

Back to the Gaol: Revisiting Retranslation Hypothesis in the Translations of the Religious Terms in *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*

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Abstract

Within the scope of literary translation studies, a translated piece of prose, a poem, and a play can be questioned over time due to the ageing or the changes in both the source and the target text itself. This questioning process may bring the retranslation of the text. First introduced by Antoine Berman, the "Retranslation Hypothesis" claims that first translations are generally more target-oriented since it is the first time the text is introduced to the target; however, later translations get the text closer to the source text. The claim that the retranslated text is closer to the target text may have divergent outlets like the ageing of the translation and the formative and conceptual shifts in the target language. Nevertheless, there has yet to be an agreed consensus on the hypothesis itself yet. "The Ballad of Reading Gaol", the last and the best-known poem of Oscar Wilde, describes the last days of the Royal Horse Guards trooper, Charles Thomas Wooldridge, who murdered his wife and was sentenced to death. Through him, Wilde depicts different themes like freedom, death, faith, and religion within his perspective, altered by prison conditions. The work was first translated into Turkish by Özdemir Asaf in 1968 and later retranslated by various translators. Therefore, this study aimed to test the validity of the hypothesis analysing the religious terms in the re-translations. The findings of this study revealed that the re-translations, while some of the re-translations are target oriented, the others tend to be source-oriented.

Keywords: Retranslation theory, domestication, poetry translation, religious terms, Oscar Wilde.

Zindana Dönüş: *Reading Zindanı Baladı*'ndaki Dini Terimlerinin Çevirilerine Yeniden Çeviri Hipotezinin Uygulanması

Öz

Edebi çeviri çalışmaları kapsamında bir düzyazı, şiir, ya da oyunun çevirisi zaman içinde hem kaynak hem de erek metnin eskimesi veya değişmesi nedeniyle sorgulanabilmektedir. Bu sorgulama süreci sorgulanan metnin yeniden çevirisini beraberinde getirebilir. İlk kez Antoine Berman tarafından ortaya atılan "Yeniden Çeviri Hipotezi", kaynak metnin dile ilk kez tanıtılması olduğu için ilk çevirilerin genellikle daha hedef odaklı olduğunu ancak daha sonraki çevirilerin metni kaynak metne yaklaştırdığını iddia eder. Yeniden çevrilen metnin hedef metne daha yakın olduğu iddiası, çevirinin eskimesi ve hedef dildeki biçimsel ve kavramsal kaymalar gibi farklı çıkış noktalarına sahip olabilir. Fakat, hala hipotezin kendisi üzerinde anlaşmaya varılmış bir fikir birliği yoktur. Oscar Wilde'in son ve en bilinen şiiri olan "Reading Zindanı Baladı", karısını öldüren ve idam cezasına çarptırılan Kraliyet Atlı Muhafızlarında bir süvari olan Charles Thomas Wooldridge'in son günlerini anlatır. Wilde onun aracılığıyla özgürlük, ölüm, inanç ve din gibi farklı temaları hapisane koşullarının değiştirdiği kendi bakış açısıyla tasvir eder. Eser Türkçe'ye ilk olarak 1968 yılında Özdemir Asaf tarafından çevrilmiş ve daha sonra çeşitli çevirmenler tarafından yeniden çevrilmiştir. Bu nedenle bu çalışma, yeniden çevirilerdeki dini terimlerin analizi ile hipotezin geçerliliğini test etmeyi amaçlamıştır. Bu çalışmanın bulguları, yeniden çevirilerin bir kısmının erek odaklı olduğunu, diğerlerinin ise kaynak odaklı olduğunu ortaya koymuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yeniden çeviri kuramı, yerileştirme, şiir çevirisi, dini terimler, Oscar Wilde.

Introduction

First published in 1989, *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* by Oscar Wilde is pretty popular with Turkish readers, especially with its eternal lines, "Yet each man kills the thing he loves. By each let this be heard" (Wilde, 1907, p. 10). Due to its popularity, different translations by different publishing houses have been published over time. Carrying the traces of Wilde's allegorical and symbolic style, the work bears many cultural and religious elements. Apart from these symbolic elements, the work is unique among Wilde's other masterpieces since it is the ultimate product of his harsh prison experience, where he had to witness a different life from his previous one. As a result of these experiences, Wilde acquired a pearl of

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new religious wisdom which promoted forgiveness and consolidation. Since the religious tone and the symbolism of the work is exceptionally high, transferring it to a culture in which another religion is practised can be a problem due to the risk of domestication, which prevents the essence of the text from being conveyed. Translating the religious elements or terms requires a meticulous procedure especially for a ballad with a highly religious tone.

First translated by Özdemir Asaf as “Reading Zindanı Baladı” in 1968, various translators translated the ballad successively seven times. Supposing there might be different motivations for each translation, the necessity for retranslation was inevitable, which brought about the Retranslation Hypothesis, first introduced by Antoine Berman in 1990, suggesting that first translations are somehow poor and “incomplete” and need to evolve and according to him, the first translations generally take the text away from their source since it is the first time that the text to be translated is introduced to the target language, and succeeding translations, by making use of the first ones, can bring the text closer to the source language.

