Iranian Studies, 2019
Vol. 52, Nos. 3–4, 299–337, https://doi.org/10.1080/00210862.2019.1646121

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Azerbaijan between Two Empires: A Contested Borderland in the Early Modern Period (Sixteenth-Eighteenth Centuries)

The first part of the paper examines the evolution and transformation of Safavid ideology in the context of confessional changes and the role of Turkoman tribes in the Safavid social movement in the Ottoman-Iranian borderland. The second part examines the impact of Ottoman-Safavid wars and religious rivalry on the society and economy of Azerbaijan from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries.

Keywords: Safavid; Ottoman; Sufism; Qizilbash; Azerbaijan; Anatolia; Social Movements; Empires and Borderlands

The history of the Ottoman-Safavid borderlands in the early modern period has not received much attention beyond the history of warfare written by historians of the Ottoman Empire as well as Iran.[1] While Ottomanist historians have paid a great deal of attention to the history of the Ottoman-Balkan frontier, they have largely ignored the Ottoman-Iranian borderland. Moreover, national historiographies by both sides have failed to pay much attention to the political, demographic, religious and social changes in this important borderland during the early modern period.[2] Except for a few scholarly works, the history of Ottoman-Safavid borderland remains sketchy due to the dearth of archival material and early Safavid chronicles and the bias in the later histories written by both Ottoman and Safavid official chroniclers.[3] European narrative accounts and travelogues have their own biases, although

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[1]Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlı-Iran Siyasi Münasebetleri*; Kırzıoğlu, *Osmanlıların Kafkas-Elleri'ni Fethi*.

[2]For a recent example of Iranian historiography see, Parsadust, *Shah Ismāʿil-i Avval*; Abisaab, *Converting Persia*; Allouche, *The Origins and Development of Ottoman-Safavid Conflict*; Melville, *Safavid Persia*; Mitchell, *The Practice of Politics in Safavid Iran*; Newman, *Society and Culture in the Early Modern Middle East*; Savory, *Iran under the Safavids*; Salehi, *Nasrullah*; Rizvi, *Kishwar*; Uluçay, *Çagatay*; and Zarinebaf, "Asserting Military Power."

[3]For a critical analysis of Safavid sources, see Morton, "The Early Years of Shah Ismāʿil." He also underlines the importance of European (Venetian and Portuguese sources). Ottoman chronicles typically carry a very anti-Safavid and anti-Qizilbash bias while Safavid sources ignore the formative period and events in Anatolia. Most Ottoman archival sources are official reports and are very biased against the Qizilbash. See Zarinebaf-Shahr, "Qizilbash Heresy and Rebellion." See also Ghereghlou, "Chronicling a Dynasty on the Make."

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https://doi.org/10.1080/00210862.2019.1646121 Published online by Cambridge University Press

they are very important for this period if they are treated carefully. We also lack a critical treatment of narrative sources in Ottoman, Persian and European languages on the early Safavid period.[4] However, this field is now receiving more attention from scholars with access to archival and narrative sources.[5]

The rise of confessional states and the consolidation of religious and political boundaries in the Ottoman-Iranian borderland was the most important development in the early modern Middle East. Both states rose to power in the fluid and diverse landscape of Anatolia and Azerbaijan. The political vacuum created by the weakening of the Byzantine Empire after the Fourth Crusade and the sack of Constantinople in 1204, the Mongol invasions from the 1220s to1250 (end of Abbasid Sunni caliphate in Baghdad) led to the massive settlement of Turkoman tribes in the region. The largest wave of Turkoman tribes from Central Asia into Iran and Anatolia took place during the Mongol invasions. They served in the army and in time formed tribal principalities (*beyliks*) and confederations all over Anatolia and Azerbaijan (Qaraquyunlu and Aqquyunlu) in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Undoubtedly, many settled in ethnically mixed regions, intermarried with the local populations (Greeks, Persians, etc.) and some engaged in raids for booty against the Byzantine lands.

The process of centralization in the Ottoman Empire speeded up after the conquest of Constantinople in May 1453. Sultan Mehmed II (1451-81) centralized the empire after the conquest of Constantinople in 1453, reduced the power of Turkoman tribes in the cavalry, expanded the *devşirme* system (recruitment of slave soldiers from among Balkan Christians) in the military and bureaucracy and reduced the endowments of Sufi orders. He also established central control over Islamic as well as non-Muslim religious establishment (i.e. Greek Orthodox Patriarchate) and issued Sultanic edicts (*kanunname*s) that regulated state-church relations as well as center-periphery governance and taxation. His policies, however, generated backlashes in Anatolia and led to social upheavals.

Moreover, the involvement of European powers such as Venice, Portugal and the Hapsburg Empire in the Ottoman-Safavid conflict deepened the divide between the two states. The Safavids (1501-1722) actively sought a joint alliance with Catholic states (Venice, Spain) and the Vatican against the Ottoman state and sought military aid, diplomatic and commercial alliance.[6] England became a close ally of the Safavids in the struggle against Portugal in the Persian Gulf in the early seventeenth century (see Daniel Razzari's paper in this issue). Shah Ismaʿil (1501-24) was known as the Sophi (Sufi and wise man) and enjoyed a positive image in Europe, unlike the Ottoman sultans. Europe's commercial and diplomatic involvement in Iran dated back to the Il-Khanid (1250-1334) and Aqquyunlu (1467-1508) periods, if not earlier. Venetian envoys left a rich record of travel and diplomacy to the Safavid capital, Tabriz.[7] I have shown elsewhere that European states (with the exception

[4]For the pre-Safavid period see the excellent study of Woods, *The Aqquyunlu*.

[5]See Riyāhi, *Sefaratnameh hay-e Iran*.

[6]For a recent study of diplomacy between the Safavid Empire, European states and Mughal India see Floor and Herzig, *Iran and the World in the Safavid Age*.

[7]Amoretti, *Sah Ismāʿil nei "Diarii" di Marin Sanudao*; Welch, "Safavid Iran."

https://doi.org/10.1080/00210862.2019.1646121 Published online by Cambridge University Press

of Spain and Portugal) sought their own diplomatic and commercial treaties with the Ottoman Empire since the Levant trade was still very important for the English, Dutch, French and Venetian traders.[8]

In this paper, I will first provide a historical backdrop to the rise of Safavids to power with a focus on social upheavals and the role of Turkoman tribes in the foundation of the Safavid state. In other words, I will emphasize the Anatolian dimension of the Safavid revolution among the Turkoman tribes, which felt alienated by the expansionist and centralizing policies of Ottoman sultans after 1453. I will emphasize the impact of Ottoman expansionist and centralizing policies in religious, political and economic developments in the borderland (an area stretching from Tabriz to eastern Anatolia, formerly controlled by Uzun Hasan Aqquyunlu (1457-78). In the second part of the paper, I will focus on the impact of the Ottoman-Safavid wars and occupation on the militarized landscape of Azerbaijan. I will argue that the Ottoman-Safavid wars that lasted for more than 200 years, the Ottoman occupations of greater Azerbaijan and the silk-producing region of Shirvan led to the decline of economic life and the devastation of this region.[9] I will compare the two Ottoman occupations of Azerbaijan in the late sixteenth (1585-1603) and the early eighteenth centuries (1725-30) and will highlight the transformation of Ottoman policies in administering this rich borderland during these two periods.[10] I will argue that the longest Ottoman occupation of Azerbaijan in the late sixteenth century witnessed tight Ottoman central control over this province based on Ottoman archival sources like the Mühimme Defterleri (registers of important affairs), Maliyeden Müdevver Defterleri (the registers of the finance department) and cadastral surveys (Tapu Tahrir collection) for Tabriz and Azerbaijan. During the eighteenth century, the Ottoman fiscal system had shifted from the *timar* system (tax grants controlled by members of the Ottoman military) to the tax farming system, where the local notables as well as members of the Ottoman military-administrative elite held control over the lucrative sources of revenue for short periods of time. Under both systems, the oppressive policies of Ottoman tax collectors led to local rebellions in the countryside, making Ottoman control over Azerbaijan very tentative. It also forced the local notables to seek their fortunes in different camps, shifting their loyalties from the Ottomans to Safavids and vice versa in order to survive.[11]

A Sacred Borderland: The Shaykh Safi Tariqa between Azerbaijan and Anatolia

One of the most important confessional developments in the history of this period was the transformation of the Shaykh Safi Sufi order in Ardabil from a Sunni *tariqa* into a militant Shiʿi order with a large following among the Turcoman

[8]Zarinebaf, *Mediterranean Encounters*.
[9]Zarinebaf-Shahr, "Tabriz under Ottoman Rule," 150-2.
[10]Ibid., 23-34. See also Başbakanlık Archives, Istanbul, Tapu Tahrir defteri (TT.d) 904 & 908.
[11]Genç, "From Tabriz to Istanbul."

https://doi.org/10.1080/00210862.2019.1646121 Published online by Cambridge University Press

tribes in Anatolia during the fifteenth century.[12] In this part of the paper, I will argue that religious developments in post-Mongol Iran, Timur's invasion of Anatolia in 1402, Ottoman expansion into eastern Anatolia later in the century and the devolution of Aqquyunlu state were crucial political events that set the stage for social upheavals and civil wars that increasingly took on a religious expression (the Baba'i and Shah Kulu rebellions) under the leadership of Sufi orders.[13]

The Shaykh Safi order was one of the most prestigious orders in the late medieval Middle East and enjoyed a wide network in Azerbaijan and Anatolia under the patronage of the Il-Khanids, the Timurids, and even the Ottomans. The Ottoman rulers allowed Khalifes to preach and gather followers in Anatolia, who donated money, property (*waqfs*) and goods to this order until the late fifteenth century. The adherence of Turkoman tribes like the Rumlu from Sivas, Tokat and Amasya; the Ustajlu also from Sivas, the Tekkelu from Tekke and Menteşe, the Shamlu from Gaziantep, Aleppo and Antakya and the Zulqadirlu from Maraş, the Afshar and Bayat from Azerbaijan enhanced the influence and prestige of the order in the fifteenth century.

Historians have highlighted the importance of popular Sufi orders in post-Mongol Iran and Anatolia and their role in social movements.[14] The prominent Turkish historian Mehmet Fuad Koprulu has underlined the spread of "batini" Shiʿi social movements through Sufi orders like the Hurufis, Sarbadarids, Nurbakhshis, and Nimatullahis and Safavis in post-Mongol Iran that continued into the Timurid period as well as the Aqquyunlu era (Khurasan, Azerbaijan and Iraq).[15] He argues that Shiʿi *batini* tendencies were quite widespread among Turkoman populations (except for Transoxiana) and the Sunni ruling class (the Aqquyunlu) tolerated it.[16] For example, the Ahl al-Haqq or Ali-Ilahis (deifiers of Ali) in Azerbaijan can be traced the medieval period (tenth and eleventh century). They shared many beliefs in common with the Nusayris of northern Syria well as the Yazidi Kurds. Mostly of rural backgrounds, they believed in the divinity of Ali, the veneration of the twelve Imams, and the transmigration of souls.[17]

Marshall Hodgson has underlined the spread of Alid-based *tariqa* Sufism and the decline of Shari'a-minded Islam in post-Mongol Iran. He has rightly drawn our attention to the emergence of New Shiʿism or *tariqa* Shiʿism in the fifteenth century, differentiating it from Imami Shiʿism in its esoteric tendencies and its emphasis on a

[12]Zarinebaf, "The Safavid Empire."
[13]Ocak, *Zındıklar ve Mülhidler*.
[14]Karamustafa, *Unruly Friends of God*; Karamustafa, "Kaygusuz Abdal."
[15]Köprülü, *Islam in Anatolia after the Turkish Invasion*, 33-51.
[16]Ibid., 50-1. On Haydari dervishes, see Karamutafa, *Unruly Friends of God*, 67-70.
[17]Winter, *History*, 22-33. They may have been the precursors of Safavid Shiʿism. Winter believes that Nusayrism and Imami Shiʿism spread to the entire Middle Euphrates from Aleppo to Antioch, the coastal area in Syria, Sayda and Tyre (Jabal 'Amil), Tripol, Latakia, Ham and Homs and even eastern Anatolia (Bidlis, Erzincan). Shiʿi shrines developed in many towns in the tenth century. The Alawis and Shiʿis may have constituted a single confessional bloc during this period. Winter argues the distinction between these communities emerged in twelfth century when Jabal 'Amil emerged as the intellectual center of scholastic Imami Shiʿism. The Ismāʿilis were their principal rival.

https://doi.org/10.1080/00210862.2019.1646121 Published online by Cambridge University Press

special revelation based on the secret teachings of Ali.[18] Ali ibn Abu Talib, the cousin and son-in law of Prophet Muhammad, the first Shiʿi imam and the fourth Sunni caliph, was an important figure as the 'perfect man and guide with esoteric knowledge' for many Sunni Sufi orders as well. Such *tariqas* as the Kubrawiyya, the Nurbakhshiyya, the Ni'matullahi as well as the Hurufis and Bektaşis rejected the Sunni compromise with temporal authority and awaited the appearance of a *qutb*, saint or *mahdi* to install a universal monarchy and to establish just rule on an earth afflicted with suffering and falsehood.[19] The esoteric devotion to the Sufi saint or *qutb* displayed what Marshall Hodgson described as chiliastic vision that could lead to movements of social protest that were both anti-conventional and anti-privilege.[20] Sufi preachers and orders could mobilize the countryside against rulers by advocating equality as well as social justice. Hodgson is right to point out that in Iran many cities were divided into Sunni and Shiʿi factions by the late fifteenth century. Ahmet Karamustafa has underscored the spread of vernacular Islam in Anatolia through Sufi preachers and orders in the medieval period.[21]

John Woods has also drawn our attention to the rise of militant and messianic Sufi orders, some of which were Shiʿitized in the aftermath of the Mongol invasions in Kurdistan, Khurasan, Azerbaijan, central Anatolia and southern Iran. According to him, the Il-Khanid patronage of Twelver Shiʿism after the elimination of the Abbasid caliphate in 1258, the influence of the militant Nizari Shiʿism (Ismaʿilis or Sevener Shiʿis) and the confluence of *futtuwwa* doctrine and folk religion (i.e. shamanism) were important developments that changed the religious balance between the Sunnis and Shiʿis in the fourteenth century. Furthermore, Woods believes that the new Safavid dispensation was very similar to the rise and fall of the Aqquyunlu confederate clans and the bloody civil wars that broke out among these clans. In many ways, the Safavids, who were related to the Aqquyunlu rulers through marriage (Uzun Hasan was Ismaʿil's grandfather), formed their own clan and restored the Aqquyunlu in a new dispensation after its devolution.[22] After the devolution of Aqquyunlu state, they united these tribes in a new dispensation under the leadership of the Shaykh Safi order in Ardabil in Azerbaijan. In a sense, the rise of the Safavids to power was very similar to the rise of the Ottomans, who used tribes and dervish orders to expand and legitimize their rule.

