Ece Tunca

DEPICTION OF THE ENEMY THROUGH THE EYES OF AN OTTOMAN BUREAUCRAT-SOLDIER: ÂSAFİ'S *ŞECÂ'ATNÂME* (THE BOOK OF VALOR) IN THE CONTEXT OF OTTOMAN-SAFAVID RIVALRY

MA Thesis in Comparative History, with a specialization
in Interdisciplinary Medieval Studies.

Central European University

Budapest

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by

Ece Tunca

(Turkey)

Thesis submitted to the Department of Medieval Studies,
Central European University, Budapest, in partial fulfillment of the requirements
of the Master of Arts degree in Comparative History, with a specialization in Interdisciplinary Medieval Studies.

Accepted in conformance with the standards of the CEU.

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Thesis Supervisor

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Examiner

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External Reader

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External Supervisor

I, the undersigned, **Ece Tunca**, candidate for the MA degree in Comparative History, with a specialization in Interdisciplinary Medieval Studies declare herewith that the present thesis is exclusively my own work, based on my research and only such external information as properly credited in notes and bibliography. I declare that no unidentified and illegitimate use was made of the work of others, and no part of the thesis infringes on any person's or institution's copyright. I also declare that no part of the thesis has been submitted in this form to any other institution of higher education for an academic degree.

Budapest, 18 June 2017

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to present a textual and visual analysis of an Ottoman war narrative, the *Şecâ'atnâme* (the book of valor) written by Âsafi Dal Mehmed Çelebi between the years 1578 and 1586, in the context of Ottoman-Safavid rivalry. While the main focus of this study is Âsafi's encounters with the enemy, it also elaborates on the essentials of the Ottoman-Safavid rivalry and the problem of "Kızılbaş," with the aim of contextualizing Âsafi's impressions within a historical framework, and investigating to what extent his views were aligned with the Ottomans' general attitude on this issue—if it is possible to generalize in this respect—during the period in question. In other words, instead of making a general analysis of the whole text, this thesis focuses on the Kızılbaş issue as one of the most controversially discussed aspects of the Ottoman-Safavid rivalry.

Not only does the *Şecâ'atnâme* shed light on certain events during the Ottoman-Safavid wars of 1578-90, but it is also a striking example for the illustrated histories abundantly produced during the reign of Murad III (r. 1574-95), which witnessed the changing dynamics in the manuscript production and patronage. While the Şecâ'atnâme was written with the aim of eulogizing Özdemiroğlu Osman Pasha's exploits, it was an extraordinary work given its production process and the emphasis placed on Âsafi as the hidden protagonist of the narrative. In this respect, apart from discussing how a Sunni Ottoman bureaucrat-soldier viewed the Safavids and their troops, this thesis also focuses on the Şecâ'atnâme as a means of self-promotion, and asks the question, "whose *şecâ'at*?"

Keywords: illustrated histories, war narratives, gazâvatnâme, gazânâme, Ottoman-Safavid rivalry, Kızılbaş, Qizilbash, Ottoman Sunnitization, Sunni-Shi'i conflict, Âsafi Dal Mehmed Çelebi, Özdemiroğlu Osman Pasha

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Note on Transliteration

Throughout the thesis, I used the modified Modern Turkish transcription system while while indicating Turkish consonants such as *ç* and *ş*, as in *Kızılbaş*, *Çaldıran;* Turkish vowels such as *ı* and *ü* as in *mülhid*, *küfür, kadı;* long vowels, *'ayn* (ع) and *hamza* (ء), as in *şecâ'at*. On the other hand, although I was faithful to the system used in the Encyclopedia of Islam while referring to the Arabic terms with the consonant, *dāḍ* (ض) as in *rāfiḍa*, I used the same consonants as *râfızi* while referring to a Turkish source. As for the direct quotations from the primary source, the *Şecâ'atnâme*, I have been faithful to the system used in Mustafa Eravcı's book, which I found easier to understand and closer to the Modern Turkish language.

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Introduction

Illustrated histories occupy an important place in Ottoman historiography. By synthesizing the power of word and image, illustrated histories promoted the political agendas of the sultan and the ruling elite. Together with chronicles, the genre of "war narrative" (bearing the titles such as *gazânâme, gazâvatnâme, fetihnâme, zafernâme* or *sefernâme*) fills certain gaps in Ottoman historiography.[1] While *gazânâme* and *gazâvatnâme* refer to the narratives of one or more than one war, *fetihnâme* narrates a conquest, *zafernâme* a victory, and *sefernâme* a particular campaign. The *gazâvatnâme* genre was the most prominent among illustrated histories during the reign of Murad III (r. 1574-95) when various members of the bureaucratic-military class and imperial household servants were important actors in the patronage and production of these books.[2] This was a period when the sultan adopted a more secluded lifestyle in his palace no longer leading the army in campaign, and the significant individuals with whom the sultan had daily contact participated in political life and were involved in the decision-making process. Within this political conjuncture, in contrast to the eulogies of the earlier periods that had been embedded into dynastic history, late sixteenth-century *gazâvatnâme*s were often dedicated to the victories of non-royal commanders, often focusing on a single campaign, and were written with the aim of privileging the military elite over the sultan's extended household.[3]

In September 1586 a certain Ottoman bureaucrat-soldier called Âsafi Dal Mehmed Çelebi completed his work, the *Şecâ'atnâme* [The Book of Valor], with the aim of presenting it to Sultan Murad III (r. 1574-95) and—as he clearly states in the prologue—with the hope

[1] Agah Sirri Levent, *Gazavatameler ve Mihaloglu Ali Bey'in Gazavatnamesi* (Ankara: Turk Tarih kurumu Basimevi, 2000), 1.
[2] Emine Fetvaci, *Picturing History at the Ottoman Court* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press), 2013, 5.
[3] Ibid., 9, 191.

of being appointed to a better position. Although the *Şecâ'atnâme* was essentially written for depicting the exploits of Özdemiroğlu Osman Pasha during the Ottoman-Safavid wars between the years 1578 and 1585, it also provides a detailed account of the adventures of Âsafi who, apart from being Osman Pasha's secretary, served as a military official in his retinue. The *Şecâ'atnâme* consists of Âsafi's campaign notes, and was completed in 1586 after his return to Istanbul. Despite narrating the adventures of Osman Paşa, it is known that he was not involved in the production process, since he was dead at the time the manuscript was written. Apart from that of Âli Bin Yusuf, the transcriber (*müstensih*), no other person's name—whether from among the servants of the imperial household or the ruling elite— is mentioned in the introduction. Different from manuscript projects patronized by the ruling elite, Âsafi presented the book to the sultan without any intermediaries, with the aim of advancing his career by means of demonstrating his military and literary skills. Although in the prologue as well as in the epilogue he claims that the *Şecâ'atnâme* was written at the request of Sultan Murad III, Âsafi did not have access to the court studio.[4] As Emine Fetvaci nicely puts, "the manuscript demonstrates what was possible to create in the provinces without high-ranking patrons or court workshops."[5]

Apart from being a good example of a late sixteenth-century illustrated manuscript dedicated to a non-royal hero, what makes the *Şecâ'atnâme* significant is that it is a captivity narrative with an emphasis on the adventures of the author who was held captive by the Safavids for about three years. Thus, his dialogues with the enemy as well as his descriptions of the Kızılbaş, whom the Ottomans regarded as a threat to Sunni orthodoxy and imperial unity, are an excellent primary source on how a Sunni Ottoman bureaucrat-soldier viewed the

[4] Âsafi Dal Mehmed Çelebi, *Secâ"at-nâme: Özdemiroğlu Osman Pasa'nın Sark Seferleri 1578–1585*, ed. Abdülkadir Özcan (Istanbul: Çankaya Basım Yayın, 2006), XXXI; Emine Fetvacı, *Picturing History at the Ottoman Court* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), 213.
[5] Fetvacı, *Picturing History at the Ottoman Court*, 88.

Safavids and their troops. In order to contextualize Âsafi's impressions about the Kızılbaş within a historical framework, the political situation regarding the Ottoman-Safavid relations needs to be elaborated. Thus, the first chapter will present a brief survey of the Ottoman-Safavid relations prior to the time the manuscript under study was produced, while paying special attention to the Ottoman legal and religious discourse on the Kızılbaş, which continues to be a dynamic field of study. Not only does this chapter investigate the evolution of the Ottoman responses to the Kızılbaş focusing mostly on primary sources, but it also aims to provide a background for the discussion on how Âsafi treated the Kızılbaş issue and to what extent his views were aligned with the Ottomans' general attitude on this issue—if it is possible to generalize in this respect.

In Chapter Two, following a brief biography of Âsafi, I will provide an introduction into the dynamics of manuscript production of the period and Âsafi's place in this milieu. Here, the personality of Âsafi, the concept of *şecâ ʾ at* (valor), and the possible reasons behind using this concept as the title of his work will be examined. Did this concept really refer to the valor of Osman Pasha or to Âsafi's courage and resistance as a Muslim among "infidels"? Could Osman Pasha's campaign be utilized by Âsafi as an envelope for narrating his own *şecâ ʾ at*? These questions will also be discussed in the third chapter, which includes an analysis of the manuscript, particularly the sections devoted to Âsafi's encounters with the Safavids as the vital part of this study.

A detailed analysis of the historical events in the *Şecâ'atnâme* is beyond the scope of this thesis and, as well, there are a few studies that present comprehensive summaries of these events, albeit written in Turkish). Süleyman Eroğlu's PhD thesis is by far the most

comprehensive study on the historical events narrated in the *Şecâ'atnâme*.[6] There also exists an art history thesis by Gönül Kaya, which summarizes several historical details on the events in the *Şecâ'atnâme* while presenting a formal analysis of its illustrations.[7]. Thus, rather than embarking on a historical analysis of the whole text, focusing on certain episodes that include encounters with the Kızılbaş will serve to shed light on the way Âsafi depicts the enemy while presenting himself as the hidden protagonist. I will investigate in particular the terms the author uses to refer to his enemy. In this respect, encounters in battlefield and court, as well as the anecdotes placed between the main turning points of the narrative are of great importance.

There exist two copies of the *Şecâ'atnâme*: one in the Istanbul University Library, the other in the Topkapı Palace Museum Library.[8] For this study I use the Istanbul University Library copy, which is a more elaborate version with illustrations, and whose facsimile and transcription are available. In this respect, apart from presenting the detailed storyline of the events in modern Turkish, Süleyman Eroğlu's PhD thesis was of great help in terms of providing me with the transcription based on both copies, with textual differences in the footnotes.[9] More recently Mustafa Eravcı also undertook the transcription of the whole text based on both surviving copies. However, Eravcı's book also includes high quality digital version of the manuscript in CD format, which enabled me to examine the illustrations

[6] Süleyman Eroğlu, "Âsaf'î'nin Şecâatname'si: İnceleme-Metin" [Şecâatname of Âsaf'î's': analysis-text], Ph.D diss. (Uludağ University, 2007). Eroğlu also provides a detailed summary of the *Şecâatname* in separate a paper. Süleyman Eroğlu. "Âsafi'nin Şecâat-Nâme Mesnevisi" [Âsafi's Şecâat-Nâme masnawi], *Turkish Studies International Periodical For the Languages, Literature and History of Turkish or Turkic* 4, no. 7 (Fall 2009): 253–97.
[7] Gönül Kaya "Resimli Bir Osmanlı Tarihi: Âsafi Paşa'nın Şecâatnâme'si" [an Ottoman illustrated history: Şecâatnâme of Âsafi Pasha], master's thesis (Uludağ University, 2006).
[8] Istanbul University Library, TY. Nr.6043. Topkapi Palace Museum Library, R:1301.
[9] The author states that the work is based on the Istanbul University copy since the Topkapı Palace copy was in a bad state. He also adds that the latter was also used as a comparandum when he had difficulty reading the former during his transcription work. Süleyman Eroğlu, "Âsaf'î'nin Şecâatname'si: İnceleme-Metin [Şecâatname of Âsaf'î': Analysis-Text]," PhD, Uludağ University, 2007, 137.

closely.[10] Thanks to these publications, the work on this thesis did not pose a challenge in terms of deciphering the paleography of the *Şecâ'atnâme*. Nevertheless, understanding the text and analyzing it in depth is is a challenge of a different order. In this respect, although the *Şecâ 'atnâme* is written in verse, Âsafi was not a poet and he did not use an artistic and pompous language riddled with Persian and Arabic words, which has also made my task easier.

As for the historical component, which forms a background for the discussion on the Ottoman-Safavid relations and the Kızılbaş problem, two old but still essential sources are highly useful: Adel Allouche's *The Origins and Development of the Ottoman-Safavid Conflict* (1983) and Bekir Kütükoğlu's *Osmanlı-İran Siyasi Münasebetleri* [Ottoman-Iranian political relations] (1962).[11] As for the primary sources included in this discussion, apart from the *Şecâ'atnâme* itself, histories such as İbn Kemâl's (Kemâlpaşazade) *Tevârih-i Âl-i 'Osman* and contemporary documents like legal opinions (*fetvâ*) and imperial decrees (*fermân*) are also of great use in terms of understanding the ambiguity of the Kızılbaş issue.[12]

Discussions on the Ottoman orthodoxy, Sunni-Shi'i tension, Kızılbaş issue and the Ottoman responses to the Kızılbaş communities form a dynamic field with a growing corpus of studies: Nabil Al-Tikriti, for instance, focuses on the concepts such as *imân* (a state of faith), *küfr* (a state of non-faith), *irtidâd* (apostasy) and *tekfir* (declaring someone to be an apostate), discussing the boundaries of belief, as well as the rulers' and jurists' evolving

[10] H. Mustafa Eravcı, *Asafi Dal Mehmed Çelebi ve Şecaatname* (Istanbul: MVT Yayınları / Tarih Dizisi, 2009).
[11] Adel Allouche, *The Origins and Development of the Ottoman-Safavid Conflict* (Berlin: K. Schwarz, 1983); Bekir Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlı-İran Siyasi Münasebetleri* [Ottoman-Iranian political relations] (Istanbul: Edebiyat Fakultesi Matbaasi, 1962).
[12] İbn Kemâl, *Tevârîh-i Âl-i 'Osman VIII. Defter (Transkripsiyon)*, ed. Ahmet Uğur (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1997).

attitudes regarding these issues.[13] Marcus Dressler also discusses the Ottoman-Safavid / Kızılbaş conflict, and questions the concepts of authority and legitimacy, controversially interpreting the religious dichotomy between the Ottomans and Safavids as a product of the Ottoman-Safavid rivalry rather than its cause.[14] More recently, Derin Terzioğlu has pointed to the complexity and evolving nature of the Ottoman discourse on Kızılbaş.[15] Terzioğlu's historiographical essay focuses on the Ottoman Sunnitization and discusses the gradual transition from a state that can be described as "confessional ambiguity" prior to the late fifteenth century to the increasing interest on the part of Ottoman authorities to define and police a Sunni orthopraxy starting in the early sixteenth century. She investigates the factors other than the political responses to the rise of Safavids / Shiism behind this process, tracing stages and evolution in Ottoman Sunnitization over the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In this respect, Terzioğlu's arguments are a good roadmap to understanding the manifold nature of the Ottoman Sunnitization and the state's responses to the Kızılbaş. Ayşe Baltacıoğlu-Brammer's article based on the *mühimme defterleri* (records of imperial orders) is also an important study in terms of focusing on the Kızılbaş terminology and the Ottoman government's attitude towards the Kızılbaş communities in Anatolia, which has parallels with the first chapter of my thesis. [16]

Until recently, the discussion of the illustrated Ottoman works saw a division of labor between historians and art historians, with the former focusing on the analysis of the text and the latter on images. Building on recent more "integrative" approaches to the illustrated

[13] Nabil Al-Tikriti, "Kalam in the Service of State: Apostasy and Defining of Ottoman Islamic Identity," in *Legitimizing the Order: The Ottoman Rhetoric of State Power*, ed. H. Karateke and M. Rainkowski (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 131–49.
[14] Marcus Dressler, "Inventing Orthodoxy: Competing Claims for Authority and Legitimacy in the Ottoman-Safavid Conflict," in *Legitimizing the Order*, 151–73.
[15] Derin Terzioğlu, "How to Conceptualize Ottoman Sunnitization: A Historiographical Discussion," *Turcica* 44 (2012): 301–38.
[16] Ayşe Baltacıoğlu-Brammer, "Formation of Kızılbaş Communities in Anatolia and Ottoman Responses, 1450s-1630s," *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 20 (2014): 21–48.

Ottoman works, this thesis aims to present an analysis of both textual and pictorial imagery featured in the *Şecâ'atnâme,* albeit focusing on a particular issue. In this respect it builds on Emine Fetvacı's groundbreaking work *Picturing History at the Ottoman Court,* which is a crucial source with regard to the dynamics of the manuscript production and patronage in the Ottoman Empire.[17] Another work of Emine Fetvacı, *The Production of Şehnâme-i Selim Han* (Book of Kings of Selim Khan), also sheds light on the social hierarchies of the Ottoman court, as well as the multiple meanings and purposes of manuscript patronage, albeit focusing on a single manuscript.[18] Speaking of Ottoman manuscript production and patronage patterns, Christine Woodhead has also made major contributions to the field. In *Reading Ottoman "Şehnames": Official Historiography in the Late Sixteenth Century,* for instance, she presents the *şehname* genre as "the propagandist voice of the court" while investigating the purpose of official historiographies.[19] Although she focuses on a different genre than I do, her remarks give me deeper insight about the dynamics of manuscript production and usage. As for the stylistic features of war narratives, Filiz Çağman and Zeren Tanındı's joint study, "Remarks on Some Manuscripts from the Topkapi Palace Treasury in the Context of Ottoman-Safavid Relations," is one of the few sources, which besides investigating the

[17] Emine Fetvacı, *Picturing History at the Ottoman Court* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press), 2013.
[18] Emine Fetvaci, "The Production of the Şehname-i Selim Han," *Muqarnas* 26 (2009): 263-315.
[19] Christine Woodhead, "Reading Ottoman 'Şehnames' : Official Historiography in the Late Sixteenth Century," Studia Islamica 104-105 (2007): 67-80. For more knowledge on official historiography during the reign of Murad III, also see, "Murad III and the Historians: Representations of Ottoman Imperial Authority in Late Sixteenth Century Historiography," in *Legitimizing the Order: the Ottoman Rhetoric of State Power*, ed. Hakan Karateke and Maurus Reinkowski (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 85-98.

Safavid influence on the Ottoman book arts, comment on the artistic features of the *Şecâ'atnâme* in particular.[20]

In this study I present a textual and visual analysis of the *Şecâ'atnâme* under two main topics. Instead of making a general analysis of the whole text, firstly I will focus on the Kızılbaş issue as one of the most controversially discussed aspects of the Ottoman-Safavid rivalry. Before investigating how Âsafi depicted the Kızılbaş, I will present an outline of the Ottoman-Safavid rivalry and the problem of the Kızılbaş (how it came into existence and how it evolved during times of war and peace) in order to understand the essence of this highly complex topic, and to assess whether Âsafi conforms to or departs from the broader "Ottoman" discourse on the Kızılbaş, if one can claim that such a discourse existed. Secondly, I will look into the dynamics of manuscript production in the sixteenth century—particularly during the reign of Murad III— focusing on war narratives as propaganda tools, and investigate how Âsafi utilized the *Şecâ'atnâme* for his self-promotion. While trying to answer several questions that these issues raise, I intend to adopt the above-mentioned integrative approach, thus analyzing textual and visual imagery together rather than engaging in an artistic or formal analysis.

[20]Filiz Çağman and Zeren Tanındı, "Remarks on Some Manuscripts from the Topkapi Palace Treasury in the Context of Ottoman-Safavid Relations," *Muqarnas* 13 (1996): 132–48. For artistic interactions between the Ottomans and Safavids throughout the sixteenth century, also see, Lale Uluç, "On Altıncı Yüzyılda Osmanlı-Safevi Kültürel İlişkileri Çerçevesinde Nakkaşhânenin Önemi" [Importance of Court Workshop in the Context of Ottoman-Safavid Cultural Relations in the Sixteenth Century] *Doğu Batı Düşünce Dergisi* 54 (2010): 23-60.

CHAPTER 1

OTTOMAN-SAFAVID RIVALRY AND THE ISSUE OF KIZILBAŞ (1500-1590)

Since the focus of this thesis is the depiction of the Kızılbaş through an Ottoman bureaucrat-soldier's eyes, an elaborate discussion of the dynamics of the Ottoman-Safavid political conflict is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, it is of vital importance to establish the historical background to the formation of the Ottoman discourse on Kızılbaş by presenting a brief survey of the Ottoman-Safavid rivalry, and the Ottoman responses prior to the time of Murad III (r. 1574-1595) when the *Şecâ'atnâme* was narrated. Not only does this help to understand the political circumstances under which the *Şecâ'atnâme* was written, but it also sheds light on the way Âsafi situates himself within the Ottoman discourse on Kızılbaş. The reason for limiting the time period between 1500 and 1590 is that these nine decades witnessed the birth and maturation of the Ottoman-Safavid conflict including the periods of peace and outbreaks of wars, which were reflected in contemporary sources. As for the period after 1590, it started with the reign of Shah 'Abbas I (1588-1629) who degraded the status of the Kızılbaş by marginalizing them, leading to a strict division between them and Twelver Shiites. Thus, the period after 1590 deserves extensive treatment on its own.