In Türkiye, a highly Muslim-populated country, the translation of the religious terms and symbols in the first translation of this ballad is expected to be adjusted to an Islamic manner to be accepted by this Muslim community in line with this hypothesis. In other words, the first translation might have called for domestication, a concept suggested by Venuti in 1995, which argues that “translation which is oriented to the target culture and in which unusual expressions to the target culture are transmuted and changed into some familiar ones to make the translated text easy to be understood by the target readers” (Wang, 2014, p. 2423). Furthermore, according to Retranslation Hypothesis, the successive translations would take the work to a more Christian one. Hence, the study aims to test the “Retranslation Hypothesis” for the translation of religious terms to see whether Christian terminology is domesticated in an Islamic manner.

This study consists of five parts; the “Theoretical Framework”, in which the “Retranslation Hypothesis” is tried to be explained, and in the second part, “Translatability and Untranslatability of Poetry Translation” problems of poetry translation are mentioned in general. In the third part, “Wilde, Religion and the Ballad”, the background story of *The Ballad of the Reading Gaol* highlights the importance of religion as a theme, as well as the structural features of the ballad, are stated. In the following part, “Method of Study,” the nature of the study is explained in detail with sub-headings “Ballad in Turkish” and “Sampling and Findings”, where the sampling and the results are shown and discussed. Finally, the “Concluding Remarks” part attempts to finalise the study.

1. Theoretical framework

First suggested by Antoine Berman in 1990, retranslation is the process of translating a text again, a literary one, following the first translation. Aiming merely literary retranslation, Berman argues that all translations are somehow a 'failure'. This failure status is primarily seen in the first translation since they are the first introduction to a new culture and society. He believes that first translations can never be great translations because perfection will come with the following since the first ones are mostly “not complete translations and, as is well known, full of flaws; then come the . . . retranslations” (Berman as cited in Brownlie, 2006, p. 148). For Berman, the road to the perfect translation of a literary piece is initiated with a starting point, which is the first translation then it excels more with each new translation in a linear fashion. “In other words, the more we translate, the better results we get, and eventually we get access to an ideal translation” (Dastjerdi & Mohammadi, 2013, p. 175) since the translation is gradually completed each time. He furthers his argument by suggesting that the following translations are keen to keep the essence of the original.

Retranslation is also defined as the second or later translation of the exact source text into the target language, and this retranslation process can be expanded over a while or co-occur. A precise definition of the theory still cannot be made. “Although the practice itself is common, theoretical discussions on

the subject are rather rare, and there is no detailed or systematic study on retranslations” (Susam-Sarajeva, 2003, p. 135). Again various studies on definitions, reasons and means have been conducted. For Vanderschelden (2000), revision, including editing, correcting or modernising a preceding translation for re-publication, can be regarded as a starting point for retranslation.

Shuttleworth and Cowie (1997), on the other hand, defined the production of a second or later translation as “indirect”, “intermediate”, “relay”, or “second-hand”. For Almberg (2010), these different translations are “new translations” or “multiple translations.” Even if some different definitions are put forward, the process itself disables to make a clear definition since;

The issue is more complicated than that. A close reading of numerous case studies has revealed that versions may get labelled as revisions or retranslations somewhat arbitrarily. This means that a version that relied heavily on a previous translation and was initially labelled as a revised edition in the publishing house may later be reprinted as a new translation. Furthermore, some texts are hybrids, containing chunks of revised earlier translation and chunks of retranslation (Koskinen & Paloposki, 1984, p. 294)

As seen from the excerpt above, sometimes it is hard to define the new product as a translation as it can be a revision but published as a new translation.

The process itself is complicated based on the reason or the application. Brisset (2000, p. 345) states that the original text changes due to authorial, editorial, printing, and technological modification or political ones. For various reasons, the activity is simple; different translators perform retranslation with varying strategies over a while, which can even be decades.

Charles (1998) lists these strategies as follows;

- 1) Corrective translation: Correcting what is already translated as faulty more faithfully.
- 2) Critical translation: Re-translating of an error-free text with a new interpretation that the original lacks.
- 3) Proselytising translation: Re-translating of a technical text with the appropriate style, terminology, and register.
- 4) Neoconceptual translation: Within the framework of this strategy, the translation is purified from its offensive language (gender or racial discrimination) (as cited in Li, 2013, p. 1911).

Bensimon (1990) again advocates this first target and second source-orientedness concept. He believes culture might be the most important reason for a target-oriented translation since it is widespread for a culture not to accept something that they are not familiar with. Therefore they try to adapt it into the domestic culture. After the text is introduced, and it is no longer a foreign text, translations can be more source oriented. For him, first translations are constructed to be target-oriented, and in the retranslations, the source is the target, and the main reason for this is that sometimes it is hard for a culture to accept something that they are not acquainted with. While the first translation is a simple debut into another language and culture, the following translations are the ones that make the original one speak.

Venuti's concepts of domestication can explain this debut process. Venuti bases his concept on Schleiermacher, who favours the idea that in “translation, the translator either leaves the author in peace, as much as possible, and moves the reader towards him, or he leaves the reader in peace and moves the author towards him” (Schleiermacher, 1813, as cited in Venuti, 1995, p. 15). While the first translation domesticates the text, the second translation may foreignize it, and therefore, the re-translated version “help(s) texts in achieving the status of a classic, and the status of a classic often promotes further retranslations” (Koskinen & Paloposki, 1984, p. 295). Both Berman (1990, p. 5) and Bensimon (1990, p. 1) state that when something is a foreign, modification (domestication in this sense) is inevitable for the first translation. However, in poetry translation, some other parameters might affect the translators' choices while translating the texts and, therefore, it will be discussed briefly in the following section.