In the absence of early Safavid sources, much speculation has been placed on the rise and transformation of the Shaykh Safi order in Azerbaijan from a Sunni Sufi order to a militant Shiʿi order in the fifteenth century. Ottoman and Safavid chronicles do not cover this period in any detail and official histories written in the late sixteenth century have their own biases on both sides.[23] Among Safavid sources, Hasan Rumlu's *Ahsan at-Tavarikh* (1577) incorporates the history of Anatolia and the Ottoman Empire

[18]Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam,* vol. 2, 494.
[19]Bashir, "After the Messiah."
[20]Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, vols. 2, 3.
[21]On the role of Turkoman tribes from Anatolia in early Safavid history see, Sümer, *Safevi Develtinin Kuruluşu*, 15-42; Hinz, *Uzun Hasan ve Şeyh Cüneyd*.
[22]Woods, *The Aqquyunlu*, 168-9.
[23]See also Calmard, "Shiʿi Rituals and Power II."

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into that of the early Safavid period but does not focus on religious developments.[24] Rumlu was a Qizilbash, who made use of oral sources floating among the Qizilbash but viewed their role from a central and state perspective. Iskandar Beg Monshi's (1560-1632) history of Shah Abbas the Great was also written in the late sixteenth century and followed Rumlu's history as well as the anonymous history of Shah Ismaʿil (*Alam Aray-i Shah Isma'il*). Monshi admitted that he lacked new information on the earlier period.[25] Aqquyunlu (Ruzbehan Khunji) and Ottoman official historians (Mustafa Celal Zade and Idris Bidlisi) carry their own centrist biases.[26] Ottoman and Persian archival documents on the other hand offer invaluable information on developments in the periphery.

However, the history of the early phase of the order down to the fifteenth century is still shrouded in mystery and we have to balance the study of Safavid and Ottoman chronicles with European narratives and a few archival sources. The Sarih al-Milk register of the endowments of the Shaykh Safi order from the early fourteenth to the early seventeenth century shows that the Sunni Il-Khanid ruler Gazan Khan and his minister, Rashid ad-Din Fazlallah set up major endowments in Azerbaijan and Anatolia for the order in the fourteenth century.[27] Timur also supported the order and provided it with rich endowments and Turkoman captives from Anatolia, underscoring its Sunni origin. The patronage of Il-Khanid and Timurid rulers and elites that included women enhanced the prestige of this order and expanded its economic orbit and *waqf* holdings from Azerbaijan to Anatolia.[28] The Ottoman rulers respected the *waqf* status of the order when they invaded Azerbaijan, probably due to its Sunni origin, and protected it from confiscation and extraordinary taxes. They prepared a survey of the *waqf* properties in Ardabil, which were initially tax exempt and collected one-third of its revenue in 1728.[29] They normally converted many Shiʿi *waqfs* to Sunni ones when they occupied Azerbaijan.

Most scholars agree on the Sunni origins of the order, which was established sometime in the fourteenth century during the Il-Khanid rule (1258-1334) in Ardabil, a city in Iranian Azerbaijan.[30] Muhammad Amin Riyahi accepts the view of Muham-

[24]Rumlu, *Ahsan al-Tavrikh*.

[25]Monshi, *History of Shah Abbas the Great*, 43; Anonymous, *Alam Aray-i Safavi*. This book was also composed in the late sixteenth century (1086 AH) probably by a Qizilbash author and covers a brief history of Shaykh Safi order until the death of Haydar and the political history of Shah Ismāʿil's reign. See also Ghereghlou, "Chronicling a Dynasty on the Make," 808-9.

[26]For example see Celal-Zade, *Selim-Name*; Genç, "From Tabriz to Istanbul."

[27]See the *Sarih al-Milk* documents (Regenstein Library, Chicago, Sarih al-Milk Register) for this order used in Zarinebaf, "Economic Activities of Safavid Women," 253-4. See in this article, the endowment activities of Junayd and Haydar as well as prominent Il-Khanid and Safavid women the shrine in the fifteenth century. The fortunes of the shrine rose during the sixteenth century.

[28]Ibid.

[29] Başbakanlık Archives (BBA), Istanbul, Mühimme Defterleri, vols. 32, 33, 73, 133, Tapu Tahrir Defterleri 896. See also Zarinebaf-Shahr, "The Ottoman Administration," 235. See a list of these properties and revenues in this article.

[30]Kasravi, "Shaykh Safi ve Tabârash," 177-88. It is uncertain that Ismāʿil himself ever claimed direct descent from Shiʿi imams. Kasravi believes that the Safavids were originally Yazidi Kurds who migrated from Mosul to Azerbaijan and were Turkified later.

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mad Kasravi that Shaykh Safi was actually Kurdish in origin and was a Shafi'i Sunni, which may explain the patronage of Sunni rulers. Like many Sufi orders in the region, the *tariqa* was probably Shiʿitized sometime in the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century. The Shiʿi origin of Shaykh Safi was forged in the sixteenth century during Shah Tahmasp's reign.[31] Riyahi also states that Junayd was actually influenced by the Qizilbash ideology when he was in Anatolia.[32] Junayd played a key role in attracting Anatolian members to the Shaykh Safi order in Ardabil while his son Haydar and grandson, Ismaʿil made the ties even stronger. But, based on his poetry, Riyahi correctly believes that Shah Ismaʿil was not an Imami Shiʿi in his religious beliefs but was an Alevi/Qizilbash. I think it is crucial to draw this distinction, which is also attested by Faruk Sümer, a prominent Turkish historian. Sümer has also underlined he role of Anatolian tribes in the foundation of the Safavid state.[33]

Safavid chronicles provide some clues on the origins of the Shaykh Safi order but do not cover developments in Anatolia. According to Monshi, the official chronicler of Shah Abbas I, Shaykh Safi (d. 1334) and his descendants down to Shaykh Shah followed both the Shari'a (Sunni) and the Sufi path in Ardabil.[34] Ottoman chronicles also confirm the Shari'a and Sufi path of the order until Haydar took over its leadership in the mid-fifteenth century.[35] Shaykh Safi was a follower of Shaykh Shahab al-Din Suhrvardi in Shiraz and Shaykh Zahid Gilani, whose daughter he married. The ritual of penitence (*tobeh*), prayer for forty days in isolation and under the spiritual guidance of a *pir*, shaving of head and cutting of nails, *zikr* and *sama'*, charity and fasting were important aspects of the tradition.[36] In this sense, the order was not too different from other Sufi orders in Azerbaijan and Anatolia, like the Khalvatis.

From a Sufi Order to a Revolutionary Movement

Historians date the transformation of the order into a militant Shiʿi order in the fifteenth century, when Shaykh Ja'far, the head of the Safavi order, and Jahanshah Qaraquyunlu expelled Junayd from the order due to his militancy. Some scholars believe that the Qizilbash movement in the fifteenth century was a continuation of the heretical Babai and Şeyh Bedreddin movement in Anatolia and the Balkans that claimed equality between Christians and Muslims and called for justice against oppressive Ottoman sultans.[37]

[31]Ghereghlou, "Chronicling a Dynasty on the Make."

[32]Riyahi, *Sefaratnameh hay-e Iran*, 35. Riyahi believes that the Qizilbash were not Imami Shiʿi and their belief system is a combination of central Asian, Zoroastrian and Ismāʿili elements.

[33]Faruk Sümer's work remains a classic but it devotes a short chapter to Shah Ismāʿil and his rise to power. Sümer, *Safevi Develtinin*.

[34]Monshi, *History of Shah Abbas the Great*, vol. 1, 23-6.

[35]Celal-Zade, *Selim-Name*, 356-7. Celal-zade emphasizes the Sunni religion of Iranian rulers and people until Haydar's ascent to power, paying special deference to Shaykh Safi.

[36]Monshi, *History of Shah Abbas the Great*, vol. 1, 23-6.

[37]See Ocak, *Zındıklar ve Mülhidler*, 216-35.

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However, the leadership of the Shaykh Safi order and its philosophy were not always in line with militant leaders such as Junayd. Like many dervish groups in Anatolia, Junayd and Haydar preached holy war (*gaza*) against the "infidel" and a radical Shiʿi ideology against the Sunni rulers that appealed to Turkoman tribes who were struggling to maintain their autonomy against the expanding Ottoman state with a centralizing mission.[38] The Anatolian Qizilbash developed a millenarian worldview, a belief in the divinity of Sufi saints and the leaders of the order, the transmigration of souls, and miracles. They did not follow the Shari'a and the five pillars of Islam, which was also typical of many Sufi orders. Their private ritual gathering, called "jam/cem," and sending missionaries to gather donations from adherents attracted the ire of the Sunni ulema as well as Ottoman provincial governors. Sultan Bayezid II (1481-1512) tolerated the missionary activities of the Safavids in Anatolia and refused to go to war against Shah Ismaʿil during the Shah Qulu rebellion.[39]

How did the Qizilbash survive in the midst of Sunni states until the late fifteenth century? Imami Shiʿism had spread to many Iranian towns during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, if not earlier. Sunni Islam, which was the official religion of Aqquyunlu Iran and the Ottoman Empire, was itself highly elastic and open to Sufi tendencies. Both Ottoman and Aqquyunlu rulers and elites belonged to Sufi orders and paid deference to Sufi leaders, who functioned as spiritual guides to them. In Aqquyunli Iran, the Khalvatiyya order of dervishes gained great influence at the court and among the elite. The *menakibname* (hagiography) of Shaykh Ibrahim Gulshani, a leading Sufi follower of Jalal ad-Din Maulana Rumi and a master of the Gulshaniyya branch of the Khalvati order in Tabriz, was composed by a disciple, dervish Muhyi Gulshani (1534). It is a good source to study the religious landscape of western Iran and Anatolia prior to Safavid takeover.[40] The biography of the shaykh was composed in the mid-sixteenth century in a mixture of Azeri and Ottoman Turkish in Istanbul, where the author had fled after Safavid victory. It traces Shaykh Ibrahim to Oghuz Turkish tribes and his spiritual mentor to Mevlana Jalal ad-Din Rumi.[41] The biography also highlights the close spiritual relationship between Uzun Hasan and Shaykh Ibrahim, who acted as the spiritual guide to the Aqquyunlu ruler and taught him to rule justly.

Uzun Hasan also showed great respect for the Shaykh Safi order and invited Junayd, the grandfather of Shah Ismaʿil, to join him in Diyarbekir when Jahanshah Qaraquyunlu (Shiʿi principality that controlled Azerbaijan) expelled him from Ardabil in 1448 due to his militant preaching. In Anatolia, in Trabzon in 1456, Junayd engaged in holy war (*ghaza*) against the Byzantine dynasty. But he was defeated by Sultan Mehmed II and fled to Diyarbekir, where he was invited to join Uzun Hasan Aqquyunlu. Uzun Hasan married his sister Khadija Begum to Junayd in 1458, which increased Junayd's prestige and power greatly. Under Uzun Hasan's

[38]On dervish groups in the Balkans see, Antov, *The Ottoman "Wild West."*
[39]See Atçil, "The Safavid State," 297.
[40]Gülşenî, *Menâkib-i Ibrahim-i Gülşenî*; Woods, *The Aqquyunlu*, 229-30.
[41]Gülşenî, *Menâkib-i Ibrahim-i Gülşenî*, 13.

