The Creation of an Ottoman Turkish Psalter. 
Ali Ufkî’s (Bobovius) Mezmûriyye (ca. 1665) 
and Maciej Rybiński’s Psalmy Dawidowe (1608)

Agata Pawlina
Jagiellonian University in Kraków
agata.pawlina@uj.edu.pl
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9842-1676

Abstract: Wojciech Bobowski is better known in international academia under the Latinised version of his name: Albertus Bobovius and by his Turkish name: Ali Ufkî. Most probably, he was born in Lviv, ca. 1610 and died in Constantinople, ca. 1675. He left for posterity numerous works that today we would classify as belonging to several fields of the humanities: musicology, linguistics, religious studies, cultural studies, political history and even ethnography. His best-known works include one of the earliest translations of the Bible into Turkish (1662–1664), an influential treatise on Islam (1690), a description of the Topkapı Palace (1665) – the main seat of the Ottoman sultan, where he lived and worked as a court musician – and collection of more than 500 Ottoman Turkish musical pieces written in European stave notation (ca. 1640–1650). In this paper, the author first presents outcomes of her current archival research on Bobowski’s early life in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Then, she demonstrates the possibility that when working on Mezmûriyye – the Ottoman Turkish psalter, Ali Ufkî took inspiration from the Polish translation of the Genevan Psalter from French by Maciej Rybiński, an influential bishop of the Reformed Church in the 17th-century Poland. This theory is based on the analysis of linguistic content of French, Polish and Ottoman Turkish lyrics, as well as the striking visual resemblance of Bobowski’s Mezmûriyye and one specific old-print of Rybiński’s Psalmy Dawidowe na melodie francuskie uczynione published in 1608.

Keywords: Bobovius, Ali Ufkî, Bobowski, Genevan Psalter, Mezmûrlar, Mezmûriyye

Wojciech Bobowski, born in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth ca. 1610, is known in international academia by many different names. In Turkey, he is known as Ali Ufkî, a court musician in the seraglio of Sultan Mehmet IV and the author of manuscripts containing musical scores, which today may be regarded as the first “anthology” of Ottoman Turkish music.¹ In Western Europe, he is remembered as Albertus Bobovius or Ali Beg – the author


DOI: https://doi.org/10.31743/biban.14575
ISSN 2083-2222 e-ISSN 2451-2168
of influential works concerning Islam and some aspects of the Ottoman state and its culture, teacher and interpreter of the Ottoman Turkish language for European diplomats, missionaries and orientalists, and translator of the Bible and other religious texts into...
He can be perceived as an extremely colourful and multifaceted figure in the history of Polish-Turkish cultural and international relations, but unfortunately Polish academia has hitherto underappreciated Bobowski and his intellectual output.

The multicultural personality of Wojciech Bobowski is reflected in the Ottoman Turkish mahlas (pen-name) he chose for himself as a poet: Ufki. It is derived from the word ufuk, “horizon,” which in both Turkish and Polish languages has metaphorical connotations with intellect, comprehension, insight and understanding. In Polish, a person characterised as o szerokich horyzontach (“of broad, wide horizons”) is not only intelligent and knowledgeable, but also tolerant towards others. Judging from the works he left to posterity, Ali Ufkî was a truly "broad-minded" man.

His attempt to create an Ottoman Turkish psalter, which is the subject of the present paper, is one of the most interesting literary and musical expressions of Bobowski’s outstanding intellect and personality. The psalter (Ott. Tur. Mezmûriyye) is known in Turkish musicology simply as Mezmurlar or Mezamir (“Psalms”). Judith I. Haug in her extended monograph on the Dutch, German, English and Ottoman Turkish versions of the Genevan Psalter fairly described this work as a “unique document for transcultural process between Europe and the Ottoman Empire.”