1.1. Translatability and untranslatability of poetry translation

The untranslatability of a literary piece has long been discussed in academia (including literature, linguistics, translation studies, and even sociology), and poetry takes the first place. Transferring these mechanisms to a target language may seem impossible, considering the language's mechanics (rhymes and sounds). Apart from these mechanics, the figurative elements, which are the product of the culture the language belongs to, are said to be transferable to another one. Kuçuradi (1978) reflects on this problem by stating that the most challenging part of poetry translation is to transfer the sounds and words which will create the image the poem is meant to give. For her, that makes poetry translation impossible. Berk (1978) also talks about this impossibility. He believes the meaning is only one element to be given in a literary piece. Other features include the mechanics, figurative factors and authorial intentions based on the target culture. The point here is the losses linguistically and culturally since Rifat (1981) asserts a poetical piece is only meaningful for the society it is written. Therefore, it can be said that "poetry translation involves transforming not only text but also cognition, discourse, and action by and between human and textual actors in a physical and social setting" (Jones, 2011, p. 123). Finally, Lefevere (1975) also believes that many of the poetry translations "are unsatisfactory renderings of the source text" because they cannot grasp what it means to capture its totality (as cited in Sharif & Khameneh, 2015, p. 54).

Still, there are many opponents against the idea of the translatability of poetry and those who believe it is possible. For Paz (1992), feelings and emotions within a poem are universal, making them translatable. Like music, it is an international language and can be transferred from one language to another. Even if the process of poetry translation has the same steps as any translation process, as Newmark (1988) suggests, creativity to find the equivalent sounds, rhymes, idioms, etc., might be very challenging.

Kuic (1970) ranges her four steps to be taken in poetry translation as follows;

- 1) Preparation and research (including the poet's life, emotions, and experiences),
- 2) Identification of the translator with the poet's,
- 3) Creativity, where the text is re-created through translation,
- 4) Criticism is where the translator, after giving a break, criticises his/her work unbiasedly. (p. 185)

Apart from these steps, she also suggests that the law of the three kinds of faithfulness should be followed, too: the meaning of the source language, the sound of the source language, and the spirit of the target language. Boase-Beier (2010), on the other hand, emphasises the importance of loyalty to the source poem's style. While translating, it is crucial to stay true to a source poem since this style determines the poet's mood.

And finally, Holmes (1994) mentions three main approaches to the poetic form, which are;

Mimetic: Replicating the original form.

Analogical: Using a target form with a similar cultural function to the source form.

Organic: Choosing a form that best suits the translator.

As seen above, the translatability of poetry pose various difficulties and rises from many other challenges, like the mechanic of a poem. Furthermore, as a culture-bound element, the translation of religious terms and concepts also causes problems; hence the next section will discuss these difficulties in detail.

1.2. Translation of religious terms and concepts

Wang (2014) explains culture as "local or specific practice, beliefs or customs, which can be mostly tasted in folk culture, enterprise culture, or food culture etc." briefly and "the total way of life of a people, including the patterns of belief, customs, objects, institutions, techniques, and language that are

characteristic of the life of the human community (p. 2423) in general. These two approaches show the extent that culture may span and the challenges of its transfer from one language to another since culture is also “a system of symbolic meanings that shape one’s way of thinking” (Rohner, 1984, p. 111). Therefore, different scholars have suggested some models or categories to handle them properly, and one of the most significant categorisations is that of Newmark’s (2010). In his classification, Newmark puts forward six categories: ecology, public life, social life, personal life, customs and pursuits, and finally, private passion². His final category, private passion, includes religion, music, poetry, social organisations, churches, poetry, and societies. Translating a religion-related term might be problematic since “translating religious discourse, we encounter within a specific context all the major problems of translation, such as questions of equivalence and fidelity or the issue of how translations find a place in a literary polysystem” (Milton, 2021, p. 112). Larson (1984) also believes “terms which deal with the religious aspects of a culture” might be highly challenging as well as finding the most suitable equivalent since “various aspects of meaning involved” (p. 180). As the religious practices may vary from one religion to another, or in other words from one culture to another, finding the equivalent may be problematic, and domestication might be used as a strategy which in return may take the text away from the reader, leading to the retranslation of a translated work.

The previous part of the study aimed at presenting the “Retranslation Hypothesis” in general, as well as dealing with the issues of translatability of poetry and the translation of religious words. The next part will present the background information of the Ballad and its translation journey in Türkiye.

2. Wilde, religion and the ballad

2.1. Background for the story

Being one of the most proclaimed works of Wilde, the ballad reflects his “prison experience, of course, but even more directly, it is the result of his conversion experience into language” (Buckler, 1990, p. 33). Being a remarkable member of English society, Wilde “was convicted of an immoral act and sentenced to two years on May 25, 1895. He was first imprisoned in Pentonville and then in the Wandsworth prison in London” (n.d). After spending a long time in a fancy lifestyle, the harsh prison life opened deep wounds and cuts in his life that were hard to heal even after his discharge. He witnessed an event that inspired him to write his famous ballad during his stay there. The story goes as follows.

