

The Politics of Translation: Two Stories from the Turkish *Ferec ba'de Şidde* in *Les mille et une nuit, contes arabes*

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*In memory of Wolfhart Heinrichs,
who encouraged me to work on the topic*

The story

The ninth volume of Antoine Galland's (d. 1715) French translation of *Les mille et une nuit, contes arabes*, the collection of stories that would later be known in English as the *Arabian Nights*, begins with a one-and-a-half-page *Avertissement*.¹ Appar-

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¹ Abbreviations for the texts quoted include: Galland, *Arabian Nights: The Arabian Nights* (London, 1821); Galland, *Les mille et une nuit*: Antoine Galland (trans.), *Les mille et une nuit, contes arabes*. Paris, vols. 1–6: 1704; vol. 7: 1706, vol. 8: 1709, vols. 9–10: 1712, vols. 11–12: 1715; Kavruk et al., *El-Ferec*: Hasan Kavruk, Süleyman Çaldak, and Kazım Yoldaş, eds., *El-Ferec Ba'de'ş-Şidde* (karşılaştırmalı metin). 2 vols. (Malatya, 2000–2004); and Tietze, *Ferec*: Andreas Tietze, ed., *Ferec ba'd eş-şidde / Freud Nach Leid*, 2 vols. (Berlin, 2006).

ently written by Galland or at his behest, the notice announces that the final two stories of the previous volume, which had been published some three years previous, were not actually part of the *Arabian Nights*. Rather, these stories were “inserted and published” without the knowledge of the translator, who learned about the addition only after the volume appeared on the market. Galland would mention the event in his *Journal*, calling it “the affair of the eighth volume” (*l'affair du huitieme tome des mille et une nuit*) in his entry for December 20, 1708.²

This interpolation at the end of the eighth volume of the *Arabian Nights* has been touched upon by scholars, although not treated at length.³ This paper

² Antoine Galland, *Le journal d'Antoine Galland (1646–1715): la période parisienne*. Vol. 1: 1708–1709, ed. Frédéric Bauden and Richard Waller (Leuven, 2011), 514. The eighth volume gives 1709 as the publication date, but the journal entries suggest that it must have been released in the last days of 1708: according to an entry in his journal, Galland had been presented with a copy of the eighth volume on 30 November 1708; cf. [Antoine Galland], *Le journal*, vol. 1, 511. Also see Mohamed Abdel-Halim, *Antoine Galland: sa vie et son oeuvre* (Paris, 1964), 271. English translations of the prefaces to all volumes of the *Arabian Nights* can be found in Ruth B. Bottigheimer (ed.), *Fairy tales framed: early forewords, afterwords, and critical words* (Albany, NY, 2012), 225–28.

³ E.g., Walter Schiller, “Über die Märchen von Tausend und ein Tag,” *Zeitschrift für Bücherfreunde* 1 (1909): 41–63 and Tietze, *Ferec*, 15–18.

will first outline and contextualize the events leading up to the publication. Subsequently, I will look closely at the translations of these stories, which are now known indeed not to be taken from the *Arabian Nights*, but from a Turkish collection of stories called the *Ferec ba‘de Şidde*. Finally, I will attempt to analyze these translations and contextualize them within the larger discipline of translation studies.

The stories known under the rubric *al-Faraj ba‘d al-shidda* (*Ferec ba‘de Şidde* in Turkish), or *Relief after Adversity*, enjoy a prominent place in both Persian and Arabic literature. Most stories in this style follow a general plot in which the protagonists are delivered miraculously from a difficult or seemingly impossible situation after a series of adventures. Two celebrated Arab writers, Al-Mada‘ini (d. 839) and al-Tanukhi (d. 994), compiled collections of stories with this title. Although the original text by al-Mada‘ini is lost today, it was translated into Persian in the thirteenth century by Dihistani and became one of the most popular collections of *al-Faraj* stories. A Turkish translation of an *al-Faraj* collection was compiled by Mevlana Lutfi Tokadi in the fifteenth century; like the collection of Al-Mada‘ini, this text is lost, but it is mentioned in *Kashf al-Zunun*, the seventeenth-century bibliographical dictionary by Katib Çelebi.⁴ Another fifteenth-century Turkish translation was undertaken by Ömer el-Halebi; this was probably sourced from the Persian version of Dihistani.

However, the two stories inserted at the end of the eighth volume of the *Arabian Nights* are neither from al-Tanukhi’s celebrated *al-Faraj* collection, nor from the aforementioned fifteenth-century Turkish translations. The source is in fact another compilation of forty-two stories in Turkish, also entitled *Ferec ba‘de şidde*, but with no connection or similarity to the established body of *al-Faraj* literature apart from the title. To avoid confusion, I will refer to it here as the *Turkish Ferec*. Andreas Tietze, the twentieth-century editor of *Turkish Ferec*, concluded that the stories are assumed translations from a Persian source text that is either lost or unrecognizable today.

The *Arabian Nights* were published at an opportune moment, when the genre of fairy tales and fairyland fictions was flowering in France. The publication was an enormous success and the French reading public clamored for more Oriental stories. François Petis

de la Croix, an interpreter of Oriental languages and a colleague of Galland’s at the College de France, undertook a compilation that included eighteen stories from the *Turkish Ferec*. The collection appeared in five volumes between 1710 and 1712 under the title *Les mille et un jours: contes persans* (*One Thousand and One Days: Persian Stories*). De la Croix began the book with a fictitious account in which he relayed how he obtained the collection from a certain dervish named Moclès in Isfahan in 1675. It has been established, however, that de la Croix’s translation was a very free adaptation of the source stories. He combined stories and added or omitted entire sections of text. For example, the first story in the *Les mille et un jours*, the story of Abulqasim, is a combination of the first, second, and sixteenth stories of the *Turkish Ferec*. After Galland was appointed the chair of Arabic at College de France in 1709, the gentlemen served as professors of Oriental languages in the same department. It is likely that their relations were less than warm.

This relationship must have been strained further by the “affair of the eighth volume.” Galland had obtained and translated three volumes from a manuscript of *Arabian Nights* (which he published in seven volumes between 1704 and 1708), and was now desperate to acquire the remainder, which he believed were extant. He had submitted translated material for the eighth volume to the publisher, but there were not enough stories to fill up a whole volume. Three years passed without new material from Galland.

La maison Barbin, the publisher of these story collections, was a bookshop that printed books on topics varying from original French plays to translations of classics, travellers’ accounts, fairy tales, and adventure stories.⁵ When the first volumes of the *Arabian Nights* were an immediate success, the publisher was eager to continue with new volumes. Yet, losing any hope of getting more stories from Galland, Barbin simply filled out the eighth volume of the *Arabian Nights* with two stories from the *Turkish Ferec* that had been translated by de la Croix and submitted to the same publisher to be included in *Les mille et un jours*. The five-volume set of de la Croix’s compilation would be published between 1710 and 1712, only a year after the eighth volume of the *Arabian Nights* appeared. Clearly, the publisher did not want to ruin the success of Galland’s popular book and included de la Croix’s sto-

⁴ Katib Çelebi, *Kashf al-Zunun*, vol. 2 (Istanbul, 1971), 1252; quoted in Kavruk, et al., *El-Ferec*, xi.