However, this situation has recently been changing. Tadeusz Majda established that Ali Ufkî was not a painter as some scholars insisted, see: T. Majda, “The Rålamb Album of Turkish Costumes,” The Sultan’s Procession. The Swedish Embassy to Sultan Mehmed IV in 1657–1658 and the Rålamb Paintings (ed. K. Ådahl) (İstanbul: Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul 2006) 197–265. Later, with the 600th anniversary of Turkish-Polish relations celebrated in 2014, interest in Wojciech Bobowski’s life and work increased in Poland, see: İ. Aynuksa, “Ali Ufuḳî Bey (Wojciech Bobowski) – Well-Known Musician, Forgotten Political Figure. A Luminary in the 600 Years of Turkish–Polish Diplomatic Relations,” Stosunki Międzynarodowe – International Relations 52 (2016) 271–284. A preliminary outline of the archival research conducted by the present author has been available for Polish readers for some time, see: A. Pawlina, “Wojciech Bobowski (Ali Ufkî) − Polak na osmańskim dworze,” Wschód muzułmański w ujęciu interdyscyplinarnym. Ludzie – teksty – historia (eds. G. Czerwiński − A. Konopacki) (Białystok: Katedra Badań Filologicznych “Wschód-Zachód” Uniwersytetu w Białymstoku 2017) 147–165, and now, a monograph presenting the outcomes of her research on Bobovius is also available, see: Pawlina, Bobovius − Ali Ufkî.

In his manuscripts it appears in both vocalised and unvocalised spelling. Even though both Latinised versions, Ufkî and Ufki, are valid, the shorter version had become established in contemporary academia and will also be used here. See also: Ali Ufkî, Mecmûa-i Sâz i Sûz. Bildiriler, 2–7; Haug, Ottoman and European Music in ’Ali Ufki’s Compendium. Monograph, 4–6.

1. Wojciech Bobowski becomes Ali Ufkî

A detailed investigation of Wojciech Bobowski’s biography lies beyond the scope of this paper. However, it will be worthwhile to give a brief review and emphasise the possible impact of Polish source material on future research concerning Ali Ufkî. At present, the story of his life may be reconstructed mostly on the basis of indirect sources. He left scarce personal information in his writings, and archival research has not yet brought any significant discoveries regarding basic biographical facts, such as where and when exactly he was born and where and when he died. Filling in the remaining “blank spots” in Ali Ufkî’s biography, especially those concerning his roots, might help understand his place as mediator between two cultures: the one into which he was born (the multicultural Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Rzeczpospolita) and the one that he learnt and absorbed over the course of his life (the multicultural Constantinople, capital of the Ottoman Empire).

Most of the information on Bobowski has been derived by scholars from the dating he left in manuscripts, correspondence and the memoirs of diplomats, travellers and orientalists who had contact with him or for whom he worked as a teacher, interpreter, translator or informant. Unfortunately, the information available in sources contemporary to Bobowski, as well as in the recent scholarly publications, seems incomplete and sometimes even contradictory. There are still many doubts and gaps in Bobovius’ biography.

The most common (and most plausible) version states that Bobowski was born in Lviv, ca. 1610.9 His extant work leave no room for doubt that he received part of his education in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, including knowledge of several foreign languages and musical education. His life changed completely when (probably) in his teens he was taken prisoner by the Crimean Tatars during one of their raids on Podolia.10 The present author believes that this could have taken place in 1633–1634 during the unofficial Polish-Ottoman war (the so-called “Abaza Pasha war”) or in the minor Tatar raids that preceded it.11 As a prisoner-of-war, on his way eastward, Bobowski must have revealed some of his skills, for he was brought as a slave to the court of the Ottoman sultan. When he converted to Islam and adopted the Turkish name “Ali,” he became an iççoğlan – a member of the inner service of the palace – and his education in the Enderûn Mektebi12 began. After settling into

---

9 All versions of Bobowski’s biography found in international literature and in Polish archival and literary sources are discussed in detail in the present author’s monograph, see: Pawlina, Bobovius – Ali Ufkî, 19–53.
10 Or as a 10-year-old boy, according to Hannah Neudecker, who also assumes that this occurred “around 1632,” thus moving Bobowski’s date of birth to 1624, see: H. Neudecker, “From Istanbul to London? Albertus Bobovius’ Appeal to Isaac Basire,” The Republic of Letters and the Levant (eds. A. Hamilton – M.H. van den Boogert – B. Westerweel) (Leiden: Brill 2005) 175. The present author considers that version false due to the fact that Bobowski displayed considerable knowledge of foreign languages and music when he arrived at the Ottoman court. The knowledge that he manifested in his works could have been acquired neither in just a few years of education in Lviv, nor through self-tuition in the Ottoman Empire.
12 Enderûn Mektebi – the so-called “school for pages.” It provided wide-ranging instruction which prepared boys for service in the palace, the state administration or the Ottoman army, depending on the aptitude of
the palace service, Ali Ufkî spent there about twenty years, serving as a court musician and eventually – a music teacher. Probably in early 1650s, he moved out of the Topkapi Palace and started to work independently as a translator for various European and Ottoman parties, occasionally returning to the sultan's service as an official state interpreter (dragoman). He died probably in Constantinople, ca. 1675.