The actual story from which the poem begins is simple: Charles Thomas Wooldridge, a trooper in the royal guards, murdered his twenty-three-year-old estranged wife, Laura Ellen Wooldridge, on March 29, 1896. Mad with jealousy, he borrowed a razor, waited for her on the road near her house, and slit her throat three times. Since it was a pre-meditated crime, pleas on his behalf to alter the death sentence had been rejected by the Home Secretary, and he was sentenced to be hanged on July 7 from the scaffold at Reading Prison, to be used now only for the second time since its installation eighteen years before. Wooldridge was said to have died bravely, but Wilde himself could have seen nothing but first-hand of the crime or the punishment except for the “hangman, with his little bag” (Alkalay-Gut, 1997, p. 350).

This event, combined with the other harsh conditions he had to endure, affected him so profoundly that “his technique of registering the inner action of the poem on a highly responsive sensibility had led him into the aesthetic fallacy of relying too literally on things that had happened to him personally in Reading” (Buckler, 1990, p. 37). In other words, the work is filtered from his mistered soul, which inevitably led to this masterpiece.

Apart from the pains and other negative experiences, Wilde acquired a new concept of religion on his own there, which is filtered through his consciousness. This is worth noting since his religious identity had always been controversial due to “Wilde’s love of artifice and his homosexuality, a sense of guilt or remorse seems inescapable within a Victorian context” (Quintus, 1991, p. 515). Because of this, it is pretty

² Since the main purpose of this article is not culture-specific items, other models and categories are not included for a wider understanding of the topic. The Newmark (2010) model has been mentioned only to emphasize that the religious terminology is culture specific.

obvious for him to deny Christianity and welcome atheism. However, this was not the case with him since he “modified it to suit his own needs [...] because he viewed Christ and Christianity as capable of transforming human beings into sentient people who demonstrate sympathy as well as self-reliance” (Quintus, 1991, p. 515). These hardships and the feeling of guilt created religious solidarity for him, and Wilde embraced a religion of forgiveness. The ballad deals with an outcast sinner who cannot, like the now-imprisoned poet, expect comfort from society or churches but in whose plight Christ nonetheless will take a particular interest (Quintus, 1991). Living the life of an outcast, Wilde formed a new religious framework for himself where forgiveness is the unitary force. Therefore, he created a religious ambience with symbolism in the work that can be hard to translate to another language whose culture is clinched to another religion.

2.2. Structural features

The Ballad of the Reading Gaol, as its title suggest, is in the form of a Ballad, which is “a poem that tells a story of adventure, of romance, or of a hero, that is suitable for singing, and that usually has stanzas of four lines with a rhyme on the second and fourth lines” (Merriam-Webster, n.d.) and still bears the traces of an oral tradition. Wilde constructed this work into six separate sections and as 109 stanzas and tells the story from the narrator – his own- point of view. The rhyme scheme of ballad is abcbdb for each of these sections. The work is centred around the themes of freedom, imprisonment, hopelessness, empathy, and religion. The poet suggests that due to the imprisonment, a significant number of the prisoners turn their faces to God since they are all forced to live in very harsh conditions and find hope through praying. This work is also notable in its perfect conversion of Wilde's allegorical and symbolic genius.

Along with the symbolic meaning attributed to Sky, the Hanging tree, God and Christ, the Rose, the Wine, etc., the ballad contains numerous religious allegories. For example, the introductory line 'He did not wear his scarlet coat' (p. 11) Wilde refers to the biblical story where the soldiers mocked Jesus on the way to his crucifixion. (Alkan, 2003, p. 81)

3. Method of study

To conduct this study, different translations of the work, “Reading Zindanı Baladı” by Özdemir Asaf (1968) “Reading Hapishanesi Baladı” by Tozan Alkan (2002), “Reading Zindanı Baladı” by Oğuz Baykara (2017) and finally “Reading Zindanı Baladı” by Türkan Yılmaz (2020) were analysed in terms of the translation of the religious terms comparatively to find the degree of domestication (Islamic) to validate the Retranslation Hypothesis.

3.1. Ballad in Turkish

The ballad has been translated into Turkish seven times, and their related information can be seen in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Chronological order of the Turkish translations of the *Ballad of the Reading Gaol*

No.	Translator	Translated Title	Publishing House	Date
1	Özdemir Asaf	Reading Zindanı Baladı	Sanat	1968
2	Tozan Alkan	Reading Hapishanesi Baladı	Bordo Siyah	2003
3	Oğuz Baykara	Reading Zindanı Baladı	Everest	2017 (May)
4	Piyale Perver	Reading Zindanı Baladı	Dedalus	2017 (September)
5	Ahmet Şerif Doğan	Oysa Herkes Öldürür Sevdiğini Reading Zindanı Baladı	Tilki	2019
6	Osman Tuğlu	Reading Hapishanesi Baladı	Klaros	2019

7	Türkan Yılmaz	Reading Zindanı Baladı	Zeplin	2021
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For this study, the highest number of translations was aimed for the analysis, yet not all of them were available in soft or hard copy. Therefore, Alkan, Baykara, and Yılmaz retranslations were analysed to test the hypothesis. Below, the covers of the books analysed in this study have been presented.

Table 2. Translation of the *Ballad of the Reading Gaol* used for this study.



Oscar Wilde was one of the few writers who profoundly influenced Özdemir Asaf. When he was appointed to his unit in Erzurum Topalak village from Ankara Infantry School in 1948, he could not bring his wife and daughter to his new duty station. Therefore, he buried himself deep into translation there. It was during this period that his translation journey of the ballad started. After completing his translation, he published it in his own publishing house, 'Sanat'. Emphasising the hardships of translating the Ballad as a literary form, which has no equivalent in Turkish literature, he used a syllabic meter of 7+7 and 7. On the back cover of the book, he underlined that “The entire 645 lines (109 sixes) of *The Ballad of the Reading Gaol* has been translated into Turkish with equal value as a poem.” (Özpinar, 2012, para 2). Since this original copy of the translation was not available for this study, no comments on the extra sections like the preface, the story, or the poem can be made.

