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Dealing with Printing in Sixteenth-Century Constantinople*

This paper deals with the issue of printing in Ottoman Constantinople during the sixteenth century. It asks questions about the attitudes of the Ottoman authorities towards printing and printed books, about the role of printing for the Ottoman Muslim, Jewish and Christian communities in Constantinople, printing presses and book markets in the city. Book printing is perceived here as a global phenomenon not only because of its cultural meaning, which is evident and indisputable, but also in the sense of trans-regional networks and connections that necessarily supported printing, like the market for printing tools and books, centers for training of printers. Of course, sixteenth-century Constantinople was not even close to being an important center of printing in the Eastern Mediterranean world, not least because, as it is well known, Ottoman Muslims did not adopt printing with movable types until the third decade of the eighteenth century. Nevertheless, Constantinople was involved in the global landscape of printing by providing a market and customers for printed production, offering manuscripts for print, but also as a place, where Jews possessed their typography, where numerous Hebrew books were printed and attempts were made also for Christians to establish their own printing. This involvement of early modern Constantinople in the processes of the global landscape of book printing will be addressed in this article.

Ottoman Muslim Authorities and Ottoman Society, Printing and Printed Books

The first official Ottoman Muslim printing press was established in Constantinople by İbrahim Müteferrika (1670/1674-1745) in 1727; this means that during the sixteenth century Ottoman Muslim books in Arabic script were not printed on site, but they could be brought from Europe as gifts or trading goods to the Ottoman capital. Certainly, European printed books were known and available to the court and to the reading elites. For example, in 1483, Sultan Bayezid II (1481-1512) received as a gift a printed Italian book with maps and a world description. The book was called *Septe giornate della geographia (The Seven Days of Geography)*, written by Francesco Berlinghieri and printed in 1482 in Florence, in a printing shop of Niccolò Tedesco. The present was delivered to the Ottoman Sultan by a Florentine merchant, Paolo da Colle. This gift was intended to serve a diplomatic mission in the name of Florence, as well as to advertise Italian Renaissance printing culture in the Eastern Mediterranean[1]. Further examples of Florentine or Flemish prints from the second part of the fifteenth-sixteenth century are to be found in the Topkapi Palace Museum Library[2]. Ottoman reading elites, which also consisted of renegades from European countries, had their own interest in accessing and possessing printed books from Europe. Some of them asked their European correspondents to send them printed books[3]. Others found the printed books they were interested in directly in Istanbul, e.g. from Jewish booksellers, who often played the role of intermediaries between European and Ottoman book markets. The sixteenth-century traveler Reinhold Lubenau mentioned in his diary a Slavonic Bible that he found at a Jewish bookbinder's in Istanbul of 1587/1588[4]. According to him, it was Dāmād Ibrahim Pasha (son-in-law of Sultan Murad III, who originated from Bosnia and Herzegovina), who ordered the Jew to bind the Bible for him. It is hard to tell, what kind of printed Slavonic Bible Reinhold Lubenau could see in a Jewish workshop in Constantinople. He mentions only the fact that the Bible included the New Testament, which surprised him, because it was commissioned by a high-ranking Ottoman Muslim and was to be found in a Jewish workshop, both belonging to religious communities, which do not accept the New Testament. Lubenau also wrote that it was his own ability to read in Polish that helped him to understand that it was a Christian Slavonic Bible[5]. Even though Zsuzsa Barbarics-Hermanik claimed that Dāmād Ibrahim Pasha bought in the Jewish bookshop a Bible, which had originally

1 Cf. Roberts, Printing 1, 4-7.
2 Barbarics-Hermanik, Market 389f.
3 Barbarics-Hermanik, Market 395.
4 Lubenau, Beschreibung der Reisen 231.
5 Lubenau, Beschreibung der Reisen 231: Ich habe auch bei einem Juden, der ein Buchbinder wahr, die gantze Biebel in sclavonischer Sprache gefunden, die geschrieben wahr, die ehr dem Ibrahim Bassa, der des turckischen Keisers Amurethi Tochter hatt, einbinden solte. Dabei auch das gantze Neue Testament wahr, daruber ich mich sehr wundert. Der Jude aber wust nicht, was es wahr. Will ich aber Polnisch lesen kunte, verstundt ich dieses auch. Der Bassa aber wahr seiner Geburt nach ein Raguseer aus Dalmatia oder Sclavonia.

been printed in Venice in Serbian with Cyrillic typefaces[6], it is more realistic to assume that the Bible Lubenau saw and was able to identify as such originated from the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and was most probably printed in Latin characters. For one thing, the Bible was never published with Cyrillic typefaces in sixteenth-century Venice. The only possible Slavonic Bible at this time would be the Bible of Ostrog (1581), from the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the first Church Slavonic edition of the complete Bible[7]. But it is not clear, if Lubenau was able to read Cyrillic letters. It could have also been a Polish translation of the Bible that had been published for the first time already in 1561 (in Cracow)[8].

Protestant and Catholic printed catechisms and missionary books were often brought to Constantinople and were also easy to find there, as e.g. Salomon Schweigger (1551-1622)[9], a German Lutheran theologian, preacher and traveler, reported. He mentioned also that he himself carried to Constantinople a catechism by Luther and Brenz in Italian, that had been commissioned by Louis III, Duke of Württemberg (r. 1568-1593) for print, with a goal to have it distributed among captive Christians in Constantinople[10].

The possibility of selling printed Christian literature motivated numerous European publishers, especially the Protestant ones, to print for the Ottoman book market for their missionary goals.

Prints in Arabic letters also arrived in Ottoman Constantinople, primarily from Italian and German cities[11]. Some Italian publishers, like the Venetian Paganino de Paganini, even prepared a full-length primer of the Qur'an in Arabic in 1536/1537 in order to distribute it among Muslims, especially among Ottoman Muslims in Istanbul for a good profit[12]. In this context, we should also mention the project of a new *Typographia Medicea* in Rome[13], which was elaborated in the 1570s with the goal of printing in languages and scripts of the Orient. In 1577 the famous French typographer Robert Granjon was invited by Pope Gregory VIII to provide Arabic typefaces of the highest quality for the new printing house[14]. The *Typographia* published religious books for Arabic-speaking Christians, grammars, works on medicine, geography, and geometry to be distributed via the Ottoman book market[15].

Ottoman authorities attempted to control the import of books printed in Arabic letters and to support some European merchants in their book trade in the Ottoman Empire. A decree (*firman*) by Sultan Murad III (r. 1574-1595) issued in 1588 explicitly allowed two Italian merchants – the brothers Bandini – to import books printed in Arabic, Ottoman and Persian for sale in the Ottoman Empire. By this decree the merchants and their business with printed books were protected from any interference by the Ottoman authorities. The Ottoman Turkish text of this decree was also printed in *Typographia Medicea* in Rome and appended to the Arabic edition of Euclid[16]. It reads as follows:

> Be it hereby known to all governors, sea captains, judges, and other officials stationed in the Imperial domain that two European merchants by the name of Anton and Orasyu [Horatio] Bandini, being bearers of Imperial permission to conduct trade, are buying and selling and doing business by importing certain goods and valuable printed books and pamphlets in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish. Some persons are opening up their shipments by force, and with little or no payment at all are taking their wares and interfering with their trade. It is therefore directed that the said merchants and their agents and employees be allowed to carry on their business in safety and that their merchandise be not seized, and that whosoever disobeys this decree of mine be reported immediately. It is also ordered that their books and goods be purchased in return for the payment of the correct price and that there should no longer be any complaints in this matter[17].

