

Research Article



The Translations of Aesop's Stories in *Letâ'ifü'l-Hikâyât*: Correspondences in Aesop Indices and Alternative Reading Recommendations

Letâ'ifü'l-Hikâyât'taki Ezop Hikâyelerinin Tercümeleri: Ezop İndekslerindeki Karşılıklar ve Farklı Okuma Önerileri

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Abstract

Most of these stories are fables that use the art of personification to give animals a voice, leading to their common designation as Aesop's fables. Initially written in Greek and Latin, these fables were translated into various languages from the fifteenth century onwards. Researchers have indexed these translations, allowing them to be grouped under the Aesopic tradition. Within this framework, Aesop's stories are analyzed in two categories: "Aesop's Life" and "Aesop's Stories." Almost all Turkish translations focus on Aesop's stories, with only one including brief information about Aesop's life in its introduction. The author of *Letâ'ifü'l-Hikâyât*, found in the Turkish Language Institution Manuscripts (number A306), is unknown. This work begins with anecdotes about Aesop's life and continues with stories, primarily fables, narrated in his voice. Although this work has been introduced in previous studies, the indices have not been addressed, and misreadings of words in the text have led to inaccurate evaluations. This article seeks to provide a comprehensive account of *Letâ'ifü'l-Hikâyât* by describing its manuscript copy, language, and orthographic features, by identifying the counterparts of Aesop's stories in international indices, and by correcting the misinterpretations found in earlier scholarship.

Öz

Ezop hikâyeleri; Ezop adlı bir köleye atfedilen ve kaynağı Antik Yunan dönemine dayanan anonim hikâyelerdir. Hikâyelerin büyük çoğunluğu, hayvanların teşhis sanatıyla konuşturulduğu fabl türünde olduğu için bu hikâyeler, daha çok Ezop masalları olarak anılır. On beşinci yüzyıla kadar Yunanca ve Latince kaleme alınan masallar, bu tarihten itibaren farklı dillere tercüme edilmiştir. Bu farklı dilde tercüme edilen hikâyeler, araştırmacılar tarafından indekslenmiş ve bu indeksler sayesinde Ezopik gelenek çatısı altında toplanmıştır. Ezopik gelenek çerçevesinde Ezop hikâyeleri, "Ezop'un Hayatı" ve "Ezop'un Hikâyeleri" olmak üzere iki kolda incelenmiştir. Ezop'un Türkçe tercümelerinin neredeyse tamamı Ezop'un hikâyelerine dairdir. Bu tercümelerin yalnızca bir tanesinin giriş kısmında Ezop'un hayatı ile ilgili çok kısa bilgi mevcuttur. Türk Dil Kurumu Yazmaları A306 numarada bulunan *Letâ'ifü'l-Hikâyât* adlı eserin müellifi belli değildir. Eser, Ezop'un hayatının anlatıldığı hikâyeler ile başlayıp onun ağzından anlatılan çoğunluğu fabl türünde hikâyelerle devam eder. Önceki çalışmalarda bu eser tanıtılmasına rağmen indekslerden hiç bahsedilmemiş, eserdeki kelimelerin hatalı okunması sebebiyle yanlış değerlendirmelerde bulunulmuştur. Bu çalışmada, *Letâ'ifü'l-Hikâyât*; nüsha, dil ve imla özellikleri bakımından tavsif edilmiş, eserdeki Ezop hikâyelerinin uluslararası indekslerdeki karşılıkları gösterilmiş ve önceki çalışmalardaki yanlış değerlendirmeler düzeltilmiştir.

Keywords

Ottoman literature,
Letâ'ifü'l-Hikâyât,
life of Aesop,
fables of Aesop,
translation

Anahtar Kelimeler

Osmanlı edebiyatı,
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Introduction

Even if no records from the time of Aesop, who is believed to have lived in the sixth century BCE, have survived, numerous storytellers who followed his tradition contributed to the transmission of his tales to the present day, gradually increasing the number of stories attributed to him. From the now-lost compilation by Demetrius in the fourth century BCE, Aesop's fables began to circulate in Western languages and evolved into a popular literary tradition. Among the earliest and most influential transmitters of this tradition were Phaedrus, Babrius, and Avianus, who lived between the first century BCE and the fifth century CE.¹ In the first century CE, Aesop's fables became an essential part of education in the Roman Empire when Marcus Fabius Quintilianus used them as tools for teaching rhetoric. These fables remained a core component of the European educational curriculum until the thirteenth century AD. In the fourteenth century, Maximus Planudes, a Byzantine priest and diplomat living in Constantinople, compiled a new Greek version of Aesop's fables that was soon translated into almost all Western languages.²

Despite the fact that it is commonly believed that translations from Western languages into Turkish began after the Tanzimat period, the stories of Aesop challenge this notion.³ Thus, it is necessary to consider the Turkish translations of Aesop's fables in two distinct time frames: before and after the Tanzimat period. There were four Turkish translations of Aesop's fables from the pre-Tanzimat period. The first is untitled and exists in a single manuscript copy, held at the National Library of France (Paris) under reference number "SUP Turc 453." The second work, titled *Hikâyât-ı Esepas*, has five known manuscript copies. The opening pages of this work contain a few folios discussing Aesop's life. The third work, titled *Kitâb-ı Emsâl*, has two known copies in existence. The final work, *Güzide Meseller*, was printed in Paris by Victor Letellier in 1826.⁴ The translator of *Güzide Meseller*, edited by Letellier, is unknown.⁵ Another copy of *Güzide Meseller*, published alongside a facsimile, is located in the British Library with reference number "OR 7332." This copy also lacks information about the date and author.⁶

¹ Niklas Holzberg, *The Ancient Fable: An Introduction* (Indiana University Press, 2002), 36–72.

² Holzberg, *Ancient Fable*, 29.

³ Mehmet Kuru, "Ezop Alla Turca: Tanzimat Öncesi Döneme Ait Ezop Tercümelerinin Kültürel Çeviri Bağlamında İncelenmesi," *Nesir: Edebiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi* 2 (2022a): 160.

⁴ Kuru, "Ezop Alla Turca: Tanzimat Öncesi Döneme Ait Ezop Tercümelerinin Kültürel Çeviri Bağlamında İncelenmesi," 161; Mehmet Kuru, "Ezop'un Osmanlı Coğrafyasındaki Maceraları," *Toplumsal Tarih* 343 (2022b): 9; Mehmet Kuru, "Ezop Alla Turca: Tanzimat Öncesi Döneme Ait Ezop Tercümeleri," *Toplumsal Tarih* 343 (2022c): 10–13; Cevat Sucu, "Bir Tercüman Mecmuası: Sözlük, Bayramlık, Ferman ve Ezop," *Toplumsal Tarih* 343 (2022): 14–15.