Tozan Alkan's version, published in 2003, is unique because it is the only translation that explains the religious allegories with footnotes. The translator is privileged to supply the reader with extra information with paratextual elements. In addition to the footnotes, a brief autobiography of Wilde and the story of the creation process was added to this version, too.

The next retranslation by Baykara starts with a preface where the translator touches upon his own translation journey, the poem, and his translation process. He explains how he has formed a rhyme scheme of abcbdc and used an iambic meter of 8-6-8-6-8-6. He uses eleven-twelve syllables to appropriate the ballad form to Turkish epic poems. Out of all the re-translators, Baykara is by far the freest translator, with the formative changes he made and his word choices (See Tables 4-9). This translation is also worth noting for its usage of actual drawings which were first used in the 1907 print of the ballad as the paratextual elements for each page.

In the newest translation by Türkan Yılmaz, the reader is presented with a concise information section about the ballad (the translator prefers the word poem here) and her own translation process at the end of the book. She explains that the rhyme a scheme she uses is abcbdb and an iambic metre of 8-6-8-6-8-6.

3.2. Sampling and findings

As already mentioned, religious and religion-related terms can be more susceptible to domestication when they are introduced to a new culture with a different religion in practice for the first time. Even if the motivation for this may vary -political, social, cultural etc.- translators sometimes prefer to use domestication as a strategy, especially for the religious practices like rituals, sermons, different types of praying etc. since it would be much easier to convey meaning in that way and to overcome the prejudices towards the source religion. Therefore, the target text, the *Ballad*, is closely read, and religion, Christianity-related and Biblical words are determined. It has been observed that fifteen words compromise the religious discourse of the ballad. Table 3 below shows the words along with their frequency of use.

Table 3. Frequency of the religion-related terms and words in the *Ballad of the Reading Gaol*

No	Word	Frequency
1	Christ	9
2	God	9
3	Pray	8
4	Sin	5
5	Chaplain	4
6	Hell	4
7	Prayer	3
8	Lord	3
9	Devil	1
10	Lord of Death	1
11	Cross	1
12	Chapel	1
13	Sinner	1
14	Paradise	1
15	Cain (First Man)	1

Out of these fifteen words “God”, “Christ”, “Pray”, “The Lord” were analysed in detail to validate the theory due to their relatively highest frequency of use. To give a more comprehensive picture of the chronological order of the successive translation, each word is presented in line with their publication date following the first translation. To show the frequency of the domestication strategy used by each translator, back translations of the words (inayet, rahmet, şefaat, ayin, and Israfil) are provided by the researcher. Table four below presents the first and the following translations of the term “God”.

Table 4. Examples of the translations of the religious term “God”

Word & Lines		Translators			
		ASAF (1968)	ALKAN (2003)	BAYKARA (2017-May)	YILMAZ (2020)
GOD		Tanrı Yaradan	Tanrı İsa	Tanrı Yarabbi Rab	Tanrı
1	In God’s sweet world again (p.22)	Yaradan’ın bu eşsiz, güzelim dünyasında. (p.22)	Efendimizin bu tatlı ülkesinde (p.26)	Ne tatlı günümde ne kederimde (p.39)	Dünya gözüyle (p.17)
2	And God from out His care (p.22)	Tanrı silmiş, Tanrısız: (p.23)	Merhametini esirgemişti Tanrı; (p.27)	Tanrının lütfundan hep mahrum olduk (p.39)	. . . Ve tanrı, rahmetinden (p.17)
3	God’s dreadful dawn was red.(p.30)	Tanrının korkunç günü başladı kırmızıdan. (p.37)	Seher dehşetle kızıla kesmişti (p.44)	Lanetli bir kızılık başladı güne...(p.57)	Tanrı’nın ürpertici şafağı kırmızıya boyanmıştı(p.25)
4	Out into God’s sweet air we went, (p.37)	Dışarıya çıkmıştık, Tanrının havasına, (p.45)	Tanrının tatlı havasına çıktık, (p.54)	Dışarısı güzel, ne söylesek az,(p.67)	Dışarıya çıktık, açık hava ne güzel (p.29)
5	It is not true! God’s kindly earth (p.40)	Ki hiç doğru değildir! Tanrınıdır topraklar (p.50)	Doğru değil bu! Allah’ın toprağı Hiç düşündükleri gibi değildir, (p.59)	Böyle bir şey var mı aman yarabbi! (p.35)	Ne ahmaklık! Tanrı’nın merhametli toprağı(p.31)
6	But God’s eternal Laws are kind (p.50)	Tanrının Yasaları iyi, ölümsüzse de (p.63)	Ama tatlıdır Tanrı’nın yasası (p.72)	Fakat Rabbin inayeti derindir. (p.89)	Ama Tanrı’nın ebedi yasaları şefkatlidir. (p.37)

