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The Versified Turkic Translation of al-Wāqidī's *Futūḥ al-Shām* by Ibn Ajā

Introduction: Turkic in the Biographical Trajectory of Ibn Ajā

Little is known about the biography of Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Maḥmūd ibn Khalīl al-Ḥalabī al-Ḥanafī, commonly known as Ibn Ajā (820–81/1417 or 1418–76), beyond his biography as given in al-Sakhāwī's *Al-Ḍawʾ al-lāmiʿ* and the implicit information that can be gathered from his extant writings. Nonetheless, his scholarly background within Arabic-Islamic traditions can be reconstructed with a good degree of confidence. Although al-Sakhāwī explicitly states that Ibn Ajā's current name *(shuhrah)* was derived from a nickname *(laqab)* of his father,[1] his scholarly trajectory was decisively influenced by his maternal uncle Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Abī Bakr ibn Ṣāliḥ al-Marʿashī.[2] As indicated by Ibn Ajā himself in his account of a diplomatic mission to Aqquyunlu Tabriz in 1471, this maternal uncle must have enjoyed a certain degree of supra-regional visibility, as the father of the future *qāḍī al-ʿaskar* of *uzun* Ḥasan Aqquyunlu had studied at the hands of Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Marʿashī at the same time as Ibn Ajā.[3]

[1] Al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Ḍawʾ al-lāmiʿ li-ahl al-qarn al-tāsiʿ,* ed. ʿAbd al-Laṭīf Ḥasan ʿAbd al-Raḥmān (Beirut, 2003), 10:40. For ease of reference, the "open" bundle of textual traditions circulating under the title of the *Futūḥ al-Shām* and ascribing themselves to al-Wāqidī is referred to as the *Futūḥ al-Shām* of al-Wāqidī in the present article. Turkic text written in Arabic letters is transliterated in an Arabicizing mode wherever possible. Armenian is transliterated according to the system proposed by the *Revue des études arméniennes*. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are by the present author. As a matter of personal taste, I omit the artificial honorific Şanlı from the name of the town of Urfa.

[2] See for him al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʾ,* 1:211. The titles studied by Ibn Ajā in Aleppo according to al-Sakhāwī's shorthand are identified by Muṣṭafá Jawād, "Tawārīkh Miṣrīyah aghfāl wa-taʿrīf bi-muʾallifīhā," *Majallat al-Majmaʿ al-ʿIlmī al-ʿIrāqī* 2 (1951): 113. According to Jawād, al-Sakhāwī's indication of "al-Qudūrī" refers to the famous *Mukhtaṣar* or concise introduction to Hanafi jurisprudence (al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʾ,* 10:40); al-Sakhāwī's "al-Manār" indicates the *Manār al-anwār* of Abū al-Barakāt al-Nasafī, which similarly introduces students to Hanafi normative traditions (al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʾ,* 10:40), and "al-Ḍawʾ" refers to the commentary on the *Alfīyah* of Ibn Muʿṭī by Ibn al-Wardī the Elder that is known as the *Ḍawʾ al-durar* [or *Ḍawʾ al-durrah*?] (al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʾ,* 10:41).

[3] Ibn Ajā, "Tārīkh," MS Topkapı Ahmet III 3057, fol. 150v, equivalent to Dār al-Kutub MS 3663 *tārīkh,* 81; cf. the editions Ibn Ajā, *Tārīkh,* ed. ʿAbd al-Qādir Aḥmad Ṭulaymāt (Cairo, 1973), 116–

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Apart from his maternal uncle, al-Sakhāwī suggests that Ibn Ajā had studied at the hands of other prominent Arabic-Islamic scholars active in Aleppo during the first half of the fifteenth century, such as Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Salāmah[4] and Burhān al-Dīn Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad ibn Khalīl al-Ḥalabī.[5] According to al-Sakhāwī, Ibn Ajā also met Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī,[6] to whom Ibn Ajā referred as his *shaykh* and master *(shaykhī wa-ustādhī)* in his travelogue.[7] Although it has recently been suggested that this meeting occurred in 845,[8] it more likely took place during Ibn Ḥajar's participation in the campaign of the Mamluk sultan Barsbāy in 836 against the town of Āmid/Diyarbakır.[9] The final teacher mentioned by al-Sakhāwī is Ibn al-Dayrī, whom Ibn Ajā met after coming to Cairo with his uncle in 843.[10]

17, and Muḥammad Aḥmad Dahmān, *Al-ʿIrāk bayn al-Mamālīk wa-al-ʿUthmānīyīn al-Atrāk: Maʿa riḥlat al-Amīr Yashbak min Mahdī al-Dawādār* (Damascus, 1986), 123–24.

[4] Al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʾ,* 10:41. For the biography of Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Salāmah, see ibid., 7:172.

[5] Ibid., 10:41. For Burhān al-Dīn al-Ḥalabī, see ibid., 1:113–19.

[6] Ibid., 10:41

[7] Ibn Ajā, "Tārīkh," MS Topkapı, fol. 148v, equivalent to MS Dār al-Kutub, 77; ed. Ṭulaymāt, 114; Dahmān, *ʿIrāk,* 122.

[8] See Georg Leube, "Erudition at the Intersection of Genres? The Asymmetrical Deployment of Genres in Ibn Ajā's *Taʾrīkh al-amīr Yashbak,*" in *Selected Studies on Genre in Middle Eastern Literatures: From Epics to Novels,* ed. Hülya Çelik and Petr Kučera (Cambridge, 2023), 175–76. This dating turns on the interpretation of Ā-M-D in al-Sakhāwī's phrase indicating that the meeting between Ibn Ajā and Ibn Ḥajar took place "in the year of Ā-M-D" *(laqiya shaykhanā fī sanat Ā-M-D fa-akhadha ʿanhu)* as the *abjadī* notation of the year 845.

[9] Al-Sakhāwī elsewhere prominently mentions Ibn Ḥajar's interactions with the scholarly configurations of Aleppo in the context of Ibn Ḥajar's participation in the campaign of the Mamluk sultan Barsbāy in 836 against the town of Āmid/Diyarbakır. See, for instance, the interactions between Ibn Ḥajar and Ibn Ajā's teacher Burhān al-Dīn al-Ḥalabī, al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʾ,* 1:117. Ibn Ḥajar's participation in this campaign is not mentioned explicitly beyond the suggestion in his biographical entry that he traveled widely; see ibid., 2:33–36. For Barsbāy's campaign of 836, see the eyewitness account of Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Nujūm al-zāhirah fī mulūk Miṣr wa-al-Qāhirah,* ed. Fahīm Muḥammad Shaltūt, Jamāl Muḥammad Muḥriz, Ibrāhīm ʿAlī Ṭarkhān, et al. (Cairo, 2008), 15:7–34; the propagandistic mention in Emmanuel Piloti, *Traité d'Emmanuel Piloti sur le Passage en Terre Sainte (1420),* ed. Pierre-Herman Dopp (Louvain, 1958), 211–12; and the discussion of its impact on the Aqquyunlu realms in John E. Woods, *The Aqquyunlu: Clan, Confederation, Empire, Revised and Expanded Edition* (Salt Lake City, 1999), 50 and 52. As al-Sakhāwī goes on to indicate that Ibn Ajā subsequently moved to Cairo with his uncle in 843 (al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʾ,* 10:41), his shorthand phrasing of "in the year of Ā-M-D" must refer to Ibn Ḥajar's participation in the campaign of 836. The interpretation of Ā-M-D as the *abjadī* form of 845 suggested by Leube, "Erudition," 175–76, should accordingly be rejected.

[10] Al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʾ,* 10:41. See for Ibn al-Dayrī his biography as given by al-Sakhāwī in ibid., 3:221–25. As suggested by Ḥājjī Khalīfah, *Kashf al-ẓunūn,* ed. Gustav Flügel (Beirut, n.d., photo-

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Although Ibn Ajā's career so far appears to have followed the standard trajectory of scholars studying with different masters of Arabic-Islamic tradition as recorded by al-Sakhāwī, his biography veers from this template during his subsequent period of traveling from and returning to Cairo *(taradduduhū ilá al-Qāhirah).*[11] In this period, al-Sakhāwī records that Ibn Ajā attached himself to the company of *(iṣṭaḥaba bi-)* Muḥammad al-Kamāl Abū al-Faḍl, known as the preacher of Mecca *(khaṭīb Makkah),*[12] and the amir Uzbak al-Ẓāhirī.[13] Within Ibn Ajā's biographical trajectory as narrated by al-Sakhāwī, Muḥammad al-Kamāl represents something of a crossroads, as he had been a *Wunderkind* coming from a privileged family of scholars and Meccan aristocrats who went on to become a public figure in Cairo after his first visit in 844.[14] As recorded by al-Sakhāwī, Uzbak al-Ẓāhirī was one of the Mamluk amirs who patronized Muḥammad al-Kamāl during his sojourn in Cairo.[15] Accordingly, it appears that Ibn Ajā's employment as the imam of Uzbak[16] constitutes the starting point of his subsequent career as something of a courtly scholar, who drew on his scholarly background in the service of Uzbak and later of the famous general and statesman Yashbak *min* Mahdī.[17]

Although al-Sakhāwī suggests that Ibn Ajā was employed as an envoy to Tabriz, Anatolia *(al-Rūm),* and other courts by Yashbak and by the Mamluk sultan—presumably Qāytbāy[18]—we only have detailed information on his negotiations with the Dulghādirid/Dhū al-Qādirid ruler *shāh* Suwār[19] and his diplomatic mission to Tabriz, as both were described in detail by Ibn Ajā in his *Tārīkh al-Amīr Yashbak*. As indicated by Ibn Iyās, Ibn Ajā was sent to the Ottoman court in the company of an Ottoman envoy who had reached Yashbak during the latter's campaign against Aqquyunlu forces in the area of al-Bīrah/Birecik in Dhū al-

mechanical reprint of a reprint Istanbul, 1941), 1:1098, and followed by Jawād, "Tawārīkh," 114, Ibn Ajā also composed a collection of biographies of Hanafi judges in three volumes. I have not seen any manuscript of this text or any reference to it in sources composed during the lifetime of Ibn Ajā.

[11] Al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍaw'*, 10:41.

[12] Ibid. For Muḥammad al-Kamāl see his biography as given in ibid., 9:28–32.

[13] Ibid., 10:41. See his biography in ibid., 2:241–42.

[14] Ibid., 9:29.

[15] Ibid., 9:30.

[16] Ibid., 10:41.

[17] Ibid. The biography of Yashbak *min* Mahdī is found in ibid., 10:250–52.

[18] Ibid., 10:41.

[19] For his biography see ibid., 3:243–44. For Ibn Ajā's involvement in Yashbak's campaign against *shāh* Suwār see Refet Yınanç, *Dulkadir Beyliği* (Ankara, 1989), 70–76.

