

A Microhistorical Study of the First Translators of Dār al-Funūn¹

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Abstract

In recent years, microhistory has shifted the focus of some translation historians from translated texts to individual translators' life and work. Because of its emphasis on microscopic small-scale investigations, microhistory enables us to see the forgotten individuals, to uncover the hidden facts and to reveal the gaps in our historical knowledge. At the center of microhistory lies the archival method, which involves in-depth examination of archives and primary sources. The present article is an archival microhistorical research on the first translators of Dār al-Funūn in the Naseri era (1848–1896). Examining the archives, this study aims at providing a detailed portrait of these translators. To this end, first, the document repositories of five archives were closely investigated. Then the first-hand information extracted from primary sources were put together to write a narrative for each translator.

Keywords: Microhistory, Archives, Primary sources, Translators, Dār al-Funūn, Naseri era

1. Introduction

One of the historical approaches that attracted the attention of translation historians is microhistory. Microhistorical approach, which was developed by a

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group of Italian historians in the 1970s, "is essentially based on the reduction of the scale of observation, on a microscopic analysis and an intensive study of the documentary material" (Levi, 1991, p. 95). Microhistory lays on the assumption that small-scale investigations give the historians the chance of seeing the unseen individuals as well as uncovering the hidden facts (Levi, 1991; Ginzburg, 1993). Through conducting a "microscopic" investigation, microhistorians can uncover the "factors previously unobserved" and they can also "demonstrate the gaps and spaces which the complex inconsistencies of all systems leave open" (Levi, 1991, pp. 97–107). Moreover, "altering the scale of observation" gives "completely new meanings" to the "phenomena previously considered to be sufficiently described" (Levi, 1991, p. 98).

During the past years, history of translation "has experienced a perceptible turning from conventional historical approaches" to "microhistory" (Gomez, 2017, p. 56). That is, instead of focusing on "dramatic events, extraordinary people, large geographic areas and long periods of time", translation history has started taking into account the "ordinary men and women and their ordinary deeds" (Gomez, 2017, p. 56). Until now, microhistory has been basically used for discovering the unseen translators as well as finding the neglected primary sources and evidence about the work and life of the individual translators (see Munday 2014; Paloposki 2016; Gomez 2017). Munday (2014) believes that by adopting a microhistorical approach, "by focusing on" individual translators and "on 'little facts' of everyday lives" of translators, historians can build up "a picture . . . of the specific interaction between a translator and other individuals, groups, institutions and power structures" (p. 77). Moreover, piecing together a number of microhistories can "enhance our understanding of the general history of translation" and translators (Munday, 2014, p. 77).

The present article aims at conducting a microscopic investigation into the primary sources and documents of the early Naseri era (1848–1896) to reveal, as much as possible, the previously hidden or unnoticed facts about the first translators of Dār al-Funūn and to provide a detailed portrait of these translators.

2. Method

As it was mentioned, microhistory is an approach to historical research, not a method. At the center of this approach lies the archival method, which involves close examination of the archives. Archives are the “materials created or received by a person, family, or organization, public or private, in the conduct of their affairs and preserved because of the enduring value contained in the information they contain” (Pearce-Moses, 2005, p. 30). In the present study, the archives of The National Library and Archives of Iran¹; Library, Museum and Document Center of Iran Parliament²; Document and Press Center Management of Astan Quds Razavi³; Malek National Library and Museum Institution⁴; and The Central Library and Documentation Center of the University of Tehran⁵ were examined to find as many primary sources as possible. A Primary source is a “material that contains firsthand accounts of events and that was created contemporaneous to those events or later recalled by an eyewitness” (Pearce-Moses, 2005, p. 309). The primary sources that were discovered and used in this research included prefaces to translations, letters, memoirs, travelogues and legal documents such as decrees of the Qajar kings. Besides, as “newspaper articles contemporaneous with the events described are traditionally considered primary sources” (Pearce-Moses, 2005, p. 309), some information was extracted from *Akhtar* and *Vaqāye‘ Itifāqīyeh*. In addition to the

1. سازمان اسناد و کتابخانه جمهوری اسلامی ایران

2. کتابخانه، موزه و مرکز اسناد مجلس شورای اسلامی

3. مرکز اسناد و مطبوعات آستان قدس رضوی

4. کتابخانه و موزه ملی ملک

5. کتابخانه مرکزی و مرکز اسناد دانشگاه تهران

mentioned sources, some books, particularly the works of E'temād al-Saltaneh, were studied closely.