As can be inferred from the table, the first translator Asaf prefers the Turkish equivalents of “Tanrı” and “Yaradan” for the word “God”, while re-translators Alkan and Baykara add “Allah”, “Yarabbi” and “Rab” to this body. It is worth noting that Asaf used domestication as a strategy with his utterance, the word “Yaradan”, which has an Islamic connotation, meaning “The creator”. In the same vein, the preference of the successor translators also bears Islamic domestication. What is worth noting here is the usage of the word “inayet” by Baykara for the example six to complement the word “Rab”. The translator here uses this word to correspond to the word “Laws”, yet its meaning is not correct since the word “inayet” has an Islamic connotation meaning “God’s protection, help and grace³.” In the same sense, example two (Baykara and Yılmaz) also presents such a domestication with the utterance of the word “Rahmet” for “His care” meaning “compassion, mercy and kind-heartedness and compassion towards someone who is in a pitiful state and that when attributed to Allah, it should be taken to mean “giving grace”, which is the product of mercy.⁴”, again a word generally used in an Islamic context. Therefore, it can be assumed that the translator adopted a mimetic approach to correspond the Ballad form (see section 4.1.) and pursuit a faithfulness to the spirit of the target language and culture. The following table presents the translations of the next term “Christ”.

³ <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/inayet>. Accessed on 23 May 2023

⁴ <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/rahmet> Accessed on 3 May, 2023

Table 5. Examples of the translations of the religious term “Christ”

Word & Lines		Translators			
		ASAF (1968)	ALKAN (2003)	BAYKARA (2017-May)	YILMAZ (2020)
CHRIST		Tanrı Yaradan	Tanrı İsa	Tanrı İsa Mesih	Tanrı İsa
1	Dear Christ! The very prison walls (p.10)	Tanrım! O an zindanın taşları, duvarları (p.11)	Tanrım! Hapishanenin duvarları (p.13)	Aman Tanrım! derken zindan duvarı (p.23)	Tanrım! Zindanın duvarları aniden çarka dönuştü. (p.10)
2	Ah! Wounds of Christ! They were living things, (p.29)	Kanayan yarasıdır bunlar hâlâ İsa'nın Görünüşleri bile.(p.35)	Ah tanrım! Gerçektiler basbayağı Gördüğümüz korkunç, feci bir şeydi! (p.42)	Şefaati İsa , ya o yaralar! Gel gör ki seninkini aratmıyorlar...(p.55)	Ah! İsa'nın aziz yaraları! O varlıklar Görülesi en çirkin şeylerdi. (p.24)
3	Christ brings His will to light, (p.41)	Tanrının Hikmetinden, (p.51)	Tanrım bizlere kendini nerede, ? (p.60)	İsa'nın hikmetinden sual sorulmaz... (p.75)	Sual olunmaz İsa'nın hikmetinden, (p.31)
4	And bound with bars lest Christ should see (p.47)	İsa görmesin diye parmaklık takılmıştır (p.58)	İsa Efendimiz görmesin diye (p.68)	İsa görmesin diye kardeş kanını(p.83)	Ve kuşatılmıştır parmaklıklarla İsa görmesin diye(p.35)
5	May Lord Christ enter in? (p.50)	Efendimiz İsa'mız ruha süzülüp girer? (p.64)	Girer mi hiç onun içine İsa ? (p.73)	Yoksa İsa ruha nereden girer (p.89)	Nasıl sızabilir İsa İçeri . . . (p.37)
6	And the crimson stain that was of Cain Became Christ's snow-white seal. (p.51)	Ve taa Kabil'den gelen o kırmızı lekeydi İsa'da kar beyazı, İsa'da ak pak olan. (p.65)	Kabil'in elindeki kızıl lekeler İsa'nın işareti gibi ak şimdi (p.75)	Kabil'in bıraktığı o kızıl leke, Dönmüştü İsa'nın beyaz mührüne... (p.91)	Ve Kabil'in kan lekesi İsa'nın kar beyazı mührü oluverdi. (p.38)

For the translation of the word “Christ”, nearly all translators followed the same pattern except for the use of “Mesih”, meaning messiah, by Baykara. In the first and second examples, the use of “Christ” with an exclamation mark exhibits some sort of a cry; therefore, all of the translators preferred to use the word “Tanrım” instead of Christ (İsa, the name of the prophet in Turkish). Yet, the employment of domestication cannot be mentioned here, since a term with Islamic connotation is not used instead. However, in the example two, the line “Ah' wounds of Christ” is translated by Baykara as “Şefaati İsa”, complemented with the word “Şefaati which has a high Islamic connotation meaning “the prophets and righteous servants who are allowed to pray in the presence of Allah for the forgiveness of believers on the Day of Judgment”⁵. Similarly, the example two “Whom Christ came down to save” is translated as “Şefaati Mesih'inden beklemeliydi...” by Baykara and “İsa'dan beklemeliydi şefaati” by Yılmaz, again hinting Islamic domestication in the successive translations. Therefore, for the translators Baykara and Yılmaz, the adaptation of a mimetic approach to correspond the Ballad form (see section 4.1.) and an act of faithfulness to the spirit of the target language can be argued. Table 6 shows how the term “Pray” is translated by each translator.

⁵<https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/sefaat>. Accessed on 3 May 2023.

Table 6. Examples of the translations of the religious term “pray.”

