Navigating the *Qabusnamah*'s Journey from Istanbul to Weimar: Ottoman-European Philosophical Exchange in the Age of Enlightenment

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Qabusnamah'nin Istanbul'dan Weimar'a Yolculuğu: Aydınlanma Çağı'nda Osmanlı ve Avrupa arasındaki Felsefi Alışverişler

Öz ■ Bu makale 11. yüzyılda İran'da kaleme alınmış olan *Qabusnamah*'nin İstanbul'dan ilk önce Berlin'e, daha sonra Weimar'a yolculuğunu belgelemektedir. Prusya maslahatgüzarı ve Aydınlanma cağı düşünürlerinden Heinrich Frierich von Diez'in (1751-1817) hareketlerini takip etmektedir. 1790 yılında elyazmasını İstanbul'dan Berlin'e götüren Diez, daha sonra Fransız İhtilali ve Napolyon Savaşlarının akabinde mutlaki düzenin yeniden canlanmasını savunmak amacıyla, eseri tercüme edip yayınlamıştır. Diez'in çevirisi Goethe'yi etkilemiş ve Alman yazar eserdeki bir çok ögeyi *Doğu-Batı Divanı*'nda kullanmıştır. Metnin akışının incelenmesi, modern Alman devletinin oluşumunu tamamladığı kritik önemi haiz bir dönemde artan Osmanlı – Avrupa diplomatik karşılaşmalarının sonucu olarak Osmanlı felsefesinin Alman edebiyatı üzerindeki etkisini göstermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Diplomasi, Tasavvuf (Sufilik), Entelektüel Alışveriş, Prusya-Osmanlı İlişkileri

Frage nicht durch welche Pforte
Du in Gottes Stadt gekommen,
Sondern bleib' am stillen Orte
Wo du einmal Platz genommen.

Schaue dann umher nach Weisen,
Und nach Mächt'gen, die befehlen;
Jene werden unterweisen,
Diese That und Kräfte stählen.

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Wenn du nützlich und gelassen
So dem Staate treu geblieben,
Wisse! niemand wird dich hassen
Und dich werden viele lieben.

Und der Fürst erkennt die Treue,
Sie erhält die That lebendig;
Dann bewährt sich auch das Neue
Nächst dem Alten erst beständig.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, 1815
(Goethe 1888: 77)

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832) penned these lines on May 19, 1815 to celebrate fifty years of service of two Weimar court officials (Mommsen 1995: 124). Written towards the end of the Napoleonic Wars, the poem also praises the absolutist order. Goethe drew inspiration for these verses from the *Qabusnamah*, an eleventh-century Persian advice manual, translated into German by Heinrich Friedrich von Diez (1751-1817), a former Prussian *Geschäftsträger* to the Ottoman Empire (Mommsen 1995: 125).[1] The poem was the result of Goethe's larger interest in classical Persian poetry, which culminated in a collection of poems first published as the *West-östlicher Divan* in 1819. An expanded edition, which included the above poem, was published in 1827.

Goethe's engagement with Persian poetry in the *West-östlicher Divan* was the result of closer diplomatic relations between the Ottoman Empire and the German-speaking world in the period between the French Revolution and end of the Napoleonic Wars (1789-1815). This article primarily focuses on the movement of one influential text for Goethe's *West-östlicher Divan*, the *Qabusnamah*, by tracing its circulation from the Ottoman Empire to the German-speaking world. Persian poetry flourished in Istanbul in the eighteenth century, and German-speaking diplomats in Istanbul collected manuscripts and imported them to Prussia and the Habsburg Empire. Some of them, including the *Qabusnamah*, were translated into German. Prussian envoy Heinrich Friedrich von Diez published translations

1 Note: Arabic, Persian, and Turkish words have been transliterated in accordance with the standards of the International Journal of Middle East Studies. Original German orthography has been preserved in publication titles. All dates are AD unless otherwise noted.

of numerous Ottoman works from his manuscript collection, including the *Qabusnamah,* which he translated as *Buch des Kabus oder Lehren des persischen Königs Kjekjawus für seinen Sohn Ghilan Schach* (1811) and a two-volume collection of translations entitled *Denkwürdigkeiten von Asien in Künsten und Wissenschaften, Sitten, Gebräuchen und Alterthümern, Religion und Regierungsverfassung* (1811, 1815), which were highly influential for Goethe's *Divan*. Austrian diplomat Joseph von Hammer (1774-1856, later Hammer-Purgstall) similarly collected manuscripts during his mission and translated them into German. Goethe also drew extensively from Hammer's translation of the *Divan-i Hafiz,* published as *Der Diwan von Mohammed Schemsed-din Hafis* in 1812 (see Shamel 2013). The main sources for Goethe's *Divan* originated in Istanbul and were translated into German by former diplomats to the Ottoman Empire.