Until new documentary evidence surfaces, any information about Wojciech Bobowski’s early years in Poland should be considered as a lore that emerged in connection with his life, rather than a proven historical fact. The most important outstanding questions concern: the exact date and place of his birth, his noble descent, the confession in which he was raised (see more below), and the circumstances which led to his arrival at the Topkapı Palace. None of these questions can be addressed without placing the period of Bobowski’s life (ca. 1600–1675) into the context of the intense contacts, in both peace- and wartime, between the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Ottoman Empire in the 17th century, as well as the Reformation and Counter-Reformation processes in Rzeczpospolita.

The present author’s archival research shows that in the 17th century there existed at least two separate branches of the Bobowski family. In the 19th-century armorials, one of them is referred to as “Bobowscy h. Gryf z Bobowy” (bearing the arms Gryphon [Jaxa] of Bobowa [a village in the Lesser Poland]) and the other as “Bobowscy z Bobów” (of Boby [a village in the Lublin region]). Count Seweryn Uruski informs us that both branches had common ancestors in the 14th century, coming from Lesser Poland. Documentory evidence confirms that over time the Bobowscy family’s land holdings covered more and
more territory, stretching from Lesser Poland in the west, through villages around Lublin, Kraśnik, Sanok and Przemyśl, to some tracts of land in the province of Podolia in the east, including villages near Lviv.\(^{18}\)

It was a family of noble descent and a glorious past, but not (yet) very influential at the time of Wojciech’s birth. We cannot ascertain into which branch of the family Ali Ufkî was born. Most likely it was the “Lviv branch,” but the “Lublin branch” is also possible, especially if we wish to assert that he was raised in the Reformed faith.\(^{19}\)

The insufficient influence may be the simplest (but not necessarily the correct) answer to the question of why Wojciech Bobowski was never ransomed from Turkish slavery, even though Polish legations to the “Grand Turk” brought many captives of war back home.\(^{20}\) Other possible answers may be much more complex and lie beyond the scope of this paper.

The only certain fact about Wojciech Bobowski’s youth in Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth is that he acquired a high level of education. Ali Ufkî’s indubitable training in European music is probably the most important clue, which may lead to the discovery of new historical evidence. In early 17th-century Poland, one could become a musician through private tutoring (most commonly by Italian masters) or by attending schools that operated at churches (as part of Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox institutions), especially the Jesuit schools which began to emerge in Rzeczpospolita in 1565. In Lviv, such a school (kolegium jezuickie) was established in 1608.\(^{21}\) Perhaps Wojciech Bobowski (if he was indeed born ca. 1610) attended the recently established kolegium?

Answers to the question of his education might also help solve another controversial problem associated with the initial period of Bobowski’s life: Was he raised in the Catholic or Reformed faith? The religious adherence of Ali Ufkî is often discussed in the context of his writings on religion.\(^{22}\) Although no final conclusion can be reached at the present

---

\(^{18}\) This information has been derived by the present author from archival records kept in the Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw, the National Archives in Kraków (including its branch in Nowy Sącz), the State Archives in Lublin, the Diocesan Archives in Tarnów, and the Ossolineum in Wrocław.


\(^{20}\) For the subject at hand, the most interesting is the legation of Wojciech Miaskowski, who was sent to Constantinople in 1640 – when Wojciech Bobowski had already been living in the sultan’s palace (or had just arrived there). Miaskowski brought back “two ships [that came] from Kezlev and Kaffa full of liberated captives of war, who had been taken during the Crimean Tatars’ raid of 1640” – W. Miaskowski, “Lepsza wojna niż dyshonor. Polski posel w Stambule w roku 1640,” Orzeł i Półksiężyc. 600 lat polskiej publicystyki poświęconej Turcji (eds. D. Kołodziejecky – A. Balcer – N. Króliskowska) (Warszawa: Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych 2014) 119.


stage of research, the author will address this subject further below, in the context of the Ottoman Turkish version of the “Protestant” *Genevan Psalter*.