Word & Lines		Translators			
		ASAF (1968)	ALKAN (2003)	BAYKARA (2017-May)	YILMAZ (2020)
PRAY		Secdeye varmak Dua etmek	Dua etmek Duaya durmak	Dua etmek Duaya dalmak Ayin	Dua etmek
1	And when he crouched to pray; (p.23)	Secdeye varmak için yere çömlse bile; (p.24)	Dua etmek için eğildiğinde (p.31)	Duaya daldı (p.43)	Dua etmek için çöktüğünde (p.18)
2	Grey figures on the floor, And wondered why men knelt to pray Who never prayed before(p.27)	Yerde gri biçimler, çömlmiş dua eden, Secdeye varmışlardı, şaşkınlıkla gördüler; Dua etmezdi oysa hiçbirisi önceden. (p.32)	Diz çökmüş gölgeler gördüler birden; Şaşkın gözleri kocaman açıldı, Hayatlarında hiç dua etmeyen Bu insanlar duaya durmuşlardı (p.39)	Yerlere diz çökmüştü siyah gölgeler. . . Hiçbir mahkûm etmemişti hayatta dua, Ama gece ayin vardı, sebep ne ola? (p.51)	Ve zemindeki gri figürleri şaşkın bakışları izledi, Ve da önce hiç dua etmemiş olanların Niye diz çöktüğünü merak ederlerdi. (p.22)
3	All through the night we knelt and prayed (p.27)	Bütün gece boyunca diz çöküp dua ettik (p.32)	Dua ettik diz çöküp saatlerce (p.39)	Bütün gece diz çöküp dua etmiştik (p.50)	Bütün gece çöktük ve dua ettik(p.22)
4	The Chaplain would not kneel to pray By his dishonoured grave: (p.43)	Papaz dua etmedi, Şerefsiz mezarının önünde diz çökmedi: (p.55)	Bu aşağılanan mezarın önünde Tek papaz bile duaya durmadı (p.63)	Rahip diz çökmedi dua etmeye, Bu lanetli kabrin durup önünde (p.79)	Onun onursuz mezarına Papaz dua için diz çökmeyecekti: (p.33)

For the word “pray”, all translator followed the same pattern. There are only two exceptions of “secdeye varmak” by Asaf and “ayin” by Baykara. Asaf’s preference of “secdeye varmak” is noteworthy since it connotes a stage of the Islamic practice of Salaat. The word choice “Ayin”, on the other hand, is proved to be insignificant in terms of Islamic domestication since it does not have a connotation as such in Turkish. Furthermore, it is generally used to “express the worship styles of non-Muslims, especially Jews and Christians⁶”. However, as the employment of this word is an addition to the source text, it can be assumed that the translator adopted a mimetic approach to correspond the Ballad form again.

Table 7. Examples of the translations of the religious term “Lord.”

Word & Line		Translators			
		ASAF (1968)	ALKAN (2003)	BAYKARA (2017-May)	YILMAZ (2020)
THE LORD		Tanrı	Efendimiz İsa	İsa Tanrı	Tanrı
1	Is as that broken box that gave Its treasure to the Lord, (p.50)	Nesi varsa Tanrıya, (p.64)	Hazineyi Efendimize sunan (p.73)	Lakin o kalbini adar Tanrı’ya (p.89)	Bir kırık kutudur Tanrı’ya Şükran sunan, (p.37)

⁶ <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/ayin> Accessed on 29 May 2023

2	The Lord will not despise. (p.51)	Tanrı uzak değildir, uzak kalmaz onlardan (p.65)	İsa ininde her zaman yeri var. (p.74)	İsa şefaatin kesmez onlardan... (p.91)	Ve sesini Tanrı küçümsemeyecektir (p.37)
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Following word ,“Lord”, is translated as “Tanrı” and “İsa” by Asaf, Baykara and Yılmaz, but Alkan prefers to use “Efendimiz” for this single word. What is worth noting is that neither the first translator nor the following ones tried to domesticate the term in an Islamic manner. Yet, their interchangeable use of the term of Jesus (as İsa) and God (as Tanrı) indicates an indecision that might be stemmed from cultural or religious elements. In the following table, word “pilgrim”, “Pope”, “Cross”, “First-man”, “Cain” and the line “till Christ call forth the dead” are also believed to worth to have a look to validate the theory. These examples are not chosen based on the frequency of use but for their highly religious tone.

Table 8. Examples of the translations of the other words related to religion

Lines	Translators			
	ASAF (1968)	ALKAN (2003)	BAYKARA (2017-May)	YILMAZ (2020)
1 Since the barren staff the pilgrim bore Bloomed in the great Pope's sight? (p.41)	Kutsal toprağa deęen hacı bastonlarının Dinsel Ulu önünde filizlenmesi gibi (p.51)	Nasıl gösterecek kim bilebilir ki Hacı'nın asası Papa'nın önünde Bir çiçeğe dönüşüvermedi mi? (p.60)	Kuru dal yeşermiştii sorun, öğrenin Gözleri önünde ulu rahibin... (p.75)	Kupkuru bir dal yeşermemiş miydi Gözü önünde aziz rahibin? (p.31)
2 Nor mark it with that blessed Cross That Christ for sinners gave, (p.439)	Kutsamadı mezarı İsa'nın İşareti , Oysaki o İşaret günahkârlar içindi, (p.55)	Kutsal haç bile konmadı başına Oysa o da İsa'nın günahlardan (p.63)	Bu lanetli kabrin durup önünde, hatta reddetmişti bir haç dikmeyi , İsa'nın mücrimlere sunduğu şeyi... (p.79)	İsa'nın günahkârlar için sunduğu Kutsal Haç da mezara dikmeyecekti (p.33)
3 Since first Man took his brother's life, (p.47)	Kardeşini öldüren o ilk İnsandan beri, (p.58)	Kabil'in Habil'i öldürdüğü... (p.67)	Kardeş kardeşini kesip gömünce (p.83)	Kardeşinin canını aldı ilk kez bir insan (p.34)
4 And the crimson stain that was of Cain (p.51)	Ve taa Kabil'den gelen o kırmızı lekeydi (p.65)	Kabil'in elindeki kızıl lekeler (p.75)	Kabil'in bıraktığı o kızıl leke,... (p.91)	Ve Kabil'in kan lekesi. . . (p.38)
5 And there, till Christ call forth the dead (p.55)	İsa çağrısına dek , ölülerin orada, (p.68)	Kıyamet gününe kadar bırakın(p.79)	İsa mahşer günü dönünceye dek , (p.95)	Ve orada, İsa sesleninceye kadar tüm ölülere (p.39)