Diez used his translations, including the *Buch des Kabus,* to outline his support of the monarchy in the turbulent era following the French Revolution, which had called the absolutist order into question. The style of the *Buch des Kabus* would have been familiar to European readers, since it resembled "mirrors for princes," (*Fürstenspiegel*) a genre of literature tracing back to ancient Greece which advised princes on proper behavior and theories of statecraft, and they would have recognized Diez's translation as an argument for an enlightened ruler in the wake of the political turmoil. Diez's views were, however, controversial; for example, his work was described in a January 1813 review in the *Jenaische Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung* as building "a temple to poor taste or boredom." Diez sought to appropriate Ottoman political theory for absolutist renewal, which was a controversial position in an era where the absolutist order was beginning to break down.

Goethe's *West-östlicher Divan* is one example of how German-speaking authors drew upon texts from the Ottoman Empire in an era of deepening political engagement between the Ottoman Empire and the German-speaking world. The *Qabusnamah*'s journey shows how German thinkers appropriated Ottoman philosophy to articulate their visions of the future in a critical historic juncture between absolutism and modern systems of governance. Thinkers such as Goethe and Diez were especially interested in moral philosophy, and the *Qabusnamah* was a cornerstone of Ottoman ethical ideals. This particular instance demonstrates the wider areas of inquiry the study of European-Ottoman diplomacy can offer cultural and intellectual history by highlighting the significance of Ottoman texts in German literature.

The Qabusnamah from Istanbul to Berlin

When Heinrich Diez arrived in Istanbul on July 16, 1784, he fit with what historians Margaret Jacob and Jonathan Israel have described as an Enlightenment "radical" (Jacob 1981; Israel 2001). A lawyer by training, he studied at the Friedrichs-Universität in Halle (now Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg), a center of German Enlightenment thought, and envisioned a new society freed from the influence of the Church through state-supported religious toleration and freedom of the press. He worked for the Prussian judiciary in Magdeburg for eleven years before his appointment to Istanbul and published numerous treatises on his views during that time (Diez 2010).

Diez was particularly engaged with moral philosophy and published several works outlining his ideas. His first publication, *Vortheile geheimer Gesellschaften für die Welt* (1772), argued that secret societies "educate" (*bilden*) young men through the cultivation of morality (Diez 2010: 16). Diez wrote the work while he was still a student in Halle, where he was also a member of a student group with ties to freemasonry called the Amicisten Order *(Amicistenorden)*. Freemason lodges provided a space for new forms of sociability, which encouraged Enlightenment thought, placing particular importance on the cultivation of morality through fraternal association (see Jacob 1981). Diez's second publication, *Beobachtungen über der sittlichen Natur des Menschen* (1773), argued that the development of morality is humankind's highest goal, stating "Moral virtue is the only real and true virtue that the Everknowing God begs from us" (Diez 2010: 79). The cultivation of morality outside of Church doctrine was a central question for Enlightenment thinkers such as Diez, and freemasonry offered ideas and institutions for a new moral system.

Diez engaged in major debates of the German Enlightenment before going to Istanbul. His 1781 work, *Apologie zur Duldung und Preßfreiheit* has been described by Jonathan Israel as "the first major plea for comprehensive freedom of thought and press in central Europe" (Israel 2011: 188). Diez also supported religious toleration and participated in the debate about Christian von Dohm's 1781 work, *Ueber die bürgerliche Verbesserung der Juden* through his own response, *Ueber Juden* (1783), which argued for equal rights for Judaism as a religion (Hess 2002: 35). The next year, Dohm facilitated Diez's diplomatic appointment as the Prussian envoy to the Ottoman court. Diez's interest in moral philosophy and participation in the German Enlightenment set the stage for his engagement with Ottoman philosophy in Istanbul.

