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Translating the Controversial: Turkish Translations of Sexual Norms in the Persian Mirror for Princes *Qābūsnāma*

Abstract

The *Qābūsnāma* is a well-known mirror for princes dating back to the Ziyārid ruler Kay Kāvūs, who ruled over a principality of regional importance on the south-east coast of the Caspian Sea in the mid-eleventh century. The *Qābūsnāma*, written for his son Gīlānshāh, deals with statesmanlike affairs, commercial transactions or family and friendly obligations and became one of the first works of the genre *Andarznāme*, *Pandnāme* or *Naṣīḥatnāme* in Persian. It was translated into Old Anatolian Turkish several times in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. With a particular focus on Chapter 15 of the work, which deals with bodily pleasures, and on the various statements made by the translators in their engagement with Kay Kāvūs' sayings about inclinations towards men and women, the article examines the different forms that the *Qābūsnāma* took in its journey from Iran to Anatolia during the beylik and Ottoman periods, and whose actors were involved in the translation processes.

Keywords: *Qābūsnāma*, mirror for princes, translation, Ottoman Turkish, sexual norms, *liwāṭ*.

Texts falling under the categories of advice literature or instructional pieces for rulers were part of the *adab* in pre-modern Islamic societies. These writings aimed at educating various social groups linguistically, ethically, and historically. They played a significant role in translation processes across the Eastern Mediterranean and beyond for many centuries. Within the Arabic-Persian and Turkish traditions, the genre of 'advice for rulers' often blurred the lines between general advice literature, ethical works, and Islamic law. These texts took forms such as memoranda or letters directed at rulers, fictitious dialogues between a ruler and a philosopher, fables, and paternal advice passed on to a successor set to assume power. These works, typically composed in courtly settings, centred on teachings about the proper conduct and understanding of leadership, carrying a normative purpose. Beyond discussing the ruler-subject relationship and the religious underpinnings of Islamic governance, they provided guidelines for leading a righteous life. These guidelines encompassed admonitions to revere God, prioritise the welfare of others, and avoid sin, envy, and unethical behaviour, as well as giving cautionary advice against pride, greed, and avarice. Emphasising values like justice, mercy, kindness, gentleness, and generosity, these facets served as integral thematic elements across multiple works within this genre.[1]

1 On advice literature and mirrors for princes, see Leder 1999; Marlow 2007.

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In the following, I will discuss an early example of this literary genre, the *Qābūsnāma*,[2] focusing on its translations into Old Anatolian Turkish by two anonymous translators, as well as by Şeyḫoğlu and Aḳḳādıoğlu, and its translation into Ottoman Turkish by Mercümek Aḥmed during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Additionally, I will cover an adaptation of the work into contemporary Turkish by Naẓmīzāde from around 1700. The approach to the work, which has been edited several times and translated into European languages, is twofold: I will contextualise the respective translation process regarding the actors involved, that is, the translators, their patrons and, if possible, the intended readership; and, in doing so, I will include the respective manuscript tradition of each translation as well as the new editions and studies that have appeared in Turkey in recent years. As an example of the way in which the translators dealt with the work in question, I will focus on sections from Chapter 15 (out of 44), which in the original Persian version of the *Qābūsnāma* deals with affections and bodily pleasures towards male and female servants (a rare topic in mirror for princes literature). The statements about pleasures with *both* sexes, which are forbidden in all four schools of Islamic law, are intended to serve as an example of how translators in Anatolia during the beylik and Ottoman periods had to adapt passages from works of advice literature in order to prevent alienating the intended readership.

1. The *Qābūsnāma* as an Extraordinary Eleventh Century Mirror for Princes

The *Qābūsnāma* is known as one of, if not the first mirror for princes written in Persian in the late eleventh century. Its author, Unṣur al-Maʿālī Kay Kāvūs (or Kāʾūs) b. Iskandar b. Qābūs b. Vushmgīr, ruled over the southern edge of the Caspian Sea in northern Iran as prince of the regional dynasty of the Ziyārids, who were adherents to the Sunni creed and dominated parts of northern Iran for about 160 years.[3] Although the dates of Kay Kāvūs' life are disputed by scholars, they can be narrowed down to around 412–480/1021–1087, of which his reign dates to around 441–480/1049–1087. Initially subject to the Ghaznavids and later to the Seljuks, who ruled over large parts of Iran, Iraq and Syria from 433/1041, Kay Kāvūs managed to remain in power for some 40 years. Nevertheless, he spent eight years at the court of the Ghaznavid ruler Mawdūd b. Masʿūd (r. 432–440/1041–1050) in what is now Afghanistan and also married a Ghaznavid princess, a daughter of the famous conqueror Maḥmūd (the mother of his son Gīlānshāh). The *Qābūsnāma* also shows that he spent some time at the court of the Shaddādid ruler Abū l-Asvār Shāvur I b. Faẓl (Faẓlūn) I, who ruled over Dvin (present-day Armenia) from 413–459/1022–1067 and later also Ganja (Gəncə in Azerbaijan). Kay Kāvūs was therefore able to draw on a wide range of experience from

2 In this article, I use the respective transcription systems for Arabic, Persian and Ottoman Turkish.

3 On Kay Kāvūs and the *Qābūsnāma*, see Fouchécour 1986, 179–222; Marlow 2018. A list of Ziyārid rulers is provided in Bosworth 1996, 166–7.

his time at two ruling courts and as a prince in northern Iran when writing his mirror for princes.

A few years before his death, in 475/1082–1083, Kay Kāvūs wrote the *Qābūsnāma* for his son and successor Gīlānshāh (r. *ca*. 480–483/1087–1090), during which short reign the Ziyārids came to an end when he was probably murdered by Nizārī Ismailis from the Alborz Mountains.[4] The title of the work, *Qābūsnāma* (*Book of Qābūs*), under which the work has come down to us, refers to the name of Kay Kāvūs' grandfather Shams al-Maʿālī Abū l-Ḥasan Qābūs (r. 366–371/977–981 and 388–403/998–1012/1013) and does not go back to the author himself, which also explains the generic names used later for the work such as *Andarznāma*, *Pandnāma*, *Kitāb al-Naṣīḥat* or *Naṣīḥatnāma*, all of which signify *The Book of Wise Counsel*. In the oldest surviving manuscript of the Persian text, MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Fatih 5297, which was copied in Isfahan in 624/1227 and also forms the basis for the standard edition by Ghulāmḥusayn Yūsufī, the work is simply called *Kitāb-i Pandnāma* (*The Book of Advice*) and in the preceding table of contents *Kitāb-i Kay Kāvusnāma* (*sic*, *The Book of Kay Kāvus*). It is divided into a total of 44 chapters, which the author lists by name at the start. The structure within a chapter is repeated continuously: individual narratives (*ḥikāyat*, *faṣl*) follow one another and underline the respective statement, whereby the author intersperses numerous proverbs and (his own) verses into the always unaffected, but therefore no less appealing prose. Thematically, he deals with various areas of human life, which gives the work an 'encyclopaedic' character.