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Qaʿdah 877/April 1473.[20] Ibn Ajā's return from a second diplomatic mission to *uzun* Ḥasan Aqquyunlu is included among the events narrated by Ibn Iyās in Jumādá I 880/September 1475.[21] As both of these diplomatic missions postdate Ibn Ajā's sojourn at the Aqquyunlu court of Tabriz and his negotiations with *shāh* Suwār in 876/1471, it appears that the events he describes in his *Tārīkh* were seen as a success notwithstanding the reservations indicated by al-Sakhāwī.[22]

In addition to Ibn Ajā's various diplomatic missions, al-Sakhāwī also records other activities in which Ibn Ajā drew on his scholarly background in a courtly setting. Accordingly, he treated everybody well *(khālaqa al-nās bi-al-jamīl)*[23] while serving as the imam of Uzbak, held the office of military judge *(qāḍī al-ʿaskar)* after Najm al-Dīn Isḥāq al-Qaramī,[24] and engaged in intercessions *(qaṣada bi-al-shafāʿāt),* presumably drawing specific persons and cases to the attention of the Mamluk elites.[25] Although al-Sakhāwī suggests that he exaggerated *(bālagha)* in his *Tārīkh,*[26] Ibn Ajā also repeatedly claims to have used his scholarly background during his presence with *shāh* Suwār and at the court of *uzun* Ḥasan to establish himself as a skilled negotiator representing the interests of his Mamluk patrons.[27]

His mastery of Turkic language(s) consistently emerges as a crucial factor in Ibn Ajā's deployment of Arabic-Islamic scholarly traditions in a courtly setting. In marked contrast to the reconstruction of his Arabic-Islamic epistemological

[20] Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ al-zuhūr fī waqāʾiʿ al-duhūr,* ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafá (Cairo, 1982–2008), 3:86.

[21] Ibid., 3:110. This diplomatic mission was most likely part of the reestablishment of diplomatic relations between *uzun* Ḥasan and the Mamluks following the revolt of *ughurlu* Muḥammad ibn *uzun* Ḥasan around Urfa, which had been supported by "the Mamluk *viceroys* of Aleppo and Birecik" (Woods, *Aqquyunlu,* 122). Although it is not entirely clear where Ibn Ajā met *uzun* Ḥasan during this second diplomatic mission, a decree in the name of *uzun* Ḥasan that appears to have been issued at the court in Tabriz *(...ba-dargāh...āmadand wa-ʿarḍ kardand)* on behalf of some Armenian clergymen from Üçkilise/Ējmiacin on 6 Jumādá II 880/7 October 1475 has been preserved at the Matenadaran; see H. D. Pʿapʿazyan, *Matenadarani Parskeren Vaveragrerə I: Hrovartakner* (Erevan, 1956), 252–53. Accordingly, it may be possible that Ibn Ajā again met *uzun* Ḥasan in or around Tabriz during his second diplomatic mission to the Aqquyunlu court.

[22] *Wa-ʿamala safrat suwār wa-fīhā munkar kabīr;* al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʾ,* 10:41.

[23] The phrase references the famous hadith "fear God in everything, erase evil with a subsequent good, and treat everybody with good morals *(wa-khāliq al-nās bi-khuluq ḥasan).*" See al-Suyūṭī, *Al-Jāmiʿ al-ṣaghīr fī aḥādīth al-bashīr al-nadhīr* (Beirut, 2008), 1:23. Its currency is indicated by its inclusion as number eighteen in the famous selection of "forty" (in fact including forty-two) hadiths by al-Nawawī; see Ibn Daqīq al-ʿĪd, *Sharḥ al-arbaʿīn al-Nawawīyah* (Cairo, 2013), 49.

[24] See his biography as given by al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʾ,* 2:246.

[25] Ibid., 10:41.

[26] Ibid., 10:250.

[27] See Leube, "Genres," 169–93.

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background undertaken above, however, it is nearly impossible to trace Ibn Ajā's mastery of Turkic within his biographical trajectory. As suggested by Barbara Flemming, any functionary holding an office in late-Mamluk Aleppo was commonly expected to know Turkic.[28] Even if this should have been the case for Ibn Ajā's teachers in Aleppo, however, none of them is credited with knowing Turkic by al-Sakhāwī. Accordingly, it appears that Ibn Ajā's prominent and visible use of his mastery of Turkic reflect his non-"academic" career as a "courtly scholar."

As he claimed in his own account of his diplomatic mission to Tabriz, Ibn Ajā used his mastery of Turkic to communicate directly with *uzun* Ḥasan. In this way, he not only translated an elaborate Arabic letter composed by his patron Yashbak word by word *(ḥarfan ḥarfan)* for *uzun* Ḥasan during a private audience,[29] but even established himself in a dominant position during a performative scholarly session at the court *(majlis)* by replying directly to questions by *uzun* Ḥasan concerning a hadith from al-Bukhārī.[30] By contrast, Ibn Ajā does not claim in his account to have conducted his negotiations with *shāh* Suwār in Turkic, as both himself and *shāh* Suwār are consistently cited in Arabic.[31] In the context of his extant versified Turkic translation of al-Wāqidī's *Futūḥ al-Shām,* it is particularly interesting to note that Ibn Ajā explicitly criticized a shaykh at the court of *uzun* Ḥasan for translating a hadith of al-Bukhārī for the ruler "without any order" *(bi-ghayr tartīb).*[32] Significantly, this criticism is not directed against any specific regional variety of Turkic used by the shaykh in question, but rather against the register chosen, which to Ibn Ajā did not constitute a Turkic rendering adequate to the performative reading of al-Bukhārī in a courtly setting. We will return to this point below.

Al-Sakhāwī's inclusion of the information that Ibn Ajā translated the *Futūḥ al-Shām* of al-Wāqidī in 12,000 Turkic verses attests to the visibility of this translation project. Nonetheless, his Turkic versification has largely remained invisible

[28] Barbara Flemming, "Šerīf, Sultan Ġavrī und die 'Perser,'" *Der Islam* 45 (1969): 82.

[29] Ibn Ajā, "Tārīkh," MS Topkapı, fol. 152r, equivalent to MS Dār al-Kutub, 84; ed. Ṭulaymāt, 118; Dahmān, *ʿIrāk,* 125.

[30] Ibn Ajā, "Tārīkh," MS Topkapı, fols. 149r–150v, equivalent to MS Dār al-Kutub, 78–81; ed. Ṭulaymāt, 114–16; Dahmān, *ʿIrāk,* 122–23.

[31] See for instance the extensive account of their first negotiations, Ibn Ajā, "Tārīkh," MS Topkapı, fols. 133r–137r, equivalent to MS Dār al-Kutub, 46–54; ed. Ṭulaymāt, 87–93; Dahmān, *ʿIrāk,* 99–103. Arguably, the Arabic words attributed to *shāh* Suwār by Ibn Ajā display less erudition and scholarly background than his own elaborate rhetorics, but this may simply be due to Ibn Ajā's fondness for suggesting that he had established himself at a dominant position at the presence of a "foreign" ruler due to his scholarly and rhetorical talents.

[32] Ibn Ajā, "Tārīkh," MS Topkapı, fol. 145r, equivalent to MS Dār al-Kutub, 70; ed. Ṭulaymāt, 107; Dahmān, *ʿIrāk,* 117.

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in modern scholarship apart from some references by Barbara Flemming.[33] The successful endeavor to achieve a great degree of visibility for his translation is corroborated by the elaborate decoration of the extant second volume of this work that is discussed below. It should also be noted that al-Sakhāwī's indication of the length of Ibn Ajā's versified rendering of this work is quite accurate, as the number of verses in the extant copy lies in the range of 11,000 to 12,000.[34] This again attests to the success of Ibn Ajā's versified translation and his commission of the elaborate manuscript copy offered to Qāytbāy. The only other reference to Ibn Ajā's knowledge in matters Turkic appears in an eccentric work by Abū Ḥāmid al-Qudsī, where Ibn Ajā is cited as an expert on a decidedly non-literary and non-scholarly question.[35] Once again, however, this citation arguably reflects Ibn Ajā's unusual biographical trajectory in combining a scholarly background in Arabic-Islamic traditions with his mastery of Turkic to establish himself as a courtly scholar.

Ibn Ajā's Turkic Versification of the *Futūḥ al-Shām* I: Paratextual Elements in the Autograph Manuscripts

As indicated by the preservation of the second volume of the original manuscript dedicated to Qāytbāy, including a colophon to the entire translation, as well as by the agreement about the number of verses in the two extant volumes with al-Sakhāwī's indication that the entire work originally numbered 12,000 verses,[36] Ibn Ajā's Turkic versification of al-Wāqidī's *Futūḥ al-Shām* has been preserved in its entirety. However, the first volume only survives in an undated copy that has suffered considerably from water damage as manuscript Saliha Hatun 157, now held in the Süleymaniye Yazma Eser Kütüphanesi in Istanbul as

[33] See for instance Barbara Flemming, "Literary Activities in Mamluk Halls and Barracks," in *Studies in Memory of Gaston Wiet,* ed. Miriam Rosen-Ayalon (Jerusalem, 1977), 255. Flemming's pioneering remarks concerning the categorization of fifteenth-century literary Turkic in the Mamluk realm are discussed in the conclusion.

[34] Arguably, the correct number is closer to 11,000 than 12,000 verses, if we calculate 15 verses per page on 395 pages in the first volume and 13 verses per page on 414 pages in the second volume, as chapter headings should be deducted from this number, even if some verses are added *in margine* to both volumes (see below). In any case, it is a substantial work of Turkic verse, which may well be what al-Sakhāwī intended to state.

[35] Abū Ḥāmid al-Qudsī, *Traktat über die Segnungen, die die Türken dem Lande Ägypten gebracht haben,* ed. Ṣubḥī Labīb and Ulrich Haarmann (Beirut, 1997), 115–16. The reference is to Ibn Ajā as "one who is knowledgeable in these matters" in attesting to the excellence of sexual intercourse with Turkic women.

[36] Al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍaw',* 10:41.

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Demirbaş 00157.[37] This manuscript is titled "The first part of the *Futūḥ al-Shām* in Turkic."[38] As Ibn Ajā is referred to as "the deceased renowned scholar and chief judge Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Ajā, may God have mercy on him!" on the title page,[39] this presentation of its author must have been added to the manuscript after Ibn Ajā's death in 881/1476.[40] However, this passage appears on the outer face of the first page of the original body of the manuscript, a space which authors or scribes of Islamic manuscripts commonly left blank—apart from the title—and only filled in later with notes concerning its subsequent history.[41] In addition, Ibn Ajā's name is written in a hand that differs from that of the title on the same page. Accordingly, the *terminus post quem* of Ibn Ajā's death in 881/1476 only holds for his name, which was evidently added later, and not for the body of this manuscript.

By contrast, the hand of the title on this page appears to be the same hand that wrote the main text of both volumes. This hand also wrote the rubricized chapter headings of the first volume, the verses added *in margine* to both volumes,[42] the catchwords on the bottom of the reverse of the folios of the second volume,[43] and even the Arabic prayer written on a separate piece of paper that became stuck to one of the pages of the first volume.[44] By contrast, the chapter headings—as well as the frontispiece, *basmalah,* and colophon of the courtly (see be-

[37] I thank my esteemed colleagues at the Süleymaniye Yazma Eser Kütüphanesi for enabling this article by sending me a scan of this manuscript.

[38] *Al-juzʾ al-awwal min futūḥ al-shām bi-al-turkī* (MS Saliha Hatun 157, fol. 1r).

[39] *Tarjamahu wa-naẓẓamahū al-ʿallāmah qāḍī al-quḍāh Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn Ajā ʿafā Allāhu ʿanhu* (MS Saliha Hatun, fol. 1r).