3. Data Collection and Historical Narratives

The primary sources and documents introduced above were the source of data for this research. In microhistory, all “tiny details” matter as they can “provide the key to a deeper reality” (Ginzburg, 1980, p. 11). Therefore, the collected data comprised of all facts and pieces of evidence that were assumed to be of significance for writing history of the first translators of Dār al-Funūn.

One of the main characteristic of microhistory is the narrative nature of historical writing, which helps microhistorians to “break with the traditional assertive, authoritarian form of discourse adopted by historians who present reality as objective” (Levi, 1991, p. 106). Function of narrative in microhistory is to involve readers in “a sort of dialogue” and to provide them an opportunity to participate “in the whole process of constructing the historical argument” (Levi, 1991, p. 106). This involvement is achieved through “incorporating into the main body of the narrative the procedures of research itself, the documentary limitations, techniques of persuasion and interpretive constructions” (Levi, 1991, p. 106). In the following section, the fragments of evidence collected from various sources are pieced together to form a narrative for each translator.

4. The First Translators of Dār al-Funūn

Dār al-Funūn was founded in 1851 by Amir Kabir (1807–1852), the first chief minister of Naser al-Din Shah (1831–1896), to train “Iranian youth in modern military, scientific, and bureaucratic disciplines” (Ekhtiar, 2001, p. 153). In the second volume of *Mer'āt al-boldān*, E'temād al-Saltaneh (1295^{AH}/1878) explains that Naser al-Din Shah had always been concerned about educating Iranians all

1. AH = After Hijri, used to label the Islamic calendar. For the Gregorian calendar and the Iranian calendar (Solar Hijri) no label is used.

over the country; thus, to spread modern sciences, such as mathematics, natural sciences and chemistry as well as other discoveries of European scientists, the school of Dār al-Funūn was built (p. 80). Right after the establishment of Dār al-Funūn, Amir Kabir issued a decree by which an official named Jean Dāvūd¹, the Chief Translator² of the government at that time, was sent on a mission to Austria to hire teachers. Jean Dāvūd came back to Iran with seven Austrian teachers chosen to teach the sciences of medicine and surgery, infantry, cavalry, artillery, engineering, mining and pharmaceutics (E'temad al-Saltaneh, 1295_{AH}/1878, pp. 80–81). After the arrival of the Austrian teachers, Dār al-Funūn officially started its classes with one hundred students, all children of aristocrats (E'temad al-Saltaneh, 1295_{AH}/1878, p. 81). Naturally, the Austrian teachers, who knew nothing of the Persian language, needed translators; therefore, some translators were hired for the school. As documents show, it can be considered as the first time in the Qajar era that a group of people were officially hired by the government to work as translators for an institution.

Based on the notes of E'temad al-Saltaneh (1295_{AH}/1878) in the second volume of *Mer'āt al-boldān*, the first translators of Dār al-Funūn were Mirzā Aqā, Mirzā Ja'far, Mohammad Hussain Khan Qajar, Mirzā Rezā, Mirzā Zaki Khān and Hajj Sheikh Mohsen Khān (p. 85). The narratives of these translators, constructed from tiny pieces of evidence, are as follows.

Mirzā Rezā was the name by which Jules Richard (1816–1891) was called in the Naseri era after he converted to Islam. Richard was a French man who came to Iran in the time of Mohammad Shah Qajar (r. 1834–1848). He set out from Paris on July 18, 1844 and arrived in Tehran on October 21, 1844 (Richard, 1322/1943, pp. 93–113). On his arrival, he rented a house in Tehran wherein

1. ژان داود؛ همچنين شناخته شده به: جان داود خان، ميرزا داود خان، مسيو جان داود.

2. مترجم اول دولت عليه ايران.