In her newly published anthology *Medieval Muslim Mirrors for Princes*, Louise Marlow briefly contextualises the work and divides its contents into three main groups as follows: (a) Chapters 1–7 on religious and moral topics, (b) Chapters 9–30 on the rules of social behaviour, (c) Chapters 31–43 on professional lives of various professions such as student, jurist, and teacher, poet, musician, vizier, etc.[5] Chapters 8 and 44 are dedicated to the maxims of Anūshīrvān and chivalry (*javānmardī*) respectively, that is, the noble qualities of a ruler, to which Kay Kāvūs attributes wisdom (*khirad*), honesty (*rāstī*), and manly virtue (*mardī*). Many of the chapters, which range from the art of government to business transactions and family and friendship obligations, can also be found in other works of advice written at the same time or later. Others may come as more of a surprise: the chapters on eroticism or on stages of the daily routine such as bathing, sleeping, and resting are less typical and seem more personal than other pieces of advice. The tone here is instructive on the one hand, but not too moralising: in Chapter 11 on the etiquette of (wine) drinking, Kay Kāvūs gives advice on how his son should consume wine without overstraining his body at the same time. One may therefore agree with Seifeddin Najmabadi when he ascribes a 'humane vital realism'[6] to the author. In the following analysis, Chapter 15, 'On Taking One's Pleasure,' will take centre stage, which is one of three chapters (14, 15, and 26) on 'erot-

4 Kay Kāvūs names his son several times as the recipient of the book. See Unṣur al-Maʿālī Kaykāvūs 1390sh [2011], 5, 234 and 237.

5 Marlow 2023, 60.

6 *Das Qābūsnāme* 1988, 22.

icism' dealing with the issues of flirting, sexual pleasure, and courting a woman, as labelled by Najmabadi and Wolfgang Knauth, who provided the modern translation of the work into German.[7]

The *Qābūsnāma* attracted attention among European scholars as early as 1811, when the first complete translation into a European language was provided by the Prussian Orientalist Heinrich Friedrich von Diez (1751–1817), whose translation into German under the title *Buch des Kabus oder Lehren des persischen Königs Kjekjawus für seinen Sohn Ghilan Schach* was published in Berlin.[8] It was Diez' translation of the *Qābūsnāma* that Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832) used for his famous *West-östlicher Divan* of 1819 (the extended version was published in 1827).[9] Notably, as in the case of the *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, it was the Turkish version of the *Qābūsnāma* that was received in Europe and made available in translation. Since then, interest in the work has not ceased, as seen by later translations into European languages such as English by Reuben Levy (1951) or the more recent German translation by Najmabadi and Knauth (1988).[10] The Persian text used for this study was edited by Yūsufī in 1345sh [1966] (second edition 1390sh [2011]),[11] which is still the standard edition today, surpassing previous editions by Riżāqulī Khān Hidāyat (1285h [1868]) and Saʿīd Nafisī (1312sh [1933]) as well as another by Reuben Levy (1951).[12] Unfortunately, as there has never been a study of the extent manuscript corpus of the Persian original, the analysis of textual variations in the manuscripts that were adapted in linguistic and textual detail is still lacking.[13]

2. Chapter 15, Humoral Theory, and Islamic Legal Discourse

The chapter in question, number 15 of 44 chapters in total, bears the title 'On Taking One's Pleasure.'[14] Therein, Kay Kāvūs advises his son Gīlānshāh not to get drunk or have intercourse during extreme cold or heat, reflecting common advice rooted in the traditions of Graeco-Arabic medicine (especially by Galen's humoral theory) and Islamic Prophetic medicine.[15] A somewhat uncommon detail is Kay Kāvūs' statement that a prince should not limit his inclinations to one sex but should desire both women and boys equally. In the Persian original, this is put as follows:

7 For the three chapters in question, see *Das Qābūsnāme* 1988, 116–20; 153–4.
8 *Buch des Kabus* 1811. On Diez, see the newly published collective volume by Rauch and Stiening 2020.
9 The most thorough contribution to this topic is still Mommsen 1961.
10 *A Mirror for Princes* 1951; *Das Qābūsnāme* 1988.
11 Unṣur al-Maʿālī Kaykāvūs 1390sh [2011]; *The Naṣīḥat-Nāma* 1951.
12 For the earlier editions of the text, see Yūsufī 1390sh [2011], 23–9.
13 An (incomplete) list of Persian manuscripts and editions of the work can be found in Bruijn 2000/2010.
14 *A Mirror for Princes* 1951, 77–8.
15 On the two traditions, see Perho 1995, 44–6. Indispensable for the topic is still Ullmann 1970.

اما از غلامان و زنان میل خویش بیک جنس مدار تا از هر دو گونه بهره ور باشی وز ذو گونه یکی دشمن تو نه باشند.

[…]

و تابستان میل بغلامان و زمستان میل بزنان کن. و مخالف فصل چیزی مخور. و اندرین سخن مختصر کردم که بیش ازین کرا نکند و نستغفر.[16]

As between women and youths, do not confine your inclinations to either sex; thus you may find enjoyment from both kinds without either of the two becoming inimical to you. […]

During the summer let your desires incline towards youths and during the winter towards women.[17] But on this topic it is requisite that one's discourse should be brief, lest it engender appetite.[18]

It is true that 'in humoral theory, the individual body temperament is assumed to be relative to the person's sex, age, season and climate of the place of birth, and disorders can be adjusted by things like diets, exercise, bath and sexual activity,' and therefore, 'intercourse is […] a means for adjusting humoral imbalances; it can also create new imbalances if not used with caution.'[19] However, Kay Kāvūs' statements about 'desires towards youths and women' are indeed surprising, considering the usual scope of mirror for princes literature, which generally disseminates accepted societal norms. On the contrary, the phrasing 'inclinations to either sex (*jins*)' and, more specifically, 'youths' (*ghulāmān*, i.e. male servants), ultimately involves sexual pleasure through intercourse, which touches on the issue of anal intercourse (Arab. *liwāṭ*), strictly forbidden by all four schools of Islamic law.[20] Not to be confused with homosexuality – a concept that did not exist in premodern Islam, as discussed by Khaled El-Rouayheb and others[21] – *liwāṭ* refers to the physical act of anal penetration that goes back to the Qurʾān and the story of the Prophet Lot.[22] The story of Lot, which is mentioned repeatedly in the Qurʾān, itself comes from the Book of Genesis (Gen 19: 1–23) and is about Lot having to stop the people of Sodom from penetrating (in this case, raping) his (male) visitors.[23]

16 Unṣur al-Maʿālī Kaykāvūs 1390sh [2011], 86–7.

17 At this point, Levy's translation leaves out the part 'و مخالف فصل چیزی مخور', 'and refrain from acting against the season.'

18 *A Mirror for Princes* 1951, 77–8.