[40] For the date of his death, see al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʾ,* 10:41.

[41] See for instance the detailed discussion of the various later notes on the title page of the Princeton holograph of a volume of al-Ṣafadī's *Tadhkirah* by Élise Franssen, "Aṣ-Ṣafadī's *taḏkira* and its Holograph in Princeton University Library," in *Personal Manuscripts: Copying, Drafting, Taking Notes,* ed. David Durand-Guédy and Jürgen Paul (Berlin, 2023), 230–31 and 233–34.

[42] See MS Saliha Hatun, fols. 55r and 107r, as well as MS Karatay 489 = Koğuşlar 883, fols. 9v, 18r (adds the word *amīn* necessary to fill the meter), 136v, 147v, 190r (adds the word *malāʾīk* necessary to fill the meter), and 191v. The same hand adds an additional verse between the penultimate and ultimate lines of the page in MS Karatay 489 = Koğuşlar 883, fols. 49r and 56v.

[43] The catchword is missing from Karatay 489 = Koğuşlar 883, fols. 15v, 24v, 31v, 55v, 134v, and 170v; on fol. 84v, only the initial *alif* of the word *īkīsindan* at the beginning of the first line of the opposite page has been written; on fol. 168v, only the initial *alif* of the following *achilmish* appears as a catchsign. On fol. 172v, the following *qachan* has been misread as *ḥaqīqat;* the possibility that some pages may have been lost at this point is argued against by the matching water stains on both pages, assuming the stains do not in fact postdate this loss.

[44] MS Saliha Hatun, fol. 71r. As far as I can see, this Arabic prayer appears in the text of Ibn Ajā's versified Turkic rendering of al-Wāqidī's *Futūḥ al-Shām* neither as a (versified) Turkic translation, nor as an Arabic retention embedded in the versified Turkic matrix of the text (see below).

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low) second volume—were written in a different but consistent ductus in golden ink with black outlines.[45] It may be possible that the scribe responsible for these sections also designed and executed the geometric and vegetal ornamentation on the frontispiece, *basmalah,* and colophon, as well as the decorative roundels on the first and last two pages of the versified Turkic text of this volume.[46] I cannot say if these portions including golden ink in the second volume were executed by the same scribe who was responsible for the body of the manuscript, or whether other calligraphers were involved in the production of these ornamented sections.

The consistent execution of the entirety of the text of both volumes in the same hand, which also wrote later supplementary verses *in margine* and even the loose piece of paper stuck to one of the pages of the first volume, strongly suggests that both volumes were written by Ibn Ajā himself. If this is indeed the case, the first volume would seem to be a complete and clean draft of the versified Turkic translation, the second volume of which appears to be lost. By contrast, of Ibn Ajā's subsequent courtly copy, produced for presentation to Qāytbāy, only the second volume remains, while the courtly copy of the first volume has been lost. Accordingly, Ibn Ajā's Turkic versification of al-Wāqidī's *Futūḥ al-Shām* survives in two volumes that were each originally part of separate autograph copies of the work. The only further indication of the subsequent history of the first volume is an Ottoman *waqf* stamp dated to 1165/1751–52. This stamp suggests that the manuscript was endowed as a *waqf* after the death of its previous owner, the former *shaykh al-islām* Āq-Maḥmūd-zādah Muḥammad Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn *efendi.*[47]

As already indicated, the second volume of Ibn Ajā's Turkic versification of al-Wāqidī's *Futūḥ al-Shām* survives in the original copy that was presented to Qāytbāy by Ibn Ajā as Karatay 489 = Koğuşlar 883 in the Topkapı Sarayı Kütüphanesi in Istanbul.[48] This manuscript is entitled "The second part of the *Futūḥ*

[45] MS Karatay 489 = Koğuşlar 883, fols. 2r, 2v, and 212r.

[46] MS Karatay 489 = Koğuşlar 883, fols. 2v and 3r, as well as 211v and 212r.

[47] *Waqafa/hādhā al-kitāb al-marḥūm/Āq-Maḥmūd-zādah al-Sayyid Muḥammad/Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn efendi/bi-sharṭ an lā yukhraja min/khizānatihī sanat 1165.* A clearly readable, if upside-down, imprint of this stamp can be found on the final page of the manuscript, fol. 185v; cf. the other imprints on fols. 1r and 91r. For the donor, see Mehmet İpşirli, "Mehmed Zeynî Efendî," *İslâm Ansiklopedisi,* 28:541–42.

[48] I thank my esteemed colleagues at the Topkapı Sarayı Kütüphanesi for enabling this article by sending me a scan of this manuscript. The manuscript is described by Fehmi Edhem Karatay, *Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi Türkçe Yazmalar Kataloğu I* (Istanbul, 1961), 164–65. *Pace* the suggestion of Karatay, *Kataloğu,* 164, that some pages had become mixed up *(Bazı sahifeleri kararmıştır),* the catchwords confirm the current order of the pages as correct wherever they are written (see above). It may, however, be possible that the current sequence reflects the

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Illustration 1: The colophon to Ibn Ajā's Turkic translation of the *Futūḥ al-Shām* of al-Wāqidī, Karatay 489 = Koğuşlar 883, fol. 212r.

al-Shām"[49] and explicitly states on the frontispiece that it was produced at the behest of Qāytbāy.[50] Ibn Ajā's intention to connect his translation to Qāytbāy is also reflected in the text of the additions made to the body of the narrative in the first volume, which include a long section praising Qāytbāy immediately after the introductory praise of Muḥammad.[51] Ibn Ajā indicates that he (as Muḥammad ibn Ajā al-Ḥanafī) is responsible for the production of the translation and this manuscript.[52] The colophon to both volumes gives the date of 880.[53]

Accordingly, Ibn Ajā commissioned this manuscript for presentation to the sultan while being involved in the diplomatic missions to the Ottoman and Aqquyunlu courts during the final years of his life that have been reconstructed above. It is difficult to give a confident estimate as to when he may have begun working on his Turkic versification. In light of Ibn Iyās's indication that he left the camp of Yashbak near al-Bīrah/Birecik on a diplomatic mission to the Otto-

rearrangement of possible loose pages by Karatay or another modern colleague following the catchwords.

[49] *Al-juzʾ al-thānī min Futūḥ al-Shām,* MS Karatay 489 = Koğuşlar 883, fol. 2r.

[50] *Bi-rasm/al-maqām al-sharīf sulṭān/al-barrayn wa-al-baḥrayn khādim al-ḥaramayn/al-sharīfayn al-nāfidh amrihī wa-al-mālik al-Malik/al-Ashraf Abī al-Naṣr Qāytbāy/ʿazza naṣruhū* (MS Karatay 489 = Koğuşlar 883, fol. 2r).

[51] MS Karatay 489 = Koğuşlar 883, fols. 3r–4v. For the *taṣliyah,* or praise of Muḥammad, see ibid., fols. 2r–3r.

[52] *Khidmat nāẓimihī Muḥammad Ibn Ajā al-Hanafī* (MS Karatay 489 = Koğuşlar 883, fol. 2r).

[53] *Tamma kitābu Futūḥ al-Shām bi-ḥamd Allāh wa-ʿawnihī wa-ḥusn tawfīqihi fī sanat thamanīn wa-thamānimiʾatin* (MS Karatay 489 = Koğuşlar 883, fol. 212r).

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Illustration 2: The frontispiece of Ibn Ajā's Turkic translation of the *Futūḥ al-Shām* of al-Wāqidī, Karatay 489 = Koğuşlar 883, fol. 2r.

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man court in Dhū al-Qaʿdah 877/April 1473,[54] it would be particularly interesting to know if Ibn Ajā had begun work on this project before reaching the Ottoman court. In this regard, it may be suggested that it is difficult to imagine two complete copies of this massive versified translation being finished in a bit over two years (between late 877 and 880) while Ibn Ajā traveled between the Yashbak's camp and the Ottoman and Aqquyunlu courts.

The subsequent history of this second volume after Ibn Ajā's death can be partly reconstructed based on endowment notes on the frontispiece attesting to its endowment to Qāytbāy's *qubbah* outside Cairo between 26 Dhū al-Qaʿdah and 1 Dhū al-Ḥijjah 895/11–16 October 1490.[55] This is confirmed by seven signatures (*shahida ʿalá* etc.) on the frontispiece, written by a total of four different individuals. Unfortunately, parts of the signatures and possibly also of the endowment notes have been cut off, likely during a subsequent (Ottoman?) rebinding of the volume. Although I am unable to offer a confident identification of Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī al-Aḥadī (?), who signed three times on the frontispiece, ʿAbd al-Razzāq ibn Aḥmad al-Baqlī can be identified based on his biography as given by al-Sakhāwī.[56] I cannot presently offer a confident reading of the names of the other two signatories confirming Qāytbāy's donation of this volume.

This endowment of the manuscript by Qāytbāy was also confirmed on the inside of the flyleaf facing the frontispiece,[57] across the top of the first two pages of the text following the frontispiece,[58] across the top of facing pages throughout the manuscript,[59] and on the final page of the manuscript following the colophon.[60] Notwithstanding its endowment by Qāytbāy, this volume was subsequently appropriated by the Ottoman treasury, presumably in the library of

[54] Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ*, 3:86.

[55] MS Karatay 489 = Koğuşlar 883, fol. 2r. For this *qubbah*, described as "outside the well-protected Cairo at al-Marj and al-Zayyāt, near the Birkat al-Ḥajj and Siryāqūs" *(al-qubbah … bi-ẓāhir al-Qāhirah al-maḥrūsah bi-al-Marj wa-al-Zayyāt qurban min Birkat al-Ḥajj wa-Siryāqūs)*, see the brief description within the biography of Qāytbāy: al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʾ*, 6:188. Karatay, *Kataloğu*, 164, misreads the date as 910.

[56] See al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʾ*, 4:170.

[57] MS Karatay 489 = Koğuşlar 883, fol. 1v, where the word *waqf* is written twice, upside-down, across the entire page.

[58] Ibid., fols. 2v and 3r: *waqf al-malik al-ashraf Qāytbāy* (once at the top of each page).

[59] Ibid., fols. 11v and 12r, 21v and 22r, 28v and 29r, 42v and 43r, 45v and 46r, 54v and 55r, 65v and 66r, 74v and 75r, 85v and 86r, 101v and 102r, 113v and 114r, 123v and 124r, 135v and 136r, 145v and 146r, 158v and 159r (each of these two last notes of *waqf* is contrasted with the word *khazīnah*, treasury, written twice above it; see below), 165v and 166r, 173v and 174r, 185v and 186r, 195v and 196r, 204v and 204r, 208v and 209r, and 211v and 212r.

[60] Ibid., fol. 212v: *waqf/al-malik al-ashraf Qāytbāy ʿazza naṣruhū* (written in two lines), as well as *waqf* written perpendicular from top to bottom across the page below these two lines.

