Gifts in the Age of Empire



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GIFTS IN THE AGE OF EMPIRE

Ottoman-Safavid Cultural Exchange, 1500–1639

SINEM ARCAK CASALE

The University of Chicago Press
Chicago & London

The University of Chicago Press, Chicago 60637
The University of Chicago Press, Ltd., London
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Published 2023
Printed in China

32 31 30 29 28 27 26 25 24 23 1 2 3 4 5

ISBN-13: 978-0-226-82042-2 (cloth)
ISBN-13: 978-0-226-82355-3 (e-book)
DOI: https://doi.org/10.7208/chicago/9780226823553.001.0001

Publication of this book has been supported by a grant from the Persian Heritage Foundation (PHF).



Publication of this book has been aided by a grant from the Barakat Trust.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Casale, Sinem Arcak, author.
Title: Gifts in the age of empire : Ottoman-Safavid cultural exchange, 1500–1639 / Sinem Arcak Casale.
Other titles: Ottoman-Safavid cultural exchange, 1500–1639 | Silk roads (Chicago, Ill.)
Description: Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 2023. | Series: Silk roads | Includes bibliographical references and index.
Identifiers: LCCN 2022026769 | ISBN 9780226820422 (cloth) | ISBN 9780226823553 (ebook)
Subjects: LCSH: Iran—Relations—Turkey. | Turkey—Relations—Iran. | Diplomatic gifts—Iran—History. | Diplomatic gifts—Turkey—History. | Gifts—Political aspects—Iran—History—16th century. | Gifts—Political aspects—Iran—History—17th century. | Iran—History—Ṣafavid dynasty, 1501–1736. | Turkey—History—Ottoman Empire, 1288–1918. | Houghton Shahnameh. | Illumination of books and manuscripts, Safavid. | Art, Safavid.
Classification: LCC DS274.2.T8 C37 2023 | DDC 955/.03—dc23/eng/20220621
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2022026769

This paper meets the requirements of ANSI/NISO Z39.48-1992 (Permanence of Paper).

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FRONTIS. Territorial extent of the Ottoman and Safavid Empires and their eastern neighbors, late sixteenth–early seventeenth centuries. Diagonal shading indicates contested territories.

Note on Transliteration

In this text, I have transliterated words in Ottoman Turkish and Persian instead of giving them in the original, Arabic script. Because no unified system of transliteration exists, words in Persian and Ottoman Turkish appear very differently in Latin script in the secondary literature. When citing passages from other studies or modern editions, I have given the text and the authors' names as they appear in those books. When citing directly from published or unpublished primary texts, I have adopted the system of transliteration given in the *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*. Place names, names of historical figures, and words that have entered the English language are given mostly without diacritical marks in the text for ease of reading.

Introduction

In 1578, Giovanni Correr returned to Italy after a three-year appointment as *bailo*, the permanent Venetian diplomatic representative to the Ottoman sultan in Constantinople. In his *Relazione* presented to the Venetian Senate, Correr recorded a widely circulated anecdote about a copy of the Qurʾan that the Ottoman sultan Süleyman the Magnificent (r. 1520–66) received as a gift from the contemporary Safavid ruler, Shah Tahmasp (r. 1524–76):

> Nor should I fail to mention that which is being said about Sultan Süleyman, who is greatly esteemed and revered by all. They say that once he opened a Qurʾan, one of the many sent to him by the king of Persia—who always includes them among the gifts he sends to court—as the Persians profess to be eloquent writers and masters of beautiful miniatures. Within its pages, [Süleyman] found a grain of wheat and immediately put it in his mouth. Then, turning to one of his attendants, he said with a laugh: "I must be greatly obliged to the king of Persia for allowing me to eat his grain from the comfort of my own home; something that in earlier times I could not have done without a great deal of trouble!"[1]

This anecdote brilliantly captures two central elements of the present study: the significant role that objects played in Ottoman-Safavid cultural exchange, and the extent to which their meaning was open to interpretation. Throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the shahs of Safavid Iran and the sultans of the Ottoman Empire championed opposing versions of the Islamic faith, staked competing claims to universal sovereignty, and

repeatedly faced one another on the battlefield. This book presents a dramatic reinterpretation of this history, told not through the lens of warfare or religious conflict but rather art.

Placing gifts at the center of diplomacy sheds light on their function as broader tools of art, politics, warfare, and religion. Typically overlooked and often treated as timeless, generic tokens of amity, this book shows instead how gift exchange was a dynamic and fundamentally meaningful medium of communication, interaction, and competition. It was through such exchange that the Ottoman and Safavid courts articulated their concepts of rulership, empire, and religion in relation both to one another and to the larger and rapidly integrating world of international diplomacy.

Anecdotes and stories similar to the one that opens this book abound in the historical record. Safavid and Ottoman historians, as well as foreign observers—some of whom participated in the official ceremonies organized for the presentation and reception of these gifts—describe gifts and interpret their meaning by frequently comparing them to previous groups of gifts in terms of their amount, rarity, and beauty. Always in conversation with past gifts sent and received in this way, gifts both illuminated the current political climate and conjured memories of significant past moments in the Ottoman-Safavid dialogue.

The above account of Tahmasp's gift to Süleyman, for example, was reported by the Venetian *bailo* not as a record of recent events, but long after the deaths of both rulers, in the midst of speculation about the possibility of renewed warfare between the two courts. Indeed, that possibility materialized soon after, when Süleyman's grandson Sultan Murad III (r. 1574–95) declared war on the Safavids. This conflict, however, was opposed by many within the Ottoman court, and Correr's *Relazione* gives ample voice to those skeptics, explaining the risks of the war, its dubious benefits even in the case of military success, and above all, the dangers posed by the cultural prestige and religious charisma of the Persian shah even among the sultan's own subjects. These concerns are all present in Correr's anecdote about Tahmasp's earlier gift to Süleyman. As he observes, the choice of a Safavid manuscript with splendid calligraphy underscored the superior skills of artists commissioned by Safavid shahs. The choice of a Qur'an, meanwhile, could be read as a demand on the part of the shah—previously declared a heretic by Süleyman during wartime—for recognition as a member of the same faith. On the other hand, Süleyman's reaction shows the extent to which such implicit readings could be subverted or ignored. In receiving the book, rather than acknowledging its superior artistic qualities or its sacred content, he instead focused exclusively on a piece of grain stuck within its pages. In doing so, he reduced the gift to an object of the shah's material subordination. Crops such as wheat—instead of money—were the basic medium of taxation in the Ottoman land-tenure system. Süleyman suggested, therefore, that rather

than an extraordinary gift, Tahmasp had simply sent him a tribute payment, something that the sultan, in the past, had been obliged to claim from him by force.

This was but one instance of a much longer history. Countless gifts were exchanged between shahs and sultans between the beginning of the sixteenth and the middle of the seventeenth century. This is a remarkable story governed by asymmetry and driven by competition. During this period, both the nature and the meaning of the gifts exchanged transformed radically against the backdrop of a highly charged confessional, political, and military rivalry. The story begins with modest, balanced, and courteous exchanges of luxury objects at the beginning of the sixteenth century, which quickly turned into openly insulting gifts as relations between the two courts soured and turned to war. Subsequently, during the latter 1500s, the by then politically weaker Safavids sent the Ottomans increasingly extravagant gifts, including unique and symbolically charged objects, such as ancient Qur'ans. Still later, in the 1600s, gifting practices changed once again, as Safavid shahs sent gifts that were easily monetized and highly sought-after commodities, such as bolts of fine silk.

Drawing on a uniquely wide range of archival and manuscript sources, for the most part in Ottoman Turkish, Persian, and Italian, the following chapters explore the long history of these exchanges in all of their contextual and material diversity. This book focuses on gifts exchanged between Ottoman sultans and Safavid shahs from the early sixteenth century to the opening decades of the seventeenth century. It examines matchless works of art, such as the famous *Shahnama of Shah Tahmasp*, as well as a much larger number of less well-known and even completely unstudied gifts, ranging from lavishly illustrated books and exquisite silk carpets to richly embroidered tents, and even lives birds of prey. But with the remarkable exception of the *Shahnama of Shah Tahmasp*, almost all of the gifts detailed in this book are now either lost or impossible to identify. This does not foreclose their study, however. In the absence of physical objects, what new areas of investigation might present themselves?

Historical Background and Cultural Landscape

The Ottoman state, founded in the early fourteenth century in western Anatolia, had already grown into a major empire by the end of the fifteenth century. Ruling from the former Byzantine capital of Constantinople, during the first half of the sixteenth century the Ottomans expanded out of Anatolia and the Balkans into the Levant, the Arabian Peninsula, parts of Africa, and eastern Europe, with growing ambitions of geographical expansion and political influence even further afield. Meanwhile, the neighboring Safavids of Iran rose to power only in the early sixteenth century, but quickly established

themselves as a powerful state that resisted Ottoman expansion, and challenged Ottoman aspirations on both dynastic and religious grounds. Safavids claimed direct descent from the Prophet Muhammad through a long line of charismatic rulers, while the Ottomans completely lacked such significant lineage. Long periods of war alternated thus with periods of relative and cold peace throughout the history of their relations.

The shared Islamic faith of the Ottoman and the Safavid dynasties proved simultaneously to be a source of common ground and of dispute. While it is frequently asserted that the nature of their rivalry was based in the Ottomans' adherence to Sunni Islam and the Safavids to Twelver Shiʿism, recent historical research has emphasized that the consolidation of these competing religious identities was a long and elusive process. Rather than the starting point for their interaction, each state's ideological inclination toward orthodox "Sunnism" and "Shiʿism" unfolded partly in response to and indeed as a result of their rivalry with one another.[2]

To be sure, there was a long-standing distinction between Sunni and Shiʿi traditions in Islamic history, predating either the Ottoman or the Safavid state by many centuries. This distinction was rooted in a dispute over who should be the rightful political successor of the Muslim community following the death of the Prophet Muhammad in 632 CE. In the Sunni tradition, these successors were named "caliphs," and were originally chosen through a kind of election (although the office soon became hereditary).[3] Shiʿis, by contrast, held that only the descendants of ʿAli, the Prophet's cousin and son-in-law, could be legitimate rulers of the community, though there were differing opinions regarding the succession itself. One group, known as "Twelvers," traced through ʿAli a line of eleven successive rulers, whom they called "imams." The last of these, born in 869 CE, was believed not to have died, but to have gone into occultation at a very young age, first communicating only through his deputies, and then withdrawing from the world completely. Thereafter, Twelver Shiʿis held that there would no longer be a legitimate earthly ruler until such time as the Twelfth Imam should return.[4]

In subsequent centuries, because of this, Twelver Shiʿis were relatively inactive politically, and Iran itself was not particularly associated with Twelver Shiʿism. But this changed dramatically in 1501, when the founder of the Safavid dynasty, Shah Ismaʿil (r. 1501–24) effectively presented himself as the returned Twelfth Imam.[5] In the eyes of his followers, the *qizilbash*, Ismaʿil was much more than a political leader; he was divine.[6] Subjects thus prostrated themselves before him, equating him with God. But although such devotion proved critical for Ismaʿil's ability to build his power, it was difficult to separate from his own charisma. Recognizing this, his son Shah Tahmasp (r. 1524–76) discouraged this level of extreme personal devotion and sought to institutionalize Twelver Shiʿi principles as a kind of state reli-

gion.[7] Clashing theological viewpoints among the religious class nevertheless rendered this project unfinished until the reign of Shah ʿAbbas (r. 1587–1629) in the early seventeenth century.

The Ottomans, meanwhile, followed a notably parallel evolution. "Until the emergence of the Safavid state," Vefa Erginbaş notes, "the Ottomans' religious identity was syncretistic, accommodating Sunni and Shiʿi interpretations, stringently orthodox ulama positions, and Ṣūfī tendencies."[8] During the first years of the sixteenth century, Ottomans reacted with alarm as large numbers of their own subjects, particularly in the eastern parts of the empire, visibly fell under the sway of Shah Ismaʿil's charisma. By the reign of Sultan Selim I (r. 1512–20), Ottoman religious authorities had begun to issue fatwas, or legal opinions, that labeled Ismaʿil and his followers as heretics, thereby sanctioning military action against them as "holy wars."[9] According to one such text: "They [Safavids] scorn and burn the noble Qurʾan, scriptures, and books of shariʿa [religious law]. They despise and kill scholars and pious people, in addition to destroying places of worship."[10] Nevertheless, Ottoman sultans also responded by adopting a similar language of messianic rulership to compete with the Safavids. Through the early decades of the reign of Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent (r. 1520–66), it was not uncommon for the sultan to refer to himself as "Imam of the Age" or even "Messiah (*Mahdi*)." Thus, in striking parallel to the chronology of Shiʿism in Safavid Iran, it was not until the second half of the reign of Süleyman that the Ottoman state began to systematically articulate its legitimacy in terms of Sunni legalism, and to define the sultan himself as a "caliph" whose legitimacy was based on his ability to enforce Islamic law.[11]

The visual and material cultures of the two courts absorbed and reflected these points of divergence in significant ways. One line of major Ottoman accusation against the Safavids revolved around the conspicuous absence of new monumental places of worship in Iran. According to this view, Safavid shahs' failure to build congregational mosques proved their heresy and their lack of good Muslim leadership and authority, as Gülru Necipoğlu has highlighted. One of Sultan Süleyman's chroniclers wrote, for example: "Today among the inhabited quarters of the world famous is / The Kingdom of Rum [Ottoman Empire] for being prosperous and well-built. Thanks to its just Imam [Süleyman] and Sunni congregations, / Its mosques overflow with worshippers."[12] The contrast in royal public building activity between the two realms throughout the sixteenth century was indeed visually striking. Beginning in the middle of the sixteenth century, Ottoman authorities engaged in a coordinated project to blanket the entire territory of the empire with easily recognizable domed-covered mosques of gray stone with tall pencil-shaped minarets, built by sultans at Ottoman capitals and elsewhere (fig. 0.1). These not only visually marked the space of the empire, but also became vehicles for canonically compulsory public rituals. As time went on,



FIGURE 0.1. Süleymaniye Mosque, Istanbul. Photo by Jorge Láscar. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:View_of_S%C3%BCleymaniye_Mosque_from_The_Galata_Tower_(8394977709).jpg. CC BY 2.0. Posted on Flickr at https://www.flickr.com/photos/8721758@N06/8394977709.

attendance at Friday prayers and sermons came to be expected and absences were monitored by the Ottoman authorities.

Safavid concepts of religion and kingship translated into a different kind of building activity. Rather than a ruler whose legitimacy was defined legalistically—through his ability to defend and enforce the shariʿa—the Safavid ruler boasted of his blood connection to the Prophet through the Seventh Shiʿi Imam. Projecting charismatic kingship, according to Kishwar Rizvi, "the body of the shah served as a conduit to both imperial and esoteric power, and the shrine as its physical manifestation."[13] Thus, shahs willingly limited their architectural patronage to expanding the Safavid dynastic shrine to highlight these ideas instead of building great mosques in their name. In addition, disagreements among Shiʿi clerics on the permissibility of Friday prayers—the primary function of congregational mosques—in the absence of the Twelfth Shiʿi Imam shaped these decisions for a century.[14] In the early seventeenth century, Shah ʿAbbas finally resolved this issue by favoring clerics who justified his construction of a congregational mosque at Isfahan, the first such project in the history of the Safavid dynasty (fig. 0.2).