19 Myrne 2020, 25. For examples of the Arabic tradition on sexual hygiene, see Ullmann 1970, 193–8.

20 I would like to thank my colleague Norbert Oberauer (Münster) for his advice on this subject.

21 El-Rouayheb 2005.

22 For a detailed discussion of the term in Arabic literature, see Schmitt 2001–2002. In contrast to *liwāṭ*, the Arabic legal term *zinā* refers to coitus or at least insertion of the penis (at least the glans) into a vagina forbidden to the penetrator (in a broader sense also the anus). See Schmitt 2001–2002, 58; Tolino 2014.

23 In the Islamic tradition, this type of attempted penetration was called *ʿamal qawm Lūṭ*.

To be sure, the expression of sexual desire between men was not uncommon in pre-modern Islamic times, as is evident in countless examples of (un)ambiguous poetry.[24] Kay Kāvūs himself alludes to this in Chapter 14, 'On Romantic Passion,' where he recounts his own grandfather Shams al-Maʿālī Abū l-Ḥasan Qābūs sending away one of his male servants after 'such-and-such an incident occurred' (*imrūz ḥāl chunīn-u chunīn raft*), and wishing that the youth in question 'remain at home until his beard is grown.'[25] Nevertheless, though explicitly mentioned neither in the Qurʾān nor in authentic hadiths, anal intercourse was punishable by Islamic law. For the topic discussed here, the standpoint of the Ḥanafī school of law as the prevailing one among Turkish Muslims in Anatolia is more important than those of the Mālikīs, Shāfiʿīs, and Ḥanbalīs. Khaled El-Rouayheb and Serena Tolino, in discussing the different treatments for *liwāṭ* among all four main schools of law, come to the conclusion that broadly speaking, whereas for Mālikīs, Ḥanbalīs, and Shāfiʿīs, the culprit – that is, the one who had anal intercourse with someone, which was testified by at least several witnesses – would be brought to death, Ḥanafīs allowed a lighter punishment (Arab. *taʿzīr*) to be applied, which could for instance mean a whipping, imprisonment, or a fine.[26] In any case, for the reasons mentioned, for a mirror for princes such as the *Qābūsnāma*, the statements made in Chapter 15 are quite unusual. In the following, I will shed light on the question of how the translators of the various Turkish versions of the text dealt with this issue and whether or not they applied changes to the original.

3. Chapter 15 in Four Lesser-known *Qābūsnāma* Translations into Turkish

One reason for the various translations of Kay Kāvūs' mirror for princes was the status of Persian as a literary language beyond Iran. This enabled its reception at various princely courts in the region from the eleventh century to the end of the early modern period. The translations into Turkish were part of the *translatio imperii* process of the Turkish principalities in Anatolia, which sought to make the traditions of Arabic and Persian scholarship and literature available for their own purposes.[27] According to current research, the *Qābūsnāma* was translated or adapted six times from Persian into Anatolian Turkish, excluding further translations into Eastern Turkish (Chaghatay or Türki), which cannot be dealt with here.[28] These are five translations into Turkish, all of which can be attributed to the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, as

24 Bauer 2014 provides a discussion on apologetic beard epigrams and various other forms of homoerotic poetry.

25 Unṣur al-Maʿālī Kaykāvūs 1390sh [2011], 83–4; *A Mirror for Princes* 1951, 73–4. For the treatment of passionate love (*ʿishq*) and the desire for sexual pleasure in Prophetic medicine, see Perho 1995, 134–8.

26 El-Rouayheb 2005, 118–45; Tolino 2014.

27 See the contribution by Andrew Peacock in this Special Issue.

28 A (rather descriptive) overview of the translations into Anatolian Turkish can be found in Doğan 2012 and Yazar 2010, 877–82. For two translations of the work into Chaghatay Turkish, see Aydın 2018 and Tekin 2001, 14, note 24.

well as the adaptation of one of these translations to the level of Ottoman Turkish in use around 1700. The best-known versions of these are the translation by Mercümek Aḥmed b. İlyās for Sultan Murād II from 835/1432 and its adaptation by Naẓmīzāde for the Ottoman governor of Baghdad Ḥasan Paşa in 1117/1705. In this section, the focus will be on four lesser-known translations, each based on at least one manuscript and all differing textually from one another.[29] In the next section, I will focus on the more famous translation of Mercümek Aḥmed b. İlyās and Naẓmīzāde's adaptation of it.

The earliest translation of the *Qābūsnāma* into Turkish is found in a single manuscript, MS T 12, which belongs to the collection of the German-Jewish Ottomanist Eleazar Birnbaum (1929–2019) in Toronto, who analysed and described it in detail in several publications.[30] It is now available to researchers in a facsimile edition annotated by Birnbaum and in a Latin-Turkish transcription of Aysel Güneş' master's thesis and can therefore be considered textually catalogued.[31] Birnbaum dates MS T 12, whose exact date of origin must remain unclear due to the missing beginning and end (today it comprises 153 of *ca*. 180 folios), to the period between 1370 and 1386 on the basis of codicological details such as the watermarks on the paper.[32] He dates the text itself to the first half or middle of the fourteenth century, that is, several decades before the copy was made, as indicated by the archaisms in vocabulary, linguistic style, and orthography.[33] The first Turkish translation thus dates to the post-Seljuk and post-Mongol periods, when Persian literature was widespread at various princely courts in Anatolia, and local ruling elites in places such as Kırşehir or Aydın actively promoted the transmission, composition, and translation of Arabic and Persian works. As the copy is incomplete, there is no information about the translator and his patron, which could have been recorded in the preface or colophon. Furthermore, in the absence of studies on the manuscript tradition of the Persian *Qābūsnāma*, it is not possible to determine the exact manuscript as the source of the translation. However, Birnbaum noted greater textual similarities between MS T 12 and the edition of the Persian text by Saʿīd Nafisi, which is based on a copy dated 750/1350, than with that

29 See the textual comparison of four versions of Chapter 10 on food etiquette in Birnbaum 1981, 15–25. In the following, as in Birnbaum, a (seventh) version called *Murādnāme* is omitted because of its textual differences. The title of the work refers to the sultan as the addressee. The author or translator of this verse adaptation of the *Qābūsnāma* with 51 instead of 44 chapters and almost 10,000 verses was Bedr-i Dilşād, who wrote it in 831/1427. Bedr-i Dilşād took the liberty of inserting a total of nine chapters that were not in the original and omitting Chapter 43, 'Agriculture and craftmanship.' As he provides no information about his activity as a translator and nowhere in the work does he indicate that his version is based on the *Qābūsnāma*, it cannot be used further in the context of the present study.

30 See Birnbaum 1977; Birnbaum 1981; Birnbaum 2015, 320–2, no. 158.

31 Birnbaum 1981, 111–264; Güneş 2001, 1–79.

32 Birnbaum 1981, 9–11.

33 *ibid*., 25–30.

of Reuben Levy, which can be attributed to textual changes in the corpus of Persian manuscripts.