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protection, Junayd established a branch of the order in Anatolia. Monshi described Junayd's activities in the following manner:

> When Jonayd became established as leader and defender of the faith, he gave them spiritual guidance in a way that gave clear evidence of his desire for temporal power and kingship. His disciples flocked to Ardabil from all sides, and a cardinal point in his spiritual guidance was the incitement of his disciples to raid and carry on a holy war against the infidel.[42]

Junayd lived and preached in Anatolia for four years and gathered a great many followers among the Turkoman tribes. He returned to Ardabil with 1,000 followers and carried out raids into Shirvan and holy war against the Circassians in 1459.[43] Junayd was killed in a battle against the ruler of Shirvan, Sultan Khalil in 1460. Shaykh Ja'far had written a letter warning Sultan Khalil about his rebellious nephew. Junayd's wife, Hadija Begum gave birth to his son, Haydar, a month later in Amid. Haydar grew up in Diyarbekir close to the Qizilbash followers of his father Junayd, who must have trained him in military skills.[44]

Haydar returned to Ardabil at the age of nine and took over the order in 1470. He later married Uzun Hasan's daughter, Halima Begum, to enhance his prestige. He introduced the red Haydari crown with twelve folds to distinguish his followers from others and they became known as Qizilbash (Red Heads). Monshi, however, noted the real ambition of Haydar to establish political dominion with his followers:

> Haydar's immediate business was to revive the customary practice of his predecessors, but his secret ambition was to have dominion over territories and subjects. Hasan Padeshah, who had overthrown Jahanshah, wished to consolidate his connection with the Safavid family by a new alliance. He therefore, gave his daughter, Halima Begom Agha to Heydar. Heydar's affairs prospered and his court was frequented by both the high and low.[45]

The alliance of Sufi preachers with rulers was a norm in this period, as was military activities under the guise of holy war by Junayd, Haydar and Isma'il. Their appeal to simple folk may highlight the deep political crisis as a result of Ottoman, Akqquyunlu and Safavid contests over eastern Anatolia and Azerbaijan. Safavid chronicles do not shed much light on social and economic conditions in Anatolia. Moreover, the reason Uzun Hasan supported Haydar may have been related to the latter's religious and political influence among local tribes in Anatolia, who were alienated from the Ottomans in the second half of the fifteenth century due to Mehmed II's expeditions

[42]Monshi, *History of Shah Abbas the Great*, vol. 1, 29-30.

[43]On *ghazā* activities against the Armenian population in Anatolia by Safavid leaders based on fifteenth century sources see, Carlson, "Safavids Before Empire," 278-89.

[44]Hinz, *Uzun Hasan ve Şeyh Cüneyd*, 31-6.

[45]Monshi, *History of Shah Abbas the Great*, vol. 1, 31.

https://doi.org/10.1080/00210862.2019.1646121 Published online by Cambridge University Press

in eastern Anatolia. In other words, Haydar brought the unruly Anatolian tribes into the Safavid fold and turned them against the Ottomans. The Aqquyunlu ruler, Uzun Hasan, may have welcomed this development as undermining the Ottomans. In other words, politics rather than religious loyalties may have played a leading role in the success of the Safavids in recruiting followers in Anatolia. It is not clear to what extent the order in Ardabil controlled or led events in Anatolia. Haydar's political star began to rise. In the words of Monshi:

> In a genuine dream experienced by Haydar, messengers from the unseen world visited him and instructed him to fashion a hat with twelve gores, indicative of the twelve Esna Ashari Imams, from crimson cloth: this was to be the distinctive headgear worn by his followers. Heydar, in joyful response to this dream, changed his ordinary Turkman hat, which was the customary wear in those days, for the twelve-gored Heydari hat. All those connected with the Safavid house followed his example. They thus distinguished themselves from other people, and acquired the sobriquet of qezelbaş or "redheads."[46]

The use of dream narratives was a common trope by emerging political actors to highlight the sacred nature of their movement and claims. Haydar's followers among the Turkoman tribes in Anatolia increased as Uzun Hasan protected his nephew and son-in law against his Ottoman enemies. Uzun Hasan had his own ambition of acquiring all of Anatolia through a joint alliance with the Karamanids, the Mamluks and Venice. It is possible that the Qizilbash were also aiding him in his campaign against Sultan Mehmed II. Uzun Hasan led an army into Bursa in 1472 and was planning to reach western Anatolia through the Taurus Mountains. However, Sultan Mehmed II was able to defeat Uzun Hasan with an army of 70,000 men and take over Karaman at the Battle of Baskent on the Euphrates in 1473. His victory must have created a deep political crisis in eastern Anatolia. It is possible that local conditions in Anatolia, Ottoman expansion and centralization policies towards local tribes as well as economic crisis led to the growing political ambitions of the Qizilbash and the leaders of the order to carve out a space when the devolution of the Aqquyunlu empire began after Uzun Hasan's death in Tabriz in 1478.

The center of Aqquyunlu state had shifted from Diyarbekir and Mardin to Tabriz in Iran due to territorial losses to the Ottomans after the Battle of Başkent in 1473. Sultan Ya'qub Aqquyunlu (1478-90) succeeded his father to the throne in Tabriz in 1478, the year that Haydar's son Ismaʿil was born in Ardabil. Sultan Yay'qub did not support Haydar due to his raids into Circassia in 1483 and admonished him in his palace in Tabriz. Sultan Khalil Farrokhyasar and his cousin Sultan Ya'qub Aqquyunlu defeated Haydar in a campaign in Daghistan and Shrivan. Haydar died from a mortal wound in Tabaristan in July 1488. After his death, Sultan Ya'qub was determined eliminate Haydar's three sons, Ali Mirza, Ismaʿil Mirza and Ibrahim Mirza, born to his own

[46]Monshi, *History of Shah Abbas the Great*, vol. 1, 31.

https://doi.org/10.1080/00210862.2019.1646121 Published online by Cambridge University Press

sister. Clearly, after Uzun Hasan's death, the Aqquyunlu support had waned and Ya'qub considered the militant Safavid leaders as a major threat to his rule. He placed them, together with their mother (his sister), in a fortress prison in Fars for four and half years. After Sultan Ya'qub's death in 1490, Rustam beg Aqquyunlu, who controlled Tabriz, ordered the release of the three Safavid brothers and invited them to Tabriz, where they entered with great pomp in 1493. Sultan Mirza, the head of the order, helped Rustam Beg Aqquyunlu defeat the ruler of Shirvan. Rustam Beg ended his support for Ali Mirza when Turkoman tribes and the Sufis of Ardabil began to rally around the brothers. Sultan Ali was killed in battle in 1492-93. Prior to his death, he had placed his *taj* on the head of his younger brother Ismaʿil, nominating him as his successor in the words of Monshi in the following manner: "

Speaking with divine inspiration, he declared that the light of the house of Ali would shine forth through Ismaʿil, and that his spear tips would be raised to the skies in triumph, and that the rays of his justice would illumine the faces of mankind."[47]

However, the continued Aqquyunlu hunt for the brothers forced their followers to smuggle Ismaʿil, who was seven years old, his mother and his brother Ibrahim to Ardabil and hide them in different places. But later his mother and the seven Sufi *khalifas* decided to move Ismaʿil to Gilan. His brother returned to Ardabil, while Ismaʿil stayed with the local governor of Lahijan, Kar Kia Mirza Ali of Seyyid descent, for six and half years. Gilan, where independent dynasties ruled the region, was a refuge for the opponents of rulers. In addition, close contacts existed between Azerbaijan and Gilan. Under the guidance of the Kar Kia family, Ismaʿil was educated in Shiʿi Islam and the Sufi path. His Qizilbash advisers taught him the hunt and military skills and protected him. In Gilan, he gathered around him Sufis and devotees from Anatolia, who believed in him as their spiritual master and king. Given the great political instability in Iran, the stage was set for him to unite alienated Aqquyunlu Turkoman tribes and his Qizilbash followers in Azerbaijan and Anatolia in the late fifteenth century. In addition, the contest over the Ottoman throne between prince Selim and his brothers Ahmed and Korkud and his nephew Murad, who joined the Safavids, enhanced the position of Ismaʿil in Anatolia.[48]

A Militarized Borderland: The Struggle between Shah Ismaʿil and Sultan Selim I

> My name is Shah Ismaʿil—I am God's mystery and the commander of Ghazis. I am the son of Ali and Fatima and the Pir of 12 Imams.
> I have recovered my father's blood from Yazid. Be sure that I am of Haydarian essence.
> I am the living Khizr and Jesus, the Son of Mary. I am the Alexander of [my] contemporaries.

[47]Monshi, *History of Shah Abbas the Great*, vol. 1, 39-45.

[48]On the involvement of prince Murad, the son of Ahmed, see Yildirim, "An Ottoman Prince Wearing a Qizilbash Taj."

https://doi.org/10.1080/00210862.2019.1646121 Published online by Cambridge University Press

> Know for certain that Khata'i is of divine nature, that he is related to Muhammad Mustafa
> He is issued from Safi, he is the scion of Junayd [and] Haydar, He is related to Ali Mustafa.[49] (Divan-e Khata'i)
> From Istanbul's throne, a mighty host to Iran guided I
> Sunken deep in blood of shame I made the Golden Heads [the Qizilbash] to lie. (Selim I)[50]

The ideological competition between Sultan Selim I and Shah Ismaʿil I over the leadership of the Middle East shaped the political, military and religious landscape of the borderland in a profound manner. To this date, the poems of both Khata'i and Selimi resonate with the religious loyalties of the population of Anatolia (Sunnis vs. Alevis) and show the deep divide that can be traced back to the sixteenth century. The consolidation of religious and political boundaries in the course of 200 years of warfare and persecution was the direct outcome of this competition.

Shah Ismaʿil (1488-1524) claimed to be the reincarnation of a series of prophets and Shiʿi imams, the vice-regent of God and even a living Godhead. He represented the Hidden Imam on earth.[51] His followers venerated and followed him as the Perfect Sufi and a divine figure who descended from Shiʿi imams, and had come to restore justice and avenge the martyrdom of Shiʿi imams, end the oppression of Sunni rulers and bring about the return of the Mahdi. The messianic claims of Ismaʿil gained great traction in Anatolia as well as in northern Syria, among Turkoman tribes and disaffected *sipahis* and even among Ottoman princes (Ahmed, Korkud and Murad), leading to a widespread rebellion in 1511-12 and forcing the Sultan Selim I (1512-20) to overthrow his father, suppress the Qizilbash and invade Iran in 1514.[52] "Destiny, in the celestial workshop / Fashioned both Selim and Khata'i."[53]

The political careers of prince Selim and Ismaʿil and their fate, as Monshi noted, were intertwined. The ongoing civil war and violence among the Aqquyunlu clan set the stage for Ismaʿil's rise to power at the age of fourteen. He left Lahijan with 7,000 followers in 1499 for Ardabil first, where he visited the tombs of his ancestors and set out to Erzincan in Anatolia, gathering 3-4,000 Sufis from Syria, Diyarbakir and Sivas around him. He invaded Shirvan with 8,000 followers to take revenge for the murder of his grandfather Junayd and father Haydar and defeated Farrukh Yasar Shirvanshah, cut off his head and took possession of his rich treasury in Baku in 1500. He then marched toward Azerbai-

[49]Minorsky, "The Poetry of Shah Ismāʿil I," 1042a-44.

[50]Finkel, *Osman's Dream*, 113-14; Sultan Selim composed his own poetry in Persian under the penname Selimi.

[51]Savory, "Safawids," 767.

[52]Finkel, *Osman's Dream*, 113-14. Sultan Bayezid wrote one letter to Ismāʿil and Sultan Selim wrote four letters to him admonishing him for his oppressive acts against the Sunni population of Iran and his "heretical deeds," against the Shari'a and the ulema, warning him of an imminent war. Ismāʿil wrote two responses to Selim I, one before the Battle of Chaldiran in 1514 and the other after the battle. See Parsadust, *Shah Ismaʿil*, 817-36.

[53]Monshi, *History of Shah Abbas the Great*, vol. 1, 74.

https://doi.org/10.1080/00210862.2019.1646121 Published online by Cambridge University Press

jan, defeated Alvand Beg Aqquyunlu in Nakhjivan and entered Tabriz in 1501. Alvand Mirza had fled to Erzincan to seek help from the Ottomans. The Aqquyunlu lands were divided among various claimants and princes.

In Tabriz, Ismaʿil declared himself shah (he was fifteen years old) and had the *khutba* read in his name and in the name of Shiʿi imams in the Friday Mosque in 1501. When a disturbance arose among the Sunni population, his Qizilbash men put many of them to death. He forced the rest of population of Tabriz (between 200,000 and 300,000), who were Sunni (two-thirds) to convert to Shiʿism or face death.[54] In addition, coins were minted in his name and with the inscription: "There is no god but God; Muhammad is the Prophet of God, and Ali is the favorite friend of God." He ordered the cursing of three Sunni caliphs in public places (*tabarrai*). The graves of Sultan Ya'qub Aqquyunlu and his military commanders were desecrated and their bones were set on fire, while many Aqquyunlu nobles were hunted down and killed. Shah Ismaʿil then marched to Anatolia and defeated Alvand Mirza Aqquyunlu in Diyarbakir in 1504.[55] He asked Sultan Murad Aqquyunlu (1497-1508) in Fars to accept his rule and convert to Shiʿism but when he refused and killed the Safavid envoy, Ismaʿil marched toward Fars, defeated Sultan Murad Aqquyunlu near Hamadan and took possession of Persian Iraq, Fars and Kerman, forcing the Sunni population to accept Shiʿism and ending the Aqquyunlu rule in Iran and Anatolia by1504.[56] No doubt, Shah Ismaʿil and his Qizilbash troops committed many atrocities against the local population in many regions (Sunni and Aqquyunlu elite), the news of which reached Istanbul. His aim was to consolidate his hold over Iran, Mesopotamia and eastern Anatolia. Faruk Sümer is right to emphasize that without the help of thousands of Qizilbash followers from Anatolia, Shah Ismaʿil would not have been able to defeat Aqquyunlu leaders and achieve these momentous victories. He did not enjoy that kind of support in Iran and even faced the resentment and hatred of the majority Sunni Iranians.

Shah Ismaʿil invaded Khurasan and defeated the Uzbek ruler, Muhammad Khan Sheibani in 1510 and sent his head to Sultan Bayezid II, who supported the Uzbeks. In Iraq and Khurasan, he paid a special attention to the tomb-shrines of Shiʿi imams in Najaf, Karbala, Samarra and Mashhad. But he suffered a setback a few years later in Khurasan and was defeated by the Uzbeks in 1512.

