Entangled Confessionalizations?

Dialogic Perspectives on the Politics of Piety and Community-Building in the Ottoman Empire, 15th-18th Centuries

Edited by

Tijana Krstić and Derin Terzioğlu

This project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement No 648498).



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents v
Acknowledgments ix
1. Introduction 1
Tijana Krstić 1
2. Can We Speak of 'Confessionalization' beyond the Reformation? Ottoman Communities, Politics of Piety, and Empire-Building in an Early Modern Eurasian Perspective 25
Tijana Krstić
3. Two Visions of Rabbinic Authority and Their Ottoman Context: The Legal Worldviews of Joseph Caro (d. 1575) and Joseph Sambari (d. c. 1703) 121
Roni Weinstein and Guy Burak
4. Grigor Daranaḷtsʻi: An Armenian Chronicler of Early Modern Mass Mobility 145
Henry Shapiro
5. Confession-Building and Authority: The Great Church and the Ottoman State in the First Half of the Seventeenth Century 165
Eleni Gara and Ovidiu Olar
6. Whose Realm, His Bishop: Orthodox Patriarch's Flock beyond the Borders of the Ottoman Empire in the Seventeenth Century 223
Vera Tchentsova
7. Sheikh ül-islam Feyzullah Efendi and the Armenian Patriarch Awetikʻ: A Case of Entangled Confessional Disciplining? 241
Cesare Santus
8. Kabbalistic Fraternities of Ottoman Galilee and Their Central European Members, Funders, and Successors 265
Carsten Wilke
9. The Commandment (Buyruk): An Introduction to the Sacred Texts of the Kizilbash-Alevi Community 297
Rıza Yıldırım

10. The Abdals of Rum and the Development of Competing Muslim Confessional Identities in the Early Modern Eastern Balkans 327
Nikolay Antov

11. Orthodox Martyrdom and Confessionalization in the Ottoman Empire, Late Fifteenth–Mid-Seventeenth Centuries 351
Yorgos Tzedopoulos

12. Catholic Confessional Literature in the Christian East?: A View from Rome, Diyarbakır, and Mount Lebanon, ca. 1674 401
John-Paul Ghobrial

13. Masjed-e Jameʿ-ye ʿAbbasi: a Twelver Shi'ite Congregational Mosque in the Context of the Debate on the Friday Prayer in the Safavid World 419
Damla Gürkan-Anar

14. On the Margins of Empire: Confessionalization and the East Syrian Schism of 1552 449
Lucy Parker

15. From Doctrinal Persuasion to Economic Threats: Paolo Piromalli's Missionary Work among the Armenians and His Conversion Strategies 473
Paolo Lucca

16. Intra-Armenian Polemics and Confession-Building in Ottoman Constantinople: The Case of Gēorg Mxlayim Ōłli (1681/85–1758) 513
Anna Ohanjanyan

17. Orthodox Confession-Building and the Greek Church between Protestantism and Catholicism: The Mission of Marquis Nointel to the Levant (1670–1673) 545
Margarita Voulgaropoulou

18. Confessional Ambiguity in the Age of Confession-Building: Philo-Alidism, Sufism and Sunni Islam in the Ottoman Empire, 1400–1700 591
Derin Terzioğlu

19. Grand Vizier Koca Sinan Pasha and the Ottoman Non-Muslims 657
Nenad Filipović

20. Law, Geography and Confession-Building in Early Modern Kurdistan (Sixteenth-Eighteenth Centuries) 707
Yavuz Aykan

21. Brokering Tridentine Marriage Reforms and Legal Pluralism in Seventeenth-Century Northern Ottoman Rumeli 735
Emese Muntán

22. Shi'ite-Iranian Pilgrims and Safavid Agents in Holy Sites under Ottoman Rule, 1690–1710 761
Selim Güngörürler

Afterword: Entangled Confessionalizations—A European Perspective.....781
Alexander Schunka

Index.....801

22. Shi'ite-Iranian Pilgrims and Safavid Agents in Holy Sites under Ottoman Rule, 1690–1710

Selim Güngörürler

After maintaining peaceful neighborly relations for half a century following the Treaty of Zuhab signed in 1639, the Ottoman Empire and Safavid Iran grew politically closer towards the 1700s. These monarchies officially championing rival Islamic denominations took their doctrinal differences off the agenda for the first time to engage in cordial diplomatic relations. As an outcome of this, the Ottoman Empire, which claimed to represent the universal leadership of Sunni Islam through the 'Greater Caliphate', and the Safavid state, which laid claims to the leadership of Shi'ite Islam as the proxy of the Hidden Imam, came to work together on several occasions. This transconfessional political rapprochement manifested itself above all in the language of solidarity, discourse of brotherhood, mutual recognition of canonical validity and dynastic claims, such as the House of Osman's assertion of caliphal supremacy and the House of Safi's professing to stem from the Household of the Prophet Muhammad (*ahl al-bayt*). The extent of this rapprochement is particularly striking when one recalls that these parties had previously been involved in a conflict for almost a century and a half, characterized by accusations of heresy and warfare justified by references to religious principles. It is also striking that the subsequent rapprochement was achieved without any legal or doctrinal reinterpretation or reconciliation of the Shi'ite and Sunni ulema.[1]

One of the major platforms on which these Shi'ite and Sunni monarchies cooperated from the 1690s through the 1710s was pilgrimage. Both as (greater) caliphs[2] and as territorial sovereigns of the Islamic pilgrimage sites, Ottoman monarchs were responsible for the upkeep of Mecca and Medina and the pilgrimage routes, and for making them accessible to all Muslims, regardless of denomination

[1] In this regard, see Güngörürler, 'Islamic Discourse in Ottoman-Safavid Peacetime Diplomacy'.

[2] On the question of 'greater' and 'lesser' caliphate see ibid.

or political subjecthood. While in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries warfare between the two states had made it sometimes impossible for Safavid pilgrims to travel to the Islamic holy sites,[3] this situation changed in the late seventeenth century. In this paper, I look at how the Shi'ite Iranian pilgrims' (*ḥājī*s and *zā'ir*s) journey through Ottoman territory to the holy sites in Hijaz (for hajj, one of the 'pillars of Islam') and in Iraq (for *ziyārat*, or visitation of the Alid Imams' mausolea) came to be regulated in an era of peace between these two polities. On the basis of diplomatic sources that I discovered in the Ottoman archives, my paper deals with the management of these Safavid subjects' entry into Ottoman territory, journey across the eastern provinces of the empire, contacts with the locals, relationship with the sovereign authority, patronage, and legal status.

Within the scope of the above-mentioned rapprochement, the Safavids began to put forward a series of requests for favors and permissions to perform certain activities in Islamic holy sites ruled by the Ottomans. The nature of these requests requires us to treat religion and inter-sectarian contacts—jurisprudence aside—against the backdrop of contemporary politics, diplomacy, and dynastic matters. Accordingly, the operative terms that characterized diplomatic discourse in the first decade under study (1690–1700) were *brotherhood*, *perpetual peace*, and eventually *alliance* between the two states. However, during the second decade (1700–1710), relations rapidly deteriorated, although the mentioned concepts continued to be referred to, albeit rarely. In this respect, one should note that these unifying concepts appear exclusively in the diplomatic correspondence produced by Ottoman and Safavid bureaucrats, and not in Ottoman advice literature, chronicles, religious treatises, or fatwas.