⁵ See Gervais E. Reed, *Claude Barbin, libraire de Paris sous le règne de Louis XIV* (Genève, 1974).

ries without asking Galland's permission.⁶ The eighth volume of the *Arabian Nights* would be the last one that Barbin published. Enraged, Galland switched to Florentin Delaulne and put out the remaining four volumes with his new publisher.

When confronted, de la Croix made it clear to his colleague that he had had nothing to do with the publisher's decision. Galland made the following entry in his *Journal* on January 17, 1710:

Monsieur Petis de la Croix, Professor and royal *lecteur* of Arabic Language, who did me the honor of coming to visit me this morning, was extremely surprised to see the translation of two of his Turkish stories printed in the eighth volume of *One Thousand and One Nights* which I showed him, and [he assured me] that it was done without his participation.⁷

However, there was probably another person besides de la Croix involved in the translation of the *Turkish Ferec*. De la Croix presented his translation to the publisher, who found his French poor. The publisher thus turned to Alain-René Lesage, who had been working with Barbin for a few years then, and whose drama *Le Diable boiteux* (*The Devil Upon Two Sticks*), also published by the same bookshop, had achieved some success a few years prior. Barbin asked Lesage to rework the stories into marketable French. Lesage was a dramatist, novelist, and well-known playwright, and, in addition to his own compositions in French, known also for his free renderings from Spanish.⁸ Although Lesage's name does not feature anywhere in the book, his involvement as a copyeditor to de la Croix's translation is generally accepted in the scholarship. Already a few years after its publication, based on stylistic similarities of Lesage's prose and that of the *Jours*, suspicions were uttered to that effect.⁹ Paul

Sebag, who prepared a modern edition of *Les mille et un jours*, may be the only scholar who rejects Lesage's wholesale collaboration, believing his involvement was confined to a few stylistic suggestions.¹⁰ Recently, Christelle Bahier-Porte not only examined Lesage's possible collaboration in *Les mille et un jours*, but also studied how he may have been influenced in his own works by perusing these stories.¹¹ There seems to be no surviving redacted manuscript that would help us determine the range of Lesage's interventions.

The text

I believe it is safe to assume that François Petis de la Croix, translator, and Alain-René Lesage, who reworked the translation, collectively produced the final version of the two stories. A comparison of the French translation with the *Turkish Ferec* reveals quite a few editorial interventions. Since Lesage worked on the translated material without any recourse to the source text, he may have felt more at liberty to intervene freely in the French translation.

To begin with, the stories of Zeynelasnam and Hudadad—the two stories inserted at the end of the eighth volume—were not two stories in the source text. They were merged into two stories from three separate texts in the *Turkish Ferec*.¹² The latter parts of both stories in the source text were completely omitted in the translation. In the translated sections, many longer segments were left out, sections up to two paragraphs were interpolated, and characters and events in one part of the story were changed—either truncated or lengthened—and inserted into another part of the story.¹³

cesse de la Chine: Conte des «Mille et un jours»; texte établi avec une introduction et un dossier par Paul Sebag (Paris, 2000), 107.

¹⁰ Ibid., 110–14.

¹¹ Christelle Bahier-Porte, "Introduction aux *Mille et un jours*," in François Pétis de La Croix, *Histoire de la sultane de Perse et des vizirs*; édition critique établie par Raymonde Robert, in *Les mille et un jours: contes persans*, édition critique sous la direction de Pierre Brunel; avec la collaboration de Christelle Bahier-Porte et Frédéric Mancier; texte établi par Christelle Bahier-Porte (Paris, 2006), 235–47.

¹² M. H. Zotenberg, "Notice sur quelques manuscrits des Mille et une nuits et la traduction de Galland," *Notices et extraits des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Nationale et autres bibliothèques* 28 (1887): 193.

¹³ For example, in a rather extended section, an old woman helps Zeynelasnam and Mubarek in their search for a suitable maiden in Baghdad. She goes to the candidate's house, chats with her, and reports back to Zeynelasnam, who later meets and likes the maiden

⁶ Muhsin Mahdi, *The Thousand and One Nights* (Leiden, 1995), 31.

⁷ Antoine Galland, *Le journal d'Antoine Galland (1646–1715): la période parisienne*. Vol. 2: 1710–1711, ed. Frédéric Bauden and Richard Waller (Leuven, 2012), 66. Also see Tietze, *Ferec*, 17 who quotes from Hermann Zotenberg, *Histoire d'Alâ al-Dîn ou la lampe merveilleuse* (Paris, 1888), 27.

⁸ For a list and assessment of Lesage's works see Francis Assaf, "Alain-René Lesage," *Writers of the French enlightenment*, vol. 1. ed. Samia I. Spencer (Detroit, 2005), 298–307. His first work for the publisher Barbin was the *Nouvelles aventures de l'admirable Don Quichotte de La Manche* printed in 1704; cf. Reed, *Claude Barbin*, 116.

⁹ L. Bordelon, *Dialogues des vivants* (Paris, 1717), 172; quoted in François Pétis de La Croix, *Histoire du prince Calaf et de la prin-*

Some interventions may have been made with the intent to make a more coherent story for the taste of the French reader; others, however, seem to have arisen out of more than purely literary editorial decisions, even by the standards of the French tradition of the time. A complete list of omissions and additions would exceed the scope of this article, but for purposes of clarity I have classified the strategies the translator and the editor used into three groups: dramatization; curious inventions; and speaking the unspeakable.

Dramatization

The first kind of interpolation was clearly intended to create a certain dramatic effect. The translator or editor added to the original in places where the original might have had a rather dull description, or a tedious transition between fascinating events. The insertion of elaborate adjectives is common throughout the translation, but in these moments in the text, the narrative itself was apparently also found wanting, and longer additions were made to increase the tension. Following, I give three examples.¹⁴

(Tietze, *Ferec*, 212–13). Strangely, this woman appears only in a very short section in the French translation, when the two men are in Cairo, i.e., before they went to Baghdad. The woman's role is more or less the same. She shows Zeynelasnam a number of maidens, but none of them meets his expectations, hence they move to Baghdad to look for a better one (Galland, *Les mille et une nuit*, vol. 8, 192–93).