Shah Ismaʿil's ambition was to gain control of the holy cities of Mecca and Medina as the only legitimate Muslim ruler and extend the borders of Iran to Istanbul and Syria as well as Central Asia. But he faced the formidable army of the Ottoman state. Sultan Bayezid II was initially tolerant of the activities of Ismaʿil in Anatolia but decided to stop him when his followers were roaming through Anatolia. When Shah Ismaʿil

[54]Anonymous, *Alam Aray-i Safavi*, 63-4. Monshi does not cover the forceful conversion of the people of Tabriz to Shiʿism. Monshi, *History of Shah Abbas the Great*, vol. 1, 45.

[55]Anonymous, *Alam Aray-i Safavi*, 79-83. Monshi does not mention the military assistance of Sultan Bayezid to Alvand Mirza. See Parsadust, *Shah Ismāʿil*, 277-80. The massacre of the people of Tabriz and the Aqquyunlu ruling class (20,000 people according to some estimates) by Shah Ismāʿil is not covered by Monshi.

[56]Sümer, *Safevi Develtinin*, 22-5.

https://doi.org/10.1080/00210862.2019.1646121 Published online by Cambridge University Press

wrote a letter to Sultan Bayezid II, asking for permission for his followers to enter Anatolia, the sultan first congratulated him on his victories and his ascension to the Persian throne. He then gave advice to the young king about the requirements of the Shari'a and just rule, admonishing him for shedding the blood of the innocent, desecrating the tombs and graves of Sunni religious figures and rulers, and taking over *waqf* properties. He also accused the shah of causing tensions and division among Muslims by spreading his "heretical" religion. The sultan reminded him of the justice of Iranian kings, who ruled effectively, and advised him to not to follow the unjust policies of the late Aqquyunlu rulers whom he had defeated.[57] He also asked him to busy himself as a king with just rule rather than interfering in religious matters. To undercut the shah's religious influence in Anatolia, the sultan also forcefully removed many Qizilbash to the Morea, and strengthened the Ottoman garrison in Diyarbekir in 1507-8.[58]

Shah Ismaʿil supported Bayezid's son, Prince Ahmad, the governor of Amasya, which had a large Qizilbash population and established contacts with him in Malatya. Meanwhile, Safavid *khalifas* directed raids as far away as Tokat in central Anatolia, where the *khutba* was read in Ismaʿil's name. Soon, the Shah Qulu rebellion broke out in Tekke in 1511, pushing Anatolia into a serious crisis.[59] Shah Qulu was the son of Hasan Khalifa and was born in a Qizilbash village in Teke. He gathered many poor peasants and *sipahi*s around him, who had lost their *timar*s and took advantage of the weakness of the sultan to lead a big rebellion. With close to 15,000 rebels, Shah Qulu defeated the *beylerbeyi* (governor) of Anatolia, which increased his prestige and following, and killed Grand Vizier Ali Pasha in a battle. His aim, according to Sümer, was to end the Ottoman rule rather than joining Shah Ismaʿil.[60] Prince Şehinşah, the governor of Karaman, joined the Qizilbash with 10,000 *sipahi*s. Ismaʿil's millenarian ideas and the activities of Qizilbash Khalifas like Nur Ali Khalifa Rumlu inspired the Shah Qulu rebellion in Anatolia in 1511-12. In 1512, Shah Qulu rebels, together with the Qizilbash from Iran, numbered around 30,000 men and gathered around Nur Ali Khalifa and others.[61] Prince Murad joined the rebels in Amasya with a large army. They attacked and raided a vast region from

[57]Parsadust, *Shah Isma'il*, 813-16. See also copies of four letters sent to Ismāʿil by Selim, 817-30. The original letters are in Feridun Beg's *Münşeat ül-Selatin*. Sultan Selim I wrote in a much harsher tone to Ismāʿil, threatening him with force and conquest in response to his policies against Sunnis. In his second letter, Selim invited Ismāʿil to submit to Ottoman rule or face Ottoman armies. Selim wrote his third letter en route to Iran and the fourth once he entered Iran with his army of 40,000 men in August 1514. Ismāʿil wrote two letters to Selim, one before and one after the battle of Chaldiran in August 1514. Ismāʿil offered peace and unity between Muslims in his second letter sent with an envoy to Selim but received no response. See also the poem of the Aqquyunlu chronicler Ruzbehan Khunji to Selim before Chaldiran, inviting Selim as the Caliph of Muslims to "behead Ismāʿil like a cobra snake" and end his "heretical" religion, uniting "the lands of Fars with Rum." Ibid., 831-2.

[58]Savory, "Safawids," 767-8.

[59]Sümer, *Safevi Develtinin*, 32-5.

[60]Ibid., 33.

[61]Safavid chronicles do not cover the Shah Qulu rebellion in any detail. On Venetian spy reports on the activities of the Qizilbash in Anatolia in 1512, see Amoretti, *Shah Ismāʿil Nei "Diarii" di Marin Sanudo*, vol. 1, 203-40.

https://doi.org/10.1080/00210862.2019.1646121 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Amasya, Tokat and Sivas to Bursa and Antalya, causing much violence, pillaging and political instability in the region. Shah Qulu was killed in battle and many of his followers fled to Iran and took refuge.[62] The Ottoman officials began suppressing deviant dervish groups in Anatolia, like the Qalandars, the Haydaris, the Abdals of Rum and the Qizilbash.[63]

Prince Selim I, the governor of Trabzon, considered his father's policies too soft on the Qizilbash and forced him to abdicate the throne in his favor in 1512. Ahmad's son Murad fled to Iran and submitted to Ismaʿil, who placed a Qizilbash crown on his head and gave him gifts and a position in Fars in May 1512. Murad had been very active in Anatolia, mobilizing the Qizilbash in central Anatolia against Sultan Selim and in support of Shah Ismaʿil in 1512. However, Shah Ismaʿil's military support did not materialize. Sultan Selim, who had already ordered the killing of five of his brothers and nephews, immediately moved against his brother Ahmad, defeated and killed him in Bursa in 1513. His son Korkud was captured near Bursa and was killed by Selim's men in 1513. Murd fled to Iran in the same year and probably died there.[64]

Selim obtained *fetvas* from Şeyhülislam Kemal Paşazade about the heresy of the Safavids and the need to capture, convert and kill the Qizilbash and invade Iran. He began a policy of surveillance and persecution in Anatolia. Imperial orders were sent to local authorities to register the names and locations of the Qizilbash, punish and kill them. According to some estimates, Selim ordered the killing and forceful removal of 40,000 Qizilbash in Anatolia and expelled thousands from Anatolia to the Balkans in 1513.[65] In the absence of detailed sources for the earlier period, it is hard to come up with any hard figures on the persecution of the Qizilbash in Anatolia and the Iranian captives during wars in Ottoman lands. We have better documentation in Ottoman sources (Mühimme registers) for the second half of the sixteenth century.[66] Shiʿism obviously survived in the Ottoman Empire (Iraq, Mount Lebanon) and Sufi orders like the Bektaşis, who had great affinity with the Qizilbash, continued to thrive. But the state had extended its disciplining force through the ulema and the *kadi*s in provinces, towns and villages, hunting down the Qizilbash, who identified

[62]Müneccimbaşı, *Müneccimbaşı Tarihi*, vol. 2, 427-32. Müneccimbaşı also thinks that the factors leading to the rebellion had to do with the unjust policies of Sultan Bayezid. He does not see a link with Shah Ismāʿil. See Uluçay, *Yvuz Sultan Selim Nasil Padişah Oldu?*, 54. See also Yildirim, "An Ottoman Prince," 97-107. Yildirim, relying on Ottoman chronicles, spy reports and letters from Topkapi Saray archives published by Tansel, Uluçay and Bacqué-Grammont, believes that political rather than religious beliefs played a key role in the support of prince Ahmed for the Safavids but his son Murad had a stronger religious tendency toward the Qizilbash and might have been initiated into the path by Shah Ismāʿil. Yildirim also argues that Ahmed and Murad disagreed on their policies toward the Qizilbash; while the former was cautious, the latter was quite bold in his pro-Safavid activities and movement.

[63]Karamustafa, *Unruly Friends of God*, 83-4.

[64]On Murad's death in Iran, see Yildirim, "An Ottoman Prince," 113-14.

[65]Sümer, *Safevi Develtinin*, 36, considers this figure unreal since no archival document has survived. Zarinebaf-Shahr, "Qizilbash Heresy and Rebellion."

[66]Sümer, *Safevi Develtinin*.

https://doi.org/10.1080/00210862.2019.1646121 Published online by Cambridge University Press

with the Safavid state. The "Qizilbash" problem had assumed a political urgency for the Ottoman state. At the same time, the Sunni ulema started defining the Qizilbash as "heretics," while other Sufi groups with similar beliefs were left alone, at least politically.[67] The well-known Ottoman Şeyhülislam Ebu Suud Efendi (1545-74) rejected the Qizilbash as even Shiʿi Muslims for their rejection of the Shari'a, the mistreatment of the ulema, insulting the three caliphs, and following the shah and their "false books."[68] Therefore, war against them and the suppression of their beliefs were of utmost importance. It is important to note that these *fetvas* were not against orthodox Shiʿi believers who lived under Ottoman rule but against the Qizilbash who waged war for the Safavids.

Following the religious rulings of the high Sunni ulema, Ottoman imperial orders to local officials contained in *mühimme defeterleri* in the second half of the sixteenth century reveal that most were rural inhabitants in central and southeast Anatolia, and that their accusations ranged from cursing the first three Sunni caliphs (Abu Bakr, Osman and Omar) to rejecting the Shari'a, not attending mosques, and engaging in ritual gatherings where men and women played music, danced and engaged in "putting out the candle," or orgies, at night. They also donated money for the order to missionary *khalifas* who came from Ardabil.[69] Shah Ismaʿil's lyrical Sufi poetry in Azeri Turkish, and influenced greatly by Hurufi poets, gained a great following among these tribes in Anatolia and Azerbaijan.[70] Historians have highlighted the rural and nomadic character of the Qizilbash and the central role of Shah Ismaʿil's poetry (*divan-i khata'i*) in their belief system, distinguishing it from the twelver Shiʿism of the ulema as we know it.[71] Indeed, his poetry and divan are still popular among the Alevis in Turkey.[72]

The numerous Ottoman campaigns into Iran first aimed at punishing Shah Ismaʿil for his ambitions in Anatolia and his support of Anatolian rebels. The Ottomans also were trying to expand into eastern Anatolia, Iraq, Azerbaijan and the Caucasus and

[67]See the *fetvas* of Ebu Su'ud Efendi, in Düzdağ, *Şeyhülislam Ebussuud Efendi*, 109-17. Ebu Suud did not consider the Qizilbash as proper Shiʿis and believed they were innovators and unbelievers and brigands who strayed from Prophet Muhammad's path. On the legal opinions of an earlier group of Ottoman ulema like Kemalpaşazade and Sarıgörez about war against the "apostate" and "heretical" Safavids, see also Atçil, "The Safavid State," 306-9. Atçil believes that Ebu Suud Efendi differed from the earlier Ottoman scholars in his position against the followers of the Safavids and suggested a more lenient approach to those who accepted Ottoman rule. He considered war against the Safavids and the persecution of their followers in Ottoman lands as permissible rather than a duty and bound to the decision of the sultan. He did not view the Safavids as a serious threat. Atçil rightly argues that his *fetva*s became the final legal opinion on this question.

[68]Düzdağ, *Şeyhülislam Ebussuud Efendi*, 109-11.

[69]Zarinebaf-Shahr, "Qizilbash Heresy and Rebellion," 9-15. For a sample of the Muhimme sources see, Sener, *Osmanlı Belgeleri'nde Aleviler-Bektaşiler*.

[70]For a discussion of Shiʿi rituals in Iran based on travelers' accounts see, Calmard, "Shiʿi Rituals and Power II"; Babayan, "Sufis, Dervishes and Mullas."

[71]Bacqué-Grammont, "Les Ottomans et les Safavides."

[72]Cavanşir and Necef, *Şah Ismail Hatayi Küliyyatı*, Csirkés, "Chagatay Oration, Ottoman Eloquence"; De Jong, "Problems Concerning the Origins of the Qizilbas."

https://doi.org/10.1080/00210862.2019.1646121 Published online by Cambridge University Press

were driven by geopolitical, economic and religious motivations. The missionary activities of Junayd, Haydar and Ismaʿil among the Turkoman tribes and disaffected *sipahis* in Anatolia and the ensuing rebellions alarmed the Ottoman central authorities in Istanbul. The Aqquyunlu Sunni elite and ulema, who fled Iran for the Ottoman Empire reported these activities and asked for Ottoman help against the Safavid leader. Moreover, the Ottoman-Safavid wars also involved territorial claims over eastern Anatolia and regions that were once part of the Aqquyunlu state (Diyarbakr, Van). Shah Ismaʿil considered himself an heir to both the Aqquyunlu and the Byzantine dynasties in Trabzon since he was related by blood to both dynasties.

After the suppression of the Shah Qulu rebellion in 1512, Sultan Selim I (1512-20) prepared a large military campaign against Shah Ismaʿil in August 1514. He occupied Tabriz for ten days after having defeated Shah Ismaʿil in Chaldiran but could not stay there for more than a week due to his fear of a mutiny among his Bektaşi troops. So, with winter approaching and the fear of famine and mutiny on his mind, he decided to retreat. Selim looted part of the shah's property and treasury in the Hasht Behesht palace and from the battlefield, his manuscripts, personal property, tents, armor, robes, precious textiles and jewelry.[73] The shah had taken the most precious parts of his treasury with him to Qazvin before Selim entered Tabriz in September. Selim took some of the craftsmen, artisans and artists from Tabriz to the Topkapi Palace in Istanbul. He directed his attention to conquering Mamluk Syria and Egypt a few years later, thus depriving the Safavids of their access to the silk route through Syria to the Mediterranean ports. Assuming the title of Caliph and Protector of the Muslim Holy cities, Selim tied his legitimacy to the suppression of the followers of the heretical Safavids and placed an economic embargo on Safavid silk exports to Anatolia to undermine their revenue from the silk trade.