While example one shows the different translations of the word “Pope” like “Dinsel Ulu”, “Papa”, “Ulu Rahip”, and “Aziz Rahip”, two re-translators, Baykara and Yılmaz omit the word “pilgrim”. Additionally, in example three, it is seen that the word “Cross” is translated as “İsa'nın İşareti” (Sign/Symbol of the Christ) by Asaf. As the first translator of the work, his preference is worth noting since he does not use the Christian equivalent of the word. Moreover, as he does not use a word with an Islamic connotation, a neutralisation of the word as a strategy can be mentioned here. The “first-man” in the third example is translated as “Kabil and Habil”. Here as the Biblical and the Qur'anic depictions are alike Alkan preferred to make an addition since it might be easier for the target audience to grasp the meaning. In the same way, it can also be said for example four. Finally, in the last example, different preferences by the translators are observed. In Islamic belief, it is the angel Israfil (Raphael in

Bible) who will summon death on the dooms day with his instrument (sûr) that he will blow⁷. So, Alkan and Baykara appropriated this line to the Islamic culture by adding “kıyamet günü” and “mahşer”, and both are literally doomsday. Therefore, with this addition, the re-translators employed domestication as a strategy in this example.

Table eight below displays how each translator uses religious-related items in an extended way chronologically by presenting the different words they substituted for the source one. While some of the examples give hints about the strategies employed by the translators, others are especially significant since they carry symbolic religious meanings.

Table 9. Preferred equivalents of the sample words by each translator.

No	Translator	Word					
		God	Christ	Pray	The Lord	Chaplain	Sin
1	ASAF (1968)	Tanrı Yaradan	Tanrı İsa	Secdeye varmak Dua etmek	Tanrı	Din-Adamı Papaz	Günah Kötülük Suç
2	ALKAN (2003)	Efendimiz Tanrı Allah	Tanrı İsa	Dua etmek Duaya durmak	Efendimiz İsa	Papaz	Günah Acı
3	BAYKARA (2017-May)	Tanrı Yarabbi Rab	Tanrı İsa Mesih	Dua etmek Duaya dalmak Ayin	İsa Tanrı	Rahip	Günahkâr Günah Suç
4	YILMAZ (2020)	Tanrı	Tanrı İsa	Dua etmek	Tanrı	Papaz	Günah

The words “chaplain” and “sin” are also included in the table by taking account of their frequency. Asaf prefers to use “Din-Adamı” for the word “chaplain”, and the other translators use “Rahip” or “Papaz”. Finally, for the word ‘Sin’, translators use different words like “Günah”, “Kötülük”, “Suç”, and “Acı”, yet these choices prove to be insignificant since these divergences do not have Islamic connotations.

Concluding remarks

As noted, the “Retranslation Hypothesis” argues that the first translation of a work is assimilated into the target culture to be accepted more by the target society, and the successive translations restore the originality of text. In other words, while the first translations take the text away from its original context (domestication), the preceding ones return to their original roots. This present study aims to validate this hypothesis by comparing three successive translations of *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* by Oscar Wilde with its first translation to find out the extent of the Domestication in an Islamic manner since the target society is an excessively Muslim-populated country. To analyze it, a word-based analysis of religious-oriented words are selected in line with Newmark's (2010) categorisation of cultural elements. The findings supplied the researcher with quantitative data based on the frequency of the words. Based on tables four to eight, which demonstrate the word choices of the translators, it can be concluded that the first translator, Asaf's preferences, does not imply any attempt at Islamic domestication. Out of the fifteen religious-related words, he only used the phrase “secdeye varmak”, a step in the practice of

⁷ <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/sur--kiyamet> Accessed on May 3, 2023

Salaat in Islam, to compensate for the word pray and the word “Yaradan”, a word with an Islamic connotation for the word “God”. For the words “chaplain” and “pope”, he preferred to use neutral words that do not suggest any particular religion in Turkish. However, when the word choice of the re-translators is examined, it is observed that they tend to use more Islam-related words (Allah, şefa, rahmet, Rab, Yarab, etc.) than the first translator. The 2017 translation of the work by Baykara has the highest number of examples of Islamic domestication in the study. However, it should be kept in mind that since the present work in analysis is a Ballad, and the role of the figurative tools are of great importance, the translators might find themselves with the challenges brought about by the poetry translation. Therefore, even if this study implies that the retranslations failed to take the text back to its roots, some other parameters, like the figurative elements such as rhymes, metres etc., might prevent the translators from taking the text back to its origins. Additionally, it can be argued that the Retranslation Hypothesis is yet to be proven, and further empirical research is needed to make this hypothesis a universally accepted one.

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