I argue that as long as the shah's requests remained limited to asking for one-time, exceptional favors and essentially had a symbolic nature, without the capacity to undermine Ottoman legitimacy and sovereignty at these sites, the padishah granted them in accordance with the political *Zeitgeist* of those decades that favored a diplomatic rapprochement. However, requests for permanent privileges in this domain, the granting of which would possibly instigate a new wave of sectarian hostilities in the region, were categorically denied, indicating that the recent fraternization between the two polities, though unprecedented in Islamic history, was rather superficial, due to the fact that the ulema, who were the principal legal and religious authorities, did not contribute to this agenda. And, whenever these requests pertained to larger projects involving the shah's providing a public service to the shrines and inhabitants of targeted towns, that is to Ottoman sovereign territory and subjects, these were not only rejected but also considered offensive by the Sublime Porte, eventually leading to antagonism between the two states in the 1710s.

---

[3] See, for example, Faroqhi, *Herrscher über Mekka*; and Ja'farian, *Safavids in the Realm of Religion*.

ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION

In the last decade of the seventeenth century, the supervisor of the Iranian pilgrim convoy in Ottoman territory was a Safavid subject, who, chosen by his fellow travelers, was sometimes called *superintendent* (*emīn*), but more frequently, deputy (*vekīl*) of the Iranian pilgrims (*İran/Acem ḥüccācı*). Apart from recognition by the convoy and the Safavid government, the deputy also enjoyed recognition by the Sublime Porte and could directly petition the imperial government, especially when he thought that an Ottoman official or subject had wronged the pilgrims. Consequently, the Sublime Porte could decree to the governor(-general) and the qadi of the relevant province that the grievance be redressed.[4] Sometimes, these corrective decrees, rather than addressing only specific wrongdoings, were issued as imperial writs (*ḫaṭṭ-ı hümāyūn*) for emphasis, and included a long set of harsh reminders to all governors, qadis, and other local authorities, who would be in contact with the Iranian convoy in Iraq, Kurdistan, Eastern Anatolia, and the Levant, on the status and rights of the Iranian pilgrims, and on what constituted a transgression. In such exceptional cases, the imperial government would micromanage the items and amounts of all customs tolls, guidance fees, camel rents, boat charges, administrative dues, water service, etc. to be exacted from the convoy members.[5]

The involvement of the Sublime Porte in the appointment of an 'Iranian pilgrims' deputy' seems to have been no more than recognizing and registering the nominated person.[6] Normally, the pilgrims would send a collective petition to the imperial court to notify it of their chosen nominee. The deputy could also engage Ottoman officials at a provincial level, such as at courthouses, while requesting supportive decrees from Istanbul.[7]

---

[4] OA, *Mühimme d.* 102, entry 852: decree dated early May 1692 to the governor-general of Diyarbakır and the judge of Amid (Diyarbakır) in response to the petition by the deputy of the Iranian pilgrims.

[5] OA, *Mühimme d.* 110, entries 1754, 1756, 1762–1764, 1767, 1770: decrees and imperial-writs dated early May 1698 to the sharif of Mecca, the imperial pilgrimage commander, the governor of Jidda, the superintendent of the Kaaba, the qadis of Mecca and Medina, the superintendent of prophet Muhammad's shrine in Medina, the military personnel in Hijaz, the superintendent of the imperial pilgrimage convoy, the governors-general and the qadis of Baghdad, Basra, Erzurum, Aleppo, Diyarbakır, Van, Raqqa, Damascus, Tripoli, Kars, Maraş, and of all provinces in Asia Minor.

[6] OA, *Mühimme d.* 104, entries 53–55: decrees dated mid-May 1692 to the governor-general and the qadi of Baghdad in response to the petition and the subsequent death of ʿAli, the pilgrims' deputy.

[7] OA, *Mühimme d.* 110, entries 886–890: decrees dated early December 1697 to the governor-general and the qadi of Damascus in response to the petitions by the pilgrims and their deputy, Tebrizi Mustafa.

Formally, the nomination would be made by the pilgrims, while the ultimate appointment was worded as made by the padishah's command. This construct provided the legal basis for the issuance of the imperial decrees that were addressed directly to the deputy himself. If a Safavid ambassador was present at the padishah's court, he could also intercede on behalf of the pilgrims and their deputy,[8] or he could initiate an empire-wide circulation of decrees for the reconfirmation of all conventional rights of Iranian groups in Ottoman territory. In extraordinary instances of the pilgrims' discontent with their incumbent deputy due to his negligence in fulfilling his responsibilities, the Safavid ambassador could appeal *ex officio* to the Sublime Porte for the deposition of the incumbent deputy and the submission of the new nominee, who would eventually be appointed again with the padishah's decree. This appointment could be accompanied with the conferral of the hierarchical grade—but not the actual post—of master-gatekeeper (*ḳapıcıbaşı*) of the Imperial Court to the Iranian office holder. Remarkably, this Iranian subject, who enjoyed an honorary Ottoman court rank, was entitled by the Sublime Porte to protect the interests of the pilgrims from potential transgression by the Ottoman authorities and subjects, about whom he even enjoyed the right to file complaints to the imperial government. Apparently, the appointment to the Iranian pilgrims' deputyship was made not on a yearly basis but for an undetermined period of time.[9] In extraordinary instances, the Ottoman provincial authorities that would deal with the new deputy were also informed of the change of the office holder.[10]

As of the mid-1690s, a new office was introduced: the chief (aga) of the Iranian pilgrims, who, if an Ottoman subject, would be appointed from among the actual master-gatekeepers of the Imperial Court, and, if a Safavid subject, would be receive the hierarchical grade of a master-gatekeeper. It seems that this new position was superior to that of deputy. If the deputy represented the pilgrims to Ottoman state authorities, then the chief represented the Ottoman State to the pilgrims and to those coming into contact with the convoy. Thus, given the fact that the pilgrimage routes and sites were in Ottoman territory, the chief was the supreme officer of the convoy, who had the political and decision-making responsibility.[11] Along with the chief, a deputy continued to serve in the apparently subordinate role of procuring the daily material necessities of the pilgrims. It seems that so long

[8] OA, *Mühimme d.* 110, entry 916: decree dated early December 1697 to Tebrizi Mustafa, the deputy.

[9] OA, *Mühimme d.* 110, entry 1769: imperial-writ dated early May 1698 to the new deputy, Hüseyin. *Mühimme d.* 111, entry 258: decree dated early August 1699 to the same deputy Hüseyin.

[10] OA, *Mühimme d.* 110, entry 1793: decree dated mid-May 1698 to the great-judge of Damascus. Also see entry 1826.