In order to understand the circumstances under which the *Şecâ'atnâme* was narrated, and to contextualize Âsafi's impressions about the Kızılbaş within a historical framework, one needs to comprehend the dynamics of the rivalry between the Ottomans and Safavids, which left its mark on the sixteenth century. Tracing the origins of the Ottoman-Safavid conflict is a challenging task. Until recently, Ottoman historiography has often evaluated this conflict as a phenomenon that derived merely from religious dichotomy, and the Ottoman

responses to the Kızılbaş as a caution against the Safavid threat towards Ottoman central authority and Sunni Islam. Bekir Kütükoğlu, the author of one of the first works on this topic, for instance, points out the crucial role of Shi'i Islam in the foundation of the Safavid State and its centrality for understanding the factors behind the birth of the Ottoman-Safavid conflict.[21] Similarly, some later scholars such as Fuad Köprülü, Franz Babinger and Ahmet Yaşar Ocak place emphasis on the Ottoman creation of an orthodox Sunni identity, problematically depicting a clear-cut division between the "high Islam" that designated the normative and textually grounded religion of the urban elite, and the "low Islam" ascribed to the syncretistic and primarily oral practices of the tribal populations in Anatolia and Rumeli.[22] Not only does this approach overlook the geographic and ethnic diversity of the Kızılbaş population, but it also attributes a timeless Sunni character to the religious culture of the urban elite.[23] Nevertheless, a one-dimensional evaluation of the Ottoman-Safavid relations and the problem of Kızılbaş based merely on religious conflict remains inconclusive. As Markus Dressler rightfully argues, instead of juxtaposing Ottomans and Safavids in an antagonistic manner and interpreting the Ottoman-Safavid conflict through religious dichotomy, one needs to adopt a multi-dimensional approach taking into account also the economic and political aspirations, as well as the processes of justification and

[21] Bekir Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlı-İran Siyasi Münasebetleri* [Ottoman-Iranian political relations] (Istanbul: Edebiyat Fakultesi Matbaasi, 1962), 1.

[22] See Mehmed Fuad Köprülü and Franz Babinger, *Anadolu'da İslamiyet* [Islam in Anatolia], trans. Ragıp Hulusi (Istanbul: Insan Yayinlari, 1996); Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, *Babailer İsyanı* [The Babai Revolt] (Istanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 1980).

[23] Derin Terzioğlu, "How to Conceptualize Ottoman Sunnitization: A Historiographical Discussion," *Turcica* 44 (2012): 302-3; Ayse Baltacioglu-Brammer, "Formation of Kızılbaş Communities in Anatolia and Ottoman Responses, 1450s-1630s," *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 20 (2014): 22. For further discussion on the scholarship, also see Ayfer Karakaya-Stump, "The Wafā'iyya, the Bektashiyye and Genealogies of 'Heterodox' Islam in Anatolia: Rethinking the Köprülü Paradigm," *Turcica* 44 (2013-2012): 279–300; Marcus Dressler, "Inventing Orthodoxy: Competing Claims for Authority and Legitimacy in the Ottoman-Safavid Conflict," in *Legitimizing the Order: The Ottoman Rhetoric of State Power*, ed. Hakan T. Karateke and Maurus Reinkowski (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 151-73.

legitimacy.[24] On the other hand, as an interpretation of the Ottoman Sunnitization and the policies of Kızılbaş, merely through the context of religious dichotomy remains incapable, defining these processes as the Ottoman state's politically-minded responses to the Safavid threat also falls behind the broader context of this multifaceted issue. Derin Terzioğlu has reconceptualized Ottoman sunnitization and interpreted Ottoman responses to the non-Muslim and non-Sunni communities within a broader religio-political framework.[25] Instead of taking a rigid Sunni-Shi'i dichotomy for granted, she underscores the multifaceted and long-term nature of the Ottoman sunnitization/confessionalization: confessional ambiguities existed –even in the level of Muslim learned elits— long before the rise of the Safavids; rather than being merely a sixteenth-century invention of the Ottoman state as a means of ideological challenge and legitimacy against the Safavids, the emerging Sunni orthodoxy— and its consequences— partly derived from the rise of the ulema as powerful agents, and the spread of Islamic literacy in the Ottoman lands.[26] Several Sufis and scholars were accused of heresy and were persecuted before the pro-Safavid millenarian revolt of Şahkulu (1511) that is generally accepted as the trigger event for the bloody campaign against the Safavid sympathizers.[27]

1.1. The Rise of the Safavids and the Formation of the Kızılbaş Identity

While the name of the Safavid Dynasty derives from the founder of the Safavid Sufi tariqah, Shaykh Safi al-Din (1252-1334) who had established the basic organization and propaganda network extending to eastern Anatolia and Syria, it was under Shaykh Junayd (r.

[24] Dressler, "Inventing Orthodoxy," 151-52.
[25] Terzioğlu, *How to Conceptualize Ottoman Sunnitization*.
[26] Ibid., 303-309.
[27] Ibid., 309-11.

1447-1460) that the Safavid order began to claim political power.[28] The succession of Shaykh Junayd coincided with the disintegration of the Timurid Empire. As a result of the Kara Koyunlu leader Jahan Shah's (r. 1438-1467) ambition to establish his authority in the area at the expense of Timurids and Ak Koyunlus, a strong rivalry developed between the Kara Koyunlus and the Ak Koyunlus, which was resolved in favor of the latter.[29] In the meantime, Shaykh Junayd, being expelled by Jahan Shah from Ardabil, the base of the Safavid order, and seeking refuge in Asia Minor and Asia, was finally given sanctuary by the Ak Koyunlu leader Uzun Hasan in Diyarbekir.[30] It was this political conjuncture that set the conditions for the transformation of the Safavids from a mystic order into a prominent actor in world politics and the long-standing rival of the Ottoman Empire.

During the reign of Shaykh Haydar (r. 1460-1488), the son of Shaykh Junayd, the Safavid authority was reestablished in Ardabil with the help of Uzun Hasan. Shaykh Haydar combined his religious leadership with military force by converting his heterogeneous followers consisting of Turkoman tribes into an organized force of *ghazis*.[31] Allegedly instructed in a dream by the Imam Ali, Haydar ordered his followers to wear a crimson headgear with twelve gores commemorating the twelve Shi'i Imams. This distinctive headgear, also known as *tâc-ı Haydari* (crown of Haydar) would lead the Ottomans to dub

[28] Roger Savory, *Iran Under the Safavids* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 10.

[29] Following the defeat of the Kara Koyunlus and the death of Jahan Shah, the Ak Koyunlu leader Uzun Hasan also vanquished the Timurid leader Abu Sa'id (1451-1469), paving the way for his supreme authority in Iran. Adel Allouche, *The Origins and Development of the Ottoman-Safavid Conflict* (Berlin: K. Schwarz Verlag, 1983), 39.

[30] Savory, *Iran Under*, 17. Junayd also got married to Uzun Hasan's sister, Khadijah Begum, thus consolidating the Safavid-Ak Koyunlu alliance against the Kara Koyunlu threat on the one hand, and having a voice in Iranian politics as a legitimate member of the Ak Koyunlu dynasty, on the other. Allouche, *The Origins*, 47.

[31] Shaykh Haydar followed a similar trajectory to that of his father in order to strengthen his ties with the Ak Koyunlus and got married with Uzun Hasan's daughter, Halimah Begum (also known as Alamshah). Allouche, *The Origins*, 50.

the supporters of the Safavid house "Kızılbaş" (red head).[32] Haydar was killed in a battle against the joint forces of the Shirvanshahs and Ak Koyunlus in 1488. Shaykh Haydar's death was followed by a series of struggles of the Kızılbaş forces with the Shirvanshahs and Ak Koyunlus, which led to the death of Shaykh Haydar's elder son Ali Mirza (r. 1488-1494).

Ismail was a seven-year-old child when he succeeded his deceased brother in 1494. Prior to his return to Iranian Azerbaijan at the age of twelve, he was given sanctuary at the court of Mirza Ali Kirkaya, the ruler of Gilan, in Lajihan (a city in northwest Iran). Here he would receive a well-rounded education, which would be influential in the formation of his leadership pattern as well as his religious inclinations.[33] During his stay in Lajihan, Ismail was never forgotten and was frequently visited by his adherents from Anatolia and Azerbaijan.[34] These were the Turcoman tribes that would form the core of the Kızılbaş army, and the vital power behind the transformation of the Safavid order into a dynasty.[35] In 1500, Ismail led the Kızılbaş forces to Shirvan where he defeated the Shirvanshah army, and was eventually enthroned in Tabriz in 1501, at the age of fifteen.[36] Here he received the ancient Iranian title, *Shahanshah* (king of kings), and declared Imami/Twelver Shi'ism the official religion.[37]

[32] Savory, *Iran Under the Safavids,* 19.
[33] Allouche, *The Origins,* 59-60.
[34] Faruk Sümer, *Safevi Devleti'nin Kuruluşu ve Gelişmesinde Anadolu Türkleri'nin Rolü* [The role of the Anatolian Turks in the foundation and development of the Safavid State], Historical Series 2 (Ankara: Publications of the Institute of Seljuk History and Civilization, 1976), 15.
[35] Aḥmad Ibrāhīmī Ḥuysanī, *Die Frühen Safawiden Nach Qāżī Aḥmad Qumī, trans. and commentary by Erika Glassen* (Freiburg: Schwarz, 1970), 79, cited in Allouche, *The Origins,* 61.
[36] Sümer, *Safevi Devleti'nin Kuruluşu,* 22; Allouche, *The Origins,* 62.
[37] Heinz Halm, *Shi'ism*, 2nd edition (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 80.

1.2. Ottoman-Safavid Rivalry: Ottoman Policies and Terms Used to Refer to the Kızılbaş

As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, there exists a general tendency in Ottoman scholarship to ascribe the beginning of the Ottoman-Safavid conflict as well as the problem of Kızılbaş to the rise of the Safavids as a threat to the Sunni Islam. Although Selim I's reign (1512-20) left its mark in history as the period when the oppression against the Kızılbaş in Anatolia was at its peak, the tension between the Ottoman rulers and Safavid shaykhs had begun much earlier.

1.2.1. The Early Phase

The first steps of the transformation of the Safavids from a mystic order into the long-standing rival of the Ottoman Empire were taken in the time of Shaykh Junayd (r. 1447-1460) under whom the Safavid order began to claim political power with its Kızılbaş army consisting of Turcoman tribes.[38] When Shaykh Junayd was exiled from his shrine in Ardabil, he made a request to Sultan Murad for a piece of land in Anatolia.[39] However, his request was rejected, which led Shaykh Junayd to take refuge among the Turcoman tribes in Anatolia and lay the foundations of the Safavid state in the long run.[40]

In 1501, Shah Ismāʿil (r. 1501-1524) declared Imami/Twelver Shi'ism the official religion. Shah Ismāʿil's (Ismail I) ascension to the throne in 1501 was a turning point in the history of Iran. The unique character of Shah Ismāʿil's supreme power lay in the duality of his leadership: a strong political leader who provided the Safavid state with a prominent role

[38] Roger Savory, *Iran Under the Safavids*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 10. Aḥmad Ibrāhīmī Ḥuysanī. *Die Frühen Safawiden Nach Qāżī Aḥmad Qumī, trans. and commentary by Erika Glassen*, (Freiburg: Schwarz, 1970), 79, cited in Allouche, *The Origins and Development of the Ottoman-Safavid Conflict* (K. Schwarz Verlag: 1983), 61.
[39] Âşıkpaşazâde, *Tevârîh-i Âl-i 'Osman* (Istanbul: 1332/1914), 264-65.
[40] Sümer, *Safevi Devleti'nin Kuruluşu,* 1-14.

in world politics on the one hand, and the hereditary spiritual leader of the Safavid Sufi *tariqah* (mystic order) and a semi-divine figure, on the other. The declaration of Twelver Shi'ism as the ruling faith and the cursing of the first three caliphs were followed by forcible conversions and executions.[41] While a sweeping campaign against the Sunni population in Tabriz was unfolding, the Safavid border began to shift westwards due to the expansionist policy of Shah Ismail and the Turcoman tribes of eastern Anatolia who helped the Safavids stir trouble within the Ottoman Empire on the other.[42]

During Mehmed II's (r. 1451-81) land reform that required the conversion of pious foundations and land-holdings into state property, many Turcoman settlements and foundation properties in the Anatolian and Rumelian periphery had been annexed, which led to a general mistrust towards the Ottoman central government.[43] Although these reforms would later be annulled by Bayezid II (r. 1481-1512), several other factors such as increasing taxes, natural disasters, plague and famine contributed to the unrest of the Anatolian populace, and rendered them more vulnerable to Safavid missionary activities.[44] On the other hand, the centralizing regime of Mehmed II together with the increasing bureaucratic consciousness provided the ulema with extreme power as the agents, allies and beneficiaries of the centralizing state, which caused serious conflict with the Sufi groups that had hitherto had a balanced relationship with the ulema, leading to several rebellions and persecutions.[45] During the end of the fifteenth century, rebellions became more frequent; a member of the

[41] Allouche, *The Origins,* 30.
[42] Ibid., 64.
[43] Irene Beldiceanu-Steinherr, "Le Règne de Selim Ier: Tournant dans la vie politique et religieuse de l'Empire Ottoman," [the reign of Selim I: turning point in the political and religious life of the Ottoman Empire] *Turcica* 6 (1975): 43–47, cited in Dressler, *Inventing Orthodoxy,* 153. For more details on Mehmed II's land reform, see Oktay Özel, "Limits of the Almighty: Mehmed II's 'Land Reform' Revisited," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 42, no. 2 (1999): 226–46.
[44] Dressler, "Inventing Orthodoxy," 153.
[45] Derin Terzioğlu, "Sufis in the Age of State-Building and Confessionalization" in *The Ottoman World*, ed. Christine Woodhead (London: Routledge, 2012), 89.

antinomian Sufi group, the Haydari brotherhood, even attempted to assassinate Bayezid II.[46] Being known as pious and personally attracted to Sufism, Bayezid II on the other hand, took actions for institutionalizing Sufism, supporting shaykhs from a wide variety of Sufi orders, with the aim of reaching out to social and religious groups potentially receptive to Safavid propaganda.[47]

The earliest and one of the most serious incidents caused by the activities of the Kızılbaş Turcoman tribes within the Ottoman lands was the Şahkulu Rebellion (April 1511-July 1511) that broke out in the Teke region (today's Antalya, a city in south-western Anatolia), which was governed by Prince Korkud, the son of Bayezid II (r. 1481-1512). The revolt was led by Şahkulu (meaning "servant of the shah"), also known as Karabıyıkoğlu, whose father had been in the service of Shaykh Haydar.[48] Although Şahkulu earned several victories against Ottoman forces, he was eventually killed, leaving his scattered partisans to flee across the border into Iran. Apart from being the earliest Kızılbaş rebellion, the real significance of the Şahkulu rebellion derives from the fact that it discredited Bayezid II's rule and Prince Korkud's claims to the throne in favor of Selim, the younger son of Sultan Bayezid II.[49]

Contemporary sources deserve further attention since they give an insight into the Ottoman perception and terminology with regards to these early Kızılbaş revolts. The narrative of Kemalpaşazâde, the prominent historian of the period, points to the disobedience and unworthiness of the Anatolian Turcomans who joined the Kızılbaş troops against the Ottoman central authority, using expressions such as "residents of the Teke region, those who

[46] Nile Green, *Sufism—A Global History* (New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 136.
[47] Terzioğlu, "Sufis," 93.
[48] Colin Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650: The Structure of Power*, 2nd edition (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 43.
[49] Ibid. 44.

would assail fearlessly and kill at every opportunity; they were the servants of Shah Ismāʿil, the leader of Ardabil […] Originally belonging to the lower class, they reached state ranks."[50] On the other hand, a report written by the *kadı* (judge) of Antalya during the Şahkulu revolt attests to the messianic claims of Şahkulu as a means of justification. The *kadı* describes the way Şahkulu followers see him: "This (Şahkulu) is the God, this is the prophet."[51] However, several other reports written in this period focus mostly on plunder and violence, as well as the gravity of the threat posed to the Ottoman central authority.[52]

1.2.2. Periods of Intense Conflict and Eventual Peace: The Reigns of Selim I and Süleyman the Magnificent

During his governorship in Trebizond, Selim I (r.1512-1520) had obtained the opportunity to observe the rise of Ismail and the fanatical valor of his warriors, and he was fully aware of the extent of the Kızılbaş threat facing his empire.[53] In contrast to Bayezid II's rather passive policy, he took extreme measures against the Safavid state as well as the Kızılbaş population within Ottoman realms, leading to imprisonment and execution of many, largely comprised of nomadic Turcoman tribesmen and peasant villagers who were suspected of being supporters of the extremist Shi'i movements.[54]

As Derin Terzioğlu points out, it is usually accepted that, being the most frequently discussed dimension of the Ottoman policies of Sunnitization, the bloody campaign against

[50] "Teke diyârınun dike burun bî-bâk fettâkları ser-i hayl-i Erdebil Şâh İsmâ'îlün a'vân u ensârı onlar idiler […] Yerlerinde ra'îyet idiler, onda vardılar, devlete irdiler." Kemalpaşazâde, *Tevârîh-i Âl-i Osmân, VIII. Defter*, ed. Ahmet Uğur (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1997), 233. Henceforth, all translations are mine unless noted otherwise.
[51] "Allah budur. Peygamber budur." Baki Öz, *Alevilik ile ilgili Osmanlı Belgeleri* (İstanbul: Can Yayinlari, 1995), 128.
[52] For further contemporary reports about the Shah Kulu revolt, see Öz, *Alevilik ile ilgili Osmanlı Belgeleri*, 125-29.
[53] Peter Jackson and Laurence Lockhart, *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 6, *The Timurid and Safavid Periods* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 222.
[54] Ibid., 222-23.

suspected Safavid sympathizers in the Ottoman realms was an outcome of the Kızılbaş uprisings that came into prominence with the Şahkulu revolt.[55] However, although it is certain that the Ottomans considered the Kızılbaş activities as a threat to the state authority, it is unlikely that the primary motive behind their persecution was religious difference and the intensifying Sunni character of the Ottomans. Based on the accounts of religious deviance in *mühimme defterleri* (registers of important matters of state), Colin Imber has demonstrated that the Ottomans did not persecute those adhering to heterodox beliefs and practices as long as they did not proclaim them publicly; what really mattered for the Ottoman authority was whether these Shi'i groups were associated with the Safavids and showed allegiance to the shah, which would make them a direct threat to public order.[56] As for the rest of the non-Sunni population, in order to bring them in line, the Ottoman government followed a policy of executing lesser forms of punishment, or purchasing their loyalty through the bestowal of posts and privileges.[57] As Markus Dressler convincingly concludes, although the persecutions during Selim's reign have been explained and legitimized by Ottoman historiographers by portraying the conflict as an outgrowth of religious extremism manifesting itself in revolt and political conspiracy, its underlying political, social, and economic causes should not be overlooked.[58]

Another important step taken by Selim I was ruining Safavid economy by imposing an embargo on Iranian silk traffic and blocking the passage of merchants in either direction.[59]

[55] Terzioğlu, "How to Conceptualize," 311.
[56] Colin Imber, "The Persecution of the Ottoman Shi'ites According to the Mühimme Defterleri, 1565-1585," *Der Islam* 56 (1979): 261-262. For a detailed discussion of the Ottoman narrative of apostasy, see Nabil Al-Tikriti, "Kalam in the Service of State: Apostasy and Defining of Ottoman Islamic Identity," in *Legitimizing the Order: The Ottoman Rhetoric of State Power*, ed. H. Karateke and M. Rainkowski, (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 131–49.
[57] Terzioğlu, "How to Conceptualize," 312.
[58] Dressler, "Inventing Orthodoxy," 156.
[59] Caroline Finkel, *Osman's Dream: The History of the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Basic Books, 2007), 105.

Furthermore, while the Ottoman army under the rule of Selim I was marching from the west, Shah Ismail was trying to avoid a war with the Ottoman Empire due to his preoccupation with the Uzbek state in the east. Nevertheless, Selim I eventually managed to lure Shah Ismail into a battle at Çaldıran (today a district in Van, in the east of Turkey), which resulted in the Ottoman victory and the capture of Tabriz, the Safavid capital.[60]

The battle of Çaldıran (23 August 1514) was a turning point in the early phase of the Ottoman-Safavid relations. On the Ottoman side, the Çaldıran victory led to the conquest of all of eastern Anatolia that had been under the control of Shah Ismail.[61] Selim I continued the purge by expelling the Safavids from southwest and eastern Anatolia either by force or persuasion. Gaining the loyalty of Sunni local lords with the help of Idris of Bitlis, a Kurdish scholar and notable, Selim I also consolidated the Sunni domination in the region.[62] As for the Safavid side, not only did Shah Ismail lose his charisma as a sacred and invincible leader in the eyes of his followers, the weakness of the Safavid state also gave an opportunity to their Christian opponents.[63] The Safavid state adopted a defensive policy vis-à-vis the Ottoman Empire while at the same time embarking on diplomatic overtures to Western Christendom, which would not succeed in building an alliance against the Ottomans.[64]

There exist a variety of contemporary sources that depict Selim I's ferocity, as well as the Ottoman policy and terminology regarding the Kızılbaş following the Battle of Çaldıran. For instance, a *fetva* (legal opinion) issued by Sheikh ul-Islam Ibn Kemal (Kemalpaşâzade) demonstrates how the Kızılbaş, as well as the punishment deemed suitable for them, were seen by a contemporary Ottoman jurisprudent:

[60] Jackson and Lockhart, *The Cambridge History*, 224-25.
[61] Mustafa H. Eravci, *Mustafa Ali's Nusret-name and Ottoman-Safavi Conflict* (Istanbul: MVT Yayincilik, 2011), 53.
[62] Imber, *The Ottoman Empire*, 1300-1650 45.
[63] Allouche, *The Origins*, 122.
[64] Ibid., 129.

