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A Collection on the Russo-Japanese War at the Atatürk Library

Muratcan Zorcu*

Koç University

Introduction

This paper aims to pinpoint a compilation of books at the Atatürk Library in Istanbul as a collection containing considerable material on the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905). During and after the wartime, many of the Ottoman military staff translated military books about the war from different languages, as well as gathered numerous materials like postcards and maps in their own individual collections.

The Russo-Japanese War shaped the understanding of the army members in the War of Turkish Independence, such as the top people from Marshall Mustafa Kemal [Atatürk] and General Kazım (Karabekir) to General Fahreddin (Türkkan) Pashas and the ordinary army officers. For instance, the founder of the Turkish Republic Mustafa Kemal, in his early military career in the Ottoman times, wrote the book titled *Conversation with Officers and Commanders*, and he mentioned the Russo-Japanese War in the fourth chapter of his book.¹ Also, he noted many events within the Russo-Japanese War in his own notebooks.² In

* Ph.D. student in Dept. of History, Koç University, Istanbul. [The author is indebted to Prof. Selçuk Esenbel for her guidance and encouragement for realizing this research.]

1 METI, Robotto Shinsenryaku. Bijon, Senryaku, Akushonpuran. ロボット新戦略—ビジョン・戦略・アクションプラン— (New Robot Strategy. Japan's Robot Strategy - Vision, Strategy, Action Plan)

2 M[ustafa]. Kemal [Atatürk], *Zabit ve Kumandan ile Hasbihal* (Istanbul: Minber Matbaası, 1334[1918], [20]. Titled with *Ruh-i Taaruz* [spirit of attacking].

a similar vein, Pertev Bey (Demirhan), who was sent to this war as an observer by Abdülhamid II, also impacted on the Ottoman military staff in the following years because he gave lectures in the Military School in Istanbul. To understand and uncover the dimensions of the impacts of the Russo-Japanese War on the Ottoman military staff with the collection in the Atatürk Library, it is able to be investigated, considering the details of its. Accordingly, this collection helps us remember the impacts of the Russo-Japanese War on the mentality of the Ottoman military staff during the late Ottoman period, as well as the early phase of the Turkish Republic. Within this context, the Russo-Japanese War between the year 1904 and 1905 created new circumstances in *realpolitik* all around the world. It also shaped different military perception of the army officers in the threshold between the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries. One of these outstanding impacts was inevitably on the Ottoman Empire. It came face-to-face with the consequences of the Russo-Japanese War. These consequences started to be investigated by the most prominent scholars in and beyond Turkey. Professor Selçuk Esenbel, for instance, hoped with to draw attention with her article "The Impact of the Russo-Japanese War on Ottoman Turkey".³ In the same manner, Professor Ali Merthan Dünder highlighted the Ottoman interest on not solely the Russo-Japanese War but also the Japanese concerns, from their daily life to political conditions.⁴ This research was significant for this present paper, because Professor Dünder catalogued all Ottoman books on the Japanese realm throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries by listing their references. The central aim of this present paper, therefore, is to propose the creation of a collection, specifically on the Russo-Japanese War, in the Atatürk Library, Istanbul; this will help to attain a better understanding of the effects of the Russo-Japanese War on the Ottoman army officers by underlining the translation differences of the books in Ottoman script. Last but not least, there are different works that were produced or translated about the Russo-Japanese War by the Ottoman army officers. These studies are not present at the library, so they should be checked with Professor Dünder's article for further research.

3 *Atatürk'ün Not Defterleri II* (Ankara: Genelkurmay ATASE ve Genelkurmay Denetleme Başkanlığı Yayınları, 2004), passim.

4 Selçuk Esenbel, "The Impact of the Russo-Japanese War on Ottoman Turkey" *Shingetsu Electronic Journal of Japanese-Islamic Relations* 4 (September 2008): 16-24.