It is obvious that the Ottoman Empire was well acquainted with printed books and had developed access to the printed books in different languages, including Arabic and Ottoman, from other countries, first of all from Italian cities, like Rome, Florence and Venice. On the other hand, it seems that in the sixteenth century Ottoman Muslims were not interested in establishing their own printing presses. The reasons for this »delay« have been discussed for centuries in the travelogues and by researchers[18]. It is interesting that the lack of printing in the Ottoman Empire did not so much bother the European travelers of the sixteenth century, who were actually used to this technology in their homelands. A rare exception is the report by Ogier Busbecq (1522-1592), a Flemish diplomat

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6 Müller, Franken 216; Barbarics-Hermanik, Market 395.
7 Guseva, Izdanija 1 no. 83, 588-593; Alekseev (ed.), Biblija; Thomson, Bible 61-66.
8 This edition is known as Biblia Leopolity (Biblia to iest Księgi Stharego y Nowego Zakonu). See also, Belcarzowa, Źródła.
9 Salomon Schweigger was sent as an envoy preacher from the Habsburgs to Constantinople in 1577 and stayed there until 1581, when he went to visit Jerusalem and Damascus, before returning back to German lands via Crete and Venice. In 1608 Schweigger's travelogue was published in Nuremberg. He is the author of the first German translation of the Qur'an, which was published and re-published in Nuremberg in 1616 (1623, 1659 and 1664). For his translation he used the translation of the Qur'an into Italian (itself a translation from Latin).
10 Schweigger, Reissbeschreibung auss Tueschland 97: daher ich aus Christlichem mitleiden bewegt worden/den Catechismum Lutheri und Brentij in Italianische

Sprach zu bringe/damit sie also ein uebung irer Christlichen Religion hetten/welchen Catechismum Italicum mein G. Fuerst und Herr Ludwig/Herzog zu Wuertemberg u. vor etlich Jaren hat lassen drucken/und ein gute anzahl derselbigen Exemplar gen Constantinopel fuer die gefangenen Christen geschictet/dann alle Nationen die Italianische Sprach verstehn.
11 On the early history of Arabic printing in Europe, see: Nemeth, Typography 25-35.
12 Wilson, Translating 33f.
13 Cf. Nemeth, Typography 29-35. On the cultural context of the presence of the Arabic language in Rome, see: Girard, Arabic.
14 Barbarics-Hermanik, Market 389f.
15 Barbarics-Hermanik, Market 403.
16 Barbarics-Hermanik, Market 403.
17 The decree was edited and translated here: Atiyeh, Book 283.
18 See Barbarics-Hermanik, Exchange 106.

and ambassador of the Habsburg monarchs to Istanbul in 1554-1562, included in one of his *Turkish letters* which he published later in Antwerp[19]. He wrote:

> For no nation in the world has shown greater readiness than the Turks to avail themselves of the useful inventions of foreigners, as is proved by their employment of cannons and mortars, and many other things invented by Christians. They cannot, however, be induced as yet to use printing, or to establish public clocks, because they think that the scriptures – that is, their sacred books – would no longer be scriptures if they were printed, and that, if public clocks were introduced, the authority of their muezzins and their ancient rites would be thereby impaired[20].

This well-known passage has often been used in order to provide the explanation for the »late introduction of printing« in the Ottoman Empire. It was the religious factor, which made Ottoman Muslims reject the »printing revolution« of the West; Islam must have been responsible for the long-term lack of book printing in the Ottoman Empire[21]. This interpretation has been strongly criticized lately by researchers, who explain that it was a typical topos used by European travelers to ascribe all negative features to the influence of the exotic religion. But this reference also says something else, namely that Ottoman authorities were open to foreign technologies as long as they were interested in them, as long as they meant a direct practical benefit for them. Apparently, this was not the case with book printing, as it seems that the demand for printing books among Ottoman Muslims was not obvious enough and did not stimulate any powerful individuals among Ottoman Muslims, who might have expressed any concern for establishing a press in the sixteenth century.

Another legend about Ottoman printing was most probably born in the second half of the sixteenth century: namely that Ottomans did not print, because printing and printed books had been prohibited by the decree of the Sultan Bayezid II stipulating the penalty of death for those who would dare to initiate printing in the Ottoman Empire. It was probably André Thevet (1502-1590), a French Franciscan priest and cosmographer[22], who first published this story

of the Ottoman legal ban against using printed books[23]. André Thevet composed a portrait of Johannes Gutenberg in the second volume of his work *Les vrais pourtraits et vies des hommes illustres, Grecz, Latins, et payens, recueilliz de leurs tableaux, livres, medalles antiques, et modernes* (Paris, 1584) and wrote about the extraordinary role of printing in Europe and commented on the lack of printing in the East. Kathryn Schwartz translated this passage into English in the following way:

> What I know for sure is that the Greeks, Armenians, Mingrelians, Abyssinians, Turks, Persians, Moors, Arabs & Tartars do not write their books except by hand. [And] that among the others, the Turks are constrained by the ordinance of Baiazeth, second in name, their Emperor [Bayezid II], published in the year fourteen hundred eighty-three, carrying the prohibitions, on the pain of death to not consume printed books, which was the ordinance confirmed by Selim, first of name, [Selim I] his son, the year one thousand five-hundred fifteen[24].

According to Kathryn Schwartz, the Western European environment, where André Thevet wrote and published his work, had been critical for decades towards the Ottoman handling of the Greco-Roman and Byzantine heritage and held the Ottomans responsible for the loss of numerous precious manuscripts. It seems that Thevet's claims must be interpreted in a similar way: The Ottomans were hostile to literary culture, they were dangerous to manuscripts, and whereas Europeans benefited so much from printed books, the Ottoman sultans were the ones who banned the use of these books in the Ottoman Empire[25]. Obviously, André Thevet did not provide any references in his writing about these two sultans' decrees. There is no evidence in the Ottoman archives that would anyhow confirm the existence of these documents[26]. By examining Thevet's information, it seems also questionable, why Bayezid II would have banned the use of printed books and printing in 1483, the same year he received a printed geographical book from Florence. Only ten years later, in 1493, Sephardic Jews established their own printing press in Istanbul without any specific permission from the Sultan (which would have been needed, if the legal ban had actually existed). Even less realistic seems

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19 The first edition of the letters appeared under the title Itinera Constantinopolitanum *et Amasianum* in 1581 in the Plantin press (by the famous publisher Christophe Plantin, of French origin) in Antwerp in Latin. In 1595 the letters were re-published under the title *Turcicae epistolae*.
20 Ogier de Busbecq, Letters 255.
21 Cf. Eisenstein, Revolution 335 f.: »Religion in particular should not be overlooked. There are some non-Asian societies where alphabets were used but where printers were forbidden to apply their craft to sacred texts. In the vast empire governed by the Ottoman Turks, prohibitions against printing not only the Koran but any text in Arabic script remained in effect for hundreds of years.«
22 On André Thevet, his career and travels see e.g. Laborie/Lestringant, Histoire 9-41.

23 See: Schwartz, Sultans 12; Sabev, Müteferrika 13.
24 Translation here: Schwartz, Sultans 12. The original passage reads as follows: Ce qui m'en réd plus asseuré est que les Grecs, Armeniés, Mingreliás, Abissins Turcs, Persiens, Mores, Arabes & Tartares n'escriuent leurs liures qu'à la main. Ce qu'entre autres les Turcs ont pratiqué par l'ordonnance de Baiazeth, second du nom, leur Empereur, publiée l'an quatorze cens quatre vingt & trois, portant dessenses, sur peine de la vie de n'user de liures imprimez: laquelle ordonnance fut confirmee par Selin, premier du nom, son fils l'an mil cinq cens quinze. Thevet, Les vrais pourtraits, II, 515a.
25 Schwartz, Sultans 12.
26 Sabev, Müteferrika 14; Schwartz, Sultans 6.