Visual polarization in Ottoman and Safavid court culture has been thoughtfully tied to politics and ideological difference in Gülru Necipoğlu's study of the genesis in the mid-sixteenth century of a new Ottoman visual canon: "It valued the directness of legibility over the virtuosity of microscopic elaboration. With a few exceptions it avoided the representation of animate forms, unlike the products of the Safavid court workshops which



FIGURE 0.2. Masjid-i Shah, Isfahan. Photo by Patrickringgenberg. Posted on Wikimedia Commons. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Isfahan_Royal_Mosque_general.JPG. CC BY-SA 3.0.

freely incorporated figural imagery into tiles, textiles and carpets designed with the miniaturist's attention to minute detail."[15] An Austrian drawing we will revisit in the fourth chapter effectively displays this difference, as a Safavid ambassador approaches Constantinople on horseback, accompanied by an Ottoman official (fig. 0.3). Clad in a robe decorated with numerous Safavid figures in rich landscapes, the colorfully embroidered sumptuous dress of the ambassador, who returns our gaze, contrasts with the purposefully plain yet extravagant robes of the Ottoman figure. "The aniconism of the official Ottoman decorative arts," adds Necipoğlu, "might indeed have been a consequence of the orthodox religious climate which took shape in response to constant conflicts with the Habsburgs and Safavids."

Early modern Muslim courts formulated a range of visual forms and idioms that are easily discernable to Islamic art historians today. Stylistic, material, and iconographic characteristics of many buildings and objects allow clear classification. Take for example a sixteenth-century large rectangular wool carpet (fig. 0.4). At the heart of its red ground is a large oval medallion with diamond-shaped blue pendants attached to its top and bottom when viewed vertically. The central medallion appears as a blue bursting sun, repeated in fraction above and below to give a sense of infinite repetition. This symmetrical design of repeating and alternating large and small medallions, flower-and-leaf scrolls, split leaves, and palmettes in contrasting colors of primarily red, blue and beige is typical of Ottoman carpets made in Uşak.



FIGURE 0.3. Safavid ambassador on horseback, detail of fig. 4.11. Österreichische Nationalbibliothek Vienna Cod. 8626, 125b.

A different long and narrow carpet (fig. 0.5), featuring a palette of bright colors, and famously known as "the emperor's carpet," has been described by Iranologist Arthur Upham Pope as "one of the greatest carpets in existence" because of its high-quality materials of fine silk and wool, lustrous colors, and intricate pattern, which Pope likened to a "perfectly designed symphony."[16] Similar to the famous Ardabil carpets and other Safavid examples, it is one of a pair, with its match now in Vienna at the Museum of Applied Arts.[17] The carpet's crimson ground, similar to the Uşak example, is framed with three distinct borders. Scrolling vines, blossoms and leaves are repeated in mirror image in both pieces. Gold cartouches in the innermost border in the emperor's carpet record, differently, verses from a long medieval poem in Persian. It likens the blossoming of roses and tulips in a garden in springtime to a chorus that praise the shah in unison: "They pray for the king of the world and say / May he enjoy glory and high position forever!"[18] Along the carpet's endlessly twisting vines inside the wide border, animal heads blend in with flower buds, leaves, and clouds (fig. 0.6). Also by contrast with the contemporaneous Ottoman example, on the carpet's main ground, floral scrolls, blossoms and cloud bands intersect and alternate with many natural animals and fantastic beasts (fig. 0.7). Some of these appear alone, either



FIGURE 0.4. The Ushak carpet, Turkey, sixteenth century. 531 × 250 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London (T.71-1914).



FIGURE 0.5. Emperor's carpet, Iran, sixteenth century. 759.5 × 339.1 cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Rogers Fund, 1943 (43.121.1)



FIGURE 0.6. (*left*) Emperor's carpet, detail.

FIGURE 0.7. (*below*) Emperor's carpet, detail.



peaceful or ready to attack; or they appear in pairs, in active combat. Its large size, its color palette, the fineness of its materials, the density of its weaving, and the complexity of its design—including the iconography of the animals and the poem that honors the king—suggest to art historians that it was a product of Shah Tahmasp's court. In sum, both the Ottoman and the Safavid carpet thus powerfully defend and attest to their origins.

Historical circumstances led these two early modern Muslim courts to develop shifting and contrasting concepts of rulership and religion. Accordingly, each court experimented with and developed its own kaleidoscope of visual and material idioms, institutions, and tastes, which art historians are able to identify through stylistic analysis. As in the above example, Safavid carpets frequently included poems or religious inscriptions and invocations to God and the Shiʿi imams. By contrast, Ottoman examples pointedly lacked such inscriptions.[19] These clear differences in visual culture were self-evident to members of these courts and were openly invoked in various social and political contexts. The Shiʿi invocations in Safavid carpets especially received reaction from Ottomans. In 1571, for example—when the two courts were at peace—Sultan Selim II sent an order to the Ottoman governor general (*beylerbeyi*) of Baghdad instructing him to specify measurements of new carpets to be made for the shrines of Imams ʿAli (in Najaf) and Husain (in Karbala), the Prophet's son-in-law and grandson. The reason for replacing the carpets was specified: the floors of those most significant Shiʿi shrines were covered, inappropriately in this view, with carpets featuring "weavings of certain names," which were previously sent there by the shah when the region was under Safavid control.[20] As Colin Imber notes, the carpets probably displayed the names of the Twelve Imams and purposefully excluded the names of the first three caliphs.[21]

But in terms of their underlying cultural frames of reference, these courts were united in so many ways. Modes of artistic patronage, collection patterns, essential reading lists of learned intellectuals, artistic and literary pedagogical tools were just a few common strands that ran through each court's cultural life and output. Rulers, princes and princesses, high-ranking officials, and other learned members of each court read and composed poetry in Persian—the lingua franca across the early modern Islamic world, "from the Balkans to Bengal," in the terminology of Shahab Ahmed.[22] They commissioned, purchased, and exchanged a range of objects, including illustrated and unillustrated books—such as copies of the Qurʾan, collections of poems, calligraphy albums, histories, scientific works, maps, mirrors for princes, or epics like the *Shahnama* (Book of kings). Knowledge, skills, and portable things were often carried by itinerant people. Artists, poets, clerics, renegade rulers and princes—sometimes together with their extended households—moved many times between the Ottoman, Safavid, Mughal and Uzbek courts. The traces of those movements created complex webs

of relations that radiate commonalities even as they express tensions and points of divergence.

A shared starting point for this process is to be found in the celebrated artistic traditions of the recent past of the Persianate world. In particular, Timurid artists, their works, and their patterns of patronage provided the most significant and lasting models and ideals to follow. Thus, when Safavid gifts arrived at the Ottoman court and were presented to the sultan in elaborate ceremonial displays, most of those gifts represented common traditions—a shared culture—and invited judgments based on mutually intelligible standards of value and excellence. However, it is also important to remember that it was above all the Safavid rulers and princes who could claim direct inheritance and continuation of Timurid court culture, having assumed authority over their former lands and patronized many former Timurid artists. In consequence, when shahs sent messages of submission to the disproportionately more powerful sultans, the magnificent Safavid gifts on display often defended their unyielding identities, reminding observers of the Safavids' unique dynastic prestige, cultural cachet, and adherence to Shiʿi Islam.

All of this recalls Arthur Upham Pope's modern judgment about the spectacular Safavid carpet discussed above, and its supposed superiority to any other carpet ever produced. Did sixteenth-century observers have similar ideas in mind when they observed presentations of Safavid gifts at the Ottoman court? A comment by the Venetian *bailo* Giacomo Soranzo, in 1584, in the middle of the twelve-year Ottoman-Safavid war, stresses the relative value attached to Safavid objects: "It is said that [the Safavids] do not possess large amounts of gold. Nor do they have silver, but nevertheless it is not known whether they would ever need them even in such a long war. They abound in the finest silk, and in great quantities; and in such fine wool that it is esteemed even more than silk, and they have Persian carpets, which in beauty and colors overshadow all others; those of wool are considered more beautiful than those of silk. They also have very fine swords, armor, and other things."[23]

The meaning of diplomatic gifts that traveled between the early modern Ottoman and Safavid courts thus was often multivalent and ambiguous, much like the political and military relationship between those two courts. Precisely because of such ambiguity, gifts evade a straightforward interpretation. Letters of kings, as messages carried by ambassadors, were often highly formulaic. The messages that gifts themselves carried—the ideas they conveyed through their geographic, artistic, and historical connections, their materials and form—generated a multiplicity of meanings and associations, seen from the perspective of their presenters, receivers, and other observers. This principle guides this book in interpreting the many objects, animals, and people that moved between the two courts within diplomatic missions.

Rituals of Exchange

During the sixteenth century, gifts exchanged between the Ottoman and Safavid courts were never sent individually, but rather in groups; no manuscript, carpet, or tent was dispatched as a stand-alone gift. Thus, the composition of each group of gifts, as well as past gifts in this context, were highly meaningful. Equally, traditions of giving and receiving gifts within and beyond these courts were relevant points of reference.

"Gift exchange persists," according to historian Natalie Zemon Davis, "as an essential relational mode, a repertoire of behavior, a register with its own rules, language, etiquette, and gestures."[24] Indeed, the exchange of gifts in social and political contexts was a highly ritualized mode of communication in the premodern world. At the Safavid and Ottoman courts as in early modern France, gift exchange was a structured social practice that displayed generosity, formed solidarity, and reaffirmed ranks and hierarchies.[25]

Contemporary and past traditions certainly served as significant points of reference in determining the selection and presentation of the presents at each court. With regard to the Islamic tradition, Linda Komaroff has noted that "gift giving was a fundamental activity at the great Islamic courts not only for diplomatic and political purposes, as reward for services rendered, or to celebrate annual events like the New Year or more personal occasions such as weddings, birthdays and circumcisions, but also as expressions of piety often associated with the construction or enhancement of religious monuments."[26] Early modern Muslim courts inherited, furthermore, a shared lexicon of gift distribution, such that diplomatic, social, personal, and pious objects of exchange were referred to with a range of common words with roots in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish, such as *tuḥfa*, *hadīya*, *inʿām*, *pishkash*, *armaġān*. Some of these terms highlighted by design the social ranks of the giver and the receiver. *Hadāyā*, for instance, referred to gifts exchanged between peers; whereas *pishkash* denoted royal tribute or tax, presented from subjects and lower-ranking officials to a ruler.[27]

Objects made of precious materials, jewels and items of jewelry, textiles, horses, Chinese porcelain, tents, carpets, and rare and exotic animals appear typically in records, serving as connective elements of a shared history across Muslim courts. A range of medieval and early modern sources from the Islamic world, including mirrors for princes, chronicles, treatises on etiquette, and other court records document gifts and discuss the most appropriate ways of displaying and presenting them.[28] Courtly tradition and protocol thus determined to a large extent what was to be given and received. In turn, gifts themselves reflected the ranks of givers and receivers, as they commented on the social context of the exchange.

When rulers received gifts from vassals, courtiers, family members, artists, and poets, as well as foreign envoys, they responded by giving them

cash and other favors in a way that reaffirmed his superior position and corresponded to the presenters' rank. Most significant among these were robes of honor (*khilʿa*), potent symbols of vassalage in the Islamic tradition that Ottoman and Safavid rulers continued to distribute to their own subjects and foreigners that arrived at their court. At the Safavid court, for instance, court historian Iskandar Beg Munshi noted that when Shah Tahmasp ascended the throne in 1524, he "[bestowed] 8000 robes of honor (*khilat*), [and granted] a reported 20,000 tomans in gifts to courtiers." Due to these expenditures, it was further recorded, almost the whole treasury was depleted.[29]

Importantly, patterns and volumes of circulation within each court operated on a different scale and register than gifts exchanged with other polities. For Safavid exchanges with foreign courts, Rudi Matthee wrote that "a combination of the presumed importance of the country, the weight of the issue to be negotiated, and the value of gifts previously received, determined the richness and value of the presents offered at diplomatic exchanges."[30] These principles generally held true in Ottoman exchanges with competitor states.[31] Embassies arriving in Constantinople would be allocated resources, for example, based on the importance of the polity they represented. Not all ambassadors would be granted the privilege to have audience with the sultan. Within this highly hierarchical ceremonial system, Safavid embassies received the best treatment, on par with the Venetians and Habsburgs.

Considered within these complex and interlacing systems, the Ottoman-Safavid cultural exchange presents a significant case study. While it might have roots in past Islamic traditions and court protocol, it equally demonstrates parallels with broader early modern patterns of exchange. Like the sultan's subjects and vassals and other foreign representatives, Safavid shahs typically dispatched gifts to the sultan on certain occasions: new rulers' accessions to the throne, peace negotiations, imperial celebrations, and the signing of treaties most typically provided occasions for these offerings.

Affinities with previous records and other contexts should not, however, insinuate automated repetition of tradition. This case departs from comparable contexts historically and conceptually. As this book shows, following the early years of the sixteenth century, the exchange of gifts between the Ottomans and Safavids was almost entirely in one direction: for over a hundred years, Safavid shahs dispatched increasingly large collections of gifts to Ottoman sultans, remarkably without comparable gifts sent back to them in return. Nevertheless, these gifts cannot be characterized as tribute. Unlike tribute, gifts were not exchanged between the Ottoman and Safavid courts according to preestablished amounts; the exchanges did not follow a predictable calendar; and, they were not regulated by contractual obligations.

This case is thus different, for example, from the famous Habsburg tributes to the Ottoman sultan between the years 1547 and 1606. During that time, a Habsburg embassy arrived at the Ottoman court every year to pre-

sent a payment of 30,000 Hungarian florins and gifts. The gifts most often included automata, objects in silver, clocks, and mirrors.[32] The terms of the treaty and previously presented gifts impacted the selection, for demands would be made by Ottoman officials if the gift's arrival was delayed, or if it did not match up to expectations. Expectations and demands determined to a large extent the gifts presented from the Venetian Republic to the Ottomans as well, even though they were not obligated by contract. Ottomans purchased from Venice silk and wool fabrics, Murano glass, spectacles, and mirrors in large quantities. Gifts presented to the sultan and his household were attuned to Ottoman requests and tastes, for these same items appear in large amounts consistently in Venetian records dating from the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.[33]

Ottoman-Safavid gift exchanges uniquely lacked such a backdrop of negotiation and close correlation with purchases and requests. More significantly, systematic studies on gift exchanges between the Ottomans, Safavids, and other polities similar to the present study are yet to be written. Our current knowledge is fragmentary and consists mostly of overviews based on episodes of a selection of well-known exchanges and visual representations. Because the majority of these materials are lost or impossible to identify with certainty as gifts, their study requires paying attention to overlooked sources and adopting alternative methodologies. Only future research will therefore illuminate the ways in which the Ottoman-Safavid case compares to parallel contexts, for example Ottoman and Safavid exchanges with the Dutch Republic, Mughal India, France, and Russia, among others.[34]

Shadows of the Gift

Within the larger field of comparative early modern cultural studies, an emerging body of scholarship has turned toward the mobility and global circulation of objects and their role in cultural encounters. Drawing on new approaches that highlight mobility and the broader "material turn" in social sciences, this literature highlights the potential of objects to enable cultural contact, conversion, and exchange across traditional boundaries.[35] The continuous and reciprocal nature of connections between Europe and the Islamic world is an important emphasis of such scholarship. Lisa Jardine and Jerry Brotton's 2000 book *Global Interests: Renaissance Art between East and West* has been highly influential in this regard, inspiring countless conferences, exhibitions, and ensuing publications.[36] Participating in this discussion, this book shifts its focus to the exchange between individual Islamic empires, rather than between "East and West." Publications on cross-cultural exchanges include disproportionately more volumes, catalogues, and individual essays than monographs, an unintended consequence perhaps of the nature of disciplinary and language training and the often

uneven survival of visual, material, and textual sources.[37] Instead of multiple spheres previously assumed to be geographically divided and culturally distinct, this book surveys exchanges between neighboring courts with a similar religious and cultural trajectory but divided by their confessional orientation and economic and military interests over a period of nearly a century and a half.