⁵ Hasan Anamur, "Türk Dilinde Güzide Meseller, 1826 Yılında Paris'te Yayınlanmış Türkçe 'Fables' Çevirileri," *Toplumsal Tarih* 163 (2007): 48; Hakan Soydaş, "Türkçeye Çevrilen İlk Fabl Antolojisi Choix de Fables Traduite en Türk/Emsâl-i Güzide," *Doğu Batı* 88 (2019): 120.

⁶ Beyhan Kesik and Gönül Delice, *Güzide Meseller (Seçkin Masallar)* (Kut, 2022), 18.

The seven Turkish translations of Aesop's fables that date back to the post-Tanzimat period include one manuscript and six printed works. The first, a manuscript, is titled *Nevâdirü'l-Emsâl* and was translated by Hâfız İbrahim Edhem Efendi (b. 1811 / d. ?) in 1259/1843.⁷ A further one, written in 1854 by Evangelinos Misailidis (b. 1820 / d. 1890), is titled *Ezop'un Kıssadan Hisse Almaya Mahsus Meselleri*. In the preface, Misailidis states that he translated the work from Greek.⁸ Another notable work is *Kıssadan Hisse*, authored by Ahmed Midhat (b. 1844 / d. 1912) in 1287/1870, which contains thirty five stories, eighteen of which are attributed to Aesop.⁹ In the third edition of this book, the number of Aesop stories increased to thirty five.¹⁰ Yet another work, *Tercüme-i Yezepos*, was written by Diyarbakırlı Çelebi-zâde Agop Lütî (b. ? / d. 1910) in 1290/1873 and contains stories about Aesop's life.¹¹ The work titled *Edebiyyât ve Hikâyât-ı Garîbe*, authored by Hâfız Refî' (b. 1840 / d. 1903), presents 10 stories first in Arabic, followed by their Turkish translations.¹² Osman Râsih Efendi (b. 1822 / d. 1884) authored *Menâkıb-ı Hayevân Berây-ı Teşhîz-i Ezhân*, in which he translated forty one Aesop fables from French to Turkish.¹³ The final work is *Ezop*, authored by Ebüzziyâ Mehmet Tefvîk (b. 1849 / d. 1913) in 1300/1882. This work does not contain fables; rather, it includes stories about Aesop's life.¹⁴ The primary objectives of translating Aesop's fables in the nineteenth century were to teach language skills and promote universal values.¹⁵ The subject of this article, *Letâ'ifü'l-Hikâyât*, which contains both Aesop's life story and his fables, has probably been translated at the end of the sixteenth century or the beginning of the seventeenth century, thus qualifying as part of the pre-Tanzimat translations of Aesop's fables.

In previous studies on *Letâ'ifü'l-Hikâyât*, the work has been introduced;¹⁶ however, due to misreadings, inaccurate assessments have been made regarding both the anecdotes and the

⁷ Suat Donuk, "Bir Aisopos Hikâyeleri Tercümesi: Hâfız İbrahim Edhem Efendi'nin *Nevâdirü'l-Emsâl*," *Littera Turca Journal of Turkish Language and Literature* 7, no. 3 (2021): 622.

⁸ Evangelinos Misailidis, *Ezop'un Kıssadan Hisse Almaya Mahsus Meselleri* (Anadolu, 1854), 3; there is also a master's thesis on this book: Seda Öner, "Grek Harfli Türkçe Esopos'un Kıssadan Hisse Almaya Mahsus Meselleri (Giriş-Metin-İnceleme-Sözlük/İndeks-Tıpkıbasım)" (master's thesis, Fatih University, 2014), 12.

⁹ Ahmed Midhat, *Kıssadan Hisse*, 2nd ed. (Muharririn Zatına Mahsus Matbaa, 1287/1870), 74; Sabahattin Çağın, ed., *Ahmet Midhat Efendi Kıssadan Hisse* (Dergâh, 2013), 11; Erol Ülgen, ed., *Ahmet Midhat Kıssadan Hisse* (Akıl Fikir, 2018), 10.

¹⁰ Ahmed Midhat, *Kıssadan Hisse*, 3rd ed. (Kırk Anbar, 1296/1879), 3.

¹¹ Diyarbakırlı Çelebi-zâde Agop Lütî, *Tercüme-i Yezepos* (Zartaryan, 1290/1873), 2.

¹² Hâfız Refî', *Edebiyyât ve Hikâyât-ı Garîbe* (Şark, 1291/1874), 6.

¹³ Osmân Râsih Efendi, *Menâkıb-ı Hayevân Berây-ı Teşhîz-i Ezhân* (Bakırcıbaşı-zâde Süleymân Efendi, 1294/1877), 1.

¹⁴ Ebüzziyâ Mehmet Tefvîk, *Ezop* (Matbaa-i Ebüzziyâ, 1300/1882-83), 3; Evangelia Balta, *19. Yüzyıl Osmanlıca ve Karamanlıca Yayınlarında Ezop'un Hayatı ve Masalları* (Libra, 2019), 12.

¹⁵ Büşra Elif Özçelik, "19. Yüzyılda Neşredilmiş Ezop Eserleri," *Toplumsal Tarih* 343 (2022): 53.

¹⁶ Mustafa Alkan, "Letâ'ifü'l-Hikâyât [TDK A 306] (İnceleme-Metin-İndeksli Sözlük-Tıpkıbasım)" (PhD diss., Erciyes University, 2024a); "Ezop Anlatılarını İçeren Bir Eser: *Letâ'ifü'l-Hikâyât*,"

translator's life. Moreover, these earlier studies did not address the counterparts of the stories in the international indices of Aesop's fables. This article seeks to fill this gap by identifying such correspondences and correcting the misinterpretations that stem from faulty readings.

Characteristics of *Letâ'ifü'l-Hikâyât*: Definition, Language and Orthography

The manuscript is registered in the catalog of the Türk Dil Kurumu Kütüphanesi (Turkish Language Institution Library, Ankara) under the title *Letâ'ifü'l-Hikâyât* with catalog number A/306. According to the catalog, the manuscript measures 208×152-160×100 mm and features a watermark of a cat. The spine is covered with black leather, and the cover is wrapped in black buckram fabric. The catalog notes that the manuscript is attributed to Kâtip Çelebi, but the accuracy of this information cannot be confirmed.¹⁷

Although the manuscript is catalogued as being written in *rik'a* script, Alkan disputes this classification, asserting that the script is actually *naskh* (*nesih*). However, he has not provided any evidence to support this claim.¹⁸ One of the most distinctive features that differentiates *rik'a* from other scripts is the form of the letter 'ك' *kef* at the end of a word, where the 'ء' *hemze* diacritic is created by an inward curve of the pen without lifting it. Another defining characteristic of the *rik'a* is the rendering of the end of the word 'ن' *nûn*, whose dot is drawn by curling the pen either inward or outward, again without lifting the pen. Additionally, at the end of words, the dots of 'ق' *kaf* are typically omitted and replaced by an outward curve created without lifting the pen (See Figure I).