¹⁴ I include the original quotations from the *Turkish Ferec* and Antoine Galland, *Les mille et une nuit, contes arabes*, volume 8. For an easy comparison, I also give the English translations of both. The translation of the passages from *Turkish Ferec* are my own. As for Galland's book, I quote directly from the 1821 English edition of *The Arabian Nights' entertainments: consisting of one thousand and one Stories*, volume 2, which I judge to be a faithful translation of the French rendering. Unfortunately, the name of its translator is not indicated in the book. For the *Turkish Ferec*, I have quoted from a recent edition of the text by Andreas Tietze, who used the Budapest manuscript, one of the earliest copies of the book (1451). I have drawn this manuscript into comparison with a critical edition of the same text by Kavruk et al., who did not have access to the Budapest manuscript, but used two Istanbul manuscripts. The nature of the variations in these three manuscripts make it highly unlikely that the additions in the French translations were rooted in some other Turkish manuscript that de la Croix used. Even if we assume that his copy was somehow acquired by the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, the presence of several copies of the *Turkish Ferec* in that library makes it impossible to easily identify his own copy; cf. the index of E. Blochet, *Catalogue des manuscrits turcs*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1932), 280, for *Turkish Ferec* manuscripts kept at the Bibliothèque Nationale. Blochet's notes do not indicate any copy that

The Episode of the Boatman

In the story of Zeynelasnam, the young man's father, the King of Basra, dies and leaves all his possessions to Zeynelasnam, who spends his inheritance and later regrets it. He sees a wise old man in his dream, who reveals the location of his father's hidden treasures. However, according to a note his father left, there was one remaining statue, more valuable than all the rest of the treasures combined. In the following section, Zeynelasnam goes to Egypt to find the precious statue and there meets Mubarek, an old slave of his father, who will take him to the place where the statue is kept. They arrive together at the edge of a river:

English translation of the Turkish source text (Turkish *Ferec*): Mubarek said “Do not worry. The boatman will bring the endowed(?) boat of the King of the Jinnis and we will cross [to the other side]. [Mubarek] said, “O master! Do not talk to the boatman and do not fear. Otherwise, we will be harmed.” Suddenly Zaynelasnam saw that a boatman was approaching on a boat made of Damascene glass.

Turkish source text (Turkish *Ferec*): Mubarek eyitdi: “Ol cihetden melul olma! Üş melik-i cinninün vakaf gemisini, gemicisi alur gelür, gecevüz” dedi. Andan eyitdi: “E hudavend! Gemiciye söz söyleme yürime ve hic endişe yeme ki anun ucında bize ziyan erişe!” dedi. Zeynülasnam nagh bakdı, gördi ki bir gemici bir Şami sırcadan mefrag gemiyi sürmiş gelür.¹⁵

English translation of the French target text (Les mille et une nuit): “You will see one appear in a moment,” replied Mubarek: “The enchanted boat of the king of the genii will come for us. But do not forget what I am going to say to you: you must observe a profound silence: do not speak to the boatman, though his figure seem ever so strange to you: whatsoever extraordinary circumstance you observe, say nothing, for I tell you beforehand, that if you utter the least word when we are embarked, the boat will sink down.” “I shall take care to hold my peace,” said the prince, “you need only to tell me what I am to

might have been owned by de la Croix, while, curiously, there is one from Cardinal Richelieu's library, cf. *ibid.*, vol. 1, no. 384.

¹⁵ Tietze, *Ferec*, 206–207; Kavruk et al., *El-Ferec*, 163.

do, and I will strictly observe it.” While they were talking, Zeynelasnam spied a boat in the lake, and it was made of red sandal wood.¹⁶

French target text (*Les mille et une nuit*): “Vous en verrez paroître un dans un moment,” reprit Mobarec. “Le bateau enchanté du Roy des Genies vá venir nous prendre; mais n’oubliez pas ce que je vais vous dire. Il faut garder un profond silence. Ne parlez point au batelier. Quelque singuliere que vous paroisse sa figure, quelque chose extraordinaire que vous puissiez remarquer, ne dites rien. Car je vous avertis que si vous prononcez un seul mot quand nous serons embarquez, la barque fondra sous les eaux.” “Je sçauray bien me traire,” dit le Prince. “Vous n’avez qu’à me prescrire tout ce que je dois faire & je le feray fort exactement.” En parlant ainsi il aperçut tout à coup sur le Lac un bateau fait de bois de Sandal rouge.¹⁷

Meeting the King of the Jinni

At one point in the first story, Zeynelasnam and Mubarek arrive at the place where they are supposed to meet the King of the Jinni (see Fig. 1). Mubarek advises Zeynelasnam (“Zeyn,” in the French) how to respond to the King if he is asked any questions:

English translation of the Turkish source text (Turkish *Ferec*): If the King asks you what you want, say, “Give me the sort of things you used to give to my father.” He will in return ask you, “What did I give your father?” You answer, “Statues made of rubies.” Then Mubarek began to pray. Six hours passed and suddenly a cloud appeared in the sky, strong winds blew, darkness fell, and evil filled the air.

Turkish source text (Turkish *Ferec*): Melik sana soracak olursa, “Sana ne gerek” deyecek olursa, eyit: “Heman ‘atâ ki atama verdün, bana hem anı ver” de. Sorsa ki “Atana ne verürdüm?,” eyit ki “Sanem-i yakut.” Mubarek bu talimi etdüğinden sonra azayim okımağa başladı. Ta altı saat gecdi, nagh havadan bir ulu bulut belürdi, karayıdı.

¹⁶ Galland, *Arabian Nights*, vol. 2, 435.

¹⁷ Galland, *Les mille et une nuit*, vol. 8, 180–81.



Figure 1—The king of the genii standing before Zeynelasnam and Mubarek. *Les mille et une nuits: contes arabes*, volume 2 (Paris, 1840), 533. From books.google.com.

Katı yel esdi, karanulık oldu, ceza ve feza aleme doldi.¹⁸

English translation of the French target text (*Les mille et une nuit*): “If the king of the genii,” added Mobarec, “should ask you what favour you desire of him, you must answer, ‘Sir, I most humbly beg of you to give me the ninth statue.’” Mobarec, having thus instructed prince Zeyn, began his conjuration. Immediately their eyes were dazzled with a long flash of lightning, which was followed by a clap of thunder. The whole island was covered with a thick darkness, a furious storm of wind blew, a dreadful cry was heard, the island felt a shock, and there was such an earthquake as that which Asrayel is to cause on the day of judgment.¹⁹

French target text (*Les mille et une nuit*): “Et si le Roy des Genies,” ajoûta Mobarec, “vous demande quelle grace vous voulez qu’il vous accorde, vous lui répondez: ‘Sire, c’est la neuvième

¹⁸ Tietze, *Ferec*, 208; Kavruk et al., *El-Ferec*, 165–66.

¹⁹ Galland, *The Arabian Nights*, vol. 2, 437.

Statuë que je vous supplie tres-humblement de me donner.” Mobarec après avoir instruit de la sorte le Prince Zeyn, commença de faire des conjurations. Aussi-tôt leurs yeux furent frappez d’un long éclair qui fut suivi d’un coup de Tonnerre. Toute l’Isle se couvrit d’épaisses tenebres. Il s’éleva un vent furieux. On entendit ensuite un cri épouvantable. La Terre en fut ébranlée & l’on sentit un tremblement pareil à celui qu’Asrafyel [!] doit causer le jour du Jugement.²⁰

Hudadad’s Search for his Brothers

In the second of the two modified Turkish *Ferec* stories, the prince Hudadad searches for his brothers, who had gone hunting and never returned. The king grows uneasy and threatens Hudadad with execution if he cannot find them. Hudadad is frightened and goes to the countryside to look for them:

English translation of the Turkish source text (Turkish *Ferec*): Hudadad was frightened. He mounted his horse, armed himself, and travelled near and far. He did not see or hear a sign of them anywhere. He continued for a few days. On the sixth day he arrived at a pleasant meadow.