2. *Genevan Psalter becomes Mezmûriyye*

The manuscript of Ali Ufki’s *Mezmûriyye* (Ott.-Tur. “Psalms”) is kept in the Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF), Département des manuscrits as MS Suppl. Turc 472.23 Its title and description in the catalogue are as follows: “عَزْمُورِیهِ. Les quatorze premiers Psalms, avec la traduction en vers turcs, et la notation musicale en plain-chant, par ῾Ali Beg Bobowski.”24 The manuscript contains six 21 × 16 cm folios, covered with 18th-century binding. The musical notation and lyrics in the Ottoman Turkish language are written in black ink on paper, in three or four columns per page (fig. 1). On folio 5v only the columns, the title and the five-line stave appear (fig. 2). On folio 6r only the columns are sketched, and 6v is left blank.

The attribution of Suppl. Turc 472 to Ali Ufki based on the handwriting was made by Cem Behar.25 A few years later, Feza Tansuğ discovered that Bobowski did not compose these melodies, as Behar had thought, but they are in fact almost identical with the first fourteen psalms of the so-called *Genevan Psalter*.26 The latter is also called the Huguenot Psalter. It was created for the purposes of the Calvinist Church between 1539 and 1562, as a result of John Calvin’s personal interest and efforts. Its final version was published in 1562. The French lyrics were written by Théodore de Bèze and Clément Marot, and the music is of mixed provenance.27 Subsequently, the psalter was translated into other European languages (e.g., English, German, Dutch, Czech, Hungarian, Polish) and published in multiple versions throughout the 16th and 17th centuries.28

In Mezmûriyye Ali Ufkî arranged the melodies of the psalms in such a way that, almost without changes, they adhere to the principles and aesthetics of Ottoman Turkish court music, so that they might be comprehensible to a supposed Ottoman Turkish “audience.”

The way Ali Ufkî accomplished this has been described in detail by Judith I. Haug in her extensive comparative musicological analysis of both the French and Ottoman Turkish versions of the Genevan Psalter.

29 In 2005, on the album Sacred Bridges (Signum Classics), psalms 2, 5, 6 and 9 were recorded by the Sarband ensemble in collaboration with the King’s Singers ensemble. In this beautiful arrangement, the listener can hear French and Ottoman Turkish versions of the Genevan Psalter, with European polyphony and Ottoman Turkish heterophony artistically combined.

In the same work, she proposed a speculative but very plausible dating for the manuscript, as no indication of the date was left by Ali Ufkî. In her view, it was Levinus Warner – scholar, orientalist, and diplomat in the service of the Dutch Republic – who commissioned a musically notated “Ottoman Psalter” based on the melodies and linguistic content of the Huguenot Psalter. Indeed, he may have wished to publish it along with the Turkish translation of the Bible, which Bobowski worked on in the years 1662–1664. The placing of Mezmûriyye in the context of Calvinoturcism and the history of the translation of the Bible into Turkish for Protestant intellectuals is justified for at least two reasons:

The Biblical Annals 13/4 (2023)

[The Ottoman Turkish] version of the Genevan Psalter would have made sense as an instrument to convert the ‘Turk’ directly to the Reformed confession of Christianity. Warner’s sudden and mysterious death [...] in June 1665 would at once provide a dating (first half of the year 1665) and an explanation for the abrupt abandonment of the work. 32

3. Ali Ufkî’s Mezmûriyye and Maciej Rybiński’s Psalmy Dawidowe na melodie francuskie urobione (1608)

The aim of the present study is to establish on which version of the Genevan Psalter Ali Ufkî based his Ottoman Turkish translations. From the content of his other works we know that Bobowski was fluent in several languages, including French. It is likely that Levinus Warner provided him with an original French edition of the psalter. However, one should not rule out the possibility that Ali Ufkî worked with more than one version, as well as with other sources that were available to him during his work on the Ottoman Turkish Bible. 33