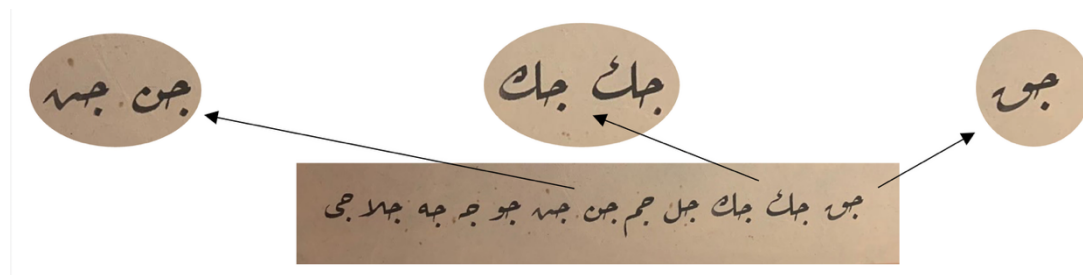


Figure I. *Rik'a* script practice (*mashq*) sample¹⁹

RumeliDE Dil ve Edebiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi 39 (2024b); "Ezop Anlatılarını İçeren *Letâyifü'l-Hikâyât*'ın Dil ve İmla Özellikleri," *Uluslararası Türkçe Edebiyat Kültür Eğitim Dergisi* 13/3 (2024c).

¹⁷ Müjgan Cunbur, *Türk Dil Kurumu Kütüphanesi Yazma Eserler Kataloğu* (Türk Dil Kurumu, 1999), 169.

¹⁸ Alkan, "Letâyifü'l-Hikâyât [TDK A 306]," 160; "Ezop Anlatılarını İçeren Bir Eser: *Letâyifü'l-Hikâyât*," 484.

¹⁹ Muhittin Serin, *Halim Efendi'nin Dîvânî, Celî Dîvânî, Rik'a Meşk Murakkatı* (Kubbealtı, 2014), 35.

While this outward-curving form of ‘*nûn*’ and ‘*kaf*’ can also be found in the *diwani* script, it is entirely absent in *naskh*. All four of these features frequently appear in *Letâ’ifü’l-Hikâyât*, leaving no doubt that the manuscript is written in *rik’a* script (See Figure II). It remains unclear on what basis Alkan claims the script to be *naskh* (*nesih*).

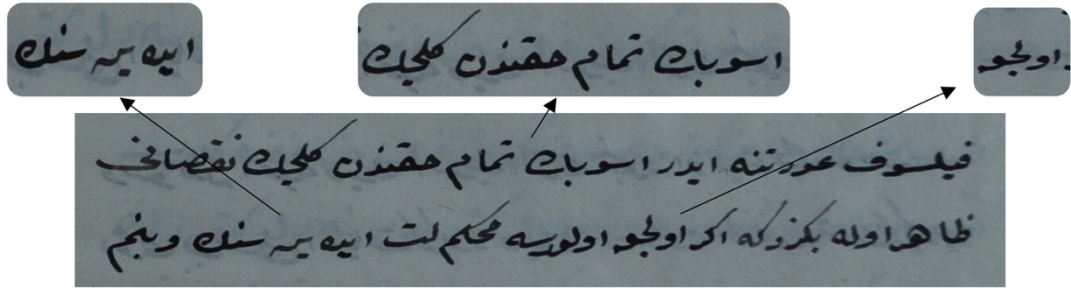


Figure II. Lines 10-II on folio 3^b of *Letâ’ifü’l-Hikâyât*²⁰

The manuscript consists of 113 folios, each numbered and featuring 15 lines in a single-column layout with spaced lines between them. The paper has a chickpea color (*nohûdî*). The title of *Letâ’ifü’l-Hikâyât* and the headings of the stories are written in red ink, while the rest of the text is in black ink. Some heading sections were intentionally left blank, possibly for later completion, but were not filled in. The manuscript does not contain any information regarding the date of copy (*istinsâh*), the author (*müellif*), or the scribe (*müstensih*). There is no recorded information (*kuyûdât*) at the beginning or end of the manuscript. The script is a clear example of *rik’a* handwriting. Given that the *rik’a* script is rarely found earlier than the second half of the eighteenth century and became more common in the nineteenth century,²¹ the manuscript can be dated to this period. The work begins with a direct narration of stories and concludes after the last story.

Begins [1^b]: (1) *Rivāyet olunur ki Yunan’da bir feylesōf var idi ve anuñ bir ‘ākıl* (2) *ķulu var idi. İsmine Esop derler idi. Anuñ ‘acā’ib ü garā’ib menķibeleri* (3) *vardur*

²⁰ [3^b] (10) *feylesōf ‘avretine eydür: Esop’uñ tamām haķķından gelecek, noķķānı* (11) *zāhir ola beñzer ki eger olcaķ olursa muħkem let ideyin senüñ ve benüm*. In this article, quotations from the manuscript text were transcribed in accordance with *Tenkitli Neşir Kılavuzu*. See Berat Açıl, Sadık Yazar, Kadir Turgut, and Özgür Kavak, *Tenkitli Neşir Kılavuzu (Osmanlı Türkçesi Metinleri İçin)* (Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Araştırmaları Merkezi (İSAM), 2022).

²¹ Muhittin Serin, “Rik’a,” *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi* (DİA), v. 35 (Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2008), 108.

Ends [113^a]: (1) ‘*Ākıbet-i aḥbār nice oldu takrİR idelim. Pādişāh bu laṭİfe-i zarİfe ile* (2) *mütesellā olup itmāmına ikdām itmeyüp el-‘ārİfİ [te]kḫİhi*’l-işāre (3) *didİ*²²

After completing the final story, the author provides limited information about the work. Alkan refers to this section as the *ketebe* record.²³ A *ketebe* or *ferāğ* record is a note placed on manuscript by copyists to indicate that the transcription of the text (*istinsāh*) has been completed.²⁴ However, since there is no transcription information in this section of *Letā’ifü’l-Hikāyāt*, it cannot be considered a *ketebe* record. The information provided in this section after the end of the stories is typically expected to appear following the *besmele*, *hamdele*, and *salvele* sections in the introduction, followed by the expression *ammā ba’d*. Contrary to classical tradition, this information appears in the conclusion (*hātime*) after the work is completed. Although the translator states that he wrote the work to present it to the sultan, he does not provide his own name or the name of the sultan. He states that, in composing the work, he drew on books written in Greek and Hebrew that had not yet been translated into Turkish. These remarks suggest that the author possessed proficiency in both languages.