Historical literature on the Ottoman-Safavid relationship has focused almost exclusively on its political and military components, typically portraying the interaction between these two states as little more than an ongoing series of sectarian conflicts.[38] This book treats gifts as agents of a more complicated set of interactions and demonstrates that the Ottoman-Safavid rivalry was shaped as much by culture and aesthetics as it was by religious disputation or by the military balance of power. Gifts destabilize what seem to be clear and lasting boundaries, whether actual borders between empires or conceptual polarities that presume to separate historical winners from losers. This book shows how, rather than neutral or insignificant accessories to diplomacy, the exchange of gifts functioned as a primary mechanism for the expression of competitive interaction between two early modern Muslim courts.

Art historians in the past decades have highlighted the ubiquity of gifts and the social, economic, and diplomatic significance of their exchange in medieval and early modern societies. Turning to material and visual dimensions of gifts, they have studied unique gifted objects and lost gifts by considering their agency, materiality, and social biographies, and the ritual dimensions of gift-giving ceremonies.[39] Brigitte Buettner wrote inspiringly, for example, that various forms of gift exchange "wove people into a complex web of prestation and counterprestation allowing social cohesion and competition to be expressed and perpetuated."[40] These interventions have expanded and enriched anthropological theories of gift exchange—starting with Mauss's *Essai sur le don*—which focused on the social dimensions of the interaction without due attention to the objects themselves.[41]

Within the field of Islamic art, multiple blockbuster exhibitions in the last two decades have underscored the mediating role of long-lost gifts by putting on public display many breathtaking objects from collections around the world. Especially prominent was the Los Angeles County Museum of Art's 2011 show *Gifts of the Sultan: The Arts of Giving at the Islamic Courts*, which subsequently traveled to the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston and the Museum of Islamic Art in Doha, Qatar in 2012. Similarly, *The Tsars and the East: Gifts from Turkey and Iran in the Moscow Kremlin* was first shown in 2009 at the Sackler Gallery in Washington, D.C., and then in 2014 at the Calouste Gulbenkian Museum in Lisbon.[42] As these exhibitions demonstrated, very few of the works on display could be placed in their actual exchange context. Most therefore represented broader categories of objects, whose exchange

and gifting were often referred to in textual and other visual sources, many of which were highlighted and discussed in the deluxe and weighty exhibition catalogues. Contributing to these efforts, this book however tracks gifts between two polities over the course of more than a century, to expand the limits of previous studies with a historically grounded account that captures continuity and change within a specific cultural and political context.

In what precise ways do gifts allow the writing of a novel history of relations between rival courts? According to Avinoam Shalem, as premodern portable objects traveled in time and space, they moved through polytemporal, multilinear, and three-dimensional networks. In order to grasp this complexity, Shalem contends, one needs to move away from traditional questions about origins—which point to two-dimensional movements—in order to see a "multilayered system of the object's travels within the varied cultural spheres that it crosses." In this view, the object-boundedness of approaches that highlight the agency and social life of objects neglects what Shalem calls the anima of the object—"the thoughts that objects carry with them, not only physical, tangible evidence, but ideas and memories, be they contrived, legendary or semi-historical."[43] Many art historians working on materiality already consider, in my view, social and intellectual connections between things, animals and people.[44] But locating agency is indeed very tricky. In this regard, Christopher Wood has more provocatively warned: "The discourses of the 'life of things,' actor-network-theory, and object-oriented ontology restore credence to pre- or nonmodern anthropomorphisms and animistic psychological habits."[45]

With specific reference to gifts, Marcel Mauss wrote of agency as if it were an inherent characteristic of objects, an active force capable of compelling the receiver of the gift to return it with another: "The thing given is not inactive. Invested with life, often possessing individuality, it seeks to return to what Hertz called its 'place of origin' or to produce, on behalf of the clan and the native soil from which it sprang, an equivalent to replace it."[46] Are all gifts imbued with such a force? Is it capable of performing work other than enabling reciprocity? Can specific social circumstances activate or obstruct its actions? While these and related questions have kept generations of scholars busy, sources on Ottoman and Safavid gifts and questions about their role in politics favor a broader attitude toward intentionality and action. In what Annette Weiner terms "inalienable possessions," memorable histories are carried by unique objects. A matchless gift such as the *Shahnama of Shah Tahmasp* demonstrably had such indelible ties to its original owner (fig. 0.8). But the messages and forces that other, not-so-special gifts transmitted and the social relations they might reveal to us today require a wide historical lens in which we locate them in comparative and relational contexts. Contesting a smooth and imbalanced separation between humans and material things, anthropologist Tim Ingold emphasizes how materials flow, mix and



FIGURE 0.8. "Isfandiyar Slays Arjasp and Takes the Brazen Hold." Folio from the *Shahnama of Shah Tahmasp* (442b). Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art.

mutate: "Thus things are active not because they are imbued with agency but because of ways in which they are caught up in these currents of the lifeworld. The properties of materials, then, are not fixed attributes of matter but are processual and relational. To describe these properties means telling their stories."[47]

How can we tell those stories, though, in the absence of the material? With the notable exception of the famous *Shahnama of Shah Tahmasp*, almost all of the innumerable gifts detailed in this book are now either lost or impossible to identify with certainty. Considering the volume and traffic of the Ottoman-Safavid gift exchange, this is a startlingly short list. Art historians have thus sought them especially in the Topkapı Palace Museum, a collection that holds most of the remaining items of the Ottoman treasury. Still, our knowledge on the extant gifts of this cultural dialogue is fragmented, random, and speculative, leaving us with plausible but inconclusive possibilities.[48]

These possibilities have emerged from specialized studies on artistic media that constitute single categories of gifts—carpets, textiles, and especially illustrated manuscripts.[49] For example, in her study on illustrated copies of the *Book of Alexander* (*İskendernāme*), Serpil Bağcı has identified one manuscript as likely a royal Safavid gift. It is the only copy of the *Book of Alexander* in the Topkapı Museum that matches a unique elaboration on one of the many gifts enumerated in historian Mustafa ʿĀlī's account of Prince Mehmed's circumcision festival in 1582. According to ʿĀlī, among the eighteen books dispatched to Sultan Murad by Shah Muḥammad Khudābanda (r. 1578–87) on that date, there was "a Book of Alexander written in Turkish, with its calligraphy and paintings in the Persian manner."[50] Elsewhere, Lale Uluç's work on Shiraz manuscripts has brought to light two books that quite possibly have formed part of Muḥammad Khudābanda's gift to Murad on the same occasion: A Yusuf and Zulaikha of poet Jāmī and a quintet (*khamsa*) of poet Amir Khusrau Dihlavi. Both "contain flyleaf notes with the date 990/1582 saying 'the book which came from the Şah'" These titles are nevertheless not mentioned in Mustafa ʿĀlī's account, cited above.[51]

In addition to these manuscripts, carpets are frequently mentioned as typical objects of exchange between the Ottoman and Safavid courts. In particular, a group known as Salting carpets are characteristically distinguished by their small size, silk foundation, high knot density, broad palette of lively colors, and precious metal brocading (figs. 0.9 and 0.10).[52] Around a central medallion or niche, they feature scrolling arabesques, palmettes, blossoms, cloud bands, trees, animals, and birds. Additionally, their borders include cartouches with calligraphic inscriptions, many of which are distinctly Shiʿi in content. Today, more than one hundred examples have been identified of this group in various collections around the world. Their date and origins have long been a source of debate. The most recent consensus—thanks in part to radiocarbon analysis—places them in sixteenth- or seventeenth-century Iran, rather than nineteenth-century Istanbul. Furthermore, because the Topkapı collection includes thirty-five such carpets, it has been



FIGURE 0.9. Carpet, sixteenth century. 161.3 × 109.9 cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Mr. and Mrs. Isaac D. Fletcher Collection, bequest of Isaac D. Fletcher, 1917 (17.120.124).



FIGURE 0.10. Carpet, sixteenth century. Topkapı Palace Museum, Istanbul (13/2042). Photo © Milli Saraylar İdaresi Başkanlığı.

suggested that most or all of them must have originated in Iran, having perhaps arrived as Safavid diplomatic gifts.[53] Pointing more specifically to the large and well-known embassies of 1568 and 1576, experts have suggested that these pieces must have arrived on those occasions. The pristine condition of the Topkapı pieces, and their subsequent dispersal, according to this view, shows that they were unused—even unseen and undisplayed—because of their overtly Shiʿi inscriptions, deemed inappropriate at the Sunni Ottoman court.[54]

It is indeed highly likely that some of these carpets were presented to the Ottoman sultan from the Safavid shah. As we will see, records show that many carpets arrived in Istanbul as Safavid diplomatic gifts. However, no single carpet can securely be associated with any particular embassy. In 1568, for example, twenty-four carpets were dispatched from the shah. As we will see in chapter 2, an archival document distinguishes them solely on the basis of size (large or small), materials (silk or gold-woven), and place of origin (from Kerman and from Khurasan), without any mention of inscriptions—the reason advanced in modern literature for their gifting, subsequent disuse, much later sale, and current pristine condition.[55]

A final and frequently cited example is a dark green velvet robe heavily embroidered with silver-wrapped polychrome silk threads that run around its borders (fig. 0.11, on the right). On its back, inside a large central medallion, a courtly figure wearing the characteristic Safavid turban is embroidered in a small cartouche. In 1941, Mehmet Ağa-oğlu suggested that this robe was presented to Sultan Murad by Shah Muḥammad Khudābanda as a gift in 1583. There is no record of any Safavid embassy to Istanbul on that date. And, Ağa-oğlu's attribution is based solely on personal correspondence with Tahsin Öz, then director of the Topkapı Palace Museum. The robe's material attributes, style, and high quality support the claim that it might have been a Safavid royal gift from the late 1500s. However, an inventory record is yet to be recovered, especially since the date might be erroneous, and the robe itself does not present any further clue.[56]

These cases demonstrate that there are many more gifts still waiting to be discovered at the Topkapı Palace Museum and elsewhere in the world. Specialized, collaborative, and interdisciplinary work will certainly expand this list. Considered together, for now, their material paucity and the uncertainty around them—whether and when exactly they arrived—pose important questions and raise significant challenges in studying these gifts. What accounts for their dearth and loss? And how can we find more traces of these gifts? Art history is a discipline in which the observation of physical remains is fundamental to the way we study the past. An art historical approach to gift exchange thus prioritizes extant objects, leaving the rest to the domains of history, anthropology, and material culture studies.



FIGURE 0.11. Installation photograph, *Gifts of the Sultan: The Arts of Giving at the Islamic Courts*. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, June 5–September 5, 2011. © Museum Associates/LACMA.

In the wake of new directions in our discipline, this book asks whether it might be possible to develop novel ways of approaching those gifts that we will never find. Even in the absence of physical objects, gifts of the Ottoman-Safavid exchange make their presence felt everywhere in the historical record: in diplomatic accounts, in courtly poems, in elaborate illustrations of their presentation at court. Taking sources on gifts seriously—in their physical absence—challenges traditional methodologies in Islamic art history, by calling for a shift in approach away from extant objects and toward their documentary footprint.[57] These sources offer alternative taxonomies. They invite us to hold a spotlight on objects, materials, and other things that we do not typically study, we do not see on museum displays, and we do not teach in detail in the classroom.

Staying patiently in the dark, this study looks beyond the few remaining gifts and individual instances of exchange. It unveils larger evolving patterns of gifting that testify to a notable historical transformation in imperial concepts of power and identity across borders and over time. Widening the focus away from a preoccupation with individual objects opens up fresh areas of investigation regarding the ritual use of material culture in politics, diplomacy, and religious rivalry. Wars fought and treaties signed were thus not the only indexes of political negotiation in the early modern world. Tracking diplomatic gifts in this manner reveals rhythms of gifts that testify to their

cardinal role in early modern politics, and sets in motion a fresh contextualization of Islamic cultural and diplomatic history against the background of expanding global trade networks.

Outline of the Book

This book traces the circulation—material, social, and political—of countless gifts as they moved between intersecting cultural spheres in a highly competitive environment—namely, between the Ottoman sultans and Safavid shahs from the early sixteenth century to the opening decades of the seventeenth century. My textual sources range from court chronicles, treasury records, poems, epistolary documents, and ambassadorial reports and travel narratives in a range of languages that mention gifts collectively, in summary, or in full inventories. They were written by people tied to the Ottoman and Safavid courts in differing ways, and therefore they had varying levels of investment in archiving their memories and thoughts.

The visual and material evidence of this study includes a gift in just one case: the *Shahnama of Shah Tahmasp*. Counterbalancing the significance and fame of that now-dispersed illustrated manuscript—described, as we will see, as one of the most sumptuous works of art ever produced anywhere, anytime—other gifts studied in this book can be accessed only through comparisons to similar objects that have survived to the present day. However, we are fortunate in having access to a unique visual collection of sources of a very different kind: manuscript paintings that recount the arrival and presentation of Safavid gifts at the Ottoman court. Far more than a visual documentation of gifts displayed before the sultan, these images contain specific iconographic details that comment on imperial politics and imbalances of power. Still other gifts discussed in the pages below almost completely elude our attempts to define them, either because they are associated with production techniques that are no longer known or ascribed physical characteristics such as colors that are difficult to translate. Yet others are listed as materials, such as heron feathers or turquoise stones, that would then be arranged and altered so they would form parts of newly made objects.

Some gifts confirm scholarly and popular expectations of the kinds of objects that were typically exchanged between early modern Muslim rulers: textiles, manuscripts, turbans, swords, camels, horses, diamonds, carpets and so forth.[58] Such sumptuous awe-inspiring courtly things also filled spaces of recent exhibitions on cross-cultural exchange and gifting between and across premodern Muslim courts (figs. 0.11, 0.12, and 0.13). Other gifts challenge our expectations. Walrus ivory or tusks of various animals are not immediately associated with the Ottoman and Safavid courts, for example; but as we will see, many materials and objects with earlier historical origins, and from far outside the territories of the two empires in question, got



FIGURE 0.12. Installation photograph, *Gifts of the Sultan: The Arts of Giving at the Islamic Courts*. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, June 5–September 5, 2011. © Museum Associates/LACMA.



FIGURE 0.13. Installation photograph, *Gifts of the Sultan: The Arts of Giving at the Islamic Courts*. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, June 5–September 5, 2011. © Museum Associates/LACMA.

caught up in their exchanges.[59] Such unexpected gifts contest now-standard art historical taxonomies and force us to confront our contextual boundaries: what we take as our object of study in early modern Muslim courts, and what we then neglect.