Diez continued his philosophical interests in Istanbul by learning Ottoman Turkish (the court language consisting of Turkish, Persian and Arabic words in Arabic script) and collecting manuscripts. Diez's language abilities were rare for European envoys, who often relied on translators. Knowing the local language allowed Diez to interact with Ottoman intellectuals without an intermediary, thus increasing his access to Ottoman literary, religious and philosophical knowledge. He collected manuscripts, including the *Qabusnamah*, a work central to Ottoman thought, which he later translated upon his return to Prussia. Learning Turkish enabled Diez to continue his philosophical inquiry in Istanbul and import Ottoman knowledge to Prussia to answer Enlightenment questions.

Istanbul in Diez's time was the second largest city in Europe after London and had a population of approximately 570,000 persons (Chandler & Fox 1974: 377). European embassies lined the Grande Rue de Péra (now İstiklal Caddesi) in Pera (Beyoğlu), a two-mile stretch in Galata. By the late eighteenth century, a thriving European community inhabited Pera, including European churches, schools and hospitals to support the growing European diplomatic staff, their families, and other resident Europeans including merchants and artisans (Çelik 1993). Pera was also a center of European society and amusement with balls, operas and other gatherings connected to the embassies.

The main diplomatic question in late-eighteenth century Istanbul was the future of the Ottoman Empire, or what would later become known as the "Eastern Question." European diplomats in Pera sought to advance the interests of European states vis-à-vis what they viewed as the weakening of Ottoman power and the rise of Russia under Catherine the Great (1729-96). Through Russia's "Greek project," Catherine allied with Habsburg Emperor Joseph II (1741-1790) in a plan to gain Ottoman territory and divide it between the two empires (Aksan 2007: 137). Habsburg chancellor (1711-1794) also saw an alliance with Russia as a way to counterbalance Prussia (Roider 1982: 171). Great Britain allied with Prussia, since Russian expansion threatened British trade routes to India. Pera in the late eighteenth century was a site for negotiating these imperial rivalries among European states concerning the future of the Ottoman Empire.

Although German imperialism is usually viewed as a late nineteenth-century phenomenon, Prussia's diplomatic engagement with the Ottoman Empire in Diez's time could be considered part of this system of European imperial rivalry (Illich 2007). As the Prussian "Envoy Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary

of His Prussian Majesty at the Court of Constantinople," Diez's mission was to advance Prussian interests regarding the Eastern Question. When the Ottoman state declared war on Russia in August 1787, Prussian officials viewed alliance with the Ottoman Empire as an opportunity to advance Prussia's interests within the diplomatic competition of European imperial rivalries over the future of Ottoman territory and gain territory in Poland, a commercial treaty for Mediterranean trade, and increased prestige through an alliance with the Ottoman state (Margoliouth 1917: 48). Diez's negotiations in Istanbul, which resulted in an alliance treaty in 1790, were part of Prussia's ambition to become a major European power.

European ambassadors collected material culture from the Ottoman Empire within this system of European imperial rivalry. Marie-Gabriel-Florent-Auguste de Choiseul-Gouffier 1752-1817, the French ambassador during Diez's stay in Istanbul, collected Greek antiquities, some of which are now in the Louvre. The British ambassador from 1776-1794, Sir Robert Ainslie (ca. 1730-1812), amassed a large collection of coins in Istanbul as well as antiquities and drawings. His replacement, Lord Elgin (1766-1841), famously removed what became known as the "Elgin Marbles" from the Parthenon during his mission as British ambassador to the Ottoman Empire from 1799-1803. Habsburg diplomat Joseph von Hammer also collected manuscripts while in diplomatic service in the Ottoman Empire (see Finkel 2015: 43–46). Diez's collection corresponded to this larger pattern of European collecting in Istanbul, although, like Hammer, his interest was mainly in Ottoman manuscripts rather than ancient Greek artifacts.