Madam ‘Abbās also lived (Richard, 1322/1943, p. 113). Madam ‘Abbās was a French woman who married Hāji ‘Abbās Shīrazī and came to Iran in the time of Fath ‘Ali Shah Qajar (r. 1797–1834). When Mohammad Shah was still a prince and lived in Tabriz, some artificial flowers were sent from Tehran for the women of his andarūni. To decorate all their rooms, these women needed more artificial flowers and since no one in Tabriz was familiar with the art, Mohammad Mirzā decided to send Hāji ‘Abbās Shīrazī, one of his painters, to France to learn artificial flower making (“Dāstānhā-ye Tārīkhī”, 1325/1947, p. 106). Hāji ‘Abbās Shīrazī went to Paris in 1820, but when he found the art of artificial flower making difficult to learn, he decided to bring a young French woman, who was an expert in this art, to Iran (Nasri, 1386/2007, p. 30). Apparently, the woman and Hāji ‘Abbās got married in their way to Iran (“Dāstānhā-ye Tārīkhī”, 1325/1947, p. 107). There is no mention to the name of this French woman in the documents as in Iran everybody knew her as Madam Hāji ‘Abbās or Madam Golsāz. However, it is known that she was from Orléans and she was thirty years old when she met Hāji ‘Abbās. Moreover, based on the documents, she was promised eight thousand French Franc as an annual wage (“Dāstānhā-ye Tārīkhī”, 1325/1947, p. 107). Soon, Madam Hāji ‘Abbās developed close relationships with the women of the andarūni, especially with Mahd-e Oliā (1805–1873). In 1848, the first year of Naser al-Din Shah’s reign, Madam Hāji ‘Abbās was appointed as the interpreter of andarūni (E’temad al-Saltaneh, 1363/1984, p. 1695). Because of her strong relationship with Mahd-e Oliā, she became an influential woman in andarūni of two Qajar kings, Mohammad Shah and Naser al-Din Shah. It was Madam Hāji ‘Abbās who took Jules Richard to the Qajar court for the first time. On December 5th 1844, almost two months after Richard’s arrival in Tehran, Madam Hāji ‘Abbās took Richard to the court to take a photo of prince Naser al-Din Mirzā (Richard, 1322/1943, p. 113). As Richard (1322/1943) recounts, Mohammad Shah was gifted two daguerreotype cameras – one by the Queen of England and the other by

the Emperor of Russia – that no one, not the Iranians nor those Europeans who resided in Iran, knew how to work with (p. 113). But, Richard knew how to take photo with those cameras and in 1845, after taking several photos of Mohammad Shah and his chief minister, he was officially hired as a government employee (Richard, 1322/1943, p. 44). Richard did not say what that official job was; however, he (1322/1943) later explains that on February 23rd 1847, he was summoned by Mohammad Shah to take some photos of Shah himself and all the princes and women of andarūni, so he had to go to the court every day because he could not ignore his duties (p. 47). Therefore, it can be concluded that Richard's first official job in Iran was photography. During the Naseri era, Richard was mainly a translator and a teacher. Yet, sometimes he was sent on missions. For instance, on January 28th 1852/Rabī' al-Thānī 5th1268, on a letter to one of his friends, Richard (1322/1943) explains that Amir Kabir sent him on a mission to Kurdestan to investigate the mines there (p. 83). Mahdavi (2016) maintains that this mission "or another one to Kurdestan led to a scandal" (para. 4). As he further (2016) explains, in Richard's house in Tehran "a Kurdish girl dressed as a boy was discovered", who "claimed that" she was "kidnapped" by Richard whereas Richard "claimed that he had bought her from her family" (para. 4). The scandal was so great that "the authorities, including the head of police, the French chargé d'affaires, Comte de Gobineau, the prime minister, and the Shah himself all became involved" (Mahdavi, 2016, para. 4). Eventually, "to avoid being expelled from Iran", Richard converted into Islam, "adopted the name Rezā, and petitioned for Iranian citizenship" (Mahdavi, 2016, para. 4). The scandal did not affect Richard's life and career in Iran. In 1288_{AH}/1871, when following the great success of students of Dār al-Funūn in an exam, all the supervisors, teachers and students were granted titles, wage raise and gifts by Naser al-Din Shah, Richard was given the title of "Khān" (E'temad al-Saltaneh, 1363, p. 1928). In addition to being a translator, Richard was also the teacher of French and English languages at Dār al-Funūn. As it is

mentioned in a letter written by Richard to a friend on January 18th 1852/Rabī‘ al-Awal 25th 1268, he had sixty students at Dār al-Funūn (Richard, 1322/1943, p. 86). Richard also worked as a translator in translation offices and some of his translations were published. Searching through the archives, the records of eleven translations were found. Among them, seven were commissioned by Amir Kabir and published in 1268_{AH}/1852. Undoubtedly, these translations can be categorized among the first books translated in Dār al-Funūn. From among these seven translations, three are about the methods of making sugar, porcelain and glass and the other four are about the methods of producing wool, silk, cotton and linen. Other published translations of Richard Khān are the Persian translation of *History of Emperor Nicholas and The Events of His Thirty-year Reign*¹ (1275_{AH}/1858), *Queen Victoria*² (1285_{AH}/1868), commissioned by Naser al-Din Shah, *Brief History of the Napoleon I, Emperor of the French*³ (1286_{AH}/1867) and *Political economy*⁴ (n.d.). It should be noted that, there was another translator in the late Naseri era with the name of Richard Khān. This second one is Yūsef Richard Khān (1868–1935), also known as Mo‘adab al-Molk, the oldest son of Jules Richard, who took his father’s place at Dār al-Funūn after his death in 1308_{AH}/1891 (Bāmdād, 1357/1978, vol. II, p. 44).