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the Topkapı Sarayı, which continues to preserve this manuscript today.[61] This is suggested by notes written immediately below or above the *waqf* attesting the endowment of Qāytbāy,[62] as well as by two imprints of a stamp declaring the volume a *waqf* in the imperial treasury and dated 1135,[63] and three signatures *(ʿalāmah)* of personnel serving in the Ottoman treasury, two of which are dated 1197.[64]

Together, these paratextual elements suggest the following reconstruction of the history of Ibn Ajā's versified Turkic translation of al-Wāqidī's *Futūḥ al-Shām*. Although it is possible that he had penned earlier drafts, the first extant trace of Ibn Ajā's work remains in the clean and complete draft of the first of originally two volumes,[65] executed in black ink with red chapter headings. It is possible that this draft remained in the possession of the author and was inherited by his son Maḥmūd[66] before its first volume resurfaced among the books of Āq-Maḥmūd-zādah Muḥammad Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn *efendi* in 1165 in Istanbul. Likely after completing the clean draft, Ibn Ajā produced a second manuscript copy of the entire translation in two volumes. This second complete copy was designed to be worthy of presentation to Qāytbāy,[67] including a decorated frontispiece

[61] Cf. the very brief discussion of these notes and stamps as context to the Ottoman appropriation of books formerly held in the possession of Sultan Qānṣūh by Kristof D'hulster, *Browsing through the Sultan's Bookshelves: Towards a Reconstruction of the Library of the Mamluk Sultan Qānisawh al-Ghawrī (r. 906–922/1501–1516)* (Göttingen, 2021), 309.

[62] See MS Karatay 489 = Koğuşlar 883, fol. 1v, where *khazīnah-yi ʿāmirah* is written below the duplex *waqf* attesting to the endowment of the manuscript by Qāytbāy, as well as MS Karatay 489 = Koğuşlar 883, fols. 158v and 159r, where the word *waqf* of Qāytbāy at the top of the pages is corrected by a duplex inscription of *khazīnah* above it.

[63] Ibid., fol. 1r, likely to be read from bottom to top and from right to left in the first part as: *wuqifa fī khazīnah-yi khānah-yi humāyūn/sanat 1135.*

[64] Ibid., where a pious Arabic slogan is signed *ʿalāmat Muṣṭafá Bīk Abāzah dar khazīnah-yi humāyūn* (followed by one word I cannot read), as well as ibid., fol. 1v, where a slogan is signed *Bakr efendi ḥamāmī/khazīnah/sanat 1197* above another signature reading *ʿalāmat Rashīd Aḥmad khazīnah/sanat 1197.*

[65] Arguably, the only irregularities in this manuscript, aside from the verses added *in margine* listed above, concern two instances where chapter headings are placed in the left column instead of across both columns of the text; see ibid., fols. 70v and 168v.

[66] See for Ibn Ajā's son Maḥmūd the very brief entry in al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʾ*, 10:136, as well as the slightly more informative suggestion that he served as the Hanafi judge in Aleppo *(qāḍī al-ḥanafīyah bi-Ḥalab)* in the disambiguation between him and his father (ibid., 11:236). A later reference to one of his companions describes him as *al-qāḍī kātib al-sirr Maḥmūd Ibn Ajā* (Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ*, 5:193).

[67] Irregularities in this copy include the verses and words added *in margine* that have already been discussed, as well as several instances where the golden headings were initially omitted and added later *in margine;* see MS Karatay 489 = Koğuşlar 883, fols. 13v, 28r, 29r, 29v, 47r,

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and colophon, decorative roundels on the first and last two pages, as well as the execution of chapter headings in gold, the arrangement of the verses in neatly outlined spaces, and the addition of catchwords at the bottom of every second page. This second volume was, possibly together with its lost first volume, endowed by Qāytbāy to his *qubbah* in 895 before resurfacing in the library of the Topkapı Sarayı in Istanbul in 1135. As both volumes were in all likelihood written by the author himself, we have a full and corrected autograph copy of Ibn Ajā's versified Turkic translation of the *Futūḥ al-Shām* of al-Wāqidī to work with in the subsequent sections.

Ibn Ajā's Turkic Versification of the *Futūḥ al-Shām* II: Interventions by Ibn Ajā

The *Futūḥ al-Shām* ascribed to al-Wāqidī constitutes one of the most protean and "open"[68] texts attesting to the continuing relevance and significance of the historiographical works describing the establishment of a specifically Islamic space during the early Islamic conquests.[69] While certainly offering one of the most

58v, 59v, 70r (written in red), 137v, 138v, and 168r. On folio 24v, the last Turkic verse is written in gold; on folio 57r, the Arabic text of Quran 4:47 is written in red and arranged within the framed areas of the last four lines otherwise containing Turkic verses; and on fols. 158v and 211r, the layout of the frames does not fit the text inscribed within them.

[68] For a succinct formulation of the theory of "open" or *unfest* text, see Joachim Bumke, *Die vier Fassungen der 'Nibelungenklage': Untersuchungen zur Überlieferungsgeschichte und Textkritik der höfischen Epik im 13. Jahrhundert* (Berlin, 1996), 3–88; as well as idem, "Der Unfeste Text: Überlegungen zu Überlieferungsgeschichte und Textkritik der höfischen Epik im 13. Jahrhundert," in *'Aufführung' und 'Schrift' in Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit,* ed. Jan-Dirk Müller (Stuttgart, 1996), 118–29; Rüdiger Schnell, "Konstanz und Metamorphosen eines Textes: Eine überlieferungs- und geschlechtergeschichtliche Studie zur volkssprachlichen Rezeption von Jacobus' de Voragine Ehepredigten," *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 33, no. 1 (1999): 319–95; and Bernard Cerquiglini, *Éloge de la variante: histoire critique de la philologie* (Paris, 1989). Cf. Michael Philip Penn, "Monks, Manuscripts, and Muslims: Syriac Textual Changes in Reaction to the Rise of Islam," *Hugoye* 12, no. 2 (2009): 235–57, as well as the magisterial overview of the implications for scholarly editions if texts are conceptualized as fundamentally "open" by Bernard Coulie: "Text Editing: Principles and Methods," in *Armenian Philology in the Modern Era: From Manuscript to Digital Text,* ed. Valentina Calzolari (Leiden, 2014), 137–74, esp. 137–55.

[69] See for the Arabic "open" text of the *Futūḥ al-Shām* ascribed to al-Wāqidī—in addition to Franz Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography* (Leiden, 1968), 186–93, and Rudi Paret, "Die legendäre Futūḥ-Literatur, ein arabisches Volksepos?," in *La Poesia Epica e la sua Formazione* (Rome, 1970), 735–49—the electronically published dissertation of Yoones Dehghani Farsani, "Text und Kontext des al-Wāqidī zugeschriebenen Futūḥ aš-Šām: Ein Beitrag zur Forschungsdebatte über frühe futūḥ-Werke" (Ph.D. dissertation, Göttingen, 2017); and the recent but problematic article of Andrii Matvieiev, "Kitab Futuh el-Sham (Pseudo) Muhammada ibn Umar al-Waqidi'ego jako źródło do studium bitwy nad rzeką Jarmuk (636)," *Vox Patrum* 77 (2021): 51–80.

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intriguing case studies showing how memories of the early Islamic conquests were developed and negotiated across Muslim cultural memory, the "openness" of this text makes it difficult to compare Ibn Ajā's Turkic versification with one specific version of the Arabic prose narrative. In addition, the very poor state of preservation of the first volume of Ibn Ajā's work in particular, which has badly suffered from what appears to have been water, frequently leaves only the headings and individual words legible.

In the face of this problem, the following discussion of Ibn Ajā's additions to the text will compare his work with a heuristical corpus of one fifteenth-century manuscript and five modern editions that were accessible to the author of the present article at the time of writing.[70] It is possible that some sections, such as Ibn Ajā's extensive description of the conquest of his hometown of Aleppo,[71] arguably represent a special focus of the Turkic versification as compared to their shorter treatment in the Arabic prose versions. However, due to the difficulty of conclusively excluding the possibility that the Arabic prose version used by Ibn Ajā could have already displayed this somewhat unusual focus, I center the following discussion on sections that can confidently be attributed to Ibn Ajā due to their complete omission in the Arabic prose versions I have consulted. The suggestion that these sections were indeed added by Ibn Ajā himself is additionally plausible due to the accordance of their content with the stated aim of his versified Turkic translation.

Like all other sections of his Turkic versification, the sections added by Ibn Ajā bear headings in Arabic *fuṣḥá* that are executed either in red or gold, de-

[70] The manuscript is Princeton MS Garrett Islamic 124 Y, which, according to its colophon, was completed Sunday, 24 Shawwāl 849. This manuscript differs notably in quality from both versions of Ibn Ajā's Turkic versifications, as the number of lines per page varies, the paper used is of notably differing thickness, and the script is much less careful as compared to the autograph copies written, as argued above, by Ibn Ajā. Accordingly, this manuscript attests to the popularity of al-Wāqidī's *Futūḥ al-Shām* beyond the courtly and scholarly elites among whom Ibn Ajā worked. I have also consulted the following modern editions: al-Wāqidī, *Futūḥ al-Shām,* no editor given (Cairo, 1926 [this is the version discussed by Paret, "Futūḥ-Literatur," 738–47], as well as the reprint dated 1966); ibid., no editor given (Beirut, n.d.); ibid., ed. ʿAbd al-Laṭīf ʿAbd al-Raḥmān (Beirut, 2005); ibid., ed. Ṣāliḥ Mūsá Darādkih (Irbid, 2007); and ibid., ed. ʿAbd al-Khāliq Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Khāliq (Cairo, 2008).Although all of these Arabic prose versions have been consulted on the questions discussed below, I accessed them at different times during the preparation of this article and did not consistently note page numbers for the pertinent passages. Accordingly, I only give detailed references to some of the versions listed above in my discussion of textual retentions by Ibn Ajā below.

[71] See MS Karatay 489 = Koğuşlar 883, fols. 64v–106v.

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pending on the volume.[72] With few exceptions,[73] these Arabic chapter headings are followed by Turkic *mathnawī* verses of eleven syllables per hemistich, which are arranged in two neatly separate columns per page.

A first cluster of additions in the voice of Ibn Ajā comes at the beginning of the first volume.[74] These include a versified Turkic *basmalah* and *taṣliyah,* a praise *(madḥ)* of Qāytbāy, a reason for the composition of the Turkic versification *(sabab taʾlīf al-kitāb),* prayers, admonitions, and expositions of some fundamentals of Islam (entitled *taqdīm kalām al-nubūwah, al-tawassul wa-ṭalab al-raḥmah, al-amthāl al-ḥikamīyah* [sic] *min maʿdin al-risālah al-muḥammadīyah, and al-aḥādīth al-qudsīyah*), a selection of sayings attributed to each of the four first Sunni caliphs, and an exculpation of the shortcomings of Ibn Ajā's translation, before continuing with verses in praise of spring *(taghazzul fī al-bahārīyāt)* and of traveling *(al-targhīb fī al-asfār),* followed by a narrative of the death of Muḥammad.

While some of these additions are easily explained as framing the text to enable Ibn Ajā's donation of his versified translation to Qāytbāy, the exposition of (Sunni) Islamic fundamentals belongs to the register of didactic instruction. In his *sabab taʾlīf al-kitāb,* Ibn Ajā explicitly states that his translation is motivated by a desire to introduce Turkic-speaking Mamluks to Islam.[75] Accordingly, this first cluster of additions in the voice of Ibn Ajā resonates with his donation of the manuscript to Qāytbāy, as well as his stated purpose of making Islamic narrative traditions accessible to Turkic-speaking Mamluks by translating al-Wāqidī's *Futūḥ al-Shām*.

