juif errant* (*The Wandering Jew's Daughter*, 1863). A second group was composed of numerous swashbuckling historical

novels modelled on Alexandre Dumas' fictions. Greek translations of his novels published in the Ottoman Empire included several examples from both categories.

This intense movement of translation of French popular fiction into Greek had a direct effect on the development of the domestic novel. The works of Eugène Sue – in particular *Les Mystères de Paris* – were rapidly imitated by Greek novelists active either in the Greek Kingdom, in the Ottoman Empire or in other parts of the Greek-speaking world,⁹ as was the case throughout Europe and beyond during the same period.¹⁰ At an unknown date, but presumably almost concurrently with the first Greek translation of *The Mysteries of Paris*, itself published very shortly after the original serialisation of the novel in French, a first Greek adaptation titled *Αθηνών Απόκρυφα* ('The mysteries of Athens') and penned by Giorgos Aspridis (dates unknown) was published in instalments, most of which are now lost. This first Greek adaptation of Sue was soon followed by similar novels also set in Athens or in Istanbul, as well as on the islands of Syros and Zakynthos or in Egypt: Petros Ioannidis (dates unknown), *Η Επτάλοφος ή Ηθη και Έθιμα Κωνσταντινουπόλεως* ('The city of seven hills, or Customs of Constantinople', 1855); Demosthenes Lymberiou (dates unknown), *Απόκρυφα Σύρου* ('The mysteries of Syros', 1866); Christophoros Samartzidis (1843–1900), *Απόκρυφα Κωνσταντινουπόλεως* ('The mysteries of Constantinople', 1868); Sokrates Zervos (dates unknown), *Έν ζακύνθιον απόκρυφον* ('A Zakynthos mystery', 1875); Maria Michanidou (c. 1855–after 1891), *Τα φάσματα της Αιγύπτου* ('The spectres of Egypt', 1875); Konstantinos Goussopoulos (dates unknown), *Τα δράματα της Κωνσταντινουπόλεως* ('The dramas of Constantinople', 1888); Epaminondas Kyriakidis (1861–1939), *Πέραν απόκρυφα* ('The mysteries of Pera, 1888–9); Ioannis Zervos, *Απόκρυφα της Αιγύπτου* ('The mysteries of Egypt', 1894).

How can we make sense of the extraordinarily rich reception of the genre of the *roman de mystères* in the Greek market for fiction – and, by extension, across the Ottoman world and the Eastern Mediterranean region at large – during the second half of the nineteenth century? One particular trait of the genre may partially account for the genre's immense popularity, both in its original context of publication in Western Europe and in the Ottoman Empire: its capacity to create forms of popular identification. Although the claim made by some that the French *roman de mystères* of the nineteenth century was a genre 'written by the people for the people'¹¹ seems somewhat exaggerated, it is certain that the emergence of this particular category of fiction set in motion new and complex mechanisms of identification for its diverse audiences. One of the defining characteristics

of the genre was that, perhaps more than any other type of novel before it, it was populated by characters belonging at once to the lowest and highest strata of society – and to virtually every echelon in between. At a time when multiple political and social ruptures allowed for the consolidation of new social groups (an economically dominant bourgeoisie, an increasingly literate working class, and so forth), the particular interest of the popular novel in representing the coexistence and frequent intermingling of characters from various social backgrounds provided, in unprecedented ways, the various components of a socially diverse reading public with the opportunity to look at one another, often with a mixture of repulsion and fascination.¹²

However, nothing seems to indicate that, when these works of popular literature started to migrate from Western Europe to the Greek-speaking world and the Eastern Mediterranean at large in the 1840s, the overall structure of their social use as it had crystallised at the source remained intact. In France and elsewhere in Western Europe, part of the original appeal of the *roman de mystères* lay in the fact that it mobilised mechanisms of social identification while articulating at the same time a discourse of multidirectional othering. It is precisely the nature of this double movement of identification and distancing that would become radically altered once put to the test of translation far away from the place of the novels' original composition. In the original French and Western European contexts, middle-class readers of urban mysteries could find an echo of their political and moral anxieties in the often rather conservative ideology that permeated these works (Sue's late conversion to 'socialism' notwithstanding).¹³ At the same time, the exoticising gaze that these same texts cast upon both the lower and upper classes served as a gratifying confirmation of their audience's intermediary social status. For all their artificiality, the topographies in which urban mysteries unfolded largely overlapped, at least in name, with the ones that the large Parisian segment of their French audience inhabited. At the same time, for the subgenre's many readers in the provinces, the spaces that served as a backdrop for the novels' often convoluted plots belonged, due to their relative geographic proximity, to the realm of the familiar.