Turkish source text (Turkish *Ferec*): Hudadad korkdı, daşra çıkdı, at bindi, cebe geydi, dağı daşı, ırığı yakını ayak altına aldı. Hiç yerde bulardan nişan görmedi, işitmedi. Birkaç gün yürüdü, altıncı gün bir mürgezara yetişdi.²¹

English translation of the French target text (Les mille et une nuit): These words chilled with fear Pirouzè’s unfortunate son [Hudadad]. He armed himself, went out of the city, and, like a shepherd who had lost his flock, searched all the country for his brothers, inquiring at every village whether they had been seen; and hearing no news of them, abandoned himself to the most lively grief. “Alas! my brothers,” said he, “what is become of you? Are you fallen into the hands of our enemies? Am I come to the court of Harran to be the occasion of giving the king so much anxiety?” He was inconsolable for having given the princes leave to go hunting, or for not having borne them company. After some days

spent in fruitless search, he came to a plain of prodigious extent [. . .]²²

French target text (Les mille et une nuit): Ces paroles glacerent d’effroy le malheureux fils de Pirouzé. Il se revêtit de ses armes, monta promptement à cheval. Il sort de la Ville & comme un Berger qui a perdu son troupeau, il cherche par tout ses freres dans le Campagne, il s’informe dans tous les Villages si on ne les a point vûs, & n’en apprenant aucunes nouvelles, il s’abandonne à la plus vive douleur. “Ah! mes freres,” s’écria-t’il, “qu’êtes-vous devenus? Seriez-vous au pouvoir de nos Ennemis? Ne serois je venu à la Cour de Harran que pour causer au Roy un déplaisir si sensible?” Il étoit inconsolable d’avoir permis aux Princes d’aller à la chasse, ou de ne les avoir pas accompagnez. Après quelques jours employez à une recherche vaine, il arriva dans un plaine d’une étendue prodigieuse [. . .]²³

Curious Inventions and Interventions

There are various other insertions or exclusions in the translations. At a few places in the French translation, an extra paragraph is inserted, summarizing the foregoing events, as if the French reader would struggle over the various names and peculiar happenings. This can be considered as an editorial decision to make the original text more intelligible to the intended audience.

The Excursus on Dreams

In the original text, when Zeynalasnam tells his mother about his dream of the wise old man and expresses his desire to go in search of the precious statue in Egypt, she encourages him. In the translation, however, she “only laughs at it.”²⁴ This is followed by a philosophical excursus on dreams, which again, is present only in the translation:

“My son,” said she to him, “would you now go into Egypt on the faith of that fine dream?” “Why not, madam?” answered Zeyn: “Do you imagine all dreams are chimerical? No, no, some

²⁰ Galland, *Les mille et une nuit*, vol. 8, 186–87.

²¹ Tietze, *Ferec*, 224; Kavruk et al., *El-Ferec*, 190.

²² Galland, *The Arabian Nights*, vol. 2, 449.

²³ Galland, *Les mille et une nuit*, vol. 8, 221–22.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 159.

of them are mysterious. My preceptors have told me a thousand stories, which will not permit to doubt of it. Besides, though I were not otherwise convinced, I could not forbear giving some credit to my dreams. The old man that appeared to me had something supernatural: he was not one of those men whom nothing but age makes venerable; there appeared a divine air about his person. In short, he was such a one as our great prophet is represented [. . .]”²⁵

The translators also constantly altered or invented objects and numbers. Hudadad, for example, instead of receiving 100 pomegranate seeds in his dream as in the original, is given 50, each of which correspond to a brother.²⁶ The King of Jinni gives Zeynelasnam a looking-glass to help him recognize the suitable girl he seeks. This mirror is not present in the original text.²⁷ Similarly, a golden key is said to open the treasures Zeyn seeks; this key is also an invention of the translators.²⁸

Speaking the Unspeakable

Other, more provocative additions to the text might logically be explained by a glance at the political climate in France of early 1700s. Louis XIV, the Sun King, assumed power in 1643; by 1709, when the eighth volume of the *Arabian Nights* was published, he had ruled for 66 years. The epitome of an absolutist monarch, Louis would continue to be the King of France until 1715. Particularly after Jean Baptiste Colbert's death in 1683, the reign of Louis became less glorious than it had been in years past. The great ministers were no more, and Louis began enjoying unfettered personal rule. France was constantly engaged in wars that plunged the country into debt. The populace felt the economic effects of the increased expenditures caused by these wars; taxation was becoming unbearable, and people were conscripted for forced labor. The cruel extortions of the tax farmer concurrent with the king's extravagant expenditure on buildings—like the many additions made to Versailles—and other pleasures became a source of popu-

lar anger.²⁹ But even more grievous for the French subjects than military or economic disasters was the King's ever-growing absolutism.³⁰ Louis' oppression of his subjects became increasingly harsh after 1704, following a series of lost wars.

Against the backdrop of such a restrictive political climate, some of the textual interventions to the Turkish *Ferec* stories indicate that either the translator or his editor were smuggling political statements into a popular Oriental story for wide distribution (these stories can be considered a major media event of the day). These additions are inserted in the beginning of the story in which Zeynelasnam is debauched with drinking and extravagant spending—habits that many contemporary French readers might easily have connected with the throne.

The Debauchery of Zeynelasnam

The following is taken from the beginning of the Zeynelasnam story. The reader learns that the King of Basra possessed great wealth, but had no children. After engaging holy persons to pray for a son for himself, the queen gives birth to a child. The king falls sick and soon dies.

English translation of the Turkish source text

(Turkish *Ferec*): After [the king] laid his head down on the deathbed, Zeynelasnam mourned for seven days. On the eighth day, he went to his mother, took the keys to the royal treasury, and put his own seal on it. Then he immersed himself in drinking and merry-making. He spent his wealth, and did not see to [the affairs of] his dominion. The [state] business remained unattended. The situation reached to a point where the people turned away from him and enthroned another person from the same lineage as sultan, and left Zeynelasnam alone with his revelries. Zeyn was at ease with this situation until the bountiful riches were all exhausted. He then sold the houses, and later, sold away all the belongings he had. Seeing his wastefulness, his companions stopped coming near him. He fell so low that he could not leave the house due to poverty. His mother walked up to him one morning and said “O Zeynelasnam, you did

²⁵ Galland, *Arabian Nights*, vol. 2, 427; cf. Galland, *Les mille et une nuit*, vol. 8, 159–60.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 211.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 190–91.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 170.

²⁹ Arthur Tilley, *The decline of the age of Louis XIV, or, French literature 1687–1715* (Cambridge, 1929), 10.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 14.

no good. You spent all your possessions. Such is the fate of extravagant and wasteful people.” Hearing his mother’s words, Zeynelasnam was grief-stricken.