Shah Ismaʿil and his troops numbering less than 20,000 Qizilbash fought heroically in the Battle of Chaldiran and both sides lost important military figures. The Safavids learned from their defeat not to face or confront the superior Ottoman army directly but to engage in hit and run tactics after the enemy had advanced well into their territory. Historians have emphasized the weakening of Ismaʿil's status among his Qizilbash followers after 1514. Iskandar Beg Monshi noted the following after Shah Ismaʿil's defeat at Chaldiran:

> Without doubt, God in His most excellent wisdom had decreed that Shah Esma'il should suffer a reverse in the Battle of Çalderan. For had he been victorious in this battle too, there would have been a danger that the belief and faith of the unsophisticated qezelbaş in the authority of the shah would have reached such heights that their feet might have strayed from the straight path of religious faith and belief, and they might have fallen into serious error.[74]

[73]For a list of the loot from Tabriz zee, Genç, "From Tabriz to Istanbul." See also Zarinebaf, "Cross-cultural Contacts in Eurasia."

[74]Monshi, *History of Shah Abbas the Great*, vol. 1, 71-2.

https://doi.org/10.1080/00210862.2019.1646121 Published online by Cambridge University Press

However, Ismaʿil ruled for another decade and continued sending *khalifas* into Anatolia to gather support. He also tried to establish peace with Selim I but his letter to the sultan suing for peace among Muslims drew no response.[75] The rebellion of the Qizilbash in Anatolia continued as the Ottoman state took further steps to punish them, invading Iran several times in the course of the sixteenth century.

Shah Tahmasp and the Qizilbash

Shah Ismaʿil died in 1524 at a young age and his ten-year-old son, Tahmasp, ascended to the Safavid throne. Tahmasp was too inexperienced and young to start hostilities with the Ottoman Empire, while Sultan Süleyman (1522-66) diverted his military attention to the western front. After the death of Shah Isma'il, the rivalry among Qizilbash clans obviously produced winners and losers. Moreover, Ottoman and Safavid princes also began to vie for power with the help of factions within the palace and in the military. The early phase of the reign of Shah Tahmasp witnessed civil war and competition between various Qizilbash clans such as the Shamlu, the Ustajlu and the Tekkelu for positions of power within the court, provincial government and the military since the new shah was very young and inexperienced. Tajlu Khanum, the favorite wife of Shah Ismaʿil, who was from the Turkoman Muwsillu tribe, enjoyed tremendous power and managed the Qizilbash factions to support her son's rise to power. But she was later exiled to Shiraz for trying to poison the shah to support his brother Bahram Mirza. Nevertheless, Safavid women, particularly princesses, played a key role in the success of the Safavid rule by forming their own faction and by supporting religious foundations like the one in Ardabil, endowing them with money and land.[76] Meanwhile, the Safavids continued to enjoy support among the Turkoman tribes in Anatolia, which flocked to the Safavid capital to pay homage and give donations to the young shah. The Anatolian Qizilbash brought donations and gifts to the shah's court in Tabriz. Michele Membré, the Safavid envoy to the court of Tahmasp I, described the arrival of Qizilbash Turkoman tribes at the military headquarters of Shah Tahmasp near Marand in 1539:

> The next day, there came from Anatolia that is from the province of Arzinjan, Turcomans of Ali, with their families and animals, about 800 households in number, who had come for the shah's sake. Thus, there were of these Turcomans, horsemen, with their arms and lances, to the number of 600, who were stationed against the court of the said Sophy, at a distance, riding round and round: altogether they kept crying, "Allah, Allah," until the Shah came forth from his apartments, at the entrance. Then he ordered the greatest of their chiefs to be summoned, and one by one, they came and kissed the foot of the Said Shah. Thus they all came. The Shah gave each one cloth for clothing and each a cap, which they call taj. Then

[75]See his letter in Parsadust, *Shah Ismāʿil*, 833-6.
[76]Zarinebaf, "Economic Activities of Safavid Women."

https://doi.org/10.1080/00210862.2019.1646121 Published online by Cambridge University Press

> the said Turcomans gave presents to the Shah, each according to his means, so many animals; some gave horses, some wethers and some camels. Then the Shah ordered them to three parts of his lands, that is, he sent one part to the province of Khorasan, another part to the province of Shirvan, and the other part to the province of Iraq.[77]

The Venetian envoy was very familiar with the close ties of the Anatolian Qizilbash to the shah in Tabriz. Venetian envoys were extremely interested in Safavid Persia and displayed great sympathy to Shiʿism, sometimes comparing it to Catholicism. They were fascinated by the spirit of martyrdom among Shiʿi Muslims, which they compared to the crusaders. They also found the veneration of Fatima (the Prophet's daughter) similar to the cult of Mary. These envoys were hoping to justify their call for an alliance with a Muslim state to the Senate in Venice by painting a favorable picture of Safavid Iran and Shah Ismaʿil.[78] Some even believed that Shah Ismaʿil was a Christian and was baptized, a notion that was not completely far-fetched since his mother (Martha, Halima Begum) was half Greek and he had blue eyes and red hair.[79] Venetians spies sent reports based on a pamphlet called *La vita del Sophie* (by Giovanni Rota) to the Doge with paintings of Ismaʿil, essentially becoming his propagandist.[80]

Membré, who carried the letter of the king of Portugal seeking to forge an alliance against the Ottomans, went on to describe the ranks of the men who sat next to the shah (*musahibs*) in his pavilions, the highest being Qara Khalifa Shamlu, who had married the shah's daughter. His two brothers were in the service of prince Bahram Mirza, the brother of Shah Tahmasp.[81] Intermarriage between Safavid rulers and the Tekelu tribeswomen enhanced the role of the latter in key positions like the governorships of Iraq and Khurasan in the second half of the sixteenth century.[82] Membré also highlighted the high standing of the Seyyids of Osku, a town near Tabriz, who enjoyed great prestige and power in the Safavid court in Tabriz. They wore the *taj* in the same style that the shah wore it, indicating their closeness to the shah. Membré conversed with the Seyyids, who were devotees of Ali.[83] It is not clear who these four young Seyyids were, but they dwelled in mansions near the shah's palace in Tabriz and performed important duties like writing petitions for the populace who came to see the shah and seek justice. Monshi also highlighted the reverence shown by Shah Tahmasp for the four Seyyids of Osku, Mir Sadr ad-Din Muhammad, Emir Nizam ad-Din Ahmad, Amir Qamar ad-Din and Amir

[77]Membré, *Mission to the Lord Sophy of Persia*, 18-20.

[78]Brummett, *Ottoman Seapower and the Levantine Diplomacy*, 30-3.

[79]His mother was the daughter of Uzun Hasan by his Pontic Greek wife, Theodora, the daughter of Emperor John IV of Trabzon. Rudi Matthee, "Christians in Safavid Iran," 10-12.

[80]Matthee, "Christians in Safavid Iran," 10.

[81]See Szuppe, "Kinship Ties," on intermarriage between Turkoman leaders and Safavid princes.

[82]Ibid. On the marriage of Tahmasb's daughters see Monshi, *History of Shah Abbas the Great*, vol. 1, 218-19.

[83]Membré, *Mission to the Lord Sophy of Persia*, 39-41.

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Abul-Hamed.[84] Monshi corroborated Membré's account of the great power these four Seyyids enjoyed at the court and in state affairs but accused them of corruption and abuse of power. The vizier Qazi Jahan, who was initially one of their protégés, according to Monshi, convinced the shah to confine them to their houses, but the shah let them keep their tax immunities and other privileges. The office of the *sadr* and the control of imperial *waqfs* were always given to a Seyyid.

Membré also described the Muharram ritual, which took place for ten days in the month of May, during which time young men who had blackened their bodies chanted passion plays for Husayn on the streets and mosques of Tabriz from morning until past midnight.[85] "In the evening all the ladies betake themselves to their mosques and a preacher preaches the passion of the said son of Ali, and the ladies weep bitterly." He described storytellers on the streets of Tabriz, who sang of the battles of Ali and Shah Ismaʿil, and the imminent conquest of Constantinople by the shah. English merchant visitors like Jenkinson described Shah Ismaʿil as the Great Sophie and compared Safavid rulers to the "wise magi" and the saw the Qizilbash as similar to the Protestants while the Venetians found Husayn a Christ-like figure and the Shiʿi concept of martyrdom very similar to theirs.[86] What was important for them was a joint alliance against "the Turk."

Membré also described the ritual of cursing the three caliphs and the Ottomans by his great lords (*tabarra'i*) each morning when the shah and his two brothers come out of their tents, crying "sad hezar la'nat bar Umar, Abu Bakr, Othman" until they sat down. Evliya Çelebi (1611-82), the Ottoman traveler and envoy, undertook two military and diplomatic missions to the borderland region of eastern Anatolia and Azerbaijan in 1645-47 and 1655 to enforce the articles of the Treaty of Qasr-i Shirin (or Zuhab) signed in May 1639. He highlighted the ritual of cursing the three caliphs in Azerbaijan and noted that they only cursed Umar in the towns he passed through to arrive in Tabriz in the second half of the seventeenth century. He noted that the local governors banned the practice upon his arrival in these towns and cities as a gesture of their hospitality. He also noted that in many villages in the borderlands he visited, the residents claimed to be Shafi'i but that they were lying and were all Qizilbash. The Ottomans were also very familiar with the ritual since they controlled Iraq and Shiʿi holy cities there. To show their deference to the Ottoman envoy, Safavid governors banned the practice of cursing the three caliphs (Abu Bakr, Osman, Omar), as Evliya Çelebi noted when he visited Azerbaijan in the second half of the seventeenth century:[87]

> Later the public criers cried throughout the city: "The Ottoman Embassy is here and they are Sunnis. It is the Shah's and the Khan's command not to curse [the

[84]Monshi, *History of Shah Abbas the Great*, vol. 1, 229-30.

[85]Membré, *Mission to the Lord Sophy of Persia*, 43, 52. For a critique of European accounts of the Muharram ritual see Rahimi, *Theater, State*.

[86]Brotton, *The Sultan and the Queen*, 36-9.

[87]Dağlı and Kahraman, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi*, 293-4.

https://doi.org/10.1080/00210862.2019.1646121 Published online by Cambridge University Press

> three caliphs]; if you curse, the Sunnis will kill you and you cannot claim blood-money." God be praised that there was no cursing of the four Chosen friends (three caliphs and 'Aysha). The blessed Abu Bakr and Osman, they definitely don't curse, but their problem is the blessed Omar.[88]

It is important to note that the Ottomans paid great respect to the family of the Prophet (*ahl al-Bayt*) and the names of Ali and Husayn were usually inscribed next to that of Prophet Muhammad in the great mosques like Aya Sofia. Evliya did not observe the practice of "putting out the candle" in any town and city he visited. In Tabriz, Evliya Çelebi described in great detail the ritual of Muharram and the performance of the martyrdom of Husayn on the polo ground (*maidan*) in the following manner:[89]

> Another marvelous and noteworthy spectacle is the Ashura ceremony held every year on the tenth of Muharram. All the notables and citizens, young and old, come out to these polo grounds where they pitch their tents and stay for three days and three nights. They boil innumerable cauldrons of Ashura pudding, in remembrance of the martyrs in the plain of Karbala, and distribute it among the rich and poor alike, devoting the religious merit accrued thereby to those martyrs' spirits. And water carriers dispense cold water and sweet sherbets, poured from their water-skins into bowls of glass or crystal, even agate or turquoise. The thirsty spectators drink these beverages in remembrance of the martyrs who suffered thirst in the plain Karbala on the day of Ashura, intoning the verse: For the Love of Husayn of Karbala, to health![90]

The emotional peak of the Ashura commemoration was reached when the martyrdom of Husayn was performed according to our Ottoman observer:

> The great event of the day is when the Khan pitches his parti-coloured pavilion in this open field and all the Tabriz notables gather round knee to hear the recital of "the martyrdom of Husayn," which is comparable to the recital of the "Birthday of the Prophet" in Turkey. All the lovers of the Prophet's family listen with dejection and humility, moaning and sighing, at the words. The accursed Shimr, the oppressor "martyred his holiness Imam Husayn, the oppressed in this fashion," a curtain opens behind the reciter and a severed head and trunk of a body, with blood flowing, are thrown in front of the Khan's pavilion. Then they bring mannequins of the Imam's innocent children, who died of thirst. The audience wail and lament and are caught up in woeful ecstasy.[91]

[88]Javadi and Floor, 22.
[89]Dağlı and Kahraman, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi*, 292-4.
[90]Dankoff and Kim, *An Ottoman Traveller*, 59.
[91]Ibid., 60.

https://doi.org/10.1080/00210862.2019.1646121 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Maryam Moazzen has underlined the role of Shiʿi commemorative rituals during the Safavid era in boosting the legitimacy of the state and in constructing historical encounters between the Sunni dominant culture and the Shiʿis, allowing the Shiʿis to exist as a "community of learning and remembering." During the holy month of Muharram, visitations to the shrines of Shaykh Safi and the imams in ʿAtabat (Najaf, Karbala and Kufa), *ta'ziyah* commemorative rituals and festivals of suffering and penitence developed during this period and replaced Sufi rituals.[92] Some Qizilbash rituals, however, were also performed publicly during this period. Membré described three days of royal festival in the Maidan of Tabriz during the month of February:

> So during those three days, the Sophians come from the villages on foot, with their instruments and their Khalifa, 50 or 60 in a company. And they come into the said maidan and make a circle and begin to dance, one by one, and in 2s, 3s, and 4s. And the others play and sing praises to God and Shah Tahmasb. And each one of the Khalifas carries a stick in his hand. And an infinite number of them come and many bring presents for the Said Shah, some 10 wethers, some lambs, some horses according to their means. For they say that the said Shah receives the tenth of what they earn each year, for being their Prophet. And there are those of them when a daughter is born to them, say, "she will be the nadhr for the Shah" that is a gift given for a vow.[93]

This passage highlights the royal and Sufi rituals in which the shah and the Qizilbash participated, including polo matches, singing and dancing, accompanied by gift giving and ritual meals for three days in Tabriz. The gifts were donations by Qizilbash followers to the Safavid king, whom they still considered holy. When Membré was staying with Shah Quli Khalifa in Tabriz, Qizilbash from Adana and Khurasan came with gifts (horses, baskets of figs) and asked for a kerchief, a piece of cloth from the shah's turban, a shoe that he wore or the water he washed his hands in as a sacred object with healing qualities (*tabarruk*).[94] The shah had married one of his sisters to the Mahdi. Membré went on to state:

> When the Sophians wish to swear they say "*Shah bashisi*," that is "by the head of the Shah," and when one wishes to return thanks to the other, they sat "*shah muradin versin*," that is, May the shah give him his desire." … They say that the said Tahmasp is the son of Ali, although Ali has been dead for 900 years. All the lords that want to render thanks to the Shah, whether in his presence or absence, bow their heads to the ground and say, "Shah, Murtada ʿAli."[95]

[92]Moazzen, "Rituals of Commemoration, Rituals of Self-Invention," 556.
[93]Membré, *Mission to the Lord Sophy of Persia*, 32-3.
[94]Ibid., 41-2.
[95]Ibid., 42.

https://doi.org/10.1080/00210862.2019.1646121 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Obviously, these beliefs in the holiness of the shah and practices went beyond the orthodox Sunni or Shiʿi views and practices and were later banned. Membré also underlined the proclivity of the shah and prince Bahram Mirza to drinking rituals and participated in one where everyone lay drunk on the carpet by midnight. The shah, however, repented and turned to "religion" when he was nineteen years old, no doubt under the influence of clerics like Ali al-Karaki, who issued *fetvas* against the Qizilbash and their rituals. It appears that the public repentance of the Qizilbash and the public at large followed a few decades later. In the words of Monshi:

> Throughout his youth, he renounced sensual pleasures. In 939/1532-33, when he had been on the throne for nine years, he paid heed to the word of God, "Turn to God in repentance," and from the bottom of his heart, repented from all forbidden acts. This act of repentance was so firmly rooted in him that he never thought of breaking it. All revenue accruing from taverns, gambling dens, and brothels was removed from the ledgers. Gradually all the qezelbash tribes followed his example and showed a desire to repent. In 963/1555-56, the great emirs and the court attendants made a public act of repentance; this was followed throughout the country by the population as a whole. The chronogram for this event is "Sincere Repentance."[96]

This statement underlines the victory of Shari'a-minded piety over Sufi rituals and Qizilbash tradition although it is not clear how effective these bans were. Safavid shahs like Shah Abbas continued paying respect to their Sufi origins, which assumed a ritualistic expression (visits to the shrine of Shaykh Safi).

The Safavids also considered reciting poetry, playing music and drinking wine an important part of court etiquette, which were visualized in miniature paintings. Evliya Çelebi, who visited Azerbaijan in the second half of the seventeenth century, underlined the excessive drinking as part of the entertainment by the local governors in Nahjivan, which he described as a Qizilbash town. He also described the varieties of grape wines and *boza* (fermented drink) that were sold in taverns in Tabriz.[97] Rudi Matthee attributes royal drinking to ancient Iran, Central Asian beliefs among the Turkish elite and Sufi rituals.[98] The shah also considered excessive drinking by Shah Ismaʿil and the Qizilbash leaders as one of the factors in the defeat in Chaldiran. The shah banned not only drinking and prostitution but also public entertainment by storytellers. He closely followed the advice of his chief Mujtahid, Mir Seyyid Husayn Amuli, and paid special attention to Shiʿi rituals, which became an important facet of urban life, very similar to Catholic carnivals in Spain

[96]Monshi, *History of Shah Abbas the Great*, vol. 1, 203-4. See also Matthee, *The Pursuit of Pleasure*, 72-80. Matthee states that the shah gave up drinking in the first year he came to power in 1524 but made the ban public by issuing edicts a decade later on his return from a campaign in Khurasan, after having visited Mashhad and en route to confront the Ottomans in 1534.

[97]Dağlı and Kahraman, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi*, 272, 291.

[98]Matthee, *Pursuit of Pleasure*, 66-7.

https://doi.org/10.1080/00210862.2019.1646121 Published online by Cambridge University Press

during Easter. European observers reported at length about these rituals in seventeenth century Isfahan, which were of Imam Shiʿi origin imported from the Arab lands.[99] Matthee believes that Shah Tahmasp's repentance took place in the same year that al-Karaki was appointed as Naib al-Imam (deputy imam) in 1534-35. The appointment of Shiʿi prayer leaders to every village and the expulsion of Sunni ulema were also among the policies of the cleric.[100]

These moves aimed, in addition, at ending Qizilbash rituals, which were increasingly viewed as immoral. Part of the Safavid attempt to suppress Qizilbash practices was to normalize relations with the Ottomans, as Evliya Çelebi noted. Katherine Babayan is right in pointing out that the gradual abandonment and suppression of *ghulat* practices among the Qizilbash was part of the process of consolidation of Imami Shiʿism and Safavid central control over these tribes. Babak Rahimi has underlined the creation of a public sphere by Shah Abbas I as he consolidated power in Isfahan, where Muharram rituals were part of distinct forms of social and communicative performances and dramatized social relations that could also be subversive during the seventeenth century.[101] However, although the state was consolidating its power over the Qizilbash tribes within Iran, it still relied heavily on them and the shah performed his role as the Perfect Sufi Guide to mobilize the Qizilbash in campaigns against the Ottomans, who occupied Azerbaijan several times in the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. He was able to defeat them in 1604.

Punishing Heresy and Controlling the Borderland

The establishment of Ottoman religious and political control over this diverse borderland was a long process that lasted for several hundred years and involved military campaigns and occupations as well as resistance and rebellions. Rebellions continued in Anatolia and sometimes took on religious expression, and the Safavids continued offering support to them. Peace treaties could not establish solid boundaries and resolve the religious and political issues between the two states. Iran was never considered a *dar al-ahd* (abode of peace) but it was often a *dar al-harb* (abode of war) as a state ruled by "heretical Safavids." This ambivalence made it difficult for negotiators to draw up meaningful and everlasting peace that ensured the toleration of Qizilbash communities in the Ottoman Empire and the fair treatment of Sunnis in Iran. The ulema in the Ottoman Empire played an important role in issuing *fetvas* to declare war against the Safavids. Permanent peace with Iran was not an option as long as the Safavids ruled the country.

When Süleyman the Magnificent (1520-66) ascended the Ottoman throne, Shah Ismaʿil did not send a letter of congratulation to the Ottoman sultan. But later he sent a large embassy composed of 500 men to Istanbul to congratulate him for his mili-

[99]Calmard, "Shiʿi Rituals and Power II." Calmard argues that the Shiʿi clerics led by al-Karaki tried to get rid of all the Qizilbash and Sufi rituals and the reading of Abu Muslim Namahs, etc.
[100]Matthee, *Pursuit of Pleasure*, 75-6.
[101]Rahimi, *Theater, State*, 14-15.

https://doi.org/10.1080/00210862.2019.1646121 Published online by Cambridge University Press

tary victories in Hungary and Rhodes in 1522. However, the sultan did not greet the embassy very warmly and admitted only twenty envoys that he allowed to cross from Üsküdar to the Topkapi Palace in September 1523. The embassy reached an agreement on a short-term peace but failed to sign a formal peace treaty.[102] However, the sultan lifted the embargo on the silk trade and released Iranian traders who had been imprisoned under the order of his father. The silk trade resumed, bringing prosperity to Tabriz and Bursa once again. Peace was maintained between the two empires until 1534-35.

The defection of princes, local notables in the borderland, governors and the Qizilbash to the Ottoman and Safavid camps was an important feature of Ottoman-Safavid politics due to the porous borderland in the sixteenth century. Governors in the border provinces always looked for an opportunity to enhance their wealth and power, switching their allegiance as the power dynamics on the ground changed in favor of one or the other power. They always maintained channels of communication with both capitals, in Istanbul and Tabriz. For example, when Zulfiqar Beg, the Safavid governor of Baghdad, rebelled and handed the keys of the city to the Ottomans in 1527, the Safavids were quick to remove him from power and have him killed in 1528. The local Kurdish Bidlisi family was a good example of serving the Aqquyunlu, the Safavids and the Ottomans. Sharaf Khan Bidlisi, the Ottoman governor of Bitlis, defected to the Safavid side and was made governor again when the Safavids took the city back in 1532.[103]

Qizilbash clans also experienced their own falling out with the Safavid state in their internecine war with other clans. Ulama Sultan Tekelu, the governor of Azerbaijan, rebelled against Shah Tahmasp in 1529 and fled to the fortress of Van, which was under Safavid control. Since the Tekelu clan had lost out in the competition against the Sahmlu for positions of power and the shah had ordered their massacre, Ulama Sultan decided to seek his fortune in the Ottoman camp.[104] Sultan Süleyman offered him the governorship of Bitlis, for his collaboration against Iran. Ulama Sultan provided valuable information to Grand Vizier Ibrahim Pasha about conditions in Iran. Grand Vizier Ibrahim Pasha was planning the invasion of Iran to annex Baghdad and Tabriz since conditions in Iran were too unstable and the shah was too inexperienced to go to war against the Ottomans. Grand Vizier Ibrahim Pasha was determined to make Iran a vassal state of the Ottoman Empire, according to reports and a letter he wrote to Sultan Süleyman from the Iranian frontier.[105] When the young shah was busy campaigning in Herat, the Ottoman army led by Ibrahim Pasha attacked Bitlis and restored it to Ottoman rule in 1533. Ibrahim

[102]Riyahi, *Sefaratnameh hay-e Iran*, 36-7. See also Bacqué-Grammont, "Les Ottomans et les Safavides," 18-19; Bacqué-Grammont, "Études Turco-Safavides, XVI"; Gökbilgin, "Rapports d'Ibrahim Paşa."

[103]See Genç, "From Tabriz to Istanbul." According to Akiho Yamaguchi, Kurdish notable families from eastern Anatolia did not regard the Safavids as more oppressive than the Ottomans and tried to win their autonomy by negotiating with them as well. However, the Safavids preferred the Qizilbash tribes and sometimes granted lands to their military elites. Yamaguchi, "Shah Tahmasp's Kurdish Policy."

[104]Zarinebaf, "Rebels and Renegades," 85-6.

[105]Gökbilgin, "Rapports," 187-228.

https://doi.org/10.1080/00210862.2019.1646121 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Pasha gave many Kurdish notables who accepted Ottoman rule timars and positions. However, some Kurdish tribes like the Mahmudi turned to the Safavids when the Ottomans tried to assert centralized control by setting up timars in the Lake Van region.[106]

Ulama Sultan marched into Tabriz on behalf of Ottoman forces in August 1534 and took the city without any resistance. Ibrahim Pasha and Sultan Süleyman arrived in Tabriz in September 1534 and made it an imperial possession, with Ulama Sultan Tekelu as the Ottoman governor.[107] The sultan appointed local *beys*, who submitted to Ottoman rule to positions of power in Tabriz and built a fortress there. The sultan performed the Friday prayer in the Hasan Padishah Friday mosque and had the *khutba* read in his name and for the four caliphs. Coins were minted in his name. The sultan's army marched into Sultaniyya, Qazvin and Hamadan. The Aqquyunlu Bayundur tribe also received titles in Hamadan from the sultan. The fortification of towns, the revival of agriculture by lowering or waiving taxes for a year, the restoration and construction of Sunni mosques and *waqfs* and the appeasement of local notables were part of the Ottoman policy in occupied territories. However, when the Ottoman government tried to appoint provincial governors, raise taxes for the expenses of fortifications and soldiers by setting up the timar system, it faced resistance and rebellion in frontier provinces like Van and Azerbaijan.[108]

Shah Tahmasp decided not to confront the Ottoman army and avoid his father's mistake. Instead, the Qizilbash used hit and run and scorched earth tactics, destroying provisions in the path of Ottoman army and forcing residents to leave their homes. The Ottoman army faced brutal winter conditions on its march to Qazvin, Hamadan and central Iran. After a long military march to the borders of Baghdad, the sultan took the city in December 1534. In Baghdad, Sultan Süleyman repaired the tomb of Abu Hanifa, which had been destroyed by Shah Isma'il. He visited Shi'i holy sites in Najaf and Karbala and eased the tax burden on the population to appease them.[109]

Since Ulama Sultan had fled Tabriz after constant Qizilbash attacks, the sultan entered Tabriz for the second time in June 1535 and performed prayers in the Hasan Padishah mosque. He had also reached out to the Safavid prince Sam Mirza, who had rebelled against his father Shah Tahmasp, and gave him a position near Tabriz. But the sultan decided to leave Tabriz after two weeks and return to Istanbul. The hit and run tactics of the Qizilbash made it very difficult for the Ottoman forces to keep Tabriz and the rest of the region under their control. Ibrahim Pasha fell out of the sultan's grace and lost his head in March 1536.[110] The shah could take some

[106]Sinclair, "Administration and Fortification in the Van Region," 214.