Thevet's claim about Sultan Selim I (1512-1520), who must have issued a firman in 1515 confirming his father's decree against printing. At this point, there were Jewish printing presses active in Istanbul and Thessalonike, South Slavs established repeatedly their presses in the Balkans and Wallachia[27]. Also, after the alleged »second firman«, printing was active in the Ottoman Empire and printed books were imported from abroad and kept in the sultanic libraries in Istanbul[28]. It is hard to tell where Thevet received this information about the ban for printed books. He himself had spent some time in the Levant and even lived for one year in Constantinople around 1549. Here Thevet must have actually learned about the existence of Hebrew presses that were mentioned e. g. by his compatriot Pierre Belon (1517-1564)[29], whose mission to the Levant ended in the same year 1549, or by the German traveler Hans Dernschwam (1494-1568/1569), who was in Constantinople between 1553 and 1555[30]. This quotation by Thevet wouldn't have gained so much attention and interest in this paper, if it hadn't had a massive influence on the research tradition in the field of the history of printing in the Ottoman Empire. Even though there are no historical documents that would support the legend of the ban on printing or printed books in the law issued by Sultan Bayezid II, who threatened with the death penalty those who wouldn't obey the law, it is still a common narrative in historical scholarship[31], especially in popular scientific works and even in general public knowledge easily accessible via the internet[32]. Another popular name, who claimed that Ottoman sultans prohibited printing, was the English diplomat and historian Paul Rycaut (1629-1700), who already in the middle of the seventeenth century commented on the status of Ottoman education, scholarship, and science in Constantinople in order to explain »the barbarous ignorance of the Turks«[33]. He wrote:

> The Art of Printing (a matter disputable, whether it hath brought more of benefit or mischief to the world) is absolutely prohibited amongst them [Turks], because it may give a beginning to that subtlety of Learning which is inconsistent with, as well as dangerous to the grosseness of their Government, and a means to deprive many of their livelyhood, who gain their bread only by their Pen, and occasion the loss of that singular Art of fair Writing,

wherein they excel or equal most Nations: the effect of which is evident amongst the Western people where Printing hath taken footing[34].

On the one hand, with this statement Rycaut pointed out the »strange« absence of Ottoman Muslim printing, which he attributed to the prohibitions imposed by sultans. He names two reasons for this prohibition: first of all, the Ottoman rulers are afraid of knowledge that could be spread thanks to the printing technology and could end the tyrannic rule; secondly, he pointed out that the sultans had to protect their scribes and their exclusive art and thus ban dangerous printing. This version of the ban on printing with the explanations delivered by Rycaut was also widespread among the later travelers to the Ottoman Empire and has been uncritically adopted by researchers until today[35].

The historical fact is that Ottoman Muslims had not established any printing presses until the eighteenth century. Printed books in Arabic and Ottoman Turkish were imported into the Ottoman Empire first of all from Italian cities. It seems that despite the numerous reports, the Ottoman authorities never prohibited printing or the import of printed books. The demand for printed books was obviously low enough that it could be covered by imports. Instead of pointing out the ›delayed‹ introduction of book printing by the Ottoman authorities, we could ask the following question: what would an Ottoman official press have printed in the sixteenth century, if it had actually existed? As the repertoire of Jewish and Armenian printed books in Constantinople will show, the main demand among various religious communities consisted of religious, liturgical and prayer books. Also, Greek books that were consistently imported into the Ottoman Empire and sold well were liturgical books for everyday services. The Ottoman Muslims considered the printing of books useful as long as sacred and religious Islamic books were excluded from printing, as the very first decree, issued by Sultan Ahmed III for Ibrahim Müteferrika's printing press (1727), prescribed[36]. It is questionable that the demand in geographic, historical, or medical printed books in Arabic, Persian and Ottoman Turkish, which were of interest only to a small group of the intellectual elite, would have been sufficient for establishing and running an Ottoman Muslim printing press in Constantinople of the sixteenth century.

27 Leber, Printing; Kilpatrick, Printing.
28 The most famous of sultanic libraries in Constantinople are the Süleymaniye and Topkapı Palace libraries. Cf. Faroqui, History 46-48.
29 Belon, Les observations III, ch. 13, 181.
30 Dernschwam, Bericht von einer Reise 151.
31 It is impossible to name here all the studies mentioning this prohibition and punishment due to their huge number, I will provide only one reference here to illustrate the point: Müller, Franken 216.
32 Cf. the following links: https://www.zukunft-ch.ch/islam-und-buchdruck-haben-sie-gewusst/; https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ausbreitung_des_Buch-drucks#Naher_Osten (28.10.2023).
33 Rycaut, The Present State of the Ottoman Empire, I, ch. 6, 30.
34 Rycaut, The Present State of the Ottoman Empire, I, ch. 6, 32.
35 On this issue, see: Sabev, Müteferrika 13-15; Schwartz, Sultans 26 f.
36 Here are some passages from the decree by Ahmed III: »Books produced by printing cause several thousand volumes to be produced from a single volume, all of which are accurate copies. With little effort there is great return, making this a desirable activity to pursue…Excepting books of religious law, Koranic exegesis, the traditions of the Prophet, and theology, you asked the Padishah's permission in the aforementioned tract to print dictionaries, history books, medical books, astronomy and geography books, travelogues, and books about logic«. For a complete translation of this firman into English, see here: Atiyeh, Book 284 f.

Jewish Printing in Sixteenth-Century Constantinople

A special role in the printing landscape of the Ottoman Empire and the whole Mediterranean was played by Jews. Sephardic Jews after the expulsion from Spain (1492) and Portugal (starting in 1496) were particularly active as intermediaries and cultural brokers between different parts of Europe and the Ottoman Empire. Their commercial networks were crucial for the book trade. Some Sephardic Jews had been educated in European universities, mostly in Padua, and brought their private libraries including printed books to the Ottoman Empire. Jews were of exceptional importance as booksellers, bookbinders, printers, collectors of manuscripts and printed books, but also as translators and compilers of European printed books[37].

The history of Jewish printing in the early modern Ottoman Empire can officially count as the most successful. A Hebrew printing press was established by Sephardic Jews in Constantinople as early as 1493, one year after the tragic expulsion of Jews from Catholic Spain. The initiative of establishing the printing press belonged to brothers David and Samuel ibn Nachmias, who originated from Spain; the necessary tools for the press arrived in Constantinople from the Italian city of Naples[38]. There is no evidence that Sephardic Jews had any difficulties with establishing their printing press in the Ottoman capital or needed any kind of special permission from the sultan. On the contrary, the colophon to the first published book in Constantinople ʾArbaʿa Ṭurim (1493) contains a praise to Sultan Bayezid II (the one, who allegedly had banned printing under the penalty of death). As the last lines of the colophon read:

> Friday 4 Tevet of the year five thousand two hundred and fifty-four, here in the large city of Constantinople, at the time of the great Mohammedan King Sultan Bayezid's reign, may he live and may the Lord help him and may He enhance his royal rule. Amen[39].

This mention of the sultan's name and the blessing of his rule deserve particular attention as a demonstration of loyalty, acknowledgement, and appreciation of the new Sephardic subjects for their Muslim ruler. Hence, Jewish printing in Constantinople also served to glorify the Sultan and preserve his memory among Jewish subjects[40]. The Nachmias brothers remained the leading Jewish printers in Constantinople and published dozens of Hebrew books until 1511/1512[41].

Not much is known or has been written about the involvement of Romaniote (former Byzantine) Jews in the process of book printing in Constantinople. To be sure, Sephardic Jews in the beginning of the sixteenth century, and later Ashkenazi Jews (mostly recently arrived immigrants), played a much more important role as printers in the Ottoman capital than the Romaniotes. Of course, the position of Byzantine Jews in Constantinople was not a very stable one, following the Ottoman measures that resulted in their forced displacement from remote parts of the Empire to the capital. Still, there are interesting examples of Romaniotes, who were involved in the process of printing as editors or sponsors. It is also important that the interests of Romaniote readership were kept in mind by both, Sephardic and Ashkenazic printers, who thus contributed to preserving the religious tradition of Byzantine Jews.