Diez used his diplomatic mission to collect hundreds of Ottoman manuscripts in Istanbul. His diplomatic position enabled manuscript collection in two ways. First, Diez made a small fortune in Istanbul by selling Prussian passports and licenses of privilege (*berats*), which funded his manuscript collection (Gronau 1824: 113). Second, Diez used political connections to acquire new items. For example, Diez purchased manuscripts from the Ottoman palace when the harem relocated upon the succession of Sultan Selim III (1761-1808) in 1789, and the transaction was brokered through a palace servant who was aware of Diez's collecting activities (Roxburgh 1995: 113). By the time Diez set sail on the Dutch ship *Esther en Dirk* from Istanbul on May 23, 1790, he had collected hundreds of Ottoman manuscripts, including the *Qabusnamah*, which he later considered to be one of the most important pieces in his collection.

Diez's Translation: From Qabusnamah to Buch des Kabus

Diez devoted the rest of his life to translating selections from his manuscript collection into German after his arrival in Prussia in September 1790. His contemporaries reported that he often studied late into the night, seldom extinguishing the candle in his study before 2 AM (Ersch & Gruber 1834: 168). One of the first translations Diez completed was of the *Qabusnamah*, a piece of advice literature written in 1082 AD by the Ziyarid ruler Kaykavus (ca. 1021-1087) to his son Gilan Shah, and translated into Turkish numerous times. Diez published it in 1811 as the *Buch des Kabus*.

Diez's translation of the *Qabusnamah* into German was an attempt to gain new perspectives on moral philosophy from the Islamic world. The *Qabusnamah* offered practical ethical guidance on all aspects of human life, and Diez referred to it as the "entire methodology of oriental (*morgenländische*) morals" (Diez 1811a: 191). Each of the forty-four chapters gave practical recommendations on a specific topic, including religious belief (Chapters 1-3), everyday activities such as eating and sleeping (Chapters 10 and 17), family matters such as selecting a wife and raising children (Chapters 26 and 27) and the art of governance (Chapters 37-42). Throughout the work, Kaykavus referred to the Qur'an, hadith, Arabic proverbs, and folk tales to support his advice. The final chapter, Chapter 44, focused exclusively on virtue, and Diez described it as "the sum of all previous chapters," since it outlined the ethical ideals of chivalry (Persian: *javanmardi,* Arabic: *futuwwa*). Taken together, the book can be read as an advice manual on the cultivation of virtue through proper behavior.

The *Qabusnamah* had a long-lasting and significant impact on the Ottoman court, and Turkish authors translated the *Qabusnamah* from Persian into Turkish numerous times. As a work of advice literature, or "mirrors for princes," the *Qabusnamah* offered guidelines to the ruler and upper classes. It was one of a group of oft-cited pieces of Ottoman advice literature that also included the *Siyasatnamah* of Seljuk vizier Nizam al-Mulk (1090) and the *Kutadgu Bilig* by Yusuf Has Hacib (1069) (Aksan 1993: 53). The earliest known existing manuscript of the original Persian *Qabusnamah*, dated 1227, is in the Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi in Istanbul (de Bruijn 2010). Turkish authors translated the *Qabusnamah* into Turkish six times in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and the most well-known and widely-circulating example of these translations was by Mercimek Ahmed b. İlyas in 1432 for Sultan Murad II (1421-51) (Doğan 2012). Mercimek's translation was

revised by Nazmizade Murtaza in 1705 to update the language to reflect the Persianized literary style of the early eighteenth century (Birnbaum 2012). Through these translations from Persian to Turkish over three centuries, the *Qabusnamah* had a long-lasting and significant influence on Ottoman literature.

Diez's *Buch des Kabus* was the first full translation of the *Qabusnamah* into a European language.[2] The 867-page work includes an extensive introduction and footnotes.[3] Diez drew upon three Ottoman manuscripts from his collection to produce the German translation. He did not consult the original Persian text and instead exclusively relied on the Ottoman translations (Diez 1811a: 178). Diez originally worked from the Nazmizade translation (MS Diez A Quart 60 in his collection), which he had acquired during his residence in Istanbul (Diez 1811a: 180).[4] According to Diez, this manuscript had many mistakes, presumably as the result of being copied many times (Diez 1811a: 181). This caused Diez to doubt the accuracy of his translation (Diez 1811a: 181), so he drew upon two additional Ottoman manuscripts, which he had possibly acquired after his return to Prussia (Diez 1811a: 181). The first was MS Diez A Oct 60, which was a more faithful hand-written copy, and the second was a copy of the Mercimek translation (MS Diez A Folio 2). These three Ottoman translations of the *Qabusnamah* in Diez's manuscript collection served as the basis for his own translation of the work into German.

