



Analysis of the translation of the
original Turkish document
labeled

***Kaimmacam's Letter N° 2
to the governor of Athens***

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In 1816, the Parliamentary Select Committee stated that **the English document was an accurate translation of the Italian document** provided by the Reverend Hunt,

and

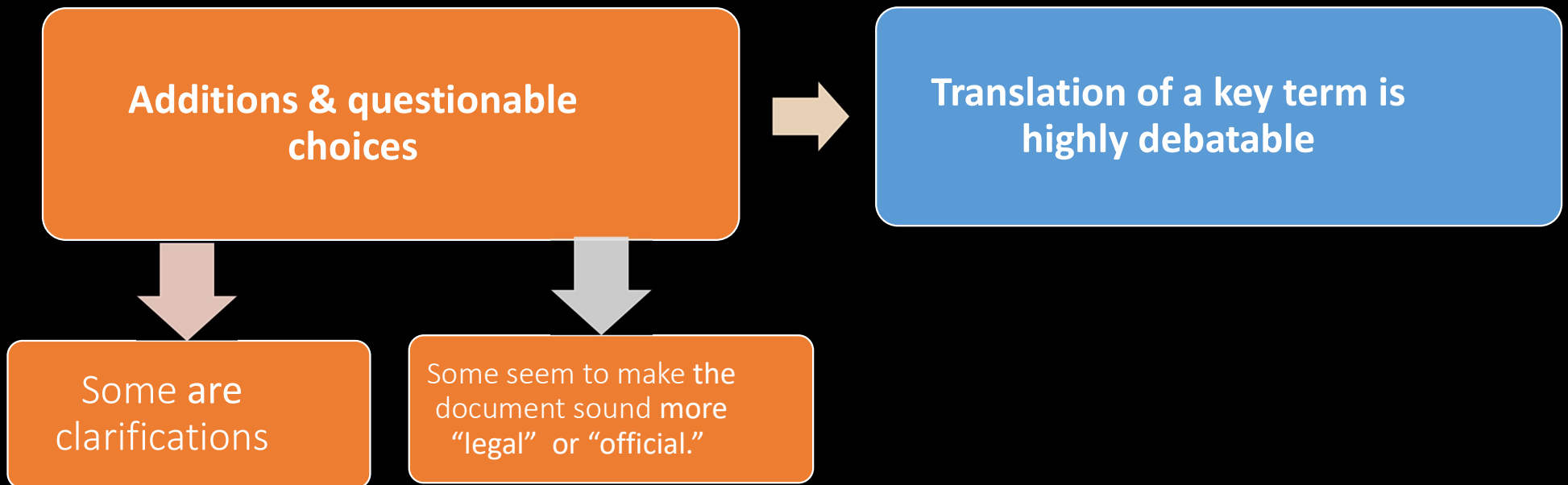
that the Italian document was a translation of the lost Ottoman document that set forth the permissions that the Ottomans gave Lord Elgin for his Acropolis activities.

Translation published in *Cardozo Arts & entertainment Law Journal* 2021.
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In my opinion there are TWO MAIN ISSUES with the translation

1

2



Examples of clarifications

...the greater part of the Frank [i.e. Christian] Courts
... *la maggior parte delle corti franche, ...*

... said citadel of Athens
... *della detta Città, ...*

... by the Disdar (or commandant of the citadel) or
any other person, ...
...*dalla parte del Castelano, né di verun'altro, ...*

Examples of
additions that
make the
document sound
more “legal” or
“official”

After the **usual introductory compliments, and the** salutation of Peace, -- “**It is hereby** signified to you,
Dop’ il saluto, vi si fà sapere

We therefore have written this Letter to you, and expedited it by **Mr Philip Hunt, an English gentleman, Secretary of the aforesaid Ambassador,**
vi s’è scritta e spedita col NN, la presente lettera

... with old inscriptions or figures **thereon**, that no opposition be made **thereto**
con vechie iscrizioni, e figure, non sia fatta lor’ opposizione,

Therefore, after having fulfilled the duties of hospitality, **and given a proper reception** to the aforesaid Artists, e
dop’essere state accompite le convenevoli accoglienze d’ospitalità verso li suriferiti pittori,

Click
to add
text

Examples of
vocabulary
choices and
additions that
make the text
sound more
formal and urgent

"It is hereby signified to you"

Vi si fa sapere. (We are letting you know)

And he hath also at this time expressly besought **us** that **an Official Letter** may be written **from hence**, ordering that ...
ed avendo questa volta espressamente supplicato acciò sia scritto ed ordinato che (and having this time expressly besought so that it is written and ordered that...)

in compliance with the **urgent** request
in considerazione anche dell'amichevole istanza (in consideration also of the friendly request ...)

A small
example of
debatable
vocabulary
choices

in search of inscriptions among the **rubbish**;

*per trovar i matton' iscritti, che fossero restati dentro la
ghiaja, (to find inscribed bricks that might have been left in
the **gravel**)*

Issues with the key term QUALCHE

... e quando **volessero** portar via **qualche pezzi di pietra** con vechie iscrizioni, e figure, non sia fatta lor opposizione...

... and that **when** they wish to take away **any pieces of stone** with old inscriptions or figures thereon, that no opposition be made thereto.

QUANDO VOLESSERO = SHOULD they wish vs WHEN they wish

And again...