This didactic purpose of Ibn Ajā's Turkic versification is resumed in the postface *(khātimah)* at the end of the second volume,[76] which similarly suggests that the narrative has served to edify and advise.[77] This conclusion also contains multiple rather general exhortations to be confident and optimistic when facing

[72] The only slip of the pen I noted within these headings concerns the *wuṣūl banū ʿabs* of MS Saliha Hatun, fol. 19r, as opposed to the regular *wuṣūl banī fulān* elsewhere.

[73] Apart from the Arabic passages that have been retained in the text by Ibn Ajā and which will be discussed below, the only exceptions to the composition of the text in Turkic *mathnawī* verses occur in MS Saliha Hatun, fols. 4v–5r and 10v–11v, where the text of specific lines appears to switch to Turkic prose. It should, however, be noted that these passages are badly deteriorated and the apparent dissolution of the rhyme scheme together with the regular visual layout of two columns per page may conceivably be due to this deterioration.

[74] Ibid., fols. 1v–15v.

[75] Ibid., fol. 4v, *ki ahl-i turk ānī khūsh* [one word illegible]*/jihād yichūn* [remainder of the verse illegible]*//dakhī ahl-i silāḥ ānī* [remainder of the verse illegible]. The object indicated by *ānī* in both verses is al-Wāqidī's *Futūḥ al-Shām,* the title of which is readable some three verses earlier.

[76] MS Karatay 489 = Koğuşlar 883, fols. 210v–212r.

[77] Ibid., fol. 210v: *naṣāʾiḥlah būnī biz khatam qildiq*.

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adversity,[78] as well as the suggestion that war for Islam continues to bring ample booty to those involved in it.[79] This edifying focus of the sections added by Ibn Ajā at the beginning and end of his work resonates with the advice and prayers attributed to several persons involved in the plot of the narrative,[80] as well as offered in the voice of Ibn Ajā himself,[81] in the body of the text.

A second set of interventions by Ibn Ajā disrupting the flow of his Turkic verses is constituted of passages that were retained in Arabic in his translation. As will be shown below, all of these Arabic passages also appear in the Arabic prose narratives with some variation and were therefore taken from Ibn Ajā's Arabic *Vorlage*. Like Ibn Ajā's Turkic text and the section headings, these Arabic retentions are completely vocalized throughout. They expand on Ibn Ajā's intention of making some basics of Arabic-Islamic courtly learning accessible to his audience. With one exception, these Arabic retentions are clustered at the beginning of the first volume of the work, which, together with the content-driven additions listed above, arguably renders this section suitable as something of a primer in Islam and Muslim literary traditions.

The first of these retentions is found in Ibn Ajā's exposition of the context of the early Islamic conquests of (greater) Syria. Here, he cites Quran 5:3 together with a hadith foretelling the expansion of Islam.[82] Significantly, both citations also feature at the very beginning of the Arabic prose narratives.[83] Both of these are cited by Ibn Ajā exclusively in Arabic prose, which is arranged within the general layout of the two columns per page, although it certainly does not fit the meter or rhyme scheme of his Turkic *mathnawī* verses. They are introduced by Ibn Ajā with rubrics missing in the Arabic prose narratives that read *kamā qāla Allāh* and *qāla al-nabīyu* [sic] and are written at the beginning of their respective lines. Both Arabic passages fill the entire length of the lines they are written in. This visual arrangement clearly marks the Arabic retentions and alerts

[78] See for instance the final two verses of ibid., fol. 211r: *na jahduñ vārīsah iḥsān ulsuñ/maḥallīnah āñā kāraksah bilsuñ//dīn ūlmāyah ūlā ish biturmaz/na ish ṭūtārisah bāshah biturmaz*.

[79] Ibid., fol. 212r: *ḥaqquñ amrīlah bir qawmah muṣībat/irishsah azkiyā* [vocalized *uzkayā*] *ūlur ghanīmat*.

[80] For advice *(naṣīḥat)* uttered by characters involved in the plot of the narrative, see MS Saliha Hatun, fols. 71v and 82r–83r, as well as MS Karatay 489 = Koğuşlar 883, fols. 21v–22v, 62r–63v, 110v–111r, 134r–134v, and 159v–160r. A prayer *(munājāt)* uttered by a person involved in the plot of the narrative is found in MS Saliha Hatun, fol. 121r.

[81] MS Saliha Hatun, fols. 23r–23v *(naṣīḥat),* 26v–27v, 36v and 39v *(munājāt),* and 180r–180v (praise of calm and censure of haste), as well as MS Karatay 489 = Koğuşlar 883, fols. 25v–26r *(fī al-tafakkur wa-mawʿiẓah lil-muʿtabir).*

[82] MS Saliha Hatun, fol. 16v.

[83] See for instance al-Wāqidī, *Futūḥ* (Cairo, 1966), 1:2, and ibid., ed. ʿAbd al-Khāliq Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Khāliq, 1:6.

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the readers of the manuscript that the following text does not adhere to the surrounding template of the Turkic *mathnawī* verses. Following the rubric *qāla al-nabīyu,* the eulogy *ṣallá Allāhu ʿalayhi wa-sallam* is written in black ink, introducing the following words of Muḥammad. Accordingly, the audience of these lines is introduced to citations from the Quran and hadith, which are framed by their appropriate verbal complements. In a performative setting, these were possibly combined with the appropriate performative gestures and replies by the audience. In addition, the confirmation that Islam is the perfect religion in Quran 5:3 and Muḥammad's hadith foretelling the political and military success of Islam tie in nicely with Ibn Ajā's framing of his audience as Mamluk Turkic-speaking military elites, even if the selection of these two citations follows the Arabic prose narrative.

A second Arabic passage is retained on the facing page, where Ibn Ajā keeps the original wording of Abū Bakr's letter to the Muslim armies exhorting them to march forth and conquer (greater) Syria.[84] Significantly, this same letter with minor variations also appears at the beginning of the compared Arabic prose narratives listed above.[85] In light of the general fluidity and openness of Arabic prose narratives of al-Wāqidī's *Futūḥ al-Shām,* the close agreement of all consulted versions in the wording of the letter demonstrates that this, like the citations discussed above, must be interpreted as something of a stable nucleus structuring the surrounding narrative. By retaining the original Arabic wording, Ibn Ajā not only introduced his readers to the normative structure of an Arabic letter from a ruler to the armies in the field, but also dovetailed his Turkic versification with one of the most prominent structural nuclei of al-Wāqidī's narrative. While facilitating the arrangement of the Arabic text across the entirety of the lines in which it appears, Ibn Ajā's sweeping lengthening of the introductory *basmalah* at the beginning of the letter also introduces those reading his manuscript to this regular means of marking the opening of a letter.[86] Interestingly, he also follows some of the Arabic prose narratives in abbreviating the exhortation to holy war *(jihād)* from Quran 9:41 by concluding Abū Bakr's letter with the Arabic phrase "and the remainder of the verse" *(ilá ākhiri al-āyati).*[87] The retention of this mode

[84] MS Saliha Hatun, fols. 17r–17v.

[85] See al-Wāqidī, *Futūḥ,* MS Princeton, fol. 2r; ibid. (Cairo, 1926), 1:2; ibid. (Cairo, 1966), 1:2; ibid. (Beirut, n.d.), 1:5–6; ibid., ed. ʿAbd al-Laṭīf ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, 1:6; ibid., ed. Ṣāliḥ Mūsá Darādkih, 1:21; and ibid., ed. ʿAbd al-Khāliq Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Khāliq, 1:7.

[86] MS Saliha Hatun, fol. 17r.

[87] Ibid., fol. 17v. The same feature appears for instance in al-Wāqidī, *Futūḥ* (Cairo, 1966), 1:2 (in the even shorter abbreviation of *al-āyah* or "[the remainder of] the verse"), as opposed to ibid., ed. ʿAbd al-Khāliq Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Khāliq, 1:7, which does not indicate that the remainder of the Quranic verse is implied.

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of abbreviation arguably serves to introduce his audience to the performative norms of citing and reciting Quranic texts, even if his stated audience most likely would not be expected to have memorized the entire Quran. Likely due to its occurrence within an overarching passage entirely written in Arabic prose, this Quranic verse is not highlighted by an additional rubric.

The next passage retained in the original Arabic again comes on the facing page. In this case, however, the Arabic text is that of verses uttered by the leader of Ḥimyar while parading in front of Abū Bakr with his troops.[88] While some of these verses also appear embedded in the Arabic prose narratives with minor variants, the five verses cited by Ibn Ajā include verses and hemistichs that are not included in the manuscripts and editions listed above.[89] This textual variation arguably reflects the greater fluidity of Arabic verse as contrasted with the stability of Quranic citations across Arabic-Islamic discursive traditions. Nonetheless, the stability of the location of these verses within the deployment of the Arab-Islamic armies to Syria demonstrates that their presence in some form constitutes another comparatively stable nucleus tying together the structure of al-Wāqidī's narrative. On the following page, Ibn Ajā also retains the Arabic wording of two lines of verse chanted by Madhḥij, which are also embedded at the same point in the Arabic prose narratives.[90] According to the interpretation of the opening pages of the first volume as something of a primer in Islam and literary Arabic suggested above, the retention of the Arabic wording of these verses arguably ensures at least a very elementary exposure to Arabic poetry for his audience.

The next set of Arabic retentions appears in the context of one of the stereotypical dialogues of a non-Muslim interlocutor with a Muslim envoy.[91] In his replies to the priest's questions, the Muslim cites four Quranic verses, which also appear in the Arabic prose narratives.[92] As before, these verses are introduced by Arabic rubrics at the beginning of the respective lines (three times *kamā qāla Allāh taʿālá* and once *fī qawlihī taʿālá*) and fill the entirety of the lines in which

[88] MS Saliha Hatun, fol. 18r.

[89] Compare for instance the four verses cited by al-Wāqidī, *Futūḥ* (Cairo, 1966), 1:3, and ibid., ed. ʿAbd al-Khāliq Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Khāliq, 1:8, which feature a different first verse compared to Ibn Ajā and also lack Ibn Ajā's fourth Arabic verse.

[90] MS Saliha Hatun, fol. 18v. The same verses appear in al-Wāqidī, *Futūḥ* (Cairo, 1966), 1:3, and ibid., ed. ʿAbd al-Khāliq Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Khāliq, 1:7.

[91] For the topical character of this type of dialogue in Arabic-Islamic historiography of the early Islamic conquests, see Boaz Shoshan, *The Arabic Historical Tradition and the Early Islamic Conquests: Folklore, Tribal Lore, Holy War* (London, 2016), 134–53.

[92] MS Saliha Hatun, fols. 26r–26v; compare al-Wāqidī, *Futūḥ* (Cairo, 1966), 1:6, and ibid., ed. ʿAbd al-Khāliq Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Khāliq, 1:14–15.

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they appear. This again facilitates their ready identification by the reader as Arabic retentions in the body of Turkic *mathnawī* verse.