On the contrary, for the first Greek and Ottoman readers of French *romans de mystères*, such points of reference were to a large extent inoperative. In other words, the class-based exoticism that was a defining characteristic of the genre in its original context of composition partially survived the translation process but was subsumed by a more generalised form of exoticism *tout court*. For readers of translated *romans de mystères* in the Eastern Mediterranean region, the appeal of the foreign in these types

of novels was not limited, as it was for their Western European audiences, to characters and situations located at opposite extremes of the social ladder. Indeed, foreignness seeped through the texts and encompassed locales, customs and entire articulations of the social fabric depicted in the novels. Therefore, it became the task of translators to negotiate this added layer of distance between texts and readers, one that went beyond the mere suspension of disbelief that the implausible plots so characteristic of urban mysteries demanded.¹⁴

From Paris to Pera: Epaminondas Kyriakidis' Πέραν Απόκρυφα ('The mysteries of Pera')

The narrative of Kyriakidis' *Πέραν Απόκρυφα* begins *in medias res*, with an elegant young woman walking down Feridiye Street in the Istanbul district of Pera on a Sunday in May 1870. Unbeknownst to her, she is being watched by an equally elegant man who follows her into a shabby-looking house in the vicinity of Tarlabaşı Boulevard, near modern-day Taksim Square. We quickly come to understand that the two characters are husband and wife, and that the young woman is suspected of adultery. As she is claiming her innocence, a handsome young man – her alleged lover – enters the scene, but is immediately shot and killed by the angry husband who then pushes his wife into an underground well, sets fire to the house to hide the double murder and is about to jump into the well himself when he is rescued *in extremis* by another – unknown – man, who helps him out of the burning house as the fire spreads to the entire neighbourhood. The long and convoluted plot that follows this inaugural scene is, like that of Eugène Sue's *Mysteries of Paris*, largely structured around the melodramatic story of a child lost and found. The main character of the novel – the unknown man who rescues the murderer in the first chapters – is Georgios Kallimahis, scion of an aristocratic family of Greek dragomans from the Danubian Principalities exiled to Anatolia after the start of the Greek Revolution in 1821. Educated by private tutors who teach him Turkish, Arabic and Persian, the young Georgios moves to Istanbul under an assumed identity after the death of his parents and falls in love with Ivi, the daughter of his lodger, whom he quickly marries. Dissatisfied with her husband's lack of wealth, the evil young bride runs away with their daughter Ermioni – who is later revealed to be none other than the woman thrown down the well by her jealous husband at the beginning of the novel. The paths of the three main characters (Georgios Kallimahis, Ivi and Ermioni) intersect with those of a host of minor figures, many of them belonging to the underworld of the imperial capital.

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In many respects, however, the main character of the novel is the city of Istanbul itself. More specifically, Kyriakidis is particularly interested in highlighting the constant intermingling of different social groups that a rapidly modernising urban landscape seems to facilitate, following here a template set by Sue and his followers. As Stephen Knight emphasises:

From Sue on the writers' purpose was to tell the story of the cities themselves through the people – and all the people – who lived in them. . . . it is the interrelation of the rich and the very poor, and also the people awkwardly in the middle, for the good and ill of all parties, that is the recurring dynamic of these stories and the succession of their interweaving narrative threads.¹⁵

Indeed, Kyriakidis' *Mysteries of Pera* offers perhaps one of the most detailed accounts of the urban spaces of Istanbul found in any novel published in the city during the nineteenth century. The attention given to a realist topographical mapping of the city is particularly evident at the beginning of the novel, in the numerous chapters dedicated to a detailed account of the Great Fire of Pera (*Beyoğlu harik-i kebir*), a real event that took place in 1870 and which, in the novel, is accidentally started by Ermioni's jealous husband. In these passages, Kyriakidis describes with journalistic precision the progression of the fire through the neighbourhood of Pera and the massive destruction that it causes. A journalist himself, the author seems to have consulted newspaper articles on the event, which had received considerable coverage in the Istanbul press of the time and remained very much alive in the local collective memory at the time of the novel's publication, almost two decades later. In fact, many details of his narrative correspond to the historical reality of the event, in particular the precise location of the house where the fire was thought to have originally started, situated indeed on Feridiye Street.¹⁶ The description of the 1870 Great Fire of Pera also provided Kyriakidis with the opportunity to insert, in the form of long interpolated digressions, purely documentary passages into the fictional core of his work, devoting for instance more than thirty pages to a detailed discussion of Istanbul's fire patrol (*tulumbacılar*) among other digressions on brothels, hospitals and other civic buildings in which the author writes as a sort of social historian of the city *avant la lettre*.