Textual comparisons have also revealed some differences in content between the Turkish text in MS T 12 and the original Persian version (according to Nafisi's edition).[34] The anonymous translator left the chapter structure with a total of 44 individual chapters untouched, but shortened or added to individual sections, changed existing details or omitted them, and replaced Persian poetry with verses from the Qurʾān or hadith. According to Birnbaum, the changes to sections that the translator found religiously or ethically inappropriate and – in particular – sexually reprehensible, indicate a *medrese* education coupled with a strong religious conviction. Due to the differences in content, Birnbaum understands the version as an 'adaptation' and not as a translation.[35] This is especially true of the statements concerning women and youths in Chapter 15, where the original Persian sentence 'do not confine your inclinations to either sex' is translated into Turkish as 'women and boys are not the same thing' (*ʿavretile oğlan ikisi bir degüldür*).[36] Consequently, the advice given by Kay Kāvūs about the right season (summer) to 'let your desires incline towards youths' is changed to something entirely different: 'in that season do not go to the steam baths' (*ol mevsimde ılıṣuya varma*).[37] As Birnbaum also observes, the translator has severe problems with gender-ambiguous parts of the Persian texts, which he changes according to his rather conservative (mainstream) mindset, for example the ambiguous *maʿshūq*, which may be applied to males and females, to the femine form *maʿşūḳa* in Chapter 14 on 'Loving.'[38] Elsewhere in the text, he explicitly describes superstitious, unorthodox practices such as relying on horoscopes 'unsunnite' (*Sünnīler meẕhebi degüldür*).[39] To summarise, one can clearly observe the translator's attempt to adapt problematic parts of the text in the translation of the (normative) mirror for princes to the intended readership, which was to be located at a court in western Anatolia.

Another early but independent translation into Turkish, which is also only preserved in a single manuscript, is MS BL, Or. 11281, which according to Birnbaum dates from the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century; the copy itself was probably made in the sixteenth or seventeenth century.[40] The text of this further Turkish version of the *Qābūsnāma* has now been made available in full in transcription as part of the two master's theses by Oğuz Samuk and Fatih D. Akyüz.[41] There are no references to the translator or copyist either in the preface to the translation or at the end of the copy. However, a complete translation, partly abridged, was made: MS BL, Or. 11281 contains 90 folios with only 41 of 44 chapters; curiously, Chapters 33–35 of the

34 Birnbaum 1981, 30–6.
35 *ibid.*
36 *ibid.*, 32, note 48 and f. 59r.
37 *ibid.*, 32, note 49 and f. 60r.
38 *ibid.*, 32.
39 *ibid.*, 33, note 52.
40 *ibid.*, 5, note 4. The manuscript is listed in Meredith-Owens 1959, 23.
41 Akyüz 2015; Samuk 2012.

Persian original on medicine, astrology, and geometry as well as poetics are not part of the version. Because it belongs to the Old Anatolian language level, the translation can be dated to the end of the beylik period around 1400.[42]

It is interesting to note that in the second Turkish version of Chapter 15, the first part is translated quite literally, in contrast with the first. The initial statement on considering both sexes is rendered as 'do not limit your desires to women or men [male servants] only; appreciate both sexes to avoid making an enemy of either' (*ve ḳuldan ʿavratdan meylüŋ bir cinse olmasun tā iki girūhdan daḫı ḥaẓ bulasın ve ikisinden biri saŋa düşman olmaya*).[43] Here, the full sentence is translated and not at all adapted to mainstream Islamic beliefs. By contrast, the second statement on desire for boys in summer is given in a different fashion. At this point, the translator steps in and adapts the original advice in the following way, leaving out the youths entirely and concentrating on women instead: 'In summer, one has to avoid women, whereas in autumn, they become somewhat agreeable; in winter, they are entirely pleasing. In this context, one should be brief' (*yazın ʿavratdan ṣaḳınmaḳ gerek ve güz günlerinde daḫı ḫoşdur biraz; ḳış güninde daḫı ḫoşdur ve bu bābda söz ḳıṣa olmaḳ ḫoşdur*).[44] Clearly, the translator is unsure of how to deal with this section, which is why he remains vague towards the end of the chapter.

A third translation into Turkish entitled *Tercüme-i Ḳābūsnāme* (*Translation of the Qābūsnāma*) was made by the translator Şeyḫoġlu Ṣadruddīn Muṣṭafā, who, in addition to the *Qābūsnāma*, translated another mirror for princes called *Marz(ū)bānnāma* (Turk. *Merzübānnāme*) from Persian. Şeyḫoġlu was born around 741/1340–1341 as the son of a family of notables and was active under the Germiyanid prince Süleymān Şāh b. Meḥmed (r. *ca*. 764–789/1363–1387) as a poet and finance minister (*defterdār*), as well as head of the chancellery (*nişāncı*). He died between 803/1400 and 817/1414 in the service of the Ottomans, whom he had joined after the temporary absorption of the Germiyanid principality into the Ottoman sphere of power in 792/1390. Şeyḫoġlu produced the *Tercüme-i Ḳābūsnāme* for Süleymān Şāh between 782–789 and 1380–1387, that is, after his completion of the translation of the thematically similar guidebook *Marzūbānnāma* for the same patron. His authorship is considered certain today.[45]

According to Şeyḫoġlu's preface, the *Tercüme-i Ḳābūsnāme* was a commissioned work and fits in with other translations in the Germiyanid beylik (Turk. *Germiyanoğulları*), the centre of which was Kütahya and which existed from around 699/1299 to 831/1428 until it finally became part of the Ottoman territory after several decades of alternating annexation and renewed independence.[46] Şeyḫoġlu's patron Süleymān Şāh and his son Yaʿḳūb II Çelebi (r. 789–792, 805–814 and 816–832/1387–1390, 1402–1411 and 1413–1428) also patronised the poets Aḥmedī (d. 815/1413), Aḥmed-i Dāʿī

42 Akyüz 2015, 5.
43 Samuk 2012, 101 and f. 37r.
44 *ibid*., 102 and f. 37r.
45 On Şeyḫoġlu and his works, see Korkmaz 1966; Korkmaz 1971; Yavuz 2010.
46 For the chequered history of the Germiyanid beylik, see Mélikoff 1965; Varlık 1996.

(d. after 824/1421), the author of the allegorical *meṣnevī* work *Çengnāme*, and Şeyḫī (d. after 832/1429), who wrote the *meṣnevī* work *Ḫüsrev ü Şīrīn* comprising almost 7,000 verses. As in other places in Anatolia, translations into Turkish played a decisive role in the literary life of the Germiyanid court in Kütahya, serving 'educational goals and the cultural needs of the new Turkish elites, which had grown out of the mixed and multilingual culture of the Seljuks.'[47]