[11] OA, *Cevdet—Dahiliye*, 8165: the draft of the decree dated late June 1694 to ʿAli [Aga], a master-gatekeeper of the Imperial Court who was appointed as the chief of the Iranian pilgrims. *Mühimme d.* 111, entry 451: decree dated early January 1700 to Hüseyin.

as there was a chief, the Ottoman government rather dealt with him, while the deputy continued to occasionally petition the imperial court and receive mention in documents addressed to authorities.[12] Otherwise, during the times that the imperial government did not create a chief, the deputy continued to serve in his conventional function.[13]

Within a few years, this division of labor and jurisdiction between the chief and the deputy came to an end, because the Ottoman government created yet another new office, the conductor (*ḳāʾid*, office: *ḳıyādet*) of the Iranian pilgrims, which apparently replaced the two former offices by merging their separate functions. The first available charter of investiture stipulates the basic responsibilities of the conductor to be gathering the pilgrims, keeping them as a group so long as they were within Ottoman borders, preventing disputes, reconciling the parties in the case of a dispute, determining the most convenient route as well as way-stations, leading the convoy during the entire journey through roads as well as hazardous passes, protecting the pilgrims while on the road, guarding and entirely surrounding the camp during stops, making sure the convoy arrives safe and sound in the Hijaz, treating the pilgrims with lenience, and not travelling too fast for the incapable and the weak to keep pace. If the conductor could not resolve a dispute amicably, he was to refer the case to provincial authorities. The first known appointee to conductorship was a senior (*emekdār*) palace halberdier (*ḫāṣṣa balṭacı*), and the investiture was made for an unlimited period of time.[14] In this decade, as in the previous one, the problem of interference attempts by former superintendents of the Iranian pilgrimage convoy continued.[15]

---

[12] OA, *Mühimme d.* 111, entry 452: decree dated mid-October 1699 to the governors-general and the qadis of Damascus and Aleppo, in which Hüseyin the chief and Said the deputy are mentioned. Ibid., d. 111, entry 853, decree dated mid-February 1700 to the governors-general of and the qadis in the provinces of Erzurum, Diyarbakır, Aleppo, Damascus, Kars, Çıldır, and Sivas, which pertains to the collaborative offense committed by a false chief and a former deputy of the Iranian pilgrims.

[13] OA, *Mühimme d.* 111, ent. 1132–1133: decrees dated mid-June 1700 to the governors of Damascus, Raqqa, Erzurum, Van, Kars, and Maraş, and to the judges of Damascus, Aleppo, Maraş, Erzurum, Sivas, Malatya, Ruha (present-day Urfa), Kars, and Van, regarding the deposition of Hüseyin the chief carrying the degree of the master-gatekeeper of the Imperial Court and the plain appointment of Sadık [b. Reşid] the deputy.

[14] OA, *Divan (Beylikçi) Kalemi b.* 289/36: copy of the investiture charter of Mahmud, the senior sultanic halberdier, as the conductor of the Iranian pilgrims, dated early March 1702. Two years later on the occasion of the enthronement of Ahmed III, Mahmud successully petitioned the grand vizierate for the renewal of his charter, Ibid.

[15] OA, *İbnülemin—Evkaf,* 4635: Mahmud the halberdier's petition to the grand vizierate in complaint about Sadık b. Reşid, the former superintendent who, using his old documents of authorization, was attempting to take over the supervision of that year's convoy of Iranian pilgrims. The petition was processed on 16 September 1704. The document also includes a copy of Mahmud's charter of investiture and the imperial-writ inserted above it.

This formally perpetual appointment lasted only several years. Upon an appeal by a Safavid ambassador in Istanbul, the first conductor was eventually deposed on the grounds of overcharging the pilgrims and negligence in their protection. In his place, an actual master-gatekeeper of the Imperial Court was invested with the conductorship of the Iranian convoy. Remarkably, the new mission instructions specified that the conductor's responsibility was geographically limited to the journey from Yerevan (Erivan) to Damascus, from where the imperial pilgrimage commander (*mīr-i ḥacc*) was to take over. Upon the completion of his mission, the conductor of the Iranian convoy was to obtain a voucher from the Safavid governor of Yerevan addressed to the Ottoman governor of Erzurum stating that he had duly performed the service expected of him.[16] In one extant letter, the governor of Yerevan states that he had previously written to his Ottoman counterpart to ask for his help in having a certain nominee appointed as the leader of the Iranian pilgrims; that even though this person had charged the pilgrims excess amounts for various tolls in the previous year, they were nevertheless satisfied with his efforts in attending to and safeguarding the convoy; and that he vouched for this official's satisfactory conduct during his service.[17]

INFERENCES ON THE PILGRIM'S LEGAL STATUS AND THE PILGRIMAGE ROUTE[18]

As of the later seventeenth century, the Iranian pilgrims in the Ottoman Empire were recognized as Muslims without any further qualification. In many of the decrees and charters, the convoy members were identified as the 'joyous pilgrims who depart from Persia to fulfill the obligation of pilgrimage and visit the honorable martyrdom sites and blessed tombs, as the circumambulation of the sacred House of God is one of the five conditions of Islam'.[19] Thus, their undertaking was given full Islamic status by the Ottoman government, which did not designate the Iranian convoy with any differentiating or discriminatory label as compared with the rest of the domestic and foreign pilgrims. In the same vein, the imperial capital

[16] OA, *Divan (Beylikçi) Kalemi b.* 307/77: the approved and decreed draft of Halil Aga's charter of investiture dated mid-April 1706.

[17] OA, *Sadaret Mektubi Kalemi b.* 1/56. The archivist's dating of the letter (to AH 1058) is not supported with any evidence. Again, the archivist's claim that the letter was addressed to the Ottoman grand vizier is inaccurate, for the *inscriptio* used in the opener is clearly that of an Ottoman vizier (i.e. governor-general), and not of the grand vizier. With reference to the above-mentioned charter of investiture, it is highly likely that this voucher was sent to an Ottoman governor-general of Erzurum from a Safavid governor-general of Yerevan (Erivan).

[18] The inferences made in this section are based on the collective treatment of the documents referred to in the previous section.

[19] Among others, see OA, *Cevdet-Dahiliye*, 8165; OA, *Divan (Beylikçi) Kalemi* b. 289/36, 307/77; OA, *Mühimme* d. 102, entry 852; d. 104, entries 53–55; d. 110, entries 886–690, 916, 1754, 1756, 1762–1764, 1767, 1769–1770, 1793; d. 111, entries 258, 452, 853, 1132–1133.

prescribed the officials in Mecca and Medina to 'support and safeguard the Iranian pilgrims as [they were to support and safeguard any] other Muslim pilgrims… and have them join the ranks of other Muslim pilgrims'. As seen, the Ottoman state did not condone the segregation of Shi'ite Iranians in Hijaz; there, they were to act and be treated as full members of the larger Muslim community, especially within the framework of this grand organization under the aegis of the House of Osman, which attracted Muslims from all over the world.

It is remarkable that in formal contacts between the Ottoman authorities and the Iranian pilgrims the issue of sectarian difference was not mentioned. When registering the Iranian pilgrims' Muslimness, Ottoman authorities never qualified this status as Shi'ite, non-Sunni, or otherwise. Besides, they followed the policy of keeping the Shi'ite Iranians as part of the larger group of co-religionist travelers and pilgrims. Their financial oppression with undue exactions or harassment in any form, particularly in Hijaz and Iraq, was perceived to be a 'diversion from the path of God, contrary to divine consent, in negation of the Islamic disposition which precludes oppression and animosity, and against the satisfaction of the illustrious, immaculate Imams'.[20] Here, the Ottoman monarchy's justification of its patronage of Iranian pilgrims with reference to not only the general tenets of Islam but also the Imams of the Prophet's House is of particular importance for us to understand the unifying motive behind the Empire's policy regarding the target group. Even in intra-governmentally circulating documents, which were to be seen only by the involved Ottoman officials and certainly not by any Iranians, there seems to have been no mention of the sectarian difference, let alone discord. This, of course, does not mean that the Ottoman Sunni establishment stopped perceiving Shi'ism as an unorthodox form of Islam. Nevertheless, it is remarkable that the pilgrimage, which was supposed to be an activity unifying the community, was not exploited as a platform on which to express sectarianism.