However, as is almost always the case in nineteenth-century *romans de mystères*, Kyriakidis' Istanbul simultaneously exists on two intersecting planes: the visible, legible city, apprehended through the means of documentary realism, and its invisible double, the hidden domain of the uncanny, marked by dark symbolic tones, echoing the opposition identified by Michel de Certeau between what he identifies as 'geometrical'

or ‘geographical’ practices on the one hand and a ‘mythic experience of space’ on the other.¹⁷ Thus, in *The Mysteries of Pera*, the various urban spaces where the plot of the novel unfolds all lend themselves to a potential unveiling that deterritorialises them, as ordinary looking houses can hide illegal brothels and familiar city landmarks conceal the activities of gangs of criminals.

Finally, Kyriakidis’ novel, composed and published in Istanbul, is notable for the almost complete absence of any reference to the majority Muslim community of the Ottoman capital – or to any minority group outside of the Greek community, to which virtually all of the novel’s characters belong. The reasons for this absence which disrupts the novel’s realistic ambitions are unclear and it is hard to determine whether it should be interpreted as a form of wishful thinking on the part of Kyriakidis who imagines an entirely ‘de-Islamicised’ and ‘re-Hellenised’ city or as evidence of the segmented nature of the late Ottoman reading public, largely segregated along communal lines. In any case, it stands in stark contrast to an important portion of the novelistic production published in Istanbul in the last decades of the nineteenth century, notably with the Ottoman Turkish novels of Ahmet Midhat Efendi, in which non-Muslim characters are numerous. However, as Henri Tonnet has emphasised, this characteristic is also present in other Greek novels of the period set in Istanbul and inspired by the work of Eugène Sue, notably in Christophoros Samartzidis’ *Mysteries of Constantinople* (1868), where the mentions of Turks are scarce.¹⁸ Interestingly the complete absence of any reference to Muslims or non-Greeks in Kyriakidis’ *Mysteries of Pera* was preserved in its Greek-scripted Ottoman Turkish version, Evangelinos Misailidis’ *Mysteries of Beyoğlu*, despite the fact that *Temaşa-i Dünya ve Cefakâr u Cefakeş* (‘Theatrum Mundi, or tormentor and tormented’, 1871–2), his earlier adaptation of a Greek novel and a rewriting of Grigorios Palaiologos’ *Ο Πολυπαθής* (‘Man of many adventures’, 1839) paid particular attention to the complex and diverse ethno-linguistic landscape of Istanbul.

From Pera to Beyoğlu: Evangelinos Misailidis’ The Mysteries of Beyoğlu

A prominent writer, translator and journalist, and one of the key figures in the world of Greek-scripted Ottoman Turkish letters (Karamanlidika), Evangelinos Misailidis serialised his translation of Kyriakidis’ novel in his own newspaper *Anatoli* (est. 1850) under the title *Beyoğlu Sırları* (‘The mysteries of Beyoğlu’) almost immediately after the publication

of the Greek novel in instalments and before its reprinting in book form. The serialisation of the Karamanlidika version began on 28 June 1888 and continued with an additional 164 instalments ending on 26 August 1889.¹⁹

In addition to this and other Karamanlidika translations of French and Greek novels, Misailidis is primarily remembered as the author of the aforementioned *Temaşa-i Dinya*, one of the first novels written in Ottoman Turkish, albeit in the Greek script. He was also the founder and principal editor until his death of *Anatoli*, the most important Karamanlidika newspaper of the nineteenth century,²⁰ primarily read by Karamanlis, that is, Turcophone Orthodox Christians of the Ottoman Empire, either in their ancestral home region of broader Cappadocia or in Istanbul, where large Karamanli communities also resided. *Anatoli* was one of the first Turkish-language newspapers to serialise translated novels, which included, among others, Heliodorus' *Aethiopica* in 1851, Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* in 1852 and Christoph von Schmid's *Genevieve* in 1853.²¹ Later on – and, in fact, only *after* the serialisation of Kyriakidis' novel which was largely inspired by these texts – Misailidis would translate and publish in *Anatoli* the two most famous works in the corpus of nineteenth-century *romans de mystères*, Eugène Sue's *The Mysteries of Paris*²² and *The Wandering Jew*.²³