> we heard that they deny the caliphate of the first three caliphs, they openly curse at Imam Ebûbekir, Imam Ömer, Imam Osman […]. They disdain sharia and its followers […]. They take Shah Ismāʿil's word for granted; if he says that wine is permissible, they accept it […]. Their land is territory of war (*dar'ül harb*).[65] Their marriages are invalid; their children are product of adultery. Animals butchered by them are unclean (*murdar*). Whoever wears that crimson headpiece is under suspicion of infidelity (*küfür*). Their property, women and children are permissible to Muslims. As for men, as long as they are not converted to Islam, they must be slaughtered."[66]

Here it is noteworthy that, considering Iran as *dar'ül-harb,* the Ottoman state does not accept Shi'i Safavids as Muslims, thus executing the law of war suitable for non-Muslims (*küffâr*).[67]

The early years of Süleyman I's reign (1520-1566) witnessed a universal wave of apocalyptic discourse regardless of religious background, which also had left its mark on the imperial competition between Selim and Shah Ismail.[68] By the time Süleyman ascended the throne, millenarianism and apocalyptic themes were still dominant thought patterns of the age.[69] Although the responses to Kızılbaş are usually considered as an outcome of the

[65] According to the notions of "divisions" of the world in Islam, *dar'ul-harb* refers to the territories bordering on *dar'ül İslam* (territory of Islam), whose leaders are called upon to convert to Islam. When the leaders of *dar'ül harb* accept Islam, the territory becomes part of *dar'ül İslam*, where Islamic law prevails; conversely, when an Islamic territory is taken by non-Muslims, it becomes *dar'ül harb*. "Dar Al-Harb," Oxford Islamic Studies Online, accessed April 15, 2016, http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e490.

[66] "Mecimü'a-i Resâl," n.d. Pertev Pasha Section, Süleymaniye Library, Istanbul, 31-31b, cited in Öz, *Alevilik ile ilgili Osmanlı Belgeleri,* 105.

[67] Ibid.

[68] In the Muslim context, the Muslim millennium started in 1495 and was to end in 1591. The expectations of an imminent apocalypse and the arrival of a messianic leader were manipulated by the rulers of the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal Empires during the sixteenth century. Tijana Krstić, "Illuminated by the Light of Islam and the Glory of the Ottoman Sultanate: Self-Narratives of Conversion to Islam in the Age of Confessionalization," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 51 (2009): 35–63. For one of the most comprehensive studies on this issue, see Cornell H. Fleischer, "The Lawgiver as Messiah: The Making of the Imperial Image in the Reign of Suleyman," in *Soliman le Magnifique et son temps*, ed. G. Veinstein (Paris: Documentation française, 1992), 159–77. Lutfî Pasha's *Tevârîh-i Âl-i Osman* is an important primary source in terms of presenting popular prophetic and apocalyptic themes while describing Selim as the Messiah of the Last Age (*mahdi-yi âhir-i zamân*). Lutfi Paşa, *Tevârîh-i Âl-i 'Osman* (Istanbul: 1341/1922), cited in Fleischer, "The Lawgiver as Messiah," 163-64.

[69] In *Tevârîh-i Âl-i 'Osman* completed in 1510, Şeyhülislam Kemalpashazade (İbn Kemâl) presents the Ottoman sultans including Bayezid II within a millenarian atmosphere. İbn Kemâl. *Tevârîh-i Âl-i 'Osman, VIII. Defter.*

Ottoman Sunnitization process, the frequent usage of Sufi metaphors, apologetic imagery, as well as 'Alid references in contemporary sources demonstrate that the early sixteenth-century Ottoman sultans were often presented in rather un-orthodox ways. Süleyman would adopt a predominantly Sunni ideology only in the 1540s.[70]

During the early years of Süleyman's reign, although Shah Ismail's aggressive policy ceased to exist, the Kızılbaş threat still continued; several rebellions such as those of Janbardi al-Ghazali in Syria and Ahmed Pasha in Egypt left their mark on the 1520s, and were considered to be partly or wholly stemming from Safavid interference.[71] However, Süleyman abandoned his father's aggressive attitude against the Safavids, seeking to contain and isolate Iran rather than to conquer it.[72] Thanks to the reports by spies whom he had sent to the court of Shah Ismail, he found out that the Safavids were still dealing with the Uzbek threat. Therefore this was the right time for Süleyman to focus on campaigns in the European front, which was the locus of the Ottoman claims of universal sovereignty.[73] Before embarking on the conquest of Europe, Süleyman consolidated his domination in the east by conducting three campaigns against the Safavids.[74] Another important action taken by Süleyman was to rescind the embargo on the Iranian silk trade.[75]

When Tahmasb I (r. 1524-1576) ascended the Safavid throne following his father's death, he was still a child of ten years. During the first decade of Tahmasb's reign, the young

[70] Dressler, "Inventing Orthodoxy," 161-62.
[71] Kaya Şahin, *Empire and Power in the Reign of Süleyman: Narrating the Sixteenth-Century Ottoman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 90.
[72] Allouche, *The Origins,*102.
[73] Jean-Louis Bacque-Grammont, "The Eastern Policy of Suleyman the Magnificent 1520-1533," in *Suleyman the Second and His Time,* ed. Halil Inalcik and Cemal Kafadar (Istanbul: Isis Press, 1993), 222-23; Şahin, *Empire and Power*, 90.
[74] Eravci, *Mustafa Ali's Nusret-name*, 54.
[75] Christine Woodhead, *Suleyman the Magnificent and His Age: The Ottoman Empire in the Early Modern World*, ed. Christine Woodhead and I.M. Kunt, (New York: Longman, 1995), 164.

shah's authority was usurped by the Kızılbaş military aristocracy.[76] The period between 1524 and 1533, termed by Roger Savory as the Kızılbaş interregnum, witnessed a civil war between several Kızılbaş tribes, and came to an end with the intervention of Shah Tahmasb and execution of several Kızılbaş chiefs.[77]

As for the relations with the Ottomans, a *tehdidnâme* (threatening letter) sent from Süleyman to the shah in 1525 points to the ongoing tension and demonstrates that although the sultan did not intend to embark on a military adventure in Iran yet, he wanted to keep his rival intimidated by means of reminding him of his father's defeat in Çaldıran. Certain terms used in the letter are also noteworthy in terms of making reference to universal sovereignty (*sâhibkırân*), caliphate (*hilâfet*), as well as to the misguidedness (*dalâlet*) and heresy (*ilhâd*) of the Safavids.[78] Thus, in the words of Kaya Şahin, the real significance of this letter derives from the fact that, it "firmly locates the Ottoman-Safavid rivalry within the political theologies of early modern Eurasia."[79]

Prior to Süleyman's Safavid campaigns that began in 1532, the frontier between the two empires was fluid; although commercial activities continued despite the tensions, Eastern Anatolia and Iraq witnessed constant skirmishes such as handovers of castles and restorations of allegiances.[80] Finally, Tabriz and Baghdad were captured by the Ottomans in 1534. The conquest of Baghdad had a symbolic meaning for the Ottomans since it was the ancient seat of the Abbasid caliphs. Another significant event around the same time was the "miraculous discovery" of the tomb of Abu Hanifa, the founder of the Sunni Hanafi legal school of

[76] Savory, "Iran Under the Safavids," 51.
[77] Savory, "Safavid Persia," 403.
[78] "taht-ı hilâfet sâhibkırân-ı cenâb-ı celâlet-meâb […] dâire-i dalâletden adem adüvlük olmağın…tâc-ı ilhâd-ı revâcın başından çıkarub." Feridun Ahmed, *Mecmû'a-yı Münşe'ât* (Istanbul: 1848), 541-43.
[79] Şahin, *Empire and Power*, 91.
[80] Ibid., 92.

thought. The royal chancellor and historian Celâlzâde Mustafa's account about the capture of Baghdad is significant in terms of demonstrating the early phase of the predominant Sunni ideology. Mustafa justifies the conquest of Baghdad and reflects a sense of Sunni Ottoman triumphalism going so far as to imply that Süleyman's aim was to honor Abu Hanifa's tomb, which had been in the hands of heretics.[81] Another indicator of an increasingly antagonistic Ottoman Sunnism was the Sunnification of the former Safavid mosques by inscribing on the walls the names of Abu Bakr, Umar, and Uthman, the first three caliphs who were regarded as usurpers by the Safavids.[82]

The Ottoman Sunnification policy gained a dominant character after the 1540s. Heresy trials and the persecution of the Kızılbaş were legitimized by issuing a sultanic decree obligating Muslim villagers to build Friday mosques, and to participate in communal prayers as a test of loyalty to the sultan and to orthodox Islam.[83] This was the period when the Safavids as well as the Anatolian Kızılbaş were denounced as infidels (*küffâr*), which legally justified their persecution.[84] With the *fetva*s (legal opinions) he issued against the Kızılbaş, the grand jurist Shaykh-ul-Islam Ebu's-su'ud Efendi played a major role in this process of justification. Ebu's-su'ud's *fetva*s concerning the Kızılbaş deserve particular attention in terms of demonstrating the state's policy of suppression towards this community. For instance, a fatwa issued by Ebu's-su'ud Efendi is as follows:

> "Question: Is it religiously permissible to kill the Kızılbaş en masse? Do those who kill them become ghazi?
>
> Answer: Killing Kızılbaş en masse is religiously permissible for sure. This is the holiest war. This is the noblest cause of becoming martyred.

[81] Celâl-zâde Mustafa Çelebi, *Tabakâtü' l-Memâlik ve Derecatü' l-Mesâlik*, 258b-259a, cited in Şahin, *Empire and Power*, 98.
[82] Ibid.
[83] Colin Imber, "Ideals and Legitimation in Early Ottoman History," in *Suleyman the Magnificent and His Age: Ottoman Empire in the Early Modern World*, ed. I. Metin Kunt and Christine Woodhead (New York: Longman, 1995), 151.
[84] Dressler, "Inventing Orthodoxy," 164.

> Question: Is killing the Kızılbaş essential because they bear hostility against the Sultan of Islam (the Ottoman Sultan), or are there other reasons?
>
> Answer: They rise against sultan, they are also heretics."[85]

However, one should keep in mind that, pragmatically driven policies of the central authority and the provincial administrations' ways of handling the issues regarding the Kızılbaş did not overlap in certain cases. *Mühimme* records demonstrate that, the existence of official decrees regarding the persecution of Kızılbaş does not mean that the orders were always executed.[86]

Another important issue that was intensely discussed during the reigns of Selim and Süleyman was apostasy (*irtidâd*), and the distinction between the Kızılbaş -born subjects and Kızılbaş converts. Phrases such as *dönmek* (to convert), *Kızılbaş olmak* (to turn Kızılbaş), *kızıl tac giymek* (to wear a crimson tac), *ehl-i fesad olmak* (to become a troublemaker), and *rafz-u ilhad ile mute'aref olmak* (to become famous by turning godless or impious) were used to point to conversion.[87] The term *Kızılbaşoğlu Kızılbaş* (Kızılbaş son of Kızılbaş) was also used in order to distinguish Kızılbaş-born subjects from the apostates (*mürted*) who became heretic (*mülhid*) as a result of the Safavid propaganda, although they had originally been Sunni.[88] Speaking of apostasy, the concept of *tekfir* (declaring someone to be an apostate) also deserves further attention. Islamic *tekfir* discussions of the sixteenth century aimed to answer the question of "who is a Muslim and who is an apostate," thus providing intellectual justification for the punishment of Kızılbaş supporters.[89] While Selim's brother Korkud's *Hafız al-insan* was the most prominent text of the Ottoman '*ilm al-kalam* (theologic disputation) focusing on *tekfir*, some later jurisprudents such as Kemalpashazade (d. 1536)

[85] Baki Öz, *Alevilik ile ilgili Osmanlı Belgeleri* (Istanbul: Can Yayinlari, 1995), 117.
[86] Baltacıoğlu-Brammer, "Formation of Kızılbaş," 29.
[87] Ibid., 28-29.
[88] Saim Savaş, *XVI. Asırda Anadolu'da Alevilik* (Ankara: Vadi Yayinlari, 2002), 34.
[89] Nabil Al-Tikriti, "Kalam in the Service of State: Apostasy and Defining of Ottoman Islamic Identity," in *Legitimizing the Order: The Ottoman Rhetoric of State Power*, ed. H. Karateke and M. Rainkowski (Leiden: Brill, 2005),136-37.

and Sarı Gürz Hamza Efendi (fl. 1514) issued legal opinions (*fetva*) and treatises (*risale*) regarding the forms of distinguishing and punishing *ilhad* (heresy) and *küfür* (disbelief).[90]

On the other hand, Shah Tahmasb avoided fighting a pitched battle with the Ottomans, and preferred attacking Turkish rearguards. While Sultan Süleyman was on his way back to Istanbul at the end of 1535, all his conquests were reversed, except for Baghdad. In other words, Sultan Süleyman had failed to achieve his goal of eliminating the Safavid threat. His next two campaigns to the Safavid lands earned him only partial success. Eventually on the initiative of Shah Tahmasb, the first official peace treaty between the Safavids and the Ottomans, the Treaty of Amasya, was signed in 1555.[91] Apart from being the first official peace agreement between the Safavids and the Ottomans, the Amasya Treaty represented a turning point in the Ottoman-Safavid relations in terms of signifying the success of Sultan Süleyman's containment policy.[92] According to this treaty, the Safavids acknowledged the Ottoman domination over Arab Iraq, eastern Anatolia, and Azerbaijan, including Tabriz.[93] The Treaty of Amasya was also important as it pointed out the pragmatic nature of the actions taken by both sides.

Although the Amasya Treaty brought a certain balance to the Ottoman-Safavid relations, the tension still continued during the reign of Selim II (r. 1566-1574). An imperial decree dated to 1568 is a significant document in terms of demonstrating the sultan's efforts to prevent the Safavid shah from gaining reputation among the Ottoman subjects in Anatolia. According to this document, the sultan rejects Shah Tahmasb's proposal to distribute alms to the poor in the Ottoman lands to commemorate the late Sultan Süleyman, and suggests him to

[90] Ibid. 146-47.
[91] Jackson and Lockhart, *The Cambridge History*, 242-44.
[92] Allouche, *The Origins*, 144.
[93] İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi: İstanbul'un Fethinden Kanuni Sultan Süleyman'ın Ölümüne Kadar* [Ottoman history: from the conquest of Istanbul to the death of Suleyman the Magnificent], vol. 2 (Ankara: Turk Tarih Kurumu Yayinlari: 1988), 342.

help the poor in their own lands instead.[94] Also, the *Mühimme* records show that the Kızılbaş who were accused of collecting alms in the name of the shah and handing them to the Safavid envoy during his visit to Selim's court were arrested. Those who were found guilty of being in connection with the Safavids would be persecuted or exiled to Cyprus together with their families.[95] These documents suggest that the issue of being in the service of the Safavids was an important criterion for the Ottomans' treatment of the Anatolian Kızılbaş during this period. When the government ordered action against the Kızılbaş, it usually encouraged admonistrators to punish them for crimes other than their association with Iran, most likely due to the state of peace with the Safavids. A decree (*ferman*) from 1576 clearly demonstrates this situation: "detain, charge with another crime and kill those *Râfızi*s (Shi'is) who are in connection with Iran. Take those who are only *Rafızi* into custody." Another decree is as follows: "secretly investigate the Shi'is who are in connection with Iran. Charge them with other crimes and execute them."[96]

Maintaining this attitude, both sides remained faithful to the treaty and no significant change occurred in Ottoman-Safavid relations until the death of Shah Tahmasb I in 1576.[97] Not only would the death of Shah Tahmasb I be followed by a struggle for the throne, but it would also break the balance in the relationship between the Ottomans and the Safavids partly due to the offensive policies of the succeeding shahs.

[94] "yoksullara böyle dağıtacak (sadaka verecek) paraları varsa, memleketlerinin yoksullarına yardım etsinler. Yüce emrime aykırı davranışta bulunmayıp, böyle bir işe girişmeyeler." Ahmet Refik, *On Altıncı Asırda Râfizîlık ve Bektaşîlik* (Istanbul: Muallim Ahmet Halit Kitaphanesi, 1932), 68.
[95] Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlı-İran Siyasi Münasebetleri*, 9.
[96] Öz, *Alevilik Ile ilgili*, 60.
[97] Allouche, *The Origins,*145.

1.2.3. Breach of the Peace: Ottoman-Safavid Wars of 1578-1590

The death of Shah Tahmasb in 1576 was followed by a turbulent period marked with struggles for the throne. The reign of the succeeding shah, Mohammad Khudabanda (r. 1578-1587) witnessed a series of upheavals and disturbances, which also rendered the Safavid Empire vulnerable against foreign threats, including the Ottomans.[98] The turbulent period following the death of Tahmasb I coincided with the reign of Murad III (r. 1574-1595). Similar to Mohammad Shah, Sultan Murad was also a passive ruler; rather than leading the army in campaigns or actively involving himself in the running of the empire, he preferred spending his days in his private quarters, which led to his inner circle's growing influence in the decision making process.[99] Beginning from the final years of Sultan Süleyman, the grand vizier, Sokollu Mehmed Pasha undertook a leading role in the state affairs up until the first years of Murad III. However, Sokollu's authority would be shaken by the new sultan's entourage that he had brought to Istanbul from Manisa where he had spent his days as a princely governor, and would be subsequently murdered.[100] The death of Sokollu Mehmed Pasha was a turning point for the foreign relations of the Ottoman Empire. Although the Safavids were in a state of instability, which seemed to many in the Ottoman government as an opportunity for launching an invasion, Sokollu had always been against breaking the peace. Following Sokollu's death, with the anti-Sokollu faction coming into power, the Ottomans launched the campaign of Shirvan and Georgia led by Lala Mustafa Pasha in 1578, thus starting the Ottoman-Safavid wars, which would continue until 1590.

As Sokollu Mehmed Pasha's death was not the sole reason behind the breakdown of the Amasya Treaty, the Ottomans' changing policy towards the Safavids did not merely

[98] Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlı-İran Siyasi Münasebetleri,* 13-16; Savory, *Iran Under the Safavids*, 69-73.
[99] Finkel, *Osman's Dream,* 165.
[100] Imber, *The Ottoman Empire,* 63.

derive from opportunism. Some sort of political tension between the two empires could be felt already in the early years of Murad III's reign; for instance, when Ismail II ascended the throne, Sultan Murad did not pay tribute to him. On the other hand, ongoing activities of the Anatolian Kızılbaş were considered a threat and a major reason for taking action.[101] Although the independent behavior of the Kızılbaş groups had been neutralized thanks to Shah Tahmasb, the problems that had caused earlier hostilities reemerged following his death. Besides, given that Shirvan had remained Sunni despite frequent periods of Safavid rule, initiating the eastern campaign with Shirvan had a symbolic meaning; the Ottomans' so-called obligation to free their Sunni brethren of Shirvan from Shi'i domination can be read as a means of legitimization for the eastern campaign.[102]

Apart from decrees, reports and accounts of contemporary historians, another kind of document came into prominence during the reign of Murad III; as different from the eulogies that had been embedded into dynastic history in earlier periods, this era produced a flurry of war narratives, which were dedicated to the victories of non-royal commanders, often focusing on a single campaign.[103] These war narratives were utilized to create the visual and verbal representations of the enemy, and in the late sixteenth century the Kızılbaş were again becoming the enemy number one. Gelibolulu Mustafa 'Âli's *Nusretnâme* (1582) and Âsafi Dal Mehmed Çelebi's *Şecâ'atnâme* provide examples of how the Kızılbaş were described within the context of war. For instance, the manner in which two narratives depict Tokmak Khan, the Safavid commander, is striking. While *Nusretnâme* addresses him with the insulting expression *re'isü'l-refâviz ve'l-mülhidîn* (leader of *Rafızi*s and heretics), Âsafi

[101] Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlı-İran Siyasi Münasebetleri*, 21; Eravci, *Mustafa Ali's Nusret-name*, 63.
[102] Cornell H. Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire: The Historian Mustafa Ali* (New York, N.Y.: ACLS Humanities E-Book, 2008), 78.
[103] Fetvacı, *Picturing History*, 191.

describes him as *şeytân sıfat* (devil-like).[104] In these manuscripts, we come across numerous terms such as *menhûs u bi-'âr* (inauspicious and shameless), *gümrâh* (deviant), *küffâr* (infidels), *mülhid* (heretic), *müfsid* (corruptor), *şeytankulu* (servant of devil), *bed-güher* (ignoble).