Already the very first Hebrew printed edition ʾArbaʿa Ṭurim (1493) was prepared for publication in the press of the Nachmias brothers by Elijah ben Benjamin ha-Levi (d. after 1540), a Romaniote Jew and a famous rabbi. He edited the code and authored its colophon[42]. Some of his responsa were published later in Constantinople (1734). Elijah ha-Levi prepared the first collection of prayers for the Romaniote audience for publication – the Maḥzor Romania (Constantinople, 1510)[43]. Thus, Elijah ben Benjamin ha-Levi secured the preservation of the Byzantine Jewish liturgical tradition by using the advantages of printing. Some decades later, another Romaniote Jew – David ben Elijahu Kashti – sponsored publishing projects of Eliezer ben Isaac, an Ashkenazi printer from Lublin, who had moved to Constantinople in 1575 and started working at the press of Sephardic brothers Ja'abetz. David Kashti was also keen in serving primarily the interests of Romaniote Jews, which is why he commissioned a prayer book for the Romaniote rite at first by Solomon and Yoseph Ja'abetz, but entrusted the printing of the second volume to Eliezer Ashkenazi[44].

Particular attention is due to a famous multilingual edition of the Torah, the so called Constantinople Pentateuch (1547) that was published by Eliezer Soncino, a member of a prominent Italian Jewish printers' dynasty. Along with Hebrew and Aramaic texts, it was translated into vernacular Greek and Spanish in Hebrew characters with the hope, as the preface states, »that it would be useful for young Israelites and so that they would get used to speaking correctly«[45]. The translation of the Torah into vernacular Greek had presumably begun in the Late Byzantine period and was concluded most probably already in the Ottoman period by Romaniotes[46]. It means that the Pentateuch of Constantinople contains a

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37 Barbarics-Hermanik, Exchange 109.
38 Offenberg, Incunable.
39 The Hebrew text of the colophon can be found here: Yaari, Ha-Defus 59. Quoted in English from Offenberg, Incunable 233.
40 On the subject of Jewish attraction and allegiance to the Ottoman state, see e. g. Levi, Sephardim 19-21.
41 Freimann, Druckereien 30 f.; Hacker, Printing 20 f.; Harris, Jews 47 f.
42 Cf. the text of the colophon: And I have done my best to make it as perfect as possible by removing all errors imaginable; I, an insignificant man among thou-

sands, Elia, son of Benjamin ha-Levi, may his soul rest in paradise. Offenberg, Incunable 233.
43 https://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/5646-elijah-ben-benjamin-ha-levi.
44 Heller, Printing 112-114.
45 Legrand, Bibliographie II no. 239, 159-161. The French translation of the preface: ibid. 159 f.
46 Sznol, Targum 240.

translation of the Bible in a medieval and early modern form of the Greek language. This edition has received particular attention by scholars because it was the very first translation of the Bible into vernacular Greek (albeit in Hebrew transliteration)[47]. This Jewish edition can be truly considered as an example of preserving the Byzantine heritage in print.

Jewish printing in the sixteenth-century Ottoman Empire was very successful, as Jews published more than 460 titles in print; 280 of them were printed in Constantinople alone. All of these books were printed in Hebrew characters, even though some of them were not in Hebrew, but in Judaeo-Spanish (Ladino), the vernacular language of Sephardic Jews primarily from Spain and Portugal. Thirty books (or seven percent) of all printed book production were in Ladino. At least one edition is known to have been published at least partially in Greek addressing Romaniote (further Byzantine) Jews of the Ottoman Empire and thus also in Hebrew characters. It is the already mentioned edition of the Torah with Haftaroth and five Megilloth, commonly known as the Constantinople Pentateuch (Constantinople, 1547) translated into vernacular Greek and Spanish in Hebrew characters[48]. Joseph R. Hacker mentions also one Persian book in Hebrew characters that was printed in Constantinople for Iranian Jews[49]. The issue of the languages in which Jews printed in the Ottoman Empire has been a controversial one, as some European travelers during the sixteenth century wrote about the multilingual character of Jewish printing in Constantinople. For example, the already mentioned Pierre Belon described Jewish printing in the 1540-s as follows (in a translation by Joseph R. Hacker):

> The Jews expelled from Spain and Portugal well know how to spread their Judaism in Turkey by translating into Hebrew all kinds of books which were continuously printed in Constantinople without any restriction. There, they also print in Spanish, Italian, Latin, Greek, and German. However, they print nothing in either Turkish or Arabic, as they are prohibited from doing so[50].

Joseph Hacker regarded this quotation by Pierre Belon as credible even though there is no evidence that Jews printed any books in the sixteenth century in other than Hebrew characters. As most other historians, Hacker repeated this statement by Belon about the official prohibition of printing in Turkish or Arabic as historically reliable and trustworthy.

The Czech traveler Kryštof Harant (1564-1612), who traveled through the Ottoman Empire in 1598-1599 and left a travelogue *Journey from Bohemia to the Holy Land, by way and the sea* that was published in Prague in 1608, described the situation in a similar way.

> Such Jews established for them a printing press or a typography in Constantinople that Turks themselves do not have. There they print books in all kinds of languages, like Wallachian (?), Spanish, Greek, Latin and Jewish; and they can also publish in other languages except for Turkish and Arabic for the sake of Turks, as these two languages are sacred for them, and they [Jews] are not worthy of them, otherwise they would defile them[51].

Kryštof Harant's description is very similar to the one by Pierre Belon and it is possible that he was acquainted with his work which had first been published fifty years earlier. Both emphasize the privileged status of intellectual Jews, their access to printing facilities and possibilities to print apart from Hebrew in different European languages, but point out that Jews do not print in the languages of Islam, because they are non-Muslims or because they have a ban on printing in Turkish and Arabic. As is usual for European travelers, they were surprised at how freely Jews could live and operate in the Ottoman Empire in comparison to Christian Europe. Among the topoi in the travelogues were the following: the huge number of Jews, who settled in Constantinople and other major Ottoman cities; the freedom of Jewish religious life with numerous synagogues in the Empire; the multilingual character of the Jewish community because of the varied origins of the Jews living there[52]; the great opportunities Jews could enjoy in trade and handicrafts, but also the fact that Jewish people were the subjects of Muslims and had similar restrictions as Christians did in terms of clothes and religious customs showing their inferiority towards Islam and Ottoman Muslims. It seems that this context is crucial for interpreting both quotes, those by Pierre Belon and Kryštof Harant. So the first question is, why did both authors write

47 On this edition and further bibliography, see: Bádenas de la Peña, Lengua; Bádenas de la Peña/Sznol, Traducciones; Sznol, Targum; Krivoruchko, Pentateuch. The re-retransliteration into the Greek alphabet of the Greek text of the Bible was provided by Hesseling, Pentateuque.
48 On this edition and further bibliography, see: Krivoruchko, Pentateuch.
49 Hacker, Authors 20.
50 Hacker, Authors 19. The original excerpt from the source reads as follows: »Les Juifs qui ont esté chassez d' Espagne et du Portugal ont si bien augmenté leur Judaism en Turquie, qu'ils ont presque traduict toutes sortes de livres en leur language hébraique et maintenant ils ont mis impression à Constantinople, sans aucuns poincts. Ils y impriment aussi en Espagnol, Italien, Latin, Grec, et Alman; mais ils n'impriment point en Turc ni en Arabe; car il ne leur est pas parmis«. See Belon, Les observations, III, ch. 13, 181.
51 Spravili sobě dotčení Židé v Konstantinopoli tiskárnu aneb impressí, jíž sami Turci nemají; v té tisknou ve všelijakých jazycích knihy, jako vlašsky, španělsky, řecky, latině a židovsky, a mohou je i v jiných řečech vydávati, krom v turecké a arabské, pro zápověď tureckou, jakoby ty dvě řeči svaté byly a oni jich hodny nebyli, aneb žeby je poškvrnili. See: Harant, Cesta do Země Svaté 47. Kryštof Harant mentioned also that learned Christians who had been ransomed from Ottoman captivity were employed in the Jewish typography and treated as slaves, as they had to work also during feast days. Cf. ibid.: V tiskárně wžívají křesťanův učených a od Turkův z zajetí vykoupených, s těmi jako s otroky nakládají a je i v svátek k robotě a dílu ženou.
52 E.g. Hans Dernschwam described with many details all the languages that were to be found among Ottoman Jews. Cf. Dernschwam, Bericht von einer Reise 144: In der Türkei lebten in allen Städten zahllose Juden aus allen möglichen Völkern und Sprachen, wobei jedes Volk und jede Sprachgemeinschaft zusammen hielt. Sie kamen aus allen Ländern, aus denen sie vertrieben worden waren, und lebten in der Türkei wie in Schwärmen dicht beisammen. Sie sprachen deutsch, italienisch, spanisch, portugiesisch, französisch, polnisch, griechisch, türkisch, syrisch, chaldäisch und andere Sprache mehr. On the variety of Jewish communities in the Ottoman Empire: Härtel, Diversity.