As with the previously discussed translations, only a single manuscript copy kept in Cairo has survived for Seyḫoġlu's translation into Turkish, which forms the basis of Enfel Doğan's study-cum-edition, *Keykâvūs bin İskender bin Veşmgîr: Ḳâbûs-nâme*.[48] This comprises a total of 107 folios of 15 lines, fully vocalised Neskhi with all 44 chapters and is dated 1 (*ghurra-yi*) Dhū l-Qaʿda 863/30 August 1459. According to the colophon, it was written by a copyist named Bābā ʿAlī b. Sāliḥ b. Ḳuṭbüddīn b. ʿAbdullāh b. Tevekkül b. Ḥüseyin b. Maḥmūd el-Merendī, whose nisba refers to the city of Marand in north-west Iran. Both Zeynep Korkmaz and Doğan assume that the sultan of Egypt and Syria, al-Malik al-Ashraf İnal (r. 857–865/1453–1461), was the patron, but they confuse him (probably due to the similar name) with the actual owner (or patron?) of the manuscript, al-Sayfī İnal al-Ashrafī, who is mentioned in an elaborately designed rosette (*shamsa*) as *kāfil al-salṭana al-sharīfa bi-Ḥalab*, that is, governor of the sultan in Aleppo.[49] For reasons of space, the manuscript cannot be analysed here in detail, but we can conclude that the copy of Şeyḫoġlu's translation of the *Qābūsnāma* made for Emir al-Sayfī İnal al-Ashrafī in Aleppo is an example of the reception of Persian texts of wisdom translated into Old Anatolian Turkish in the Mamluk Empire, which has attracted increasing attention in recent research.[50]

In contrast with the two previously mentioned translations of the *Qābūsnāma*, this was a translation of the Persian original made at court and for the Germiyanid ruler Süleymān Şāh, as stated by Şeyḫoġlu in his preface, following the instruction: 'The *Qābūsnāma* is to be translated so that its good name may be remembered in the world, may God the Exalted be content in this. It is not necessary to translate it word for word; rather, it should be put into beautiful words'.[51] As far as the chapter in question is concerned, this imperative is carried out in a rather strict manner: Chapter 15 seems to have been considerably shortened, and the only reference to the 'inclinations to either sex' is the rather vacuous sentence that the translator keeps the advice on how to seek sexual pleasure brief, as 'there is no one who would not know' (*ve bu bābda*

47 Kirchner 1996, 144–5.

48 Doğan 2016. The copy is MS Cairo, Dār al-kutub, Funūn mutanawwiʿa, Turkī 22m. In addition to an introduction and linguistic analysis, Doğan's monograph contains a Latin-Turkish transcription of the entire text and a facsimile of the Cairo manuscript.

49 Doğan 2016, 37; Korkmaz 1971, 264.

50 Apart from Barbara Flemming's contributions to the topic some decades ago (Flemming 1969; Flemming 1976; Flemming 1977), more recent studies include D'hulster 2010; D'hulster 2021; Mauder 2020; Mauder 2021.

51 For the Turkish text, see Doğan 2016, 83–4 and ff. 1v–2r.

söz muḫtaṣar ḳıldum zīrā anı bilmez kimse yoḳdur).[52] This is another strategy for conveying controversial statements to the intended readership: instead of shortening or at least partially adapting the original as in the first two Turkish *Qābūsnāma* versions, Şeyḫoğlu prefers to omit the two short sections altogether and keep the chapter short. The fact that he fails to omit the chapter itself is due primarily to the need to maintain the structure of the work with its 44 chapters.

The translator of the fourth existing translation of the *Qābūsnāma* into Turkish, also known by its original title (*Tercüme-i Ḳābūsnāme*), is Aḳḳādıoğlu, who translated the work for Ḥamza Bey, the vizier of Süleymān Çelebi (c. 779–813/1377–1411), one of the sons of the Ottoman sultan Bāyezīd I called Yıldırım ('the Thunderbolt,' r. 791–804/1389–1402).[53] The period of origin is assumed by scholars to be the so-called interregnum, that is, the period between the capture and death of Sultan Bāyezīd after his defeat by the Central Asian conqueror Timur Lang (Tamerlane, r. 771–807/1370–1405) in 804/1402 and the death of Prince Süleymān in 813/1411. Having lost the Battle of Ankara, the latter was able to escape to the western territories of the empire divided between him and his (half-)brothers and establish himself as his father's successor in Edirne through alliance treaties with Constantinople and the Italian city-states of Genoa and Venice. His reign came to an end when the conflict with his half-brothers Meḥmed I (r. 816–824/1413–1421) and Mūsā (d. 816/1413) developed to his disadvantage and Süleymān was finally overpowered and executed by the latter.

Regarding Aḳḳādıoğlu's translation, available information on the author and patron can only be found in the preface of the *Tercüme-i Ḳābūsnāme* itself, which has been preserved in three copies.[54] The one used for the present study, MS İBBAK, MCY 187 with 137 folios of 15–18 lines each in unvocalised *taʿlīq*, was completed on Saturday, 1 Ramaḍān 1079/2 February 1669 by a copyist named Ḥasan b. ʿAlī. It contains several notes that contain no indication of the further readership of the copy. According to the preface to the translation, Aḳḳādıoğlu made it for Ḥamza Bey, who is described as the 'eminent emir and wise vizier' (*emīr-i kebīr ve vezīr-i ḫaṭīr*) of the 'ruler of Islam' (*sulṭān-i islām ḫüdāvendigār*), Emir Süleymān b. Bāyezīd Khan. Further, Aḳḳādıoğlu states that his patron Ḥamza Bey was explicitly interested in the *Qābūsnāma* and had commissioned Aḳḳādıoğlu via a follower, the 'revered emir' (*emīr-i mükerrem*) Ḥasan Bey. Aḳḳādıoğlu describes his work as a translator as an act of obedience to his patron: 'I, this lowly man called Aḳḳādıoğlu, have translated it from Persian into Turkish' (*ben żaʿīf-i naḥīf Aḳḳādıoğlı anı fārs[ī]den türkïye tercüme ḳıldım*).[55] As a result, he characterises his translation as 'beauty of expression and comprehensible language'

52 Doğan 2016, 121 and f. 35v.

53 Aḳḳādıoğlu's translation is discussed in Doğan 2011. On the patron, see Bosworth 1997.

54 Doğan 2011, 10. The three manuscript copies include MS İBBAK, MCY 187 (copied in 1079/1669), MS Ankara, Millî, 06 Hk 303 (undated, presumably the oldest of the three copies), and MS British Library, Or. 7320 (according to Birnbaum copied in the seventeenth century).

55 MS İBBAK, MCY 187, f. 3v.

(*dile getürdüm şunı ki ḥüsn-i ʿibāret idi rūşen şöyle ki[m] ġāyetdi*), an assessment not shared within modern scholarship.[56]

The version remains relatively close to the Persian original and leaves several verses untranslated, which shows that Persian was read and understood at the court of Süleymān Çelebi. Aḳḳādıoġlu's close adherence to the original is also evident in the chapter in question, when he uses a different way of dealing with the sections about both sexes – a simple adoption. As far as 'inclinations to either sex' are concerned, he follows Kay Kāvūs in stating: 'do not limit your tastes to either women or boys' (*amā ʿavratlardan ve oġlanlardan yendek bir cinsi meyl eyleme*), thus advising 'to take pleasure in both sexes' (*iki cinsinden daḥı ḥaẓ alasın*).[57] Nevertheless, the translator does not follow Kay Kāvūs' judgement that summer is the right time to enjoy the company of young men and winter the right time to enjoy the company of women: strangely enough, Aḳḳādıoġlu reverses the order here, stating: 'your inclination should be towards women in summer and youths in winter in order to stay in good health' (*ve meyliñ yazını* [*sic*] *ʿavratlara ve kışın oġlanlara olsun tā ten-dürüst olasın*).[58] Whether he has simply made a mistake when translating the section or bases his judgment on a different tradition of humoral theory and its relation to the right time for the right activity remains unclear. In any case, the four different approaches to the sections of the fifteenth chapter discussed so far show how the freedom with which translators dealt with texts for different patrons around 1400.