A Collection in the Atatürk Library

In beginning, it should be reminded that this collection is not under the specific title and the materials about the Russo-Japanese War like books and postcards are in different locations in the Atatürk library. Different sources, such as translations and materials, will be shown by turn in this section of this present paper.

The central items among this collection are Pertev *Bey*'s reports.⁵ Pertev *Bey*⁶ was one of the most outstanding military officers during the disintegration process of the Ottoman Empire. He was sent to Manchuria when he was in the rank of *miralay* (colonel), in order to observe the Russo-Japanese War, between the year 1904 and 1905, with the reference of Goltz Pasha. He spent two months in Japan and more than a year in Manchuria. In addition to explaining his findings in the field of warfare, he also served as an unofficial ambassador, due to the lack of diplomatic relations with Japan. In other words, he contributed to the development of relations among the two countries. After Pertev *Bey* returned to Istanbul, he had given a detailed report, that will be assessed in the following paragraphs, to the Sultan Abdülhamid II. In addition, he gave lectures about the Russo-Japanese War and the Japanese society in the Military School. At the end of the Russian-Japanese War, in 1905, Pertev *Bey* was promoted to the rank of general. Pertev Pasha was the most influential person on the understand the outcomes of the Russo-Japanese War on Turkey because he directed the attitude of the military staff that grew up in the Committee of Union and Progress, the War of Turkish Independence in Anatolia, as well as the Republican period.

These reports are in one cover. It includes one preface and five notebooks.

5 A. Merthan Dündar, "Japan in the Turkish Press: An Essay on Books Written about Japan in Ottoman Script during the 19th and 20th centuries" *Asian Research Trends New Series 7* (2012): 55-73. In addition to highlighting the Ottoman interest in the Japanese Empire, the press in Istanbul is still waiting for a comprehensive investigation by the magazines such as *Asker*, *Servet-i Fünun* and *Sırat-ı Müstakim*. For the articles about the Russo-Japanese War in the journal of *Asker*: Colmar von der Goltz "Keşfi İstikbal: Şark'ın Manevîyatı", *Asker 3*, (1324[1908]), 113-122. Ali Fuad [Erden], "Aksay-ı Şark Harbî'nden Alınan Dersler", *Asker 4*, (1324 [1908]): 167-175. Ali Rıza, "Muharebenin Tesirat-ı Manevîyesi: Rus-Japon Seferinden Mütalaat-ı Umumiye", *Asker 17*, (1325[1909]): 199-204. Raşid Galip, "Mançurya Harbî'nde Rusların Yenilmelerinin Sebeplerinden Biri Ne İdi?", *Asker 10*, (1324[1909]): 498-502. Ali Rıza (Mütercim), "Rus Askerlerine Dair Mülâhazat-ı Hususiyeye", *Asker ?*, (?): 275-280.

6 From the Atatürk Library. (Bel_Yz_B0043). This war report is solely in the Atatürk Library, so the status of this library becomes an archive rather than the library.

At the initial step, the 16-page-preface written by Perteve *Bey* on February 11, 1906, followed the first report. It is under the title of "The Military action of the Third Japanese Army from the first Days of the Month of June to August 1".⁷ This 14-page-report narrated the Japanese Army's military action in the earliest days of the war, with his opinions on the events. It continues with the second report that is included under the title of "The Military Action of the Third Japanese Army from the Nineth Day of the Month of August to Fifteenth Day of October".⁸ It is also fourteen pages. The following report, namely report 3, involves the following days of October 15 to the second day of October.⁹ This report was 59 pages and, additionally, his opinions followed the addendums of the details. The fourth report was two pages, and shows the order of battle among army troops. It was under the title of "In the Evening of 26/27 October, the Japanese Attack to *Hobihoday* [Pine Tree Port] Battery".¹⁰ The fifth report was titled "The Third Japanese Army' Military Action in the Battle of Mukden"¹¹ and included twenty-seven pages. The second and fourth report was also added within the cover following the fifth report. It should be said that these reports were reevaluated and published by Perteve *Bey* in the following years with the name of "Rus-Japon Harbi'nden Alınan Maddi ve Manevi Dersler ve Japonların Esbab-ı Muzafferiyeti".¹² This book was respectively transliterated to modern Turkish in the 2010s by Ali Merthan Dündar and Doruk Akyüz.¹³ Doruk Akyüz also evaluated this book and Perteve *Bey*'s perception of the Russo-Japanese War.¹⁴ However, these