Equally striking is that the Ottoman monarchy, when committing itself to patronizing the Shi'ite Iranian pilgrims, did not refer to its claim to the ('greater') caliphate as a source of justification: 'the pilgrims' traffic, passage, and arrival in the Protected Domains [i.e. imperial territory] in complete security, well-being, utmost safety, and prosperity are the requisites of the liability of world-keeping and within the scope of the majestic efforts'. Apart from this justification based on political sovereignty, the Sublime Porte did not mention the traditional, sharia-based responsibility of the caliph to ensure the safe performance of the pilgrimage for all Muslims.

Likewise, the Ottoman monarchy prohibited the oppression of the Shi'ite Iranian pilgrims on the grounds that it was contrary to its treaty, contractual relationship, peace conditions, and friendship with the Safavid State. It was not even discussed whether the case of an Iranian convoy's suffering an injustice in Ottoman

[20] OA, *İbnülemin—Evkaf*, 4635; OA, *Sadaret Mektubi Kalemi*, b. 1/56.

territory would constitute a shortcoming in the House of Osman's fulfillment of its caliphal responsibilities. This is in stark contrast to the contemporary diplomacy between the Ottomans and the Safavids, in which caliphal concepts were used as one of the principal discourses for defining the relationship between the two states. This outward contradiction, however, can be explained by the fact that the Ottoman State exploited its 'greater caliphate' status almost exclusively on an interstate platform. Internally, caliphate did not form a basis for the relations between the state and its subjects. If we keep in mind that the Iranian pilgrims in the Ottoman Empire were qualified as Iranian only due to their land of residence, and not due to their Safavid subjecthood, and that regarding their dealings with the state they enjoyed the same status as Ottoman subjects, we can conclude that because the Ottoman monarchy then did not grant international status to the Muslim subjects of other sovereign states, it legally treated them as if they were its own Muslim subjects as long as they were in imperial territory. Likewise, because the caliphate did not regulate the relationship between the Ottoman state and its subjects in practice, the imperial government did not employ a caliphal discourse in justifying its patronage of the Iranian pilgrims.

Unfortunately, our information on the Ottoman government's preferences and policy regarding the route of the Iranian pilgrim convoy is limited due to the very scattered nature of the sources and the apparent lack of a document series directly dealing with this issue. Nevertheless, dispersed references and mentions made in passing are still helpful in partly reconstructing the picture. First of all, the Sublime Porte seems to have maintained its position that the Iranian convoy should join at Damascus the imperial pilgrimage train that traveled from Istanbul for the Hijaz. As a rule, the Iranian convoy would enter the Ottoman territory from Yerevan, and via the route leading through the provinces of Kars, Erzurum, Van, Diyarbakır, Raqqa, and Aleppo, reach Damascus, from where it would travel on together with the imperial train through Syria and Palestine to the Arabian Peninsula. There are not only documents that make this preference clear, but also plenty of decrees to the authorities in Syrian provinces regarding their conduct towards the Iranian pilgrims who were present there. Decrees regulating the affairs of both the incoming and the returning Iranian pilgrims suggest that it was the norm for the convoy to use the Damascene route in its outbound as well as inbound journeys.

Next to this primary highway, there was also the Mesopotamian route. As can be seen from the intermittently preserved Ottoman documentation, Iranian pilgrims had a constant presence in the Imams' mausolea located in Iraq, which were sometimes additional and sometimes alternative sites of pilgrimage.[21] The sources show that the pilgrims (*zāʾirs*) visiting the Holy Shrines (*ʿAtabāt-i ʿAlīyāt*) consisted mostly of principal pilgrims (*ḥācıs*) going to or returning from the Hijaz, and that

[21] Shi'ite Iranians could visit these shrines either as part of a greater pilgrimage that also included Mecca and Medina, or in a standalone trip only to Iraq. Also see, for example, Rizvi, 'The Incarnate Shrine'.

the imperial government emphatically prescribed its appointees in Iraq that they facilitate the Iranians' pilgrimage to the Imams' shrines in every way possible. Thus, in addition to the above-mentioned Syrian highway, the pilgrimage route from Iran to the Arabian Peninsula through Iraq and the Persian Gulf, and the stand-alone pilgrimage to the Holy Shrines in Iraq, were also under the patronage of the Sublime Porte, which did not prohibit the Mesopotamian route.

Shah's Appeals to the Sublime Porte for Permission to Make Donations to the Prophetic Shrines, Case One:

In 1696, Shah Husayn asked for Mustafa II's permission to 'renovate' Imam ʿAli Hadi's and Hasan ʿAskari's 'sarcophagi' situated within their 'sepulchers' at Samarra.[22] The matter was submitted to the Sublime Porte by Abu'l-Masum Shamlu during his embassy (late December 1696–early January 1697) at Edirne.[23]

In Ottoman-Safavid relations, the 1690s constituted a heyday that was unprecedented and that would not be repeated. A half-a-century long peaceful coexistence had stabilized relations between the two former enemies. On top of this, the Safavids had rejected joining the anti-Ottoman *Sacra Ligua* (of the Habsburg Empire, Poland-Lithuania, Venice, Russia, and the Papacy, 1684–1699). Moreover, the shah's government was not letting the damage that Iran had been suffering from the rebellions originating in Ottoman territory impact the bilateral relations, even though these rebellions had found favorable ground to spread to Iran only due to the power vacuum in the Empire's eastern provinces, because the empire-wide mobilization against the *Sacra Ligua* was channeled to the western and northern fronts. In return for this act of goodwill, the Ottomans let their relations with the Safavids be no longer defined merely as peace, but as *brotherhood* (*uḫuvvet*), *perpetual peace*, and *alliance* (*ittifāḳ*).[24]

If it were not for these unusual circumstances, the above-mentioned request could not only have been rejected without hesitation but could also cause antagonism. What made possible the Safavids' submission and the Ottomans' eventual granting of this request was the combination of a series of factors that had been slowly gaining momentum since the 1640s, and which testified to the Safavids' unconditional recognition of Ottoman superiority. Thanks to the stability of this political relationship, the Sublime Porte did not perceive this request as a Safavid scheme to open a breach in Ottoman legitimacy and sovereign rights. In the absence of this extremely positive background, the same request could have occasioned a confrontation.