Asymmetries dominate our story. Most gifts only traveled one way: from the Safavid shah to the Ottoman sultan. Sometimes, they came in enormous quantities, and sometimes only a handful of gifts were dispatched. This historical case stands in opposition to anthropologist Marcel Mauss's influential cyclical theory of the gift. In *Essai sur le don*, Mauss famously places gifts within a system of total prestations (*système des prestations totales*) that spans all aspects of society. The giving of gifts is thus defined as a social obligation that binds the givers and receivers of gifts in a circular relationship: "Total prestation does not bring with it only the obligation to return the gifts (*cadeaux*) received; it presupposes two others, of equal importance: the obligation to give them, on the one hand, and the obligation to receive them, on the other."[60] Art historians have indeed confirmed the application of these ideas in a range of contexts. The exchanges between the Ottoman and Safavid courts suggest, differently, an asymmetrical and noncyclical dynamic, one that forces us to refine the gift-countergift paradigm. We will return to this paradigm and how it might shift in the light of these exchanges in the epilogue.

Taking all contact as a form of exchange, I highlight rather than obliterate conceptual and historical imbalances.[61] In the absence of gifts themselves, I track their flows, weighing them against other gifts in each group, and against what was gifted before and after. Historical context foregrounds this relational approach, for letters rulers wrote each other were often generic, and court chronicles frequently glossed over gifts. How then were those gifts perceived? What meanings did they carry? And what reactions did they incite? According to Marcel Mauss, giving could convey both vengeance and friendship. While the obligation to give was a means to achieve solidarity among different tribes, the obligation to reciprocate could provoke competition and rivalry. In a case where visual and material remains of gifts on most occasions have not survived, I weave patterns of exchanges into a well-grounded historical context. Gifts thus illuminate religious and political interaction in the early modern Islamic world as we follow their shadows and historically locate them in their broad rhythms.

Spanning the early sixteenth century to the opening decades of the seventeenth century, I examine specific offerings, or a series of ceremonial exchanges, in roughly chronological order. Each chapter highlights the potential and actual movement of objects to illuminate the complex and multivalent relationship between two rival empires and provides visual and material clues about how objects functioned as cultural and diplomatic mediators in the early modern Muslim world. Note that this is not intended to

be a study that comprehensively chronicles all of the exchanges between the two courts. Instead, each chapter focuses on a particular ceremonial exchange or a set of exchanges that has been selected because of its special resonance. This book thus zooms in and out of historical episodes of exchange, highlighting a different method of studying exchanges and encounters and demonstrating how gifts, even in their physical absence, allow new histories of art to be written.

A reader with knowledge of these courts will note that there are significant episodes of encounters and exchanges that are discussed but not examined in detail. The escapes of a Safavid in 1547 and an Ottoman prince to their rival courts in 1559, for example, were each followed by intense exchanges of letters and presentations of many gifts. These episodes, however, are conceptually very different from the types of encounters examined in this book. They represent extraordinary instances of dynastic crises, periods of a state of exception in which the exchanges of gifts were governed by a different mode of negotiation, and thus stand as exceptional cases. Additionally, sizeable embassies that carried large amounts of gifts, for example in 1576 on the occasion of a sultanic enthronement or in 1582 for a circumcision festival, are analyzed across later chapters but are not each dissected separately. Rather than departing from any single encounter, my questions about these gifts necessitate relational discussion and analysis of various exchanges.

The most famous gift of the Ottoman-Safavid encounter—indeed, in Islamic art—is the *Shahnama of Shah Tahmasp*. The gifting of that manuscript, together with an ancient Qurʾan, many carpets, a magnificent tent, and tens of falcons, in this reading, was culturally competitive, even as the Safavid shah extended a remarkably submissive political message. This episode forms the thematic crux of the book, and I examine it in chapter 2. As mentioned, though, no exchange discussed herein stands alone, even one of such resonance as the *Shahnama of Shah Tahmasp*.

To preface the story of that remarkable book and its theatrical gifting, I turn in the first chapter to the earliest encounters between the two courts. There, we uncover a turning point in which previously unnoticed courteous and balanced exchanges turn competitive and discordant, giving way to an enduring asymmetry. The second chapter follows the Safavid embassy that accompanied many sumptuous gifts to the newly enthroned Sultan Selim II, amongst them the *Shahnama of Shah Tahmasp*. Using familiar and previously unknown sources, it then interprets the gifting of Tahmasp's *Shahnama* as a signifier of sophisticated royal power, the kind of object that acquired currency when set in motion, especially when exchanged between sovereigns. Specific visual clues from the manuscript itself show that the gift proudly declared its original owner's strong Twelver Shiʿi identity and underscored his status as a learned patron of the arts—thus placing him in a position of

cultural superiority to the Ottoman sultan, even as he presented his gift as an act of political submission.

Thus, following an interpretation based on old and new sources on a single embassy—the one that carried the famous *Shahnama of Shah Tahmasp* in 1568—the third chapter examines a unique group of Ottoman manuscript paintings from subsequent decades, which display Safavid gifts before Ottoman sultans. Ultimately, repetition and sameness act as visual devices—against truth—to fashion an image of the sultan as king of the world. The next chapter takes as its point of departure a prince-gift. Toward the end of the sixteenth century, ever-increasing Safavid gifts came to be the norm of exchange. But the child prince singlehandedly came to signal Safavid obedience, at the expense of the shah's material gifts.

The final chapter identifies new signposts in the Ottoman-Safavid exchange etiquette. The syntax and meaning of gifts completely transformed when a commercial element was introduced into the two courts' military and ideological struggles in the early seventeenth century. During this time, Safavid silk became the most promoted, and the most desired, gift. Just as art, politics, and trade converged against the backdrop of an emerging globalized economy, gifts distinctively reveal new concepts of power, legitimacy, and world order from the perspective of these two powerful Islamic empires.

1

Scandal and Decorum

After this, the Sophi sent legates to the Turk in Amasia, with a sceptre of gold ornamented with jewels, a saddle, and a sword likewise covered with jewels, and a letter, saying: "We, Ismael, Lord of Persia, herewith send you these regal presents, equal in value to your realm; if you are a man, keep them well, as I shall come and take them back, and not them only, but also your throne and life." Selim hearing this wished to put the ambassadors to death, but his Pashas dissuaded him, and so contenting himself with cutting off their noses and ears he let them go, saying: "Tell your master that I treat him as a dog, and that he may do his worst."

GIOVAN MARIA ANGIOLELLO, *A Short Narrative of the Life and Acts of the King Ussun Cassano*

According to the Venetian author Giovanni Maria Angiolello, this exchange of insults took place at the Ottoman camp in the Anatolian city of Amasya just a few months after the historic Ottoman-Safavid war at Chaldiran (fig. 1.1).[1] At this first major battle between the two empires in August 1514, armies of the Ottoman sultan Selim I (r. 1512–20) spectacularly defeated Shah Ismaʿil (r. 1501–24), the young and charismatic king and founder of the Safavid dynasty.[2] In the lead-up to their famous confrontation, the two rulers indeed sent each other provocative letters accompanied by disgraceful objects as gifts. In each instance, objects played a key role as Selim and Ismaʿil challenged one another's religious orientation, political legitimacy, and masculinity. Even though these gifts are no longer extant, this highly



FIGURE 1.1. The Battle of Chaldiran. Opaque pigments on paper. Qajar Iran, nineteenth century. Private collection. Photo © Christie's Images/Bridgeman Images.

aggressive dialogue in the prelude to conflict is well-attested in a variety of contemporary Ottoman and Safavid sources. However, no mention of such a daring exchange as related by Angiolello in the fall of 1514, after the Battle of Chaldiran, exists in those sources.

In reality, Isma'il never sent Selim a collection of courtly objects, whose collective value he weighed against the value of the lands under the sultan's rule. In 1514, Selim provoked Isma'il more than one time, and dared him to war as he marched east with his armies. "If you are a man," he wrote, "step out onto the field [and fight]!"[3] In response, the Safavid king on one occasion ironically declared he did not believe the sultan could be responsible for such belligerence. Shah Isma'il explained further that he was sending with his ambassador a gift of a golden casket filled with opium for the consumption of Selim's scribes, who must have written the sultan's letters under the influence.

The Battle of Chaldiran appears imminently in historical scholarship. Guided by questions about war tactics, military organization, and technology, historians continue to discuss the significance of this war to reflect on Selim's victory and Isma'il's defeat.[4] Most often, references to exchanges of

insulting words and objects between Selim and Ismaʿil are secondary to the main discussion and appear only sporadically within this corpus. Sensibly, art historians have predominantly concerned themselves with the aftermath of 1514, rather than the war itself. Indeed, that moment marks a watershed in the history of early modern court culture, for the Ottoman victory mobilized an important group of objects and people.[5] After Chaldiran, many artists and a large booty from Tabriz arrived in Constantinople. These artist-designers and artisans from the Safavid side transformed artistic production at the Ottoman court for half a century.[6] Furthermore, some of the objects brought by Sultan Selim to his court from Tabriz might have been those inscribed with the name of Shah Ismaʿil. These have since been preserved in the royal treasury, and a selection of them can still be seen on display at the Topkapı Palace Museum today.[7]

Historical narratives on the establishment of Ottoman-Safavid relations focus overwhelmingly on the battle fought between Sultan Selim's and Shah Ismaʿil's armies. Counterbalancing modern scholarship's emphasis on Chaldiran, my discussion begins with and uncovers the earliest exchanges between Shah Ismaʿil and his contemporary Ottoman sultan Bayezid II (r. 1481–1512). This story turns our attention to gifts that mediated diplomatic conversation, but have remained obscure because they no longer exist and they appear as ordinary and predictable in the historical record, and therefore insignificant.

Yet a closer reading of sources unearths an unusual story in early modern diplomacy, seen from the point of view of diplomatic gifts. Even though the initial Ottoman-Safavid dialogue was governed by refined and balanced exchanges, scandal and crisis remarkably hovered as a backdrop to diplomacy. Then, after Sultan Selim's accession to the throne in 1512, exchanges between the two courts turned inflammatory, provoked by agonistic gifts.[8] Gifts themselves became the scandal. The mobility of objects during this period thus shaped politics in a significant way. Political and military potency was tested at that time by dispatches of contentious letters accompanied by openly insulting objects as a prelude to conflict. Each ruler challenged his adversary's masculinity, religious orientation, and legitimacy around 1514, when Selim defeated Ismaʿil in war.

None of the objects exchanged by Selim and Ismaʿil have survived to our time. Neither any visual record nor representation of the exchanges exists. But the disappearance of these gifts from our view does not justify their invisibility in the history of early modern art and diplomacy. Rather than straightforward accessories to diplomacy, this chapter shows how these long-gone gifts served as significant participants to the interchange.

The forgotten gifts of the Ottoman-Safavid dialogue demonstrate how wars fought and territories lost and won were not the sole index of victory in the early modern Islamic world. Exchanges of visually dazzling, culturally

significant, and scandalously inappropriate objects as gifts were critical to peace and conflict as their memories continued to set the tone for the visual and material dialogue between the Ottoman and Safavid courts for centuries to come.

A Self-Professed Messiah and the Wise Old Sultan

When Ismaʿil declared himself king in 1501, he was only fourteen years old (fig. 1.2). But rather than a crown prince destined for the throne, he was a Sufi spiritual guide (*pīr* or *murshīd*); leader of the Safavid mystical order whose roots went back to the fourteenth century. When Ismaʿil rose to power, meanwhile, the Ottomans had established themselves as a large empire ruling from Constantinople. Originally formed as a clan dynasty supported by mystic-warriors at the beginning of the fourteenth century in western Anatolia, they ruled as Muslim emperors over territories that significantly overlapped with those of Byzantium at its height by the beginning of the sixteenth century.



FIGURE 1.2. Portrait of Shah Ismaʿil. Inscribed "Ismael Sophy Rex Pers." Oil on canvas. Cristofano dell'Altissimo (1525–1605). Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence (5-1890).

Counteracting the Sunni origins of the order, Ismaʿil declared Twelver Shiʿism as the official religion of his new state.[9] Ismaʿil harmonized his newfound claim to temporal rule with this new religious identity; and his claim to universal Islamic sovereignty was invigorated by his descent from the Prophet's family through ʿAli ibn Abi Talib, Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law. Even more radical among the actions of the young king was his active self-promotion as a messiah.[10] In his collection of poetry, Ismaʿil paralleled himself with many ideal kings, prophets, and heroes. Some of his assertions were so bold and extreme that he even fashioned himself as ʿAli ibn Abi Talib and God himself. Ismaʿil wrote: "Prostrate thyself! Pander not to Satan! Adam has put on new clothes, God has come, God has come!"[11]

These radical statements were meaningful beyond the persona of the king himself, for they compelled his following to convert to Ismaʿil's version of Shiʿism.[12] Within just a few years, Ismaʿil amassed a large and influential following, often referred to as the *qizilbash* (redheads).[13] These devotee-soldiers were so certain of the young king's infallibility that they went to war behind him without armor, for they believed Ismaʿil was invincible.[14]

Ismaʿil's charismatic and absolute power appropriately adhered to his divinely ordained character. But the young king also drew a large following because he appeared as a perfect human being and a pinnacle of social justice. Ismaʿil was selflessly generous. "And when he is given cash," noted Francesco Contarini, the Venetian *bailo* to Constantinople, in 1502, "he distributes all of it to his followers in need, and keeps nothing to himself."[15] Often it is noted that Ismaʿil's treasury was completely empty because rather than amassing riches, he apportioned everything back to his loyal followers and soldiers. The Venetian Giovanni Maria Angiolello, who was possibly in Ismaʿil's army at the time, notes that after conquering an affluent fortress, "Ismaʿil gave all of the wealth they found in the place to his soldiers. Hence, the fame was spread abroad, that Ismael, the son of Sechaidar, had recovered his dominions, and that his liberality to his men made them devoted to him; and an almost incredible number of people joined him."[16]

Indeed, in the early 1500s, news of Shah Ismaʿil's invincibility and exponentially growing fame had spread quickly far and wide. In reports to Venice dated as early as 1501, he is referred to as a "new prophet" (*novo profeta*). Inspiring much hope and skepticism all around Europe, the idea that Ismaʿil might finally be able to put a stop to Ottoman expansion rapidly became popular.[17] Echoes of Ismaʿil's phenomenal and charismatic rulership could be found at the Florentine Carnival of 1503, for example, just two years after his accession to power. In a song chanted by the poor, Ismaʿil appeared as the anticipated savior to soon arrive and end social injustice: "And we are pretty certain / That the Sophy [Ismaʿil] will come soon / Who will take from one and give to another / Leveling off every sign of wealth / And then it will become clear / Who has sense and prudence."[18]



FIGURE 1.3. Portrait of Bayezid II. Oil on canvas. Anonymous painter from Verona. Venice, 1578 or later. Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Staatsgalerie in der Residenz Würzburg, Munich (2246). Image in the public domain. CC BY-SA 4.0.