On a more general note, the fact that Aḳḳādıoġlu's patron Ḥamza Bey was a vizier of Süleymān Çelebi fits into the image of the Ottoman princely or ruling court as a centre of patronage in Anatolia (including Edirne in Thrace) that remained after the defeat at Ankara. This also included Süleymān Çelebi's patronage relationship with the abovementioned important poet Tāceddīn İbrāhīm b. Ḫıżır called Aḥmedī (c. 735–815/1334–1413), who dedicated both his well-known *meṣnevī* works *Cemşīd ü Ḫurşīd* and *İskendernāme*, as well as the medical didactic work *Tervīḥu'l- ervāḥ*, to the prince. The overarching courtly patronage of western Anatolia manifests itself in the person of Aḥmedī, which indirectly connects Aḳḳādıoġlu's translation of the *Qābūsnāma* with that of Şeyḫoġlu: Aḥmedī was a contemporary of Şeyḫoġlu and, like the latter, was also active at the court of the Germiyanid prince Süleymān Şāh in Kütahya, who was the addressee of the *İskendernāme* on the life of Alexander the Great, which Aḥmedī finally dedicated to Süleymān Çelebi a few years later, after the death of the Germiyanid prince and his departure to the Ottoman court. Süleymān Çelebi is to be understood as an outstanding patron of his time, who supported, among others, the poet Niyāzī and Aḥmedī's brother Ḥamzavī, as well as the scholar Ḥācı Paşa; the poet Dede Süleymān Çelebi (d. 825/1422) also wrote his work *Vesīletü'n-necāt* at the court of the Ottoman prince.

56 *ibid*., f. 4r; Birnbaum 1981, 25–6, describes Aḳḳādıoġlu's version in a comparison of the literary quality of all five Old Anatolian translations (including Mercümek b. Aḥmed's, see below) as 'rather less talented.'

57 MS İBBAK, MCY 187, ff. 50v–51r.

58 *ibid*.

4. Mercümek Aḥmed's and Naẓmīzāde's 'Ottoman' *Qābūsnāma*

Of the translations of the *Qābūsnāma* into Old Anatolian Turkish, no version was as successful as that of Mercümek Aḥmed b. İlyās from the year 835/1432. No fewer than two dozen copies have survived. Mercümek Aḥmed's translation, like those mentioned above, bears only the name *Tercüme-i Ḳābūsnāme* and thus has no title of its own. Regarding the identity of the translator (*mercimek* means *ervum lens*, the 'lentil,' in Persian and Turkish), no further details of his life can be found in later biographical dictionaries.[59] However, Mercümek Aḥmed must have been active at the sultan's court, as suggested by the depiction of the opening scene; it can also be assumed from the level of language and the interspersed verses and proverbs that he had both a religious and secular education. He was therefore employed as a translator on the direct instructions of the Ottoman sultan Murād II (r. 824–848/1421–1444 and 850–855/1446–1451), who was known as a patron of the (re)translation of older works.[60] In the preface, regarding the sultan's commission to translate the *Qābūsnāma* into comprehensible Turkish, Mercümek Aḥmed expresses himself quite confidently:

> In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate, the Lord of the Worlds, peace and salvation be upon the best of His creation, Muḥammad, and his family! As for the matter at hand: It should be known that the weakest of creation before God and mankind, (I) Mercümek Aḥmed b. İlyās – may God protect him! – paid his respects to the Padishah Sultan Murād b. Meḥmed b. Bāyezīd b. Orḫān one day on the way to Filibe – may God preserve his rule and make his dynasty last forever! – and asked him about the book he was reading [lit. holding in his hands]. In response, the sultan said with mild favour: 'It is the *Qābūsnāma*, a pleasant book containing many useful teachings, but written in Persian. Someone has translated it into Turkish, but since he has not written it clearly and comprehensibly, we cannot enjoy its narrations. If only someone would translate it clearly so that its meaning would fill our hearts with joy!' Then I, the lowly one, asked to translate it, whereupon the Padishah, with a pure mind, did not say, 'How can you?' but ordered, 'Translate it right away!' So I, the lowly one, tried, although my strength was hardly sufficient, but translated the whole *Qābūsnāma* into Turkish in the shadow of his favour. I have not omitted a word, but, as far as my mind permitted, I have added explanations to some problematic words so that readers may benefit from them and remember this unworthy person [...].[61]

Compared to the translations of Şeyḫoġlu for the Germiyanid Süleymān Şāh and Aḳḳādıoġlu for the vizier of Prince Süleymān Çelebi, Ḥamza Bey, where at best the name of the person who commissioned the translation is known, in the case of Mercümek Aḥmed, the reader is presented not only with the concrete occasion for the

59 On the person, see Birnbaum 1991.

60 Darling 2014, 62–3. See also the list of works produced under Murād II in Azamat 1996, 129–93.

61 Keykavus and Mercimek Ahmet 1944, 3–4; MS Ankara, Millî, 06 Mil Yz A 366, ff. 1v–2r.

renewed translation of the *Qābūsnāma*, but also with a complete scene. In it, Sultan Murād II appears in the then Ottoman Filibe (today's Plovdiv in Bulgaria) as a person directly interested in the work – in keeping with the intended readership of mirrors for princes and books of advice, the ruler himself is the protagonist here – and holds in his hands a copy either of the Persian text or an early translation into Turkish, which he finds linguistically inadequate: It was not 'written in clear and plain language' (*rūşen degül açuḳ söylememiş*), so that 'the sweetness of the stories' (*ḥikāyetinden ḥalāvet*) could not be savoured. This is unfortunate because the *Qābūsnāma* is 'a pleasant book containing many useful teachings' (*ḫoş kitābdur içinde çoḳ fāyideler naṣīḥatlar vardur*), which is why someone should translate it into Turkish in a 'comprehensible' way (*açuḳ*) so that its insights 'may bring happiness to the hearts' (*mefhūmından gönüller ḥaẓ alsa*). When Mercümek Aḥmed then suggests undertaking this task, Sultan Murād II agrees. As stated in the colophon copied in later manuscript copies, the translator completed the sultan's commission in the first months of the year 835/1432. Whether the text that the sultan deems insufficient, as described in the narrative, was one of the four versions discussed – Mercümek Aḥmed only names 'someone' (*bir kişi*) as the translator – is possible, but must remain unclear due to a lack of further information.

