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AN 18th CENTURY EASTERN ANATOLIAN DIALECT  
RECORDED IN LATIN CHARACTERS

In last 25 years a considerable number of publications of Turkish texts in non-Arabic scripts have made available a large amount of comparative material, advancing the studies of the spoken Turkish of the period before the 19th century. In this way many new linguistic features not only of the literary language of the Ottoman »élite« but also of the spoken language of the lower classes of the capital have been revealed. In many cases these texts deal with separate Anatolian or Rumelian dialects, thus advancing the Turkish dialectology.

The text under discussion is written in Latin characters in a particular 18th century Eastern Anatolian dialect. The manuscript of the John Rylands University Library in Manchester dating back to 1767 contains Turkish translations of some scores of Gospels and studies made by a French missionary, Father Géry Desiré of Cambrai (North France), which he used for missionary purposes among the Turkish speaking Armenian community in the region of Diyarbakır. We do not know whether Father Desiré was a Capucine or a Jesuit, for both orders were active in south-eastern Anatolia in the 18th century. The Turkish translation is accompanied by a French version of the respective passages from the Holy Bible, although the translations do not always correspond literally with each other. There are also some short fragments written in Armenian in Latin characters at the end of the manuscript. The author states (p. 21) that the language, which he used to speak and write was a spoken language (dialect), which the inhabitants of the region of Diyarbakır could easily understand.

»Tous les passages de l'évangile sont été écrits par le pere Gery Desiré de Cambrai, le turcq est un turcq choisi, et qu'un chacun comprend aisement«.

This suggests that Father Desiré learned this language during his missionary activity having also, very probably, a knowledge of the literary Turkish language. He used the French spelling in the transcription system, though there are sometimes various spellings of the same vowel or consonant, for example the back vowel »ı« is transcribed by »e«, but sometimes a graphic variant »eu« is used, especially when consonants – *r, l, n* follow, for ex, bir birena (birbirina), nakeul (nakıl). An influence of Armenian spelling tradition can be observed in the spelling of the diphthong »ay« (often in auslaut), which should be pronounced like »a«, for ex. vay = va »and«, or in the lack of a vowel in consonant-clusters, especially between – *dl, ns*, for ex. verdüns = verdünüs.<sup>1</sup>

We do not know much about the Diyarbakır dialect previous to the 20th century. There are only a few publications on the dialects of south-eastern Anatolia, of the region between Diyarbakır and the Syrian border in particular. Some early publications have recorded mostly a late 19th century dialect, while others reflect a modern dialect. A general study of the Anatolian dialects was made by T. Kowalski<sup>2</sup> and A. Caferoğlu<sup>3</sup>. The only book on the modern Diyarbakır dialect was published by Şevket Beysanoğlu<sup>4</sup>, which is a collection of folk texts with an introduction on the dialect of rather inferior value. For comparative studies various dialect text publications are also useful, for example those by A. Caferoğlu<sup>5</sup> and A. P. Vekilov<sup>6</sup>, as well as some earlier dialect studies by A. Caferoğlu, T. Kowalski, A. Littmann and others.<sup>7</sup>

The text under discussion reveals, generally speaking, the phonetic features which characterize the Eastern Anatolian dialects. On the other hand this dialect shows some features in common with the Middle Ottoman dialect and also reveals some distinct features of the Eastern Anatolian dialects. In many cases these features are analogous to Armenian-Turkish. As a rule vowel harmony is not observed. Moreover a great number of suffixes with a labial vowel are preserved.

To render the Turkish sounds the author used the following French letters:

#### Turkish – French

|           |           |
|-----------|-----------|
| a – a     | f – f, ph |
| e – e     | g – g, gu |
| i – i, j  | g – g, gh |
| ı – e, eu | h – h     |

<sup>1</sup> This spelling particularity was noted by O. Spies in his *Esman ile Zejdschan. Ein türkischer Volksroman aus Kleinasien*

nach einem armenisch-türkischen Druck, »Anthropos« XX (1925)

|                                    |              |
|------------------------------------|--------------|
| o – o                              | k – k, c, kc |
| ö – eu                             | l – l        |
| u – ou                             | m – m        |
| ü – u, ü                           | n – n        |
| b – b                              | p – p        |
| c – dj, dz, g, j                   | r – r        |
| ç – tch, ch                        | s – s, ş, c  |
| d – d                              | ş – ch       |
| ae = e only in pharisaei           | t – t        |
| ch = k only in Christus, christian | v – v, w     |
|                                    | y – i, i, j  |
|                                    | z – z, ş     |