[107]Finkel, *Osman's Dream*, 125-6. See also Parsadust, *Shah Tahmasb-i Avval*, 153-60.

[108]For the Lake Van region, see Sinclair, "Administration and Fortification," 214-15. The Ottomans captured Van in 1548 and reconstituted the region by redistricting it and by getting rid of tribal fiefdoms. Sinclair argues that the Lake Van region remained a theater of war even after the Treaty of Amasya and was subject to Safavid incursions.

[109]Finkel, *Osman's Dresm*, 126.

[110]Bacqué-Grammont, "Les Ottomans et les Safavides," 21-3.

https://doi.org/10.1080/00210862.2019.1646121 Published online by Cambridge University Press

comfort since he saw the grand vizier as the main force behind the occupation of Iran, preventing peace between the two states.

The borderland region of Azerbaijan and eastern Anatolia was deeply affected by warfare and violence, depopulation and economic setbacks as a militarized borderland and was occupied four times by Sultan Süleyman.[111] The eastern campaigns of Süleyman the Magnificent in 1534-35 brought Erzurum, the region of Van and northern Iraq under Ottoman control, making the defense of Tabriz more challenging for the Safavids. Moreover, the rebellion of Safavid prince Alqas Mirza, the brother of Shah Tahmasp, and his escape to Istanbul, instigated the next Ottoman invasion of Iran by Süleyman the Magnificent in 1547. Alqas encouraged the sultan to invade Iran and overthrow the shah.[112] He joined the sultan in the third invasion of Iran and took part in the occupation of Van and Shirvan in February 1548. The sultan occupied Tabriz again in July and appointed Ulama Sultan Tekelu, the former governor of Azerbaijan, as adviser to the Safavid prince. Alqas Mirza raided Kashan and Isfahan but failed to gain new victories for the sultan, who was campaigning in Aleppo. When the sultan cut off his support to the Safavid prince, Alqas turned to his brother, offering reconciliation and asking for appointment as the governor of Shirvan. But he was captured by a Kurd and handed to the shah, who imprisoned him and put him to death in October 1549.

Finally, the two powers opted for peace and negotiated a treaty to draw up the new borders. The Treaty of Amasya was signed between Shah Tahmasp and Süleyman the Magnificent (1520-66) on 29 May 1555. It granted Van and Baghdad to Ottoman control but left greater Azerbaijan in Safavid hands. The Ottoman Empire had gained control of Iraq as well as the Lake Van region from the Safavids as a result of the Persian wars. Since the Shiʿite holy cities (Najaf and Karbala) in Iraq had passed to Ottoman control, the treaty allowed Iranian pilgrims to visit these cities in Iraq as well as go on pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina. The Safavids promised to ban the cursing of the three caliphs in their lands.[113] However, the Treaty of Amasya failed to adequately address the religious issues that divided the two empires. The Ottoman ulema like Ebu Su'ud Efendi kept issuing *fetvas* that justified war against the "*rafizi*" Safavids, and the capture, enslavement, killing and forceful conversion of the Qizilbash during these wars. Iranian Muslim traders thus refused to travel to the Ottoman Empire partly due to persecution of Iranian Shiʿis there. Armenian traders eventually took over trade between Iran and the Ottoman Empire.

In other words, Ottoman and Safavid rulers and statesmen did not issue edicts of toleration and the ulema in each state failed to recognize the "other" Muslim minority, while Christians and Jews enjoyed specific rights within the Shari'a. Each state used the "other" to enhance its legitimacy as the champion of Sunni orthodoxy (Selim I) or as the spiritual heir to the Prophet's family (Shah Ismaʿil) to restore justice and the "true faith." However, it is important to note that Ottoman policies were directed

[111]Zarinebaf-Shahr, "Tabriz under Ottoman Rule."
[112]Zarinebaf, "Rebels and Renegades," 84-6.
[113]See Sabri Ateş, "Treaty of Zohab," in the present issue of *Iranian Studies*.

https://doi.org/10.1080/00210862.2019.1646121 Published online by Cambridge University Press

specifically against the Qizilbash and that Twelver Shiʿism survived in Ottoman territories like Iraq, although they must have come under increasing pressure.

Moreover, in the absence of solidly established borders, tribes, local notables as well as officials (local governors, tax collectors) and Safavid missionaries constantly contested the borders established and Ottoman armies moved across to punish rebels, fugitives and the heretical Qizilbash. The fate of Ottoman prince Bayezid, who rebelled against his father Sultan Süleyman and defected to Iran with his four sons and several thousand janissaries and retainers on August 1559, was very similar to the defection of Safavid prince Alqas Mirza to the Ottoman side. The shah provided refuge for prince Bayezid and used him as a bargaining chip with the sultan to renew the Treaty of Amasya. After the exchange of many letters between the two rulers, the shah finally handed the Ottoman prince to the executioners who arrived in Qazvin in July 1562, who immediately put him and his son to death after two and a half years of exile in Iran. The sultan renewed the Treaty of Amasya, which contained an important provision on the surrender of defectors. The shah received a rich payment in thousands of gold coins as a reward for turning in the Ottoman prince.[114] Ottoman executioners carried the bodies of prince Bayezid and his son to Bursa and peace between the two states was restored until Shah Tahmasp's death.

Comparing Two Ottoman Occupations of Azerbaijan in 1578 and 1725

The peace treaty remained in force until 1578 and Shah Tahmasp sent envoys and rich gifts to Istanbul to appease Sultan Selim II. The death of Shah Tahmasp in 1578 led to political instability in Iran and civil war among the Qizilbash. After three decades of peace between the two empires, given the continued strategic and economic importance of this region for the Ottomans, the invasion of Azerbaijan and Shirvan by Murad III (1574-95) in 1578 was inevitable.[115] An uprising by a Qizilbash who claimed to be Shah Ismaʿil in Bozok in Anatolia 1578 may have provided the excuse for the Ottoman invasion of Iran.[116] Safavid missionaries were still active in Anatolia.

The Ottoman forces led by Özdemiroğlu Osman Pasha occupied Tabriz for the second time in September 1585. The people of Tabriz (100,000 residents) resisted Ottoman forces and as a result the city was taken by force and was looted for three days.[117] The Ottoman commander held prayers in the Hasan Padishah Friday mosque and Osman Pasha began building a fortress near the Hasht Behesht Palace. To appease the civilians, the governor reduced the size of Ottoman army in Tabriz to 7,000 troops and created four provinces (Tabriz, Shirvan, Karabagh and Kars) in the occupied territories. [118] However, tensions between the local residents and janis-

[114]Zarinebaf, "Rebels and Renegades," 88-9.
[115] Kütügoğlu, *Osmanlı-Iran Siyasi Münasebetleri*; Kırzıoğlu, *Osmanlıların Kafkas-Elleri'ni Fethi*.
[116]BBA Mühimme Defteri, vol. 32, 206.
[117]Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlı-Iran Siyasi Münasebetleri*, 158-9.
[118]Murphy, "The Garrison and Its Hinterland."

https://doi.org/10.1080/00210862.2019.1646121 Published online by Cambridge University Press

saries grew over scarce resources. When the residents of Tabriz got into brawl and killed a few janissaries, the head of janissaries ordered a general massacre of the population, killing thousands of civilians, looting their possessions and taking their children and wives into slavery.[119] Osman Pasha could not stop the army from further acts of violence. He fell ill and died a few months later in November 1585.

After the death of Osman Pasha, the province of Tabriz, with its population of 100,000, was fully incorporated into the Ottoman provincial administration and became the center of Ottoman operations in Azerbaijan. It was placed under the governorship of the chief white eunuch Ja'fer Pasha, who maintained the garrison in Tabriz with 6,000 men in 1586 and supported it from local funds.[120] As the governor of Tabriz for eight years, he restored the fortifications and constructed a fortress there with a medium-size garrison of two to three thousand janissaries. He then ordered an *icmal* or summary survey of villages and towns in the province, which was completed in 1597.[121] The Ottomans administered Shirvan as tributary vassal state, collecting heavy tribute in the form of silk (Shirvan) shipments.[122]

Since the population of many villages and towns around Tabriz had declined and productivity was low due to war, the notables of Tabriz agreed in May 1598 to collect and pay a lump sum (*maktu'*) of 500,000 akçe annually to the Ottoman treasury until conditions improved. They did not want Ottoman tax collectors to collect taxes from every village. The survey register also listed revenue grants from villages and towns amounting to 7,164,254 akçe that were to be paid to the members of the Ottoman military-administrative class.[123] The total amount of revenue from the province of Tabriz was 17,912,254 akçe in 1597. Of this amount, the imperial (*hass*) revenues from the province of Tabriz amounted to 1,523,000 akçe.[124]

The Ottoman occupation of Azerbaijan in the course of the late sixteenth century proved highly exploitative of local resources and very harsh in its fiscal demands, leading to local rebellions against Ottoman rule. For example, prior to the completion of the land survey (*tahrir*), many Ottoman officials were accused of oppressing the local population through over-taxation and imposition of other dues. For example, the rebellion of Shaykh Haydar in October 1594 was widespread and lasted for several months. It was a response to the oppressive financial policies of Hizir Pasha, the Ottoman governor of Tabriz and Azerbaijan.[125] The Ottoman central government issued several orders to local officials to refrain from oppressive policies and finally replaced Hizir Pasha with Hasan Pasha as the governor in August 1595 (see Primary Sources, Archival Material Section in this issue).

[119]Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlı-Iran Siyasi Münasebetleri*, 158.
[120]Murphy, "The Garrison and Its Hinterland," 366. The size was reduced due to desertion and depletion to 1,500 men in 1588.
[121]See TT 645.
[122]Murphy, "The Garrison and Its Hinterland," 358-70.
[123]BBA, TT 668.
[124]BBA, TT 668, 5.
[125]BBA, MD 73: 292, 365

https://doi.org/10.1080/00210862.2019.1646121 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Moreover, the scorched earth and hit and run tactics of Shah Abbas I proved effective in driving Ottoman forces out of Azerbaijan in 1603.[126] The people of Tabriz received Shah Abbas with great enthusiasm after twenty years of occupation by the Ottoman forces. But the Ottoman-Safavid wars continued for another ten years and finally the two sides signed a peace treaty based on the Treaty of Amasya in 1613. Peace between the two states lasted until 1622 and when Sultan Osman II was overthrown during a janissary rebellion, Shah Abbas occupied Diyarbakir, Baghdad, Mosul, Najaf, Kufa and Karbala in 1623.

When Murad IV (1623-40) ascended the throne, Ottoman forces invaded Baghdad but could not take the city and signed a peace treaty with Shah Abbas. But after the death of Shah Abbas in 1630, Sultan Murad IV invaded Baghdad and Hamadan and carried out a large massacre of the population.[127] In 1635, Sultan Murad IV invaded Azerbaijan and occupied Tabriz, where his troops carried out another massacre of the residents and destroyed many buildings except for the Sunni mosques. The Safavid forces took Baghdad and Yeravan back but Baghdad was occupied again after forty days of siege by Ottoman forces in 1638.

The Peace Treaty of Zuhab or Qasr-e Shirin signed between the two sides on May 1639 granted Baghdad to the Ottomans and kept Azerbaijan within Iran.[128] So, after a century of warfare, the borders between the two states were back to those drawn at the Treaty of Amasya. The Safavids cared much more about retaining Azerbaijan, their ancestral homeland, but the Shiʿite holy cities were in Iraq. When Evliya Çelebi visited Azerbaijan in the second half of the seventeenth century to enforce the articles of the peace treaty, he lamented the high degree of destruction in cities and towns of Azerbaijan by the armies of Murad III (1574-95) and Murad IV (1623-40).[129] Although the Safavids sent many envoys to Istanbul, the Peace Treaty of Zuhab did not protect Azerbaijan from yet another Ottoman invasion in the following century.

The mistreatment of Sunnis by Shah Sultan Husayn and the Afghan invasion of Iran in 1722 exposed Iran to the Ottoman, Afghan and Russian armies. In 1721, after the Afghan occupation of Isfahan and the imminent disintegration of the Safavid state, the Ottoman grand vizier Damad Ibrahim Pasha sent Durri Efendi to Iran ostensibly to negotiate Ottoman-Iranian commercial relations. But his real mission was to gather information on the internal conditions of Safavid Iran, especially the borderland. He traveled all the way from Baghdad, via Kermanshah and Hamadan to Tehran and spent 6.5 months in Iran visiting local khans, Safavid officials and the grand vizier.[130] This was a time when the Ottoman Empire and Russia, with the mediation of the French ambassador, Marquis de

[126]Matthee, *The Politics of Trade in Safavid Iran*; Zarienbaf-Shahr, *Tabriz Under Ottoman Rule*, 147-78.
[127]Riyahi, *Sefaratnameh hay-e Iran*, 41-2.
[128]Ibid., 42-3.
[129]Zarinebaf, *Evliya Çelebi in Azerbaijan*.
[130]Riyahi, *Sefaratnameh hay-e Iran*, 49-65.

https://doi.org/10.1080/00210862.2019.1646121 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Bonnac, were negotiating the partition of western Iran, the Caspian Sea region and the Caucasus. Muhmmad Amin Riyahi has compared this plan to the partition of Poland, which also took place with French mediation later in the century.[131] Thus Russia took parts of Shirvan (Darband, Baku), Gilan, Astarabad and Mazandran on the western shores of the Caspian Sea and the Ottoman Empire occupied Hamadan, Kermanshah, Azerbaijan, the rest of Shirvan, Armenia and Georgia. The Ottoman agreement with the Russian takeover of Caucasian cities where Muslims resided created a backlash among the janissaries. According to Mehmed Raşid, who was the Ottoman court historian during the reign of Ahmed III (1703-30), given the disintegration of "heretical and oppressive Safavids," the Ottoman state had to protect its border from Afghan marauders and prevent the disruption of trade between Izmir, Erzurum and Tabriz, where French traders from Izmir and their partners were suffering grave conditions.[132] It is interesting to note that the Ottoman plan to invade Iran led to yet another series of *fetvas* against the Qizilbash. Şeyhülislam Abdullah Efendi issued *fetvas* on the punishment of Qizilbash heretics, their enslavement and forceful conversion in 1721.[133]

Having taken Kermanshah, Salmas, Ardalan, Khuy, Churs, Maraghah, Hamadan, Tasuj and Marand, Ottoman troops composed of 10,000 soldiers under the command of Abdullah Pasha took Tabriz in August 1724. The siege of Tabriz continued for twenty-nine days and, due to the strong resistance of the local population, Ottoman troops took possession of landed property, gardens and orchards of Tabriz that were abandoned by the local residents who had fled or had been killed. Some of the land and gardens in large allotments became the *hass* property of Ottoman high officials. Only those residents who submitted to Ottoman forces peacefully managed to keep possession of their properties or get them back.