Turkish source text (Turkish Ferec): Andan baş ölüm yastugına kodi. Zeyn yedi gün azâ resmin gördi. Sekizinci gün anası katına vardı, hazayın miftahlarını aldı, hazineleri acdı, gördi, gendü mühürin urdı. Andan sonra ‘ayşa temaşaya meşgul oldı. Malı harc eyledi, mülk gamın yemedi: mesalih muattal oldı. İş ana yetişdi ki halk bundan iraz etdiler. Ol kökden bir gişi padişah edindiler. Zeynülasnamı işretde kodılar. Zeyn bu hala razı oldı, zevk eyledi, anadegin ki ol bihad mal dükendi. Bu gez ‘akar satmaga başladı, andan fûruşa vü alata el urdı, anları dahı düketdi. Herifleri anun müflisliginden göricek katına gelmez oldılar. Şöyle üftade oldı ki yalıncaıklıktan evden çıkamaz oldı. Bir gün anası eyitdi: “E Zeynülasnam! Eyü etmedün, israfa [katı] meşgul oldun. Lacirem halı müsrifün böyle olur” dedi. Zeynülasnam bu sözden melul oldı.³¹

English translation of the French target text (Les mille et une nuit): As soon as the king was dead, prince Zeyn went into mourning, which he wore seven days, and on the eighth he ascended the throne, taking his father’s seal off the treasury, and putting on his own, beginning thus to taste the sweets of ruling, the pleasure of seeing all his courtiers bow down before him, and make it their whole study to show their zeal and obedience. In a word, sovereign power was too agreeable to him. He only regarded what his subjects owed to him, without considering what was his duty towards them, and consequently took little care to govern them well. He wallowed in all sorts of debauchery among the voluptuous youth, on whom he conferred the prime employments in the kingdom. The queen, his mother, was still living, a discreet wise princess. She had several times unsuccessfully tried to check her son’s prodigality and debauchery, giving him to understand, that, if he did not soon take another course, he would not only squander his wealth, but would also alienate the minds of his people, and occasion some revolution, which perhaps might cost him his crown and his life. What she

had foretold was very near falling out: the people began to murmur against the government, and their murmurs had certainly been followed by a general revolt, had not the queen had the address to prevent it. But that princess being acquainted with the ill posture of affairs, informed the king, who at last suffered himself to be prevailed upon. He committed the government to discreet aged men, who knew how to keep people within the bounds of duty. Zeyn, seeing all his wealth consumed, repented that he had made no better use of it.³²

French target text (Les mille et une nuit): Ausitôt que le Roy fut mort, le Prince Zeyn prit le deuil qu’il porta durant sept jours. Le huitième, il monta sur le Thrône, ôta du Trésor Royal le Sceau de son Pere pour y mettre le sien, & commença à goûter le douceur de regner. Le plaisir de voir tous ses Courtisans fléchir devant lui, & se faire une unique étude de lui prouver leur obeissance & leur zele: le pouvoir souverain eut trop de charmes pour lui. Il ne regarda que ce que ses sujets lui devoient sans penser à ce qu’il devoit à ses sujets. Il se mit peu en peine de les bien gouverner. Il se plongea dans toutes fortes de débauches avec de jeunes voluptueux qu’il revêtit des premieres Charges del’Etat. Il n’eut plus de regle. Comme il étoit naturellement prodigue, il ne mit aucun frein à ses largesses, & insensiblement ses Femmes & ses Favoris épuiserent ses Trésors. La Reine sa Mere vivoit encore. C’étoit une Princesse sage & prudente. Elle avoit essayé plusieurs fois inutilement d’arrêter le cours des prodigalitez & des débauches du Roy son Fils, en lui représentant que s’il ne changeoit bien-tôt de conduite, non seulement il dissiperoit ses richesses; mais qu’il alieneroit même l’esprit de ses peuples, & causeroit une révolution qui lui coûteroit peut être la couronne & la vie. Peu s’en falut que ce qu’elle avoit prédit n’arrivât; les peuples commencerent à murmurer contre le Gouvernement, & leurs murmures auroient infailliblement été suivis d’une révolte générale, si la Reine n’eût eu l’adresse de la prévenir; mais cette Princesse informée de la mauvaise disposition des choses en avertit le Roy, qui se laissa persuader enfin.

³¹ Tietze, *Ferec*, 202; Kavruk et al., *El-Ferec*, 155.

³² Galland, *Arabian Nights*, vol. 2, 426–27.

Il confia le Ministère à de sages Vieillards qui sceurent bien retenir ses Sujets dans le devoir. Cependant Zeyn voyant toutes des richesses consumées, se repentit de n'en avoir pas fait un meilleur usage.³³

Of Travels and Dreams

Before setting out to look for the storied ninth statue, and even before discovering his father's treasures, Zeynelasnam dreams of a wise old man, who instructs him to go to Cairo. Once in Cairo, he is visited again by the old man in a dream. This time, the man tells Zeynelasnam to go back to Basra. The frustrated prince tells his mother, the queen, about his dream. His mother advises him thusly:

English translation of the Turkish source text (Turkish *Ferec*): His mother said to him “My son, [so much] worrying is not wise. If God has allocated riches for you, you certainly will find them without any difficulty. Be patient!” [Thereupon] Zayn went to sleep again.

Turkish source text (Turkish *Ferec*): Anası eyitdi: “E ogul! Kaygulanmak âkıl issi degüldür. Eger Tanrı ta'ala sana nimet ruzi kıldısa, bi-zahmet yetişür. Sabur eyle” dedi. Andan Zeynulasnam meleletile fikrile yatdı, uyıdı.³⁴

English translation of the French target text (*Les mille et une nuit*): “Forbear afflicting yourself, my son,” said she: “if God has appointed you riches, you will have them without any trouble. Be easy, all that I recommend to you is to be virtuous, renounce the delights of dancing, music, and high-coloured wine, shun all these pleasures; they have already almost ruined you; apply yourself to make your subjects happy; by securing their happiness, you will establish your own.” Prince Zeyn swore he would for the future follow his mother's advice, and be directed by the wise viziers she had made choice of to assist him in supporting the weight of the government.³⁵

French target text (*Les mille et une nuit*): “Cessez de vous affliger, mon Fils,” lui dit elle: “si Dieu vous destine des richesses, vous les acquer-

erez sans peine. Demeurez en repos, tout ce que j'ay à vous recommander, c'est d'être vertueux. Renoncez aux delices de la danse, des orgues, & du vin couleur de pourpre. Fuyez tous ces plaisirs. Ils vous on déjà pense perdre. Appliquez vous à rendre vos sujets heureux; en faisant leur bonheur, vous assurerez le vôtre.” Le Prince Zeyn jura qu'il suivroit déformais tous les conseils de sa Mere, & ceux des sages Visirs dont elle avoit fait choix pour l'aider à soutenir le poids du gouvernement.³⁶

In the French translation, Prince Zeynelasnam is generally depicted as more befuddled and agitated than he is in the *Turkish Ferec*. In one particular instance the French text reads: “[Zaynalasnam] lost all command of his power. Being naturally prodigal, he set no bounds to his grants, so that his women and his favourites drained his treasury.”³⁷ This passage does not exist in the *Turkish Ferec*.

The Matter of the Disgruntled Imam

When Zeynelasnam and Mubarek go to Baghdad in search of a suitable maiden to offer to the King of Jinni, they move into a palace and begin to live lavishly. A neighborhood imam named Ebubekir is disturbed by their lifestyle:

English translation of the Turkish source text (Turkish *Ferec*): There was a neighborhood imam nearby whose name was Ebubeker Müezzın. One of his servants stopped by [the Prince's house], and carried away plentiful of food to [his master's] house, which they ate.