There are the following suffixes with an unrounded vowel:

|               |                            |                |                        |
|---------------|----------------------------|----------------|------------------------|
| dative        | – a                        | possessive     | – 1 sing. im/im/ /~üm  |
| locative      | – da/ta                    |                | 2 sing. in/in/ /~ün    |
| ablative      | – dan/tan                  |                | 3 sing. i/i/sı/si/ /~ü |
| inifinitive   | – mak                      |                | 2 pl. mis / /~ünüs     |
| negative      | – ma                       | personal       | – 1 sing. em;          |
| optative      | – a                        |                | 2 sing. sen            |
| conditional   | – sa/isa                   |                | 1 pl. iz//ak           |
|               |                            |                | 2 pl.sis               |
| deverbial     | – la                       | plural         | – ler                  |
| participles   | – an; acak; dık/tık        | accusative     | – i                    |
| necessative   | – mali                     | di paste tense | – di/ti                |
| aorist        | – ar/er / /~ür             | miş past tense | – miş                  |
| passive       | – il/il                    | interrogative  | – mi                   |
| denominal     | – ci/çi; ık/ik / /~ıok; li |                |                        |
| gerunds       | – ip / /~üp; iken          |                |                        |
| postpositions | – ilan; tek                |                |                        |

Suffixes with a labial vowel:

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| adjective     | – sus  |
| optative      | – 1 pl. alum   |
| genitive      | – ün/nün / /üm                                       |
| possessive    | – 1 sing. üm/ /~ım/im; 2 sing. ün / /~ın; 1 pl. müs; |
|               | 2 pl. ünüs / /~ınıs                                  |
| verbum subst. | – dür/tür  |
| imperative    | – 2 pl. ün/ünüs                                      |
| aorist        | – ür / /~ar/er                                       |
| gerund        | – üp / /~ip  |
| participle    | – duk / /~dık/tık                                    |

causative — dūr/tūr

di past tense — 1 sing. düm/tüm; 2 sing. dün/tün; 2 pl. dünüs

There occur also a transitional vowel »10«, a labial vowel »o« as a variant of the back vowel »ı« in the following suffixes: 3 person sing. imperative — sion /< son/; denominal — liok /< lok/; iok /< ık/.

We find various phonetic alternations in comparison with the standard, literary language.

*Vowel alternations:* ü > u: kuçuk, uç, vucud; u > o: bordan, bonda, omut, çonki; e > a: edar, tan, mertabeli, zira, kilisa, avel; diphthong shortening — ey > e /ē?/: elamak, meva; öy > ö: söylemak /~ söylemak/; i > ye: fikir

*Consonant alternations:* b > p: pakior, perk; p > b: barmak; d > t: tök-, tikan; t > d: duz, dad, daş; ħ > k: kazna, kalk, kırsus /hırsız/, kresmetkâr; n > l; zengil; l > n: tekmin; ş > ç: çakırd /şagird/; ş > s: skanca /ışkence/, peşkes; ç > ş: borşli, akşa; g > h: perhamber /peygamber/; ğ > k: kayri, sak, bakla-; v > f: ef, kafdiler; d > s: muras; n > g: ög.

*Labialization of vowels:* lazüm, samus/semiz/, möhöbet, cuab

*Delabialization of vowels:* bitün, koniş- /konuşmak/

*Vowel-clusters:* brak-

*Epenthetic vowels:* e: fikrela-, sabrela; a: marahamet

*Progressive assimilation of vowels:* a - i > a — a: saab /sahip/, cahallıok; a — ı > a — a: dagat-; a — i — a > a — a — a: nasahat, şaraat; o — u > o — o: tokom; *Regressive:* ı — a > a — a: yaka-; ı — a — e > a — a — e: kayamet

*Consonant-clusters:* h: abs, ergün, eç, patişalıok; ğ: boaslaçera; y: boğda, üksek; l: kak-

*Epenthetic consonants:* r: kresmetkâr, perhamber; p: kampşı

*Doubled consonants reductions:* izet, möhöbet

*Geminated consonants:* effendi, emmin

*Diphthong shortening:* ev > o: toba /tevbe/, zok /zevk/; ev > ö: döşür-;