The first citation is of Quran 17:1, referring to the nightly journey *(isrāʾ)* of Muḥammad to the *masjid al-aqṣá* and visually featuring the extended introductory *basmalah* filling the entire line already described above. Ibn Ajā's version differs from the Arabic prose narratives in suggesting that the remainder of the verse after *li-nuriyahu min āyātinā* should be implied.[93] The second citation features Quran 2:185 concerning the revelation of the Quran in the month of Ramaḍān. Again, Ibn Ajā differs from the Arabic prose narratives in including additional parts of the verse until *min ayyām ākhar,* while the Arabic prose narratives end their citation of this verse after *min al-hudá wa-al-furqān.*[94] By including these additional parts of the verse, Ibn Ajā emphasizes one of the main verses motivating the Muslim normative practice of fasting during the month of Ramaḍān. The final two citations are of Quran 6:16 and 33:56 concerning the tenfold requital of good as compared to the single retribution of bad deeds, as well as the Quranic basis of the Muslim practice of uttering the eulogy *(taṣliyah)* for Muḥammad. In both cases, the citations retained by Ibn Ajā are identical to those of the Arabic prose narratives.[95]

As shown by the close agreement of the different versions of al-Wāqidī's *Futūḥ al-Shām* concerning the use of these four Quranic verses by the Muslim envoy to answer questions of his interlocutor, the citation and sequence of these verses in this passage constitute another stable nucleus structuring al-Wāqidī's narrative. While clearly highlighting the Quranic verses in his layout, Ibn Ajā's addition of some of the following words of Quran 2:185 arguably enhances the usefulness of these verses as a primer to Islam. To his Mamluk audience, Quran 17:1 references the importance of Jerusalem to Islamic salvational geography as focused on the Mamluk realms,[96] Quran 2:185 motivates fasting during Ramaḍān, Quran 6:16 concerns the requital of deeds in the afterlife, and Quran 33:56 explains the form and practice of the *taṣliyah* for Muḥammad.

[93] MS Saliha Hatun, fol. 26r *(ilá ākhiri al-āyati);* compare the conclusion of the citation after the words cited above, al-Wāqidī, *Futūḥ* (Cairo, 1966), 1:6, and ibid., ed. ʿAbd al-Khāliq Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Khāliq, 1:14.

[94] MS Saliha Hatun, fol. 26r; compare al-Wāqidī, *Futūḥ* (Cairo, 1966), 1:6, and ibid., ed. ʿAbd al-Khāliq Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Khāliq, 1:14.

[95] MS Saliha Hatun, fols. 26r–26v; compare al-Wāqidī, *Futūḥ* (Cairo, 1966), 1:6, and ibid., ed. ʿAbd al-Khāliq Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Khāliq, 1:14–15.

[96] Cf. the inclusion of this verse in the "virtues of the lands of Egypt" *(faḍāʾil al-diyār al-miṣrīyah)* in the monumental early fifteenth-century Mamluk epistolary encyclopedia of al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-aʿshá fī ṣināʿat al-inshāʾ,* ed. Muḥammad Ḥusayn Shams al-Dīn (Beirut, 2012), 3:304.

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The final Arabic passage retained by Ibn Ajā in these opening parts of the first volume is Abū Bakr's letter to the inhabitants of Mecca, which again features the extended introductory *basmalah* and is written across the entire length of the lines in which it appears.[97] As this letter again turns on the exhortation to jihad of Quran 9:41, this verse is arguably highlighted by its repeated inclusion in Ibn Ajā's adaptation. As with its occurrence in the first letter by Abū Bakr presented above, the verse is not visually distinguished from its surrounding Arabic prose. This fits the interpretation of the rubrics introducing Quranic verses outside longer blocks of Arabic text as visual devices alerting the reader to a change in the interpretative matrix within which the following letters must be approached, which was suggested above.

Compared to the close accordance of the text of Abū Bakr's first letter across the different versions, Ibn Ajā's rendering of the second letter is more different from the version cited in the Arabic prose narratives, possibly indicating a comparatively lesser prominence of this textual nucleus within the structure of the narrative. The only meaningful difference, however, concerns the presentation of the sender as ʿAtīq ibn Abī Quḥāfah by Ibn Ajā as opposed to the Abū Bakr or Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq of some of the Arabic prose narratives.[98] Within the interpretation of this opening section as a primer in Islam, this arguably serves to familiarize his audience with Abū Bakr's real name *(ism)* as opposed to the more current epithet *(kunyah)* under which he is known in Islamic discursive traditions.

Although additional Quranic verses are cited throughout the Arabic prose narratives, the only visually distinct Quranic citation retained in Ibn Ajā's Turkic versification beyond this point is in the second volume. Here, Quran 4:47 is cited in the context of the conversion to Islam of Muḥammad's proverbial Jewish companion Kaʿb al-Aḥbār during ʿUmar's visit to Jerusalem. As before, the Arabic text of this verse is written across the entirety of the lines in which it appears and visually highlighted, this time by being written entirely in red ink.[99] Together with a later chapter heading initially forgotten and later added *in margine,*[100] this constitutes the only occurrence of red ink in this volume. As the same verse also appears in the Arabic prose narratives of this episode,[101] it should again be interpreted as part of a structural nucleus stabilizing the dif-

[97] MS Saliha Hatun, fols. 26r–26v; compare al-Wāqidī, *Futūḥ* (Cairo, 1966), 1:7, and ibid., ed. ʿAbd al-Khāliq Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Khāliq, 1:15–16.

[98] MS Saliha Hatun, fol. 28v, compare al-Wāqidī, *Futūḥ* (Cairo, 1966), 1:7 *(min abī bakr),* and ibid., ed. ʿAbd al-Khāliq Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Khāliq, 1:15 *(min abī bakr al-ṣiddīq).*

[99] MS Karatay 489 = Koğuşlar 883, fol. 57r.

[100] Ibid., fol. 70r.

[101] See al-Wāqidī, *Futūḥ* (Cairo, 1966), 1:168, and ibid., ed. ʿAbd al-Khāliq Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Khāliq, 1:287.

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ferent versions of al-Wāqidī's *Futūḥ al-Shām*. Within Ibn Ajā's intended functionalization of the *Futūḥ al-Shām* as a primer on Islam, this verse arguably serves to motivate the Islamic concept of the abrogation of Judaism by Islam.[102] Nonetheless, the retention of this verse at this location, more than a volume after the last element that could confidently be attributed to this functionalization, more likely indicates that it was retained as part of Ibn Ajā's comparatively extensive narrative of the conversion of Kaʿb al-Aḥbār.[103]

A final addition made by Ibn Ajā to the body of the narrative compared to the Arabic prose versions is Turkic verses praising spring *(bahārīyāt),* which again appears at the beginning of the first volume.[104] While not immediately fitting the register of a primer on Islam served by the other additions in Turkic verse listed above, it may be suggested that these verses are motivated by a desire to introduce Turkic-speaking Mamluks to this *topos* of Persophone courtly poetry during the fifteenth century and beyond.[105] In light of the other additions and retentions so far discussed, as well as considering the linguistic form of Ibn Ajā's Turkic verses analyzed in the following section, I believe this addition reflects his overarching aim to introduce his audience to a specific subset of Islamic discursive traditions as embedded in fifteenth century Persophone courtly culture.

Ibn Ajā's Turkic Versification of the *Futūḥ al-Shām* III: Linguistic Form and Mode of Transposition

After the detailed investigation of paratextual elements as well as additions and retentions by Ibn Ajā as compared to the Arabic prose narratives in the preceding sections, I will be comparatively brief in the following discussion of the form of Ibn Ajā's Turkic verses. Although I suggest a preliminary framework for the categorization of the linguistic form of this literary and courtly Turkic in the final section of this article, a detailed contextualization of Ibn Ajā's notation of Turkic in Arabic letters within other texts written in pre-sixteenth century southwest literary Turkic transcends the scope of the present

[102] Cf. the succinct commentary on this verse in the late fifteenth century *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn,* ed. Marwān Sawār (Beirut, 2000), 109.

[103] For the different stages of Kaʿb's conversion to Islam, including a prophetic vision *(ruʾyā),* see MS Karatay 489 = Koğuşlar 883, fols. 55r–58v.

[104] MS Saliha Hatun, fols. 13v–14r and 22r–22v.

[105] For the concept of a supra-linguistic *Persophonie,* see Bert G. Fragner, *Die "Persophonie"* (Berlin, 1999).

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contribution.[106] Accordingly, I limit myself to an exemplary investigation of the mode in which Ibn Ajā rephrased the text and content of the Arabic prose narratives in his Turkic verses.

As indicated by his criticism of the *ad hoc* translation of a hadith from al-Bukhārī at *uzun* Ḥasan's court as "without any order" *(bi-ghayr tartīb),*[107] Ibn Ajā's conception of a Turkic language appropriate for literary topics in a courtly setting is rooted in a stable set of normative paradigms. For his project of transposing the Arabic prose narratives of al-Wāqidī's *Futūḥ al-Shām* into Turkic verse, this normative standard is particularly significant in light of the Turkologic quip that "any Arabic phrase can be converted to Turkic by the addition of the copula *dir* at its end."[108] Accordingly, the independence of Ibn Ajā's Turkic wording from the wording of the Arabic prose narratives can by no means be taken for granted, as a (rather bad) Turkic versification of the Arabic text might conceivably be achieved by the addition of some (Turkic or Arabic) fillers and the copula *dir* to the wording of the Arabic. At the same time, the literary and court-appropriate register of Turkic aspired to by Ibn Ajā, as well as his stated intention of introducing Turkic-speaking Mamluks to the discursive traditions of (Arabophone) Islam, certainly necessitates the inclusion of Arabic words as markers of an Islamic literary register in his verses. Accordingly, Ibn Ajā's concept of literary Islamophone Turkic cannot be understood in terms of (distinctly modern?) notions of "linguistic purity." Instead, Ibn Ajā's court-appropriate Turkic must be approached as a literary Islamic language that actively blends terminology derived from Arabic, Turkic, and potentially even Persian within a linguistic matrix of cultured Turkic.

To ascertain the stability of Ibn Ajā's literary register of Turkic *vis-à-vis* its Arabic *Vorlage,* a viable first step lies in comparing some of the passages he translated into Turkic *mathnawī* verses with other passages written (at least as far as al-Wāqidī's *Futūḥ al-Shām* is concerned) *ex nihilo* and which do not occur in the Arabic prose narratives. Several versified passages whose subject matter does not appear in any of the Arabic prose versions consulted for this study and which must have been composed independently by Ibn Ajā are identified above. Accordingly, an exemplary comparison of the density of Arabic lexemes

[106] For an exemplary linguistic analysis of one of the manuscripts of the *dīwān* of Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī, see Orhan Yavuz, *Kansu Gavrî'nin Türkçe Dîvânı (Metin–İnceleme–Tıpkıbasım)* (Konya, 2002), 159–282.

[107] Ibn Ajā, "Tārīkh," MS Topkapı, fol. 145r, equivalent to MS Dār al-Kutub, 70; ed. Ṭulaymāt, 107; Dahmān, *ʿIrāk,* 117.

[108] I owe this concise phrasing to my esteemed teacher Jens Peter Laut. For the Turkic copula as derived from *tur–* see A. von Gabain, *Alttürkische Grammatik* (Wiesbaden, 1974), 126, as well as G. L. Lewis, *Turkish Grammar* (Oxford, 1978), 97.

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in translated and independent passages of Ibn Ajā's Turkic verse constitutes a first step in evaluating the stability of Ibn Ajā's versified Turkophone voice *vis-à-vis* its Arabic *Vorlage*.