Although the aim of the *Şecâ'atnâme* was narrating Özdemiroğlu Osman Pasha's campaign in Iran and Caucasia, it is noteworthy that Âsafi starts his narrative with the Battle of Çıldır, which ended with the victory of the Ottoman army led by Lala Mustafa Pasha over a major Kızılbaş force in August, 1578. Following his outstanding service during the battle, Osman Pasha was appointed governor general in charge of guarding Shirvan against potential Safavid attempts at reoccupation. Also, before leaving Shirvan, Lala Mustafa Pasha appointed Âsafi as the secretary and administrative assistant (*tezkereci*) to Osman Pasha.[105] Given that Âsafi prefers beginning his narrative with the Battle of Çıldır emphasizing Osman Pasha's role in the victory, he must have considered this battle as a turning point for both his and Osman Pasha's career.[106]

Although the victory at Çıldır was followed by others under the leadership of Lala Mustafa Pasha and Özdemiroğlu Osman Pasha, at times the Ottoman army suffered financial

[104] H. Mustafa Eravci, *Mustafa Ali's Nusret-name and Ottoman - Safavi Conflict* (Cağaloğlu, Istanbul: MVT Yayincilik, 2011), 93; Âsafi Dal Mehmed Çelebi, *Şecâ'atnâme*, Istanbul University Library, 16b.
[105] Ibid., 81.
[106] Âsafi praises Özdemiroğlu Osman Pasha and emphasizes his intervention in a critical moment as follows: "Döndüğü demde Diyarbekr 'askeri / İrdi Osmânilerün şîr-i neri / Ya'ni ol merd-i dilîr-i kâmrân / Âb-ı rû-yı mîr-i mirân-ı zamân / Hazreti Osman Paşa-yı dilîr / Fâtih-i milk-i Yemenin Özdemir" [The moment the Diyarbekir soldiers turned back / the male lion of the Ottomans arrived / he, the blessed brave man / the honorable governor of the time / his excellency, the brave Osman Pasha / Özdemir, the conqueror of the realm of Yemen]. Âsafi Dal Mehmed Çelebi, *Şecâ'atnâme*, Istanbul University Library, TY. 6043, 16b.

problems and food shortages, which encouraged the Kızılbaş forces to counter attack.[107] In 1582, for instance, Shirvan was reoccupied by the Safavids, which led Osman Pasha to seek for a safe place for his army where they could take shelter from winter conditions, and to charge Âsafi Dal Mehmed Çelebi with the repair of the Qabala fortress. This was the place where Âsafi and his soldiers would be besieged by the Kızılbaş and deceived with false rumors of peace, thus leading Ottoman soldiers to abandon the fortress and Âsafi to be taken captive.[108] However, this incident would not be enough to bring an end to the Ottoman control of Shirvan; thanks to the reinforcements sent from Istanbul on the request of Osman Pasha, the Ottomans consolidated their sovereignty in Shirvan and Daghestan in 1583 following fierce battles that caused great losses on both sides.[109] Also in 1585, the conquest of Tabriz was achieved by Osman Pasha by taking advantage of a dispute among the Safavid factions which had marked Mohammad Shah's reign.[110]

In addition to war narratives, two imperial festival books figure as important sources about this period: *Câmi'ü'l-Buhûr Der Mecâlis-i Sûr* (Gatherer of the Seas in Gatherings of the Festival) by Mustafa Âlî, and *Sûrnâme-i Hümâyû*n (Imperial Festival Book) attributed to Intizâmî, which narrated the fifty-two-day festival organized for celebrating the circumcision of Murad III's son, Mehmed, in 1582.[111] Being one of the most colossal and unforgettable events of the age, it was witnessed by the representatives of many countries, including those

[107] Palmira Brummett, "Subordination and Its Discontents: Ottoman Campaign 1578-80" in *Decision Making and Change in the Ottoman Empire*, ed. Caesar E. Farah (Kirksville: Truman State University Press, 1993): 101-14, cited in Imber, *The Ottoman Empire,* 64.
[108] *Şecâ'atnâme*, 141b-150b. His captivity, which is one of the most crucial incidents in Âsafi's narrative, will be elaborated further in Chapter 3.
[109] *Şecâ'atnâme,* 159a-182b.
[110] Imber, *The Ottoman Empire*, 65.
[111] Beginning from the earliest times, imperial festivals, which were organized for celebrating specific events related to the sultan and the members of the imperial family, occupied an important place in the Ottoman social life. These events could be victories, departures for campaigns, births, marriages, circumcisions, successions, as well as visits of diplomatic envoys, and were celebrated within elaborate settings that would leave their mark in the Ottoman collective memory.

of the Safavids. Thus, apart from being a means of presenting imperial generosity and power to the Ottoman population, it served as a venue for impressing the foreign envoys.[112] In short, the imperial circumcision festival of 1582 was an international event whose depiction can give us some hints about the political realities of the time. While *Câmi'ü'l-Buhûr* focuses on the detailed descriptions of the state protocol and the gift-giving ceremonial, *Sûrnâme-i Hümâyûn* narrates each day of the festival, describing the processions and colorful spectacles in a meticulous manner.[113]

Certain anecdotes from *Sûrnâme-i Hümâyûn* about the seating arrangements give us an insight into the political dynamics of the day and the position of the Safavids in the eyes of the Ottomans. That the seating arrangements were very important shows us a conflict that flared up over the assigned boxes for the envoys. As briefly noted in the text, the envoy of the King of Vienna protested when he found out that the Safavid envoy, Ibrahim Khan would be seated in the first box at the top, and he even took out a legal opinion from the Sheikh ul-Islam who had declared that killing a single Kızılbaş was more meritorious than killing seventy infidels.[114] Eventually a separate seat was assigned to the Safavid envoy where they sat together with other Muslim rulers including the Crimean khan and the Polish envoy.[115] Rather than the incident itself, the way both the Safavid and Austrian envoys are referred to in *Sûrnâme* is striking: "the ambassador of the ill-behaving Kızılbaş" (*Kızılbaş-ı bed-me'âş*

[112] Derin Terzioğlu, "The Imperial Circumcision Festival of 1582: An Interpretation" *Muqarnas* 12 (1995): 85.
[113] Ibid., 84.
[114] "Bir kızılbaş-i bed-me'âşı öldürmek yetmiş mikdârı kâfir öldürmek sevâbın bulurmış." Gisela Procházka-Eisl, *Das Surname-i Humayun Die Wiener Handschrift in Transkription*. Bibliotheca Ottomanica (Istanbul: Isis Verlag, 1995), 77. For the role of Sheikh ul-Islam as a diplomatic mediary, see Joshua M. White, "Fetva Diplomacy: The Ottoman Şeyhülislam as Trans-Imperial Intermediary." Journal of Early Modern History 19, no. 2-3 (2015): 199-221.
[115] *Gayrı yerde anlarun içün dahı bir mesîre peydâ edüb çanakların ayırdılar.* Procházka-Eisl: 77; Terzioğlu, "The Imperial Circumcision Festival," 85.

elçisi) and "the ambassador of the evil-doing king of Vienna" (*Beç kral-i bed-fi'âlün elçisi*).[116]

Both *Sûrnâme* and *Câmi'ü'l-Buhûr* also mention the expulsion (or according to some sources, imprisonment) of the Safavid ambassador due to the bad news from the Safavid frontier.[117] As Mustafa 'Âli narrates the incident, because the Safavid ambassador lied, he was expelled and deprived of the benevolence of the sultan. However, since festivals were times of generous forgiveness and grace, the sultan pardoned the ambassador and bestowed him with accommodation and food. Being impressed by the generosity and forgiveness of the sultan, several Kızılbaş converted to Sunni Islam.[118] The real significance of these festival narratives derives from the emphasis they place on the variability of the Ottoman attitude towards the Kızılbaş, which could change in such a short period of time according to the daily dynamics of the Ottoman-Safavid rivalry. Also, the anecdote about the conversion of the Safavids points to the fact that, the Ottomans still considered Shi'ism outside of Islam, and being a Muslim required proper conversion to Sunnism.

Speaking of the Ottoman perception of Shi'ism, the distinction made between the Kızılbaş and Twelver Shi'ites also needs to be clarified. Although it is not possible to come to a concrete conclusion about this issue, several contemporary documents draw a picture of the way Ottoman authors labeled Kızılbaş and Twelver Shi'ites. Elke Eberhard, for instance, has examined several *fetva*s and polemical writings from the first and second half of the sixteenth century.[119] These documents, composed of several *fetva*s by Kemalpaşazâde and

[116] Translation by Derin Terzioğlu in "The Imperial Circumcision Festival," 85.
[117] Ibid., 86.
[118] "Bu reşkile gün başına bir nice Kızılbaş İslâma gelüp oldı Müsülmânlara kardaş." Gelibolulu Mustafa 'Âlî, *Câmi'ul - Buhûr Der Mecâlis-i Sûr*, ed. Ali Öztekin (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1996), 64.
[119] Elke Eberhard. *Osmanische Polemik gegen die Safawiden im 16. JahrhundertnNach arabischen Handschriften* [Ottoman Polemic against the Safavids in the 16th Century by

Ebu's-su'ud, as well as an anonymous *fetva*, in addition to polemical writings by four sixteenth-century authors who were Safavid refugees in the Ottoman Empire, an-Nahcuvani (before 1540), ash-Shirvani (1540), Mirza Mahdum (1580) and Mutahhar (1581), point to a possible distinction between the terms Kızılbaş and Shi'i. Overwhelmingly using the term Kızılbaş rather than Shi'i, these authors seem to imply that Kızılbaş are not identical to Twelver Shi'ites.[120] In one of his *fetvas,* for instance, Ebu's-su'ud says that these Kızılbaş groups claim that they are Shi'i, which suggests that he himself does not believe that is the case, or that it is unverified.[121] Mirza Mahdum's work (*an-Nawaqid fi radd ar-rawafid*) stands out in this respect, in that he explicitly criticizes the learned men in the shah's circle who were doctors of Imami, the Twelver Shi'i law.[122] As for other terms used to describe the offending groups, terms such as rāfiḍa (rejectors), *zandaḳa* (clandestine disbelief) and *mulḥid* (heretic) are among those that are typically used when "Kızılbaş" is not. In light of these expressions it is possible to assert that, whether in the 1540s or 1580s, the learned men who attained a place in the Ottoman political environment aimed to present the Kızılbaş as extreme Shi'i groups that gained followers among the military and nomadic groups, rather than identifying them with the religion of the Safavid government. A more comprehensive survey of polemical literature, as well as later *fetva* literature would demonstrate the correct framework for the discussion of this issue is; judging from Eberhard's work, it was mostly the Kızılbaş who were portrayed as a heretical, extreme, Shi'i group, and specifically singled out for opprobrium, rather than Shi'is in general. At the same time, however, the term *rāfiḍa*,

Arabic manuscripts] (Freiburg: Klaus Schwarz, 1970). I would like to thank Tijana Krstić for kindly advising me about this source, and also for her valuable input on the issue, much needed due to the language barrier.

[120] Ibid., 71-76.

[121] Ibid., 74.

[122] Ibid., 131.

which was used interchangeably with the term "Kızılbaş" does have a long career in Islamic heresiography, where it is used to denote Shiites in general.[123]

As for the Kızılbaş population in the Ottoman Empire during this period, certain decrees demonstrate that connection with Iran was still an important criterion for punishment. A decree issued in 1579 is as follows: […]secretly and openly investigate those who are known for their rejectionism (*rafz*) and heresy (*ilhad*), as well as their connection with Iran[…][124] Apart from connection with Iran, *tekfir* (declaring someone to be an apostate) and cursing at Sunni Muslims inflicted serious punishment. A decree dated to 1583 makes clear distinction between this kind of Kızılbaş and those who were inoffensive: "…refrain from torturing and oppressing those who are inoffensive."[125]

As for the Safavid side, the state of chaos during Mohammad Khudabanda's weak rule was mostly stirred by the Kızılbaş, who had originally constituted the military force of the Safavid Dynasty, but eventually turned into an internal opposing power. The most important Kızılbaş revolt occurred under the leadership of the crown prince 'Abbas' *lala* (tutor) Murshid Qoli Khan, who took him under his guardianship. Murshid Qoli Khan marched on Qazvin forcing Mohammad Khudabanda to abdicate, and pronounced 'Abbas shah in 1587.[126] Under Shah 'Abbas I's rule (1587-1629), Safavid Iran witnessed profound changes in the social structure, including forceful restructuring of the Kızılbaş, as a result of the promotion of new conceptions of imperial sovereignty and dynastic rule. The reign of 'Abbas I was a crucial period regarding the Ottoman-Safavid relations and the issue of

[123] The term *Rāfida*, is an Arabic term that refers to the proto-Imāmiyya (and, subsequently, the Twelver Shi'a) as well as any number of a Shi'i sects. "rāfiḍa", in: Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition, Glossary and Index of Terms, Edited by: P.J. Bearman, Th. Banquis, C.E. Bowworth, E. van Donzel, W. P. Heinrichs Bowworth. Consulted online on 16 May 2017 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_ei2glos_SIM_gi_03825>

[124] Öz, *Alevilik,* 68.

[125] "kendi hallerinde olanlara zulüm ve baskı yapmaktan kesinlikle kaçınasın." Ibid., 70.

[126] Rudi Mathee. "Safavid Dynasty," Encyclopaedia Iranica, accessed April 11, 2016. http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/safavids.

Kızılbaş. Apart from the final peace settlement (Treaty of Istanbul) achieved in 1590, Shah 'Abbas' attitude towards the Kızılbaş would also be influential on the Ottoman policy of Kızılbaş in the seventeenth century. In the words of Hans Robert Roemer, Shah 'Abbas I had not only destroyed the military might of the Kızılbaş, but also neutralized the strongly religious elements of the group.[127]

CHAPTER 2

ÂSAFİ DAL MEHMED CHELEBİ AND THE *ŞECÂ'ATNÂME*

Kâtib-i dîvan idi kânun-şinâs / İtme câhil kâtibe anu kıyâs

Âsafi mahlas idi manzûr idi / Dâl Mehmed diyü meşhur idi

Anda cem' olmuş idi tîg ü hem kalem / Hâme-veş doğru idi hidmetde hem[128]

While narrating his appointment as the personal secretary (*tezkereci*) to Osman Pasha, Âsafi Dal Mehmed Çelebi draws attention to his versatile personality, first, as a bureaucrat with a solid grasp of legal issues; second, as a renowned man of letters, and third; as a righteous soldier whose sword is as strong as his pen. The significance of these lines from the *Şecâ'atnâme* derives from the fact that they give us an insight into the author's social status,

[127] Ibid., 312. Although the Ottoman-Safavid relations during the reign of Shah 'Abbas I and the position of Kızılbaş in the Ottoman Empire deserves more extensive treatment, an elaborate discussion of this later period goes beyond the scope of this thesis.
[128] Âsafi Dal Mehmed Çelebi, *Şecâ'atnâme,* Istanbul University Library, TY. 6043, 31a.

his self-perception, as well as his effort to situate himself within the narrative as a protagonist. Moreover, these lines provide a point of departure for investigating Âsafi's multifaceted personality, the possible motives behind the production of the *Şecâ'atnâme*, his way of perceiving the world, his intellectual and religious tendencies, as well as the way he depicts the Kızılbaş.

2.1. Biography of Âsafi Dal Mehmed Çelebi

Apart from the *Şecâ'atnâme*, Gelibolulu Mustafa Âlî's *Künhü'l-Âhbâr* (Essence of Histories) is an important contemporary source that sheds light on Âsafi's life story.[129] As Mustafa Âlî reports, although Âsafi was born in Serres (Siroz), a city in Macedonia, he grew up and received education at the court of the grand vizier Lala Mustafa Pasha (d. 1580) in Istanbul.[130] Although we do not know his date of birth or how he made his way to the pasha's inner circle at an early age, it is possible to assume that he was born to a family close to the palace circle since the *Şecâ'atnâme* mentions that his brother also attended the eastern campaign as a high ranking soldier.[131] Also, as we learn from the *Şecâ'atnâme*, he was a blood relative (*akrabâ*) of Osman Pasha who was known to be of Circassian origin.[132]

[129] Gelibolulu Mustafa Âlî, *Künhü'l-Âhbâr*, Nuruosmaniye Library, n.d. 3409.
[130] *Künhü'l-Âhbâr*, 243b.
[131] H. Mustafa Eravcı. *Asafi Dal Mehmed Çelebi ve Şecâ'atnâme* (Istanbul: Mvt Yayincilik, 2009), xxxiv.
[132] "Akrabâsıydı müşîrün Âsafî." *Şecâ'atnâme,* 284b; Süleyman Eroğlu. "XVI. Yüzyılda Bir Mevlevi Şair: Âsafi" [A Mawlawi Poet in the Sixteenth Century: Asafi], *Selçuk Üniversitesi Türkiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi* (2009): 84; Abdurrahman Şeref, "Özdemiroğlu Osman Paşa," *Tarih-i Osmani Encümeni Mecmuası* 3-4 (1911/1329): 1289.

2.1.1. Âsafi as a Man of Learning

The latter half of the sixteenth century, especially the reign of Murad III (r. 1574-1595) witnessed a new kind of bureaucratic consciousness. This was a period when the Ottoman government was heavily bureaucratized, and the sharp division between the "men of sword" and the "men of learning" diminished, as those with a *devşirme* background (men of sword) entered the bureaucratic ranks that had been reserved for the *ilmiye* class (men of learning) in earlier times.[133] Mustafa Âlî heavily criticizes these changes in the Ottoman professional system, complaining about the admission to the ranks of government officials of unworthy people who were not trained for such duties.[134] It is noteworthy that in *Künhü'l-Âhbâr*, not only does he distinguish Âsafi as one of his apprentices who reached perfection in poetry (*şi'r*) and rhymed prose (*inşâ*), but he also describes him as a good-tempered person (*melek-hısâl*) with no fondness for property (*hubb-ı mâl ü menâl*).[135] As for the *Şecâ'atnâme*, Mustafa Âli praises Âsafi stating that his manner has left its mark even on stonehearted deniers (heretics).[136] Thus, although Âsafi's educational background and the steps he took prior to his admission to the imperial council secretariat are unknown, Mustafa Âli's glowing account of his personal and professional qualities in such a period when the Ottoman bureaucratic ranks were invaded by the "unworthy," gives a hint about his background. Given that he had been close to the court since his childhood and also had military training, he probably had received his education in the *enderun* (palace school) as the son of an *ilmiye* member.

[133] Cornell H. Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire: The Historian Mustafa Ali* (New York, N.Y.: ACLS Humanities E-Book, 2008), 221-22.
[134] Ibid., 192-93.
[135] "melek-hısâl, şi'r ü inşâya kadir, sahib-i kemâl idi. Hubb-ı mâl ü menâl sevdâsında değil idi." *Künhü'l-Âhbâr*, 243a.
[136] "Hattâ ki kalb-i sengin münkire te'sîr edecek edâlarla sikke-i mermerde kazmıştır." Ibid., 243b.

In the latter half of the sixteenth century, Ottoman manuscript tradition witnessed a move away from the Persianate aesthetic in terms of both visual idiom and language. During this period when court historians were selected mostly from among bureaucrats instead of poets, histories began to be written in Turkish rather than Persian and with *naskh* and *dîvânî* script instead of the poetic *ta'liq*. The busy compositions of Persianate prototypes gave way to the less ornamented and more legible Ottoman style.[137] As for the *Şecâ'atnâme*, although it is written in Turkish with *naskh* script and a rather plain language, Persianate characteristics of its illustrations gives it a hybrid character.[138] Frequent mention of *Shahnama* in Âsafi's narrative also points to his affection towards Persian literature, as well as his desire to demonstrate his literary skills.

2.1.2. Âsafi as a Man of Sword

As mentioned before, although the main focus of the *Şecâ'atnâme* is Özdemiroğlu Osman Pasha's campaign in Iran and Caucasia, Âsafi begins his narrative with the Battle of Çıldır (1578), which ended with the victory of the Ottomans under the leadership of Lala Mustafa Pasha. Apart from being the first military campaign in which Âsafi took part, the Battle of Çıldır had an important place for Âsafi's career since it triggered a series of opportunities by leading to Osman Pasha's appointment as the governor general of Shirvan, and that of Âsafi as the records secretary and administrative assistant (*tezkereci*) to Osman Pasha. In *Şecâ'atnâme,* Âsafi also emphasizes the importance of the first-witness account stating that seeing (witnessing) a battle is better than hearing about it, thus drawing attention to his presence in the Battle of Çıldır.[139] During his tenure as *tezkereci,* Âsafi was also charged with carrying out the tax census (*tahrir*) of Shirvan. Thanks to his military and

[137] Fetvacı, *Picturing History*, 12-15.
[138] Ibid., 89-90.
[139] "Cengi görmek ola mı girmek gibi / Hiç işitmek ola mı görmek gibi" *Şecâ'atnâme,* 16b.

administrative skills he displayed in this fluid frontier situation, he would be appointed to the rank of sanjak governor (*sancak beyi*) responsible for safeguarding Shirvan and Daghestan.[140]

After the Çıldır victory, the second important campaign that gave Âsafi the opportunity of demonstrating his military and administrative skills was the Battle of Shamakhi that took place within the same year. As he has done for Çıldır, in *Şecâ'atnâme* Âsafi feels the need to describe his presence in Shamakhi, as well as his willingness and effort, stating that he became a companion (*yoldaş* / *pâdâş*) to the Ottoman forces and stood next to them within the chaos of war.[141] Although the battle ended with Ottoman victory, it would not be possible to keep the region under control partially due to tough winter conditions, which would lead the Ottoman army to migrate to Demirkapı (Bâbu'l-Ebvâb). Âsafi also took an important role during this migration, as he was responsible for the protection and transfer of the treasury.

Another important event that consolidated Âsafi's military success was the defense of Shirvan against the Safavid occupation in 1579. Âsafi tries to demonstrate that he was regarded as a trustworthy soldier by Osman Pasha, who expressed his trust and charged him with repulsing the Safavid attack.[142] Along with Kaykı Mustafa Bey on his side, Âsafi achieved significant success in Shirvan, and helped to set the Ottoman forces at ease for some time.[143] In *Şecâ'atnâme*, not only does Âsafi elaborately narrate the Shirvan victory, but he also includes a miniature painting illustrating a scene from the battle **(**Figure 2**)**. The way he depicts himself as one of the protagonists is significant since it points to his self-perception as a man of sword, as well as his desire for narrating his own "*şeca'at*," in addition to that of Osman Pasha.

[140] Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire,* 81.
[141] "Kâil-i nazm anlara yoldaş idi / Ol tekâpûlarda hep pâdâş idi" *Şecâ'atnâme,* 56a.
[142] "Kâil-i nazm Âsafi'ye ol-zamân / İ'timâdım sanadır dedi hemân" *Şecâ'atnâme,* 119a.
[143] Eroğlu, "XVI. Yüzyılda Bir Mevlevi Şair," 77.

In 1582, the Ottoman army faced new Safavid attacks and occupations including that of Shirvan. Osman Pasha was struggling with financial problems; he also did not have enough manpower to resist the Safavid threat. In order to provide a safe place against the enemy as well as the winter conditions, he charged Âsafi and Kaykı Mustafa Bey with the restoration of the Qabala Castle.[144] During their march to the castle, the soldiers in his service rose up, demanding their *ulûfe* (salary) to be paid. Âsafi overcame the revolt by selling some part of the supplies and paying the soldiers.[145] Including this detail in his narrative, Âsafi most probably wished to demonstrate his sense of leadership and success in taking control during moments of crisis.