Eventually, during either the embassy of Rustam Zangane at Edirne or Kavuk Mehmed Pasha at Isfahan (mid-1698 to early 1699), the Sublime Porte granted the

[22] OA, *Mühimme d.* 111, entry 1694.
[23] Güngörürler, *Diplomacy and Political Relations*, pp. 292–293.
[24] Güngörürler, *Diplomacy and Political Relations*, pp. 237–370.

request 'in accordance with the premises and brotherhood between [the two states]'.[25] The padishah issued to the shah a decree[26] registering the permission and entitling him to carry out the renovation. However, the almost three-year delay in response to the request hints at the Sublime Porte's concerns about Ottoman legitimacy at the Holy Shrines, for the shah was meaning to make this symbolic renovation in a sacred territory whose sovereignty lay exclusively with the padishah. The matter must have been thoroughly discussed among the Ottoman dignitaries. In the end, the shah's unreservedly presenting back to the padishah the entire province of Basra, which had been in rebel hands since 1695 and recently captured by Safavid vassals, must have convinced the Ottomans that the Safavid initiative was not an attempt to undermine Ottoman legitimacy in Iraq. In return for this major display of good will by Shah Husayn, Mustafa II must have seen no harm in issuing this one-time permission. Another imperial decree, to the governor of Baghdad, prohibited anyone from preventing the Iranian agent from carrying out his commission, and even charged the pasha of Baghdad with providing the shah's functionary with lumber and whatever other materials that were required for the renovation.[27]

Presumably in early December 1700, on the eve of the launch of an imperial campaign in Mesopotamia, an agent from the governor of Kermanshah brought a letter to Daltaban Mustafa Pasha, governor-general of Baghdad and marshal (*serdār*) of the Imperial Army. The Iranian governor informed his addressee that the 'illustrious sarcophagi' at the mausoleum of 'the radiator of oracle, fruition of the genealogy of *siyādat* and *valāyat*, the revered imams, the preeminent ʿAli Hadi and Hasan ʿAskeri of the Prophetic House' [the choice of vocabulary belonging to the Ottoman rephrasing] had been renovated with the padishah's 'august permission'. The shah's armor-bearer (*jaba-dār-i şāhī*), Mahmud Aga, had been commissioned with transporting them to their destination, the mausolea in Samarra. In reply, the vizier-marshal wrote that his troops were already mobilized and that he was about to depart for campaign, stipulating that the shah's functionary was to wait in Kermanshah until the marshal's return from Basra.[28]

Here, we can observe a tendency: in protecting the Empire's interests in Iraq from potential harm, the padishah's appointees and military corps serving in Baghdad could potentially be more rigorous than the Ottoman court itself. In this case, we see that the central government preemptively instructed its provincial representatives to cooperate with the shah's functionaries throughout the transportation and placement of the renewed sarcophagi. Given the ideological weight of Baghdad as the seat of the Abbasid caliphs, the resting place of major Alid Imams, and the focus of the last Ottoman-Safavid war, it can be inferred that the governorate apparatus, the Imperial *kul* corps (*kapıkulları*), and the local *kul* corps (*yerlü kulu*) in the

[25] OA, *Mühimme d.* 111, ent. 1694; Çabuk, 'Nusret-nâme'nin', pp. 331–332.
[26] Çabuk, 'Nusret-nâme'nin', p. 334.
[27] OA, *Mühimme d.* 111, entry 1694.
[28] Nazmizâde, *Gülşen-i Hulefâ*, pp. 337–338; Çabuk, 'Nusret-nâme'nin', pp. 331–332.

province preferred to be one step ahead of the central government in keeping Iraq clear of anything Safavid, not only in a political and military sense but also in terms of administrative and courtly representation, except for diplomatic missions. This rigidity they would relax only in the case of specific orders from the imperial court, or else they could not protect themselves from a later accusation that their negligence had rendered possible Safavid infiltration into the Imams' shrine towns which, for the padishah, were ideologically a *sanctum sanctorum*[29] second only to the Kaaba in Mecca and the Prophet's Sanctuary in Medina, and arguably Jerusalem, and were thus crucial sources of religio-political legitimacy.[30]

Approximately in early January 1701, the Safavid court doubled its efforts to realize its project: the governor of Kermanshah sent another letter to Daltaban Mustafa Pasha via his agent. Accompanying him, the shah's armor-bearer came to the marshal's encampment assembling in Baghdad, and brought the shah's rescript as well as the padishah's decree of permission. The Iranian governor stressed that Mahmud Aqa was the shah's courtier, and that halting him [that long] was impossible. Upon observing the padishah's decree produced by the Iranian mission, in which it was stated that he permitted the shah to renovate the sarcophagi 'as blessing', that the governors of Baghdad should assist in the execution, and that no one should hinder the conveyance, Daltaban Mustafa Pasha gave them passage and 'appointed a pious (*mütedeyyin*) aga of his' to accompany them and to secure the way. The sarcophagi, along with a 'fine door' that accompanied them, were placed at their destined site.[31]

It seems that upon seeing Daltaban Mustafa Pasha's previous response that the shah's armor-bearer should wait, the Safavid court this time got in touch directly with the Sublime Porte to make sure that the imperial permission be acted upon. This we understand from the decree to the governor-general of Baghdad dated late January 1701, which summarizes the shah's 'beseeching' for this sake. The governor-general, who was supposed to receive the decree after returning from the imperial campaign, was charged with assisting the conveyance of the sarcophagi to their locations and, if necessary, with providing the shah's functionary with carpenters, workmen, and lumber available locally.[32] This decree must have reached Dalt-

[29] Although Sunnis, unlike Shi'is, do not deem the Alid Imams to be revelation-receiving and infallible, they still venerate them as members of Muhammad's family, saints, and scholars of Islam, and they consider them to be Sunni Muslims. This veneration of the Imams was even more emphasized in the Ottoman context. Therefore, as long as the Ottoman monarchy, as the leader of Sunni Islam, held sway in Iraq, it invested in the Imams' shrines there. See Arabkhani, *Sultan II. Abdülhamit Dönemi* and Mulder, 'Abdülhamid and the 'Alids.'

[30] One should not forget that the self-interest of the incumbents of the governorship, judgeship, and military officerships could also be a factor contributing to this rigor.

[31] Çabuk, 'Nusret-nâme'nin', pp. 334–335.

[32] OA, *Mühimme d.* 111, entry 1694.

aban Mustafa Pasha after he had already given passage to the shah's armor-bearer and provided him with escort.

Immediately following January 29, 1701, on which day the Imperial Army departed from Baghdad for Basra, the shah's armor-bearer, having performed his commission in Samarra, returned to Baghdad. Marshal Daltaban Mustafa Pasha invited him and the Iranian notables accompanying him to a feast at his encampment by the Diyala River. The royal armor-bearer, according to master-secretary of the Baghdad council, feigned illness and did not go, while the notables came along with his chief-of-staff (*ketḫüdā*) and joined the feast. The marshal wrote his reply to the shah's rescript and delivered it to the royal armor-bearer's chief-of-staff. He also 'commissioned' Çetrefiloğlu Yusuf Pasha (governor of Mosul) and Hüseyin Aga (governor's proxy at Baghdad) with ensuring the safety of and assisting the Iranian delegation on its return journey.[33]