that Jews printed books in many European languages? On the one hand, there is no evidence that Jews had printed in other than Hebrew letters before the second half of the seventeenth century[53]. Maybe the travelers experienced Jews speaking different European languages and suggested that they also printed books in each of their vernaculars. For the sixteenth-century Europeans printing was directly associated with vernacular languages and they could hardly imagine that Jews would print exclusively in their sacred language Hebrew, when they were so capable of communicating with Christians in each of their languages[54]. Another explanation could be that Jews not only printed books in Constantinople, but also acted as translators, bookbinders[55] and sellers of European printed books. Thus the number of European printed books Jews were selling and working with close to Jewish printed production could be confusing for Europeans and lead them to a wrong conclusion.

On the other hand, it is not clear, what European travelers meant about the ban of printing in Turkish and Arabic for Jews. Again, there are no official documents preserved that would contain any specific permissions, regulations or restrictions of the Ottoman authorities towards Jewish printers in Constantinople. Certainly, there could have been some oral agreements that were never written down from the Ottoman Muslim or Jewish part, or there never existed any legal restrictions for Jews concerning printing in Arabic or Turkish. So why would Belon and Harant claim otherwise? Both were definitely aware of the lack of Ottoman Muslim printing in sixteenth-century Constantinople and were possibly interested in finding an explanation for this ›strange absence‹, as Orlin Sabev put it. They wouldn't have written about the complete ban on printing in the Ottoman Empire as André Thevet did, as they knew too well that Jews had actively printed books there. But they needed to demonstrate that sacred for Islam languages were excluded from printing and thus suggested that even though the Ottomans had not prohibited Jews from printing, they had forced them to limit printing only to Hebrew and European languages. Nevertheless, the version about the Ottoman special permission for Jews to print in other languages than Turkish and Arabic, as well as the particular multilingualism of Jewish printing in the Ottoman Empire have been established narratives in the historiography until today[56].

In my opinion, an appropriate question to formulate would be: Why would Ottoman Jews be interested in printing other than Jewish books in Hebrew (or at least Hebrew letters)? The Ottoman Empire was a part of the Eastern Mediterranean printing landscape, where Jewish traders could easily establish connections to any European publishers or booksellers in order to import, for example, European printed books in any languages including Arabic. It seems that the main and the only goal of Jewish printing in Constantinople was to provide the Jewish community with the necessary religious and legal books. As the preface in one of the earliest published books in Constantinople (1506) implies:

> Since that day, when God confused the languages of the earth by the sudden and bitter expulsion from Spain… books were also abandoned in the trauma of destruction… and because of troubles of the times and the lack of books, people have neglected the education of their children. May their hearts inspire them to spread the knowledge of the Torah in Israel… and to replace some of the numerous works which were destroyed[57].

On the one hand, Jews were interested in printing their own books in Constantinople. On the other hand, it was important to take care of funding for the publication and printing activities of the Jewish press. As the price of books in the sixteenth century was very high, the problem of the distribution of books posed a significant problem for printers. Although the wish to make books available for readership was an important motive for printing, the existence of printing presses and their ability to publish further books depended on regular financing as well as public demand. If both these factors did not exist, early modern printing presses could not function and ceased their activities. In the case of Hebrew printing presses in the Ottoman Empire, there seemed to be a list of measures in order to provide necessary funding for presses to enable them to operate. On the one hand, there were patrons of printing among wealthy Jews, who were ready to finance the publication of books for the benefit of the Jewish community. The fact that there was only one Hebrew printing press in Istanbul and thus no concurrence among Jewish printers in the Ottoman capital and later also in Thessalonike, made it possible for representatives of the

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53 Jewish printer Avraham ben Yedida Gabbai definitely possessed Latin typesets and printed also in Spanish and English (in Latin characters). E. g. in 1663 Gabbai printed Paul Rycaut's Capitulations in English with Latin characters. He also apologized in his preface for technical problems with some letters like »w«. See Rycaut, The Capitulations and Articles 8.
54 On Jewish multilingualism in the Ottoman Empire: Hacker, Authors 18-22.
55 As already mentioned above, a Jewish bookbinder who was working with the printed Bible, according to the report by Reinhard Lubenau. Cf. Lubenau, Beschreibung der Reisen 231. Hans Dernschwam referred to meeting one bookbinder from Wroclaw (Breslau), probably a former convert to Christianity, who moved with his sons to Constantinople and around 1552 also brought his

daughter there. Cf. Dernschwam, Bericht von einer Reise 148 f.: Auch jene Juden, die der Taufgeschenke wegen von einem christlichen Land zum anderen gezogen waren, sich zwei oder dreimal hatten taufen lassen, auch um ein Handwerk lernen zu können, fand man in Konstantinopel und in der Türkei. Sie ernärten sich teils von ihrem Handwerk, wie zum Beispiel ein Buchbinder, der lange in Breslau gelebt hatte, mit zwei Söhnen hierher gekommen war und seine Tochter ungefähr 1552 nachgeholt hatte.
56 Hacker, Introduction 18; Hacker, Authors 18; Heller, Book 81, fn. 5.
57 Quoted in English from Ben Na'eh, Printing 79; Yaari, Ha-Defus 18, 59 f.; Freimann, Druckereien 30.

urban community to provide for the only source of printed production. On the other hand, it was necessary to find the way to sell books among Ottoman Jews in order to have stable means for further printing, but also to distribute already printed books. Yaron Ben Na'eh mentioned in this context the following description from the introduction to the Talmud Constantinople edition of 1583, which said:

> Every Sabbath we shall publish sections from the Talmud and distribute them among those who wish to buy them. They will receive these booklets each Sabbath and pay their price so that with God's help the Talmud will be in the hands of everyone in a short while and can be paid for gradually in a manner that will make the burden of payment easier to bear. The Talmud will then be wholly his own by payment which will amount to twenty-five florins. Therefore, now anyone who wishes can come and get booklet after booklet and pay for them…[58].

Among patrons of Jewish printing in Constantinople were also some wealthy women, like *kira* Esther Handali, who sponsored publishing of several books in the Jabez/Ya'abetz press in Constantinople in 1566[59]. Another female patron Reyna Nasi (d. 1599), a widow of the famous diplomat, the Duke of Naxos Joseph Nasi (1524-1579), established a new printing press at the outskirts of Istanbul in Ortaköy (1592), and moved it later (1597) to the suburbs of Kuruçeşme (Kuru-Chesme)[60]. Her press was active between 1593 and 1599 and produced fifteen books in Hebrew and Ladino[61]. After she died in 1599, the Jewish press also ceased its activity and the Jewish community of Constantinople remained without means for printing for several decades, until 1639.

It seems that the demand for a printing press on a regular basis existed only among the Jewish community in sixteenth-century Constantinople. Its success was connected with a broader readership among Jews in the Ottoman Empire and beyond. The level of literacy among Jewish Sephardic and Ashkenazi immigrants from European cities was presumably higher than that characteristic of premodern Ottoman society in general. Printing in Hebrew, the sacred and intelligible language for Jews (at least male ones and non-converts) made these religious books accessible to different Jewish communities of the Ottoman Empire regardless of their everyday vernaculars.