With Âsafi's arrival to the Qabala Castle, a new phase of his adventures started, including his capture by the Safavids following the siege of the castle, his three-year imprisonment in the Alamut Castle, his encounter with the Safavid court members, as well as his eventual escape to the Ottoman lands, and his reunion with Osman Pasha.[146] In 1585, he attended the Tabriz campaign of Osman Pasha. Following the conquest of Tabriz, Osman Pasha appointed Âsafi governor (*beylerbeyi*) of Kefe (Caffa). However, after the death of Osman Pasha, he was suspended from his duty by Ferhat Pasha who had taken over. In *Şecâ'atnâme,* Âsafi narrates this unfortunate situation in an elaborate manner and extends his complaints to Sultan Murad.[147]

Âsafi spent his final years in Istanbul. Between the years 1587 and 1593, he held bureaucratic positions such as head clerk (*reis-ül küttab*) and chief administrative assistant

[144] Ibid., 78.
[145] Süleyman Eroğlu, "Âsaf'î'nin Şecâatname'si: İnceleme-Metin" [Şecâatname of Âsaf'î': Analysis-text], Ph.D. diss. (Uludağ University, 2007), 39.
[146] Âsafi's years of imprisonment in the Safavid lands and his encounter with the Kızılbaş constitute an important part of this thesis, thus will be scrutinized in the next chapter.
[147] *Şecâ'atnâme,* 287a-288b.

(*baş tezkereci*). Although there is no direct evidence on his exact date of death, Mehmed Süreyya has concluded that Âsafi died in 1006 A.H. (1597-98).[148]

2.2. Illustrated Histories and Patterns of Patronage during the Reign of Murad III: Production of the *Şecâ'atnâme*

The issue of patronage the of Ottoman illustrated histories has been a point of contention among scholars due to its complex nature. Given that every single royal commission produced in the palace workshop intended to glorify the sultan on the surface, it is easy to assume that the sultan actively participated in the production process. However, the production of illustrated histories in the Ottoman court was a more complex and collaborative process, which at times did not require the sultan's supervision or financial support. To make it less complex, illustrated histories were commissioned in two ways: under the patronage of the sultan, which necessitated intermediary actors such as grand viziers and chief eunuchs, and under the patronage of the ruling elite that gained importance during the end of the sixteenth century. Although both types of books were intended as presents for the sultan in the long run, they probably did not solely reflect the imperial vision; these books were the outcome of the intersection between politics and artistic production. In other words, they also reflected the personal concerns of these influential intermediaries.[149] Group readings, vocal performances, and discussions occupied an important place in the Ottoman book culture. The titles referring to the court historian other than *şehnâmeci*, such as *şehnâmehân* (the reader of the *Şehnâme*) or *şehnâmeguy* (performer of the *Şehnâme*) point to the fact that illustrated

[148] Mehmed Süreyya. *Sicil-i Osmâni,* vol. 3 (Istanbul: 1996), 133, cited in Asafi Dal Mehmed Çelebi, *Şecâ'atnâme,* ed. Abdülkadir Özcan (Istanbul: Camlica Basim Yayin, 2012), xxix.
[149] Emine Fetvacı, *Picturing History,* 59-61.

histories, especially *Şehnâme*s were often orally performed texts.[150] Thus, these books were written and illustrated in order to be read by the others; maybe not by the common people, but by a privileged group consisting of the sultan, his entourage (chief, eunuchs, senior pages and other servants) and his advisers.[151] Being borrowed from the imperial treasury and circulated among the courtly community on a regular basis, these books (not only *Şehnâme*s but also unofficial histories) acted as powerful agents in the formation of courtly identity, as well as objects of communication.[152] This courtly audience was often the target of political messages conveyed by these complex documents in which word and image were deliberately brought together.[153]

Beginning with the second half of the sixteenth century there existed a power struggle between what Baki Tezcan has (controversially) named the "absolutists" and the "constitutionalists" in the Ottoman Empire. According to his definition, while the former recognized the royal prerogative, a sovereign right with no restrictions in terms of defining how the Ottoman polity was supposed to function, the latter referred to the denial of such an unlimited source of authority to the sultan.[154] Murad III's reign could be described as an absolutist political project.[155] Following the assassination of the grand vizier Sokollu Mehmed Pasha in 1579, Murad III aimed to gain direct control of state affairs within the walls of his palace, thus leading to growing importance of the actors within the harem. This was a period when the sultan adopted a more secluded lifestyle in his palace no longer leading the army in campaign, and at the same time aiming to establish an empire tightly

[150] Ibid., 26; Nurhan Atasoy, "Illustrations Prepared for Display During Shahnama Recitals," in *Fifth International Congress of Iranian Art and Archaeology* (Tehran: Ministry of Culture and Arts, 1972), 262-72.
[151] Woodhead, *Reading Ottoman Sehnames,* 70.
[152] Fetvacı, *Picturing History,* 25; Woodhead, *Reading,* 73.
[153] Fetvacı, *The Production of Şehnâme-i Selim Han,* 264.
[154] Baki Tezcan, *The Second Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 48.
[155] Ibid., 56.

governed from his court. This led significant individuals with whom the sultan had daily contact contact—for example, the chief black eunuch who was considered his closest confidant and most important agent of royal power—to dominate political life and the process of decision-making.[156] The chief black eunuch, Mehmed Agha gained unprecedented power thanks to his unlimited access and mobility as the highest-ranking servant within the harem. Not only was he influential in state affairs, but he also took on a major role in artistic patronage in the form of either manuscript production or architecture.[157] The *Şehinşahnâme* (Book of the King of Kings) is one of the several examples that document the increased power of the chief black eunuch in the new imperial iconography. Although the book was produced as the illustrated account of the reign of Murad III, the presentation of Mehmed Agha as a protagonist is striking.[158] Different drafts prepared during the long production process of the Şehnâme-i Selim Han (from 1569 until 1595) also attest to the evolving power structure of the Ottoman court towards the end of the century; although an early draft depicts the grand vizier, Sokollu Mehmed Pasha with great emphasis as the sultan's deputy, in the final draft his centrality is diminished and other members of the imperial council are equally praised.[159] Also, as it is in the war narratives of the period, the Şehnâme-i Selim Han focuses on the victories of non-royal commanders (Iskender Pasha, Osman Pasha, Behram Pasha, Ali Pasha, Koca Sinan Pasha, Piyale Pasha, Lala Mustafa Pasha, Pertev Pasha, Ahmed Pasha, Siyavuş Pasha) and glorifies Selim II (r. 1566-74) through these deputies instead of depicting him as a warrior-sultan. This reflects the new imperial iconography of Murad III's reign,

[156] Baki Tezcan, "The Politics of Early Modern Ottoman Historiography" in *The Early Modern Ottomans: Remapping the Empire*, ed. Virginia H. Aksan and Daniel Goffman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 177-78.
[157] Fetvaci, *Picturing History*, 149-53.
[158] Ibid., 150.
[159] Fetvacı, *The Production*, 263-75.

which emphasized the spirituality, generosity and piety of the sultan who ruled and conquered through intermediaries.[160]

Before going into details about the production of the *Şecâ'atnâme*, it is necessary to touch upon one particular war narrative, the Nusretnâme (the book of victory), written by Âsafi's master Gelibolulu Mustafa 'Âlî in 1582. The similarities and differences between the two manuscripts demonstrate the *Şecâ'atnâme'*s extraordinary character within the manuscript production trends of the time. Similar to the *Şecâ'atnâme*, the *Nusretnâme* was written with the aim of narrating a singular campaign of a certain pasha during the Ottoman-Safavid wars of 1578-90: Lala Mustafa Pasha's Georgian campaign of 1578-80. Two important aspects of the *Nusretnâme* are salient regarding its relation with the *Şecâ'atnâme.* First of all, although it was written with the aim of eulogizing Lala Mustafa Pasha, it also gives considerable emphasis to Osman Pasha's heroic deeds and presents him as a main character. Secondly, as explicitly stated in the prologue (*dîbâce*) of the *Şecâ'atnâme,* Âsafi hoped to impress Sultan Murad with his work, and thus gain appointment to a better position.[161] By doing so, it is likely that Âsafi modeled his own career after that of Mustafa 'Âlî who had presented the *Nusretnâme* to the sultan with the hope of rising to the position of chancellor.[162] The way both authors hope to impress the sultan is also noteworthy; in the beginning of his narrative for instance, Âsafi describes the appearance of a comet one night during Ramadan, heralding the future victory over the Safavids.[163] Similarly, Mustafa 'Âlî

[160] Ibid., 266.
[161] *Şecâ'atnâme,* 4b.
[162] Fetvaci, *Picturing History,* 194.
[163] *Şecâ'atnâme,* 14b.

places in the beginning of the *Nusretnâme* a section about the appearance of a comet as an omen for the Safavid campaign, thus appealing to the sultan's literary taste.[164]

Although it followed the trends in manuscript production to a certain extent, the *Şecâ'atnâme* was a distinctive work in other respects. First of all, while producing his manuscript and presenting it to the sultan, Âsafi followed a different patronage pattern. As different from the general practice of the period, no intermediary actor took part in the production and presentation process of the *Şecâ'atnâme*; the work was the outcome of Âsafi's own endeavor. Although in the prologue Âsafi implies that his work was completed upon the sultan's order, there is no evidence of the sultan or any other influential actors from the sultanic household being involved in the production process.[165] Another distinctive feature of the *Şecâ'atnâme* is the way Âsafi situates himself within the narrative. The considerable number of illustrations (16 out of 77) depicting Âsafi's adventures also attests to the emphasis he placed on himself as one of the protagonists of the narrative and a military hero. Most of these illustrations depict Âsafi's encounters with the Safavids, his capture, as well as his adventures on the way to salvation, which set ground for an elaborate discussion on the depiction of the Kızılbaş through his eyes.

[164] Murad III's interest in rare and strange events, occultism, as well as astronomy was widely known, which made major influence on the manuscript production of the period. Ibid., 43. For further information on Murad III's literary interests, also see Christine Woodhead, "Murad III and the Historians: Representations of Ottoman Imperial Authority in Late 16th-Century Historiography," in *Legitimizing the Order: the Ottoman Rhetoric of State Power*, ed. Hakan Karateke and Maurus Reinkowski (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 85–98; Özgen Felek, "Re-Creating the Image and Identity: Dreams and Visions as a Means of Murad III's Self-Fashioning." Ph.D diss. (University of Michigan, 2010).

[165] "pâdişâh-ı dîn-penâh ve sa'âdet-dest-gâh hazretlerinün emr-i şerifleri ile nazm olunub…" [written on the order of his holiness, the sultan, shelter of the faith…], *Şecâ'atnâme,* 7a.

CHAPTER 3

DEPICTING THE ENEMY: KIZILBAŞ IN TEXT AND IMAGE

One of the most important aspects of the *Şecâ'atnâme* is that it presents a first-hand account of the encounters between a bureaucrat-soldier of the Sunni-minded Ottoman state and their Shi'i opponents, the Kızılbaş, in a time of war. In the first chapter, I traced the formation of the Ottoman-Safavid rivalry, its evolution through times of war and peace, Ottoman responses to the Kızılbaş community, how these responses varied according to the changing political situation, and how they were reflected in the Ottoman terminology. The second chapter introduced Âsafi; his career as a bureaucrat and soldier, his intellectual persona, as well as his ideological and literary predispositions. A closer look at Âsafi's profile also raises the question to what extent his narrative reflected the Ottoman mindset regarding the Kızılbaş, which will be discussed in the present chapter. How were the Kızılbaş depicted by Âsafi? How did the political dynamics, religious dichotomy, and the state ideology manifest themselves in his language? Moreover, the concept of *şecâ'at* (valor) and the possible reasons behind using this concept as the title of his work need to be scrutinized. Did this concept really refer to the valor of Osman Pasha or to Âsafi's courage and resistance as a Muslim among 'infidels'? Could Osman Pasha's campaign be utilized by Âsafi as an envelope for narrating his own *şeca'at*? It is not possible to give definite answers to these questions; however, an analysis of the episodes focusing on Âsafi's adventures in the light of these questions will serve to draw a picture of his perception of the Kızılbaş in the context of the Ottoman-Safavid rivalry, as well as the way he utilizes an illustrated manuscript as an instrument of self-promotion.

The main storyline of the *Şecâ'atnâme* is shaped around Osman Pasha's Eastern campaign of 1578-85, which includes events such as his battles with the Safavids resulting in the capture of Shirvan, Dagestan and Tabriz, his struggle against the Crimean Khan, Mehmed Giray (r. 1577-84), as well as his departure from Tabriz due to his illness and his eventual death in 1585. Apart from this main storyline focusing on Osman Pasha as the apparent protagonist of the *Şecâ'atnâme*, episodes on Âsafi 's capture by the Safavids, his encounters with the Kızılbaş, as well as his adventures on the way to freedom take an important place within the narrative.

The first mention of the Kızılbaş is in the prologue (*dîbâce*) and is remarkable with regard to the terminology. Using phrases such as "*şeytânat-âsâr*," "*Kızılbaş-ı bed fi'âl*" and "*iblis-fi'âl,*" Âsafi attributes a devil-like character and evil-doings to the Kızılbaş, which will be repeated frequently throughout the narrative.[166] Another remarkable aspect of the prologue is the extent of the emphasis placed on Âsafi both as a man of learning and as a man of the sword. While eulogizing the *Şecâ'atnâme*, not only does Âsafi compare his work with Firdawsi's *Shahnama* in terms of content and literary quality, but he also underscores the value of a first-hand account. Instead of recording what he heard, he states that he took part in several battles beside Osman Pasha, and moreover, he gained many victories as a commander, thus proving his bravery and valor (*şecâ'at*).[167]

Following an excerpt from the *Mathnawi* of Rumi, an index of the events in the book, a *methiye* (praise) section, as well as the description of the appearance of a comet as an omen of victory, the storyline of the *Şecâ'atnâme* begins with the battle of Çıldır. Although the

[166] *Şecâ'atnâme*, 3b.
[167] "Velâkin istimâ' ile tahrîr itmege irtikâb itmeyüp ol şîr-pîşe-i heycâ a'nî Osman Paşa ile ma'ân eyledügi kâr u zârdan mâ'adâ kendü dahi nice def'a guzât-ı şecâ'at-nihâ da serdâr ve guruh-ı şehâmet-mü'tadâ sipahsalar olmağın şecâ'atı gün gibi zâhir ve celâdeti mihr-i cihan-ârâ gibi bâhir olup, 'ayânen müşâhede eyledügi muhârebâtı tahrîr eylemişlerdir." *Şecâ'atnâme,* 3b.

Çıldır victory was gained under the command of Lala Mustafa Pasha, Âsafi includes it in the *Şecâ'atnâme* together with an illustration since the battle turned from defeat to victory thanks to Osman Pasha's intervention, which was apparently an important detail in both Âsafi's and Osman Pasha's careers, as he felt the need to begin his narrative with it.[168] The way he refers to the Kızılbaş in this section is similar to the one in the prologue; he describes the Kızılbaş (*surh-ser*) commander Tokmak Khan as "devil-like" (*şeytan-sıfat*).[169] He also makes a reference to the stoning of the devil, a ritual act performed during the *Hajj* (annual Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca), thus attributing strong religious connotations to their battle against the Safavids.[170]

The Çıldır victory (9 August, 1578) was followed by the conquest of Tiflis (Tbilisi) (24 August, 1578) whose description in the *Şecâ'atnâme* makes possible a cursory comparison. While Âsafi emphasizes the infidelity of the Safavids by referring to the devil (*şeytân*/*iblis*), it is remarkable that he prefers using a less harsh language to describe a non-Muslim enemy. In the section written about the submission of the Georgian king, Alexander Khan, for instance, Âsafi describes him as victorious (*muzaffer*).[171] As we learn from Âsafi, Alexander Khan and his army did not resist the Ottoman occupation. Lala Mustafa Pasha invited Alexander Khan to his court and treated him with respect in return for his submission. Although Âsafi uses the word "*esnâmi*" (idolater) for the Christian Georgians, he does not speak about any act of conversion. By describing the Christian king's submission, he emphasizes the superiority of Sunni Islam, as well as the Ottomans' tolerance and generousness in return for Alexander Khan's submission. The illustration depicting Alexander Khan in Lala Mustafa Pasha's court also corroborates Âsafi's positive attitude

[168] *Şecâ'atnâme,* 16b-17b.
[169] "Surh-ser serdârı tokmak Han idi / Bir nice şeytân-sıfat sultân idi." *Şecâ'atnâme,* 16b.
[170] "Düşmene sür'atle itdiler hücûm / Atdılar şeytâna recm içün nücûm." Ibid.
[171] "Cümlenün başı Aleksandır idi / Ol gürûh içre muzaffer-fer idi" *Şecâ'atnâme,* 20a.

towards the Georgian king; rather than the former ruler of a conquered land, Alexander Khan is portrayed like a respected guest **(**Figure 3**)**.

From Tiflis, Lala Mustafa Pasha's army moved to Shirvan where they defeated the Safavid forces (9 September, 1578). Before leaving Shirvan, Lala Mustafa Pasha gathered a council with the aim of making provisions for direct Ottoman administration of the newly conquered territories.[172] He offered several governors (*beylerbey*s) to be the commander-in-chief (*serdar*) of Shirvan in order to protect the region against the Safavids. However, nobody but Osman Pasha volunteered to stay in Shirvan in the tough winter conditions. Âsafi narrates this part in great detail—including Lala Mustafa Pasha's expostulation to those who rejected—in order to draw attention to the self-sacrifice of Osman Pasha who was willing to take on this uphill task along with Âsafi at his side as his administrative assistant.[173]

Following Lala Mustafa Pasha's departure from Shirvan on 8 October 1578, Osman Pasha dispatched an army against the Safavids with the aim of gaining trophies. Although the Ottomans defeated the Safavid forces under the command of Partaloğlu, they could not succeed in battle against the army of Aras Khan, and thus retreated. However, Osman Pasha was determined to eliminate the Safavid threat in the region. When the Ottoman army arrived in Demirkapı (Bâbu'l-Ebvâb), a group of people from among the Muslim inhabitants of the region detained the Safavid governor Çerâg Halife whom they loathed because of high taxes, and brought him to the court of Osman Pasha.[174] As we learn from Âsafi, Çerâg Halife was beheaded because he refused to follow the path of Sunni Islam. Given that Âsafi puts considerable emphasis on Çerâg Halife's disfigurement, his bad deeds, as well as his

[172] Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual*, 81.
[173] *Şecâ'atnâme,* 25b-29b.
[174] Eroğlu, *Âsaf'î'nin Şecâatname'si*, 32-33.

mismanagement, he apparently aims to justify his persecution for being a stubborn Shi'a.[175] In addition to that, the inclusion of a metaphorical illustration with parrots and cats following Çerâg Halife's execution scene, as well as a quotation from Rumi's *Mathnawi* is also remarkable **(**Figure 4**).**[176] The *Mathnawi* story presents a moral of a fable about a parrot that deceives his owner by pretending to be dead and escapes from captivity.[177] The parrot in the *Mathnawi* serves as a metaphor for a true believer (*mümin*) who seeks salvation, and points to the distinction between the true believer (*mümin*) and a religious hypocrite (*münâfık*). According to Rumi, as Âsafi quotes, the religious hypocrite is like a bird in cage whose wings lack the power to fly out of the cage; being aware of the hazards outside its cage, this bird has no desire for salvation. As for the true believer, he is like a bird that is keen on leaving its cage; he knows that in order to attain salvation, one needs to die first.[178] Here, while the bird is a metaphor for the human spirit, the cage symbolizes the body, referring to the Sufi concept of "dying before death," which means getting rid of the self and journeying to the spiritual world, thus to God. Referring to Rumi and ending this section by stating that he wants to die as martyr, not only does Âsafi display his knowledge of Sufi philosophy, but he also

[175] "Katı bed-şekl idi ol hem bed-hısâl / Kâmetin egmiş idi bâr-ı vebâl / Merhametden yoğ idi aslâ eser / Halka hulkından irişürdi zarar" *Şecâ'atnâme,* 46-a.
[176] Ibid., 49b-51a.
[177] The *Mathnawi* story is about a merchant and his pet parrot in a cage. One day the merchant sets off on a journey to India. Before his departure, he asks his parrot if he wants any gift from India. The parrot asks the merchant to tell other birds in India about his situation; he says, "Tell them that you have a parrot in cage. He says, 'while you are free to fly over trees I am suffering, while you are in rose gardens I am held captive in cage. Is this what you understand from friendship? Just remember me and I will be happy,' this is all I ask." When the merchant arrives India and meets a couple of parrots, he conveys his parrot's words to them. At that moment one of the parrots shivers and dies. When the merchant returns to his country, he tells his parrot about what happened to the other parrot in India. At that moment, the parrot shivers and dies, too. Being devastated with his parrot's death, the merchant takes him out of his cage and brings him by the window. At that moment the parrot comes to life, flies out and lands on a tree. He says to the merchant who was dazed and confused, "That parrot in India sent me a message by pretending to be dead. He said, 'Die if you want to be saved.' This is what I did; I died and got rid of my cage." Maulana Jalalu-'d-din Muhammad Rumi. *The Masnavi I Ma'navi: Complete Six Books*, trans. E.H. Whinfield (North Charleston, SC: CreateSpace, 2011), 42-49.
[178] *Şecâ'atnâme,* 49b-50b.

attributes strong religious connotations to the battle against the Kızılbaş, presumably drawing a parallel between Rumi's anecdote and his escape from captivity as a true believer.[179]

In the meantime, Aras Khan, who had allied with Partaloğlu and Imam Kuli Khan, attacked the Ottomans. The battle resulted in Ottoman victory thanks to the last minute reinforcement of the Crimean forces, and the capture of Aras Khan.[180] However, being engaged in plundering, the Crimean force could not withstand the second Safavid attack in Shamakhi and fled.[181] Âsafi appeals to religious sentiments while narrating this violent three-day battle and describes their struggle against the Safavids as holy war (*gazâ*) against the enemies of religion (*a'da-yı din*)[182].