...non si faccia opposizione al portar via **qualche pezzi** di pietra con iscrizioni, e figure...

...nor hinder them from taking away **any pieces** of stone with inscriptions or figures.



Cambridge Dictionary
Qualche (*adjective*). = **a few, a small number**

Collins
Qualche (indefinite adjective) = **a few**

Does or did QUALCHE ever mean **any** implying a large quantity? I do not think so.

Even in the rare occurrences (in the 14th century) when it was still spelled as **two separate words**, **QUAL CHE** implied an indefinite quantity, translated with **any**, **BUT** one or a few out of many.

Non si pareggi a lei qual più s'aprezza. In **qual ch'etade**, in qual che strani lidi (Petrarca, *Canzoniere* 260.
(Written between 1327-1368)

There is none more appreciated, or equal to her, **in any age**, on any foreign shore.

Da **qual che** parte parte il periglio l'assanni. = no matter from what side that menace stirs. Dante Alighieri, *Purgatorio* 70 (early 14th century)

..e non si faccia opposizione al portar via qualche pezzi di
pietra con iscrizioni

.. and no one oppose the taking away of **some/a few** pieces of
stones with inscription

*(nor hinder them from taking away **any** pieces of stone with
inscriptions)*

Elgin's team removed **15 metopes**, and **247 feet**, or around half of the
surviving frieze, including a female sculpture from the portico of
Erechtheion and **four fragments** from a smaller temple to Athena Nike
also located on the Acropolis.

Here is the whole letter

- In **red are additions**, in **blue vocabulary choices** that are debatable and **in green untranslated** terms/sentences
- **Highlighted in yellow**, particularly questionable choices

After the usual introductory compliments, and the salutation of Peace, -- "It is hereby signified to you, that our sincere Friend his Excellency Lord Elgin, Ambassador Extraordinary from the Court of England to the Porte of Happiness, hath represented to us, that it is well known that the greater part of the Frank [i.e. Christian] Courts are anxious to read and investigate the books, pictures or figures, and other works of science of the ancient Greek philosophers: and that in particular, the ministers or officers of state, philosophers, primates and other individuals of England, have a remarkable taste for the drawings, or figures or sculptures, remaining ever since the time of the said Greeks, and which are to be seen on the shores of the Archipelago and in other parts; and have in consequence from time to time sent men to explore and examine the ancient edifices, and drawings or figures. And that some accomplished Dilettanti of the Court of England, being desirous to see the ancient buildings and the curious figures in the City of Athens, and the old walls remaining since the time of the Grecians, which now subsist in the interior part of the said place; his Excellency the said Ambassador hath therefore engaged (AND ORDERED) five English painters, now dwelling at Athens to examine and view (word order), and also to copy the figures remaining there, *ab antiquo*: And he hath also at this time expressly besought us that an Official Letter may be written from hence, ordering that as long as the said painters shall be employed in going in and out of the said citadel of Athens, which is the place of their occupations; and in fixing scaffolding round the ancient Temple of Idols there; and in moulding the ornamental sculpture and visible figures thereon, in plaster or gypsum; and in measuring the remains of other old ruined buildings there; and in excavating when they find it necessary the foundations, in order to discover inscriptions which may have been covered in the rubbish; that no interruption may be given them

given them, nor any obstacle thrown in their way by the Disdar (or commandant of the citadel) or any other person: that no one may meddle with scaffolding or implements they may require in their works; and that when they wish to take away any pieces of stone with old inscriptions or figures thereon, that no opposition be made thereto. We therefore have written this Letter to you, and expedited it by Mr Philip Hunt, an English gentleman, Secretary of the aforesaid Ambassador, in order that as soon as you shall have understood its meaning, namely, that it is the explicit desire and engagement of this Sublime Court endowed with all eminent qualities, to favour such requests as the above-mentioned, in conformity with what is due to the friendship, sincerity, alliance and good will subsisting *ab antiquo* between the Sublime and ever durable Ottoman Court and that of England, and which is on the side of both those Courts manifestly increasing; particularly as there is no harm in the said figures and edifices being thus viewed, contemplated and designed. Therefore, after having fulfilled the duties of hospitality, and given a proper reception to the aforesaid Artists, in compliance with the urgent request of the said Ambassador to that effect, and because it is incumbent on us to provide that they meet no opposition in walking, viewing or contemplating the figures and edifices they may wish to design or copy, or in any of their works of fixing scaffolding or using their various implements; It is our desire that on the arrival of this Letter you use your diligence to act conformably to the instances of the said Ambassador, as long as the said five Artists dwelling at Athens shall be employed in going in and out of the said citadel of Athens, which is the place of their occupations; or infixing [sic] scaffolding around the ancient Temple of the Idols, or in modelling with chalk or gypsum the said ornaments and visible figures thereon; or in measuring the fragments and vestiges or other ruined edifices; or in excavating, when they find it necessary, the foundations, in search of inscriptions (THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN LEFT) among the rubbish; that they be not molested by the said Disdar (or commandant of the citadel) nor by any other persons, nor even by you (to whom this letter is addressed;) and that no one meddle with their scaffolding or implements, nor hinder them from taking away any pieces of stone with inscriptions or figures. In the above-mentioned manner, see that ye demean and comport yourselves.