(4) *eger bu ‘abd-ı züllüñ ĩali’ müsā’id olup bu tercüme-i kitāb-ı nāyābı* (5) *naẓar-ı iksİR-e[s]er-i pādişāhİ ve huẓur-ı sa’ādet-meyfūr-ı ḫāẓret-i* (6) *salṭanat-penāḫİye vuşul bulup fi’l-cümle makbūl olursa zihİ* (7) *sa’ādet-i bā-ıkbāl-i devlet-i cāvid ger ḳabūl küned ez-luṭf-ı kerem* (8) *şāh-ı cihān heme ikbāl-i cihān içün nişānum lisān-ı Yünānİde* (9) *ve zebān-ı ‘İmrānİye[de] vāḳİ’ olan kütüb-i tevārİḫ ü aḥbār u siyer-i* (10) *lisān ki bu Türkİ dile tercüme olunmamışdır rüşen ‘ibārāt* (11) *ve ḫüb iştİlāḫātla tercüme olur.* (12) *Ve mine ‘llāhi’n-nevvir li-küllİ me’mūl* (13) *inneḫū ‘alā küllİ şey’in ḳadİR* (14) *temmet bi-‘avni ‘llāhi’l-müste’ān* (15) *mīm*²⁵

The *zebān-ı ‘İmrānİye* mentioned in the quotation refers to Hebrew or the language of the Israelites. Imran is the father of Moses, Aaron, and Mary, and they are collectively referred to as *āl-i ‘İmrān*.²⁶ Another instance of this term referring to the Israelites is a poem by Derzİ-zāde ‘Ulvİ (d. 1585): *Güneş gibi heẓārān altun üsküflü ḳuluñ vardır / Niçe Yūsuf-liḳālar saña oldu ‘abd-i ‘İmrānİ*.²⁷ The poem refers to Joseph’s affiliation with *āl-i ‘İmrān*.

On the one hand, the text contains Arabic and Persian words, but the number of Arabic and Persian compounds is relatively small. In contrast, the density of Arabic and Persian words does

²² *Letā’ifü’l-Hikāyāt*, 1^b/1-3; 113^a/1-3.

²³ Alkan, “Letāyifü’l-Hikāyāt [TDK A 306],” 160.

²⁴ Orhan Bilgin, “Ferāğ Kaydı,” *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi* (DİA), v. 12 (Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1995), 354.

²⁵ *Letā’ifü’l-Hikāyāt*, 113^a/4-15. Alkan claims that the author (*müellif*) wrote his work in his old age, reading the phrase ‘‘abd-ı züllüñ’’ as ‘‘abd-ı z[ā]lūñ’’ by adding the letter *elif*. However, it is also appropriate to read ‘züll’ in the phrase as meaning ‘poor and humble.’ See Alkan, “Letāyifü’l-Hikāyāt [TDK A 306],” 213.

²⁶ Şemseddin Sāmī, *Kāmūsü’l-A’lām V* (Mihran, 1896), 2316.

²⁷ İsmail Çetin, “Derzİ-zāde ‘Ulvİ (Hayatı, Edebİ Şahsiyeti ve Dİvānının Tenkidli Metni)” (master’s thesis, Fırat University, 1993), 65.

not hinder text comprehension. Therefore, the language of the work is relatively plain prose for this era.²⁸ This observation can be illustrated by the following example:

(1) *Hayvânât kitâbında mestûrdur ki* (2) *dilkü arslanı daħi görmemişdi. Bir gün râst geldi, görince* (3) *şöyle korkdı ki az kaldı öleyazdı. Şoñra bir kere daħi* (4) *gördi, evvelki gibi korkmadı. Üçünci görüşde yüzi alışdı,* (5) *korkmaz oldu. Belki yanına varup münâsebetle muķârenete başladı.* (6) *Ol zamânda ħükemâ bu ħuşûşı te'emmül kıldılar. Keşret-i müşâhede, kıllet-i* (7) *ħürmet idüğün bildiler. Her nesne az olsa ve aħyânen olsa mu'teber* (8) *ve ħürmetli olurdı*²⁹

The manuscript contains numerous significant errors in the orthography of words, which complicate the understanding of the text. It is unclear whether these errors were made by the translator or the copyist of the manuscript, with serious errors, particularly in spelling Arabic and Persian words. Most of these errors involve the substitution of letters that have similar shapes or sounds, such as 'طtı' with 'تte,' 'غ gayın' with 'ق kaf,' 'غ gayın' with 'ك kef,' 'ح hi' with 'ح ha,' 'ظ zı' with 'ض dat,' and 'س sin' with 'ث se' (see examples at *karâ'ib* [1^b], *hâzır* [1^b], *isbât* [3^a], *hâ'ib* [4^b], *ṭabbāḥ* [4^b], *vâris* [16^a]). Another common error is representing the short 'i' vowel in Arabic words with the 'ي ye' character, creating a long vowel (see examples at *ākıl* [1^b], *ve'l-ḥāşıl* [5^a], *münāsib* [7^a]). Another issue is the Persian conjunction 'ki', which is supposed to be written with the 'ك kef' and 'ه he' characters but is instead written with 'ك kef' and 'ي ye' (see examples in [3^a], [3^b], [5^b]). The incorrect use of 'ك nasal n' instead of 'ن nun' to represent the accusative suffix '-n' in Turkish words is also quite common (see examples in *eliñ* [24^a], *ḥālîñ* [42^b], *budağîñ* [42^b]).

In the manuscript, there are also instances where 'ب be' and 'ي ye' are confused at the beginning of Turkish words, or 'د dal' and 'ت te' are interchanged, creating puzzles that complicate reading. This confusion also occurs in Arabic and Persian words, turning the task of reading the text into a challenge. Since this manuscript is the only copy, it is not possible to refer to other versions to read the words correctly. Therefore, to clarify their meaning, some words must be interpreted differently from those in the manuscript. Accordingly, the intended meaning of the words in the stories is the guiding principle. While copying, the text seemed almost as if a picture was drawn without the copier understanding the words. In several instances, it is evident that words were written with whatever letters came to mind, indicating uncertainty regarding the correct spelling. The same word was written incorrectly in various parts of the manuscript, and in some cases, it was written correctly.

The consistent misspelling of words suggests that the text may have been copied or translated by a merchant or dragoman who had only recently learned to write Turkish in Arabic script. When

²⁸ Cihan Okuyucu, Ahmet Kartal and Mehmet Fatih Köksal, *Klâsik Dönem Osmanlı Nesri* (Kriter, 2009), 15.