Turkish source text (Turkish *Ferec*): Meger ol yakınlarda Ebubeker Müezzın adlı bir mahalle imamı vardı. Anun kullukcısı ograyugelmiş, kapu nimetlerinden firavan götürübildügince eve götürmüş, yemişler.³⁸

English translation of the French target text (*Les mille et une nuit*): There lived in that quarter an imam whose name was Boubekir Muezzin, a vain, haughty, and envious person: he hated the rich, only because he was poor, his misery making him angry at his neighbor's prosperity. He heard talk

³³ Galland, *Les mille et une nuit*, vol. 8, 156–58.

³⁴ Tietze, *Ferec*, 202–203; Kavruk et al., *El-Ferec*, 156.

³⁵ Galland, *Arabian Nights*, vol. 2, 429.

³⁶ Galland, *Les mille et une nuit*, vol. 8, 163–64.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 157

³⁸ Tietze, *Ferec*, 210; Kavruk et al., *El-Ferec*, 169.

of Zeyn Alasnam, and of the plenty his house afforded. This was enough for him to take an aversion to that prince; [. . .]³⁹

French target text (Les mille et une nuit): Or il y avoit dans le quartier un Iman appelé Boubekir Muezin. C'étoit un homme vain, fier & envieux. Il haïssoit les gens riches, seulement parce qu'il étoit pauvre. Sa misere l'aigrissoit contre le prospérité de son prochain. Il entendit parler de Zeyn Alasnam & de l'abondance qui regnoit chez luy. Il ne luy en fallut pas davantage pour prendre ce Prince en aversion.⁴⁰

Introducing the King of Harran

Curiously, while the emphasis in the *Turkish Ferec* is on the lavish and wasteful life style of Hudadad, the French version instead emphasizes his popularity and acceptance among his men and the general public. The Hudadad story in general has fewer interpolations. An extra sentence is added at the very beginning of the story, when the King of Harran is introduced:

English translation of the Turkish source text (Turkish Ferec): It is reported by the sages of the time that there used to be a great king in the city of Harran in Diyarbeker.

Turkish source text (Turkish Ferec): Âkılan-ı kârdan şöyle rivayet etdiler ki Diyarbekerde Harran şehrinde bir ulu şehriyar varıdı.⁴¹

English translation of the French target text (Les mille et une nuit): Those who have written the history of the kingdom of Diarbekir inform us, that there formerly reigned in the city of Harran a most magnificent and potent king, who loved his subjects, and was equally beloved by them.⁴²

French target text (Les mille et une nuit): Ceux qui ont écrit l'Histoire du Royaume de Dyarbekir rapportent que dans la Ville de Harran renoit autrefois un Roy tres magnifique & tres-puissant. Il n'aimoit pas moins ses sujets qu'il en étoit aimé.⁴³

³⁹ Galland, *Arabian Nights*, vol. 2, 440.

⁴⁰ Galland, *Les mille et une nuit*, vol. 8, 193–94.

⁴¹ Tietze, *Ferec*, 223; Kavruk et al., *El-Ferec*, 188.

⁴² Galland, *Arabian Nights*, vol. 2, 445.

⁴³ Galland, *Les mille et une nuit*, vol. 8, 209.

The discussion

No doubt, de la Croix and Lesage were operating within the French tradition that came to be known as “les belles infidèles.” The golden age of this tradition extended from the early part of the seventeenth century well into the eighteenth, and produced free dynamic translations of the Greek and Latin classics, among others, with a primary aim of producing texts that were pleasant to read in the target language. These translations were carried out, in extreme cases, with such license that they have been considered travesties of their originals. The conventions during the epoch of “les belles infidèles” generally allowed free editorial additions and omissions of any material that was deemed unsuitable for the French audience. Texts by Cicero or Tacitus, for example, were often censored, their factual errors “corrected” with the aim of “improving” the source and adapting the ancient customs to contemporary modes of propriety.⁴⁴ Scholars have described the degree of such translative interventions with various terms, including rewriting, adaptation, appropriation, domestication, and imitation.⁴⁵

Whether the translations under investigation here differed in any way from comparable works of the period has yet to be established through a thorough comparison. Fairy tales with no named author may have been regarded as even more fair game for alterations after a translator’s fancy. It is also worth exploring whether the nature of the *Arabian Nights*, i.e., a frame story into which two stories from the *Turkish Ferec* were incorporated, allowed the translators an extra measure of freedom to intervene. Adaptation is considered a form of translation characteristic of theatrical works, namely, dramas. In these cases, the “performability” of the text in translation as a part of the integrated whole of a drama on stage must be taken into consideration by the translator.⁴⁶

Of course, the *Arabian Nights* was not expected to be staged in French; however, the Arabic text is considered to be the written version of an oral tradition which most probably involved some performative aspect on the part of its reciter. There are certain

⁴⁴ Myriam Salama-Carr, “French tradition,” *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*, ed. Mona Baker and Gabriela Saldanha (London, 1998²), 406–408.

⁴⁵ George L. Bastin, “Adaptation,” in *ibid.*, 3.

⁴⁶ Gunilla Anderman, “Drama translation,” in *ibid.*, 92–95, and Bastin, “Adaptation,” 4.

religious texts, for instance, which have been staged in Iran as part of the *taziya* mourning performance.⁴⁷ A similar tradition allowed itinerant story-tellers (*hakawati* in Syria or Palestine, or *qissa-h'ân* in Iran) to recite texts with dramatic effects: modulating the tone or pace of the recitation, or even adding a melodic element. Since the text of the *Arabian Nights* was collected from orally-transmitted stories, the texts naturally present themselves on such a language and plot register.⁴⁸ We are aware at least that Galland attended gatherings in Istanbul during which similar tales were read in public, and that he thus must have observed the dramatic qualities inherent in the tales.⁴⁹ It is not outside the realm of possibility that the nature of the text may have led its translators to more freely intervene.

In addition, we should not disregard the possibility that de la Croix had difficulty understanding some expressions in the Turkish text, and had to use his imagination. *Turkish Ferec* has quite a few archaisms, even for the early eighteenth century. Furthermore, some idioms do not readily make sense, possibly due to the fact that some expressions were translated from Persian literally. Nor should we ignore, finally, the role of government censorship in translations in early eighteenth-century France. The royal censors scoured all sorts of works in search of immorality, and manuscripts had to be approved by the office of the Chancellor before they were printed. The “approbations” were then usually printed in the books declaring that the contents were “agreeable to the public.”⁵⁰

⁴⁷ See Peter J. Chelkowski (ed.), *Ta'ziyeh, ritual and drama in Iran* (New York, 1979), and Peter J. Chelkowski, “Popular entertainment, media and social change in twentieth-century Iran,” *The Cambridge History of Iran 7* (Cambridge, 1991), 770 ff.; Jamshid Malekpour, *The Islamic Drama* (London, 2004). Cf. Sadiq Ashurpur, *Namayishba-yi Irani* (Tehran, 1389/2010), vol. 2: *Taziye*; and Hamid Dabashi, “Ta'ziyeh as theatre of protest,” *The Drama Review* 49/4 (Winter, 2005), 91–99.

⁴⁸ Hasan El-Shamy, “The oral connections of the Arabian Nights,” *The Arabian Nights Encyclopedia*, ed. Ulrich Marzolph and Richard van Leeuwen (Santa Barbara, CA, 2004), 9–13, and Rana Kabbani, “The Arabian Nights as an Orientalist text,” in *ibid.*, 25–29.