7 Perteve Said [Demirhan] Pasha (1871-1964). He was born in 1871 of Istanbul. Except his journey to Japan, he participated to the Balkan Wars that was enormously influential to the Turkish nationalist understanding in the second decade of the 20th century. He continued his own career during the World War I and the War of Turkish Independence as an Inspector of Military Schools in Istanbul. He retired in 1931 and in the following years, he served as the deputy of Erzurum for three terms in the Republican Era.

8 "Üçüncü Japon ordusunun haziran ibtidasından ağustosun birinci gününe kadar olan harekât-ı askeriyyesi."

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid.

11 "26/27 teşrinisani gecesi Japonlar tarafından hobihoday [Sho-Ju-San] bataryasına icra edilmiş hücum." This was a fortification known as Sho-Ju-San in Japanese and Pine Tree Port in English. Perteve *Bey* used the word of *Hobihoday* for that. Rotem Kowner, *Historical Dictionary of Russo-Japanese War* (Maryland: The Scarecrow Press, 2006), 461.

12 "Mukden Meydan Muharebesinde üçüncü Japon ordusunun harekât-ı askeriyyesi"

13 Doruk Akyüz, "Perteve (Demirhan) Paşa'nın Rus-Japon Harbi'nden Alınan Maddi ve Manevi Dersler ve Japonların Esbab-ı Muzafferiyeti Adlı Eseri" (MA Thesis, T.C. Harp Akademileri, 2013).

14 S. Perteve Demirhan, *Rus-Japon Harbi'nden Alınan Maddi ve Manevi Dersler ve Japonların Başarılarının*

reports still await the transliteration process from the Ottoman scripts to the Latin scripts for academic usage without any intervention.

Before different translations about the Russo-Japanese War, the last point about Pertev *Bey*'s comprehensive reports is to include many observations and battle plans. For instance, this following illustration in his fourth report displays the order of the battle in the first, the second, the third, and the fourth companies, as well as the battle of the battalion during the Japanese attack on December, 1904.¹⁵

The subsequent items consist of the three different translations of the same book. The original book including translations like English, French and different Turkish versions was *Расплата* that was written by Commander Vladimir Semenoff with the Russian language in 1912.¹⁶ This book was translated to English by British Captain A. B. Lindsay.¹⁷ He was an expert of the Russian language, according to the British War Records.¹⁸ This English book was converted into Ottoman scripts with different titles four times.

The first book is *Çuşima Muharebesi* (The Battle of Tsushima), which was translated by Ottoman navy officer Lieutenant Mustafa Kemal *Bey*.¹⁹ This book was a further step from the translations by him in the official Navy Magazine (*Ceride-i Bahriyye*) because he translated this book from the English version in this magazine before publishing his translation as a book.²⁰ At this point, the translations of Lieutenant Mustafa Kemal *Bey* in the navy magazine based on the English version of the book.²¹ Lieutenant Mustafa Kemal *Bey* as

Sebepleri (Ankara: Gece Kitaplığı, 2016). Doruk Akyüz, *Bir Osmanlı Kurmayının Gözünden Rus-Japon Harbi: Miralay Pertev Bey'in Gözlemleri* (Istanbul: Dergâh Yayınları, 2017).

15 Doruk Akyüz, "An Ottoman Staff Officer in the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905): General Pertev Bey's Impressions and Evaluations" *Global Perspectives on Japan* 4: 38-64.

16 From the fourth report by Pertev *Bey*, 2. Please see, Appendix I.

17 В.И. Семенов, *Расплата: Трилогия* (Санкт-Петербург: тип. т-ва М.О. Вольф, 1912).