²⁹ *Letâ'ifü'l-Hikâyât*, 32^a/1-8. The phrase 'yüzi alışdı' in the example story has the same meaning as 'gözü alışmak' and is commonly used in Ottoman literature, as in the verse by Nefî (d. 1635) *Bir gice yok ki çıkmaya tâ mâh ü encüme / Âhumla âsümânüñ alışdı yüzi gözi*. See Metin Akkuş, *Nefî Dîvânı* (Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 2018), 292.

viewed alongside other translations of Aesop, this conclusion seems plausible. Assuming the translator wrote accurately, and the copyist made mistakes, there are two potential explanations for these errors. The first is that the copyist transcribed the text by listening rather than reading, writing down whatever incorrect letters came to mind. The second possibility is that the copied text contained diacritic marks (*hareke*), and the copyist, not using pointing, omitted some letters. Therefore, my textual interventions in the quotations extend beyond simple letter substitutions. To enhance comprehension and correct sentence structure, I make additions in square brackets [] as follows:

(12) *O[ğ]lan eydür: Bunlar[un]cevābı āsāndur, bir yük büre taleb* (13) *eyle ki nışfi erkek ve nışfi dişi ola*³⁰

(6) *Şāh-zāde yalñuz cāhil iken şimdi beter* (7) *budur ki re 'āyā[dan] birü 'aşk[ın]a ki c[ā]nunuñ bir kısımdur māyil olur*³¹

The 185th story in *Letā'ifü'l-Hikāyât*, titled “The Monk’s Dog’s Will” (*Vaşıyyet-i seg-i rāhib*), is set in Thessaloniki. In this story, the author employs the phrase “*bu yerlerde*” (in these places). This expression may refer to either Thessaloniki or to the place where the author himself lived, and both possibilities should be taken into consideration. Based on this phrase, along with the misreading of ‘*Beṭrīkū'l-beṭārika*’ as ‘*Paṭrīk Eliṭarkā*’ and ‘*Patriyah*’ as ‘*Pāyzbah/Payzbāh*,’ Alkan concluded that the author lived in the Balkan region.³² The relevant section of this story is as follows:

(2) *Zamān-ı kadīme Selānik'de* (3) *bir manastırda bir mütemevvil keşiş vardı. Māl u ni 'met ve ğnā vu vüs 'ati gibi* (4) *hamākat u cehālet[i] hadd u kemālde idi. Bir kelbcügezi vardı. Ziyāde şūh* (5) *u şeng kelbdı. Envā '-ı mülā 'abe ta 'līm olunmuşdı. İttifāk mürde oldı. (6) Keşiş, pür-teşvīş olup cām-ı sürür inkisār buldı. Ziyāde muhabbetden* (7) *kilisānıñ bir küşesinde āyinlerince meşāy[ī]h-i Naşārā 'ya maḥşūş* (8) *mevāzi 'de defn ider. Beṭrīkū'l-beṭārika*³³, *ki bu yerlerde Patriyah*³⁴ *derler, (9) işidür. Mezḳūr keşīşin mütemevvil ve māl-dār olduĝın bilürdi*³⁵

³⁰ *Letā'ifü'l-Hikāyât*, 13^a/12–13. In this story, the word *büre* was mistranslated by Alkan as “bring a load of oud wood here as well.” However, the phrase “half female, half male oud wood” was not explained. In fact, the character referred to as “the boy” is mocking the man by deliberately using the word *büre*—meaning “flea”—and absurdly requesting “a load of fleas, half male and half female.” See Alkan, “*Letāyifü'l-Hikāyât* [TDK A 306],” 259.

³¹ *Letā'ifü'l-Hikāyât*, 81^b/6–7.

³² Alkan, “*Letāyifü'l-Hikāyât* [TDK A 306],” 213.

³³ This word appears in *Kāmūs-ı Okyânūs* as follows: *el-bitrīk, Rûm tâ'ifesinin dîni ulusu; el-betārika, cem 'i, dîn uluları ma 'nâsına*. See <https://kamus.yek.gov.tr/> [Date of Access: 26.09.2025]. The same word was defined by Meninski (1620-1698) as follows: *patrīk: noun betrīk (plural betārīkā, betārīk), pātrīk, pātrīkī → patriarcha*. See Mertol Tulum, *17. Yüzyıl Türkçesi ve Söz Varlığı* (Türk Dil Kurumu, 2011), 1444.

³⁴ This word was defined by Molino (d. 1643) as follows: *Patriyah, Patriiah, Patrijah → Patriarcha*. See Elżbieta Święcicka, *Dictionary of Italian-Turkish Language (1641) by Giovanni Molino* (De Gruyter, 2020), 414.

³⁵ *Letā'ifü'l-Hikāyât*, 87^a/2–9.

I believe that these two phrases alone are insufficient to conclude that the author lived in Thessaloniki or the Balkan region. Since the stories attributed to Aesop are set in Anatolia and Greece, it is quite natural for these locations to be mentioned. Contrary to Alkan's assertion,³⁶ the linguistic features of the work do not exhibit dialectal characteristics specific to the Balkan region but rather reflect the general characteristics of Western Turkish.

This manuscript includes significant examples of phonological features. One is metathesis, which involves the rearrangement of letters within a word. For instance, the word “*kavra* > *karva*” (to clutch) was written as ‘*قروايوب karvayup*’ in various folios (See examples at [23^b], [50^b], [63^a], [69^b], [72^a], [84^b], [102^b]). Another phonological feature is haplology, characterized by the dropping of middle syllables. In the text, the phrase *şimdiden girü* (“from now on”) appears as *şimden girü* (See examples in [39^a] and [81^b]). In Arabic words like *dā'imā* (“always”) and *fā'ide* (“benefit”), the former is transformed to *dāyim* [44^a], reflecting the ‘*y*’ sound, while the latter retains its original form as *fā'ide* [45^a]. The word *pişgür* > *pişür* (“to cook”), which takes the causative suffix, is written as *pişürürler* [32^b] and *pişgürmekiçün* [13^a].³⁷ In many instances, the same words are spelled in two different ways, such as *dilkü* [24^b] and *dilki* [66^a] (both meaning “fox”), indicating dual spelling. Given these orthographic features, it is reasonable to assert that the text embodies characteristics of Old Anatolian Turkish. Based on these linguistic and orthographic elements, it is estimated that the work was composed at the end of the sixteenth or the beginning of the seventeenth century.³⁸

The Stories in *Letâ'ifü'l-Hikâyât*

In the Aesopic tradition, stories are categorized into two branches: one focusing on Aesop's life (*Vita Aesopi*) and the other on stories narrated from Aesop's perspective, most featuring animals as protagonists. *Letâ'ifü'l-Hikâyât* begins with a story that recounts Aesop's life directly, as illustrated in the following excerpt:

[1^b] *Rivāyet olunur ki Yunan'da bir feylesōf var idi ve anuñ bir 'ākil (2) kulu var idi. İsmine Esop derler idi. Anuñ 'acā'ib ü ğarā'ib menkıbeleri (3) vardur. Evvelā bir ğün şarı feylesōf, felāsif[e]ye ziyāfet etmek murād eyledi. (4) Esop'a etdi: Var çārsūdan et al, lākin pek a'lāsından al; zīrā felā- (5) sif[e]ye ziyāfet etsem gerek, didi. Esop varup çārsūyı gezdi, bir münāsib (6) şey bulamayup bir şıgır d[i]li alup götürdi, hāzır eyledi. Müsāfirler (7) geldiler, ta'ām ortaya kōndı, bākdılar bir şıgır d[i]lidir.*

³⁶ Alkan, “Letâ'ifü'l-Hikâyât [TDK A 306],” 229.