CASE TWO

In a letter to the grand vizier that was delivered in August 1702, the Iranian chief vizier Muhammad Muʾmin Shamlu requested from the Ottoman grand vizier Köprülü Amcazade Hüseyin Pasha that the padishah issue a general 'permission of initiative' for the shah's functionaries so that henceforward they be entitled to renovate the edifices of the Holy Shrines and to dispatch necessities, presents, and alms without the need to produce their permission before the Ottoman provincial authorities and without the requirement to obtain a new license from the Sublime Porte each time. Additionally, the chief vizier requested active cooperation from the Ottoman state authorities in installing the new sepulchers of the Imams Musa al-Kazim and Muhammad Taqi in Kazimiyya, as he stated that the Safavids had already manufactured these sepulchers 'as blessing' and dispatched them 'as auspiciousness'.[34]

In his reply, Köprülü Hüseyin Pasha informed the shah's chief vizier that the padishah indeed 'favored' the granting of (a one-time) permission for the installation of the restored sepulchers and sarcophagi to the mausoleum of Musa al-Kazim and Muhammad Taqi at Kazimiyya, for which imperial decrees were also issued. However, the Safavids' request for a permanent permission enabling them to undertake renovations at and donate to the Holy Shrines was categorically denied: being the 'aspiration' of monarchs, such 'imposingly prestigious' projects of 'pride' were the exclusive prerogative of the Ottoman monarch. The grand vizier declared

[33] Çabuk, 'Nusret-nâme'nin', pp. 337–338.

[34] OA, *Name-i Hümayun d.* 5, entry 218; Navai, ed., *Documents and Correspondence 1693–1723*, pp. 82–86.

that the shah's desire was 'evidently intolerable and unattainable', and that the padishah Mustafa II himself would obviously attend to the Holy Shrines.[35]

A decree to the governor and to the qadi of Baghdad in late August/early September—issued around the same time as the Safavid envoy Muhammad Selim Beyg, who effected the above-mentioned letter exchange, was leaving Edirne—summarized the Kazimiyya affair as such: 'it has been appealed by the shah, the sovereign of Iran, that sarcophagi be placed to the purified mausolea of the preeminent *Kāẓimayn* Imams from among the Imams of the immaculate-lineage and evident-orthodoxy, who bestow honor to the soil of Baghdad. [This appeal] has incurred the [padishah's] august favor'. The addressees were charged with ensuring that no one hinder the [Safavid] functionaries and with procuring for them the necessary material as well as workmen. In the case of any tolerance the governor and the judge would show towards Baghdad's janissaries or other actors that could attempt to hamper the execution, these two dignitaries would be held directly responsible.[36]

The Safavids' donating to the Imams' shrines under Ottoman sovereignty had previously been the subject of negotiations, yet it had not entered interstate correspondence. Now, for the first time, matters concerning the Holy Shrines became referred to in inter-governmental letters, in an itemized and explicit manner.

CASE THREE

In 1705, in yet another letter to the grand vizier, Muhammad Muʾmin Shamlu spoke of an earlier uncompleted initiative to dig a canal from the eastern Euphrates (Murad Water, specifically) to the shrine-town of Imam ʿAli b. Abu Talib at Najaf. Through his chief vizier, Shah Husayn asked for the Ottoman ruler's permission to complete the project. The Sublime Porte referred the matter to be inquired by the governor-general and the qadi of Baghdad, and ordered them to deliberate with a committee of experts.[37]

An exchange of diplomatic notes between the incoming Safavid ambassador, Murtaza-qulu Ustajlu, and the grand vizier, Baltacı Mehmed Pasha, whose reply is dated 1 February 1706, makes clear the empire's position: these matters had to be submitted to the padishah himself, and only after his ruling would Murtaza-qulu Ustajlu be duly informed.[38] This tells us that although it was the diplomatic chan-

---

[35] OA, *Name-i Hümayun d.* 5, entry 220; Rami Mehmed, *Compositions*, fols 23a–24a (some words are missing in this copy).

[36] OA, *Mühimme d.* 112, entry 1218.

[37] See the draft of the imperial decree and the grand vizierial edict for its issuance in OA, *Ali Emiri—Ahmed III*, 20076. Also see OA, *Divan (Beylikçi) Kalemi b.* 305/49; OA, *Ali Emiri—Ahmed III*, 20277; *Ali Emiri—Ahmed III*, 20281; *İbnülemi—Hariciye,* p. 704. These are all for AH 1116–17 (1704/5–1705/6).

[38] Rami Mehmed, *Compositions*, fols 24b–25a.

nel through which the requests were being processed, these particular matters were beyond even the grand vizierial authority. Pertaining to the sites that carried sanctity not only for the Shi'ite shah but also for the Sunni padishah, these requests needed to be weighed with an eye to their potential effect on Ottoman legitimacy in Iraq before taking any decision.

On 11 February 1706, Baghdad's committee of experts which was composed of the ulema and the military officers, and which was presided over by the governor-general Eyüplü Hasan Pasha, penned its final report to the Imperial Court. It delivered the opinion to reject the shah's request, and in this regard, highlighted the potential harm that the Ottoman monarchy would see from the Najaf canal project's actualization by the Safavid State:

> With this pretext, it is apparent that those of contrary-denomination (*ḫilāf-meẕheb*) will shuttle across, interfere in, and assault the frontier of Islam (*serhadd-i İslām*) and the domain of the padishah, and that under that [request] are a great many drawbacks and tacit evils (*mefāsid*).[39]

The composition of the committee can tell us further about the concerns of the Imperial Court and the Baghdad governorate: even though the report was also co-sealed by military officers of the imperial kul corps deployed in Baghdad[40] as well as Baghdad's local kul corps officers,[41] the foremost commissioners who sealed the document were members of the ulema, such as professors (*müderris*),[42] jurists (muftis as well as *naḳībü'l-eşrāf*),[43] prayer-leaders,[44] preachers (*vāʿiẓ*), and orators (*ḫaṭīb*).[45]

---

[39] OA, *Divan (Beylikçi) Kalemi b*. 305/23.

[40] co-sealers: Salih Haseki—commanding Janissary officer of the garrison, Abbas—[garrison] secretary of Baghdad, Ahmed—*serçavuş*, Mustafa [captain of the Janissary company] 78, Hasan—[captain of the Janissary *bölü*]*k* 58, Ömer—[captain of the Janissary *bölü*]*k* 31, Hasan [captain of the Janissary *bölü*]*k* 40, Mehmed—[captain of the Janissary *bölü*]*k* 26, Hüseyin— [captain of the Janissary *bölü*]*k* 60, Bektaş – [captain of the Janissary *bölü*]*k* 6?, Ömer—[captain of the Janissary *bölü*]*k* 35.

[41] co-sealers: Mustafa—chief of the [Local] artillerymen, Ebubekir—chief of the [Local] *azeb*s, Bayram—lieutenant of the left flank Volunteers, Ömer—chief of the left flank Volunteers, Ahmed—. . . lieutenant of the right flank [Volunteers?], Ahmed—chief of the right flank Volunteers, Mehmed—lieutenant of the Local Janissaries, Ahmed—chief of the Local Janissaries, Sefer—lieutenant of the *azeb*s, Ahmed—chief of the [Local] munitioners, ʿAli—lieutenant of the [Local] munitioners.

[42] Abdülkadir—*müderris*.

[43] Seyyid Ferecullah—vice *naqībü'l-eşrāf* of Baghdad, Mehmed—former mufti of Baghdad, ʿAli—mufti of Baghdad.

[44] Şemseddin—prayer-leader of the Abdulqadir Geylani Mosque, Abdullah—prayer-leader of the İmam-ı Azam Mosque.