Originally, Diez translated manuscripts from his collection, including the *Qabusnamah*, for his own personal study and did not intend to publish them. For example, he wrote about the *Qabusnamah*: "very few books have benefited me as much as this work" (Diez 1811a: 267). Diez completed the translation in 1802, yet he did not publish it until 1811, when he made the decision to publish his other works as well. That year, Diez published several other translations, including *Über Inhalt und Vortrag, Entstehung und Schicksale des Königlichen Buchs* and a collection of translations entitled *Denkwürdigkeiten von Asien in Künsten und Wissenschaften, Sitten, Gebräuchen und Alterthümern, Religion und Regierungsverfassung* (Volume 1). He described his decision to publish in the introduction to the *Königliches Buch:* "I decided for myself long ago to leave the ripe fruits of my labor until after my death, since completely different motivations other than fame

2 Excerpts of the *Qabusnamah* were available in French (see Galland 1730).

3 A reproduction, without the introduction, was printed in 1999 (see Diez 1999).

4 Diez's manuscript collection, which includes the manuscripts cited above, is now located at the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Orientabteilung.

and fortune motivated my work. However, unexpected times have interfered…" (Diez 1811b: 4-5) The "unexpected times," for Diez, were the destruction in the German-speaking world caused by the Napoleonic Wars. Also concerned with what he viewed as the exclusive rationalism of the Enlightenment, Diez sought to bring moral philosophy back to the forefront of discussions through his translations. Diez did not seek remuneration for his endeavors, as indicated by the title pages of his works, since he published all of his translations at his own expense and donated the proceeds to charity.

Published during the Napoleonic Wars, Diez's *Buch des Kabus* addressed early nineteenth-century discussions of moral philosophy that were tied to the future of German society. Featuring a perspective from the Islamic world, it provided practical advice to cultivate human virtue, which was a central issue of concern in a post-Enlightenment world increasingly shaped by secular philosophical values. This was further underscored with its 1823 adaptation into a children's book as *Das Buch des Kabus: Aus dem Persischen für die Jugend bearbeitet nebst einem Anhange morgenländischer Geschichten.*

The Qabusnamah in Weimar: Goethe and the Buch des Kabus

Goethe checked the *Buch des Kabus,* along with *Denkwürdigkeiten von Asien*, out of the Weimar Library on January 8, 1815 and began reading it three days later (Mommsen 1995: 78). He read it throughout the first half of 1815 before returning it on May 22, 1815 (Mommsen 1995: 78). A week later, Goethe bought six copies of the *Buch des Kabus* from a Weimar bookseller and gave some of them to friends (Mommsen 1995: 83). He described his experience reading the *Buch des Kabus*: "At the time when I was carefully researching Oriental poetry, the *Buch of Kabus* came into my hands. It seemed so important that I devoted much time to it and invited many friends to have a look at it" (Goethe 2010: 273). The *Buch des Kabus*, along with Diez's other works, had a significant influence on the *Divan.*

Written between 1814 and 1827, the *West-östlicher Divan* is a collection of over two hundred poems inspired by classical Persian poetry. The poems are divided into twelve "books" bearing names from themes and figures in Persian poetry such as "Hafis Nameh" (Book of Hafiz), "Ushk Nameh" (Book of Love) and "Suleika Nameh" (Book of Zuleika). An attachment, the *Noten und Abhandlungen,* explains background information for the poems, including an extensive discussion of the historical context of the *Qabusnamah* and Diez's translation. Goethe's

Divan draws from the symbolism of classical Persian poetry, such as wine and the cupbearer, and its catalog of Sufi metaphors. In doing so, Goethe's *Divan* in a way continues the tradition of Persian (and Ottoman) poetry by using a shared set of symbols and naming the book a "divan," which was common for similar collections of poems in the Islamic world.