³⁷ For the suffix *-gür-* in the word *pişgürmek*, see *Ötüken Dictionary*; *-gur-*: [-kir-/cur-/kür-/gir-/gir-/gur-/gür-] {eT} {eAT} yap. e. 1. Fiillerden fiil türeten ek; ettirgenlik eki. [ETY] od-gur-mak (uyandırmak), tir-gür-mek (yaşatmak), dir-gür-mek, tur-gur-mak. <http://www.otukensozluk.com/> [Access Date: 26.09.2025].

³⁸ Mustafa Alkan, “Ezop Anlatılarını İçeren *Letâ'ifü'l-Hikâyât*’ın Dil ve İmla Özellikleri,” *Uluslararası Türkçe Edebiyat Kültür Eğitim Dergisi* 13/3 (2024c): 896.

Beyt

Ne kim 'ālemde geldiyse vücūda

*Ḳamu bir söz ile geldi sücūda*³⁹

*İmdi kelāmiñ āleti (9) ol et pāresidir ki 'Arab lisān deyü ta 'bīr eder, me'l-insānū lev le'l-lisānū (10) illā şūretün mümeşseletün ev behīmetün mühmele*⁴⁰. *Esoḡ'uñ şoñra getürdüği ta 'āmlar [2^a] daḡı şıḡır d[i]linden olmaḡın tenāvül edenlere melāl gelüp āḡar ta 'āma meyl olundu*⁴¹

As shown in the example above, although the stories are primarily in prose, some include Turkish and Persian verses related to their themes, as well as Arabic idioms and proverbs. Some stories in *Letâ'ifü'l-Hikâyât* do not have titles, and blank spaces appear to have been left for titles to be added later, which were never filled. Based on these blank spaces, I assigned numbers to the stories, resulting in a total of 216, including the one located directly beneath the main title. The work contains ten stories concerning Aesop's life, which comprise the one directly beneath the heading and those numbered 1–6 and 13–15. The 128 stories narrated in Aesop's voice primarily consist of animal fables. Among the remaining seventy eight stories, several have been translated from other narrative sources, including *Kelîle ve Dimne* and *Câmi'ü'l-Hikâyât*.⁴²

The history of academic studies on Aesop dates back to the nineteenth century. However, the first comprehensive and analytical compilation of Aesop's fables based on ancient Greek and Roman sources was produced by Émile Chambry. Published in French in Paris in 1927, Chambry's edition organized and numbered 358 fables in alphabetical order.⁴³ The edition used as the source text for the full Turkish translations by Nurullah Ataç and İö Çokona was also based on this 1927 compilation.⁴⁴ Following this publication, studies on Aesop have continued to expand. Ben Edwin Perry, incorporating newly discovered sources from various libraries, prepared a more extensive index. This work, listing a total of 725 fables attributed to Aesop along with their sources, has become a reference in international Aesop scholarship.⁴⁵ This index, which provides a shared framework for the growing body of literature in different languages, is known as the Perry Index.

³⁹ The distich meaning "Everything created in the universe prostrated itself with a word" also appears in Kemalpaşazade's *Yūsuf u Zeliḡā*. See Mustafa Demirel, *Kemāl Paşa-zāde (Şemse'd-dīn Ahmed bin Süleymān) Yūsuf u Zeliḡā [Süleymaniye, Lala İsmail Efendi 621]* (Harvard University the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, 2004), 34.

⁴⁰ This proverb expresses that without language, humans would be nothing more than a represented image or a neglected animal, and there are two spelling errors in the text. See Meydānî, *Mecma'ü'l-Emsāl II* (Matbaatü's-Sünneti'l-Muhammediyye, 1374), 291.

⁴¹ *Letâ'ifü'l-Hikâyât*, 1^b/1-10 – 2^a/1.

⁴² Alkan, "Letâyifü'l-Hikâyât [TDK A 306]," 180–197.

⁴³ Émile Chambry, *Ésope Fables* (Belles Lettres, 1927), 155.

⁴⁴ Nurullah Ataç, *Aisopos Masalları* (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 1945); İö Çokona, *Aisopos Masallar Bütün Ezop Masalları* (İş Bankası, 2013).

⁴⁵ Ben Edwin Perry, *Aesopica: A Series of Texts Relating to Aesop or Ascribed to Him* (University of Illinois Press, 1952).

More recently, addressing the lack of an English-language compilation, Laura Gibbs prepared an anthology of 600 fables, including corresponding numbers from both the Chambry and Perry indices alongside each story.⁴⁶

In indices compiled within the scope of the Aesopic tradition, only the fables ascribed to Aesop are indexed, while biographical narratives about his life are excluded. In the table below, Aesop's stories in *Letâ'îfû'l-Hikâyât* are indexed according to the numbering systems found in these indices (Table I).

Table I. Numbers in the Chambry, Perry, and Gibbs Indexes of Aesop's Stories in *Letâ'îfû'l-Hikâyât*

Perry	Gibbs	Chambry	<i>Letâ'îfû'l-Hikâyât</i>	Story Title in Laura Gibbs (2002)
15	255	32	<i>Hikâyet [23]</i>	The Fox and the Grapes
1	155	3	<i>Hikâyet [28]</i>	The Eagle and the Fox
9	113	40	<i>Hikâyet [29]</i>	The Fox and the Goat in the Well
10	269	42	<i>Hikâyet [30]</i>	The Fox and the Lion
4	131	8	<i>Hikâyet [31]</i>	The Hawk and the Nightingale
16	129	12	<i>Hikâyet [32]</i>	The Cat and the Rooster
17	398	41	<i>Hikâyet [33]</i>	The Foxes and their Tails
20	189	35	<i>Hikâyet [34]</i>	The Fox and the Crocodile
27	550	43	<i>Hikâyet [35]</i>	The Fox and the Mask
23	134	21	<i>Hikâyet [36]</i>	The Partridge and the Roosters
115	138	137	<i>Hikâyet [37]</i>	The Bird Catcher and the Viper
118	451	153	<i>Hikâyet [38]</i>	The Beaver and his Testicles
29	542	56	<i>Hikâyet [39]</i>	The Charcoal Burner and the Fuller
33	209	51	<i>Hikâyet [40]</i>	The Boastful Athlete
34	478	46	<i>Hikâyet [41]</i>	The Sick Man and his Wife
21	420	22	<i>Hikâyet [42]</i>	The Fishermen and the Tuna Fish
43	445	68	<i>Hikâyet [43]</i>	The Two Frogs at The Well
60	484	78	<i>Hikâyet [44]</i>	The Poor Man and Death
57	589	87	<i>Hikâyet [45]</i>	The Old Woman and her Doctor

⁴⁶ Laura Gibbs, *Aesop's Fables: A New Translation* (Oxford University Press, 2002).