As mentioned earlier, Misailidis retained in his translation of *Πέραν Απόκρυφα* Kyriakidis' exclusive focus on Greek characters and complete erasure of the city's Muslim and non-Greek population. However, the title of the work bears the trace of a degree of 'Turkification', the toponym of Pera (associated with ideas of cosmopolitanism since at least the mid-nineteenth century) being replaced by that of Beyoğlu, the Turkish name that would ultimately prevail in the twentieth century. This substitution reflects the general conventions of nineteenth-century Karamanlidika literature, which had a tendency to prefer the 'Ottoman' (that is, Turkish) versions of places names.²⁴ Beyond this difference in the title of the novel, the text of Misailidis' *Mysteries of Beyoğlu* mostly corresponds to that of Kyriakidis' *Mysteries of Pera*, with the notable exception of the final five chapters of the latter, which appear in a much-abridged version in the former. In addition, Misailidis opted to introduce a small – yet crucial – modification to the plot as a way to conform to the political stances shared by most of the Turkish-speaking Greek community of the Empire. In Kyriakidis' version, the main character Kallimahis and his daughter Ermioni leave Istanbul at the end of the novel and settle in Athens where, some years later, the young woman is ultimately reunited with her lover Iakovos upon his return from serving as a volunteer in the 1879–84 War of the Pacific. On the contrary, in Misailidis' Karamanlidika version,

Kallimahis and his family decide to remain in the Ottoman capital. Far from trivial, this difference in the plot of the two texts sheds light on the wide political chasm between the Greek bourgeoisie in the independent Greek state (which presumably constituted the largest portion of the readership of Kyriakidis' novel) and the Turkish-speaking Greek minority in the Ottoman Empire to which Misailidis and his readers belonged. While the former increasingly framed the Greek Kingdom as the natural homeland of Hellenism, the hope of better prospects for non-Muslim minorities in the wake of the Tanzimat reforms led the latter to remain durably committed to the idea of Ottoman subjecthood, as echoed by the two alternative outcomes of Kallimahis and Ermioni's trajectory.²⁵

The very rapid translation of Kyriakidis' novel into Karamanlidika, which began to be serialised even before the publication of the original work in book form in Greek, was undoubtedly due to the broad popularity of the *romans de mystères* as a genre across the various communities of the Ottoman Empire, as well as to Misailidis' desire to provide the subscribers of *Anatoli* with content both contemporary and enjoyable. In parallel, however, it is possible to hypothesise that a dominant motif of the novel and of the genre at large, that of disguise, might also have had a particular resonance with the Turcophone Orthodox Christian readers of Misailidis' newspaper. Indeed – as it was already the case in Sue's novels – cases of hidden, disguised or mistaken identity abound in the plot, as do broken family relations whose rupture is almost always ultimately resolved in highly melodramatic moments of recognition and reunion. It is quite possible that this particular theme might have found an echo in the anxieties of the community to which Misailidis and his Turkish-speaking Greek readers belonged.

From the second half of the nineteenth century onwards, public discourses in both Greek and Turkish increasingly framed this group respectively as either 'lost kin' (that is, inner-Anatolia Greeks who had 'forgotten' their native tongue and adopted that of their Muslim neighbours) or as a case of 'disguised identity' (that is, Turks who had converted to Orthodox Christianity during the Byzantine era but retained their language while adopting the 'Christian' script²⁶). In fact, these discussions were still prominently featured in the pages of *Anatoli* at the time of the serialisation of Misailidis' translation. The newspaper devoted ample space to a refutation of the idea, especially common among Greek speakers, that the Karamanlis of inner Anatolia constituted a cultural anomaly that needed to be corrected and that they lagged behind other Greeks in terms of their educational and 'civilisational' level²⁷ due to the fact that their linguistic alterity prevented them from fully participating

in the *genos*, a conception of national identity relying upon both religion and language.²⁸

In addition, a particular plot point in Kyriakidis' novel might have provided an additional point of identification to the Karamanli readers of Misailidis' *Karamanlidika* translation: Georgios Kallimahis, the central character of the story, is presented as a migrant from inner Anatolia (specifically the city of Ankara, then little more than an isolated provincial centre) to Istanbul, a characteristic shared by many of *Anatoli's* readers themselves, either because they belonged to the Karamanli communities who had migrated to the imperial capital but retained strong connections with their Anatolian homeland, or because they still resided in Anatolia, as many of the subscribers of the newspaper did, but had family ties with recent migrants who relocated to Istanbul in search of better economic prospects.