[45] Receb—Friday preacher (*ḫaṭīb*) of the Sheikh Shahabeddin Mosque; Seyyid Taha—*ḫaṭīb* of the Abu Hanifa Mosque; Halil—*ḫaṭīb* of the Abdulqadir Geylani Mosque; Salih?—preacher

In his cover letter to the grand vizier, dated 14 February 1706, the governor-general of Baghdad justified the negative opinion of the committee he presided over and the practical unfeasibility of the project with reference to his own observations, field reconnaissance, consultation with administrative authorities, and security concerns about a potential clash of the Safavid armed personnel with locals. In the case of the dispatch of a Safavid workforce, and particularly Safavid troops to meet the sentry demand that would arise from the necessity to guard the Najaf canal's route, Eyüplü Hasan Pasha stressed: 'among Baghdad's vizier-governors and this many Rumi *kuls*, the existence of a community of incompatible-sect and denomination (*meşrebi ve meẕhebi uymaz bir ṭāʾife*) in the same place will be the cause of dispute and hostility'. In short, the governor-general declared the request to be unfriendly and totally inappropriate.[46]

Furthermore, the Safavid government simultaneously attempted a *fait accompli*. Around the end of 1705 / beginning of 1706, an '*emīr*' named ʿAbdülhakk arrived in Baghdad with his retinue. In the letter he brought from the shah's chief vizier, it was stated that 'just as' the revenues of Süleyman the Magnificent's endowment were already being disbursed at Karbala, and 'in accordance with the friendship [between the two states]', the mentioned functionary was to serve as trustee and also to 'overtly, and publicly' donate revenues from the Safavids' royal endowments to be spent for the shrine's expenditures at Karbala, 'so that there be no discomfort of separation [between the Ottoman and Safavid states]'. The Ottomans were asked to perform the necessary arrangements, so that 'blessings [could] accrue'. Eyüplü Hasan Pasha did refer this initiative to the imperial government, but also sent a letter of rejection to the Iranian chief vizier on his own authority: 'whereas there is [already] a stand-alone trustee of the Sublime [Ottoman] State at the Two Illustrious Martyria [*Meşhedeyn-i Şerīfeyn*, the shrines of ʿAli in Najaf and that of Husayn in Karbala], this [Safavid appointee] will be sort of a second trustee. The emergence of an unprecedented matter will occasion dispute. Their [two separate trustees'] complaints about each other and contrary communications to their [own governments'] sides will inevitably occasion annoyance between the great ministers [of the two states]'.[47]

(*nāṣıḥ*) of the İmam-ı Azam Mosque; Ahmed b. Sheikh Tacü'l-Ârifin—preacher (*vāʿiẓ*), Abdurrahman b. Ömer—*ḫaṭīb* of the Muradiye Mosque, Celaleddin, *ḫaṭīb* of the Citadel Mosque, Mustafa—*ḫaṭīb* at [the mausoleum of] Musa al-Kazim.

[46] OA, *Divan (Beylikçi) Kalemi b*. 305/49.

[47] OA, *Divan (Beylikçi) Kalemi b*. 305/49. The Safavids' belated dispatch of a conventional embassy with unreasonable requests and their concurrent attempt, in a provocative manner, to score two separate faits accomplits—one in Iraq and one in Hijaz—cannot have been a coincidence. These actions make up the second episode of the series in which Muhammad Muʾmin Shamlu put his anti-Ottoman policy into action. After all, the initiative would only serve to antagonize the other party, which must have been the chief vizier's real agenda.

Concurrently, the Safavid chief vizier submitted a further request. In the previous year, Shah Husayn—on his own initiative and without prior arrangement with the Ottoman State—had sent via his armor-bearer Mahmud Aqa a bejeweled pastille (*muraṣṣaʿ şemmāme*) to be placed at the sepulcher of the Prophet Muhammad in Medina. On the grounds that imperial permission was lacking, the personnel in charge of the shrine had prevented the royal armor-bearer from carrying out the plan. Probably following the instructions previously given to him, Mahmud Aqa, instead of taking the bejeweled pastille back to Iran, had rather left it in Medina. Now, via the diplomacy between Istanbul and Isfahan in 1705–1706, Muhammad Muʾmin Shamlu also asked that the shah's donation be placed upon its destined location.[48]

In his consequent reply[49] (1706) to Muhammad Muʾmin Shamlu, Baltacı Mehmed Pasha reminded the chief vizier that 'because the Ottoman state was designated by the grace of God to the service of the *Two Illustrious Sanctuaries*, it was impossible in Medina [or in Mecca] for anything to be placed or removed without the explicit permission from the padishah. Nevertheless, because the bejeweled pastille had already ended up there, and in accordance with the lasting harmony between the two states, its rejection was not deemed appropriate'. An imperial decree would be issued for its placement within the tomb. However, this was to be performed by the padishah's Hijaz-donation superintendent (*ṣurre emīni*) during the next pilgrimage season. Secondly, undertaking the Imam ʿAli canal project was portrayed to be the padishah's exclusive honor. If this enterprise was to be embarked upon by the Safavid side, it would cause 'bother', but if by the Ottoman side, then 'ease'. Baltacı Mehmed Pasha comforted the Safavid government by referring to Ahmed III's statement that the shah would also receive divine merit (*ṣevāb*) by virtue of having occasioned the padishah's enterprise. Even more sarcastically, the grand vizier expressed his hope that the Safavid court would 'do the favor of constantly preoccupying itself with making the rivers of amity flow'.

With regards to the two Safavid requests that provoked reaction, the Sublime Porte did not content itself just with rejecting them. The bejeweled pastille donated by the shah would not be sent back; however, it would be held until the arrival of the imperial Hijaz-donation superintendent (*ṣurre emīni*) and be placed by him within the tomb. This was meant to remind the donor who the sovereign of the donation site was. In the same vein, in communicating that the shah would receive divine merit by the padishah's undertaking of the canal project to Najaf, declared to be an exclusive Ottoman prerogative, the grand vizier added an insult to the injury of the shah's rejection.

[48] Rami Mehmed, *Compositions*, fols 25a–25b, ent. 37.
[49] Rami Mehmed, *Compositions*, fols 25a–26a, ent. 37 (misdated in this copy).

CONCLUSION

The opportunistic yet unprecedented rapprochement in the realm of diplomacy between the Ottoman and Safavid states led to the initiation of a novel dialogue on joint pilgrimage organizations and mutually venerated religious sites. It is noteworthy that this dialogue did not tackle the issues of sectarianism or orthodoxy. The Ottomans returned the Safavids' gestures of goodwill by conceding a limited right of representation in the supervision of the Iranian pilgrimage caravan and accommodating isolated, exceptional, and symbolic requests regarding the holy sites—with the following conditions: firstly, that the Ottoman State remain as the absolute decision maker in terms of granting, withholding, or rejecting such requests; secondly, that the imperial officials oversee the timing and each step of the actual execution even when the shah's functionaries were involved, so that no shadow is cast on Ottoman sovereignty; and thirdly, that the manner of the granting of requests remind everyone that it was a one-time and exceptional Ottoman magnanimity, not a vested right of the Safavids.