Armenians and Greeks in Ottoman Constantinople: Dealing with Printing Armenians

At least two Armenian printing presses are known to have been active in Ottoman Constantinople in the second half of the sixteenth century. They were tightly connected with the Armenian diaspora and printing networks in Venice. Venice remained the main center of printing for Armenians; Armenians went there in order to be trained as printers; also printing tools originated in Venice and needed to be imported to the Ottoman Empire.

Armenian printing was established for the first time in Venice, at the beginning of the sixteenth century[62]. A few decades later Abgar Dpir, a native Armenian from Northern Anatolia, came to Venice to acquire printing skills. In 1567, Abgar Dpir moved with his skills and press to Constantinople, where he first published a short grammar of the Armenian language. The Armenian printing press was housed in the church of Saint Nicholas Topkapı for only two years. During this time the printer managed to publish five books, including a psalter, a prayer book, and a church calendar[63]. According to the preface in Abgar Dpir's book, Armenian printing in Constantinople had to be coordinated not only with the head of the Armenian Church, but also with the Greek Patriarch and the Ottoman authorities; hence a significant effort had to be made to overcome the bureaucracy[64].

Moreover, the existence of an Armenian printing house in Constantinople was probably complicated by the competition between different Christian groups and denominations. Another Armenian printer, the priest Yovhannēs/Hovhannēs T'ērznts'i, went to Rome and Venice for education, he established a new printing house in Constantinople in 1587, but that did not last long either. However, most Armenian printed books were still produced in Venice and later brought to Constantinople in order to be sold. Their import and distribution were arranged thanks to the activities of Armenian merchants and clerics with active networks in the diaspora abroad[65].

Manuscripts also remained particularly important for Armenian religious culture. The need for Armenian scribes in the Ottoman Empire was evidenced in many points in the text of Simeon from Zamość, who visited Constantinople some decades later. An Armenian traveler Simeon of Poland (1584-after 1636), who had been active as a copyist of manuscripts in his homeland, had no difficulties to find assignments for

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58 Transl. by: Ben Na'eh, Printing 78.
59 Cf. Yaari, Ha-Defus 113; Pektaş, Beginnings 15; Rozen, Community 206.
60 Cf. Meral, Matbaası.
61 Ben Na'eh, Printing 81; Yaari, Ha-Defus 139-147.
62 It was Hakob Meghapart, an Armenian printer, who established the first Armenian printing press in Venice in 1512. His first book was Urbathagirq (The book of Fridays). Hakob Meghapart (»Jacob the Sinner«) published five books in two years 1512-1513. See, Aslanian, Circulation 36f.
63 Kevorkian, Livre; Pektaş, Beginnings 16f.
64 Cf. the colophon to the first Armenian printed book in Constantinople (translated into French by Kevorkian, Livre): Ce livre de prières et livre de messe ont

été composés en 1017 de l'ère des Arméniens [= 1568], un jeudi du mois de mai, sous le catholicossat de Têr Mik'aêl…, dans la métropole de Constantinople, sous la protection de [l'église] Saint-Nicolas, aux pieds du rabunapet [et] patriarche Têr Yakob, avec l'agrément des prêtres d'ici…et de ceux qui ont commandité le livre, de xoca Murat, mahtesi F[…], du clerc Martiros, de Sadar Ibrahimsa, de Toner et Xat'unpasa. Souvenez-vous en outre, dans vos pures prières, de moi, Abgar dpir, qui ai construit cet atelier, ainsi que de mon jeune enfant, le clerc Sultan.
65 Sanjian, Celebrating 6; Aslanian, Circulation 41-43.

copying books in Constantinople in the first decades of the seventeenth century. He reported as follows:

> I stayed in Istanbul for a year. I worked hard copying books in order to save [money] for the trip to Jerusalem, for I had made a vow to go there. Scribes are very valued in Istanbul and although there are many clerics there, there are no copyists, for reading is one art, while writing is another. The laymen, clerics, and k'ahanas gave me many books to copy. I worked and labored zealously day and night, hurried and worried nonstop in order to earn enough for the expenses of the journey, for I had no money left. I earned fifty to sixty drams a day. May God bless the people and the k'ahanas of Istanbul, for I managed to save eighty kuruş that year[66].

Simeon himself was acquainted with the advantages of Armenian printing that he experienced not only in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, but also during his voyage from the Ottoman Empire to Venice and Rome[67].

Printing in Greek Beyond the Ottoman Empire

Greek attitudes towards printing can be addressed only in the global Transottoman context. When dealing with the history of printing in sixteenth-century Constantinople, it is important to stress that Greeks were directly involved in the process of book exchange between the Ottoman Empire and the Western world. European scholars and publishers were interested in Greek manuscripts from the Ottoman Empire that could be easily published in numerous centers of Greek printing like in Venice, Florence, Rome, Alcala, Paris, or Geneva[68]. Greek intellectual émigrés, who had left after the fall of Constantinople in 1453 carrying numerous manuscripts with them[69], played an enormous role in the publishing activities in Italian cities first of all. Increasing European interest in the ancient heritage made Greek scholars abroad important figures in Renaissance culture. Their networks allowed them access to Greek manuscripts and support for their publishing activity in Southern and Western Europe[70]. Printed books in Greek were imported by Greek merchants from European centers to the Ottoman Empire and sold among Ottoman Greeks. It seems that Greeks

in Constantinople until the seventeenth century were not directly interested in establishing a Greek press in the Ottoman Empire. Some travelers to Constantinople like Stephan Gerlach, noted that the Greeks preferred manuscripts to the printed books even though there were many ecclesiastical prints imported from Venice[71].

Little is known about the attitude of Greeks towards printing in sixteenth-century Constantinople. Allegedly, it was already Patriarch Hieremias II Tranos, who had attempted to establish a Greek printing press in Constantinople. However, the only evidence for this is to be found in the so-called *Annales Suevici* of the Protestant theologian Martin Crusius (1526-1607). He mentioned that he had been visited by two Greek priests, Leontius Philoponus and Ezekiel Xyriches on 17 March, 1590. They had been talking about the pitiful condition of the Greek clergy, their lack of education, and their failure to understand the Greek language of the Scripture. In this context, Hieremias' initiatives to improve the level of education among the clergy were mentioned. Martin Crusius noted the following testimony during this visit:

> *Episcopi et clerus Graecorum: indocti plerique sunt, et adversati patriarchae Hieremiae, quando voluit ante plureis annos Scholas et eruditionem in Graeciam introducere, ac Typographiam. Metuunt enim sibi, ne postea removeantur ipsi propter ruditatem[72].*

According to this passage, the Greek clergy resisted Hieremias' reform attempts, because of the fear they would be replaced by more educated ones. Even though this passage mentions the typography in the last place after schools and education for Greeks, K. Sathas suggested that Patriarch Hieremias II had planned to establish a printing press in Constantinople as a part of his reforms to improve the level of education among Orthodox Greeks[73]. Sathas' narrative became a part of the official biography of the Patriach Hieremias II. As Hannick and Todt stated, Hieremias II Tranos had devoted his attempts to the foundation of a typography, but his project had failed, because of the constant resistance from the side of the poorly educated clergy[74]. The facts that Patriarch Hieremias actively advocated for measures for the education of the clergy and that he was also involved during the 1570s in theological negotiations with German Protestants initiated by Stephan Gerlach and Martin Crusius[75], would support the idea of the Patriarch's interest in founding a Greek typography in Con-

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66 See, Simēon, The Travel Accounts 187.
67 Cf. Simēon, The Travel Accounts 138: »The Armenians have also established a printing press [basmakir, from Turkish basma, printing press], which we saw with our own eyes. May God illuminate their souls for they worry about us more than we do about ourselves! They told us that the printing press cost 10000 kuruş. However, at present, just like in Venice, it is idle; because of the carelessness and the evil disposition of our people, there is no manager and no workers«.
68 Cf. Staikos/Sklavenitis, Centres 2-87.
69 Reinsch, Manuscripts 105.
70 See, Rhoby, Friendship 259, 262; Reinsch, Manuscripts 106.