To an extent, it is possible that Kallimahis' difficulties in Istanbul and his feeling of estrangement might have also functioned as a sort of cautionary tale warning Anatolian Greeks against the ills of the 'debauched' imperial capital. This implicit opposition between the 'lascivious' capital and its 'modest' hinterland is notably visible in the text in passages that underline sartorial differences between the Christian women of Istanbul and those of Anatolia, the former being represented in the novel by the evil, Europeanised femme fatale Ivi, while the narrator notes that Anatolian Christian women commonly wear the *ferace* and the *yaşmak*, respectively a long coat and a veil, traditionally associated with Muslim women.

In parallel, another of the elements of Giorgos Kallimahis' biography might have served Misailidis' ideological agenda: in addition to having spent his formative years in Anatolia before coming to Istanbul, the central character of the novel also has family roots in aristocratic circles of the Danubian Principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia, ruled in the name of the Ottoman sultan by dynasties of Phanariot Greeks, for more than a century from the beginning of the eighteenth century to the Greek Revolution of 1821. Thus the novel establishes a symbolic – and entirely fictional – link between the isolated Orthodox Christian communities of inner Anatolia and Danubian Phanariots, a community that not only constituted the closest thing that Greece had to a nobility in the Western sense in recent memory, but was also perceived at once as a beacon of civilisation due to its familiarity with the ideas of the Enlightenment that had penetrated the Phanariot courts in the eighteenth century and as directly connected to the national awakening due the role it had played in the Greek uprising of the 1820s.

Coming back to Kyriakidis' *The Mysteries of Pera*, we would like to end by suggesting two possible venues for further theoretical inquiry opened up by a study of that particular text, both in its own right and in articulation with its Karamanlidika version, *The Mysteries of Beyoğlu*. First, the particular position of this Greek-Ottoman novel vis-à-vis its obvious French source compels us to rethink the very terminology that we use in order to define it. With respect to the model of which it constitutes a variation (Sue's *Mysteries of Paris* and other works inspired by it), Kyriakidis' work is neither fully 'original', nor is it a direct 'translation' in the sense of textual correspondence. Concurrently, it is also not *sensu stricto* an adaptation of Sue, in the sense that none of the episodes of the French work's convoluted narrative make their way into the Greek text. Yet, at the same time, every single element of the Greek text, from the melodramatic twists of its plot to the hordes of stock characters that populate it, gives the impression of having been lifted from the work of Sue or of one of his epigones. In that regard, a case like that of *The Mysteries of Pera* allows us, when we study its relationship with its Western source of inspiration, to think of translation as a phenomenon of *transposition*, not only because it makes ample use of the *topoi* associated with the specific genre of the *roman de mystères*, but also, quite literally, because it stages the 'displacement' and 'migration' of these same narrative tropes from one urban space to another. As has often been noted, Sue's text in *The Mysteries of Paris* ultimately came to overlap with the *tissu urbain*, the urban fabric of the French capital in the mid-nineteenth century. In Kyriakidis' novel, the (symptomatically alliterative) transfer of generic stereotypes from *Paris* to *Pera* is highlighted in the ways in which a specifically Parisian blueprint is projected upon – and ultimately becomes blended with – the topography of Istanbul, where the 'Grand Rue de Péra' becomes a symbolic extension of the Parisian boulevards and where the Prince Islands, where part of the Kyriakides' work is set, function as a counterpart to the non-central locales (the Bois de Boulogne, the various points of the peri-urban *zone*, to use a slightly anachronistic term) that the characters of Sue's work frequently visit.

Finally, when studied in articulation with its Karamanlidika translation by Misailidis, Kyriakidis' *Mysteries of Pera* allows us to think of translation in articulation with yet another notion, that of *transcription*. As an example of literary exchange not between ethno-religious communities but within one of them, a study of the pair formed by *The Mysteries of Pera* and *The Mysteries of Beyoğlu* provides us with tools to counter the diffusionist narratives that have approached late-Ottoman literary translation as a largely unidirectional phenomenon of transfer between

Western Europe and the Ottoman world. In mobilising the notion of ‘script’, we can expand our exploration of the practice of translation in the late Ottoman Empire, where the existence of shared alphabets and the complexity of the social uses of competing writing systems often interfered with the theoretical compartmentalisation imposed by the so-called millet system. Examples of these tensions around scripts during the period included, among others, the coexistence of at least three writing systems used for the printing of Ottoman Turkish (the Arabo-Persian script, as well as the Greek and Armenian alphabets), the debates around the choice of a ‘national’ script among the Albanian intellectual circles of Istanbul, or the particular situation of Judeo-Spanish, commonly printed in the semi-cursive *rashi* script interspersed with Hebrew block characters).