Safavid requests for the perpetuation of otherwise extraordinary permissions were the extension of the anti-Ottoman policy of the Iranian chief vizier, Muhammad Muʾmin Shamlu. The two instances in which the padishah replied to the shah's petitions in the affirmative were isolated cases, granted as one-time favors and only in return for greater sacrifices from the Safavid government, first the symbolic offering and then the actual handover of the province of Basra in its entirety. But in the latter cases discussed above, the chief vizier was asking that certain privileges be granted in perpetuity—in practice a concession from the Ottomans' sovereign rights. He must have known that in the absence of an exceptionally favorable conjuncture such requests would bring about nothing other than antagonism, and that, given the actual circumstances, their rejection was certain.

Therefore, Safavid attempts to build on the precedents of their previous requests granted as one-time favors and turn them into vested privileges were destined not only to be rejected but also to considerably deteriorate bilateral relations. The discourse of Islamic unity employed since the late seventeenth century in the diplomatic correspondence between the foremost Shiʿite and Sunni polities of the age was maybe not hypocritical or completely dissimulative, but rather formal, and certainly superficial. The downplaying of sectarian differences and the emphasizing of Islamic commonalities—to the point that the parties came to define bilateral relations through brotherhood-in-religion and to project their policies as jointly undertaken deeds in the way of God—could be sustained only as long as the senior partner's, the Sunni Ottomans', dynastic priorities and political objectives necessitated close cooperation with the junior partner, the Shiʿite Safavids ruling Iran. Take the political circumstances out of the equation, and the parties do not seem to have had the intention of establishing an autonomous inter-sectarian reconciliation independent from realpolitik.

Beyond the Ottoman-controlled cooperation on the organization of pilgrim caravans, one-time granting of requests, and rejection of the applications for permanent privileges, there were also the more extraordinary proposals that the Sa-

favids provide public service to a shrine town by undertaking a canal project and that the Safavid State become a full partner in providing funds for the expenditures of sacred shrines by endowing continuous donations of cash. The proposals belonging to this latter set would, if granted, constitute a limited Safavid partnership in Ottoman sovereignty and an injury to Ottoman legitimacy, for the towns and subjects in question were under direct Ottoman rule. Even the very submission of these proposals was considered by the Sublime Porte as an insult to the point that it directly caused antagonism between the parties.

In response, the parties—primarily the Ottoman side—toned down the trans-sectarian discourse of the 1688–1702 rapprochement. While the Ottoman authorities did not raise any objections to the coming of Shi'ite pilgrims from Iran to the Holy Shrines in Iraq, they eventually began to openly utter concerns that permanent cooperation at the official level would result in an organized, regular, and quasi-extraterritorial Shi'ite Safavid presence in Sunni Ottoman territory, which would lead to conflict.

The 1688–1702 Ottoman-Safavid rapprochement, which engendered an unprecedented cooperation in the bedecking of the Holy Shrines, was the byproduct of political processes independent from the realm of theological discourse. Likewise, this heyday of Shi'ite-Sunni cooperation was short-lived due to the fact that the above-discussed requests, which were initially exceptions, eventually created political tensions as they increased in ambition and scope. When the trajectory of the Safavids' requests, which were pro-Shi'ite as a matter of course, clearly began to aim at turning the Ottomans' exceptional favors into permanent privileges, both the political authorities and the ulema of the Ottoman Empire emphatically protested the initiative with reference to sovereign rights and legitimacy concerns, and thus these goodwill gestures between the political establishments representing Shi'ism and Sunnism came to an end.

This short-lived, trans-sectarian, Islamic solidarity could not be sustained because it was championed by bureaucrats and military administrators who sought to justify their course of action with references to Islamic principles, while those who were indeed competent to interpret such principles, i.e. the ulema, conspicuously stayed out of the dialogue, and voiced their concerns when it appeared to go beyond performing symbolic acts of goodwill. However, one should note that, firstly, political dignitaries appear to have taken the potential opening of a breach in Ottoman sovereignty in Iraq vis-à-vis Safavid Iran no less seriously than did the Sunni ulema, and, secondly, it is understood that they did notice the disappearance of the pressing circumstances that had prompted this practical rapprochement. Concerns for legitimacy were shared by the administrative and military elites and the Islamic scholars of the empire, and although they were not articulated in an identical manner, with the former two groups referring more to state sovereignty and the latter to theological differences, in the final analysis they implicitly agreed that these two dimensions formed, in this specific case, an indivisible whole. The confessional divide between the Sunni and the Shi'ite establishments was too wide to be bridged merely by a practical effort by bureaucrats without the endorsement of the ulema.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Unpublished Sources

OA—(T.C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı), Osmanlı Arşivi collections:

Ali Emiri – Ahmed III

Cevdet – Dahiliye

Divan (Beylikçi) Kalemi Belgeleri

İbnülemin – Evkaf

İbnülemin – Hariciye

Mühimme Defterleri

Name-i Hümayun Defterleri

Sadaret Mektubi Kalemi Belgeleri

Rami (Mehmed), *Compositions* [*Münşeʾāt*], Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, MS. H.O. 179.

Published Sources

R. Arabkhani, *Sultan II. Abdülhamit Dönemi Osmanlı-İran İlişkilerinde Atabat-ı Aliyat (Samerra, Kerbela, Kazımiyye, Necef)*, (unpubl. diss., Gazi Üniversitesi, Ankara, 2012)

V. Çabuk, 'Nusret-nâme'nin Kaynaklarından Târih-i Seferü'l-Basra', *İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Tarih Enstitüsü Dergisi* 15 (1995), pp. 321–380

S. Faroqhi, *Herrscher über Mekka: die Geschichte der Pilgerfahrt* (München, 1990)

S. Güngörürler, *Diplomacy and Political Relations between the Ottoman Empire and Safavid Iran, 1639–1722* (unpubl. diss., Georgetown University, 2016)

S. Güngörürler, 'Islamic Discourse in Ottoman-Safavid Peacetime Diplomacy after 1049/1639', in *Historicizing Sunni Islam in the Ottoman Empire, c.1450–c.1750,* T. Krstić and D. Terzioğlu eds (Leiden, 2020), pp. 479–500

R. Jaʿfarian, *Safavids in the Domain of Religion, Culture, and Politics* [*Safaviye dar ʿArsa-i Din, Farhang, u Siyasat*] (Tehran, hs.1391).

S. Mulder, 'Abdülhamid and the 'Alids: Ottoman Patronage of "Shi'i" Shrines in the Cemetery of Bab al-Saghir in Damascus', *Studia Islamica* 108/1 (2013), pp. 16–47

M. Nazmi-zâde, *Gülşen-i Hulefâ: Bağdat Târihi 762–1717*, M. Karataş ed. (Ankara, 2014)

A. Navai, ed., *Political Documents and Correspondences of Iran from the Year 1693 to 1723* [*Asnad u Mukatabat-i Siyasi-yi Iran az Sal-i 1105 ta 1135*] (Tehran, hs. 1363)

K. Rizvi, 'The Incarnate Shrine: Shi'ism and the Cult of Kingship in Early Safavid Iran', in *Saints and Sacred Matter: The Cult of Relics in Byzantium and Beyond*, C. Hahn and H. Klein eds (Washington, 2015), pp. 289–30