18 Captain Vladimir Semenoff, *The Battle of Tsushima between the Japanese and Russian Fleets, fought on 27th May 1905*, trans. Captain A[lexander]. B[ertram]. Lindsay (New York: E. P. Dutton & Company, 1908), half-title.

19 Imperial War Museums, Bond of Sacrifice First World War Portraits Collection, HU 124159. Cited in <https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/205384584>, accessed on January 25, 2022. His biographic entry was also written with the preface of the book.

20 Yüzbaşı Mustafa Kemâl, *Çuşima Muharebesi* (Istanbul: Matbaa-ı Bahriyye, [1]328 [1912]). TÖ_0110.

21 Yüzbaşı Mustafa Kemâl, *Çuşima Muharebesi*, [2-3]. There is also registry error in the Library of Turkish Historical Association (TTK) in Ankara. This translator was not the founder of Turkish Republic but the navy officer. https://kutuphane.ttk.gov.tr/details?id=533760&material_Type=NE&query=Dil+bilim, accessed on January 25, 2022.

a translator noted that he was aware of the French version²² of this present book after the serialized period in the magazine, as well as that this book was a further version with his own additional corrections, according to his preface.²³ In addition, he noted that in this 129-page-translation, there were an erratum table and various plans on the final pages of the book. Within this translation, the last point to be emphasized is that one copy of the book is also in the museum of General Kazım (Karabekir), Pasha who was one of the significant commanders during the War of Turkish Independence.²⁴ This can be understood as having shaped impact of the Russo-Japanese War on the founding fathers of Turkey.

Among the collection of the Atatürk Library in Istanbul about the Russo-Japanese War, is the following translation: *Kapudan Vladimir Semenofun Ruznamesi ve Çuşima Muharebe-i Bahriyyesi*.²⁵ It was another translation of the previous one by different army officer in the same year. In other words, this book was translated to the Ottoman Turkish by M. Nahid, who was an engineer in *Turgud Reis Battleship*, via the English version of the book by Russian Semenoff. According to the half-title of the translation, H. Fevzi published this book, translated by M. Nahid.

The third translation is the English translation of the book by Semenoff deciphered by the army officers in the Ottoman military service under a different title: *Çuşima Deniz Meydan Muharebesinde Moskof Donanmasının Perişanlığı*.²⁶ Like the publishing of the translation by Lieutenant Mustafa Kemal in the Naval Magazine, this book was a final version of the translation by Muhyiddin, Thessaloniki Harbor Master, after the serialized process in the Rumelia Newspaper.²⁷ In addition, the sixth chapter of the book was

22 Yüzbaşı Mustafa Kemâl, *Çuşima Muharebesi*, [2-3].

23 W. Sémenoff, *L'expiation: L'agonie d'un Cuirassé. L'escadre de Port-Arthur. Sur le Chemin du Sacrifice*, trans. [Raoul de] Balincourt (Paris: Librairie Maritime et Coloniale, 1911).

24 Please see, footnote 19.

25 <https://www.kazimkarabekirvakfi.org.tr/kutuphane.htm>, accessed on January 20, 2022.

26 The Diary of Captain Vladimir Semenov and the Naval Warfare of Tsushima. M. Nahid, *Kapudan Vladimir Semenofun Ruznamesi ve Çuşima Muharebe-i Bahriyyesi* (Istanbul: Matbaa-ı Hayriyye ve Şürekâsı, 1328[1912]). Bel_Osm_K.00264.

27 The Misery of the Russian Armada in the Tsushima Battle. Kumandan Semenoff, *Çuşima Deniz Meydan Muharebesinde Moskof Donanmasının Perişanlığı* trans. M. Muhyiddin Hasan and Muhyiddin, (Selânik [Thessaloniki]: Rumeli Matbaası, 1327 [1911]). Bel_Osm_K.00669. This translation was also transcribed to Latin scripts in modern Turkish: Komutan Siminof, *Çuşima Deniz Meydan Muharebesinde Moskof Donanmasının Perişanlığı*, edited. Habibullah Habib (Istanbul: Kayıhan

translated into Ottoman scripts by M. Muhyiddin Hasan; however, there was not a separate title 'The Sixth Chapter (*fasıl* in Turkish)'. Finally, the Ottoman version of this book was 185 pages.