In framing late-Ottoman translation as *transcription*, it is possible to read the rapid and massive increase in the number of translations of foreign prose fiction in the various literary idioms of the Ottoman Empire during the second half of the nineteenth century in articulation with the proliferation of scripts employed for the printing of these translated texts. Additionally, by making use of the various connotations carried by the idea of script, a recourse to the concept and to its dual meaning of ‘typeface’ and ‘template’ or ‘convention’ (as it is used, for instance, in the notion of ‘cultural scripts’) can lay the ground for an analysis of late Ottoman translation going beyond the exclusive study of textuality and encompassing both typographic traces and cultural practices.²⁹

Notes

1. See notably Johann Strauss, ‘Who Read What in the Ottoman Empire (19th–20th Centuries)?’, *Middle Eastern Literatures* 6: 1 (2003): 35–76; Mehmet Fatih Uslu and Fatih Altuğ (eds), *Tanzimat ve Edebiyat: Osmanlı İstanbulu’nda Modern Edebi Kültür* (Istanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası, 2014); Etienne Charrière, “‘We Must Ourselves Write About Ourselves’: The Transcommunal Rise of the Novel in the Late Ottoman Empire”, PhD dissertation, University of Michigan, 2016; Monica Ringer and Etienne Charrière (eds), *Ottoman Culture and the Project of Modernity: Reform and the Tanzimat Novel* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2020).
2. The novel was concurrently serialised in *Epitheorisis*, a Greek-language newspaper published in Istanbul. We thank Prof. Georgia Gotsi (University of Patras) for providing us with this information.
3. Interestingly, the work shares a title with an unrelated novel, *Les Mystères de Péra*, published in French in Istanbul by Sephardic author Jacques Loria less than a decade later in 1896. See Johann Strauss, ‘Le roman d’Istanbul’,

Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranée 87–8 (1999): 19–38; 29.

4. Data used in this overview of Sue's Greek-Ottoman reception come from the bibliography of Greek translations compiled in Konstantinos G. Kasinis, *Βιβλιογραφία των ελληνικών μεταφράσεων της ξένης λογοτεχνίας, ΙΘ'–Κ' αι. Αυτοτελείς Εκδόσεις*, vol. 1: 1801–1900 (Athens: Syllogos pros Diadosin Ophelimon Vivlion, 2006). See also Etienne Charrière, 'Borrowed Texts: Translation and the Rise of the Ottoman-Greek Novel in the Nineteenth Century', *Syn-Thèses* 6 (2013):12–26; Charrière, 'We Must Ourselves Write About Ourselves'; Ringer and Charrière, *Ottoman Culture*, 12–18. Unsurprisingly, considering Sue's truly global fame in the second half of the nineteenth century, translations of his works appeared in large numbers in other languages of the Ottoman Empire during the same period – although slightly later than the first Greek translations: the first translation of Sue into Ottoman-Turkish, an Armenian-scripted translation of *The Mysteries of Paris*, attributed to Garabed Panosyan (1826–1905), seems to have appeared as early as 1858, while *The Wandering Jew* appears to have been translated for the first time into Ottoman-Turkish by Mehmet Tevfik (1860–1910). The same two novels were translated into Armenian in 1863 (by Matteos Mamurian, 1830–1901) and 1867 (by Garabed Utudjian, 1823–1904) respectively, while they appeared in Ladino translation in 1876 (by Eliau Moshe ben Nahmias and David Yosef Saporta, dates unknown) and 1896 (by Victor Levy, dates unknown).
5. Aude Aylin de Tapia 'De *La Porteuse de pain* (1884) à *l'Etmekçi Hatun* (1885). Un roman populaire français chez les *Karamanlis*', in Evangelia Balta and M. Ölmez (eds), *Cultural Encounters in the Turkish-speaking Communities of the Late Ottoman Empire* (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2014), 223–56.
6. Ivan Dupin, Nicolas Hubé and Nicolas Kaciak, *Histoire politique et économique des médias en France* (Paris: La Découverte, 2009).
7. Faubourg, originally 'suburb', is not easily translated. Many of these neighbourhoods were absorbed by the city in the second half of the nineteenth century. The term, however, was still used, and in this title has working-class implications.
8. Féval's novel was published the same year as George W. M. Reynolds' similarly titled but entirely unrelated English-language novel.
9. For more on the Greek tradition of the *romans de mystères* see, among others, Pantelis Voutouris, *Ως εις καθρέπτην . . . Προτάσεις και υποθέσεις για την ελληνική πεζογραφία του 19^{ου} αιώνα* (Athens: Nefeli, 1995); Sophia Denisi, 'Μυθιστόρημα των Αποκρύφων: μια μορφή κοινωνικού μυθιστορήματος του 19ου αιώνα', *Periplus* 43 (1997): 38–63; Georgia Gotsi, 'Η μυθιστορία των "Αποκρύφων". Συμβολή στην περιγραφή του είδους', in Nasos Vagenas (ed.), *Από τον Λέανδρο στον Λουκή Λάρα. Μελέτες για την πεζογραφία της περιόδου 1830–1880* (Heraklion: Crete University Press, 1997), 149–68;