He faced a challenge of considerable difficulty – translating poetry containing a significant amount of religious terminology and sophisticated metaphors, which were alien to its intended readers and listeners: the Ottomans. Ali Ufkî proved to be a talented poet, skilful in adhering to the rules of Ottoman Turkish prosody and poetic forms. Judging by the result of his work on the Bible, we can also ascertain that choosing proper Ottoman Turkish equivalents for terms describing the concepts and dogmas of Christian religion was an important matter for him. Considering these premises and adding to them the unquestionable eloquence and multifaceted knowledge of Ali Ufkî, the present author assumes that to prepare a transcultural translation of the psalms, he might have wanted to take inspiration from the images and ideas embodied in each of them in his own native tongue.

The first Polish version of the Genevan Psalter was written ca. 1605 by Maciej Rybiński (1566–1612), bishop of the Unity of the Brethren (Jednota Braci Czeskich) in Greater Poland. In the face of the emerging Catholic reaction, he was involved in the political and intellectual process of unifying the Reformed confessions in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Rybiński wished to enable his Polish brothers in faith to worship God in the same manner as was done in Reformed churches abroad, and thus build an even stronger international, spiritual connection with Protestants living in Western Europe. He translated the French psalms written by Théodore de Bèze and Clément Marot into Polish, occasionally taking inspiration from the then most popular Polish version of the Book of Psalms: Jan Kochanowski’s Psalterz Dawidów, published in Kraków in 1579. 34

33 Haug, Der Genfer Psalter, 561–562.
In 1605, Rybiński’s translation of the *Genevan Psalter* was printed, along with mensural notation for a single voice, as *Psalmy Dawidowe przekładania ks. Macieja Rybińskiego. Na melodie psalmów francuskich urobione*, in the famous Racovian Academy (run by the Polish Brethren in Raków, Lesser Poland), by Sebastian Sternacki. That first edition has been lost, but some subsequent versions, published with small amendments in Raków by Sternacki (1624), in Gdańsk by Andreas Hünefeld (1608, 1616, 1619, 1628, 1632, 1633) and in Toruń by August Ferber (1617, 1618), have been preserved. In 1636, Rybiński’s psalter was incorporated into the first hymnbook compiled for use during liturgy in both the Calvinist’s and the Czech Brethren’s churches. Thus, it became the most popular version of the Book of Psalms among followers of the Reformed faith in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. By the end of the 18th century, Rybiński’s psalter had been published at least twenty times.

Comparative evaluation of the linguistic content of Ali Ufkî’s *Mezmûriyye* and the *Genevan Psalter* in French shows the greatest divergence in the lyrics of psalms 2, 6 and 8. A further comparison of the Ottoman Turkish and Polish versions of these psalms leads to the conclusion that it is very likely that Ali Ufkî worked not only with the French texts, but also with one of the 17th-century editions of Maciej Rybiński’s psalter. Investigations led to the discovery of an old print of his *Psalmy Dawidowe*, published in Gdańsk with the title *Psalmy Dawidowe Przekładania X. Macieja Rybińskiego* in 1608. This edition aroused the present author’s particular interest, because even at first glance, a comparison with Ali Ufkî’s *Mezmûriyye* shows a resemblance (figs. 3, 4).

The 1608 edition of Rybiński’s *Psalmy Dawidowe* (fig. 3) is the only 17th-century version of the *Genevan Psalter* known to the present author, in which the editor used columns to present both musical notation and lyrics, instead of the simpler layout seen in other editions (figs. 5, 6, 7).

---


36 The full title of this hymnbook is: *Kancyonal, to jest księgi psalmów y pieśni duchownych na chwałę Boga w Tryncy S. jedynego... za zgodą wszystkich Zborów ewangelickich koronnych, W. X. Lit. y państwa do nich należących, z dawniejszych kancyonów, psalterów y katechizmów zebrane y kwoli jednostajnemu używaniu wydane* (Gdańsk: Hünefeldt 1636) https://academica.edu.pl/reading/readSingle?uid=97738559 [access: 6.10.2023].


39 The same conclusion was reached by Judith I. Haug, who compared Ali Ufkî’s translation not only with French but also with Dutch and German versions of the *Genevan Psalter*, see: Haug, *Der Genfer Psalter*, 561–564.