The second translator is Mirzā Zaki Khān. Mirzā Zaki Māzandarāni was one of the five Iranian students who were dispatched to France in 1845 by Mohammad Shah. In Qajar era, the early Qajar era in particular, students were chosen by the government or the Shah himself from among the children of aristocrat families. Mirzā Zaki was not an exception as his father, Mirzā Moqīm Māzandarāni ‘Ali

1. تاریخ امپراطور نیکولا و وقایع سی سال سلطنت او

2. ملکہ ویکتوریا

3. تاریخ مختصر ناپلیان اول امپراطور فرانسویان

4. اکونومی پلیتیک

Ābādi, was “the state accountant¹ of the court” (Mahbūbi Ardakāni, 1344/1966, p. 595). As recorded in the handwritten decree of Mohammad Shah, Mirzā Zaki was sent to France to become a good engineer². However, following the French Revolution of February 1848 and the death of Mohammad Shah in September of the same year, it was not possible for the Iranian students to stay in France any longer (Mahbūbi Ardakāni, 1344/1966, p. 592). Therefore, all the students came back to Iran after three years. When Dār al-Funūn was established, Mirzā Zaki was employed as the translator of August Karl Krziž³, the teacher of artillery in the school. Mirzā Zaki compiled and translated some booklets from what Krziž taught in classes or from the pamphlet he prepared for the students. One of the early booklets, perhaps the first one that was prepared by Krziž and Mirzā Zaki for the students of Dār al-Funūn, is titled *Qavā’ed-e Mashq-e Dasteh va Qā’ed-ye Nazm-e Tūpkhāneh-ye Mobārakeh* (1269_{AH}/1852). A short note on the first page of this booklet shows that it was commissioned by Naser al-Din Shah. Other booklets are *Mizān al-Hesāb* (1274_{AH}/1857), *Elm-e Jerasqil* (1274_{AH}/1858), *Resāleh dar Elm-e Mashq* (1270_{AH}/1854), *Elm-e Masāhat* (n.d) and *Elm-e Tūpkhāneh* (n.d). From the information given in the prefaces of the aforementioned booklets, it can be deduced that the booklets were the product of a collaborative work between Krziž and Mirzā Zaki. In the preface to *Elm-e Jerasqil*, it is clearly mentioned that this booklet of Krziž is written in Persian by the assistance of Mirzā Zaki. Moreover, in the preface of *Mizān al-Hesāb*, it is explained that the content of the booklet is extracted from various French sources by Krziž and then it is edited and translated into a fluent Persian by Mirzā Zaki. As mentioned in the prefaces of these translations, in addition to being the translator of French language in Dār al-Funūn, Mirzā Zaki was

1. مستوفی

2. جملهٔ مربوط به میرزا زکی در فرمان محمدشاه قاجار: میرزا زکی مهندس خوب انشاءالله.

3. در ایران شناخته شده به: مسیو کرشیش نساوی. اعتمادالسلطنه در مرآت البلدان (ج.2، ص. 1080) او را مسیو اوکشت کی ژیر معرفی کرده است.

also the adjutant of the artillery. Later, in 1275_{AH}/1858, he was raised to the rank of artillery colonel (E'temad al-Saltaneh, 1363/1984, p. 1809). In addition to working with Krziž, Mirzā Zaki translated some books individually. The translations that were found in the archives are: *Tārikh-e Rūm-e Bāstān* (n.d.) and *Tārikh-e Tavāyef-e Turk* (n.d.). Another translation is *Tārikh-e Salātin-e Osmāni* in four volumes, published from 1308_{AH}/1890 to 1313_{AH}/1895. As explained in the prefaces of volumes one and three, translation of this book was commissioned by Naser al-Din Shah and in the postface of the fourth volume, he explains that translating these volumes was an arduous task that took a long time. While complaining of being all alone without any assistance at all stages of translation, Mirzā Zaki mentions four jobs, including being translator, scribe, copyist and reviser which he did himself instead of having a separate person for each. It seems that this part, in one way or another, alludes to the division of labor in a translation project in the Qajar era. As pointed out before, in Mirzā Zaki's first translations, published in the early Naseri era, he was introduced as the translator of *Dār al-Funūn* and the artillery adjutant as well. However, the titles he used to introduce himself in *Tārikh-e Salātin-e Osmāni* show that in the late Naseri era he was given the rank of brigadier general and was appointed as the especial adjutant of Naser al-Din Shah.