With no particular sign of tumult or panic, the Ottoman reception of Ismaʿil's rise to power seems to err on the side of caution and patience, as historians often have noted. In this regard, the contemporary Ottoman ruler Bayezid II is often dismissed as fainthearted and inefficient, partly because Bayezid never confronted the upstart shah on the battlefield (fig. 1.3).[19] While indeed never provoked to war, that sultan took firm measures to counteract the rapid expansion of the Safavid movement, including persecution and forced migration of the Safavid order's followers. Immediately after Ismaʿil's self-declaration as a messianic leader of a politically autonomous Twelver Shiʿi state in 1501, for example, the sultan sent orders to local governors for the immediate execution of Ismaʿil's followers captured in Anatolia.[20] News of Bayezid's brutal reaction to Ismaʿil's growing fame on Ottoman territory rapidly reached as far as the city of Mainz in Germany. A broadsheet published there in July 1502 records: "It is also reported from Constantinople that the Turk burnt over one hundred houses and farms with men, women, and children of those who had praised this prophet and issued an order and command in all his lands that whoever talks about this prophet will have his head taken off."[21] Indeed, in the summer of 1502, Bayezid ordered the closing

of the border, to block Ottoman subjects' movement into lands under Ismaʿil's rule in order to prevent decrease in populations cultivating land and tax evasion, and Ismaʿil's supporters in Anatolia were expelled and resettled in the newly conquered Morea.[22]

In response, in one of the earliest correspondences between the shah and the sultan, Ismaʿil asks Bayezid to allow his followers living under Ottoman rule to safely cross the border when they wished to visit the center of the Safavid order, the shrine of Shaikh Ṣafī in Ardabil. While accepting this request, however, Bayezid points out that those people should return to Anatolia, and the pilgrimage should not be used as an excuse for illegal economic activity.[23] This early correspondence might have been carried by a small embassy from Ismaʿil to Sultan Bayezid. A Venetian account from September 1502 mentions, for example, a Safavid ambassador, whom the sultan refused to grant audience in Constantinople.[24] The sultan's indifference, however, does not nearly compare to the insolence toward Bayezid's ambassador at Ismaʿil's own court in 1504/5.

The Sight of Corpses Ablaze

The very first sizeable embassy carrying numerous valuable gifts exchanged between the Ottoman and Safavid courts witnessed a horrendous execution. The sight of corpses ablaze, according to two of the earliest sources of Safavid history, terrified the Ottoman ambassador Muhammed Çavuş Balaban in the winter of 1504/5 in Isfahan. This embassy was dispatched by Sultan Bayezid II when news of Ismaʿil's military successes in Iraq and Fars came to be heard in the west. The delegation carried Bayezid's letters and gifts, and was received by Shah Ismaʿil while at winter quarters (*qishlaq*) in Isfahan. "The burning of Husayn Kia's body and Muhammad Kura was carried out in that emissary's presence," writes historian Ghiyāṯ al-Dīn Khvāndamīr in his *Ḥabīb al-Siyar* (Beloved of careers), "and as a consequence [the ambassador] returned to his homeland in fear and trembling to report the shah's wrath to Ildīrīm Bayezid."[25]

The two insurgents in question, Husain Kia Chulavi and Muhammad Kurra, were former governors, who had each risen in armed rebellion against the shah, and after being defeated at different locations, were each held prisoner in iron cages to be displayed in public until their death.[26] Their slow suffering prolonged their punishment, serving at the same time as a sign of things to come for whoever considered challenging Ismaʿil's authority.

The imprisonment of Husain Kia is depicted in a copy of Qāsimī's *Shāhnāma-i Ismāʿīl* (Book of kings of Ismaʿil), a versified epic-history of the reign of Ismaʿil (fig. 1.4). The painting, dated to about 1540, presents a scene of the aftermath of Ismaʿil's victory in Firuzkuh, just outside of Ustā, the largest fort in lands previously commanded over by Husain Kia: After



FIGURE 1.4. Page from Muhammad Qāsim Gunābādī (Qāsimī), *Shāhnāma-i Ismāʿīl*. The Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, MS. Elliot 328, fol. 91a. CC-BY-NC 4.0.

surrendering to Ismaʿil's forces, Kia has been placed in a large iron cage, one that he had designed as a tool of punishment for his own enemies. In the middle ground, Kia is seen next to the fortress inside the cage, suspended on a long chain, as if hung from the sky. In the foreground, on the left, we see two rebels chained around their necks, subjugated by one of Ismaʿil's followers.

On the lower right is the most shocking of the punishments performed in the painting: a man is being roasted as a Safavid soldier turns the spit (fig. 1.5). Meanwhile, Shah Ismaʿil observes this entire scene seated in a relaxed pose



FIGURE 1.5. Page from *Shāhnāma-i Ismāʿīl*, detail.

on his throne on the upper right.[27] The man on the spit is none other than a supporter of Kia named Murad Beg, whose gruesome death is narrated in Safavid sources. After the fortress fell that day, Qāżī Aḥmad Ghaffārī writes, "the soldiers roasted Murad Beg to serve as a public example to others."[28] Some sources record that Ismaʿil went so far as asking his followers to eat Murad Beg's roasted flesh, to which request they complied until "neither flesh nor bones remained."[29]

Although the Ottoman embassy was not present during this particular public punishment, it witnessed a similar one: the shah's final vengeance on Husain Kia, executed on his dead body, several months later in Isfahan. In the meantime, Ismaʿil had moved south to Yazd from Mazandaran, and at Abarqūh he had defeated Muhammad Kurra, who was ordered to be confined similarly in a large cage. When Ismaʿil had then moved on to Isfahan, and before the eyes of the Ottoman ambassador Muhammed Çavuş Balaban, "the shah had his men gather a lot of firewood in the playing field in Isfahan, the wood was torched, and Kura and his liegemen Abdi Beg had brought from Abarqūh were burned to death."[30]

The story of the Ottoman ambassador's witnessing of that atrocious event is briefly mentioned in some sixteenth-century sources, while it is completely absent in others.[31] Yet the ambassador's horror at the burning of Kurra and Kia's corpses is confirmed in Amīnī Haravī's *Futūḥāt-i Shāhī* (Royal victories), with citations from the Qurʾan on punishment by fire:

> The Ottoman ambassadors were held at the station of [Qurʾan 111:3] *Soon he will enter the blazing fire* and admonishers from among the highest nobles raised over their heads the cry of dread and terror from conflagration of [92:14–6] *I warn you of a blazing fire, which none shall enter except the most wretched—he who impugns and turns his back*. Thus smoke from the fiery torment of that repulsed group of people opened the floodgates of blood from the eyes of the ambassadors, and the flaring fire of astonishment rose from their hearts and minds over the sky of anxiety like piercing flames.[32]

This shocking end to the Ottoman embassy's mission is intensified by the courtliness of its treatment prior to that time. According to the *Royal Victories* of Amīnī Haravī, special servants were appointed to work for the ambassador at his designated residence in Isfahan, which was decorated from top to bottom beautifully with "admirable carpets," silk fabrics, and gold-woven satins. No expense was spared for the comfort of the ambassador, whose kitchen expenses were also provided by the shah.[33] As such, the embassy was accommodated in parallel fashion to significant embassies arriving at the sultan's court in Constantinople. Similar to Ottoman diplomatic custom, furthermore, following a feast Ismaʿil gave audience at court to Muhammed

Çavuş, who respectfully kissed his hand and presented Bayezid's letter to him.[34]

In this letter, Sultan Bayezid congratulates Ismaʿil on his accession to the throne and acknowledges his recent requests. At the same time, Bayezid assumes an admonitory tone in his message. After reproachfully pointing out that the sultan would have preferred to learn about Ismaʿil's enthronement through direct royal letters, Bayezid counsels the young king on several significant issues by enumerating a few "disinterested admonitions" (*vaṣāyā-yi bīgharażāna*). The letter criticizes first Ismaʿil's adoption of Shiʿism: "It is unnecessary to practice and disseminate a sect contrary to the beliefs of the majority of Muslims." Demanding Ismaʿil to cease persecuting Muslims, the sultan warns Ismaʿil that his actions will make Muslims enemies to one another and will result in the conquest of those territories by the adversaries of religion. Third, the letter instructs Ismaʿil to preserve religious monuments and houses of worship: "Do not let ignorant Sufis be led astray to demolish, ruin, or take by force graves, mosques, shrines, and Sufi establishments, and other institutions of kings, grandees, and ancient religious scholars. For those testify to and stand for the sovereignty of Islam in those lands, and they honor celebrated men and the community of the beloved of God [Prophet Muhammad]." Finally, the sultan reprimands Ismaʿil by lecturing him on the land and people of Iran and how to govern them: "Fourth, inculcating justice and fairness into the hearts of people is more effective than violence and bloodshed. Capture people's hearts with sincerity and upright conduct, do not offend anyone! Avoid actions that will drive people out of their homeland; for the cultivation of that land and the permanency of that state depends on the satisfaction of its people with the government. As long as Iranians remained satisfied with the rule of the Turkish Aq Qoyunlu tribe, that sovereign could not easily conquer it."[35]

Even though Ismaʿil's grandfather and father had married Aq Qoyunlu (White Sheep) princesses and effectively taken advantage of their ties to that royal family to claim temporal authority, Ismaʿil fought the Aq Qoyunlu, eventually ending their rule in Iran. Ismaʿil's offensive against that Turkoman confederation went beyond military defeat and conquest. It is reported that during the first years of his rule, Ismaʿil's followers "sowed terror among the largely Sunni inhabitants, forcing people to condemn the first three caliphs in public and desecrating the graves of Aq Qoyunlu rulers."[36] But Ismaʿil's "militant religious separatism" was cultivated by an unremitting battle with any and all resistance to his authority, Sunni and Shiʿi.[37] Indeed, the rebel governor Husain Kia whose body was set on fire before the Ottoman ambassador was a Shiʿi. The contemporary author Khvāndamīr relates the scale and extent of Ismaʿil's punishment after the conquest of the fortress held by Kia and his followers: "As before, a general massacre was ordered, and not a soul was left alive."[38]

Thus, Bayezid's letter disputes Ismaʿil's political and religious legitimacy by stressing his unjustified suppression of opposition to his authority in material and symbolic terms. These included frequent persecutions of Ismaʿil's adversaries regardless of religious orientation, and the destruction of sacred sites, such as the tombs of the Sunni jurist Abu Hanifa (d. 767) and the poet Jami (d. 1492).[39] More acrimoniously, the very last argument advanced by the sultan asserts that Ismaʿil was able to overpower large territories in Iran and amass a remarkable following because of a power vacuum rather than the appeal of his superior abilities and the force of his allure. Perhaps it was this veiled condemnation that sparked Ismaʿil's fury at the end of the Ottoman embassy's visit to Isfahan that led the shah to order them to behold one of his merciless punishments performed as a public spectacle.

Gifts of Affection

Within this obscure and peculiar unfolding of events, what role did gifts play? The burning of Ismaʿil's adversaries before the Ottoman embassy was unprecedented, unanticipated, and completely inappropriate by any measure of the period's diplomatic culture. And yet in Isfahan in the winter of 1504/5, an exchange of diplomatic gifts took place in complete accordance with early modern diplomatic protocol and etiquette. According to historian Khvāndamīr, the Ottoman ambassador had come "bearing gifts and delivering a message of sincerity and unity from the caesar [Bayezid II]."[40] The gifts were presented, writes Amīnī Haravī, following the ambassador's audience with Ismaʿil: "And after the presentation of the letter, they presented coveted gifts, ranging from horses fast as the wind, and gold-woven fabrics, and unlimited amounts of cash, and things worthy of being presented to great sultans, to the threshold of heaven." Shah Ismaʿil accepted each one of these, relates the same author, with deep affection and friendship.[41]

The atrocity of the burning of Ismaʿil's adversaries before the eyes of the Ottomans in Isfahan clashes with the diplomatic cordiality of the objects entrusted to the ambassador when he was granted permission to leave. A friendly letter of response was written for Sultan Bayezid, according to Amīnī Haravī, and Muhammed Çavuş was given gifts whose amount equaled more than twice what he had brought Shah Ismaʿil. Thus, the Safavid king was engaging in a competitive exchange with the sultan without being aggressive, an act entirely kingly within early modern diplomacy. Appropriately, Ismaʿil also showered the ambassador with favors.

The shah's gifts to Muhammed Çavuş included a *tāj* (Safavid headdress), a robe of honor, a gold dagger belt encrusted with jewels, a horse, and a gold saddle.[42] More than emblematic courtly favors, this specific group of objects were attributes that materially signified loyalty and devotion to the Safavid cause. The distinct Safavid headdress is often noted as a marker of



FIGURE 1.6. Prince and page. Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper. Topkapı Palace Museum Library, Istanbul, H. 2154, 121b. Photo © Milli Saraylar İdaresi Başkanlığı.

Safavid identity (fig. 1.6). Represented in sources as a skullcap with a tall red extension around which the turban would be wound, it was introduced in that form by Isma'il's father Haydar following a vision of 'Ali ibn Abi Talib. With this miraculous intervention, the previous Safavid headdress was not just replaced by a new one; its associations shifted from pure religious devotion to include complete allegiance to the shah. "As the Safavid order became militarized," writes Azfar Moin, "this practice was extended into the political domain. To become a partner in the Safavid project, one had to replace one's headgear with the Safavid hat."[43] The wearing of the Safavid *tāj* presented by the shah had become synonymous with being his vassal by 1540. That year,

an Uzbek ruler wrote to the shah "saying he wished to be his vassal and put on his cap."

In addition to the headdress, all the other gifts for Sultan Bayezid's ambassador are among what Ismaʿil routinely gave his most devoted followers, who were expected to wear them on their body. The Venetian Michele Membré, who was at the court of Ismaʿil's son about three decades after, wrote further that the bestowal of these attributes was reserved only for the shah: "And none can wear a velvet *tāj* unless the Shah gives it, nor have a belt or flask of gold, nor plumes on the head, nor a sword with a gold scabbard."[44]

An interesting counterpoint to the burning of Kia and Kurra is a dissident by the name of Mantash, who similarly rebelled, held a fortress, and fought Ismaʿil's soldiers around 1500, but later repented and asked for the shah's forgiveness: "After being allowed to kiss the ground in homage, [Mantash] apologized for his misconduct, and the shah pardoned him and gave him a golden crown (*tāj*), a special robe of honor, a jewel-studded belt and fine horses. Mantash swore to be a devoted servant and was allowed to return to his stronghold."[45] Significantly, Mantash's reward matched precisely with the gifts presented to the Ottoman ambassador.

Having witnessed therefore the type of punishment that awaited those rejecting the new king's authority in the winter of 1504/5, the Ottoman ambassador was also given a taste of the rewards for joining Ismaʿil's ranks with these gifts. What Muhammed Çavuş accepted were a group of objects highly coveted by the followers of Ismaʿil, indexing association with the Safavid cause and membership in the Safavid political and military entity. Their gifting to a foreigner might be interpreted as a subtle and refined invitation, therefore, to join the shah. But alternatively, if the sultan's ambassador understood their meaning as more than a random selection of materially valuable courtly objects and did not admire Ismaʿil the same way his devotees did, he might have taken them as insulting.

Insolent Diplomacy, Decorous Gifts

Outrageous as the treatment of the Ottoman embassy was in Isfahan in the winter of 1504/5, it was in fact only an overture to what was to come. A close look into numerous embassies exchanged thereafter between Sultan Bayezid II and Shah Ismaʿil uncovers many other shocking events, reckless utterances, and even some unusual gifts. This largely forgotten story encompasses various situations in which kings and ambassadors from both sides faced humiliating situations: kings disrespected by ambassadors, ambassadors forced to eat pork and drink wine (both forbidden by religion) and even asked to commit murder in one case. But there is also a parallel story that unfolds amid these instances of crisis. All along, remarkably, diplomatic gifts continued to be exchanged graciously between Bayezid and Ismaʿil. Thus, this period

emerges as an exceptional one. It was only during this time that diplomatic gifts were truly exchanged between the Ottomans and the Safavids in a balanced and ceremonious manner. But what makes them truly extraordinary is that they persisted through a continuous series of crises.