The Shamakhi defeat would be a turning point for Âsafi since Osman Pasha decided to move the army to a safer area, to the castle of Demirkapı (Bâbu'l Ebvâb), and charged Âsafi with the protection of the treasury during their journey. Acting as rear guard (*dümdâr*) to the Ottoman forces he fought against the brigands. He narrates this four-day battle in an elaborate manner and presents himself as the commander-in-chief (*serdâr*) who saved the Ottoman soldiers from a very difficult situation during the attacks. Describing his intervention in the last minute as God's favor, he pictures himself as being known for his valor (*şecâ'at*), and states that he made a lion-like move to save the treasury, encouraging his soldiers and ensuring the safe transfer.[183] Certain details in the section narrating Osman Pasha's escape from death during the battle are also highly significant in terms of pointing to Âsafi's desire for demonstrating his own *şecâ'at*; he states that they became companions

[179] "Bendeni Yârab gâzilerden et / Ölmeğe can ile razılardan et" *Şecâ'atnâme,* 50b.
[180] Ibid., 62a-64b.
[181] Eroğlu, *Âsaf'î'nin Şecâatname'si,* 34.
[182] "Çünkü tâmi'sen gazâya tâmi' ol / Bâri berk-âsâ 'aduya lâmi' ol / Durma var a'da-yı dinile uruş / Bezm-i rezm içre ğuzâtıla görüş" *Şecâ'atnâme,* 71b.
[183] "Lutf-ı Hak oldu hemân ol demde yâr / İrdi dümdâr-ı şecâ'at iştihâr / Yetdi hem şîrâne etdi hamlesin / Çekdi darbıyla katarun cümlesin / Kuvvet-i kalb oldu dümdâr 'askere / Geldi sağlıkla hazine Bendere" *Şecâ'atnâme,* 82b-83a.

(*pâdaş*) of Osman Pasha and they were willing to risk their lives.[184] The illustration depicting Âsafi and Osman Pasha is also remarkable in terms of its hierarchical organization: although Osman Pasha is the real protagonist and hierarchically at the top, there is almost no difference in the depiction of him and Âsafi in terms of the size and their ostentatious apparel **(**Figure 5**)**.

The Crimean army under the command of Mehmed Giray also arrived in Demirkapı on 10 October 1579. Although Osman Pasha plotted the conquest of Azerbaijan region together with Lala Mustafa Pasha and Mehmed Giray, this could not be realized due to Lala Mustafa Pasha's backtrack, which would lead to the Crimean army's departure and the attack of the Safavids who took advantage of this situation and set out to capture Shirvan and Demirkapı.[185] As discussed in the previous chapter, Âsafi played a major role in defeating the Safavids during this occupation, which he regarded as a stepping-stone in his military career as he narrated it in an elaborate manner emphasizing Osman Pasha's trust in him, even including an illustration of himself as one of the commanders **(**Figure 2**)**.

The next important encounter with the Safavids took place near the Kura River as a result of Gazi Giray and Safa Giray's attack at the behest of Osman Pasha.[186] Not only did the Safavid commander Salman Khan flee at the end of this raid, but his sister Banu was also taken as captive by the Crimean forces.[187] However, evading the Safavid counterattack and the siege of Baku would not be easy; although the Ottoman forces under the command of Ferhad Bey, Kaykı Bey, Ali Bey and Âsafi rescued the city from the Safavid occupation, Ali Bey could not escape captivity.[188] The spiritual elements that Âsafi utilizes in the narrative of Salman Khan's decision to lift the Baku siege are also worth touching upon. As Âsafi

[184] "Çünkü pâdâş oldu ol serdârımız," "Hâsılı olduk o gün serden geçen" *Şecâ'atnâme,* 57a.
[185] Eroğlu, *Âsafi'nin Şecâat-Nâme Mesnevisi*, 268-69.
[186] *Şecâ'atnâme*,124a-125a.
[187] Ibid., 125b-126b.
[188] Ibid., 127b-130b.

narrates, during the siege of Baku, one night Salman Khan sees in his dream the Shiite saint Ukeyma Khanum, also known as Bibi-Heybat. Bibi-Heybat reproaches Salman Khan for demolishing the Baku Castle that she had built. Being touched by Bibi-Heybat's words, Salman Khan visits the saint's mausoleum and lifts the siege immediately.[189] It goes without saying that there must have been more mundane factors behind the retreat of the Safavids other than Salman Khan's dream, and it is not possible to find out how Âsafi came up with the dream story. However, it is apparent that he wished to link the actualization of a fateful incident (retreat of the Safavids) to a key figure's (Salman Khan's) dream, which involved a spiritual figure (Bibi-Heybat) and by extension, God's interference.[190] Although the way Âsafi gives role to Bibi-Heybat including an illustration of her mausoleum within a spiritual setting **(**Figure 6**)**, as well as his implication that the saint's intervention paved the way for the Sunni victory over the Kızılbaş bring to mind the Ottomans' ambiguous attitudes towards the Kızılbaş and Shi'ism as a whole, Âsafi presumably paid tribute to Bibi-Heybat not because of sympathizing her as a Shiite saint, but rather due to the fact that he considered Bibi-Heybat as a descendant of the Prophet Muhammad.

The passage about the Baku siege also includes the execution of a certain Kızılbaş resident of Baku who was accused of spying for the Safavids by shooting an arrow out of the castle walls with a letter attached to it.[191] Âsafi does not hesitate to describe the details of the gory execution such as describing how the "heretic" (*mülhid*) was burned alive and flammable oil was constantly poured over him, and he also includes a dramatic illustration of

[189] Ibid., 132a-132b.
[190] Contemporary Ottoman writers often utilized dreams and visions as a means of self-fashioning. Murad III was also known for his keen interest in spirituality, as well as his eagerness for using dreams and visions to shape his personal and imperial image. For a detailed analysis on Murad III's use of dreams and visions for his image-making process, see Özgen Felek. "Re-Creating the Image and Identity: Dreams and Visions as a Means of Murad III's Self-Fashioning" Ph.D diss. (University of Michigan, 2010).
[191] Ibid., 131a.

the scene **(**Figure 7**)**. His expressions describing the scene are as dramatic as the illustration; stating that the Kızılbaş (*surh-ser*) was covered with flames from head to foot, he likens the flames around the victim's head to a crown.[192] Including such gruesome expressions accompanied by an explicit illustration of the execution of a spy, Âsafi clearly wishes to send a threatening message by portraying how the Kızılbaş involved in activities against the Ottomans would be punished.

In the meantime, the Safavid Shah sent an army of fifteen thousand to Shirvan where they would fight against the Ottomans led by Gazi Giray.[193] The result would be a fiasco for the Ottoman side; the Safavids occupied the Shirvan region and took Gazi Giray captive to the Alamut Castle where his path would cross with Âsafi in the future. On the other hand, in order to avoid possible Safavid attacks and to resist tough winter conditions Osman Pasha charged Âsafi with the renovation of the Qabala Castle along with Kaykı Bey on his side. Not only did Âsafi have to deal with the uprisings among his army during the journey, but he also struggled to defend the castle from the Safavid forces. Being forced to abandon resistance by both his own soldiers and the enemy, Âsafi was taken captive and was eventually imprisoned in the Alamut Castle.[194] Âsafi's devoted resistance against the siege, his clash with the soldiers under his command, as well as his reluctant surrender are elaborately narrated in the *Şecâ'atnâme.* As we learn from Âsafi, he and his soldiers were stuck in a very difficult situation during the siege because of famine, which caused disorder and some of the soldiers to join the Safavid side.[195] Being informed of the situation in the castle, and in order to break the resistance of the Ottomans, the Safavids sent a letter and told them that peace was about

[192] "Surh-ser oldu o dem ser-pâ'alev / Başı üzre tâc idi güyâ 'alev" Ibid., 134a.
[193] Eroğlu, *Âsafi'nin Şecâat-Nâme Mesnevisi*, 269.
[194] *Şecâ'atnâme,* 141b-150b.
[195] Ibid., 145b.

to be made in Istanbul.[196] Âsafi narrates how he was oppressed by others including Kaykı Bey and was eventually forced to abandon the castle, stressing that he never believed the enemy's words. He states that being betrayed and abandoned by his fellow soldiers, he had to escape in order to stay alive.[197] Given that Âsafi also provides the illustrations of every single step of this process including the siege of the castle, the visit of the Safavid delegates with Qurans in their hands, the revolt of his fellow soldiers, as well as his final struggle against the Safavids and eventual capture in a swamp, he apparently wishes to demonstrate his devotion and courage until the very last moment in contrast to the others who were fooled by the Safavids' deceit and fled when they were attacked **(**Figure 8-10**)**.

Âsafi's narration of the chain of events following his capture also points to his aspiration for presenting himself as a man of letters as well as a devoted Muslim who never made concessions regarding his thoughts on true Islam even in the presence of the Safavid Shah. He narrates that what saved him from execution was his literary skills; although his fellow soldiers including Kaykı Bey were killed right away, he got respect from the enemy.[198] Following his transfer to Qazvin, he would be brought to the presence of Shah Khudabanda, which would lead to a striking conversation between the two. As Âsafi writes, the shah asked him in a scolding manner whether the Ottomans consider Ali (*Murtazâ*) as sinner (*fasık*), the Shi'is as heretic (*kafir*), and why they would not stop attacking the Safavids although they already conquered plenty of lands.[199] Âsafi does not seem to be as blunt as he has been throughout his narrative regarding his opinion about the Kızılbaş; he replies to the shah saying that Ali is the sage (*pîr*) of the first four caliphs and the patron saint of soldiers,

[196] Ibid., 146a.
[197] "Kaldı tenhâ Âsafî birkaç ğulâm / Yalnız ölmemek idi ihtimâm" Ibid.,149a.
[198] "Düşmen iken ana izzet etdiler / Şii'r ü inşasına rağbet etdiler / Hayli kul-kardaşların hem ol zamân / Katl edüp başların aldılar revân" Ibid., 151a.
[199] "Ben Ali evladıyım lâyıkmıdur / Dininizde Murtazâ fasıkmıdur / Üstüme niçin gelirsüz söylenüz / Mezhebinde yoksa biz kafir miyüz / Zabtınızda anca vardır ülkenüz / Basdı Lâr u Hindi Sindi gölgenüz" Ibid., 153b.

without making any negative comments about the Shi'i creed.[200] On the other hand, his response is rather daring when he says to the shah that all possessions belong to God and he bestows them upon whom he wishes; while sultans have always been keen on conquering lands and possessions, their subjects have to obey his order, otherwise they will lose their heads.[201] He boldly adds that he is ready to die for this cause: "I fought for the sake of the sultan; here is the stage, here is the sword, here is the head."[202] Offended by Âsafi's forwardness, other court members demanded that he be executed immediately.[203] Fortunately, he would be saved thanks to the last-minute intervention of a certain Kızılbaş, Yusuf Bey, and would be sent to the Alamut Castle. Âsafi states that Yusuf Bey had affection for the Sunni and he made the shah change his mind by warning him about Âsafi's status in Ottoman lands and the possible negative consequences of his execution.[204] In order to portray his last-minute escape from death, Âsafi includes a dramatic illustration depicting him naked to the waist and about to be executed **(**Figure 12**)**, which is followed by another scene depicting him in a pit where he would be imprisoned for three years together with an inmate called Zülfikâr Abdâl, who according to Âsafi, was insane **(**Figure 13**)**. Âsafi explains his feelings about his years of imprisonment stating that living together with someone of inferior quality (*nâ-cins*) is the kind of death that makes a bigger impact on a person than death itself; thus, it is better to die than to be a companion to the devil.[205]

[200] "Murtazâ hem çâryarun pîridir / Cümle erbâb-ı sipâhun pîridir" Ibid., 154b.
[201] "Milk Hakkındur kime ister ise / Alur ol virür kime virdim dese / Pâdişahlar milke râğıbdır ezel / Memleket fethine tâlipdir ezel / Biz ki hünkâra kuluz ey şehriyâr / Etmesek emrine zerre i'tibâr / Başımız eyler hemân tenden cüdâ" Ibid., 154b.
[202] "Eyledim hünkâr uğruna savaş / İşte meydân işte şimşîr işte baş" Ibid., 154b.
[203] Ibid., 155a.
[204] "Bu kişi kim katle emr etdin anı / Rumda vardır bunun adı sanı" Ibid., 155a. Yusuf Bey had previously been taken captive by the Ottomans but released thanks to Osman Pasha.
[205] "Ademe eyler ölümden çok eser / Bir ölüm vardır ki ölmekden beter / Ölmedir nâ-cinse olmak hem-nişîn / Yekdir ölmek olmadan dive karîn" Ibid., 156b.

Meanwhile, Osman Pasha and his army retreated in Demirkapı. Although the Ottoman army succumbed to the Safavid attack led by Imam Kuli Khan who took advantage of the Ottoman army's weak position with the aim of moving to Shirvan, the next battle resulted in favor of the Ottomans allowing for Osman Pasha's departure from Demirkapı.[206] Osman Pasha and his army had several difficulties such as Russian attacks throughout their journey. Although all these events coincide with the period when Âsafi was in prison, he narrates them in detail even including an illustration depicting his brother being killed by the Russians **(**Figure 14**)**.[207]

Although the Ottoman army managed to reach Crimea, here they faced the threat of Mehmed Giray.[208] Following a long and tough battle in Caffa, the Ottomans gained the upper hand with the help of Kaptan Ali Pasha, and Mehmed Giray was eventually killed by his brother Alp Giray who was in service of Osman Pasha together with his older brother Islam Giray.[209] After appointing Islam Giray as the new khan of Crimea, Osman Pasha left Caffa. On 28 June, 1584, he arrived in Istanbul where he would be welcomed by Sultan Murad III and soon be appointed as the grand vizier.[210] On the other hand, the political unrest in Crimea would still continue. Receiving the news of revolt fueled by Mehmed Giray's son Saaadet Giray, Osman Pasha charged Ferhat Pasha with the suppression of the revolt. After securing the situation in Crimea, Osman Pasha would prepare for the conquest of Tabriz.[211]

As for the Safavid side, delighted with the political instability in Crimea, Shah Mohammad Khudabanda offered his hostage, Gazi Giray, the Crimean throne with the

[206] Ibid.,161b- 184a.
[207] Ibid., 189a.
[208] Ibid., 200a.
[209] Ibid., 206a-220a.
[210] Ibid., 226a-231a.
[211] Ibid., 235a-237a.

purpose of coopting Tatar forces.[212] This development would be an opportunity for Âsafi since it would pave his way out of the Alamut Castle, thanks to his friend Gazi Giray's interference. Pretending to cooperate, Gazi Giray requested for Âsafi's discharge from the dungeon and his appointment as his clerk for replying to the letters sent from the Safavid court.[213] Improving rapport with the Safavid prince Hamza Mirza thanks to Âsafi's ingenious wording, Gazi Giray eventually managed to introduce Âsafi into the court.[214] However, Âsafi's confrontation with Hamza Mirza in the presence of other notables turned out to be a fiasco; because of his extreme negative statements about the Safavids, he would be beaten, chained up and then exiled to Isfahan.[215] As Âsafi narrates, following other court members' negative statements about the Ottomans, Hamza Mirza insisted that Âsafi make a remark about the Safavids without fear.[216] Âsafi's dialogue with the Safavid prince is highly interesting regarding the way he expresses his thoughts on the quality of the Safavid army, as well as their subjugation policy. Comparing Ottoman and Safavid soldiers in terms of their skills (*san'at*), he criticizes the latter stating that while the Ottoman army employs several artisans (*erbâb-ı hiref / ehl-i hiref*) thus being able to meet all their needs, Safavid soldiers lack these talents.[217] After mentioning the Ottoman sultan's justness, he adds that the Safavids could not manage to keep hold of the lands that they had conquered; he draws an analogy stating that lands are like wives of kings (*menkûha-i şahan*), who cannot be bestowed on others.[218] Âsafi notes that although this final remark of him enraged one of the court members, Peykoğlu, who tried to convince the prince to execute him because of his

[212] Ibid., 238a-238b.
[213] Ibid., 238a-240a.
[214] Ibid., 246b. Âsafi narrates all these steps in great detail along with illustrations.
[215] Ibid., 246b-251b.
[216] Ibid., 247b.
[217] "Evvela dirsiz ki hünkâr 'askeri / Cümle erbâb-ı hirefdir leşkeri / Olmayalar ehl-i sûka ihtiyaç / İrişe her derde askerden 'ilâç / Bu tedarük sizde herkiz varmıdır / San'at ile biri ber-hûrdârmıdur / Azminiz bu def'a kim Tebrizdir / Bilmez 'askerden biri san'at nedir" Ibid., 247b.
[218] "Memleket menkûha-i şahandır / Gayre virmek 'ırza çok noksandır" Ibid., 248a.

insolence, the prince responded by saying that it was his fault and not Âsafi's, because he allowed him to express his thoughts.[219] Here it is remarkable that Âsafi uses a less pejorative language with regard to the Safavid prince as well as other court members, compared to the Kızılbaş terminology used while narrating encounters in the battlefield, which was composed of terms often with religious connotations such as "devil" (*şeytân/iblis*), "heretic" (*mülhid*), "enemies of religion" (*a'da-yı din*).

After spending about six months in Isfahan, Âsafi embarked on a prison break together with a former Ottoman soldier named Murad, an Indian-born prisoner Kanber Khan, and a Safavid slave. Âsafi and his companions managed to reach Shiraz against all the odds.[220] From Shiraz they moved to Kazirun, to Ray, and then sailed to Basra where Âsafi would be welcomed by the governor Ahmed Pasha.[221] From Basra Âsafi traveled to Erzurum and eventually reunited with Osman Pasha who would appoint him to take place in the Tabriz campaign.[222] In the meantime, Gazi Giray, who had been plotting an escape from Hamza Mirza's retinue in Tabriz, also managed to reach Osman Pasha.[223]

The battle between the Ottoman and Safavid forces resulted in favor of the Ottomans and Osman Pasha entered Tabriz with his army. In order to maintain Tabriz, Osman Pasha had the city walls fortified, and he also appointed Gazi Giray as the new khan of Crimea to gain Crimean support. As for Âsafi, he was appointed as the governor of Caffa.[224] On the other hand, due to the deterioration of his health, Osman Pasha handed over the command to

[219] "Dedi ben etdim günâhı yok bunun / Söyledirsen var özrü çok bunun" Ibid., 249a.
[220] Âsafi and his companions came across several difficulties throughout their journey. Apart from struggling with hunger and thirst, they were attacked and robbed, which would lead Âsafi to beg in the streets. Âsafi narrates all these events in detail along with illustrations. Ibid., 252a-257a.
[221] Ibid., 258b-261a.
[222] Ibid., 262b-263b.
[223] Ibid., 263b-264b.
[224] Ibid., 265b-267a.

Sinan Pasha, which would encourage Hamza Mirza to attack Tabriz. However, Sinan Pasha's unfortunate decisions in response to Hamza Mirza's strategic moves resulted in Ottoman defeat, which would lead to public unrest and violent acts by the Ottoman soldiers in Tabriz.[225] Devastated by Sinan Pasha's negligence, its awful consequences and continuing Safavid attacks, Osman Pasha decided to leave Tabriz after appointing Cafer Pasha as the governor of Diyarbekir.[226] However, on the way Osman Pasha died of an illness on 29 October, 1585.[227] In spite of the ongoing attacks led by Hamza Mirza who was encouraged by Osman Pasha's death, the Ottoman convoy managed to repulse them successfully and finally reached Van. Osman Pasha's body would then be transferred to Diyarbekir and buried there in accordance with his will.[228]

As Âsafi has included his career expectations into the prologue of the *Şecâ'atnâme* before narrating Osman Pasha's campaign, he also says a few words between the section on Osman Pasha's death and the epilogue (*hâtime*). After eulogizing himself and narrating how he had deservedly been appointed governor of Caffa, he addresses the sultan and states that he was dismissed from his position for no reason, which made him feel terribly hurt.[229] Given that the main storyline of the *Şecâ'atnâme* actually comes to an end with the death of Osman Pasha, Âsafi's preference for ending his narrative with a topic related to his own career once again draws attention to his aspiration for demonstrating his own *şecâ'at* along with that of Osman Pasha.

[225] Ibid., 269b-272b.
[226] Ibid., 279a.
[227] Ibid., 280b-281b.
[228] Ibid., 283a-284a.
[229] "Pâdişâhım Âsafa zulm etdiler Bî-sebeb 'azl etdiler incitdiler" Ibid., 286b.

Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to analyze an Ottoman manuscript, the *Şecâ'atnâme* written by Âsafi Dal Mehmed Çelebi, in the context of Ottoman-Safavid rivalry. I chose this particular manuscript due to the fact that the *Şecâ'atnâme* is not only a striking contemporary source that sheds light on certain events during the Ottoman-Safavid wars of 1578-90, thus on the encounters with the Kızılbaş, but because it demonstrates how an illustrated history could be used as a means of self-promotion by its author.

Before embarking on a discussion about the encounters with the Kızılbaş throughout the text, I believe that one needs to have a solid grasp of certain aspects of the Ottoman-Safavid rivalry and the problem of Kızılbaş in the Ottoman Empire. Although coming to a concrete conclusion with regards to its rise and development is a challenging task and at certain points beyond possible, contemporary documents and a growing body of secondary literature helps us understand the dynamics behind the Kızılbaş problem. Being aware of the importance of the historical knowledge on the Ottoman-Safavid rivalry and the Kızılbaş issue, the first chapter aimed tracing back the origin of this problem.