71 Cf., Moennig, Collection 50: *Typographiam nunquam habuisse creduntur. Idem libri ipsorum, plerique manuscripti sunt. Et Bibliotheca in Monte S(ancto) ex manuscriptis constare dicitur. Multi Venetiis importantur impresse: quorum in Templis usus est…Manuscripta, magis, quam impressa, legere amant…*
72 Annales Suevici, vol. 3, 830.
73 Sathas, Schediasma ʟʹ-ʟα' [90-91].
74 Hannick/Todt, Jérémie II 554. The authors of this article also maintain that such an initiative by the patriarch would have never been approved by the Ottoman authorities (without citing any reference for this suggestion) (fn. 24).
75 Hannick/Todt, Jérémie II 558-560.

stantinople even though there is no more concrete evidence that he had attempted to establish one.

Ottoman Greeks were primarily interested in regular supplies of liturgical books that could be used in churches and monasteries in their daily service. This way the Greek clergy was able to preserve the Byzantine liturgical tradition among Orthodox Greeks under Ottoman rule. Greek merchants, especially those who were born in the Venetian territories, acknowledged this demand and ensured that such books were published in large quantities in the Italian cities and organized regular delivery to the Ottoman cities and towns, where they were mostly sold by their agents. In the recent article by Irene Papadaki (2021), the author presented a case study on activities of Manolis Glyzounis (c. 1540-1596), a Greek publisher and copyist in Venice originally from the island of Chios, who was involved in systematic book trade in Constantinople[76]. Glyzounis had been actively interested in the trade of his editions since he first ventured into publishing activities. He sold his books directly in Venice nearby the Rialto Bridge[77], he organized a network of merchants in the Ottoman Empire, who were interested in trading his books in Greek regions. Glyzounis himself also organized shipments of books to Greek regions. In 1588 he sent a batch of 173 copies of the *Octoechos* and the Psalter, 14 copies of the *Anthologion*, and 15 copies of the Gospels to Ioannina. Even more systematic was his engagement with the trade of his printed books in Constantinople, where as of 1590 he had a personal commercial agent: Giacomo Messinis. This merchant from Chios was responsible for the distribution of Glyzounis's books to the local book market and in his homeland. Sales profits covered the needs of Glyzounis's family in Chios, while the surplus was sent to him in Venice[78]. Another characteristic case is the Cypriot merchant Gabriel Cudunà, who bought 197 copies of the Psalter, 124 copies of the *Octoechos*, and five copies of the *Anthologion* in Venice, in order to send them for sale to Constantinople, along with other arts and crafts products[79].

Greek hierarchs, especially patriarchs of Constantinople and Alexandria were well aware of the advantages, but also the disadvantages of book printing, especially in the context of confession-building and competition with representatives of other confessions, first of all German Protestants and Catholics. Treatises and letters of Greek hierarchs became available for publishing and distributing abroad. In the sixteenth century it was the aforementioned patriarch of Constantinople Hieremias II Tranos as well as the patriarch of Alexandria Meletios Pegas, whose writings appeared in print. The negative reply of Hieremias II to the idea of a union between the Orthodox and Protestant Churches, which he had originally sent to Tübingen, had been published in a Latin translation in Cracow in 1582 (Typographica Lazari) under the title *Censura orientalis Ecclesiae de praecipius nostri saeculi haereticorum dogmatibus* and dedicated to Pope Gregory XIII. The initiative for the translation and publication of this text came from the chaplain of the Polish king Stefan Báthory named Stanisław Sokolowski[80]. Hieremias II's text had not originally been written to be printed. It was archimandrite Theoleptos, the patriarch's associate from Constantinople, who arranged that »this book against the Lutherans« was brought to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth by an Armenian priest[81]. His epistle was published in Greek after the Latin preface to *Censura orientalis Ecclesiae* by Hieremias II. A copy of it was sent to Pope Gregory XIII; the anti-Protestant attitude of the patriarch of Constantinople was interpreted as a favorable moment for negotiations about a possible union between Rome and Constantinople[82]. Pope Gregory XIII in October 1582 initiated his famous calendar reform that was shortly afterwards introduced by Stefan Báthory as obligatory for all inhabitants of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, including the Orthodox Ruthenians, who were subordinated to the patriarch of Constantinople. Hieremias II reacted with an epistle against the new calendar, issued in Iaşi (Moldavia) in April 1583. Some months later it was published in its Slavonic translation in Ostroh, in the typography of the Orthodox prince Constantin Basil of Ostroh[83].

As I haven't found much information on Hieremias II Tranos' attitude towards printing, it seems that he himself did not have any influence on the process of publishing his writings. Hieremias' polemical view towards the Protestants was not supposed to appear in print and he possibly considered its publication wrong, as the information that the Orthodox patriarch of Constantinople rejected the attempts of a Lutheran-Orthodox rapprochement, had potentially strengthened the Catholic Church, primarily in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. On the other hand, he probably appreciated that his critique of the new Gregorian calendar could be printed and distributed among the Orthodox Ruthenian clergy as well as lay people and could thus provide a direct and official reaction from Constantinople on this issue. It seems that unlike Hieremias II, the patriarch of Alexandria Meletios Pegas was definitely interested in having his polemical treatises and letters with pastoral contents printed and distributed for a broader readership. He even developed a particular strategy for publishing his texts primarily in the cities of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Not only did he send manuscripts of his treatises with Greek members of clergy and

76 Cf. Papadaki, Glyzounis.
77 Papadaki, Glyzounis 131.
78 Papadaki, Glyzounis 132 f.
79 Papadaki, Glyzounis 131.
80 The book was republished 1582 in Dilingen and Cologne. Some parts of it were republished again in Ingolstadt in 1585. Cf. Legrand, Bibliographie IV, no. 762-764, 239-241; no. 789-790, 275 f.

81 Cf. Censura orientalis Ecclesiae (without pagination): ἔπεμψα ἐκεῖνο τὸ βιβλίον τὸ κατὰ τῶν λουτέρων, μετὰ τοῦ ἀρμενίου ἱερέως τοῦ ἡλιοπολίτου.
82 Hannick/Todt, Jérémie II, 564.
83 Cf. Poslanie patriarcha Ieremii; Guseva, Izdanija II, no. 93, 677 f.

merchants there, but he also informed his correspondents, among them the Russian Tsar, about the successful publication of his work in Ruthenian cities[84]. It is worth mentioning Meletios' treatises »On Christian Piety – an Answer Against the Jew« (Κυρίου Μελετίου Ἁγιωτάτου Πάπα Ἀλεξανδρείας ὑπὲρ τῆς χριστιανῶν εὐσεβείας πρὸς Ἰουδαίους ἀπολογία) (Leontopolis [Lviv] 1593)[85]. As the preface of the Meletios Pegas' following treatise mentioned, it was the success of Meletios' anti-Jewish bilingual edition that became a reason for publishing his other work in Greek: Διάλογος Ὀρθόδοξος Χριστιανός (Bylinē [Vilnius] 1596)[86]. Epistles that Meletios Pegas wrote in support of Ruthenian Orthodox Christians against the Union with the Catholic Church were translated into Slavonic and published in such famous anti-Unionist editions as Apokrisis (Ostroh 1597)[87] and »A booklet in ten sections« (Книжица в десяти разделах) (Ostroh 1598)[88]. Another (re-) publication of Meletios Pegas' epistles succeeded in Greek under the title Περὶ τῆς ἀρχῆς τοῦ Πάπα (Constantinople 1627?)[89] most probably already several decades after Meletios' death, in Constantinople, in the typography that had been founded by the Patriarch of Constantinople and Meletios' nephew, Kyrillos Loukaris (1572-1638), a strong advocate of book printing. He was helped by a Greek emigré from London, the professional typographer Nikodemos Metaxas (1585-1646). The press operated only for a few months, before it was closed by the Ottoman authorities, because of Jesuit complaints about the anti-Islamic character of Greek editions[90].

