

A new print by Müteferrika (?)

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A new print by Mütferrika (?)

A comparative view of Baron's Qibla Finder



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1. Introduction¹

The albums and folders of heterogeneous contents from the possession of the Prussian envoy and orientalist Heinrich Friedrich von Diez (1751–1817)² have long attracted the interest of researchers from a wide range of disciplines.³ In the following, the history behind two objects from the collector's album with the signature Diez A fol. 58 and their connection to some art-historically unique objects will be examined more closely.

First of all, it is not at all obvious that sheets f. 10r and f. 11r from the album belong together: the map on f. 10r is coloured and partly badly damaged by intensive use and double bending in the folds; f. 11r is not coloured and looks kind of unused. Only at second glance one can see that the maps are identical in the upper halves of the circular prints.

In a cartouche on the maps directly above the equator, approximately near today's Sierra Leone, there is an inscription in Ottoman Turkish which can be interpreted as following: "Engraving from Mığirdic from Galata"⁴ (عمل حك مغرديج غلطوى = 'amel-i hakk-i Mığirdic-i Galatavi)⁵. However, a certain Mığirdic Galatavi is also known as one of the engravers from İbrahim Müteferrika. Can these two maps therefore be assigned to the so-called Turkish incunabula? So far nobody seems to have noticed a relationship, but some arguments appear to prove the connection.

¹ The author of this paper is neither an Ottomanist nor a cartographer or art historian. If he should have ventured too far into unfamiliar territory at some points of this article and made mistakes in the process, this was surely unavoidable. He is happy to take note of corrections, hints and additions and hopes that, if the theory concerning the new Müteferrika print is confirmed, the real experts will take care of the object and work it up in an appropriate and scholarly manner.

² <http://viaf.org/viaf/25396397>. For all internet addresses referenced in this article: last access on 31.03.2020.

³ About Diez is currently published: Christoph RAUCH and Gideon STIENING (eds.): Heinrich Friedrich von Diez (1751–1817) Freidenker – Diplomat – Orientkenner. Werkprofile, vol. 12. De Gruyter, Berlin 2020. For the Diez albums see: Julia GONNELLA, Friederike WEIS and Christoph RAUCH (eds.): The Diez Albums. Contexts and Contents. Islamic Manuscripts and Books, vol. 11. Brill, Leiden and Boston 2017.

⁴ Throughout the article the names are given in modern Turkish spelling.

⁵ I would like to thank Dr. Güler Doğan Averbek for deciphering the cartouche of the copper engraver.

2. The protagonists

2.1. İbrahim Müteferrika

Not much more needs to be said about Müteferrika⁶ (ca. 1670–1/74–1747)⁷: he originally came from Hungary, converted to Islam, worked for the Ottoman army, continued his education and thus earned the title of an Efendi, and finally was awarded the position of a Müteferrika (a person assigned to the Sultan for personal service⁸). Protected by Yirmisekiz Mehmed Çelebi (about 1670–1732)⁹ and especially by his son Yirmisekizzâde Mehmed Said Paşa (died 1761)¹⁰, who later became his business partner for a certain time, he got access to the Grand Vizier of the Ottoman Empire, Nevşehirli Damat İbrahim Paşa

⁶ A short summary of the current state of research on his person with extensive literature references are given, among others: Orlin SABEV (Orhan Salih): Waiting for Godot: the Formation of Ottoman Print Culture and Vefa ERGINBAS: Enlightenment in the Ottoman Context: İbrahim Müteferrika and His Intellectual Landscape. Both articles in: Geoffrey ROPER (ed.): Historical aspects of printing and publishing in languages of the Middle East: papers from the Third Symposium on the History of Printing and Publishing in the Languages and Countries of the Middle East, University of Leipzig, September 2008, Brill, Leiden (et al.) 2013, pp. 101–120 and 53–100. Furthermore Necati ÇAVDAR and Ünal ÇELİK with their article "İbrahim Müteferrika'nın 'Usûlü'l-Hikem Fî Nizâmi'l-Ümem' Adlı Eserine Göre Osmanlı Askerî Sisteminin Sorunları ve Çözüm Önerileri", in: İlyas GÖKHAN and Hüseyin SARAÇ and A. Gökçe ÖZCAN (eds.): Lale devri'nde Osmanlı devleti ve Nevşehir. Kömen Yayınları, Konya 2018, pp. 581–600, here p. 583 ff. An English short vita with many literature references is again given by Orlin SABEV: İbrahim Müteferrika (b. ~ 1670s; d. < 1747). Online at: http://ottomanhistorians.uchicago.edu/sites/ottomanhistorians.uchicago.edu/files/ibrahimmuteferrika_en.pdf or the same in detail in English: Waiting for Müteferrika. Glimpses of Ottoman Print Culture. Ottoman and Turkish Studies. Academic Studies Press, Boston 2018 and in Turkish: İbrahim Müteferrika ya da ilk Osmanlı matbaa serüveni. Yeditepe Yayınevi, İstanbul 2006. Very decorative with many illustrations also the following, comprehensive work: Fikret SARICAOĞLU and Coşkun YILMAZ: Müteferrika - Basmacı İbrahim Efendi ve Müteferrika matbaası. Esen Ofset, İstanbul 2008.

⁷ <http://viaf.org/viaf/22382427>.

⁸ Cf. Franz BABINGER: Stambuler Buchwesen im 18. Jahrhundert. Dt. Verein für Buchwesen und Schrifttum, Leipzig 1919, p. 10.