Modern Ottoman scholarship has interpreted the Ottoman-Safavid as an outcome of mere religious dichotomy until recently. Emphasizing the orthodox-Sunni identity of the Ottoman state, this approach presents the Ottoman responses to the Kızılbaş as a caution against the Shi'i threat towards Sunni Islam and the Ottoman central authority. As Derin Terzioğlu rightfully argues, this one-dimensional evaluation attributes a timeless Sunni character to the religious culture of the urban elite, overlooking the geographic and ethnic

diversity of the Kızılbaş population, as well as the confessional ambiguity in Anatolia.[230] Early sources dated before the sixteenth-century Ottoman-Safavid wars—the period that is often identified with the Ottoman sunnitization at its peak—demonstrate the variety of the responses of the Ottoman central authority, pointing to the multifaceted nature of the Ottoman-Safavid conflict, the problem of Kızılbaş, as well as the Ottoman policies and terms used to refer to the dissenters. These sources point to the fact that Ottoman Sunnitization was a long-term religio-political process and a means of social disciplining, which aimed bringing the problematic population—including Shi'i militant groups and nonconformist Sufis—in line through persecutions, banishments and lesser forms of punishments or through peer pressure—establishing Friday mosques and making the attendance to the Friday prayer compulsory— and purchasing loyalties through the bestowal of posts and privileges.[231]

By the second half of the sixteenth century, the variety of terms and expressions regarding the Kızılbaş would evolve into religious terminology thanks to the increasing self-awareness of the Ottoman ulama. Nevertheless, although several sources such as legal opinions of prominent religious scholars, imperial edicts and *mühimme* records demonstrate that the Ottoman central state did not accept Shi'i Safavids as Muslims, same sources point to the lack of a universal attitude or a specific method of enforcement towards the Kızılbaş. In other words, the Ottoman discourse of Kızılbaş had a complex and multifaceted nature determined by various issues such as political loyalties, as well as religious and social conformities of the heterogeneous Kızılbaş communities, apart from the political relations with the Safavid Empire.

As understanding the essentials of the Ottoman-Safavid rivalry and the Sunni-Shi'i conflict is of major importance for a detailed analysis of the *Şecâ'atnâme* in its historical

[230] Terzioğlu, *How to Conceptualize*, 302-3; Baltacıoğlu-Brammer, 22.
[231] Ibid., 304, 309, 312-317.

context, Âsafi Dal Mehmed Çelebi's versatile personality also deserves attention since it provides an insight into the possible motives behind the production of the *Şecâ'atnâme*, its author's way of perceiving the world, his intellectual and religious tendencies, as well as the way he depicts the Kızılbaş. Although little is known about Âsafi's biography, his personality as a bureaucrat-soldier manifests itself throughout the narrative. Apart from being a representative of the Sunni-minded Ottoman state, Âsafi was a man of learning committed to the philosophy of Mewlana Jalaluddin Rumi, as well as a devoted soldier whose *şecâ'at* was emphasized as much as that of Osman Pasha, the ostensible actor of the narrative.

Another aspect of Âsafi's personality is the way he situated himself into the patronage patterns of the time. Due to Murad III's style of ruling the empire from within the palace walls, which necessitated intermediary actors between the sultan and the outer world, artistic patronage was mostly dominated by various members of the bureaucratic-military class and imperial household servants. On the other hand, the Ottoman-Safavid wars of 1578-90 created an atmosphere in which new patrons other than the sultan and the ruling elite, as well as new historians other than court historians emerged. This period witnessed a frenzy of war narratives often dedicated to the victories of non-royal commanders, usually focusing on a single campaign, and which were often utilized as a means of self-promotion. As for the *Şecâ'atnâme*, although it followed the contemporary trends of manuscript production to a certain extent (it bore many similar features to Mustafa 'Âlî's *Nusretnâme*, for instance), it was an extraordinary work in two main respects. Firstly, unlike the general practice of the period that necessitated intermediary actors in the production and presentation process, the *Şecâ'atnâme* was the outcome of Âsafi's own endeavor. Secondly, Âsafi placed a particularly great emphasis on himself as the hidden protagonist of the narrative; 16 out of 77 illustrations for instance, depict his own adventures.

The last and the most crucial chapter of this thesis focused on the encounters with the Safavids during Osman Pasha's campaign between the years 1578 and 1585 as narrated in the *Şecâ'atnâme*. It is possible to assert that the storyline of the *Şecâ'atnâme* is composed of two main themes: the battles of the Ottoman army under the lead of Osman Pasha (in most of which Âsafi took an active role), and Âsafi's adventures including his capture by the enemy, his encounters with the Kızılbaş, as well as his experiences on the way to salvation. As I stated in the introduction, the main concern of this study was focusing on the latter, thus investigating how Âsafi as a Sunni Otttoman bureaucrat-soldier depicted his encounters with the Kızılbaş, as well as the way he presented himself as the protagonist of the narrative.

Although several other war narratives depict the Kızılbaş in the context of Ottoman-Safavid rivalry, what makes the *Şecâ'atnâme* distinctive is that it provides us with an image of the encounters both in battlefield and in court. The earliest illustrated manuscript dedicated to a non-royal hero (Lala Mustafa Pasha), the *Nusretnâme* by Mustafa 'Âli, for instance, presents a great number of details about the battles against the Kızılbaş, often including gorier depictions compared to the *Şecâ'atnâme*, and gives us an insight about the terms used to refer to the Kızılbaş. Although the *Şecâ'atnâme* is not distinctive with regards to the depiction of the Kızılbaş in the battlefield, being a first-hand account of a Sunni bureaucrat-soldier who was imprisoned by the Safavids and who had the chance to be in dialogue with Safavid court members, it brings into mind the possible distinction between the Kızılbaş and the Twelver Shi'is in the eyes of the Ottomans. The increasing marginalization of the Kızılbaş in the Safavid lands also supports this idea; the centralization process of the Safavid Empire was breaking the spiritual and political power of the Kızılbaş, leading to the inevitable contest between the sedentary bureaucracy and nomadic military, and the word 'Kızılbaş' being connoted 'single-minded, uneducated and uncultured rough men' among the

bureaucratic elite.[232] It goes without saying that these developments had certain repercussions in the Ottoman Empire and the Ottoman understanding of the Kızılbaş.

With regards to the terms used to refer to the Kızılbaş, the *Şecâ'atnâme* follows a terminological pattern dominated by words such as *mülhid* (heretic), *müfsid* (corruptor), *gümrâh* (deviant), in accordance with the religious terminology of the period that had reached a certain level of maturity by the latter half of the sixteenth century. Furthermore, Âsafi's narrative also addresses certain issues with major importance regarding the Ottoman responses to the Kızılbaş; the concept of *takfir* (declaring someone to be an apostate) and the issue of being a Kızılbaş in connection with the Safavids. In the *Şecâ'atnâme*, portrayals of two Kızılbaş executions are particularly remarkable: execution of the Safavid governor Çerâg Halife, and that of a certain Kızılbaş resident of Baku who was accused of spying in favor of the Safavids. These executions are depicted in such an elaborate manner that Âsafi clearly intended to emphasize the reasons underlying these executions. While Çerâg Halife was a stubborn Shi'i who openly declared his belief and refused to follow the path of Sunni Islam, the Kızılbaş man from Baku was punished for his cooperation with the Safavids and acting against the Ottoman authority.

Speaking of terminology, the *Şecâ'atnâme* also makes possible a comparison with regards to the encounters with the Kızılbaş and other non-Muslim enemies. Although making a general statement regarding the differences between the two in Ottoman narratives is not possible at this point, and this issue deserves further research, certain expressions in the *Şecâ'atnâme* reveal subtle differences. An intense emphasis on the infidelity of the Safavids and reference to the devil (*şeytân*/*iblis*) is quite frequent with regard to the Kızılbaş, whereas a less harsh language is used while portraying the non-Muslim enemy. However, the issues of

[232] Rıza Yıldırım, "Turkomans between Two Empires: The Origins of the Qizilbash Identity in Anatolia (1447–1514)," PhD, Bilkent University, 2008, 589; Kathryn Babayan, "The Safavid Synthesis: From Qizilbash Islam to Imamite Shiʿism," *Iranian Studies* 27 (1994), 143.

resistance and submission need to be taken into consideration. Whether the Kızılbaş were a threat was a major concern for the Ottoman central authority, and Âsafi's attitude was also shaped by similar anxieties in his description of both the resistant Kızılbaş and the submissive non-Muslim subject.

I have discussed the harshness of Âsafi's language with regard to the Kızılbaş that he fought against; using condescending words often referring to the devil, he emphasizes the infidelity of the enemy and attributes a holy meaning to his struggle. On the other hand, his dialogues with the Safavid shah and the prince in the Safavid court following his capture are worthy of attention since they point to a distinction. Âsafi's attitude in the Safavid court is remarkable; even when he is given the opportunity, he does not utter disrespect for the Shi'i belief, whereas he dares to criticize the quality of the Safavid army, as well as their subjugation policy. It goes without saying that it would be unreasonable to expect him to openly express his thoughts about the Shi'i creed in the presence of the shah. However, lack of a significantly condescending language even while 'narrating' his encounters with the Safavid court members in contrast to that he used for describing Kızılbaş commanders and soldiers brings to mind the possible distinction between the Kızılbaş and Twelver Shi'is in the eyes of the Ottomans, which was discussed by Elke Eberhard in light of the contemporary documents.[233] Another detail that points out this issue is the way Âsafi implies that Bibi-Heybat's intervention through a dream paved the way for Sunnis' victory over the Kızılbaş during a siege. Including this dream detail to his narrative, not only does Âsafi appeal to Sultan Murad III's literary tastes, but he also pays tribute not necessarily to Twelver Shi'ism, but to a Shi'i saint who was known to be a descendant of the Prophet Muhammad. In this respect, the connection between 'Alid loyalties and Sufism also needs to be taken into consideration; most of the Sufi families of the previous centuries, long before the rise of the

[233] Eberhard, *Osmanische Polemik.*

Ottomans and Safavids as Sunni and Shi'i empires, had traced their descents to 'Ali and to the Prophet, which ascribed a role to 'Ali as the first saint of Islam, and a permanent castle-like status to the *Sayyid*s (descendants).[234] Although Âsafi's praise of 'Ali in the presence of the shah at first glance brings to mind a positive attitude towards Shi'ism since Shi'ism is by default 'Ali centric, the central role attributed to 'Ali in the Ottoman literary production, needs to be taken into consideration. 'Ali has been an important figure in Islamic literature beginning from earlier times and has been portrayed with various personalities shaped by political and socio-cultural factors.[235] On the other hand, while Shi'is present 'Ali as a heavenly figure being the only rightful caliph and imam after Muhammad, Sunnis depict him as a historical character, the fourth caliph, highlighting his legendary war skills.[236] Apart from the *Cenkname* literature that revolves around 'Ali's heroic deeds, the Ottoman court (*divan*) poetry also embraces 'Ali; his titles, especially those related to his achievements in the battlefield, have been a source of inspiration for the eulogies presented to the court members.[237] In this context, while Âsafi's reverence for 'Ali cannot be interpreted as a sign of sympathy towards Shi'ism, the emphasis he places on 'Ali as the sage (pîr) of the first four caliphs and the patron saint of soldiers, points to the role attributed to 'Ali in the Sunni context.

There exist a variety of sources regarding the Ottoman-Safavid rivalry and the problem of Kızılbaş, some of which were presented throughout this study. However, rather than coming to a concrete conclusion or making a generalization about the reasons and consequences of these issues, it is only possible to speculate on its dynamics shaped by

[234] A. Azfar Moin, "The Millennial Sovereign: Sacred Kingship and Sainthood in Islam," (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 40.
[235] Kamile Ünlüsoy, "Tarihi Şahsiyeti ve Anadolu İnanç Kültüründeki Tasavvuruyla Hz. Ali (XIII.-XVI. Yüzyıllar) [Hazrat Ali with his Historical Personality and Imagination in Anatolian Faith Culture (Between 13th and 16th centuries)]" PhD, Suleyman Demirel University, 2011, 234.
[236] Ibid., 70, 234.
[237] Meliha Yıldıran Sarıkaya, "Türk İslam Edebiyatında Hz. Ali [Hazrat Ali in Turkish-Islamic Literature]" PhD, Marmara University, 2004, 480.

various aspects other than the Sunni-Shi'i dichotomy or the state of being either at war or peace. The *Şecâ'atnâme* is not only a good example of the late sixteenth-century war narratives, which gives hints to how a Sunni Ottoman bureaucrat-soldier viewed the Safavids and their troops in the context of Ottoman-Safavid rivalry and the problem of Kızılbaş, it also demonstrates the way these manuscripts were utilized as a means of self-promotion. Although the *Şecâ'atnâme* also makes possible a comparison between the depiction of the Kızılbaş and non-Muslim enemies on a small scale, this issue deserves further studies.

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Figures

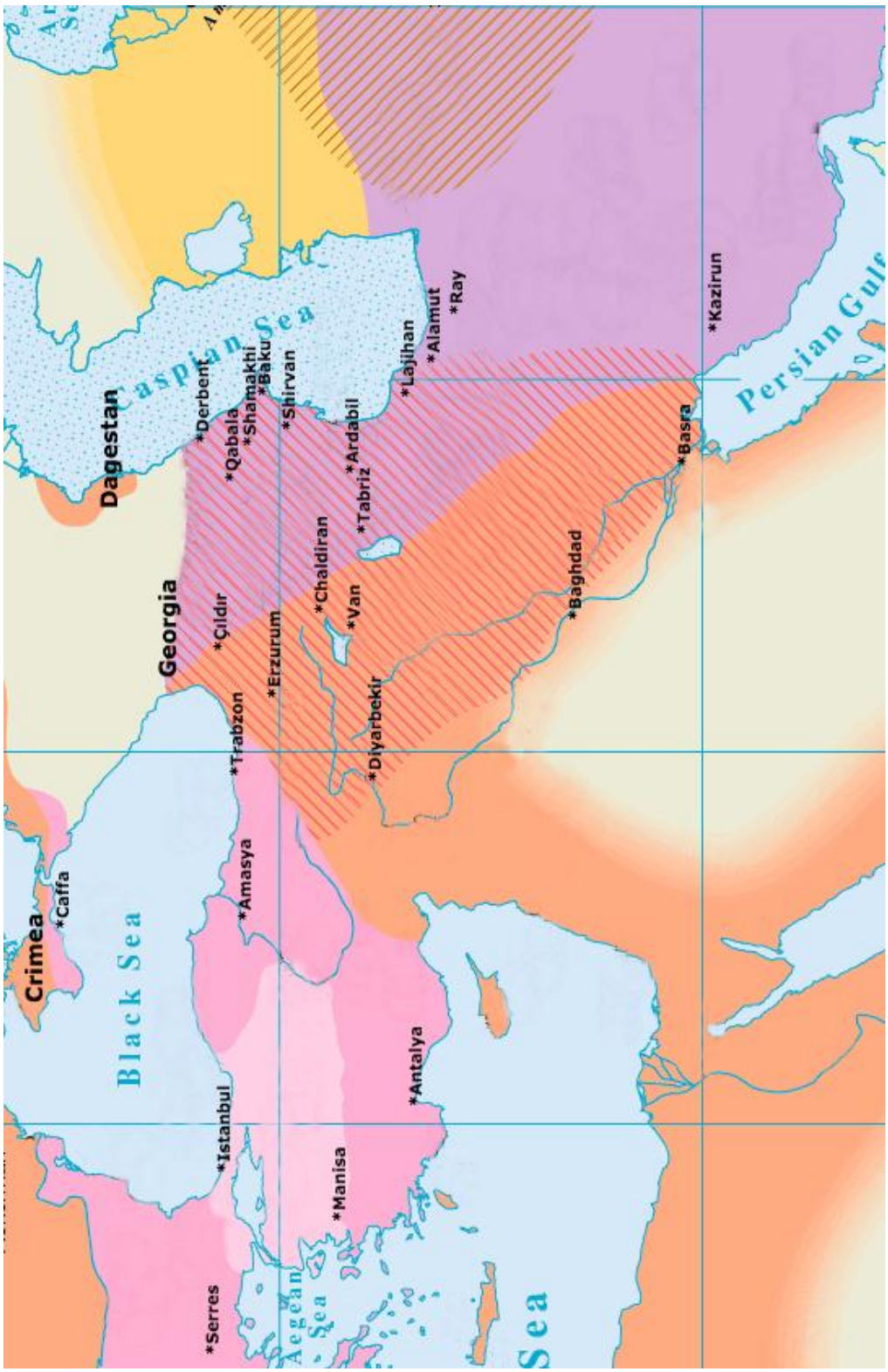

Figure 1: Map of the places mentioned.

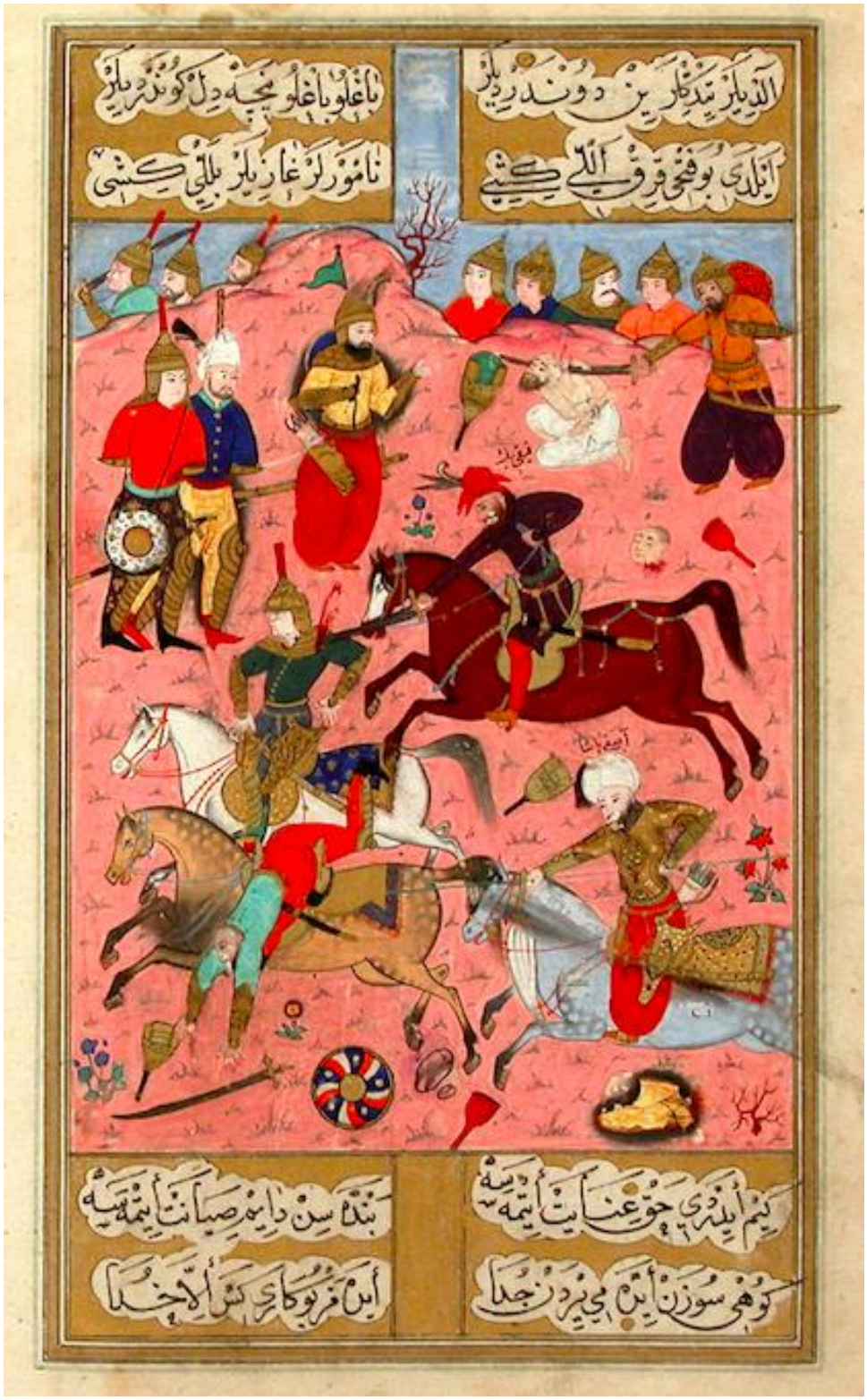

Figure 2: Âsafi and Kaykı Bey in Shirvan, Şecâ'atnâme, 120b.