Mercümek Aḥmed complied with the sultan's request for a comprehensible translation, as described in the opening scene, by, in his own words, translating the Persian text of the *Qābūsnāma* in its entirety, adding explanations to the more difficult words to make it easier for readers to understand. The key terms he uses to describe the translation process are the generic verbs *tercüme/terceme etmek* (to translate) and *şerḥ etmek* (to explain, to comment), where the former can be understood as adhering to the wording and the latter as providing the text with useful and necessary additions. According to Birnbaum, the translator's linguistic ability and greater literary skill can be seen, among other things, in the skilful translation of Persian verses from the source text and the insertion of Turkish proverbs and his own verses, which made the text more accessible to the intended readership in the courtly environment of Sultan Murād II. For the illumination of possible changes regarding Chapter 15, 'On Taking One's Pleasure,' I used Orhan Şaik Gökyay's (standard) edition of the text and checked it against the earliest dated manuscript copy of the work, MS Ankara, Millî, 06 Mil Yz A 366, which was copied in Jerusalem in 941/1535. Therein, Mercümek Aḥmed deals with the topic as follows:

> *Ve andan gerü ḫizmetkarların ki iki tayifedir yani kuldan ve karavaştan. Meylin yendek birine olmasın ta ki ikisinden birisi sana düşman olmaya ve hem ikisini beraber gözlersen hem kulun ve hem karavaşın ḫizmetinden iki türlü safa kesbedesin.*[62]
>
> And from then on, your servants will be of two kinds, namely, male and female servants. Your inclination should not favour one over the other to avoid making an enemy of either. If you pay attention to both of them equally, you will derive two kinds of pleasure from the service of both the male and the female servants.

62 *ibid*., 134 (here and in note 63, the text follows the edition).

Ve yaz olıcak avretlere meylet ta ki dürüst olasın. Avret teni sovuktur, kışın iki sovuk bir yere gelse teni kurudur vesselam.[63]

And in the summer, have a liking for women, so that you may be healthy. The body of a woman is cool, and if two cold ones come together in winter, it dries out the body, that's it!

As can be seen from the passages quoted above, Mercümek Aḥmed's version remains faithful to the original in the first part and deviates from it in the second. Instead of specifying the season for dealing with male servants, the reader is only given the advice to stay with women in summer instead of winter, which is similar to the advice found in Aḳḳādıoġlu's version. In contrast, the half-sentence that refers to winter as the time to spend with male youths has somehow disappeared and also marks the end of the chapter. His approach to the subject is similar to that in the second Turkish version discussed above and found in MS BL, Or. 11281.

Regarding the reception of Mercümek Aḥmed's text, the numerically greater distribution of Mercümek Aḥmed's version than the other four translations was certainly due to the patronage of Sultan Murād II, which gave the fifth verifiable Turkish translation of the mirror of princes from Ṭabaristān a higher degree of popularity and a larger readership at the Ottoman court and in the provinces than was the case with the previous versions for the beylik of the Germiyanids or the vizier of the defeated Ottoman prince Süleymān Çelebi (Aḳḳādıoġlu had produced his translation for the latter only 20–30 years earlier). In particular, the fact that Aḳḳādıoġlu worked in the circle of a later defeated prince of the same dynasty, who met his end during the fratricidal struggle of the first years of the fifteenth century, may have had a negative effect on the latter. It remains speculation whether his translation would have been as 'successful' as Mercümek Aḥmed's if he had instead dedicated it to the victor and later Sultan Meḥmed I. However, the larger number of copies of the translation of 835/1432 is certainly the reason why only the Mercümek Aḥmed translation appeared in print until the emergence of scholarly study-cum-editions of the earlier versions much later.

The last Turkish version of the *Qābūsnāma* to be discussed is closely related to that of Mercümek Aḥmed and goes back to Murtażā called Naẓmīzāde, who was born in Baghdad as the son of the poet Seyyid ʿAlī (d. 1066/1656–1657), and who bore the nom de plume Naẓmī (which gave the son his name). Neither the year of his birth nor the year of his death is clearly known; the year of his death is given as 1133/1720, 1134/1721 and 1136/1723 in biographical dictionaries.[64] Throughout his life, Naẓmīzāde worked in the Ottoman financial administration, where he ultimately held the office of assistant to the diary keeper (*rūznāmeci*) in the treasury. In addition to his professional activities, he was active as an author and translator in more than one field of knowledge and was well known for his historical and biographical works. With regard to his origins, upbringing, and works, Mark Kirchner sketches him as

63 Keykavus and Mercimek Ahmet 1944, 135.

64 On the person, see Babinger 1927, 250–3; Özcan 2006 (both provide references to biographical dictionaries). A list of works is provided in Cırcır 2019, 7–13.

an 'established Ottoman state scholar, whose only flaw can be seen in his provincial sphere of activity.'[65] Based on his known translations and his own works, Naẓmīzāde can be regarded as a translator who (as far as is known) had decades of experience in translating Arabic works into Turkish, unlike the other individuals discussed in this study. As such, he could be considered as a 'professional' translator.

However, Naẓmīzāde's fame as an author was not limited to the Ottoman provincial capital of Baghdad in Iraq, which is made clear by the fact that, in contrast with other authors and translators, some of his writings were printed in the capital early on. His Turkish version of Ibn ʿArabshāh's biography of Timur, *Tārīḫ-i Tīmūr-ı Gūrkān* (*The History of Timur Gurkan*) and the *Gülşen-i ḫulefā* (*The Rose Garden of the Caliphs*) are among the few works that İbrāhīm Müteferriḳa (d. 1158/1745) published as a printed edition in Istanbul in the early eighteenth century (both works appeared in 1142–1143/1730); they are thus among the earliest works ever printed in Turkish. The fact that Naẓmīzāde was able to count on the patronage of the Baghdad elite, who supported him and explicitly commissioned works from him, was decisive in the composition of his works such as the *Tercüme-i Ḳābūsnāme*, of which he produced a linguistically and stylistically 'updated' version in 1117/1705–1706 for the governor of Baghdad, Eyüplü Ḥasan Paşa (in office 1116–1136/1704–1724). Naẓmīzāde's text has now been fully edited three times in Latin script and is available both in the edition provided by Perihan Ölker as well as in the dissertation-cum-edition by Hilal Cırcır and the two related master's theses by Ramazan T. Özdemir and Hayriye Köktaş, which I checked against MS Kütahya, Vahid Paşa İl Halk Kütüphanesi 1323 (completed in 1154/1741).[66]

Naẓmīzāde's version of the *Qābūsnāma* stands out from the translations discussed so far in that he did not translate the work from the source language, Persian, into Turkish, but instead used Mercümek Aḥmed's Turkish translation of 835/1432 as the basis for a linguistically far-reaching revision. In his own words, Naẓmīzāde's intention was to 'translate' the insights found in the work into a contemporary linguistic level of Turkish, which in Ḥasan Paşa's view was outdated at the time, in order to once again make this useful knowledge accessible to a wide audience.[67] The key words he used for this process are *taṣḥīḥ*, *tenḳīḥ* and *tecdīd*, which translate into English as 'revision' or 'improvement' (*taṣḥīḥ*), 'purification' (*tenḳīḥ*) and 'renewal, reworking' (*tecdīd*). It is no coincidence that the keywords 'renewal' (*ıṣlāḥ*) and the 'contemporary use of language' (*zamāne luġat ve istiʿmāline göre*) used at the end of the translation ultimately contributed to the 'new form' (*ṣūret-i cedīd*).[68]

65 Kirchner 1996, 145.

66 Cırcır 2019; Köktaş 2018; Ölker 2018; Özdemir 2018. All four studies are based on MS Kütahya, Vahid Paşa İl Halk Kütüphanesi 1323.