42	494	83	<i>Hikāyet [46]</i>	The Farmer and his Sons
52	292	80	<i>Hikāyet [47]</i>	The Farmer and his Dogs
58	433	90	<i>Hikāyet [48]</i>	The Widow and her Hen
64	173	177	<i>Hikāyet [49]</i>	The Man Bitten by The Dog
66	540	246	<i>Hikāyet [50]</i>	The Boys and the Butcher
68	159	114	<i>Hikāyet [51]</i>	The Two Enemies
79	299	13	<i>Hikāyet [52]</i>	The Chickens and the Cat
113	160	132	<i>Hikāyet [53]</i>	The Tuna Fish and the Dolphin
114	586	134	<i>Hikāyet [54]</i>	The Doctor at The Funeral
134	117	184	<i>Hikāyet [55]</i>	The Wolf and the Sleeping Dog
252	149	180	<i>Hikāyet [56]</i>	The Fox, the Rooster and the Dog
141	270	201	<i>Hikāyet [57]</i>	The Lion and the Frog
149	15	209	<i>Hikāyet [58]</i>	The Wolf, the Fox and the Lion Dividing the Spoils
213	201	324	<i>Hikāyet [59]</i>	The Trees and the Bramble Bush
214	260	326	<i>Hikāyet [60]</i>	The Mole and the Frankincense
219	22	334	<i>Hikāyet [61]</i>	The Peacock Elected King of The Birds
224	449	327	<i>Hikāyet [62]</i>	The Fox, the Boar and his Tusks
81	24	38	<i>Hikāyet [63]</i>	The Monkey Elected King of The Animals
229	192	348	<i>Hikāyet [64]</i>	The Raven, the Swallow and the Seasons
147	62	200	<i>Hikāyet [65]</i>	The Lion and the Bear
161	316	233	<i>Hikāyet [66]</i>	The Soothsayer and the Theft
235	71	242	<i>Hikāyet [67]</i>	The Ant, the Pigeon and the Bird- Catcher
179	10	273	<i>Hikāyet [68]</i>	The Donkey and his Masters
193	87	283	<i>Hikāyet [69]</i>	The Bird-Catcher and the Lark
178	476	260	<i>Hikāyet [70]</i>	The Traveller and Hermes
200	496	296	<i>Hikāyet [71]</i>	The Thief and his Mother

196	141	290	<i>Hikāyet [72]</i>	The Snake and the Crab
267	36	314	<i>Hikāyet [73]</i>	The Shepherd, the Wolf Cub and the Wolf
258	17	205	<i>Hikāyet [74]</i>	The Wolf, the Fox and the Ailing Lion
246	558	88	<i>Hikāyet [75]</i>	The Woman and her Drunken Husband
399	303	173	<i>Hikāyet [76]</i>	The Goose and the Swan
393	361	11	<i>Hikāyet [77]</i>	The Black Man in the River
48	288	75	<i>Hikāyet [78]</i>	The Bat and the Songbird
55	432	89	<i>Hikāyet [79]</i>	The Maids and the Rooster
61	469	84	<i>Hikāyet [80]</i>	The Farmer and the Goddess Fortune
67	93	256	<i>Hikāyet [81]</i>	The Travellers and the Axe
92	68	175	<i>Hikāyet [82]</i>	The Hunting Dog and the Watch Dog
351	249	247	<i>Hikāyet [83]</i>	The Deer and his Mother
138	248	191	<i>Hikāyet [84]</i>	The Hares and the Frogs
357	410	268	<i>Hikāyet [85]</i>	The Donkey, the Horse and the War
225	407	344	<i>Hikāyet [86]</i>	The Man and his Gold
228	49	353	<i>Hikāyet [87]</i>	The Swans and the Geese
230	331	351	<i>Hikāyet [88]</i>	The Eagle and the Tortoise in the Air
76	459	104	<i>Hikāyet [89]</i>	The Deer and the Lion
77	80	103	<i>Hikāyet [90]</i>	The Deer and the Vine
82	235	269	<i>Hikāyet [91]</i>	The Lion, the Rooster and the Donkey
223	196	342	<i>Hikāyet [92]</i>	The Bald Horseman
97	356	107	<i>Hikāyet [93]</i>	The Kid, the Wolf and the Flute
116	333	150	<i>Hikāyet [94]</i>	The Crab on Dry Land
121	252	156	<i>Hikāyet [95]</i>	The Musician at Home
122	122	158	<i>Hikāyet [96]</i>	The Rooster and the Thieves
129	325	163	<i>Hikāyet [97]</i>	The Jackdaw and the Doves
131	8	164	<i>Hikāyet [98]</i>	The Jackdaw and the String
160	33	231	<i>Hikāyet [99]</i>	The Sheep and the Injured Wolf

256	51	190	<i>Hikāyet [100]</i>	The Hares and the Foxes
166	513	240	<i>Hikāyet [101]</i>	Zeus and the Ant
172	364	251	<i>Hikāyet [102]</i>	The Bat and the Weasels
183	4	264	<i>Hikāyet [103]</i>	The Onager, the Donkey and the Driver
188	322	267	<i>Hikāyet [104]</i>	The Fox, the Donkey and the Lion Skin
189	377	271	<i>Hikāyet [106]</i>	The Donkey and the Frogs
190	390	274	<i>Hikāyet [107]</i>	The Wolf and the Raven
191	145	270	<i>Hikāyet [108]</i>	The Fox, the Donkey and the Lion Skin
192	441	286	<i>Hikāyet [109]</i>	The Hen and the Eggs
195	268	148	<i>Hikāyet [110]</i>	The Camel and the People
198	172	291	<i>Hikāyet [111]</i>	Apollo and the Snake
201	431	301	<i>Hikāyet [112]</i>	The Pigeon and the Painting
208	78	316	<i>Hikāyet [113]</i>	The Sheep, the Shepherd and his Cloak
181	65	141	<i>Hikāyet [114]</i>	The Donkey and the Ox
22	387	34	<i>Hikāyet [116]</i>	The Hare and the Cowherd
285	464	61	<i>Hikāyet [117]</i>	The Statue of Hermes and the Treasure
328	382	178	<i>Hikāyet [118]</i>	The Cook and the Dog
11	290	24	<i>Hikāyet [119]</i>	The Fisherman and his Pipe
49	229	74	<i>Hikāyet [120]</i>	The Shepherd and the Lion
324	370	168	<i>Hikāyet [121]</i>	The Kite and his Mother
276	43	7	<i>Hikāyet [122]</i>	The Eagle and the Arrow
373	126	336	<i>Hikāyet [123]</i>	The Ant and the Cricket
87	434	287	<i>Hikāyet [124]</i>	The Man and the Golden Eggs
142	18	196	<i>Hikāyet [125]</i>	The Fox, the Lion and the Footprints
51	75	81	<i>Hikāyet [126]</i>	The Snake and the Farmer
98	221	106	<i>Hikāyet [127]</i>	The Ram and the Wolf
315	206	128	<i>Hikāyet [128]</i>	The Boastful Mule
370	121	325	<i>Hikāyet [129]</i>	The Soldier and the Trumpet