Goethe began corresponding with Diez four months after reading the *Buch des Kabus*. A mutual acquaintance, philologist Ferdinand Hand (1786-1851), wrote Diez that Goethe was reading Diez's work (Mommsen 1995: 79). In response, Diez sent two copies of his recently published translation, *Vom Tulpen- und Narcissen-Bau in der Türkey*, one for Hand and one for Goethe. Hand delivered the booklet to Goethe on April 21, 1815 (Mommsen 1995: 79). That same day, Goethe composed a poem praising Diez and the *Buch des Kabus* (Mommsen 1995: 80):

> Wie man mit Vorsicht auf der Erde wandelt,
> Es sey bergauf, es sey hinab vom Thron,
> Und wie man Menschen, wie man Pferde handelt
> Das alles lehrt der König seinen Sohn.
> Wir wissens' nun, durch dich der uns beschenkte;
> Jetzt fügest du der Tulpe Flor daran,
> Und wenn mich nicht der goldne Rahm beschränkte,
> Wo endete was du für uns gethan!
> (Mommsen 1995: 291)

The poem expressed Goethe's gratitude for Diez's translations. It highlighted the *Buch des Kabus* as a piece of advice literature encompassing all aspects of life ("Wie man Menschen, wie man Pferde handelt / Das alles lehrt der König seinen Sohn"). The "king" who teaches his "son," refers to Kaykavus, the original author of the *Qabusnamah*, and his son, Gilan Shah. Goethe praised Diez for making the text accessible by translating it into German ("Wir wissens' nun, durch dich der uns beschenkte"). He also thanked Diez for the book, *Vom Tulpen- und Narcissen-Bau in der Türkey* ("Jetzt fügest du der Tulpe Flor daran"). Goethe had this poem framed in a golden frame and sent it to Diez one month later, which he referred to as the "goldne Rahm" (Mommsen 1995: 80) in the poem. While Hand originally

put the two men in touch, Goethe used this poem to praise Diez and initiate a direct correspondence.

Read on another level, the poem also implicitly acknowledges the contribution of the *Buch des Kabus* as a work of moral philosophy. "Wie man mit Vorsicht auf der Erde wandelt / Es sey bergauf, es sey hinab vom Thron" refers to the "inward track," or the soul's journey towards the Divine (represented by the throne), a concept from Sufism (*tasawwuf*) found in Ottoman and Persian poetry (see Şeyh Galib 2005: xiii), which requires moral cultivation for advancement. Mirrors for princes such as the *Qabusnamah* can be considered works of *ādāb* (etiquette) literature which offer formulas for cultivating virtue through recommended actions (Marlow 2009). For Goethe, the main question was if these recommendations were specific to eleventh-century Ziyarid culture or could be applied to the early nineteenth-century German-speaking world. He wrote in a letter to Diez, "it is only a question of the situations interesting us merely historically and analogously or if it really continues to our time" (Goethe 1901: 339-340). Like Diez, Goethe's interest in the *Qabusnamah* rested on its potential usage as an advice manual for the cultivation of morality in the early nineteenth-century German-speaking world.

Goethe's poem to Diez began a correspondence of ten letters between the two authors (see Almond 2010: 87). Goethe often posed questions to Diez about Ottoman literature (which included Persian, Turkish, and Arabic works), which Diez promptly answered. In the *Noten und Abhandlungen*, Goethe described his correspondence with Diez: "Because I was working in a planned, methodical way, I needed accessible information that would have required time and energy to locate in books. So when in doubt I consulted him and always got an adequate, practical reply to any question" (Goethe 2010: 274). In his first letter to Diez, written May 20, 1815, Goethe asked Diez if he could send his questions to him, writing, "I ask for permission to call upon your protection and grace in a kingdom which I visit only as a stranger, and where you rule absolutely" (Goethe 1901: 339-340). Goethe's metaphor of the stranger in a kingdom ruled by Diez reflects his earlier imagery of absolutist rule.

Goethe drew upon Diez's *Buch des Kabus* for eighteen poems in the *Divan* (Mommsen 1995: 342–6). Many of these are in the *Divan*'s "Buch der Sprüche," and were written by Goethe in the spring of 1815 when he was engaged with the *Buch des Kabus* (Mommsen 1995: 110). For example, Katharina Mommsen shows

how the poem "Betrübt euch nicht ihr guten Seelen!" is related to a passage in the *Buch des Kabus* (Mommsen 1995: 111). The poem in Goethe's *West-östlicher Divan* reads:

> Betrübt euch nicht ihr guten Seelen!
> Denn wer nicht fehlt weiß wohl wenn andre fehlen;
> Allein wer fehlt der ist erst recht daran,
> Er weiß nun deutlich wie sie wohl gethan.
> (Mommsen 1995: 111)