In the summer of 1505, soon after the return of Muhammed Çavuş Balaban from Isfahan, a large Safavid embassy arrived in Constantinople. But according to reports that reached Venice shortly thereafter, Bayezid refused to give audience to Ismaʿil's ambassador. Just as historian Khvāndamīr predicted, then, the Ottoman ambassador must have conveyed Ismaʿil's mistreatment of him to Sultan Bayezid, even though the burning of Ismaʿil's adversaries is absent from contemporary sources written in Constantinople.[46] All the same, Venetian reports uncover a deeper crisis. They note that Ismaʿil's ambassador retaliated by disrespecting the sultan, which according to one account, almost cost him his life:

> The reason for the arrival [of this embassy] was unknown, though it was commonly said that it was to demand Trabzon. And at the departure of this ambassador, [Sultan Bayezid] having granted him a lot of money, which the said ambassador did not want to accept, throwing them away, and saying, "My king is not in need of money, but wants the occupied lands that he is entitled to," throwing on the ground a great quantity of coins minted by the mentioned shah. A great uproar arose, and almost led to the ambassador's execution together with all of his men. And only with great effort could he avoid it; leaving all of the possessions he had in his residence, he was sent away on the boat immediately through the shortest way.[47]

Amid crisis, nevertheless, gifts were exchanged cordially between the shah and the sultan. Sources note that this embassy had arrived with more than one hundred men on horseback, "carrying beautiful presents with four elephants."[48] And, before his departure from Constantinople, the ambassador was presented a range of gifts, as recorded in Sultan Bayezid's book of royal donations. These consist of a generous sum of cash and other objects of prestige. Most importantly, the ambassador received from the sultan 40,000 silver aspers and two high-quality red velvet garments, recorded at the top of the list as a "patterned heavy red European wool velvet surcoat," and a kind of "red European plain velvet garment." In addition, he was given four alloy jugs (fig. 1.7), two silver serving dishes, ten drinking vessels, two Bursa gold-embroidered velvet garments patterned with dots, two Bursa silk and cotton mixed velvet garments, two Bursa velvet garments with fringes, two Amasya dresses of silk brocade, and sable skin. Other individuals in Ahmed Beg's retinue were also given some cash and lower-quality fabrics corresponding to their rank.[49] How are we to interpret these gifts, which remain



FIGURE 1.7. Jug with lid. Gilded silver, c. 1500. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London (15-1894).

only as recorded entries in a gift register? (See appendix 1.) And how did the tension between the shah and the sultan impact the nature of what was given and received?

Significantly, the cash and objects given to Isma'il's ambassador correspond to those gifts presented exclusively to the highest-ranking members of the court, the sultan's immediate family, and eminent ambassadors. Patterns of distribution in Bayezid's book of donations clarify this point. When compared with gifts presented to other ambassadors and high-ranking members of the court, the Safavid ambassador's gifts rise near the top of the strictly hierarchical Ottoman system of gift distribution.

Gifts presented to the Mamluk ambassador Yunus Beg and his retinue the previous summer, for example, correspond closely with what the Safavid ambassador Ahmed Beg received. The two most valuable robes of honor that both ambassadors were given appear very similar. The only difference is that the red-gold velvet surcoat for the Safavid ambassador was identified as "dotted" (*çuḳa'-i Egin an ḳadīfe-i müẕehheb-i benek-i kırmızı-i Firengī*). At



FIGURE 1.8. Italian velvet kaftan. Early sixteenth century. Attributed to Prince Korkud. Topkapı Palace Museum, Istanbul (13/829). Photo © Milli Saraylar İdaresi Başkanlığı.

the same time, Yunus Beg received a lower cash sum of 30,000 aspers, only three-quarters of the money that was given to the Safavid ambassador. While other differences can be detected in amounts of the same items, such as the Bursa velvets and the dishes presented to each ambassador, these lists are very similar. Furthermore, the first two robes of honor presented to both the Safavid and Mamluk ambassadors are precisely those garments distributed on a regular basis to the highest-ranking members of the imperial court, as Hedda Reindl-Kiel has shown. The identification of these two robes as "European (probably Italian)" (*firengī*) velvet is noteworthy for example, as the presentation of a pair of robes of this type was reserved exclusively to those closest to the sultan in the state system or in his extended family (fig. 1.8).[50] Lower-ranking officials were typically given instead fabrics associated with the Ottoman cities of Bursa or Amasya in the early 1500s.[51] Within this highly status-conscious etiquette of exchange, the Safavid ambassador's gifts align therefore with those ambassadors who received the highest amounts of cash and the best quality and number of objects that Sultan Bayezid offered.

Though it might seem counterintuitive, during the years that followed, diplomacy prevailed between the two courts despite a series of crises. In the next few years, Ismaʿil crossed over Ottoman territory to attack a Mamluk vassal, sought to secure the military support of Venice against the sultan, and tried to take advantage of the ongoing Ottoman civil war caused by a major dispute among Bayezid's sons over the succession to the throne.[52] But the shah's increasing aggression did not provoke the sultan into military confrontation. Gifts continued to be exchanged between the two rulers even though there was no shortage of shocking events recorded in contemporary sources. In 1507, for example, Sanudo mentions the following:

> During the same time that Signor Ardeveli [Shah Ismaʿil] sent his ambassador to the Turk [Sultan Bayezid], and he also sent one of his to him. These two ambassadors would have run into each other had they taken the same road. That ambassador of [Bayezid] was received by [Ismaʿil] with approximately ten thousand armed cavalry. And once he arrived, [the shah] organized a most sumptuous meal for him, and made him drink wine and eat pork, forbidden by the law of Muhammad. And at this banquet, some prisoners who had rebelled against him were presented to him; whom that king took, and he gave one to each of the people around him, and especially to the said ambassador. And picking one for himself, saying: Whoever loves me will do as I do! And striking a dagger on his chest, murdered him. And everyone else did the same, especially the ambassador. To whom, after the meal, the shah gave a golden cup, in which he had given him wine to drink, and with many other presents and kindnesses sent him away.[53]

It was also during the same year that Shah Ismaʿil entered Ottoman territory on his way to attack a local ruler between Ottoman and Mamluk territories.[54] Subsequently, Sultan Bayezid sent forces to protect the borders but did not order an assault on Ismaʿil. While the sultan was cautious, the future Ottoman ruler Prince Selim regarded his father's inaction unacceptable. Infuriated, Selim ordered raids on Safavid territories.[55] In response, Ismaʿil sent an embassy to Istanbul in 1508. Stressing that he had no intention of attacking Ottoman territory, the shah explained that all he wanted was "to make peace with [Sultan Bayezid], and his good friendship." Also with this mission, Ismaʿil complained to Bayezid of Prince Selim's actions, and asked that the weapons Selim had taken by force be returned.[56]

During these years, gifts exchanged appear in contemporary records. But nothing about them signals an unfolding political or military escalation due to Ismaʿil's provocations. In 1507, according to Sultan Bayezid's book of imperial donations, Safavid ambassador Bali Beg received a cash sum of 20,000 aspers, while the next year, that amount doubled. Fewer objects are recorded

for 1507, but the gifts presented in 1508 are almost identical to what was given to an earlier Safavid ambassador in 1505.[57] In 1508, the Venetian *bailo* in Constantinople additionally wrote that the Safavid ambassador Seydi Beg was received honorably, and among Shah Ismaʿil's "many gifts" for Sultan Bayezid were approximately seventy-five pieces of high-quality silks, satins, and other kinds of fine textiles. These are recorded as such:

> Presents made from the Sophi [Shah Ismaʿil]'s ambassador to the sultan [Bayezid II]
>
> 40 pieces of damasks in the Persian style, woven with gold flowers
> 30 pieces of satins (*rasi*)
> 15 pieces of fine silk satin fabrics (*talassi*)
> 12 sashes, or kerchiefs to tie around [the waist], very beautiful, each worth 6 or 7 thousand
> Several strips of fine turban cloth[58]

Thus, the gifts exchanged between Shah Ismaʿil and Sultan Bayezid tell a story of cordial exchanges despite events that gesture toward an escalating tension. For example, it was in 1508 that Ismaʿil conquered Baghdad and ordered the destruction of the tombs of legal scholar Abu Hanifa (d. 767), eponym of the Hanefi school of jurisprudence followed by the Ottomans, and of ʿAbd al-Kadir Gilani (d. 1166), founder of the Kadiriyya Sufi order. These important Sunni shrines were only restored after Bayezid's grandson Sultan Süleyman took Baghdad from the Safavids in 1534.[59] In addition, having expressly sought the alliance of Venice against the Ottomans in 1509, Ismaʿil even managed to secure the loyalty of multiple members of Bayezid's own family.[60]

Over against his promise of peace in 1508, therefore, Shah Ismaʿil continued to provoke Sultan Bayezid, who kept on responding in the most congenial manner. This dynamic became most evident around 1510, with Ismaʿil's dispatch of a highly insulting "gift." At the end of that year, Ismaʿil emerged victorious from his battle with the Sunni Uzbek ruler Muhammad Shaybani Khan and conquered all of Khurasan. He then dispatched an embassy to announce his success to the Ottoman court, told by the Safavid historian Ḥasan Beg Rūmlū, as follows: "Then the Shāh commanded that [Muhammad Khan's] wicked head should be cut from off his body, and stuffed with straw, and sent to Sulṭān Bāyazīd of Turkey, and that the bones of his skull should be mounted in gold and fashioned into a cup. And they poured wine into it, and sent it round in the Royal assembly."[61] Although Ismaʿil's dispatch of his defeated enemy's hay-filled scalp to Bayezid is lacking in Ottoman sources, news of it reached further west in the summer of 1511. The Venetian *bailo* Andrea Foscolo wrote:

> As for the ambassador of the Sophì [Shah Ismaʿil], he is still in Constantinople, and is held by guards and not allowed to go out or talk to anyone. It is confirmed, regarding that ambassador, that his king having defeated the king of the greencaps [Uzbeks], and that king having died, only one of his brothers remains. It is said that this ambassador has brought the head of the greencaps, who are the slaves of Tatars, and king of many countries, most of which [Ismaʿil] does not have. It is also related that this ambassador has brought two bags full of salted noses so that everyone may be sure of his victory.[62]

Indeed, Shah Ismaʿil announced his defeat of the Uzbek ruler Muhammad Khan widely, by sending in a similar way parts of his dead body to his other rivals. In June 1511, a Safavid embassy reached Cairo, according to Mamluk historian Ibn Iyas, to present "a copy of the Holy Qurān, a prayer carpet, a crossbow, and a small box. When the box was opened in the presence of the Sultan, they found inside the head of Özbeg Khān. Sultan al-Ghawrī ordered the head to be buried and the crossbow was broken." This unquestionably provoking gift enraged the Mamluk sultan, who responded to Ismaʿil's letter with matching insults, and a year later, news of his order to parade the turbaned heads of defeated Safavid *qizilbash* soldiers through the streets of Cairo were soon heard at Shah Ismaʿil's court.[63]

Bayezid II's response was different. In November 1510, precisely when Ismaʿil defeated Muhammad Shaybani Khan, the Ottoman sultan had sent a certain Hasan Beg to the Safavid court with a large collection of gifts for Shah Ismaʿil (fig. 1.9). These consisted of the highest-quality textiles and other courtly and rare objects in circulation in Constantinople. Importantly, this is an unprecedented offering to the Safavid court of the most gracious gifts that the sultan offered anyone. The most precious items on this unusually long list of gifts are 115 pieces of high-quality textiles in total (including gold-embroidered Italian and Ottoman [Bursa] silk velvets in different colors and patterns), 9 alloy pitchers, 9 silver trays, 9 silver flasks, 5 water pitchers, 29 goblets (of which 2 are indicated as "elegant, with lid" from Hungary, 9 from Dubrovnik, and 9 from Trabzon), 9 pieces of fur, 7 bows, and 9 pieces of walrus ivory (*dendān-ı māhī*).[64] (See appendix 2.)

Most of these are courtly objects routinely given by Bayezid to members of his court, his extended family, governors, vassals, and foreign kings in some combination with other objects from the same set. But careful comparison of this list with others in Bayezid's royal book of donations shows that this collection was unique. To begin, the gifting of certain items in the list was unusual in a diplomatic context. For example, goblets from Hungary only appear as gifts from the sultan to his sons Selim, Korkud, and Şehinşah. Although we may not readily identify such important objects of exchange, a fifteenth-century chalice with later additions (fig. 1.10) might help us imag-

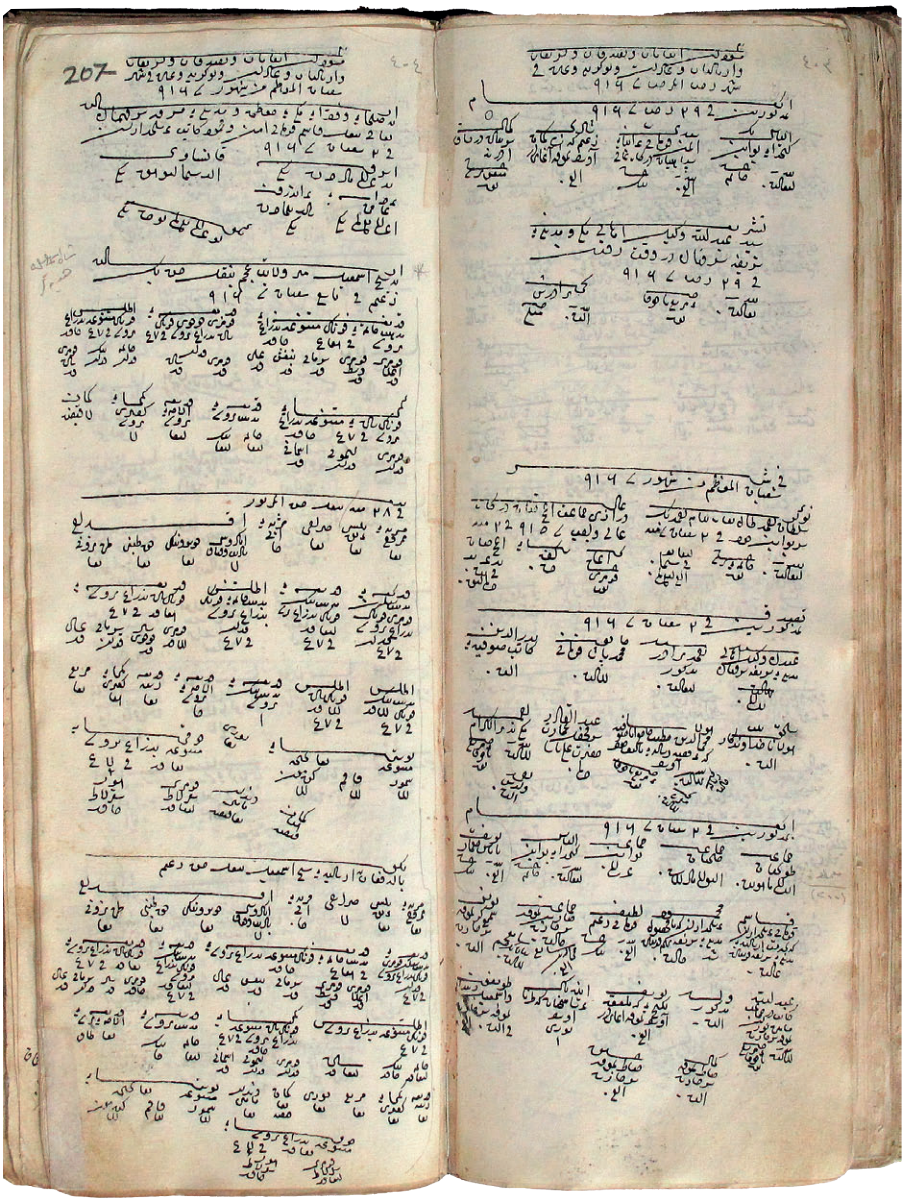


FIGURE 1.9. Pages from Sultan Bayezid II's book of imperial donations. The title of a long entry on the left page reads "Remittance to Shah Ismaʿil, Ruler of the Province of Iran." Istanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi, Atatürk Kitaplığı, Muallim Cevdet, O. 71, 404.

ine what they might have looked like. Furthermore, items such as walrus tusks that likely came to the Ottoman court as gifts were rarely granted by Bayezid as gifts (figs. 1.11 and 1.12). Shah Ismaʿil received nine pieces of this rare object, which was often carved into elaborate dagger handles or belt buckles; it was only given to the Hungarian ambassador a few times by Bayezid, and each time, only one piece was given.[65] Similarly, other objects



FIGURE 1.10. Lidded cup with a lansquenet. Gilded silver, enamel, c. 1510. 32 cm × 13.5 cm. Ludwig Krug (1489/90–1532). Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien, KHM-Museumsverband (Kunstkammer, 979).