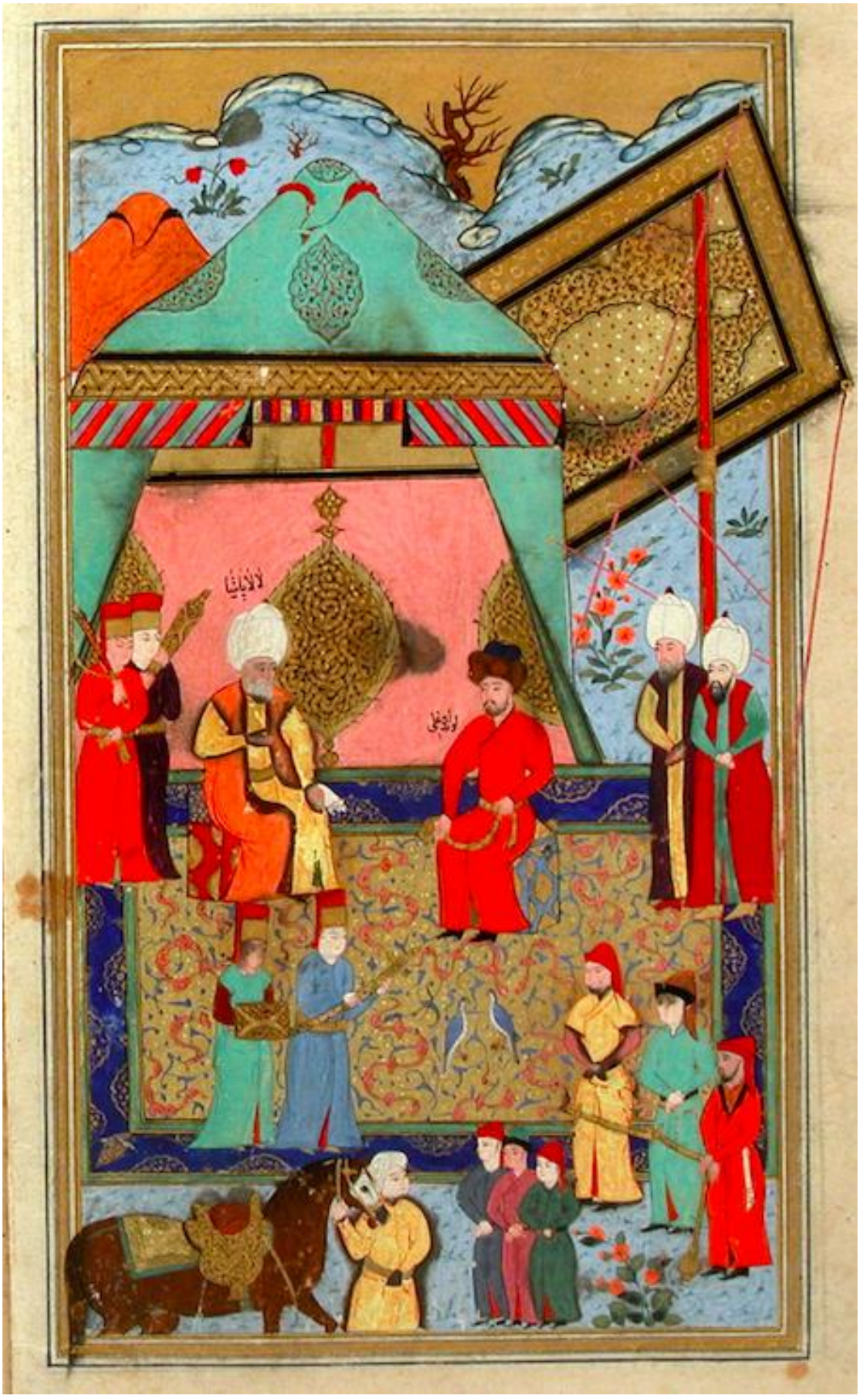

Figure 3: Alexander Khan in the presence of Osman Paşa. Şecâʿatnâme, 20b.

Figure 4: Parrots and cats in a garden. Şecâ'atnâme, 50b.

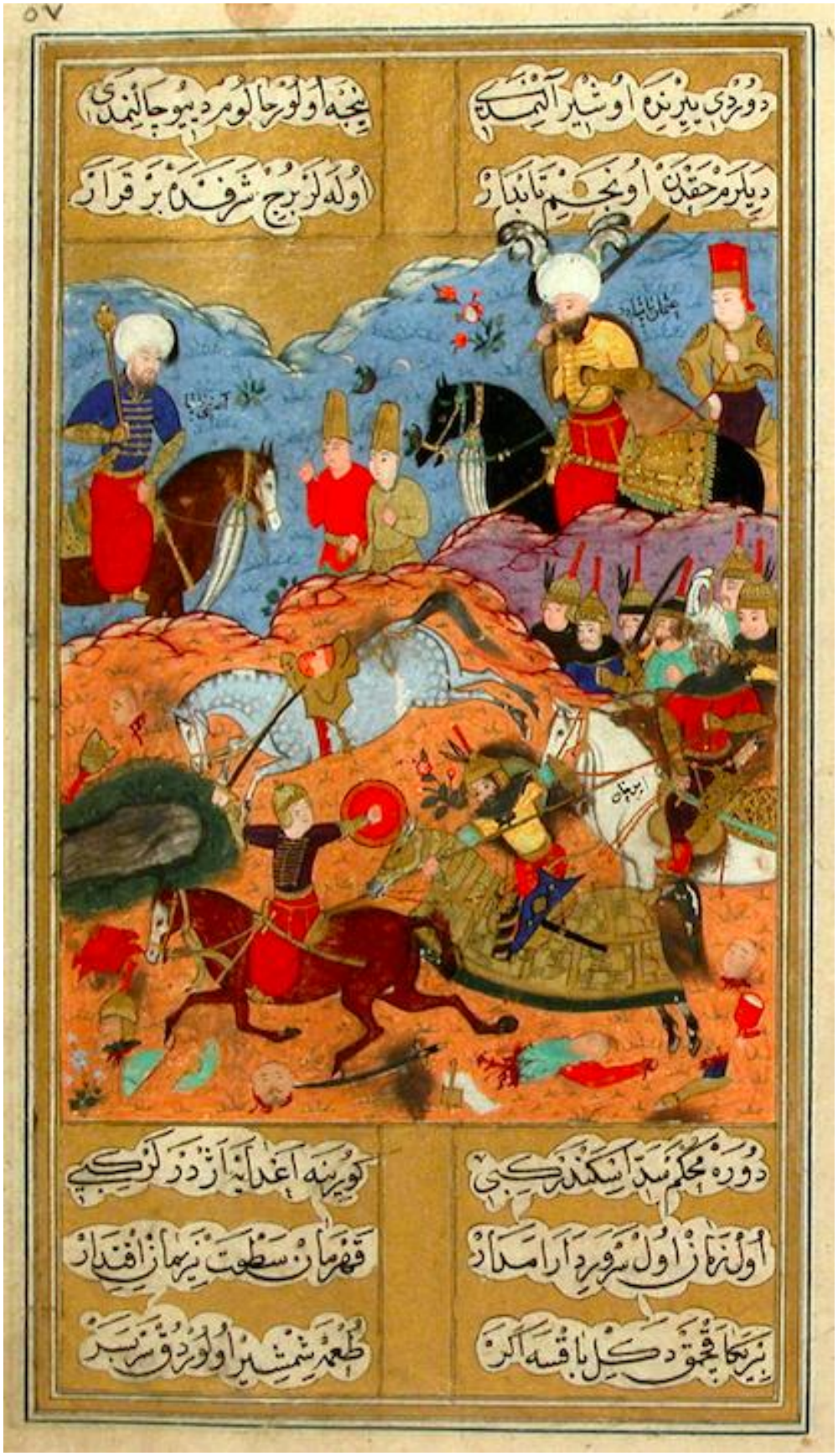

Figure 5: Osman Paşa and Âsafi against Aras Khan. Şecâʿatnâme, 58a.

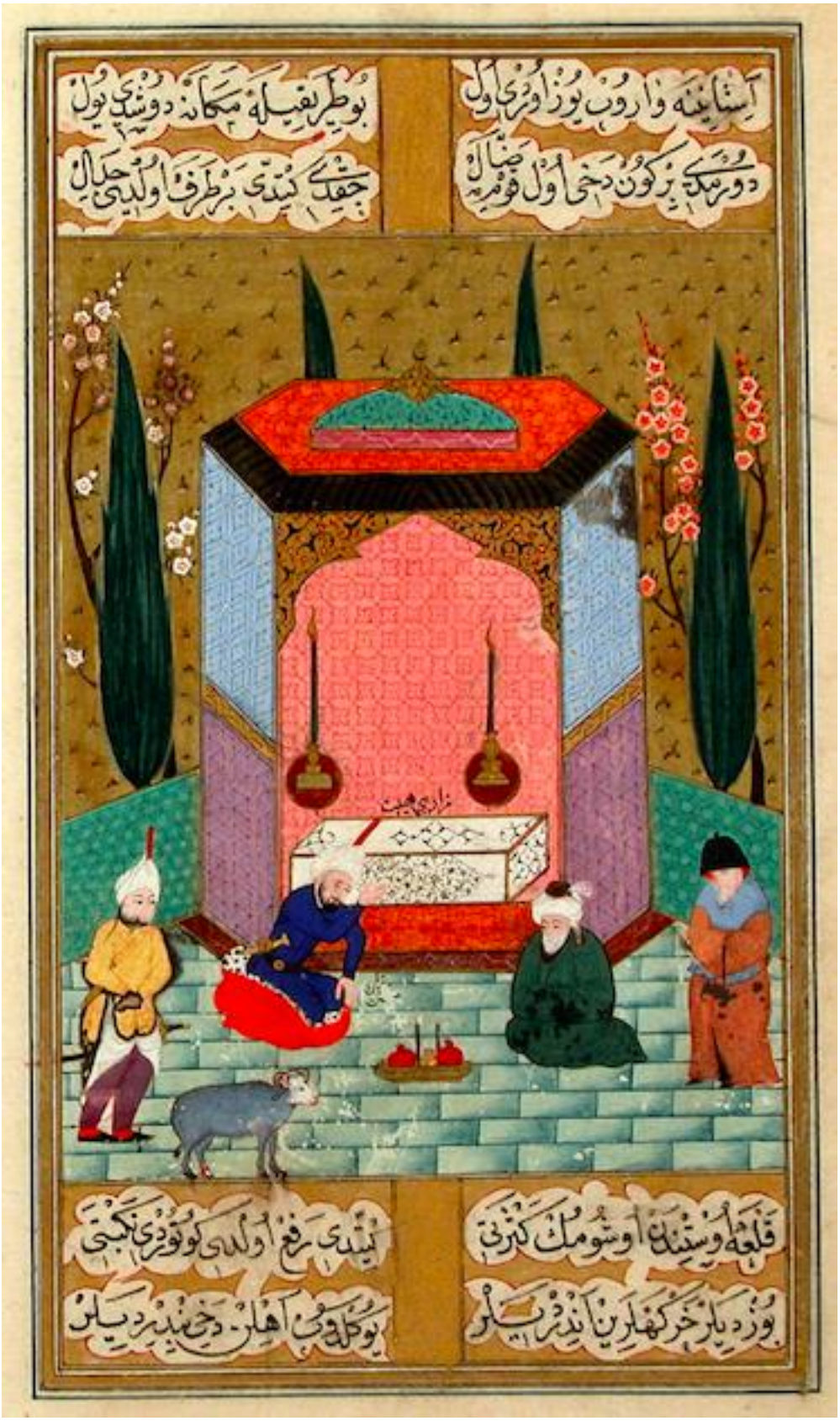

Figure 6: Salman Khan's visit to Bibi-Heybat's mausoleum. Şecâ'atnâme, 132b.

Figure 7: Execution of a *Kızılbaş*. Şecâ'atnâme, 133b.

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Figure 9: Safavid delegates with Qurans in their hands. *Şecâ'atnâme*, 147b.

Figure 10: Revolt inside the Qabala castle. *Şecâ'atnâme*, 148b.

Figure 11: Âsafi's struggle against the Safavids. *Şecâ'atnâme*, 150a.

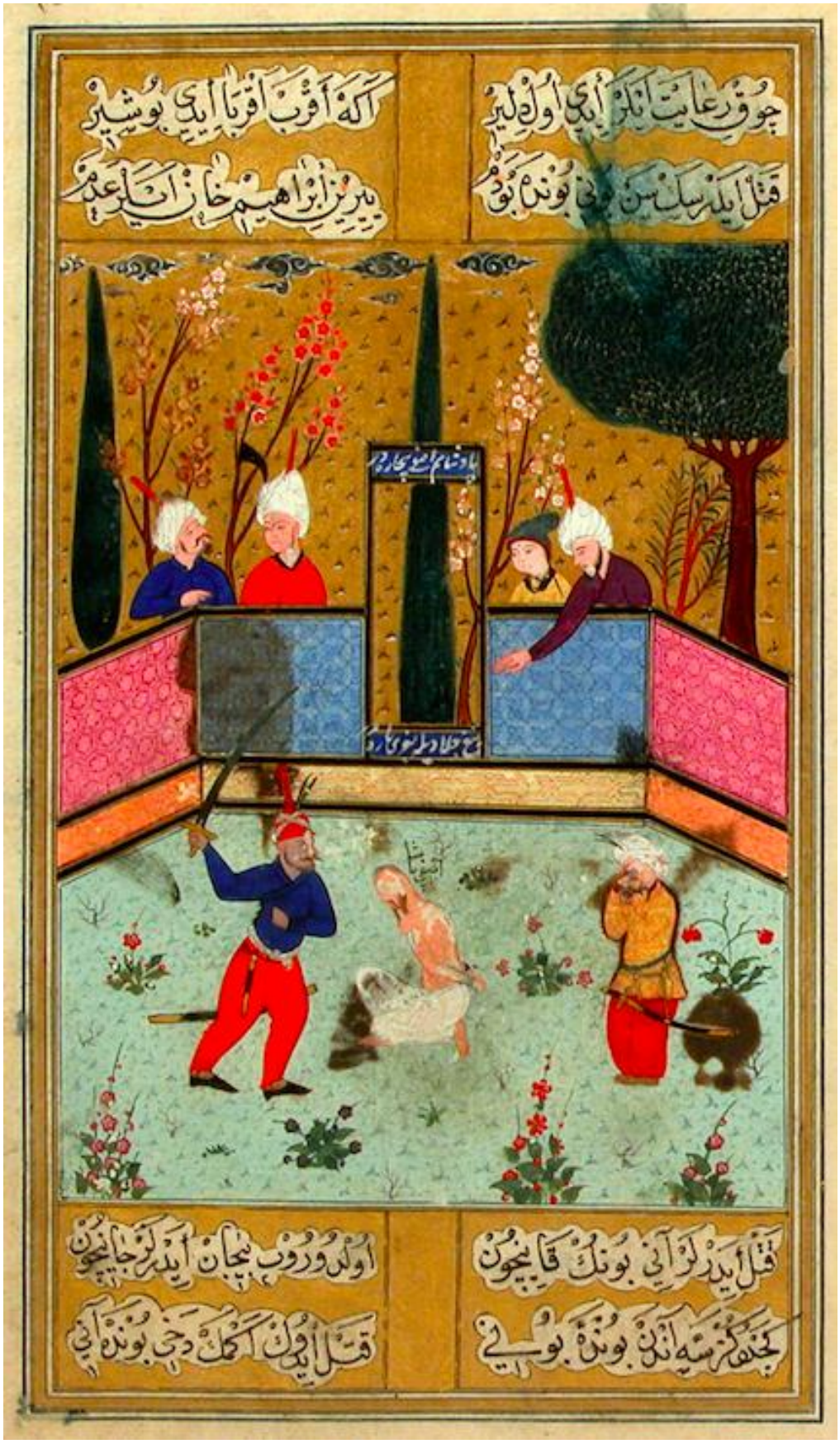

Figure 12: Âsafi about to be executed. *Şecâ'atnâme*, 156a.

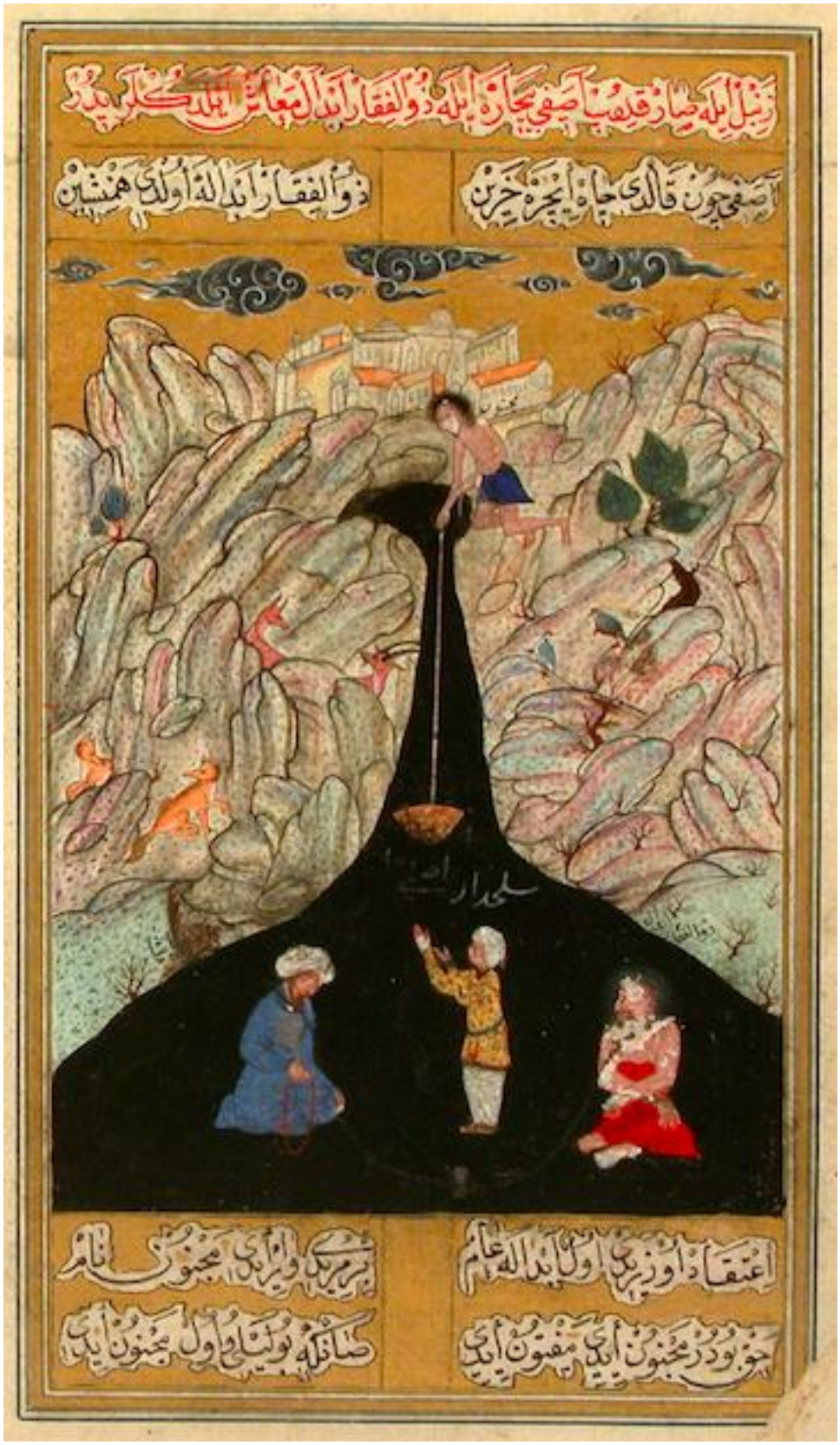

Figure 13: Âsafi imprisoned in a pit. *Şecâ'atnâme,* 157b.

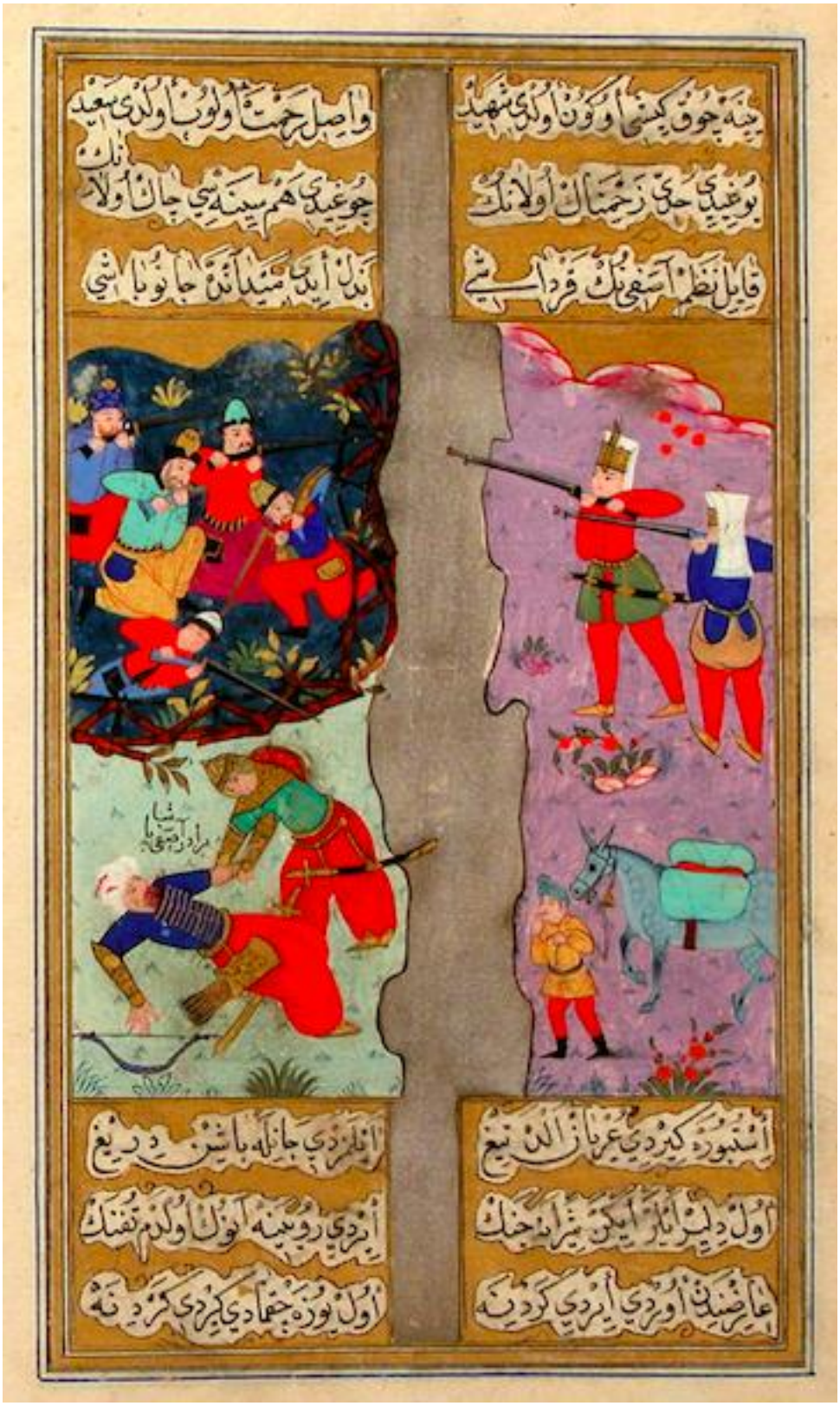

Figure 14: Death of Âsafi's brother during Russian attacks. *Şecâ'atnâme*, 189b.