⁹ <http://viaf.org/viaf/18027449>, known by his report (*sefaretnâme*) on his legation to Paris 1720/21 (<http://viaf.org/viaf/180239443>). A digitized manuscript copy online at: http://orient-digital.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/receive/SBBMSBook_islamhs_00060181.

¹⁰ Cf.: https://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yirmisekizzade_Mehmed_Said_Pa%C5%9Fa. Like his father, he later wrote a *sefaretnâme* about his diplomatic mission to Sweden in 1733.

(1662–1730)¹¹. On his advice, Müteferrika wrote a pamphlet on the advantages of printing in 1726 (*Vesileti-ṭ-ṭiba'ā*) and one year later obtained a ferman¹² by Sultan Ahmed III (1673–1736; ruled from 1703–1730)¹³ to set up a printing shop with Arabic letters for secular works not related to religion and law.¹⁴ The printing house operated under the name *Dārü-ṭ-ṭiba'ati-l-āmira*, also known as *Basmaḥāne*.¹⁵



Fig. 1: contemporary (≈ 1735), orientalizing representation of Müteferrika's workshop¹⁶

¹¹ <http://viaf.org/viaf/224450780>, also son-in-law of the Sultan. According to BABINGER 1919, p. 10, however, he met the Grand Vizier during his travels with Franz II Rákóczi (1676–1735).

¹² For an English translation of the pamphlet and the ferman, prepared by Christopher M. Murphy see: George Nicholas ATIYEH (ed.): *The Book in the Islamic World: The Written Word and Communication in the Middle East*. State University of New York Press (et al.), Albany 1995, pp. 284–285 and 286–92.

¹³ <http://viaf.org/viaf/290225144>.

¹⁴ In order to confirm the legitimacy of the printing activity, Müteferrika had to put in front of his first book, printed in February 1729 (*Kitāb-i Luḡat-i Vanqulī*, known as *Sihahül-Cevheri*), the ferman of the Sultan (ff. 2v–3r), the fatwa of the Mufti Abdullah Efendi (d. 1743: <http://viaf.org/viaf/309612881>) (f. 3r below) and the positive review by the Kazaskers (ff. 3v–5r) and also his own pamphlet (ff. 6r–8r). For a digital copy see: https://id.lib.harvard.edu/curiosity/islamic-heritage-project/40-990051172640203941_FHCL.HOUGH:3026368.

¹⁵ On the history of Hebrew, Greek and Armenian printing in Constantinople s.: Nile PEKTAŞ: *The Beginnings of Printing in the Ottoman Capital: Bookproduction and Circulation in early modern Istanbul*. In: *Osmanlı Bilimi Araştırmaları / Studies in Ottoman Science*, XVI/2(2015), pp. 3–32, here p. 13 ff. Online at: <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/download/article-file/673531>.

¹⁶ Andreas Lazerus von IMHOF (author and ed.): *Deß Neueröffneten Historischen Bilder-Saals Neunter Theil*. Das ist:

In his eventful life, Müteferrika thus acted as a soldier, diplomat, geographer/cartographer, author, editor, dragoman and translator, among other things – and all this in a historically turbulent epoch, marked by the so-called Tulip Age and its de facto end with the Patrona-Halil Uprising in 1730, but he is remembered as the Muslim who built and operated the first movable-letter printing workshop for Arabic script works in an Islamic country. A total of 17 works in 22 volumes left his office, with an average of approximately 500 copies and a total circulation of 10–11,000 volumes. It has been printed in the Ottoman-Turkish, Persian, Arabic and also French languages. Furthermore he also produced 5 separate maps:

1. the Marmara map (1132/1719–1720)
2. the map of the Black Sea (1137/1724–1725)
3. the map of the Ottoman countries and Asia (1139/1726–1727) (no print, hand drawn)
4. the map of Persia (1142/1729)
5. the map of Egypt ([1142/1730])¹⁷

Of its six printing presses, no less than two are said to have been designed exclusively for the printing of maps.¹⁸

2.2. Miğirdic Galatavi

Unfortunately, very little is known about Miğirdic from Galata, a study not only in art history seems long overdue. Miğirdic (Միգրիդի) is Armenian for “Baptist”, so that one can assume that he was a Christian of Armenian descent. Galata is a district of Istanbul, which is also known for its non-Muslim population groups, among other things.

Kurtze/ deutliche und unpartheyische Beschreibung Der Historiae Universalis, Enthaltend Die Geschichten welche sich unter dem Glorwürdigst-regierenden Kayser Carolo VI. von dem Jahr 1723. biß auf das Jahr 1733. vornemlich in Europa, auch sonst hin und wieder in der Welt zugetragen. Conrad Schönleben; Nürnberg 1735, p. 835. Source: Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München, Sign.: H.un. 297-9,1, p. 835, <http://mdz-nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb10032571-2>. For this illustration cf.: SABEV 2018, p. VIII f.

¹⁷ See SARICAOĞLU and YILMAZ 2008, p. 126 f.

¹⁸ See: J. WETSTEINS (ed.): *Bibliothèque raisonnée des ouvrages des savans de l'Europe*. Pour les mois Janvier, Frevrier & Mars 1731. vol. 6, part 1. J. Wetsteins, Amsterdam 1731, p. 237. Online at: <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=ucm.5326808130&view=1up&seq=241>.