This poem draws from the following passage in the *Buch des Kabus* (Mommsen 1995: 111):

> Man fragte jemanden: hast du denn gar keine Fehler? Er antwortete ich habe keine! Man fragte weiter: ey! hast du den nie an andern Leuten Fehler gesehn? und da er sagte, sehr viel! so sprach man zu ihm: also hat es denn keinen Menschen gegeben, der mehr Fehler hätte als du? (Diez 1811a: 474-5)

Goethe's reworking of the *Buch des Kabus* into poetry for the *Divan* is one example of the transmission of knowledge from the Ottoman Empire to the German-speaking world. This particular passage relates to recognizing one's own faults in those of others, an ancient Greek concept also found in *tasawwuf,* as a means to moral development.

Diez's concept of moral philosophy rested on the idea of self-knowledge ("*Selbsterkenntniss")*. In the introduction to the *Buch des Kabus,* Diez described self-knowledge as "the only science that is never understood by most people and only by a few in advanced age" (Diez 1811a: 6). In the introduction to another translation published the same year, the *Königliches Buch,* Diez described self-knowledge as the "key to wisdom and the path that leads to God and all good things" (Diez 1811b: 18). Diez's concept of moral philosophy was rooted in the necessity to know oneself in order to reach knowledge of the Divine, a concept from ancient Greek thought which also informs Sufism. In the first chapter of the *Buch des Kabus,* Kaykavus advised his son to not attempt to know the Divine, which is unknowable, but to instead "first know yourself and take lessons from your situation, since he who knows himself also knows God […] you are the Known and He is the Knower, that is, you are the Creation and He is the Creator.

So try to focus your contemplation on your createdness rather than His act of creation" (Diez 1811: 285-6). In a page-long footnote, Diez described this concept as "one of the greatest truths that can be spoken and also the basic truth of real Christianity" (Diez 1811a: 286). Diez believed that the essence of Christianity was knowledge of oneself, a notion shared by ancient Greek and Islamic thought, and the *Qabusnamah* offered keys to this self-knowledge.

The *Qabusnamah* offers an example of how a text, tied to historical developments, can make its way from Persia to the Ottoman court and subsequently to the German-speaking world. It began as a work of advice literature in Persia and then, through multiple translations into Turkish, became a significant work in Ottoman literature. Its subsequent transmission from Istanbul to Berlin was the product of diplomatic engagement between the Ottoman Empire and the German-speaking world, and Prussian diplomat Heinrich von Diez used his diplomatic position in Istanbul to collect valuable Ottoman manuscripts, including the *Qabusnamah*. He translated it into German as the result of an interest in moral philosophy stemming from an Enlightenment search for new ethical systems outside of Christian institutions. Diez's translation influenced the literary production of a new text, Goethe's *West-östlicher Divan,* which also drew upon other texts imported from the Ottoman Empire and translated by German-speaking diplomats.[5] In this sense, perhaps one legacy of the Ottoman Empire's rich intellectual heritage is to be found - surprisingly - in German literature.

5 Goethe's *Divan* also later became a source of literary inspiration in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries as authors such as Muhammad Iqbal (*Payam-i-Mashriq*, 1923) and Martin Bidney (included in his translation of *West-East Divan*, 2010) wrote poems inspired by Goethe's *Divan*.

Navigating the Qabusnamah's Journey from Istanbul to Weimar: Ottoman-European Philosophical Exchange in the Age of Enlightenment

Abstract ■ This article documents the journey of the *Qabusnamah*, originally written in eleventh-century Persia, from Istanbul to Berlin and, subsequently, Weimar. It follows the movements of Enlightenment thinker and Prussian chargé d'affaires in the Ottoman Empire, Heinrich Friedrich von Diez (1751-1817), who imported the manuscript from Istanbul to Berlin in 1790. He later translated and published it to advocate for a renewal of the absolutist order following the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars. His translation inspired the German writer Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832), who included several elements of it in his *West-östlicher Divan*. A study of the movement of this text demonstrates the influence of Ottoman philosophy on German literature as the result of broadened Ottoman-European diplomatic encounter.

Keywords: Diplomacy, Tasawwuf (Sufism), Knowledge Exchange, Prussian-Ottoman Relations

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