⁴⁹ Antoine Galland, *Journal d'Antoine Galland pendant son séjour a Constantinople (1672–1673)*, ed. Charles Schefer, vol. 1 (Paris, 1881), 242.

⁵⁰ For an analysis of the role of social contexts, especially patronage, but also censorship, in the “rewritings” of texts, see André Lefevre, *Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary Fame* (London, 1992).

Of course, just like de la Croix, the fidelity of Galland's own translation of the *Arabian Nights* to its source text has been a matter of debate. Galland is known to have eliminated or changed rude expressions and overdramatized descriptions of Oriental ambiance. Galland's translation of *Arabian Nights* is generally considered merely an adaptation of the Arabic source text, an embellished version conforming to the taste of the French reader and incorporating the spurious addition of miscellaneous stories from disparate origins.⁵¹

Interestingly, though, Galland harshly criticized de la Croix's translations.⁵² On the day that he obtained a copy of his colleague's translated work, he recorded his initial impressions in his *Journal*, noting the translator's general lack of knowledge about the Levant. Just from reading a bit of the translation, Galland was probably not aware of the fact that de la Croix had merged various stories together at will.

We can safely assume, however, that Galland knew that the edition of *Les mille et un jours* was a translation from Turkish, even though the book was presented as a Persian collection by de la Croix. In the journal entry about the eighth volume of *Arabian Nights* quoted previously, Galland referred to the two stories translated by de la Croix as “Turkish stories” (*contes ture*).⁵³ In fact, an entry in his *Journal* dated June 16, 1710, penned after examining the first volume of the *Jours*, demonstrates that Galland initially misjudged the source text as being from a collection known as the *Forty Viziers* (*Qırq Vezir*) in Turkish. It seems clear that Galland was aware of the false promotion surrounding the book.⁵⁴ And as Galland did not make any critique of de la Croix's translation techniques per se (and provided that his criticisms were not merely made out of professional jealousy), his remarks give us some indication of the perceived boundaries of free translations and adaptations in early eighteenth-century France.

Although both translators, Galland and de la Croix, were academics at the College de France, they

⁵¹ See Muhsin Mahdi's evaluation of Galland as translator in *The Thousand and One Nights*, 41–49. For some examples, see Zotenberg, *Histoire d'Alâ al-Dîn ou la lampe merveilleuse*, 10–13. Cf. “Galland, Antoine,” *The Arabian Nights Encyclopedia*, 556–60.

⁵² Mohamed Abdel-Halim, *Antoine Galland: sa vie et son oeuvre* (Paris, 1964), 269 n. 53. Cf. Galland, *Journal d'Antoine Galland*, vol. 2, 164.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 66.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 164.

chose not to execute their translations with “scientific accuracy”—a strategy that later became the main criterion of a good translation in the Orientalist paradigm.⁵⁵ That said, the “belles infidèles” approach was not the only one available to a translator in France in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. There were some who disapproved of this method, urged the translator to show humility towards the source text, and accordingly carried out literal translations.⁵⁶

Richard Jacquemond has aptly argued that scholarly, pedantically literal translations with abundant exegetical and critical apparatus (footnotes, glossary, commentary) reinforced the image of the Orient as a stagnant, mysterious, strange, esoteric place, a culture penetrable only with the help of Orientalist experts.⁵⁷ This method of alienation is certainly perceptible if the source text in question was contemporary or near-contemporary. Otherwise, an aura of foreignness and stagnation inevitably clung to translations of all classical texts which were carried out with scientific accuracy during and after the “philological turn” in the nineteenth century.

A footnote by de la Croix in his *Histoire de la sultane de Perse et des visirs* may serve as an example. The translator inserted a footnote to the story at an instance in which a doctor (i.e., Chéc Chahabeddin) behaves haughtily to the sultan. The note to this incident explains that “the contemplative cabalistic doctors in the Orient are so proud of themselves that they expect to be respected by the kings,” and that “they indeed are respected.”⁵⁸ Compounding the alienating and Orientalizing effect of the prefaces to the books, examples of such notes within the texts abound.

The *Arabian Nights* was the first major encounter of the French reading public with Arabic literary culture and it has arguably remained the most influential one to date in terms of being a source for French representations of the Arab world. The *Arabian Nights* were translated at a favorable moment. 1690s France

saw the flowering of the fantastic and fairy tale genre; an explosion of publications occurred between 1697 and 1700, during which time more than seventy tales were published. This first wave of the vogue continued until the 1710s.⁵⁹

It is therefore within this literary craze that we should situate the “discovery” of the *Arabian Nights*. Galland of course knew the genre of Oriental stories well as a consequence of his stay in Istanbul, as early as the 1670s. His writings describe his astonishment at the great quantity and length of “Turkish” tales like the *Forty Viziers*, or the Alexander romances.⁶⁰ He furthermore wrote in his *Journal* for January 9, 1673, that he had been offered a compilation with the title *Ferec ba‘de Şidde* and that it contained 42 stories; he noted in the following weeks that he read two stories from this collection (this must be the same as the collection I refer to as the *Turkish Ferec*).⁶¹ Significantly, one or more books of a nine-volume set of a Turkish translation of the *Arabian Nights* kept today at the Bibliothèque Nationale seem to have been in Galland’s possession (purchased in Istanbul?).⁶² There is no doubt that Galland was well aware of the genre and the multitude of tales within it.

It is thus reasonable to argue that the translation of the *Arabian Nights* was indeed a “rediscovery” for Galland himself. Surely the burgeoning genre of fairyland fictions at the turn of the century encouraged him to return to these tales. The first indication we have of Galland’s interest in translating them dates to the mid- to late-1690s, when he first rendered a version of *Kelile ve Dimne* from Turkish into French as *Les fables indiennes, politiques et morales, de Bidpai, bramine ou philosophe indien*,⁶³ and a few years later,

⁵⁵ Richard Jacquemond, “Translation and cultural hegemony: the case of French-Arabic translation,” in *Rethinking Translation: Discourse, Subjectivity, Ideology*, ed. Lawrence Venuti (London, 1992), 139–58.

⁵⁶ Salama-Carr, “French Tradition,” 407.

⁵⁷ Jacquemond, “Translation and cultural hegemony,” 149; also see Wang Hui, “Postcolonial approaches,” *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*, ed. Baker and Saldanha 200–204.

⁵⁸ Chéc Zadé, *Histoire de la sultane de Perse et des visirs: Contes turcs; composez en Langue Turque par Chéc Zadé, & traduits en François* [by F. de la Croix] (Paris, 1707), 26.

⁵⁹ Lewis C. Seifert, “France,” *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales*, ed. Jack Zipes (Oxford, 2000), 174–77.

⁶⁰ Galland, *Journal d’Antoine Galland*, vol. 1, 242.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, 6–7; quoted in Tietze, *Ferec*, 15–16.

⁶² Bibliothèque nationale de France, Ancien Fonds Turcs 356, vols. 2–10. Based on E. Blochet, *Catalogue des manuscrits turcs*, vol. I: *Ancien fonds, nos 1–396. Supplement: nos 1–572* (Paris, 1932), 149–50. M. H. Zotenberg noted that only the last volume belonged to Galland: “Notice sur quelques manuscrits des Mille et une nuits”: 187. Cf. Mahdi, *The Thousand and One Nights*, 190 n. 33, and Şinasi Tekin, “Binbir Gece’nin ilk Türkçe tercümelere ve hikâyelerdeki gazeller üzerine.” *Türk Dilleri Araştırmaları: Talat Tekin’e Armağan* 3 (1993): 239–55.