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10. On the global 'mysterymania' that followed the publication of Sue's novel, see notably Berry Palmer Chevasco, *Mysterymania: The Reception of Eugène Sue in Britain, 1838–1860* (Oxford and Bern: Peter Lang, 2005). This focuses on the British reception of the work. See also the online proceedings of a series of conferences organised by the Médias 19 platform. The platform also maintains a database referencing a very large number of nineteenth-century urban mystery texts. Available at <<http://mysteres.medias19.org>> (last accessed 1 June 2019).
 11. See, for instance, Christopher Prendergast's reading of Sue's *Mysteries of Paris* as a collectively produced work: Christopher Prendergast, *For the People, by the People?: Eugène Sue's 'Les Mystères De Paris' – A Hypothesis in the Sociology of Literature* (Leeds: Legenda, 2004).
 12. On the position of the *roman de mystère* in nineteenth-century French popular literature, see notably Michel Ragon, *Histoire de la littérature prolétarienne de langue française: littérature ouvrière, littérature paysanne, littérature d'expression populaire* (Paris: Librairie générale française, 1974); Marc Angenot, *Le Roman populaire, recherches en paralittérature* (Montréal: Presses de l'Université du Québec, 1975); Francis Lacassin, *A la recherche de l'empire caché: mythologie du roman populaire* (Paris: Julliard, 1991); Dominique Kalifa, *L'Encre et le Sang: récits de crimes et société à la Belle Époque* (Paris: Fayard, 1995); Vittorio Frigerio, *Les Fils de Monte Cristo: idéologie du héros de roman populaire* (Limoges: Presses de l'Université de Limoges, 2002); Dominique Kalifa, *Crime et culture au XIXe siècle* (Paris: Perrin, 2005); Daniel Compère, *Les romans populaires* (Paris: Presses de la Sorbonne Nouvelle, 2012).
 13. On Sue's readers and their politics, see notably Jean-Pierre Galvan, *Les Mystères de Paris: Eugène Sue et ses lecteurs* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1998).
 14. For a detailed analysis and examples of the challenges involved in rendering Sue into Ottoman languages, see Charrière, 'We Must Ourselves Write About Ourselves', 130–60.

