



By blending research approaches from Middle Eastern studies, translation studies and material philology, the group will not only close significant gaps in the current research but also replace current reductionist concepts of translation with a new understanding that better reflects cultural history. This applies, in particular, to the function of translation in the context of ideological self-positioning and confessional demarcation. The further development of literary norms by translators, patrons and recipients will also be examined across different text types. Four major and two associated subprojects are each focusing on a different genre of Ottoman literature: (1) mirrors for princes and historiography, (2) biography, (3) encyclopaedia, and (4) hadith, complemented with (5) mystical advice literature and (6) Qur'anic exegesis. In order to counter the potential exceptionality of the Ottoman case, two further subprojects are broadening the geographical and linguistic scope by exploring the role of translation in (7) the Mamluk Sultanate and (8) early modern Central Asia respectively.

**FUNDING PHASES: 2022–2025 & 2025–2028**

## University of Münster Institute of Arabic and Islamic Studies

Prof. Dr. Philip Bockholt

Schlaunstraße 2

48143 Münster

Telefon +49 251 83-24571

E-Mail [philip.bockholt@uni-muenster.de](mailto:philip.bockholt@uni-muenster.de)

[uni.ms/translapt](http://uni.ms/translapt)



Emmy  
Noether-  
Programm

DFG Deutsche  
Forschungsgemeinschaft



# translAPT

TRANSLATION: ARABIC • PERSIAN • TURKISH



## About the Project

Translation processes played a central role in the formation of the Ottoman Empire in the early modern period. Against the backdrop of socio-political identity construction in the eastern Mediterranean and Middle East, a multitude of works were increasingly received, translated and commented upon. Using a multidisciplinary approach, the junior research group is investigating this transregional transfer of knowledge between 1350 and 1800 holistically for the first time. In so doing, the group is focusing on translation as a concept, process and product in a large portion of the Islamic world. The main aim is to reveal the central role Ottoman Turkish translations from Arabic and Persian played in dissipating the cultural and literary ambiguity between Sunni and Shia Islam, without a clear understanding of which the intellectual-historical developments in the region cannot be fully comprehended or appreciated.

## Mirrors for Princes and Historiography

**Principal Investigator: Philip Bockholt**



Philip Bockholt studies how translations of advice literature and historiography shaped Ottoman elite identity and self-fashioning. Focusing on mirrors for princes such as *Kalīla wa-Dimna*

and the *Qābūsnāma*, and on Ottoman receptions of major histories including Ibn Kathīr's *al-Bidāya wa-l-Nihāya*, Mīrkhvānd's *Rawḍat al-Ṣafā* and al-'Aynī's *Iqd al-Jumān*, he examines patronage, adaptation and readership from the fourteenth to eighteenth centuries. His project traces the translation practices at Anatolian princely courts and the Ottoman court, showing how translators, patrons, and readers mediated meaning. It also highlights the transregional circulation of texts and ideas across the Arabic, Persian and Ottoman Turkish literary spheres.

Philip Bockholt received his PhD in Islamic Studies from Freie Universität Berlin (2018) and his Habilitation from the University of Münster (2024). Since 2022, he has been Junior Professor for the History of the Turco-Persian World at the Institute of Arabic and Islamic Studies.

## Ottomans and Mamluks Compared

**Postdoctoral Researcher: Kristof D'hulster**



Kristof D'hulster explores the role of translation in the formation and early stages of Western-Turkic literacy, starting with the Mamluk-Turkic literary corpus. He surveys its translated titles, the agents involved in producing them and the reasons for the translations. He then compares these findings

with those of the better-researched Anatolian beyliques and the early Ottoman sultanate, thereby mapping convergences and divergences. In applying this macro-perspective, he is bringing the pivotal role of translation in the formation of the Mamluk, Anatolian and Ottoman literary fields into sharper focus by determining the extent to which one can consider translation not only as a form of inter-linguistic transfer but also as a crucial site of Turkic social identity-making.

Kristof D'hulster received his PhD in Oriental languages and cultures from the University of Leuven in 2010.

## Turkic Translations in Central Asia

**Postdoctoral Researcher: Tobias Sick**



Tobias Sick's research concerns the translation activities of early modern Turkic polities in Central Asia, in particular the Chinggisid dynasties of the Abū al-Khayrids and the Jānid/Ashtarkhānid khanates in Bukhara, Samarkand, and Khiva during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Initially, the main focus of the subproject is to conduct a comprehensive survey of both translations and their extant manuscript corpora. To supplement this, a selected subset of the surveyed translations is being analysed in a detailed fashion as case studies. Ultimately, this approach aims at improving our understanding of the reception, transformation, and influence of Turkic literature in Central Asia during this period, in particular, as a form of Turkic vernacularisation in the Persianate world.

Tobias Sick received his PhD in Arabic and Islamic Studies from the University of Münster in 2026.

## Biography

**Doctoral Researcher: Hicham Bouhadi**



Hicham Bouhadi is examining Ottoman translations of Arabic biographical works, focusing on the Turkish renderings of Ibn Khallikān's *Wafayāt al-A'yān*, and paying particular attention to the translation by Meḥmed Rodosīzāde. His thesis contextualises this translation within the imperial milieu of late seventeenth-century Istanbul and traces its circulation up to the nineteenth century. At the textual level, it analyses Rodosīzāde's use of sources produced after Ibn Khallikān's lifetime, as well as the strategies of adaptation he used to meet the expectations of his Ottoman readership. It also examines the role of imperial patronage in shaping the translation's reception and its impact on subsequent translations of the *Wafayāt*, including the case of a "plagiarised" translation, completed in 1267/1850 by Ḥasan Ḥaydar, which reproduces Rodosīzāde's work without acknowledgement.

Hicham Bouhadi received his BA (2018) and MA (2020) in Islamic Studies from the University of al-Qarawiyyin in Morocco.

## Hadith

**Doctoral Researcher: Muhammed Sofu**



Muhammed Sofu examines hadith translations as a medium of intra-Islamic knowledge transfer and literary interaction in the Ottoman world. Focusing on 'Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī's Persian forty hadith collection *Chihil Ḥadīṣ* (Herat, 886/1481) and its nine Turkish verse translations produced between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, his study combines philological analysis with codicological and paratextual investigation in order to explore how Jāmī's ethically

oriented poetic rendering of hadiths was reinterpreted, transmitted and received in Ottoman contexts. In particular, attention is paid to the use of common vocabulary, the transfer of meaning between Persian and Ottoman Turkish, and the employment of stylistic devices that reveal how translation and imitation (*naẓīre*) intersected in the Ottoman literary sphere.

Muhammed Sofu completed his BA (2021) and MA (2023) in Islamic Studies at İstanbul 29 Mayıs Üniversitesi.

## Tafsir

**Associated Subproject of the Cluster of Excellence "Religion and Politics"**

**Doctoral Researcher: Ahmet Aytep**



As an associate researcher at TRANS-LAPT, Ahmet Aytep is focusing on the pre-modern translations of tafsir works into Ottoman Turkish. His primary goal is to explore how translations of tafsir

works interact with their socio-cultural and historical contexts, influencing and reflecting the dynamics of Ottoman intellectual life, and revealing the complex interplay of language, identity and knowledge transfer within the Ottoman Empire. While his study considers, to some extent, all the tafsir translations identified thus far, it focuses primarily on the translations of the tafsir of Abū l-Layth al-Samarqandī (d. 373/983), a jurist, exegete and ascetic who had a significant impact on the Ottoman world.

Ahmet Aytep completed his MA (2018) and PhD (2023) at İstanbul 29 Mayıs Üniversitesi.