*Metathesis:* terciba /tecrübe/

*Regressive assimilation of consonants:* inkân /imkân/

*Progressive assimilation of consonants:* babamüm /babanın/

*Syllable-clusters:* Apram /< Apraham »İbrahim«, cennem /< cehennem/, kitlern- /< kilitlen-/

*Old phonetic forms occur in:* gey-, get- /~git-/, kibi /~kimi/, şindi, konşi /komşu/, dogri, gendi, için, niçun, büyük, obir

*New phonetic forms occur in:* o, kapi, degil /~degel/, karşı, dışari, içari, bana /ben/, sana /sen/

*Forms with vowel or consonant alternations:* Alla ~ Allah; şahir ~ şair ~

şaar; borda~burda; borc~borş; aşıgi~aşaki; çakar~çıkar-; söyle~  
söyle-; possessive suf. -ım~üm; ı~i

*Tenses and moods* /without compound tenses/:

Present: -iyer: negative: -miyer

sing. 1. -iyerem, 2. -iyeresen, 3. -iyer

plural 1. -iyeriz, 2. -iyersis, 3. -iyerler

Aorist -ar/er; -ır/ir; -ür; negative: -mas

sing. 1. -rem, 2. -rsen, 3. -r; plural 1. -riz/ /rık, 2. -rsis

di-past: sing. 1. -düm/tüm, 2. -dün/tün, 3. -di/ti

plural 1. -dık/tık, 2. -dünüs/tünüs, 3. -diler/tiler

miş-past: sing. 1. -mişem, 2. -misen, 3. -miş

pl. 1. -mişak,

Future: sing. 1. -acakem, 2. acaksen, 3. -acak

Conditional: sing. 1. -sam/ /isam, 2. -san/ /isan, 3. -sa/ /isa

Optative: sing. 1. -ayım, 2. asen, 3. -a, pl. 1. -ak

Imperative: sing. 3. -sın, pl. 2-ün/ /ünüs

Impotential: -ama: sing. 1. -amanam, 3. -amas

A great number of the discussed phonetic features are testified to in various earlier dialect text publications (M. Räsänen, Balaknoğlu, F. Luschan, E. Littmann, K. Foy, O. Spies), as well in numerous publications of the modern Anatolian dialects (T. Kowalski, A. Caferoğlu, Ş. Beysanoğlu, A. P. Vekilov). Nevertheless these features do not occur on the whole in any known Anatolian dialect. The dialect under discussion is probably preserved by the Turkish speaking Nusayris or Armenians of that region. The most outstanding characteristic of this Diyarbakır dialect lies in fact that vowel harmony (assimilation) is frequently not observed, which characterizes also the Armenian-Turkish and the Armenian-Kipchak spoken by the Polish Armenians.

The vocabulary shows some dialectal, Anatolian words, some rare old words, and borrowings from Armenian, for example: aparmak — to bring; itik, itkin — lost; gizlin — secretly; görükmak, gürükmak — to appear; uşak — child; gişi — husband; koti — box; şükükmak — to be shocked; cahalliok — debauchery, ill fame; pul — money; çek — coin; çüt — pair; hülla — tabernaculum; puar — source; sofracı — banker; surp (Arm.) — saint; Bogos (Arm.) — Paul.

*Text I, Gospel by St. Lucas, XIV*, in modern Turkish transcription İncil diyer ki bir zengil kimsa varidi, bir gün davet etti, yolladi dostlerini çakırmağa, krestmekâr getti bir dosti yanına, va dedi, benüm agam salam ediyer buyurüm toya, o adam cuab etti, get söyle, bu gün gelamanam, zira bu gün evlenmişem, onün için gelamanam, kresmetkâr getti obir dosti yanına, va dedi, benüm agam salam ediyer, toya çakırdi seni, buyurün(ü)s, o aga dedi kresmetkâra, bu gün bir çüt öküs almışem, gerek gıdayim terciba etmağa, onün