The next translator in the list is Hājj Sheikh Mohsen Khān (1820–1899). With respect to Mohsen Khān's childhood and personal life no information was obtained other than his father was Sheikh Kāzem-e Tājer and "his paternal grandfather was an Arab Sheikh who came to Iran in the time of Fath 'Ali Shah and resided in Tabriz" (Bāmdād, 1357/1978, vol. III, p. 204). As for his professional life, he was an important political figure in the Naseri era who held some official posts. Apparently, Mohsen Khān started his professional career as an employee for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and he was sent to the Iranian Embassy in Saint Petersburg (Bāmdād, 1357/1978, vol. III, p. 204). He also served as the First

Deputy¹ of the Embassy of Iran in Europe (1858), the Minister-Counselor² of the Embassy of Iran in Paris (1863), the Chargé d'affaires³ of the embassy of Iran in London (1866–1869) and the Plenipotentiary⁴ of Iran in Istanbul (1872–1891). He also served as the temporary Plenipotentiary of Iran in Germany in 1885 (Bāmdād, 1357/1978, vol. III, pp. 205–209). Moreover, as recorded in documents, he held the position of Lashkar Nevis⁵ in 1861 (E'temad al-Saltaneh, 1363, vol. III, p. 1842). In 1873, one year after he started his job in Istanbul, he “was given the title of Mo'in al-Molk” for his good service (E'temad al-Saltaneh, 1363/1984, vol. III, p. 1949). Based on Hazrati (1398/2019), one of the most important things that happened in the time of Mohsen Khān's residence in Istanbul and by his own efforts was the foundation of *Akhtar* newspaper (p. 10), the Persian language newspaper published in Istanbul from 1876–1896. Working as a translator at Dār al-Funūn was just a temporary job for Mohsen Khān. Contrary to the two translators introduced earlier, Mohsen Khān was never officially known as a translator and he never published a translation other than the Persian translation of *The Adventures of Telemachus* (1699) by François Fénelon (1651–1715) which was done during his residence in Istanbul. Translation of this novel was published as a series in *Akhtar* under the title of *Tarjome-ye Hekāyat-e Telemāk*. The first part was appeared on this newspaper in issue 27 of the year 1296_{AH} (July 1st 1879) and publication of other parts continued uninterrupted for about 15 months until issue 34 of the year 1297_{AH} (August 4th 1880). From issue 35 to issue 44 of the same year, there is no translation by Mohsen Khān. In issue 35, which was published in September 7th 1880, there is a report of Naser al-Din Shah's arrival to Istanbul on his way to

1. نایب اول سفارت

2. مستشار سفارت

3. شارژدافر (کاردار)

4. وزیر مختار

5. In the Safavid to Qajar period, the one who kept the statistics and numbers of the troops and the account of their rations and their benefits (*Farhang-e 'Amid*).

Mecca. In many of the ten issues that lack Mohsen Khān' translations, there are news about several parties thrown because of the presence of Naser al-Din Shah in Istanbul. As reported in *Akhtar*, in many of the parties Mohsen Khān was the host or he was the Shah's dinner companion. Therefore, it is highly likely that the major reason for that gap in publication of translation was the presence of Naser al-Din Shah in Istanbul. Finally, after a ten-issue gap, the next part of the translation, which is also the last published translation of Mohsen Khān, was appeared in issue 45, which was published on October 1880. The translation was left incomplete and Mohsen Khān never published its rest. Perhaps the reason was the violent rebellion of Kurds led by Sheikh Ubeidullāh (1826–1883), which broke out in 1880 in the western border areas of Iran that turned into a serious problem for both Iran and the Ottoman Empire. In 1891 and after serving as the Plenipotentiary of Iran in Istanbul for about twenty years, Mohsen Khān was unexpectedly discharged from his post by Naser al-Din Shah. In 1892, a year after his dismissal, he was given the title of Moshir al-Dowlah and he was appointed as the Minister of Justice¹ and the Minister of Trade² (*E'temad al-Saltaneh*, as cited in Bāmdād, 1357/1978, vol. III, p. 210). Later, in the time of Mozaffar ad-Din Shah (r. 1896–1907), he was appointed as the Minister of Foreign Affairs and he remained in the same post until his death (Bāmdād, 1357/1978, vol. III, p. 211).