⁶³ Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des manuscrits, Français 6133. Digital images of the manuscript are now viewable at <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b9063135f>, accessed May 2015. Cf. Abdel-Halim, *Antoine Galland*, 180 ff.

when he translated the story of “Sindbad the Sailor.” His breakthrough no doubt came in the early years of the 1700s when he set out to translate the *Arabian Nights* stories from an Arabic manuscript he acquired. If Galland indeed knew (and assuming he had not forgotten) about the nine-volume Turkish set, it remains to be discovered why he did not attempt to carry out any translation from that collection—which, with some 2,400 pages and close to 800 nights, would have satisfied any publisher—in the first place.⁶⁴

Galland and de la Croix’s adaptation strategies must be viewed first and foremost within the general trends of translations into French, but also in relation to the style and idiom of the fairy tales and fairyland fictions of the time. By all accounts, it was probably not only the supernatural or magical elements that made the *Arabian Nights* so successful. However astonishing and wondrous the fairy tales and fairyland fictions published prior *Arabian Nights* may have been, they all presented cultural reference points familiar to their readership. Virtuous or pagan knights, fairies, giants, and ogres were familiar characters in the European chivalric romance traditions. The *Arabian Nights* arrived with an extra patina of exoticism that made them attractive. The cultural milieu of the stories was so alien and foreignly mystical that one would think it needed no further mystification in the translation. In many ways, the *Arabian Nights* stories resembled the French fairy tales as much as they differed from them. There is no doubt, however, that the interventions by the translator quoted above added opacity to the text. The discourse that Zeynelasnam’s mother delivers on the nature of dreams (see above, pp. 216–17), which is present only in the French translation, is just one testament to this.

It is unnecessary, then, to consider whether a scientifically accurate translation of the *Arabian Nights* or *Les mille et un jours* was ever considered by the translators, or if the publisher of that time would have wanted such a thing. Galland himself clearly distinguished between his more serious studies and his work on the *Arabian Nights*, and said often that the latter was done as relaxation, amusement, and entertainment.⁶⁵ In fact, by adjusting the language, naturalizing the descriptions, truncating or interpolating segments, and

rewriting parts of the stories, Galland created a text that actually transcended its literary standing in the source cultural system, and produced a durable and influential piece of literature. The success and fame that the *Arabian Nights* achieved paved the way for other Oriental stories to be funneled into the market, *Les mille et un jours* being one of them—although the latter never reached *Arabian Nights*’ level of success.

Apart from these two stories, de la Croix’s *Les mille et un jours* in its entirety is a very free adaptation of the Turkish source text. The sequence of days in the book jumps from 203 to 960. According to an explanation at the beginning of the fifth volume, the intervening days were filled either with false miracles of the Prophet, or with events so licentious that they were unsuitable for French readers. Of course, there was no such sequence of days in the Turkish source text. The translator was fabricating after the format of the *Arabian Nights*.

The fact that such an explanation could be included in the edition is an indication of the accepted range of freedom in the translation. Many later editions of the book either omitted the fictive story of the translator obtaining the copy from a dervish in Isfahan, and/or expanded the title to indicate that the stories were translated not only from Persian, but from Turkish and Arabic as well.⁶⁶ The stories of Zeynelasnam and Hudadad remained in all French translations of the *Arabian Nights*, as well as those editions in other languages that were translated from French. Unsurprisingly, Muhsin Mahdi’s reconstruction of the text of the *Arabian Nights* based on a fourteenth-century manuscript does not contain these two stories from the *Turkish Ferec*.⁶⁷

If the strategies employed in the translation of the *Les mille et un jours* included various degrees of deviation from literality, the deliberate interventions of the translator involved more than just literary motives. It is clear that either de la Croix himself, or more probably, Lesage, the editor of his text, made not only minor “editorial changes” in the translation, but also took the opportunity to convey covert political messages

⁶⁴ For instance, cf. the 1826 Béchét Ainé edition (*contes persans, . . . , suivis des contes turcs*) or the 1828 Dauvin edition (*contes orientaux, traduits du turc, du persan, et de l’arabe*); cf. Victor Chauvin, *Bibliographie des ouvrages arabes; ou relatifs aux Arabes publiés dans l’Europe chrétienne de 1810 à 1885*, vol. 4, (Paris, 1909), 123–27.

⁶⁷ *The Arabian Nights*, translated by Husain Haddawy based on the text of the fourteenth-century Syrian manuscript, edited by Muhsin Mahdi (New York, 1990).

⁶⁴ Cf. Şinasi Tekin, “Elf Leyle ve Leyle’nin 17. yüzyıl yazması nasıl yayımlanmalı? Bu metin ne kadar müstehcen?” *Tarih ve Toplum* 208 (2001): 77–80.

⁶⁵ Mahdi, *The Thousand and One Nights*, 22.

which would, expressed otherwise, have had dire consequences in the contemporary political climate. Lesage is otherwise known to have utilized fierce social criticism in his works—for instance in *Turcaret* (published 1709), in which he remorselessly attacked the *traitants* or farmers of the taxes, and characterized Turcaret, the protagonist, as a greedy tax contractor who gets arrested for financial malfeasance.⁶⁸ He may well have been the one who inserted the political messages. Whether or not the publisher Barbin was aware of the nature of the interventions cannot be established. For all we know, the bookshop avoided printing books on controversial subjects such as religion or the customs and manners of the French court.⁶⁹ Whoever of these parties was instrumental in inserting the passages felt that this Oriental story collection was an ideal place to convey anti-monarchical views to the public. This is not to say that the *al-Faraj* or the *Arabian Nights* stories had never before been vehicles for political moralizing,⁷⁰ but that the two stories un-

der investigation here were altered from their original meanings, indicating an intentional distortion.

Returning to the *Arabian Nights*, I am not aware of any interventions of a political nature in Galland's translation. Sylvette Larzul, who compared Galland's translations with the Arabic source text preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale, details various intervention strategies by the translator, but she has not detected any interpolations that may be considered to contain socio-political remarks.⁷¹ A comparison of the respective strategies of these two French scholar-translators may result in further insight into the broader culture of translation of Oriental story collections into European languages. The political interpolations provide a tantalizing example of the kind of evidence that might be found in comparisons of translations and their sources, particularly during the heyday of fairy tales in late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century France.

⁶⁸ Assaf, "Alain-René Lesage," 303.

⁶⁹ Reed, *Claude Barbin*, 66.

⁷⁰ For an essay that investigates the political wisdom in the *Arabian Nights*, see Robert Irwin, "Political thought in the *Thousand and one nights*," in *The Arabian Nights in Transnational Perspective*, ed. Ulrich Marzolph (Detroit, 2007), 103–15.

⁷¹ Sylvette Larzul, *Les traductions françaises des Mille et une nuits: étude des versions Galland, Trébutien et Mardrus*, précédée de traditions, traductions, trahisons par Claude Bremond (Paris, 1996).