In a similar vein, the last record of this translation process of Semenoff's book is Muhyiddin's translation. Under normal circumstances, the printed information could not be completed since the half-title page of this book was missing. However, the book was nothing else but the same book previously published by Muhyiddin. Although there was a deceptive note about this book, as the memoirs of Russian commander Kuropatkin in the records of the Atatürk Library,²⁸ the book was again the translation of Semenoff's book with the same title because the content of these books is exactly the same, except for a few pages missing in the second one. M. Muhyiddin Hasan also wrote the epilogue after the fifth (actually, sixth chapter in the original book) chapter of the book.²⁹

The third example is the book of "*Rus-Japon Muharebesi Tecrübelerinden*" (*From the Experience of the Russo-Japanese Battle*).³⁰ According to the half-title of this present book, it included the note titled "*Zafer Külliyyatı Numero 3*" (*The Corpus of Triumph* no. 3). It can be clarified that the book was third gift of *Zafer Ceride-i Askeriyyesi* (the military newspaper called *Triumph*) because it also mentioned the monthly gift of this newspaper to its own subscribers.³¹ In other words, the book was gifted with the newspaper. This 92-page-book was translated from the Russian language to the Ottoman Turkish by M. Sadık. According to the title page, M. Sadık's rank was *süvari binbaşı* in the Ottoman military service.³²

One more investigation among this collection about the Russo-Japanese War is First Lieutenant Mehmed Hilmi *Bey*'s translation.³³ The original study of this translation was not found in any British records; however, the Özege

Yayımları, 2020).

28 Kumandan Semenoff, *Moskof Donanmasının Perişanlığı*, half-title.

29 AG_0327/02.

30 Semenoff, [*Çuşima Deniz Meydan Muharebesinde Moskof Donanmasının Perişanlığı*], trans. M. Muhyiddin Hasan, [(Selânik [Thessaloniki]: Rumeli Matbaası, 1327 [1911]].

31 M. Sadık, *Rus Japon Muharebesi Tecrübelerinden* (Dersaadet [Istanbul]: Artin Asaduryan ve Mahdumları Matbaası, 1330 [1914]. Bel_Osm_K.02448.

32 The book included that subtitle: *Zafer Ceride-i Askeriyyesinin abonelerine hediye-i şehriyesidir*. M. Sadık, *Rus Japon Muharebesi*, half-title.

33 Its equivalent was below lieutenant colonel.

records, which involve a list including the names of books with Ottoman scripts until the Language Reform in Turkey in 1928, demonstrated that this translation was based on the writing of Tottenham.³⁴ He was a British army officer in Istanbul under the Admiral Limpus Pasha, a top leader of the British naval mission.³⁵ According to Mehmed Hilmi *Bey*'s autograph note in the Prolog of this translation, not only Tottenham, but also Mehmed Hilmi *Bey*, were in the retinue of Admiral Limpus,³⁶ so it is possible to say that any reports or studies of Tottenham, could also have been translated by Mehmed Hilmi to the Ottoman Turkish in the following years from the starting date of the British naval mission under Limpus Pasha. This translation was 96 pages, as well as 19 tables and maps.