About the other two translators, Mirzā Aqā and Mirzā Ja'far, no information has been found yet. The fact is that discovering the identity of these translators by just having their first names seems almost impossible. And about Mohammad Hussain Khān Qajar, the only information that was obtained is that he was the translator of Jakob Eduard Polak (1818–1891) at Dār al-Funūn (*Vaqāye' Itifāqīyeh*, 1269_{AH}/1852, No. 98, p. 3). Polak was an Austrian physician who first taught

1. وزیر عدلیه

2. وزیر تجارت

medicine at Dār al-Funūn and later became the private physician of Naser al-Din Shah. It appears that Mohammad Hussain Khān was not proficient in French. In his itinerary, Polak (1361/1982) recounts that at the beginning he thought the translator works well; however, after a while he realized that the translator did not understand him at all and instead of translating his words, repeats the wrong content of Persian books for students (pp. 209–210). Therefore, Polak decided to learn Persian and in the meantime he used drawings and gestures to teach medicine to his students (Polak, 1361/1982, p. 210). Werner (2009) believes that Mohammad Hussain Khān “may be identical with” Muhammad Hussain Adib al-Dawlah (1835–1897) (para. 3). Actually, it appears highly unlikely at least because of two reasons: First, Adib al-Dawlah was born in 1835, so when Dār al-Funūn was established he was only sixteen years old. Compared to the other three translators, Jules Richards, Mirzā Zaki and Mohsen Khān, Adib al-Dawlah was too young and inexperienced to be employed by the government. More importantly, as Bāmdād (1357/1978, vol, V) reports, Adib al-Dawlah was among the first students of Dār al-Funūn who was enrolled for artillery science and after graduation in 1861, he was first appointed as the adjutant of the school and later he became the schoolmaster of Dār al-Funūn (p. 235). It is very unlikely that a first-year student of artillery science was chosen as a translator for the teacher of medicine.

5. Conclusion

As an archival microhistorical translator research, the present article aimed at providing a detailed account of the first translators hired for the school of Dār al-Funūn. Unfortunately, from among the six translators, the identity of two remained unknown because of just having their first names. While reaching any conclusions or generalizations from the narratives of the other four translators is impossible, the tiny details provided us with valuable insights into the history of translators in the early Naseri era. Close examination of archival documents and sources unfolded some of the unseen aspects of the life and work of the first translators of Dār al-

Funūn. It also introduced the translators who were underrepresented in the history of the Qajar translators or were left out from the historical translation/translator studies of the Qajar era.

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مطالعه خردتاریخی نخستین مترجمان دارالفنون^۱

زهرا عاطف‌مهر^۲ و فرزانه فرحزاد^۳

چکیده

در سال‌های اخیر، خردتاریخ سبب شده است تا توجه برخی تاریخ‌نگاران ترجمه از متن‌های ترجمه‌ای به پیشه و زندگی مترجمان معطوف شود. تأکید خردتاریخ بر پژوهش‌های جزءنگرانه موجب یافتن افراد فراموش‌شده، آشکارساختن حقایق نهفته و پی‌بردن به خلاءهای تاریخی می‌شود. در مرکز خردتاریخ روش پژوهش آرشیوی قرار دارد که شامل بررسی دقیق آرشیوها و اسناد دست اول می‌شود. پژوهش حاضر مطالعه‌ای خردتاریخی و آرشیوی درباره نخستین مترجمان دارالفنون در عهد ناصری (۱۲۶۴-۱۳۱۳ق.) است. هدف پژوهش پیش‌رو این است که با بررسی دقیق منابع آرشیوی تصویری واضح و مشروح از این مترجمان ارائه کند. به منظور دستیابی به این هدف، ابتدا منابع اسنادی پنج آرشیو به دقت بررسی شدند. سپس، با کنار هم گذاشتن اسناد دست اول پیداشده روایت هر مترجم نوشته شد.

واژه‌های راهنما: خردتاریخ، آرشیو، منابع دست اول، مترجمان، دارالفنون، عهد ناصری

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