15. Stephen Knight, *The Mysteries of the Cities: Urban Crime Fiction in the Nineteenth Century* (Jefferson, NC and London: McFarland & Company, 2012), 11.
16. Zeynep Çelik, *The Remaking of İstanbul: Portrait of an Ottoman City in the Nineteenth Century* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1993), 64. The fire described in the novel took place, in fact, in the Pera area in the spring of 1870 and destroyed more than 3,000 buildings, rendering hundreds of people homeless and significantly impacting the social and cultural life of the European side of Istanbul. The exact location where the fire started was identified by Ottoman newspapers of the time (such as, for instance, *Takvim-i Vekayi*, the first Turkish newspaper published under Mahmud II) as a private house rented by a Hungarian citizen named Rechini (Macar Reçini) or Richini (Riçini). The fire started around noon on 5 June 1870 around noon and spread quickly around the neighbourhood due to the strong winds that were blowing that day. With the exception of its initial starting point, the details match Kyriakidis' description of the event in his novel. At a later point in the novel, Kyriakidis stages a conversation between his main character Kallimahis and Greek banker Georgios Zafiris who organised rescue efforts in the wake of the fire. This minor character is probably inspired by the figure of Georgios Zarifis, a well-known Greek-Ottoman banker and philanthropist – and a possible patron of the author. On this figure and his role in Ottoman banking, see Murat Hulkiander, *Bir Galata Bankerinin Portresi George Zarifi 1806–1884* (Istanbul: Osmanlı Bankası, 2003).
17. Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven F. Rendall (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984).
18. Tonnet, 'Ο χόρος και η σημασία', 29. It is not, however, the case in Stephanos Xenos' *The Devil in Turkey* (1851), an earlier novel probably partially inspired by Sue, originally published in English translation and which includes Muslim Turks, Jews and Armenians among its characters.
19. Epaminondas Kyriakidis, *Beyoğlu Sırları*, trans. Evangelinos Misailidis, *Anatoli*, 28 June 1888 (No. 3926) – 26 August 1889 (No. 4091). The text has recently been reprinted in book form and in the Latin alphabet: Epaminondas Kyriakidis, *Beyoğlu Sırları*, edited by E. Balta and S. Payır (Istanbul: Istos, 2020).
20. Şehnaz Şişmanoğlu Şimşek, 'The *Anatoli* Newspaper and the Heyday of the Karamanli Press', in Evangelia Balta and Matthias Kappler (eds), *Cries and Whispers in Karamanlidika Books – Proceedings of the First International Conference on Karamanlidika Studies (Nicosia 11th–13th September 2008)* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010), 429–48; Foti and Stefo Benlisoy, 'Reading the Identity of Karamanli Through the Pages of *Anatoli*', in Evangelia Balta and Matthias Kappler (eds), *Cries and Whispers in Karamanlidika Books – Proceedings of the First International Conference on Karamanlidika Studies (Nicosia 11th–13th September 2008)* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010), 93–108.

21. For a general overview of fiction published in *Karamanlidika*, see Ioanna Petropoulou, 'From West to East: The Translation Bridge: An Approach from a Western Perspective', in Anna Frangoudaki and Çağlar Keyder (eds), *Ways to Modernity in Greece and Turkey: Encounters with Europe, 1850–1950* (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2007), 91–112; for a list of the novels and short stories serialised in *Anatoli*, see Şehnaz Şişmanoğlu Şimşek, 'Karamanlidika Literary Production at the End of the 19th Century as Reflected in the Pages of *Anatoli*', in Evangelia Balta and Mehmet Ölmez (eds), *Cultural Encounters in the Turkish-speaking Communities of the Late Ottoman Empire* (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2014), 109–24; and Şehnaz Şişmanoğlu Şimşek, 'Osmanlı Tefrika Çalışmalarında Göz Ardı Edilen Bir Kaynak: Karamanlıca Anatoli Gazetesi', *Kebikeç* 44 (2017): 145–88.
22. Eugène Sue, *Paris Sırları (The Mysteries of Paris)*, trans. Evangelinos Misailidis, *Anatoli*, 25 February 1897 (No. 5471) [unfinished].
23. Eugène Sue, *Serseri Yahudi (The Wandering Jew)*, trans. Evangelinos Misailidis, *Anatoli*, 17 July 1897 (No. 5587) [unfinished].
24. This convention was also reflected in the choice of the names used to identify Istanbul as the place of publication on the cover of *Karamanlidika* books: *Der-i Saadet*, *Der Aliye*, *Konstantiniye*, or *Istanbul* were usually used in lieu of the Greek *Konstantinoupolis*.
25. Interestingly, Misailidis had already adopted the same trope in his earlier rewriting of a Greek novel, the aforementioned *Temaşa-i Dünya*, where the main character also opts to remain in Istanbul at the end of the plot instead of moving to Athens as in the original text.
26. For a detailed account of these debates, see notably Evangelia Balta, 'Gerci Rum Isek de Rumca bilmez Türkçe Söyleriz: The Adventure of an Identity of the Triptych: Vatan, Religion and Language', *Türk Kültürü İncelemeleri Dergisi* 8 (2003): 25–44.
27. Foti and Stefo Benlisoy, 'Türkdilli Anadolu Ortodoksların Kimlik Algısı', *Tarih ve Toplum Yeni Yaklaşımlar* 11: 251 (2010): 7–22;
28. Peter Mackridge, *Language and National Identity in Greece, 1766–1976* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).
29. On the intersections of transcription and translation in late Ottoman literature, see Etienne Charrière, 'Translation, Transcription, and the Making of World Literature: On Late Ottoman and Modern Turkish Scriptworlds', in Burcu Alkan and Çimen Günay-Erkol (eds), *Turkish Literature as World Literature* (London: Bloomsbury, 2020), 36–54.

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