Excluding proper names and the rubrics consistently written in Arabic, the number of Arabic lexemes in the eleven translated verses describing the arrival of Ḥimyar and the approval of their poetry (retained by Ibn Ajā in the Arabic original and therefore excluded from the present calculation) by Abū Bakr is 30 out of a total of 94 words (32 percent).[109] As a comparison, the number of Arabic lexemes within the 104 words contained in the first 11 verses of the afterword *(khātimah)* composed independently by Ibn Ajā is 43 (41 percent).[110] Although this analysis could certainly be refined by including additional verses,[111] the finding that the passages based on the *Vorlage* of an Arabic prose narrative do not display a higher density of Arabic lexemes than those passages which Ibn Ajā composed himself in a literary Turkic idiom can confidently be retained from this preliminary comparison.

A second mode of ascertaining the stability of Ibn Ajā's literary Turkic voice compared to his Arabic prose *Vorlage* is comparing the content of his Turkic verses with the content of the Arabic prose narratives. As in any literary translation, Ibn Ajā's poetic voice navigates the continuum between literality and independent re-narration of the content of his *Vorlage*. If we again turn to his treatment of the arrival of Ḥimyar and Abū Bakr's approval of their poetry as a preliminary case study, we find that Ibn Ajā's Turkic verse adds information not found in any of the consulted Arabic prose narratives. Upon their initial arrival, Ḥimyar is described in the Arabic prose narratives as equipped with (distinctly early or even pre-Islamic) *dāwūdī* corselets, *ʿādī* helmets, and Indian swords.[112] By

[109] MS Saliha Hatun, fols. 18r–18v.

[110] MS Karatay 489 = Koğuşlar 883, fol. 210v.

[111] Arguably, the somewhat surprising higher density of Arabic lexemes in the *khātimah* as compared to passages based on an Arabic prose *Vorlage* may reflect a somewhat higher register permeating Ibn Ajā's concluding advice as opposed to his description of the arrival of Ḥimyar. This interpretation would, however, be particularly significant if embedded within an investigation of the relative density of Arabic lexemes in different parts of compositions across pre-sixteenth-century literary (and/or versified) southwest Turkic (as well as of the relative density of Arabic lexemes in other Islamic literary and courtly languages of the same period such as Persian). As this transcends the scope of the present article, I limit myself to the preliminary exploration presented above.

[112] Al-Wāqidī, *Futūḥ* (Cairo, 1966), 1:3, and ibid., ed. ʿAbd al-Khāliq Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Khāliq, 1:8 *(wa-hum bi-al-durūʿ al-dāwūdīyah wa-al-bayḍ al-ʿādīyah wa-al-suyūf al-hindīyah)*. For *bayḍah,* literally egg, as a term denoting helmets, see Friedrich Wilhelm Schwarzlose, *Die Waffen der alten Araber aus ihren Dichtern dargestellt: Ein Beitrag zur arabischen Alterthumskunde, Synonymik und Lexicographie nebst Registern* (Leipzig, 1886), 349.

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contrast, Ibn Ajā's Turkic verses present them as equipped with naked helmets and corselets that are brown with the fur of sable.[113] Unfortunately, a confident reading of the following verse is hindered by the effacement of several letters by water. Nonetheless, the Arabic words *muwashshaḥ* (decorated), *murashshaḥ* (selected), and *qurbān* (sacrifice) can confidently be identified. None of these occurs in the consulted Arabic prose narratives.

Immediately after describing the accoutrement of Ḥimyar, the Arabic prose versions narrate how Dhū al-Kalāʿ, the famous leader of Ḥimyar during the early Islamic conquests, recited poetry in front of Abū Bakr.

> The first of them was Dhū al-Kalāʿ al-Ḥimyarī, may God be satisfied with him! When he was close to Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq, may God be satisfied with him! he wanted to inform him of his own rank, as well as that of his people. Thus, he greeted and began to chant the following verses.[114]

In Ibn Ajā's Turkic versification, the same scene is narrated as follows:

> In front was Dhū al-Kalāʿ, their general / Their advisor and their leader,
> He wanted to let him know his rank / As well
> as all the honor of his people.
> Arriving, he greeted Abū Bakr / Turning, he chanted these verses.[115]

Once again, Ibn Ajā's three Turkic verses contain several Arabic words that do not occur in any of the Arabic prose narratives that have been consulted *(amīr, mustashār, kabīr, maqām, iḥtirām,* and *niẓām,* as well as the verbal noun *inshād* instead of the finite verb *yunshidu).* The "openness" of al-Wāqidī's *Futūḥ al-Shām* certainly cautions against an overconfident exclusion of the possibility that Ibn Ajā's Arabic *Vorlage* may already have contained some of the additional information given by his Turkic verses. Nonetheless, the agreement of all consulted Arabic prose versions against Ibn Ajā strongly suggests that Ibn Ajā did indeed add

[113] MS Saliha Hatun, fol. 18r *(kalan awwal qabīlah ḥimyar yidī/ishīghī ʿārah dirʿī sāmur yidī).* I interpret *ishīghī* as a variant form of *āshīq,* iron helmet or skull cap, cf. the *lemma āshīq* in James W. Redhouse, *A Turkish and English Lexicon* (reprint Istanbul, 2006), 125, and the form *sāmur* as a (possibly etymologizing) conflation of Arabic *samura,* to be brown, with Arabic *sammūr,* sable.

[114] Al-Wāqidī, *Futūḥ* (Cairo, 1966), 1:3, and ibid., ed. ʿAbd al-Khāliq Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Khāliq, 1:8 *(wa-amāmahum Dhū al-Kalāʿ al-ḥimyarī, raḍiya Allāh ʿanhu, fa-lammā qaruba min al-ṣiddīq, raḍiya Allāh ʿanhu, aḥabba an yuʿarrifahū bi-makānihī wa-qawmihī wa-ashāra bi-al-salām wa-jaʿala yunshidu wa-yaqūlu).*

[115] MS Saliha Hatun, fol. 18r *(ūñinjah dhū al-kalāʿ ūlmish amīrī/ichindah mustashārī ham kabīrī// dilādī bildurāh nah dur maqāmī/dakhī qawmindah nījah iḥtirāmī//kalub wirdī abū bakra salāmī/dunub inshād itdī bū niẓāmī).*

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these details. This suggestion that his poetic Turkic voice must be understood as stable and well-ordered is further corroborated by such characteristically Turkic syntactic constructions as the converbs *kalub/dunub* or, in modern Turkish orthography, *gelip/dönüp*.[116] The poetic quality of his verses is further enhanced by the successful deployment of rhetorical parallelisms within given verses. Within the lines discussed above, examples occur both within one hemistich *(ishīghī ʿārah–dirʿī sāmur yidī)* and across the two hemistichs of one verse *(uñinjah–ichindah,* as well as the already mentioned converbs *kalub–dunub).*

From a linguistic perspective, this very preliminary survey suggests that Ibn Ajā's literary Turkic voice is indeed stable in its integration of Arabic terms both in passages he translated and in those he added to the narrative. In addition, the mode of re-narration followed by Ibn Ajā organically rephrases and even rethinks the plot of the Arabic prose narratives within the structure of idiomatic Turkic syntax, while integrating non-Turkic words as indices of a courtly and literary Islamic register. In a way particularly fascinating to the present author, Ibn Ajā's Turkic retelling of al-Wāqidī's *Futūḥ al-Shām* appears to proceed via a visual interface equivalent to some sort of internal cinema screen. In the case of the warlike accoutrements of Ḥimyar translated above, this "internal cinematization" actualized the material culture of able warriors to better accord with the standards of the fifteenth-century Mamluk realms, replacing *dāwūdī* corselets with corselets featuring sable fur. According to this suggestion, Ibn Ajā's Turkic verses not only display a remarkable stability and level of Islamic culture, but even actualize the iconography of the narrative to better reflect the material culture of his audience.

Conclusion and Outlook: Ottoman Turkish, Anatolian Turkic, or Pre-Sixteenth-Century Southwest Literary Turkic?

As has been shown in this article, Ibn Ajā's Turkic versification of al-Wāqidī's *Futūḥ al-Shām* continues the overarching pattern of his biographical trajectory in combining his background in Arabic-Islamic scholarly traditions with his knowledge of Turkic to establish himself as a courtly scholar rooted in the Mamluk realms. In this context, the elaborate decoration of the second volume of his work that is prominently dedicated to Qāytbāy signals Ibn Ajā's attempt to establish himself at the court of the Mamluk sultan with this translation. In this project, Ibn Ajā's poetic voice succeeds in spanning the divide between being understandable as idiomatic and eloquent Turkic and clearly pertaining to a literary Islamic register suitable for courtly presentation and performance. Ac-

[116] Cf. von Gabain, *Grammatik,* 120, and Lewis, *Grammar,* 177–79.

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cordingly, his Turkic translation of al-Wāqidī's *Futūḥ al-Shām* represents a masterpiece of pre-sixteenth-century literary Turkic, notwithstanding the unclear extent of its reception in pre-industrial and modern times.

A question remains, however, regarding the proper designation and categorization of the Turkic language written by Ibn Ajā. Although no systematic linguistic study of the entire corpus has been made,[117] his Turkic poetical voice appears to pertain to the same tradition that is attested for his patron Yashbak and Sultan Qāytbāy together with their surroundings,[118] and that is subsequently cultivated at the court of Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī.[119] In one of her pioneering studies of this corpus, Barbara Flemming framed this literary Turkic voice as "the old-Anatolian–Turkic literary language current in Anatolia during the fourteenth and likely also during the fifteenth century, and which continued to thrive in the Mamluk realms longer than in the Ottoman empire."[120] This framing also enables her identification of "Azeri colorations,"[121] situating the southwestern branch of literary Turkic within the emerging Islamic and Turkophone world of Azeri and *chaghatāy* poetry during the second half of the fifteenth century.[122] Flemming's framing also resonates well with the identification of an adaptation of Nawāʾī's eastern or *chaghatāy* Turkic poetry to Azeri Oghuz Turkic in a manuscript dated to 876 by Aftandil Erkinov.[123] Elsewhere, Flemming also admits the

[117] For a linguistic discussion of the poetry preserved in the so-called *dīwān* of Qānṣūh, see Yavuz, *Kansu,* 159–282, but cf. Robert Dankoff's corrections in his review of Yavuz's work (*Mamlūk Studies Review* 8, no. 1 [2004]: 303–7).

[118] See Flemming, "Šerīf," 87–89, idem, "Activities," 253, as well as Kristof D'hulster, "'Sitting with Ottomans and Standing with Persians': The *Šāhnāme-yi Türkī* as a Highlight of Mamluk Court Culture," in *Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Eras* VI, ed. Urbain Vermeulen and Kristof D'hulster (Leuven, 2010), 233. For some additional texts pertaining to the era of Qāytbāy, cf. Barbara Flemming, "Zum Stand der Mamluk-Türkischen Forschung," in *XIX. Deutscher Orientalistentag 1975 in Freiburg im Breisgau: Vorträge,* Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft, Supplement 3, 2 (Wiesbaden, 1977), 1158.