70	202	143	<i>Hikāyet [130]</i>	The Oak Tree and the Reed
156	46	224	<i>Hikāyet [131]</i>	The Wolf and the Crane
358	323	279	<i>Hikāyet [132]</i>	The Farmers, the Donkey and the Lion Skin
146	245	213	<i>Hikāyet [134]</i>	The Lion and the Mouse on his Mane
124	104	165	<i>Hikāyet [135]</i>	The Fox and the Raven
74	262	102	<i>Hikāyet [136]</i>	The Stag and his Reflection
133	263	185	<i>Hikāyet [137]</i>	The Dog, the Meat and the Reflection
117	510	146	<i>Hikāyet [138]</i>	Zeus and the Camel
281	454	20	<i>Hikāyet [139]</i>	The Two Roosters and the Eagle
372	59	71	<i>Hikāyet [140]</i>	The Two Bulls and the Lion
180	152	265	<i>Hikāyet [141]</i>	The Merchant, the Donkey and the Salt
13	419	23	<i>Hikāyet [142]</i>	The Fishermen and the Stone
69	490	67	<i>Hikāyet [143]</i>	The Two Frogs by the Road
91	338	275	<i>Hikāyet [148]</i>	The Donkey and the Pet Dog
563	69	- ⁴⁷	<i>Hikāyet bā-arşlan [149]</i>	The Shepherd and the Lion
503	403	-	<i>Hikāyet [155] Ḥorūs cevher başına</i>	The Rooster and the Pearl
480	116	-	<i>Hikāyet [158] Zāden-i seg der-ḥāne-i 'acūz</i>	The Mother Dog and her Puppies
149	15	209	<i>Hikāyet [159] Şīr ve r[ū]bāh ve peleng</i>	The Wolf, the Fox and the Lion dividing the Spoils
150	70	206	<i>Hikāyet [160] Şīr bā-mūş</i>	The Lion and the Mouse
490	-	-	<i>Hikāyet [161] Bāz bā-keşef⁴⁸ ḥīle-i zāğ</i>	[The Falcon and the Tortoise, and the Crow's Deception] ⁴⁹

⁴⁷ The dashes (-) signify that the fable is not present in that specific index.

⁴⁸ Alkan translated the story's title as "Falcon's Discovery of Deceit and the Crow" because he misread the word "keşef," meaning "tortoise," as "keşif" (discovery). See Alkan, "Letâyifü'l-Hikâyât [TDK A 306]," 208; For the meaning of "keşef" as "tortoise," see Ali Nazîmâ and Faik Reşad, *Mükemmel Osmanlı Lügati* (Türk Dil Kurumu, 2009), 209.

⁴⁹ Since this story is not included in the Gibbs index and lacks a title, the heading has been assigned by me.

378	52	354	<i>Hikāyet</i> [165] <i>Mübāḥaṣe-i kūze-i mis bā-kūze-i ḥazeḥ</i>	The Two Pots
46	183	73	<i>Hikāyet</i> [170] <i>Āfitāb bā-ṣabā</i>	The North Wind and the Sun
155	130	221	<i>Hikāyet</i> [188] <i>Gürg bā-berre</i>	The Wolf and the Lamb
44	27	66	<i>Hikāyet</i> [189]	Jupiter and the Frogs
218	497	307	<i>Hikāyet</i> [207] <i>Beççe-i rubbāh</i> ⁵⁰	The Monkey and her Two Children
31	584	52	<i>Hikāyet</i> [211] <i>Pīr-i nābāliḡ bā-zenān</i>	The Bald Man and his Two Mistresses
210	151	318	<i>Hikāyet</i> [212] <i>Çōbān-ı dūrūḡ-gūy</i>	The Boy who Cried ‘Wolf’

Conclusion

Letâ’ifü’l-Hikâyât, catalogued under number A/306 at the Turkish Language Institution Library (Ankara), is a collection of 216 stories. Nine of these stories relate to Aesop’s life, while 128 are attributed to him, most of which are fables. The remaining seventy-eight stories are translations from Eastern literature collections, such as *Kelîle ve Dimne* and *Câmi’ü’l-Hikâyât*.

Although the manuscript copy of *Letâ’ifü’l-Hikâyât* indicates it is a translation, there is no information regarding the author (*mütercim*), copyist (*müstensih*), or source text. The translator claims to have used works written in Greek and Hebrew but does not specify them. The numerous spelling errors in Turkish, Arabic, and Persian words suggest some insights about the translator and the copyist. One possibility is that the translator learned Ottoman Turkish, which extensively incorporates Arabic and Persian vocabulary, later in life. Another possibility is that these errors were introduced by an ignorant copyist who learned Ottoman Turkish later as well. In particular, the numerous errors resulting from the absence of diacritic marks (*hareke*) in the text suggest that the scribe copied the work from a text with diacritic marks (*hareke*) but did not include them in his copy.

Given that the language features resemble those of Old Anatolian Turkish, the translation may have occurred at the end of the sixteenth century or the beginning of the seventeenth century. However, since the manuscript is written in the *rik’a* script, which was prevalent in the latter half of the eighteenth century and more commonly in the nineteenth century, it is estimated that the

⁵⁰ Alkan confused the word *rubbāh*, meaning “monkey,” with *rūbāh*, which means ‘fox’. See Alkan, “Letâyifü’l-Hikâyât [TDK A 306],” 332. For the meaning “monkey,” see <https://kamus.yek.gov.tr/> [Date of Access: 26.09.2025] (*er-rubbāh: erkek maymûn, hamdûne-i ner ma’nâsına*).

manuscript was copied in the nineteenth century. This article contributes to the Aesop tradition in terms of Turkish translations by highlighting the equivalents of Aesop's fables in *Letâ'ifü'l-Hikâyât* within the indexes prepared by Perry, Chambry, and Gibb. *Letâ'ifü'l-Hikâyât* is the most extensive work among the Turkish translations of Aesop's Fables written during the pre-Tanzimat period.⁵¹

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares no conflict of interest related to this study.

Statement on the Use of AI and AI-Assisted Tools

I confirm that no artificial intelligence-based tools were used in the preparation of this article.

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⁵¹ The project "Aesop Alla Turca: A study on Turkish Translations of Aesop Fables From Pre-Tanzimat Era in the Context of Cultural Translation" has been carried out on Turkish translations of Aesop's fables from the pre-Tanzimat era. For information about the project and to examine the texts, see <https://www.ezopaturka.com/> [Date of Access: 26.09.2025].

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