Last but not the least, Fahreddin *Paşa* (Türkkan), who was a defender of the Muslim Holy Center, Medina and the ambassador in Afghanistan in the early Republican period had his own collection, like the example of General Kazım Pasha in the previous paragraphs. Fahreddin Pasha's collection remarkably included the postcard about the Russo-Japanese War in 1905, according to his collection in the Atatürk Library.³⁷

In Lieu of Conclusion

This study introduced and listed several books that were written with the Ottoman script about the Russo-Japanese War, as well as different postcards and maps in the collections of the Ottoman military staff in the Atatürk Library. With the help of them, the main item is the report of Pertev Bey who was dispatched by Abdülhamid II to observe the wartime. Also, there were different translations of the book by Captain Semenoff by different army members of the Ottoman Empire. Whereas the main target of this present research is to introduce this collection to the world literature, it is possible to say some points in lieu of conclusion. Firstly, the ottoman responses to the

³⁴ Tottenham, *Mühim Bir Ders-i Tarihi*, trans. Mehmed Hilmi Bey (Dersaadet [Istanbul]: Yeni Turan Matbaası, [191-]). Bel_Osm_K.00294.

³⁵ Özege Catalogue, 14686.

³⁶ *Şehbal* [Dergisi], 15 Mayıs 1330 [May 28, 1914] (97): 3. Cited in Rasım Koç, "Osmanlı Donanmasında Modernleşme Hareketlerine Bir Örnek: Amiral Arthur Limpus Raporu" *Türk Dünyası Araştırmaları*, 128 (253): 372.

³⁷ Tottenham, *Mühim Bir Ders-i*, [3].

war ought to be clearly established within the different Ottoman magazines; secondly, the position of Ottoman military staff and its impacts on the founding fathers of the modern Turkish Republic in the 1920s and 1930s should be presented; thirdly, the translation differences will help to reveal the perceptions of the Ottoman army officers for further research.

Appendix

برنجی فرقیہ منسوب برنجی طاہور	برہولوک	برہولوک	برہولوک	برہولوک
	۱	۲	۳	۴
کھنچہ	۱	۲	۳	۴
دوقورنجی و اولہ برنجی فرقہ لر قطعان				

Figure 1: From Perteve Bey's fourth report, p. 2. (Bel_Yz_B0043)

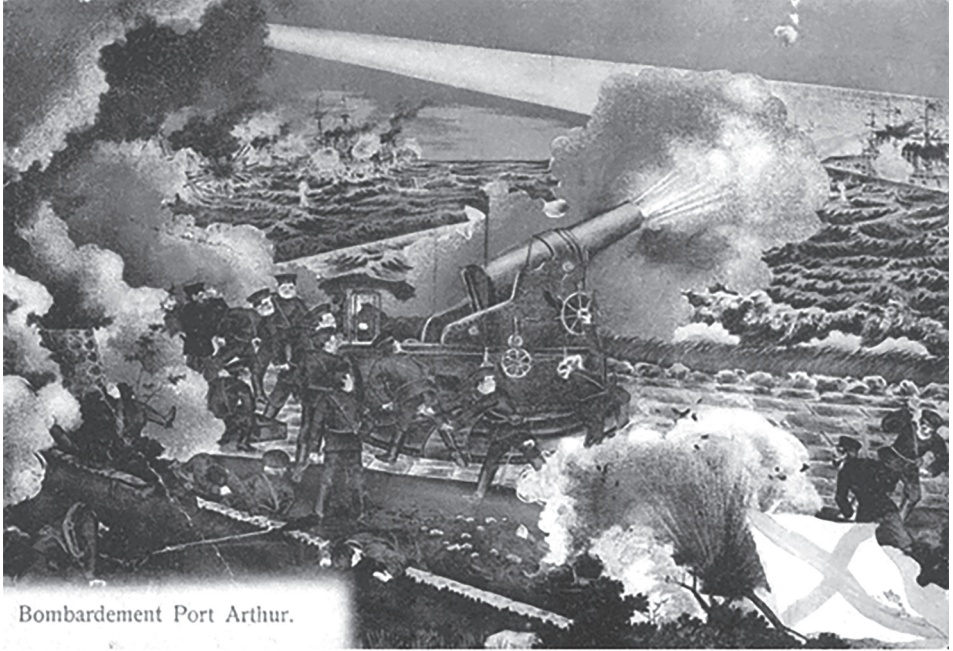


Figure 2: The postcard from the collection of Fahreddin Pasha. (Bel_Mtf_026282)

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