67 MS Kütahya, Vahid Paşa İl Halk Kütüphanesi 1323, f. 3r: *Ṣarf-ı Türkī-yi ḳadīm olmaġla bu zamānede müstaʿmel ve meşhūr olan Türkīye cünbān olmayub dil-pesend ve fāyidemend olmamaġla tekrār taṣḥīḥ ve tenḳīḥ olunub zamān-ı ehl-i zamāniye muṭābıḳ ve fehm-i ḫāṣ ve ʿāmme-i muvāfıḳ Türki ile tecdīd olunur* (see the edition by Ölker 2018, 38; 521).

68 MS Kütahya, Vahid Paşa İl Halk Kütüphanesi 1323, f. 151v.

This does not mean that Naẓmīzāde merely exchanged older Turkish words and terms for Arabic and Persian or contemporary Turkish ones, as was shown by Mark Kirchner and Perihan Ölker. A comparison of the two versions shows that Naẓmīzāde replaced Arabic and Persian words with other words of the respective language on a lexical level, and also replaced Turkish words with Arabic-Persian or Turkish words.[69] Examples of this are his intra-Turkish exchange of *ulu* to *büyük* (big, important) or *dilemek* to *istemek* (want, wish), the partially completed intra-Arabic change from *murād* to *maqṣūd* (wish) and the replacement of Persian *kardan* to Turkish *etmek* (do, make) or, in the direction from Persian to Arabic, from *tan* to *beden* (from *badan*, body). When replacing Turkish words with Arabic-Persian terms, it is particularly striking that Naẓmīzāde frequently replaced the word in the original Persian text with a term common in contemporary Turkish. For example, he replaced the Turkish *yüz* with Arabic *vech* (from *wajh*; in the original Persian *rū*, meaning 'face'), *düş* with Arabic *rüyā* (from *ruʾyā*; in the original Persian *khvāb*, meaning 'dream'), or *oğlan* with Arabic *ṣabī* (in the original Persian *kūdak*, meaning 'child'). This approach reinforces the suspicion that Naẓmīzāde did not use the Persian version for his adaptation, whereby Kirchner notes that the preference for words that entered Ottoman from Arabic, in addition to their more frequent use in Ottoman prose texts, may also have had something to do with his competence in Arabic as an educated man of letters in Baghdad.[70]

On a syntactic and stylistic level, Naẓmīzāde provided his readers with a tighter and more elegant text than Mercümek Aḥmed's version was capable of at the time; interestingly for Naẓmīzāde, this includes the sometimes more literal translation of Arabic proverbs than is found in his predecessor's work. According to Kirchner's analysis, Naẓmīzāde's interventions pursued the overall purpose of (1) improving the information content through additions, (2) replacing outdated linguistic structures, and (3) embellishing the original text through the use of an elevated prose style – recourse to the Persian original was not absolutely necessary in this process. The fact that the later version did not completely change the original is due to the fact that Naẓmīzāde proceeded in his work according to the principle of necessity and not according to the exhaustion of existing linguistic and stylistic possibilities.[71]

Regarding the fifteenth chapter, the differences in content between the versions of Mercümek Aḥmed and Naẓmīzāde are remarkable. In contrast to his fifteenth-century original, Naẓmīzāde drops any notion of male gender and turns the passage in question into a statement that refers exclusively to women: 'If you have a large number of wives and concubines, your attraction to one of them should not be excessive (at the expense of the others), lest the others become an enemy to you, and if you treat them equally, you will enjoy the service of all of them' (*ve nisā ve cāriyeleriŋ müteʿaddid olursa meyliŋ birine ziyād olmasın ta kim biri saŋa düşman olmasın hem anları beraber gözlersen ḫiẓmetde cümleniŋ ṣafāsın idersin*).[72] The fact that Naẓmīzāde refers to women

69 The following examples are part of the studies by Kirchner 1996 and Ölker 2016.
70 Kirchner 1996, 153.
71 Kirchner 1996, 145.
72 Ölker 2018, 86 and f. 55v.

only becomes clear from the words *nisā* and *cāriye*, used for wives and concubines, while Mercümek Aḥmed uses *ḳul* and *ḳaravaş*, that is, terms clearly used for male *and* female slaves. Based on this observation, it is not surprising that Naẓmīzāde completely omits the second section on pleasure in the company of either sex and fails to mention the right season for the company of either women or men. What can be seen here can perhaps be described as the end of the process of dealing with problematic parts of the *Qābūsnāma* in its Turkish form. After centuries of disquiet about how to deal with the fact that Kay Kāvūs apparently practised the custom of deriving (sexual) pleasure from the company of male servants, and clearly advised his son Gīlānshāh to follow him in this way, Naẓmīzāde's approach of 'feminising' the statement by retaining its order (the one ... and the other) by using two different words for women separated by their legal status seems like a skilful adaptation for his intended readership in Ottoman Baghdad around 1700.

5. Conclusion: Limited Pleasure in the Turkish Versions of Chapter 15

As discussed in Chapter 15 of the *Qābūsnāma*, 'On Taking One's Pleasure,' Kay Kāvūs' Persian work of wisdom and advice literature contains a highly personal narrative, posing challenges for translators and likely raising questions for readers who remain unknown. While the chapter structure of the six Turkish versions of the *Qābūsnāma* remained stable, translators made cuts, additions, and adaptations to individual sections as they saw fit. The first anonymous translator contradicts the author's statement on 'inclinations to either sex,' emphasising that 'women and boys are not the same thing,' while the third translator, Şeyḫoġlu, chooses to omit these statements altogether. In contrast, the second anonymous translator, along with the fourth and fifth translators, Aḳḳādıoġlu and Mercümek Aḥmed, demonstrate fewer issues with Kay Kāvūs and generally adhere to his claims. Considering that all translators presumably worked for Sunni Muslim courts in Western Anatolia, one wonders about the factors influencing their assessments of the text, aside from their personal preferences, which must always be considered. Naẓmīzāde's adaptation of Mercümek Aḥmed's translation in the sixth version offers an elegant solution to the problematic statement found in the original text, as Naẓmīzāde replaces (male) 'youths' with (female) 'concubines,' while retaining the sentence structure.

In summary, the sections discussed shed light on translation practices before the modern period, where *tercüme* involved correction, adaptation, and rearrangement of certain parts according to the tastes and moral convictions of the translator and intended readership. This process mirrors discussions about problematic terms found in older works today. Nevertheless, the translations of the *Qābūsnāma* in Anatolia illustrate an enduring interest in the text as normative Islamic advice literature, transcending centuries and individual court contexts.

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