Fig. 3. Rybiński, *Psalmy Dawidowe* [Gdańsk 1608], 2–3, http://nanki-ml.dmc.keio.ac.jp/M-05_32_R040/content/0006_large.html [access: 6.10.2023]
Fig. 4. Ali Ufkî, *Mezmûriyye*, BnF, MS Suppl. Turc 472, f. 2r, https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8415002q/f9.item [access: 9.10.2023]
4. The Genevan Psalter in French, Polish and Ottoman Turkish – A Comparison

The table below shows similarities and differences between the original French version of the Genevan Psalter (Marot and de Bèze, 1563)\(^{41}\) and its subsequent translations into Polish (Rybiński, 1608)\(^{42}\) and Ottoman Turkish (Ali Ufkî, ca. 1665).\(^{43}\) The psalms’ lyrics are analysed here in terms of structure – the number of stanzas (s), the number of lines in each stanza (L) and the rhyme scheme (e.g., aabbcc).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Psalm</th>
<th>French</th>
<th>Polish</th>
<th>Ottoman Turkish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4s (6L) aabbcc</td>
<td>4s (6L) aabbcc</td>
<td>4s (6L) aabbcc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>6s (8L) + 1s (4L) ababcdcd</td>
<td>6s (8L) + 1s (5L) ababcdcd</td>
<td>6s (8L) aabccddd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4s (12L) aabccbddeffe</td>
<td>4s (12L) aabccbddeffe</td>
<td>4s (12L) + 1s (2L) aabccbddeffe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4s (10L) aababcdcedd</td>
<td>4s (10L) abaabcdcedd</td>
<td>4s (10L) abaabcdcedd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>12s (5L) abaa</td>
<td>12s (5L) abaa</td>
<td>12s (5L) abaa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>10s (6L) aabcccb</td>
<td>10s (6L) aabcccb</td>
<td>10s (6L) aabcccb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>8s (8L) + 1s (4L) aabbcddd</td>
<td>8s (8L) aabbcddd</td>
<td>8s (8L) aabbcddd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>9s (4L) aabb</td>
<td>6s (4L) + 1st stanza repeated aabb</td>
<td>8s (4L) + 1st stanza repeated aabb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>20s (4L) aabb</td>
<td>20s (4L) aabb</td>
<td>20s (4L) aabb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>9s (7L) ababbcc</td>
<td>9s (7L) ababbcc</td>
<td>9s (7L) ababbcc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>3s (7L) + 1s (3L) ababcbc</td>
<td>3s (7L) ababcbc</td>
<td>3s (7L) ababcbc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>8s (4L) abab</td>
<td>7s (4L) abab</td>
<td>7s (4L) abab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>5s (5L) aabba</td>
<td>5s (5L) aabba</td>
<td>5s (5L) aabba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>7s (5L) abbaa</td>
<td>7s (5L) abbaa</td>
<td>7s (5L) abbaa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Comparison of the French, Polish and Ottoman Turkish lyrics of the Genevan Psalter

Source: author’s own analysis.

---


\(^{42}\) Rybiński, *Psalmy Dawidowe* [Gdańsk 1608].

As we can see, the form of the lyrics is mostly consistent in all three versions of the Genevan Psalter. The exceptions, indicated in the table above in bold, are as follows:

- Psalm 2: a different rhyme scheme in the Ottoman Turkish version (aabcedd instead of ababcd);
- Psalm 3: two additional lines written by Ali Ufkî after the 4th stanza;
- Psalms 7 and 11: both Polish and Ottoman Turkish translations lack the last half-stanza of the French version;
- Psalm 8: the Polish version is three stanzas shorter than the other versions.

An analysis of semantics brought even more interesting results. The present author believes that all the significant differences between the French and the Ottoman Turkish version, in terms of the vocabulary used, can be explained by the choices made by Maciej Rybiński in the Polish translation. The most important differences are found in Psalm 2 (in the 6th stanza) and Psalm 8 (in the 3rd stanza).