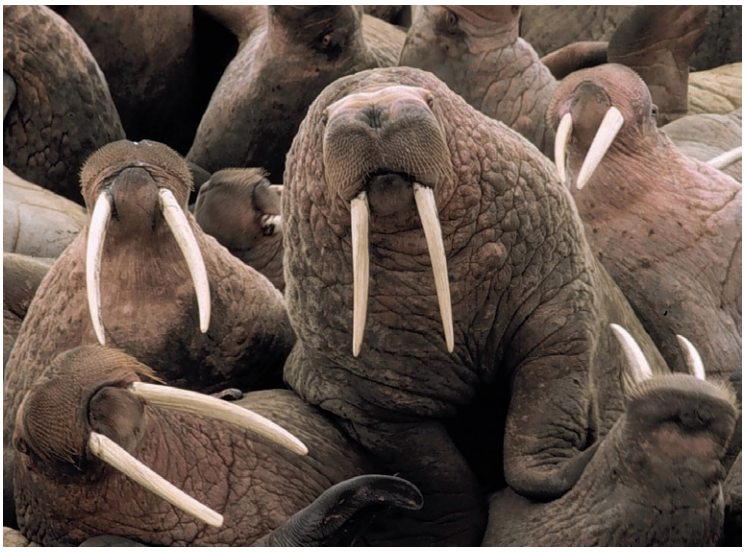




FIGURE 1.11. (*top*) Pacific walrus at Cape Peirce. Published by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Image in the public domain. Published online: https://digitalmedia.fws.gov/digital/collection/natdiglib/id/2999.

FIGURE 1.12. (*bottom*) Steel knife with a handle of carved walrus tusk ivory. The David Collection, Copenhagen (Inv. 9/2005). Photo by Pernille Klemp.

also appear significantly higher in their quantities than others. The quality, variety, and the total sum of textiles are quite significant, for instance. Comparable amounts were only dispatched to members of the sultan's family on special occasions, such as weddings. Thus, the spectrum and the quantities of Bayezid's gifts to Ismaʿil in 1510 trumps any other group of objects that the sultan granted anyone in or outside his court, in a diplomatic context or otherwise.

And yet Shah Ismaʿil's reaction to this extraordinary generosity was the dispatch of Uzbek Muhammad Khan's stuffed head to Sultan Bayezid a few months later as we have seen. Unlike the Mamluk sultan, however, Bayezid did not respond to Ismaʿil's intimidation with a corresponding hostile gift. The sultan is recorded to have granted a Safavid ambassador in August 1511

a group of gifts and cash that match exactly what was given to the Safavid envoy Ahmed Beg six years earlier in 1505, following a similarly shocking event that had terrified the Ottoman envoy at Ismaʿil's court.[66]

Thus, if provocation held sway over Shah Ismaʿil's last gifts to Bayezid, those of the sultan were governed by court decorum. These gifts were furthermore reciprocated at an unprecedented turning point at the Ottoman court, as two unfolding crises challenged the sultan's authority. Bayezid's sons had already begun fighting for the throne when, at the beginning months of 1511, a popular revolt partly led by the *qizilbash* followers of Shah Ismaʿil erupted in Anatolia. Remembered today after its mastermind Şahkulu, this rebellion changed the course of the struggle for the throne, according to Erdem Çıpa, benefiting considerably the unfavored Prince Selim to defeat his father in battle and subsequently become sultan in 1512.[67]

From Decorous to Agonistic Exchanges

Following a decade-long series of exchanges of gifts that stood the test of many scandals, the transfer of power at the Ottoman court in 1512 changed everything. Famous for his fatal temper, ferocious exercise of kingship, and military determination, Selim came to power by fighting in battle and deposing his father, the reigning Sultan Bayezid II, who was forced into retirement (fig. 1.13). "In contradistinction to his fathers and forefathers," wrote the Safavid historian Khvāndamīr about the new king, "Sultan Selim deviated from the straight path and, taking up a position of opposition to the representatives of the court of world refuge, opened the gates of war and battle."[68]

During his short rule, Selim indeed fought momentous wars. After defeating and ending the rule of the Mamluks in 1517, he claimed Egypt, Syria, and the Hijaz, as well as Mecca and Medina, and as a result acquired the title "Servitor of the Two Holy Sanctuaries." Three years earlier, Selim had also fought Ismaʿil in a war at Chaldiran that ended with a decisive Ottoman victory. Far greater than any consideration of territories or riches that the Safavid king had to concede to his opponent, this singular downfall crushed Shah Ismaʿil's image as an unbeatable military leader and the long-awaited, mythical messiah.[69]

Even though the Ottomans and Safavids fought numerous other wars, Chaldiran has loomed most largely in historical writing and the public mind. That war is approached here from a different perspective. An analysis of the communication between Ismaʿil and Selim immediately before and after Chaldiran demonstrates that objects strenuously drove escalation as each ruler challenged his adversary's masculinity, religious orientation, and political legitimacy. And both their nature and meaning changed shape such that the kind of balanced exchanges mediated by refined gifts at the time of Sultan Bayezid II disappeared for more than a century, transforming the



FIGURE 1.13. Portrait of Sultan Selim. Inscribed "Selimus Primus Imperator Turcarum decimus Tertius." Pierre d'Avity, *Wereld Spiegel, waer in vertoontwordt de Beschryvinge der Rijken Staten, ende vorstendommen des gantsen Aerdbodems . . .* (a Dutch translation of "Les estats, empires et principautez de monde"). Engraved by Nicolaes de Clerck (de Klerc), Amsterdam, Cloppenburch, Jan Evert, 1611–1643, 1621. Koninklijke Bibliotheek, Den Haag, 108 B 17, 640.

entire course of diplomacy between the two courts. This transformation was so potent that they came to be erased even from popular memory.

Provocation: War of Words

In 1514, Sultan Selim led his armies east, to confront Shah Ismaʿil on the battlefield. As he marched forward, the sultan sent four letters in total to his adversary.[70] Selim declared war as he provoked Ismaʿil to come out on the battlefield and to fight him. While at first quite formulaic in their rhetorical strategies, these letters then depart from the rules of established protocol, employing increasingly demeaning language, in order to establish the superior position of the sultan vis-à-vis the shah, who was named a sacrilegious and blasphemous heretic with no legitimacy to rule, destined for defeat.

A statement of the sharp contrast between the titles and attributes of each ruler dominate the opening sections of Selim's letters to Ismaʿil.[71] In this construction, the Ottoman ruler is addressed as "Sulṭan Salīm Shāh, the son

of Sultan Bayezid, the son of Sultan Mehmed." This way, the sultan's royalty is directly tied to his immediate ancestors. But even though the Ottomans were unable to trace their lineage to the Prophet Muhammad—as did the Safavids—Sultan Selim is also defined in his letters as the leader of all Muslims, the "Caliph of God."[72] In Selim's letters, furthermore, the name of the sultan is aligned with the most distinguished kings and heroes in the Perso-Islamic tradition: "the Solomon of Splendor, the Alexander of Imminence; haloed in victory, Farīdūn triumphant; slayer of the wicked and the infidel, guardian of the noble and the pious; the warrior in the Path, the defender of the Faith; the champion, the conqueror; the lion, son and grandson of the lion; standard-bearer of justice and righteousness."[73] By contrast, Ismaʿil is simply referred to as "prince" (*amīr*). Adding to the insult, the titles attributed to "Prince Ismaʿil" all belong to the most evil and despised kings in the Persian tradition: "the possessor of the land of tyranny and perversion, the captain of the vicious, the chief of the malicious, the usurping Darius of the time, the malevolent Zahhak of the age, the peer of Cain."[74]

What purpose did such a pointed effort to define Ismaʿil as a tyrant serve for the sultan beyond petty provocation? Substantiating that Ismaʿil was unfit to rule had a significant political purpose. Far worse than an evil king, the sultan was saying that Ismaʿil was a heretic. Selim needed such proof to convince his own audience, the Ottoman administrative and military establishment, that it was legitimate to wage war on Ismaʿil and to kill his following, who were Shiʿi Muslims. For that, Selim refers in his letters to the fatwas (judicial rulings) issued by Ottoman religious scholars.[75] These legal opinions confirmed the legality of waging war on the Safavid king. The fatwas proclaimed that the Safavids had defamed the word of God, and had disrespected caliphs Abu Bakr, ʿUmar, and ʿUthman, and the Prophet's wife ʿAʾisha. The murdering of Safavids, they confirmed, was an obligation for true Muslims: "This group of people are unbelievers and heretics, and they are malicious evildoers; and therefore their annihilation is an incumbent duty."[76]

Drawing on this body of judicial support and justification, Sultan Selim gives specific evidence in his letters to Ismaʿil for how his actions deviated from those of ideal historical rulers and from religious doctrine. According to Selim, Ismaʿil claimed leadership of the eastern lands through coercion (*taʿāddī*) and tormented those lands and its people, for example, by destroying mosques and minarets, by burning shrines and tombs, and by allowing unlawful marriages. Even worse, one of Selim's letters says that Ismaʿil disrespected the religion by throwing copies of the Qurʾan in the dirt and by disrespecting the immediate successors of the Prophet Muhammad, the first caliphs.[77]

Religious polemics served Selim's political agenda beyond pointing out Ismaʿil's individual acts of transgression and impiety. One letter requests

Ismaʿil to follow a well-known tradition (*hadith*) of Prophet Muhammad: "My companions are like the stars: whomever you choose to follow, you will be guided aright." In this context, the stars refer to the first three "rightly guided" caliphs, whose authority was rejected by the Twelver Shiʿi Safavids. Followers of Shah Ismaʿil (*tabarrāʾiyān*) publicly cursed these historic figures, in addition to others they considered to be the enemies of Imam ʿAlī (d. 661), the cousin and son-in-law of Muhammad.[78] This practice of public cursing as religious ritual and political propaganda was crucial in the Safavid conversion of large populations to Shiʿism, and they intensified during moments of conflict with the Sunni Uzbeks and the Ottomans. In light of this, the rhetorical emphasis on difference in religious ideology and practice in Selim's letters was crucial for the Ottoman sultan to provide a solid political foundation for his attack.

All of Shah Ismaʿil's crimes enumerated in Sultan Selim's letters were deemed unacceptable and severely punishable. Interrupted frequently by selections from the Qurʾan, these letters warn Ismaʿil of the consequences of his actions: punishment in this world by Selim, and in the next by God himself.[79] One of these Qurʾanic verses highlights Selim's mission, and its citation implies that the sultan considered himself a direct messenger of God: "It is He who hath made you [His] agents, inheritors of the earth"[80] Another verse flawlessly reinforces and justifies Selim's military assault in theological terms: "Leave not of the unbelievers a single one on Earth!"[81] Indeed, Selim declared his imminent victory against Ismaʿil as inevitable and approved by God.[82]

Having established that his opponent was not a true Muslim and an illegitimate ruler, Selim's second letter extends a final proposition to Ismaʿil to repent, adopt the true path and recognize the political dominance of the Ottoman sultan, and become his vassal.[83]

Finally, Selim provoked Ismaʿil to war in a way that dared his bravery and strength, embodied in the sultan's view, in his masculinity: "If you are a man, come out and fight like a man."[84] The sultan repeats such provocation once again in his third letter, written in Turkish. Burdened by logistical and other problems Selim faced as the Ottoman army moved forward, the sultan eagerly anticipated his confrontation with the shah: "It is wrong to attribute manliness to those who take refuge in their safety and comfort, who live in seclusion. And those who fear death are unworthy of girding a sword and mounting a horse."[85] By contrast with Ismaʿil's lack of attributes exuding bravery, according to Selim, the sultan had previously described himself as being adorned with symbols of military might rather than royalty and wealth. At the beginning of the military campaign, in his first letter to the shah, Selim had written to Ismaʿil that he was marching on Iran to confront him. Having taken off, so to speak, his silk garments, Selim announced that he was armed with his armor and sword and had mounted his horse.[86]

The Gift of Opium

Shah Ismaʿil responded to Sultan Selim's provocations with derisive messages, accompanied by an appalling and uncouth gift: opium.[87] In its gracious opening, Ismaʿil's letter recorded by Feridun Beg refers to Selim as "the champion of the sultanate and of the state, the hero of the faith and of the earth, Sultan Selim Shah." Highlighting the friendly relations he had previously established with Selim's father, Sultan Bayezid II, Ismaʿil then feigns ignorance of Selim's anger: "The cause of your resentment and displeasure yet remains unknown." But the shah's seemingly dismissive response indeed engages with and responds to Selim's accusations in an evasive yet equally presumptuous way. Instead of directly addressing the fatwas obtained by Selim—which detailed Ismaʿil's heretic acts—the shah only brings up the name of Imam ʿAli: "Bitter experience has taught that in this world of trial / He who falls upon the house of ʿAli always falls."[88] Thus, in his letter to the sultan, Shah Ismaʿil was maintaining that by waging war on the Safavids, Selim was intending to attack the followers of ʿAli (the cousin and son-in-law of Muhammad), universally admired by all Muslims. This way, Ismaʿil was implying that it was in fact Selim who was at fault and therefore doomed to be defeated himself for it.[89]

Writing as Selim marched on Safavid territory, Ismaʿil wrote further about his refusal to take action and respond to the sultan in an aggressive vein. First, Ismaʿil pointed out that there were far too many followers of his ancestors living under Ottoman rule. And second, considering the long history of friendship between their states, Ismaʿil did not "wish the outbreak of sedition and turmoil once again as in the time of Timur." This was in reference to the devastating defeat of the Ottoman sultan Bayezid I at the hands of Timur in 1402. Nearly a century before, that confrontation had resulted in the dissolution of Ottoman power for about a decade.