içun gelamanam, getti obiri dosti yanına, va dedi, benüm agam salam ediyer, kakün, gelün toya, o aga kresmetkâra dedi, bu gün bir tarla almışem, sendan rica ederem, boşla beni, onün içun gelamanam, kresmetkâr boş geldi agasinün yanına, nakıl etti gendisina, agasi başladı darulmaga, yolladi kresmetkâri, va dedi, get, yol üstında, dur, er kim ki geçersa al, getür, isterem ki bu ef doli ola, kresmetkâr neca ki işitti, sözini tutti, va bitürdi, kanun dür ki toy saabi gelür, bakaş toya gelanlara, gördi ki o toya gelanlerün içında bir adam var idi ki fana aspabli, o zaman dedi, eh adam, sen niçun buraya girdün ki toy içun aspabün yok idi, kak, kak, get bendan, yer yoktür senün içun, baklayın elni va ayakını, va brakün gendini derında ki alta ki absta, onda olur aqlamak va dişlerini birbirına çalmak.

*Text II, St. Mathew, XXV*

Bir ef saabi kair şahera gidacak idi, getmaktan avel kresmetkârlerini çakırdı, birına verdi beş çeki, birına iki çeki, birına bir çeki, diyer iken işaldüm ben gelana tek, bu sösleri dedıktan sonra getti karib vile[y]atta, bir zamandan sonra geldi, çakırdi kresmetkâlerini hesab istedi gend[i]lerinden, geldi on çeki alan, va dedi benüm saabüm on çeki verdün bana, on çeki da kazandüm, ef saabi dedi gendina, ikramli kresmetkârüm, sen ki emmin bulundün çeklerün üstına, beş şaer üstına üküm ettüm seni, gir zokün içına, sonra geldi bir çeki alan va saabisina dedi, benüm effendüm bir çeki verdün bana, bildüm ki sen bir perk adamsen, biçersen ekmadıkın yerda, döşürürsen sapmadığın yerda, korktüm sendan, senün bir çekün yer altında sakladür, al, senün ki sana, söyledi ef saabi gendina, fana kresmetkâr va alçaksen, bildün ki ben perk kimsa idüm, biçerdüm ekmadığımı, döşürürdüm sapmadıkımı sana lazüm idi ki benüm gömişimi koyaydüm sofracılera, ben üküm ilan teftiş ederdüm, benümkini iraklan bendan, tes va tes, baklayın elni va ayakını va brakün gendini derında ki alta ki absta, onda aqlamak, va dişlerini birbirına çalmak, onda kalmalidür, neca ki Allah, Allahtür.

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## S u m m a r y

### A TURKISH DIALECT FROM EASTERN ANATOLIA – 18th CENTURY TEXT IN LATIN TRANSCRIPTION

This unique text in Latin characters deals with an Eastern Anatolian Dialect of mid 18th century. It has been written by a French missionary, Gery Desiré for a Turkish and Armenian speaking community in the district of Diyarbakır. The Turkish text has been composed in a spoken Turkish, »le turcq est un turcq choisi et qu'un chacun comprend aisement« according to the author's statement. The text consist of passages from the Holy Bibel and the Evangel. It was certainly destined for missionary activity among the Armenians, in aim at convict the »heretics«.

From a linguistic point of view the Turkish text brings many important informations about the spoken language of the Diyarbakır region, especially what concerns the phonetics. Many of the phonetic features enrich our knowledge of the development of the Anatolian dialects and therefore constitute an outstanding linguistic source in the field of Turcology.

## R e z i m e

### TURSKI DIJALEKT IZ ISTOČNE ANADOLIJE – TEKST IZ OSAMNAESTOG VIJEKA PISAN LATINIČKOM TRANSKRIPCIJOM

Ovaj originalni tekst pisan latinicom obrađuje dijalekt u Istočnoj Anadoliji sredinom 18-tog vijeka. Napisao ga je francuski misionar Gery Desiré. Govori o turskoj i armenskoj govornoj sredini u oblasti Diyarbakır. Turski tekst je napisan na govornom turskom jeziku »le turcq est un turcq choisi et qu'un chacun comprend aisement«, kako kaže autor. Tekst sadrži dijelove iz Biblije i Evandjelja.

Sa lingvističke tačke gledišta, turski tekst donosi mnogo važnih informacija o govornom jeziku u oblasti Diyarbakır, što se posebno odnosi na fonetiku. Mnoge fonetske karakteristike obogaćuju naše znanje o razvoju anadolskog dijalekta i zbog toga predstavljaju izvanredan lingvistički izvor na polju turkologije.