Those fragments are presented below, with differences indicated in bold. The orthography of the French lyrics is kept unchanged, with one exception: the symbol ‘ſ’ is replaced by the contemporary ‘s.’ The orthography of the Polish lyrics is modernised according to the rules proposed by the Polish Academy of Sciences. The Ottoman Turkish lyrics have been transcribed from Arabic into Latin script by the present author, according to the rules proposed by İsmail Parlatır in the 9th edition of his Ottoman Turkish Dictionary, with the addition of two symbols: ‘ġ’ for ‘ﻍ’ and ‘ŋ’ for ‘ﻙ’ in Gen., Dat. and Imperative suffixes.

- Psalm 2, stanza 6, the 5th line: the French version reads “pay tribute to the Son,” where in both Polish and Ottoman Turkish translations it is “kiss the Son”:

Du Seigneur Dieu seruiteurs rendez-vous,
Craignez son ire, & luy vuseillez complaire,
Et d’estre: luy vous resiouissez tous,
Ayans tousiours crainte de luy despleaire.
**Faites hommage au Fils** qu’il vous enuoye,
Que courroucé ne soit amerement.
Afin aussi que de vie & de voye
Ne perissiez trop mal-heureusement. 46

Służcie już Panu z tę uprzejmością,
Statecznie zawżdy w świętych cnotach stojąc,
Pochutniwajcie się z radością,
Zawżdy się Pana Boga swego bojąc.
**I pocalujcie Syna** na[j]milszego,

---

Nie drażniąc jego zapalczywości,
Aby nie natarł zasię na którego,
W swej niewytrwanej ludziom srogości.  

Hak te’ālāya ibādet edün
takvādan serhat-i ifāde-i edün
Oğlunī öpün aŋa edün bey’at
Ki incinmeye ve olmayasız zay’at
Hem ki size pek heißüm edüb ol müllāk
Yol u izerde olmayasız helāk
Ne mutlu aŋa mürevkekillere
Uğramayalar hiç tenkillere.  

– Psalm 8, stanza 3: there is no mention of “the sun” in the French version:

Mais quand ie voy & contemple en courage
Tes cieux qui sont de tes doigts haut ouurage,
Estoîlles, lune & signes differens
Que tu as faits & assis en leurs rengs.  

Wysokie nieba palców twych robota,
Gwiazdy jaśniejsze niż świetny blask złota,
Słońce i Miesiąc z odmienną twarzą,
Same nie mówią, mnie mówić każą.  

Masnū’atıŋa nazar edügüm zamān
Ki engüştlerüŋ işleridür hemān
Nücūm u kamer şems ü mu’azzam
Mahlūkuŋ olub durur muntazam.  

Additionally, in Psalm 8, the first stanza is repeated as the last without any changes in the lyrics in both the Polish and Ottoman Turkish versions, but not in the French version:

O Nostre Dieu & Seigneur amiable,
Combien ton Nom est grand & admirable.
Par tout ce val terrestre spacieux,
Qui ta puissance ele ues fur les cieux!

47 Rybiński, Psalmy Dawidowe [Gdańsk 1608], 1.
48 Ali Ufkî, Mezmûriyye, 1v.
50 Rybiński, Psalmy Dawidowe [Gdańsk 1608], 5.
51 Ali Ufkî, Mezmûriyye, 3r.
Conclusion

Wojciech Bobowski’s output, which includes both original and translated works, can be classified into a number of branches of the Humanities: music and musicology, linguistics, translation studies, anthropology, religious studies. In the context of the period, Bobowski’s writings related to religion are characterised by remarkable objectivity. He does not evaluate religions: he does not deprecate Islam and Turkish customs, and he does not elevate Christianity, as subsequent 17th- and 18th-century authors who engaged this subject would do.

From a present-day perspective, Ali Ufkî appears to be an unbiased observer of both religions, and Mezmûriyye should be considered one of the most remarkable expressions of his bicultural personality. Since he was born Christian, he probably understood the importance of the Book of Psalms in the daily worship practices of his contemporaries in Europe. On the other hand, as a well-educated Ottoman, he was able to adapt the meanings contained in the lyrics and in the music of the original psalms to the aesthetics of Ottoman Turkish poetry and makam-based art music.

In this paper, the author attempted to demonstrate the possibility that when working on Mezmûriyye, Ali Ufkî took inspiration from the Polish translation of the Genevan Psalter by Maciej Rybiński, an influential bishop of the Reformed Church in the 17th-century Rzeczpospolita. However, it is important to emphasise that this does not necessarily mean that Wojciech Bobowski was born and raised as a Protestant, as some sources indicate.