The dispersal of local residents to the countryside, the decline in urban and rural sources of revenue as well as the drop in the trade of Tabriz were the major results of the Ottoman occupation. To revive the war-torn economy of Tabriz, the Ottomans undertook a series of administrative and fiscal measures and established a strong military presence in 1724. They carried out detailed surveys of villages and towns in the whole region under their control, producing more than ten registers—rare for Iran. The province of Tabriz was divided into seventeen districts and each district was further divided into several sub-districts. The Ottomans followed the Persian tax registers in assessing taxes and added their own taxes on the mint workshops, stamp tax (*tamgha*), taxes on textile looms, and the superintendent of silk sellers as well as the public scale (*kantar*). The Ottoman local administration also had to rely on local notables to remedy the shortage of cash and to revive the urban economy (see Primary Sources, Archival Material Section in this issue).

In 1724, the Ottoman garrison was initially composed of 4,565 men under the command of Vizier Abdullah pasha. But he reduced the size to 3,028 men in 1726 and to 656 men in 1729.[134] There was a high degree of desertion in the ranks due

[131]Ibid., 60.
[132]Raşid, *Tarih-e Raşid*, 62-3.
[133]See ibid.
[134]Zarinebaf-Shahr, *Tabriz under Ottoman Rule*, 109-14.

https://doi.org/10.1080/00210862.2019.1646121 Published online by Cambridge University Press

to financial difficulties in Tabriz, since the salaries were paid from the local treasury. Revenues from the land, trade and urban sources had fallen drastically after the occupation.

The Ottomans first farmed out the sources of revenue to members of the Ottoman military administrative class as well as local notables who entered Ottoman service. Some members of the local elite who accepted Ottoman rule and entered into their service became part of the Ottoman provincial administration in both periods. Those who resisted Ottoman rule either were forced to flee or were eliminated. In 1587, when Ottoman invasion of Iran became imminent, the governor of Tabriz, Amir Khan, wrote a letter to the governor of Van expressing his submission to the Ottomans if he received the entire province as his fiefdom (*malikane*) together with robes of honor and titles.[135] In addition, several members of local elites in Azerbaijan received large revenue grants upon submission and service to the Ottoman state. While most sources of revenue were farmed out to the Ottoman governors and the military administrative class, local elites of both ulema and landowning class as well as Shahsevan and Dunbuli tribal leaders also entered Ottoman service in 1728 and won back their land grants and received salaries.[136]

The aim of the Ottoman central authorities was to generate revenue in the form of tax farms for the Ottoman military administrative class. Their approach was very similar to what they had done in the Morea ten years earlier. What was different from the earlier occupation of Azerbaijan was that they did not actually settle the cavalry in the countryside to collect revenue. But the majority of tax farmers (90 percent) were members of the Ottoman military-administrative class. Tax farming had expanded considerably in the eighteenth century and lifetime as well as short-term tax farms provided ready cash for the provincial treasury and considerable profits for the tax farmers, no doubt at the expense of direct producers. In 1728, the Ottoman center was very careful in appeasing the local elites and avoiding oppressive policies, although the most important sources of revenue and properties were under the control of the Ottoman occupying forces.

In 1725, the rebellion of the Shahsevan tribe, which was divided up between the Ottoman, Russian (Talesh) and Iranian controlled lands, and their refusal to accept Russian authority and pay taxes to the Ottomans presented the greatest challenge to the two imperial regimes in Azerbaijan. The rebellion soon spread to towns in eastern Azerbaijan. The governor of Van was ordered to send 10,000 soldiers to put down the rebellion.[137] The rebellion lasted for two years and the Shahsevan attacked both Ottoman and Russian forces. They were split up and forced to settle under the authority of either the Russian or Ottoman forces and pay taxes to them. They could not move freely across the Kur River to their summer pastures. Even though Ottoman authorities tried to reinstate some tribal leaders in their position as tax collectors, the rebellion spread to the rest of Azerbaijan and assumed a

[135]BBA, MD 32, 276-7.
[136]Zarinebaf-Shahr, *Tabriz under Ottoman Rule*, 138-46.
[137]Ibid., 20-30; MD 133: 198, 254-5.

https://doi.org/10.1080/00210862.2019.1646121 Published online by Cambridge University Press

regional character. It expressed the social and economic grievances of the majority of the population against the occupying Ottoman and Russian forces. When Nadir Shah Afshar came to power and took over Azerbaijan from the Ottoman army in 1730, the local population wasted no time in attacking the Ottoman troops and driving them out. The withdrawal of Ottoman troops from Azerbaijan and the start of peace negotiation with Iranian envoys resulted in a big uprising in Istanbul led by Patrona Halil, an Albanian part-time soldier, and the overtaxed artisans in Istanbul, that eventually led to the overthrow of Sultan Ahmet III (1703-30) and the murder of his son-in law and grand vizier, Nevşehirli Ibrahim Pasha, in August 1730. The rebels were in charge of the government for several months and brought the Tulip Age to an abrupt end.[138] The defeat of Ottoman troops on the Iranian borderlands thus had created a social revolution in the capital while Isfahan had fallen into the hands of Afghan marauders. It took some time for Nader Shah to defeat the Ottomans, the Russians and the Afghans, restore Iran's independence and secure the borders in a series of peace negotiations with the Ottoman Empire.

Conclusion

Both Ottoman and Safavid historiographies have paid very little attention to confessional developments in the eastern borderlands of the Ottoman Empire. Moreover, present national boundaries have influenced the historiography of both empires. I have tried to show that the histories of Azerbaijan and Anatolia were closely intertwined in the early modern period. This was most evident in the rise of the Safavid millenarian movement that started in Azerbaijan and spread to Anatolia, where religious boundaries were still in flux but were being solidified in favor of orthodox Islam with the rise of Ottoman state. Socially, the attraction of Anatolian Turkoman tribes to heterodox Sufi orders was a reaction against the centralizing policies of the Ottoman state. The spread of Alid-centered Sufi orders in post-Mongol Iran and Anatolia and their role in social movements of protest date back to the fifteenth century. While many orders might have been of Sunni origins, some were Shiʿitized in this period. In addition, the presence of Shiʿite communities in many towns in Iran, Anatolia, Iraq, Syria, Yemen and Hijaz made the appeal of Sufi orders like Shakh Safi even stronger.

The religious wars of the sixteenth century between the Ottoman Empire and Iran were in part motivated by political strategic and economic concerns. Both states claimed the legitimacy of Muslims and cracked down on their Muslim minority communities after 1511. However, the Ottoman state inherited large pockets of Shiʿi communities after the conquest of Mamluk lands, particularly in Iraq and Syria. Thus while the persecuting zeal of the Ottoman state reached its height against the Qizilbash and Iranian Shiʿis during times of war, the state had to switch gears to a more tolerant attitude during times of peace. Once they conquered these

[138]Zarinebaf, *Crime and Punishment in Istanbul*, 54-9.

https://doi.org/10.1080/00210862.2019.1646121 Published online by Cambridge University Press

territories, they had to treat the conquered population with justice although the lure of plunder and power sometimes overrode these concerns. In both states the state asserted its control over the Sunni and Shiʿi religious establishment and imposed strict control on movements of dissent led by the Qizilbash and some Sufi orders. Thus, the revolutionary legitimation of the Safavid state based on Tariqah Shiʿism gave way to the emerging role of independent *mujtahids* or learned Shiʿi scholars who claimed that they (rather than the shah) were the spokesmen of the Hidden Imam. The leading *mujtaheds* like Majlisi were in a position to create Shari'a orthodoxy and get rid of all traces of Sufism in the seventeenth century.[139]

The rise of centralized states, however, often led to the settlement of tribes and the imposition of religious disciplining, social control, and moral policing on Sufi orders, a process that was very similar to the process of Reformation and Counter-Reformation in Europe.[140] However, print capitalism did not yet develop in the Ottoman Empire or Safavid Iran to suppress a vernacular version of Shiʿi Islam, although oral and folk traditions such as the poetry of Shah Ismaʿil in Azeri Turkish and *Abu Muslim Names* in Persian were certainly among the forbidden and banned texts in Anatolia during the sixteenth century. The Shari'a courts functioned like inquisitional courts in Europe at the height of the Ottoman-Safavid conflict in areas where communities of Qizilbash resided. However, a level of accommodation was eventually reached with the Ottoman state in 1555 during the peace negotiations that made the survival of these communities possible in the long run. But Ottoman officials viewed the Qizilbash as a fifth column and monitored their activities and ties to Iran.

Benedict Anderson's idea of "imagined communities" spreading from Germany to the rest of Europe as a result of the spread of Luther's texts and print capitalism in the sixteenth century was certainly a slower process in the Middle East.[141] But as in Europe, the process was revolutionary and gave rise to bloody conflicts between the confessionalized Sunni Ottoman and Shiʿi Safavid states. Shiʿi communities survived in the Ottoman Empire, particularly in Iraq and Syria (Nusayris), and reached accommodation with the Sunni state while a good number of Turkoman Qizilbash communities in Anatolia moved to Iran and constituted the military core of the Safavid Empire.[142] In addition, Iranian Shiʿi traders and pilgrims to Ottoman lands were subject to arrest, enslavement and forceful conversion until the nineteenth century. Ottoman-Safavid conflicts undermined trade between the two states and led to the formation of alternative maritime trade routes with Europe.

However, the religious landscape of the borderland remained fluid with the constant shift in political control between the Sunni Ottomans and the Shiʿi Safavids. The control of rich agricultural lands in Azerbaijan as well as silk-producing

[139]Hodgson, *Venture of Islam*, vol. 3, 51-3.

[140]Hsia, *Social Discipline in the Reformation*.

[141]Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 36-40. We can compare the decline of Latin as the sacred language to Arabic in our region and the rise of Turkish and Persian in sacred texts to vernacular languages in Europe, like German.

[142]On the Nusayri community in Syria, their origin and development as well as administration under Ottoman rule, see Winter, *A History of the 'Alawis*.

https://doi.org/10.1080/00210862.2019.1646121 Published online by Cambridge University Press

regions and the commercial center of Tabriz promised the Ottomans prestige, wealth and greater legitimacy in the Islamic world. Azerbaijan became a theater of war and an ideological and confessional battleground for almost 300 years. As a result, its major cities like Tabriz were sacked and plundered several times by Ottoman forces.

The local population on both sides of the border either resisted occupation or learned how to adapt to shifting political control and survive under constant occupation. The Ottoman surveys prepared in 1587 and later in 1725 describe many villages and towns in ruins and deserted by their residents. Evliya Çeiebi noted the destruction and ruin caused by the armies of Murad III and Murad IV when he traveled through towns and villages in Azerbaijan in the second half of the seventeenth century. The revenues from land and towns dropped after the occupation and recovered slowly. Depending on who was the military governor, Ottoman forces also used harsh tactics against the native population and civilians since the Safavids usually used scorched earth (destroying crops and forcing out civilians) and hit and run tactics. However, to restore the economy and collect taxes, the Ottoman provincial governors provided some tax relief and tried to integrate some of the local elites into their administration in the second stage of their occupation. During this period, the Ottoman state first followed a more decentralized control over Azerbaijan and farmed out the most important sources of revenue to members of the Ottoman military administrative class based in Tabriz and important urban centers. The Ottoman state also coopted members of local nobility as well as tribal leaders into its administration as tax farmers. It farmed out the sources of revenue to its own military as well as local *ayan* who submitted to Ottoman rule. This policy proved more effective in reviving the economy as revenues began rising and local elites returned and entered Ottoman service. But the dispersal of some major local tribes between the Russian- and Ottoman-held territories caused a major uprising by the Shahsevan tribe against Ottoman and Russian policies. In brief, Ottoman policies attempting to rule over tribes in Azerbaijan proved ineffective and the joint Russian-Ottoman control of this region caused major dislocation among the Shahsevan tribe. But they were never in Azerbaijan long enough to reap the benefit of their appeasement policies; they were soon driven out in the next stage of warfare together with the local elites who had submitted to them earlier. Only in the nineteenth century, with the relaxation of religious tensions and the expansion of the Russian Empire into the Caucasus, were the Ottoman and Qajar governments able to ease religious tensions, recognize the confessional divide, draw the borders, negotiate lasting peace (Treaty of Erzurum) and open the region up to international trade.

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