[119] See for the performative display of Islamic learning and culture at his court—in addition to the pioneering study of Barbara Flemming, "Aus den Nachtgesprächen Sultan Ġaurīs," in *Folia Rara Wolfgang Voigt LXV. Diem Natalem Celebranti ab Amicis et Catalogorum Codicum Orientalium Conscribendorum Collegis Dedicata,* ed. H. Franke, W. Heissig, and W. Treue (Wiesbaden, 1976), 22–28—the recent detailed study by Christian Mauder, *In the Sultan's Salon: Learning, Religion and Rulership at the Mamluk Court of Qāniṣawh al-Ghawrī (r. 1501–1516)* (Leiden, 2021); as well as the monograph of D'hulster, *Browsing*.

[120] Barbara Flemming, "Ein Gazel von Ḥasan Oġlï (Unbekannte Gedichte im Dīvān von Sultan Ġavrī)," in *Bilimsel Bildiriler* (Ankara, 1975), 338.

[121] Flemming, "Stand der Forschung," 1158.

[122] Barbara Flemming, *Die Sprachen der Türkischen Dichter* (Leiden, 1977), 17.

[123] Aftandil Erkinov, "From Herat to Shiraz: The Unique Manuscript (876/1471) of ʿAlī Shīr Nawāʾī's Poetry from Aq Qoyunlu Circle," *Cahiers d'Asie centrale* 24 (2015): 61–62; and ʿAlī-Shīr

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designation of the literary language of Ibn Ajā and his peers as "old-Anatolian Turkic or Ottoman Turkish."[124] Nonetheless, it is clear that the second term cannot be taken to imply that the centrality of the Ottoman state to the subsequent development of this language after the Ottoman occupation of the formerly Mamluk realms should be extended to the fifteenth or even fourteenth century.

The linguistic form of Ibn Ajā's poetic Turkic voice is largely understandable to a modern scholar familiar with Ottoman Turkish, and the present author has also sometimes consulted the [Ottoman] Turkish Lexicon of James Redhouse. At least since Robert Dankoff's review of two modern Turkish editions of the *dīwān* of Qānṣūh, however, the nuanced framing proposed by Flemming has commonly been supplanted by a confident designation of this literary Turkic tradition cultivated in the Mamluk realms as "Ottoman."[125] As proposed by Dankoff's discussion of Yavuz's linguistic analysis of Qānṣūh's *dīwān,* this linguistic analysis "struck this reviewer as largely unnecessary since Gavri's language is generally simple and straig[h]tforward and departs in no way from standard Ottoman Turkish."[126] Although this assessment may well be linguistically feasible,[127] it risks being misunderstood as negating the rootedness of the Turkic cultivated at the court of Qānṣūh in the earlier performative Mamluk courtly culture of Yashbak and Qāytbāy.[128]

The somewhat overconfident application of a purely linguistic perspective rooted in post-fifteenth-century Ottoman Turkish by Dankoff is particularly unfortunate due to the subsequent elaboration of his designation of this tradition as "Ottoman" within a framework of "Ottomanization before conquest" of the Mamluk realms in the early sixteenth century. To be sure, the framing of the later years of the Mamluk sultanate as a transitional period is compelling

Nawā'ī, *Āqqūyūnlī Mukhlislār Dīwānī/Dīvān of the Aq Qoyunlu Admirers (1471),* ed. Aftandil Erkinov (Tokyo, 2015).

[124] Flemming, *Sprachen,* 17.

[125] But cf. the designation as "a Western-Turkic literary tradition" and "Medieval Literary Western Turkic" by D'hulster (*Browsing,* 36 and 269). Note that these terms do not acknowledge the meaningful distinction between "Azeri" and "southwest" literary Turkic during the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. They also do not reflect the linguistic shift from earlier "Mamluk-Qipchaq" to "supra-regional southwest literary" Turkic written in the Mamluk realms from Qāytbāy onward, which is acknowledged by D'hulster (ibid., 269).

[126] Dankoff, review of Yavuz, *Kansu,* 303–4.

[127] This would be the case if the average internal divergences within the corpus of early sixteenth-century literary Turkic texts produced for the Ottoman court were equal to or greater than the average linguistic distance between the poetry in Qānṣūh's *dīwān* and this corpus.

[128] See Flemming, "Activities," 88, for the emulation of Yashbak's courtly culture by Qānṣūh.

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and fruitful[129] and the framing of "Ottomanization before conquest" has much to contribute to understanding the military history of the Islamic Near East in particular between the final quarter of the fifteenth and the first quarter of the sixteenth century.[130] Nonetheless, Christian Mauder's application of Dankoff's ahistorical labelling as Ottoman Turkish of the linguistic form of Turkic poetry at Qānṣūh's court as part of the same frame of "Ottomanization before conquest" obscures the rootedness of literary Turkic within the courtly representation of Qānṣūh in the earlier Mamluk precedents of Yashbak and Qāytbāy.[131] Notwithstanding Mauder's numerous well-taken observations, I believe that the linguistic register to which Ibn Ajā's Turkic versification of al-Wāqidī's *Futūḥ al-Shām* pertains cannot yet be understood as presaging the subsequent political rise of the Ottoman empire until the mid-sixteenth century.

Against the implied directionality of "Ottoman Turkish," I understand the situation of literary and courtly Islamic Turkic in 880/1475–76, when Ibn Ajā finished his "courtly" copy of the manuscript, as part of an emerging realm of literary Turkic cultivated at different courts that can possibly be contrasted with the emerging parallel spheres of Azeri and *chaghatāy* Turkic. Accordingly, I propose the term "southwest" literary Turkic as a geographical container for a linguistic milieu that may well have formed the background to the subsequent rise of Turkish as a literary language cultivated on an imperial scale by the Ottoman court from the mid-sixteenth century onward.[132]

Although this framing also occurs in the pioneering work of Flemming, Yavuz's overconfident interpretation of Qānṣūh's Turkic poetry as representative of a homogenous Anatolian Turkic vernacular is similarly misleading. This is exemplified by the implicit framing of his presentation of Anatolian Turkic in the Mamluk realms:

[129] See Stephan Conermann and Gül Şen, "Introduction: A Transitional Point of View," in *The Mamluk–Ottoman Transition: Continuity and Change in Egypt and Bilād al-Shām in the Sixteenth Century,* ed. Stephan Conermann and Gül Şen (Göttingen, 2017), 13–31.

[130] See the exemplary contribution by Albrecht Fuess, "Why Domenico Had to Die and Black Slaves Wore Red Uniforms: Military Technology and Its Decisive Role in the 1517 Ottoman Conquest of Egypt," in *Transition,* ed. Conermann and Şen, 131–54.

[131] See Christian Mauder, "Ottomanization before the Conquest? Mamluk–Ottoman Religious and Cultural Entanglements in the Courtly Salons of Qānişawh al-Ghawrī and Post-conquest Gatherings," in *The Mamluk–Ottoman Transition: Continuity and Change in Egypt and Bilād al-Shām in the Sixteenth Century, 2*, ed. Stephan Conermann and Gül Şen (Göttingen, 2022), 418–21.

[132] For the connectedness of courtly literary Turkic across the emerging spheres of southwest, Azeri, and *"chaghatāy"* Turkic in the performative culture of different rulers, see D'hulster, *Browsing,* 291–94.

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> On the one hand, Anatolian Turkic *(Anadolu Türkçesi)* may have been particularly accessible and useful compared to other Turkic dialects *(diğer Türk lehçelerine nazaran).* Additionally, the cultivation for political reasons of the languages of Turkic, Arabic, and Persian in the administration of Egypt under the Turkic Mamluks meant that Turkic scholars and poets *(Türk âlim ve şâirler)* were held in high esteem. Accordingly, many scholars and poets from Turkic realms near and far *(uzak ve yakın Türk memleketlerinden)* flocked to Egypt. Coupled with the regular journeys of connoisseurs and poets living in Anatolia *(Anadolu'da yetişen edip ve şairler)* to Egypt for the purpose of studying, this rendered the Mamluk realms a fertile ground for the composition of many beautiful works of Anatolian Turkic.[133]

Notwithstanding the value of detailed linguistic analysis such as his, however, Yavuz's framing of literary Turkic as part of a dialectal landscape *(Anadolu Türkçesi* vs. *diğer Türk lehçeleri)* is misleading as it misrepresents the degree of literary artificiality inherent in this courtly language and register.[134] This artificiality of the supra-regional literary Turkic cultivated by Ibn Ajā and others is starkly exemplified by the biography of the famous poet Sharīf, who wrote in this idiom.[135] Although he successfully established himself as one of the paramount poets writing southwest literary Turkic at the princely Ottoman court of Cem and subsequently at the Mamluk court of Qānṣūh, Sharīf originally hailed from the town of Āmid/Diyarbakır, where an Azeri variety of Turkic remained the predominant form of vernacular Turkic until the seventeenth century, if not longer.[136] Accordingly, the linguistic form of courtly Turkic cultivated by Sharīf, Ibn Ajā, and other Mamluk courtiers during the last quarter of the fifteenth and the first decade of the sixteenth centuries cannot be explained as a

[133] Yavuz, *Kansu,* 25.

[134] This was already suggested in passing by Flemming, "Stand der Forschung," 1159 ("in der Literaturforschung [sollten] die literarischen Phänomene nicht länger dem Dialektbegriff subsumiert werden").

[135] For him, see the pathbreaking article of Flemming, "Šerīf," as well as D'hulster, *"Šāhnāme,"* 235–50.

[136] For the classification of the Turkic idiom of Diyarbakır reported by Evliya Çelebi as "close to Azeri," see Martin van Bruinessen, "The Population of Diyarbekir: Ethnic Composition and Other Demographic Data," in *Evliya Çelebi in Diyarbekir: The Relevant Section of the Seyahatname,* ed. Martin van Bruinessen and Hendrik Boeschoten (Leiden, 1988), 29, as well as the discussion of Evliya Çelebi's sample of the Turkic vernacular of Diyarbakır during the seventeenth century by Hendrik Boeschoten, "The Seyahatname as a Source for Linguistic Investigation," in *Evliya Çelebi in Diyarbekir,* ed. van Bruinessen and Boeschoten, 100–3.

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homogenized "Anatolian Turkic vernacular." Instead, their idiom must be approached as a nuanced and stable literary language that was established at various Turkophone courts of the Near East.

Although it assuredly is something of a mouthful, I therefore suggest the designation "pre-sixteenth-century southwest literary Turkic" as a less misleading categorization compared to "Ottoman Turkish," with its implied political and dynastic directionality, or "Anatolian Turkic," with its implied suggestion of a homogenized vernacular. As I hope to have shown, Ibn Ajā's Turkic versification of the *Futūḥ al-Shām* of al-Wāqidī is indeed, as intended by its author, composed in a stable and quite beautiful literary idiom suitable for presentation and performance at the court. In this regard, it forms a necessary precedent for the subsequent commission of a Turkic versified *Shāhnāmah* by Qānṣūh and the huge popularity this text later enjoyed among Ottoman Turkish connoisseurs.[137] Accordingly, Ibn Ajā's versified Turkic rendering of al-Wāqidī's *Futūḥ al-Shām* marks an initial stage in the transregional consolidation of literary Turkic as performed in a courtly setting. Even if this convergence was consummated under Ottoman rulers, however, the Turkic voices of Ibn Ajā and his peers writing in the late Mamluk realms serve to remind us that the original milieus of elements subsequently integrated in "Ottoman" imperial culture deserve study on their own terms.

[137] See Mauder, "Ottomanization," 421–24.

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