---

53 Rybiński, Psalmy Dawidowe [Gdańsk 1608], 4–5.
54 Ali Ufkî, Mezmûriyye, 3r.

56 C. Rålamb, “A Relation of a Journey to Constantinople: Giving an Account of Divers Occurrences, how Far the King of Sweden’s Commission was Executed There, as Also of the State of the Turkish Monarchy at that Time, Being a Report Made to the Most Potent Prince, Charles Gustavus, King of the Swedes, Goths and Vándals,” A Collection of Voyages and Travels, Some Now first Printed from Original Manuscripts, Others Now First Published in English. In Six Volumes (ed. A. Churchill) (London: Linot & Osborn 1732) V, 669–716; Aynuksa, “Ali Ufkî Bey (Wojciech Bobowski).”
If we consider the international character of the Reformation and the importance of the exchange of knowledge between Protestants regardless of their nationality, we may assume that Levinus Warner could have contacted an intellectual of Polish origin to ask him to send Rybiński’s *Psalmy Dawidowe* to him or directly to Constantinople. Bobowski may have been a Protestant before his conversion to Islam, and he may have known these psalms from his childhood in the Polish Lithuanian Commonwealth. Equally he may have been unaware of the existence of the Polish version of the Genevan Psalter before he sat down to work on its Turkish translation.

In fact, Bobowski’s religious stance cannot be judged either by the fact that he arranged the Huguenot Psalter (since it was probably a commission, not a case of an “inner need” for the artist to express his suppressed religious feelings), or on the basis of his personal preferences regarding his choice of associates in Constantinople. It is true that most of his works on religion, as well as Turkish language and customs, were commissioned by intellectuals of the Reformed faith (e.g., Levinus Warner, Isaac Basire, Henry Denton), but Bobowski also worked for Muslims (including the Ottoman sultan and his officials) and for Catholics (e.g., Teofil Rutka, Robert de Dreux).

If we take into account the multicultural and multidenominational nature of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth at the turn of the 16th and 17th centuries, it seems that for the formation of Wojciech Bobowski’s broad-minded personality, it was not really important whether he had been raised a Catholic or a Protestant. He left his homeland probably in the 1630s, before the times when the Counter-Reformation flourished in Rzeczpospolita, which finally led to the imposition of the death penalty for all Protestants by king Jan Kazimierz in 1668. At the beginning of the 17th century, Calvinism was the third largest confession in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, after Catholicism and Orthodox Christianity. Interestingly, Lubelszczyzna (the Lublin region), where one of the branches of the Bobowscy family lived, was at that time an important centre of Calvinism and Ari­anism. We also know that Protestant intellectuals from Lublin maintained contact with their brothers in faith living in the Netherlands. Also, Lviv – a place where Bobovius was most probably born – often called “the Gate to the Orient” had a truly multidenominational and multiethnic character, with Christians, Jews, Karaites and Muslim Tatars working alongside each other. A youth spent in such an environment, regardless of the faith he professed, could have led to the formation of Wojciech Bobowski’s broad-minded personality, which would later also be brought to life in the work of “Ali Ufkî.”

---


59 Chodynicki, *Reformacja w Polsce*.

60 Bahlcke, *Kalwinizm i Jednota braci czeskich*, 22.

Bibliography


Balcer, A., Turcja, Wielki Step i Europa Środkowa (Kraków: Międzynarodowe Centrum Kultury 2018).


Bobovio, A., Serai Enderum, cioè Penetrale dell’Seraglio detto nuovo dei G.S.ri e Re Ottomani; la descrittione del loro vivere e costumi et altri essercitij, da me Alberto Bobovio Sequolitano Polaccho fatta al qual tempo di Sultan Ibrahim strangolato et nel’tempo del presente G.S. Sultan Mehemet, ha qui con ufficio di Paggi di musica parecchi anni habitato (MS Harley 3409, 1665, Western Manuscripts Collection, British Library).


Rålamb, C., “A Relation of a Journey to Constantinople: Giving an Account of Divers Occurrences, How Far the King of Sweden’s Commission Was Executed There, as Also of the State of the Turkish Monarchy at