These examples show that the only aspect of printing Greek hierarchs from the Ottoman Empire were missing, was the possibility of publishing polemical writings. In the second half of the sixteenth century they could use their networks in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in order to publish polemics in Greek or Slavonic. Later, in the seventeenth century, Kyrillos Loukaris would use his typography in Constantinople for publishing polemical writings; in the second half of the seventeenth century the printing presses in Wallachia and Moldavia would become centers of Greek and Orthodox polemical printing. On the other hand, the demand for Greek liturgical books, more important for the broader needs of the Greek Orthodox community, was sufficiently fulfilled by Venetian editions. There is no evidence that the Ottoman authorities were more restrictive towards establishing a Greek printing press than they were towards the Jewish or Armenian ones. But like in the Ottoman Muslim or Armenian cases, there were enough Greek printed books imported. The transregional or Transottoman connections and networks made the global exchange possible, and thus there was no need to have a Greek printing press in sixteenth-century Constantinople.

Conclusion

This paper shows different strategies of Ottoman Muslims, Jews and Christians by dealing with printing in sixteenth-century Constantinople. Even though only Jews possessed their own typography that was active for decades and published several hundreds of book titles in the Ottoman capital during this period, Constantinople remained an attractive center for the trade of printed books in different languages and scripts, and was involved in the intellectual and scholarly exchange with European centers of printing as a source for manuscripts and a recipient of published books.

84 Meletios Pegas informed Tsar Feodor Alekseevič in July 1593 about his polemical book against the Jews, which the Orthodox brotherhood of Lviv had published earlier in 1593 as a bilingual Greek-Slavonic edition. Cf. Regel, Analecta 105: τὴν γὰρ χαλκογραφίαν πολλῇ δαπάνη οἱ ἀδελφοὶ κτησάμενοι τάς τε ἱερὰς βίβλους ἐκτυποῦσι καὶ τὰ παιδείας τῆς χθαμαλωτέρας γράμματα. ἕν ἐστι τῶν πόνων αὐτῶν βλάστημα καὶ τὸ ἡμέτερον τουτὶ ὑπόμνημα τὸ κατὰ Ἰουδαίων, ὅπερ αὐτοὶ λαβόντες κατὰ τῶν τῆς πίστεως τῆς ὀρθοδόξου ἐδημοσιεύσαντο.

85 Legrand, Bibliographie II, no. 200 f.; Leber, Polemics 71 f. 86-105.

86 Only one copy of this printed book is known in the British Library, no. 869. Cf. Legrand, Bibliographie II, no. 218, 115-119.

87 The Apokrisis contains one epistle by Patriarch Meletios Pegas, in section seven of the book, folio 185-192 (a copy from the National Library of Russia, St

Petersburg, I.7.13). The editor introduced Meletios falsely as the incumbent Patriarch of Constantinople (possibly to make his text appear more important to his readers, because of the exceptional authority of the Ecumenical Patriarch): Замыкаючїй всовѣ листы нѣкоторые навелебнѣшого и всестѣйшого кѵрѣ Мелетїа перед тымъ алеѯандрїйского, а теперъ ѹже константинополског патрїархи (fol. 185).

88 A Slavonic edition, consisting of eight epistles by Patriarch Meletios Pegas, one letter by Prince Constantin Basil of Ostroh and one letter by an Athonite monk and publicist Ivan Višenskij. Cf. Guseva, Izdanija II, no. 161.

89 Legrand, Ouvrages, no. 168. 240-243.

90 Cf. Hering, Patriarchat 164-168; Vranoussis, Hellénisme 30 f.; Legrand, Ouvrages, no. 166-168. 234-243; Olar, Typographie; Pektaş, Press (esp. 110-114); Leber, Printing 74 f.

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Summary / Zusammenfassung / Résumé

Dealing with Printing in Sixteenth-Century Constantinople

This contribution asks about the role that book printing played in 16th-century Constantinople. Keeping in mind cultural changes that book printing brought to early modern Europe, the article explores how the knowledge about printing as well as the import of printed books challenged the Ottoman capital. As it is known that the first Ottoman Muslim press was established as late as 1727, this paper asks about the attitudes of the Ottoman authorities towards printing and printed books, about the role of printing for the Ottoman Muslim, Jewish and Christian (primarily Greek, but also Armenian) communities in Constantinople. These groups had apparently different strategies in dealing with printing in the capital: Sephardic Jews established their first printing press in 1493 in Constantinople and printed for decades and centuries almost without disruptions; Ottoman Muslims used mainly manuscripts as their media, but also imported printed books from Europe; Greeks and Armenians mostly imported books from Venice and other centers of printed production with the aid of diaspora networks. Altogether, Constantinople was an attractive center for the trade of printed books in different languages and scripts and was involved in the intellectual and scholarly exchange with European centers of printing.

Der Umgang mit dem Buchdruck im Konstantinopel des 16. Jahrhunderts

Der vorliegende Beitrag befasst sich mit der Frage, welche Rolle der Buchdruck im Konstantinopel des 16. Jahrhunderts spielte. Unter Berücksichtigung der kulturellen Veränderungen, die der Buchdruck im frühneuzeitlichen Europa mit sich brachte, untersucht der Artikel, wie das Wissen über den Buchdruck sowie die Einfuhr gedruckter Bücher die osmanische Hauptstadt herausforderten. Da die erste osmanisch-muslimische Druckerei erst 1727 gegründet wurde, geht dieser Artikel der Frage nach, wie die osmanischen Behörden zum Buchdruck und zu gedruckten Büchern standen und welche Rolle der Buchdruck für die osmanisch-muslimischen, jüdischen und christlichen (hauptsächlich griechischen, aber auch armenischen) Gemeinschaften in Konstantinopel spielte.

Diese Gruppen hatten offenbar unterschiedliche Strategien im Umgang mit dem Buchdruck in der Hauptstadt: Sephardische Juden errichteten ihre erste Druckerei 1493 in Konstantinopel und druckten jahrzehntelang und jahrhundertelang fast ohne Unterbrechungen; osmanische Muslime verwendeten hauptsächlich Manuskripte als Medien, importierten aber auch gedruckte Bücher aus Europa; Griechen und Armenier importierten hauptsächlich Bücher aus Venedig und anderen Zentren der Druckproduktion mit Hilfe von Diaspora-Netzwerken. Insgesamt war Konstantinopel ein attraktives Zentrum für den Handel mit gedruckten Büchern in verschiedenen Sprachen und Schriften und war in den intellektuellen und wissenschaftlichen Austausch mit europäischen Druckzentren eingebunden.

L'emploi de l'imprimerie à Constantinople au XVIe siècle

Cet article traite du rôle de l'imprimerie à Constantinople au XVIe siècle. En tenant compte des changements culturels qu'a entraînés l'imprimerie dans l'Europe moderne, l'article examine comment la connaissance de l'imprimerie et l'importation de livres imprimés ont défié la capitale ottomane. Étant donné que la première imprimerie ottomane n'a été fondée qu'en 1727, cet article explore la position des autorités ottomanes vis-à-vis de l'imprimerie et des livres imprimés, ainsi que le rôle de l'imprimerie pour les communautés ottomanes, juives et chrétiennes (principalement grecques, mais aussi arméniennes) de Constantinople. Ces groupes avaient manifestement des stratégies différentes concernant l'imprimerie dans la capitale: Les Juifs séfarades ont construit leur première imprimerie à Constantinople en 1493 et ont imprimé pendant des décennies et des siècles presque sans interruption; les musulmans ottomans utilisaient principalement des manuscrits comme supports, mais importaient également des livres imprimés d'Europe; les Grecs et les Arméniens importaient principalement des livres de Venise et d'autres centres de production d'imprimés grâce à des réseaux de la diaspora. Dans l'ensemble, Constantinople était un centre attractif pour le commerce de livres imprimés en différentes langues et écritures, et était intégrée dans les échanges intellectuels et scientifiques avec les centres d'imprimerie européens.