By drawing attention to the extent of his following living under the sultan's rule, and by bringing up such an embarrassing historical event, therefore, Ismaʿil was pompously double-daring his opponent. Criticizing Selim's hostile tone in his own letters, Ismaʿil finally explained why he had sent opium for the sultan as a gift:

> Nevertheless, there is no cause for improper words: indeed, those vain, heretical imputations are the mere fabrications of the opium-clouded minds of certain secretaries and scribes. We therefore think that our delayed reply was not completely without cause for we have now dispatched our honored personal companion and servant Shāh Qulī Āghā (may he be sustained!) with a golden casket stamped with the royal seal and filled with a special preparation for their use should they deem it necessary.[90]

How did Sultan Selim respond to such a scathing message? The gift of opium appears in numerous sources but not all of them reflect on the sultan's reaction to it. In a unique account, Şükrī-i Bidlīsī, who participated Selim's campaign on Ismaʿil, ponders this question. According to that poet, when Selim received the shah's opium, he ridiculed it by saying that it was not potent enough to give him pleasure: "[Sultan Selim] said, this opium will not stimulate me / Its sender will not be a cause for self-conceit / But I own a kind of invigorating opium / That will be the cause of the enemy's debacle."[91] As if Ismaʿil had predicted Selim's fury over his scandalous gift and biting words, he had asked at the end of his letter that his ambassador Shah Quli Agha be dismissed unharmed. Alas, he was immediately imprisoned and tortured before he was put to death.[92]

At this period in the summer of 1514, Sultan Selim was getting increasingly impatient, as keeping his army in formation was proving difficult, since the soldiers were overcome with fatigue and deprived of sustenance. The energy and hope of the Ottoman military was waning; small-scale revolts were already worrying the commanders. Meanwhile, Shah Ismaʿil did not prove to be as eager to fight as Selim did, for he was nowhere to be found.[93] To make things worse, Ismaʿil had ordered the burning of villages and crops along the Ottoman route, in order to force the sultan to despair. But at this point, Selim was ever more determined to move forward at any cost.

Double Dare: Women's Clothes and Sufi Stuff

After executing the Safavid ambassador in July 1514, Sultan Selim sent a final ultimatum to Ismaʿil, provoking his enemy to war. Departing totally from diplomatic etiquette, Selim's fourth and final letter openly ridicules Ismaʿil by calling him a drug addict and a coward: "[It is known that] you get strength of character by using that disgraceful substance. Use that which you are extremely dependent on, so that you will have the courage for confrontation."[94] Furthermore, Selim says that as he marched on Iran, to give Ismaʿil a head start he diminished the size of his army, leaving behind forty thousand soldiers. In response to such generosity, according to the sultan, Ismaʿil had no other choice but to come out and fight: "Even after this, if you resort to seclusion as you did before, calling you a man should be outlawed. Instead of a helmet, you should wear a veil, and you should prefer women's clothes over armor. You should abandon your ambition for commander-in-chiefdom and give up your lust for leadership."[95]

Selim thus provoked Ismaʿil bitterly. But to dare him to war, the sultan also attacked his opponent's masculinity and political legitimacy with matching gifts: "Along with letters full of offensive words and scolding statements," wrote late sixteenth-century Ottoman historian Mustafa ʿĀlī, "[Selim] had sent [Ismaʿil] a female headdress here, and handkerchiefs worn

by women there. To expose [Ismaʿil's] impotence, [Selim] wrote: 'For you, who are unworthy to be called a man, these are more fitting than a turban and a helmet.'" ʿĀlī adds furthermore that Selim sent Ismaʿil a cloak, woolen robes, a shawl, a stick toothbrush, and a staff—all garments and equipment typically worn or used by Sufis (figs. 1.14 and 1.15). Ottoman scholar Hoca



FIGURE 1.14. Seated dervish wearing a felt hat and long-sleeved cloak and holding prayer beads. Possibly Bukhara, sixteenth century. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Cora Timken Burnett Collection of Persian Miniatures and Other Persian Art Objects, Bequest of Cora Timken Burnett, 1956 (57.51.27).



FIGURE 1.15. Dervish's staff, steel. The David Collection, Copenhagen (Inv. 15/1994). Photo by Pernille Klemp.

Sadüddin, whose father was a favorite of Selim, similarly explains: "In order to demonstrate that a son of Sufis should don green robes and dwell in a convent, they sent [Ismaʿil] a staff and woolen robes." Thus, both authors confirm that by highlighting Ismaʿil's Sufi lineage, Selim's gifts teased him, communicating that he should wear them instead of royal regalia, and that his place of dwelling is more appropriately a Sufi residence rather than a throne.[96]

After this last communication, Shah Ismaʿil indeed confronted the Ottoman army at Chaldiran in August 1514. It was indisputably a significant defeat for Ismaʿil, who completely lost his aura of invincibility in the eyes of his devoted followers and never fought the Ottoman army again. Following his victory, Sultan Selim entered the Safavid capital, but after just a few days because of many difficulties he was forced to leave, after which Ismaʿil was able to return.

While in Tabriz, Selim acquired an important treasure and exiled a large group of artists, intellectuals, and nobles, who were taken with him to Constantinople. At the Safavid palace, a conversation between Sultan Selim and one of those nobles, the eldest son of the Timurid Sultan Husain Baiqara (r. 1469–1506) is recorded in a panegyric history of Selim's reign. Selim explained to Badi-al-Zaman Mirza that he had sworn to subjugate all of the Safavids and conquer Khurasan, and that he was hoping to go as far as India (*Hind ü Sind*), after which Selim would reinstate the Timurid prince in Herat as an Ottoman vassal.[97] But the sultan's dream was never realized and Ismaʿil's state was preserved, which allowed the two courts to engage in continued dialogue until the end of Safavid rule in Iran.

Cold Gifts

The diplomatic duel between Selim and Ismaʿil ended with the war of 1514. Although those inflammatory exchanges took place within the course of a few months, in their aftermath, the cordial reciprocity that drove the Ottoman-Safavid dialogue previously was not restored for over a century. Provocative gifts and words exchanged between Selim and Ismaʿil in 1514 marked a turning point, and thus transformed the whole course of diplomatic conversation between the two courts.

If Chaldiran transformed the Safavid attitude toward diplomatic communication, then for the Ottomans, the enthronement of Sultan Süleyman (r. 1520–66) marked that turning point. But these nonsynchronic shifts were mismatched. Safavid gifts to the Ottoman court multiplied in number as they did in extravagance and variety up until the end of the sixteenth century. On the Ottoman side, by contrast, sending routine diplomatic gifts to the Safavid court was never reanimated, as at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Sultan Süleyman and his successors came to tolerate the Safavids, though

continuing to denounce them as heretics in political discourse and fighting them in several long campaigns, alternating with periods of cold peace. Meanwhile, as the next chapters show, Safavid gifts kept on flowing into the Ottoman court without any comparable reciprocation. Rather than empty charms of court ritual, these were meaningful participants of the diplomatic encounter. Significantly, however, their meaning remained open to interpretation until the very end of the sixteenth century.

Immediately following the war, Selim continued to be confrontational, whereas Ismaʿil upended his militant attitude and repeatedly sent embassies to the Ottoman court asking for peace. Those efforts proved to be fruitless. However, as Jean-Louis Bacqué-Grammont aptly noted, Safavid chronicles that present the rest of Ismaʿil's life as a time of mourning and retreat, as a series of hunts and banquets with minor military achievements, do not acknowledge how acutely Ismaʿil recognized his own limitations and used means other than war to avert the Ottomans. After Chaldiran, to that end, Ismaʿil actively pursued alliances against the Ottomans, promoted revolts on Ottoman territory, and sought to rebuild his army with modern weapons.[98]

In this new context, by contrast with the discourteous objects he had sent Selim before, Ismaʿil's gifts became kingly in a new way. The embassies that carried them were led by some of the most reputable members of his court, who presented letters that underscored friendship and sought peace. But Sultan Selim decidedly rejected Ismaʿil's requests, and either imprisoned or executed the ambassadors, which was difficult to sustain.

In November 1514, Shah Ismaʿil's first ambassador after his defeat was Sayyid Nuruddin Abdalvahhab, a Sunni descendant of the Prophet Muhammad. He was also the jurist (*shaikh al-Islam*) of Tabriz, a position he inherited from his father who had held it under Aq Qoyunlu rule. Decades after his death in Istanbul, the imprisonment of Abdalvahhab propelled Ottoman courtiers to deliberate the sultan's decision. How could the ambassador's imprisonment be justified even if that saintly figure and scholar represented Ismaʿil, a ruler Selim had declared a heretic? More than signaling opposition to Selim's rigidity, this situation reveals the complexity of the synthetic Sunni-Shiʿi division that Selim had diligently sought to forge.[99]

How did Ismaʿil reverse his rhetoric as he asked for peace from the sultan? In a letter that arrived in Edirne in November 1515, there is not a trace of the diplomatic escalation and the ensuing battle between Selim and Ismaʿil of the very recent past. Conforming to the norms of epistolary etiquette, Ismaʿil addresses Selim in his message with royal titles and laudatory epithets, evoking some of the most envied historical rulers, including Darius and Alexander, and heroes and kings from the Persian epic *Shahnama* (Book of kings), by referring to him as Jamshid and Faridun—echoing titles Selim used for himself in his earlier messages to Ismaʿil. The letter also frequently conjures sentiments of affection and proposes to establish bonds of friend-

ship and brotherhood. Evoking the Qurʾan on perils of dispute among Muslim groups and on rewards for peace, Ismaʿil claims that he never intended conflict or dispute with the Ottoman court, and finally asks Selim for truce. As several Ottoman authors noted, Selim was not even tempted to believe in Ismaʿil's sincerity, and these ambassadors too were thrown in prison. Despite objections at court, Selim later ordered them to be strangled.[100]

Those ambassadors had brought precious gifts for Sultan Selim, according to the Venetian *bailo* Nicolò Giustiniani: "A gold belt with precious stones, and a book with the gospels of their faith, with a jeweled cover, whose value was estimated at one hundred thousand ducats."[101] Belts frequently appear among marks of investiture Ismaʿil gave his officials, provincial governors, tribal leaders, and foreign ambassadors (figs. 1.16 and 1.17). As objects of routine royal distribution, they were usually accompanied, however, by a set of other royal favors and signs of courtly integration, such as robes of honor, the distinct Safavid headgear (*tāj*), and horses. But Ismaʿil's gift, in this case, was only accompanied by a copy of the Qurʾan, whose high value was especially noted by Giustiniani. A gem-studded Qurʾan is a new kind of gift that Shah Ismaʿil is not known to have presented to anyone before. Jeweled bindings were rare in general, and jeweled copies of the Qurʾan were even more scarce.[102] More significantly, the Qurʾan and the belt together stand in contrast to the gifts Ismaʿil had sent the Ottoman court prior to this date. Before, Ismaʿil's gifts for Sultan Bayezid consisted mainly of precious textiles, as we have seen.

What could these new gifts signify in the context of Ismaʿil's post-defeat and Selim's post-victory? The gifting of a jewel-studded Qurʾan would be most appropriate, from Ismaʿil's perspective, to another king, someone he considered to be on par with his own rank. Complementing Ismaʿil's message that devout Muslims should not be fighting, these objects stressed how their original owner was indeed a faithful Muslim and an affluent king. This is in keeping with how Ismaʿil appeals to Selim in his letter.

And yet the Ottoman sultan would accept Ismaʿil neither as his peer nor as a proper Muslim. To the contrary, Selim's entire discourse of attack on Safavid Iran was built on the argument that Ismaʿil was a sinful heretic—worse than a non-Muslim—whose aberrant habits like drinking alcohol excessively and disrespect for the Prophet's family and companions through ritual cursing were intolerable, and therefore rightly punishable. If Selim's execution of the Safavid ambassadors is any indication, far from being cajoled by this gift, receiving a copy of the Qurʾan from Ismaʿil quite likely infuriated him.

All the same, Ismaʿil was not going to be discouraged. Although fragmentary and incomplete, records on the Safavid shah's gifts to the Ottoman court after the war at Chaldiran demonstrate continual and increasingly larger dispatches of gifts of distinction. A year before, in 1514, the gifts that



FIGURE 1.16. Belt inscribed with the name of Shah Ismaʿil. Dated 1507. Topkapı Palace Museum, Istanbul (2/1842). Photo © Milli Saraylar İdaresi Başkanlığı.



FIGURE 1.17. Inscribed belt, detail. Image courtesy of Special Collections, Harvard Fine Arts Library, SCW2016.10911.

Sayyid Abdalvahhab had presented Selim are described in sources as "a few gifts" and as "a gold saddle and other sumptuous presents"[103] And later, in 1518 an envoy from Ismaʿil arrived in Damascus, where Selim was at camp. This time, Ismaʿil had sent individual gifts not just for Selim, but also his mother and some of his officials. According to Haydar Çelebi, who kept a daily journal of Selim's activities during the eastern campaign, Ismaʿil's gifts prepared especially for the sultan included "unequaled and unmatched gifts and peerless turquoises and pearls and books and lapis lazulis."[104] Thus Ismaʿil's gifts to the sultan were multiplied. But this time the shah also upped

the ante in his bid to persuade the sultan of his legitimacy, sincerity, and true faith, by including additional gifts: coveted precious stones.

News of that encounter found echoes in Egypt, where the Mamluk historian Ibn Iyas noted Selim's indifferent reaction to Ismaʿil's obsequious request for peace: Selim took the gifts, Ibn Iyas wrote, but executed the ambassadors. Addressing the Ottoman sultan as the Alexander of the times, the conqueror of Egypt and the Servitor of the Two Sanctuaries—titles that Selim had rightly earned in 1517 after terminating the rule of the Mamluks—Ismaʿil begged Selim in his letter to spare the lives of Muslims and to not attack him.[105] Indeed, precisely at that moment, Selim was unwaveringly committed to face Ismaʿil once again on the battlefield. However, with a sudden change of heart, just a few months after, in May 1518, the sultan returned to the capital, and never fought another battle with the Safavid shah. Sultan Selim passed away two years later.

Sultan Süleyman, during whose long reign the empire reached its widest extent, was not going to attack Safavid lands until the mid-1530s. With other priorities, Süleyman initially was tolerant of Ismaʿil, unlike his father.[106] In a letter that the new sultan wrote Ismaʿil announcing his ascension to the throne, he addressed Ismaʿil with royal titles, treating him as a peer.[107] But a response came much later. By that time, the shah had doubly failed to return that initial gesture, and to send a letter of condolence for the late sultan's death. To make things worse for Ismaʿil, Sultan Süleyman had conquered Belgrade and Rhodes, thus proving that he was a potent military ruler able to lead and expand the empire he inherited. When a sumptuous Safavid embassy arrived in Constantinople in 1523, the shah finally relayed his condolences, and congratulations for Süleyman's enthronement and recent conquests:[108]

> At that time, a glorious ambassador arrived from Shah Ismaʿil, the king of Persia, bearing beautiful gifts and blessings, and rare presents, all of which were made of silver and gold, and were decorated with jewels: golden things, gem-studded belts, precious fabrics, and astonishing weapons. [The ambassador], showing servile obsequiousness and deference, his gifts and letter were received. After two months had passed, the ambassador was also granted permission to be received at the imperial council of firm foundations. Following receptions with the pillars of the state, in response to the letter he had brought, a letter bearing the illustrious imperial cipher was written and he was sent back to his country.[109]

The highlights of Ismaʿil's gift therefore were jewel-studded gold and silver objects and precious textiles.[110] The role and meaning of Ismaʿil's many lavish gifts, no doubt remembered with awe and wonder in Bostan Çelebi's above account, have been lost however to the coldness of the ensuing communication. Ismaʿil's letter succinctly expresses his wish for friendship

and reiterates his sincerity of faith. It was reciprocated by Süleyman with a terse, nonconfrontational response so formulaic that it is nearly devoid of any meaning.[111] This icy affirmation of friendship was ambiguous enough that it was interpreted as peace by the Venetian ambassador Piero Zen.

Shah Ismaʿil's gifts in this environment were also ambiguous. Zen wrote in a different note to the Senate that the Safavid ambassador had brought Süleyman "a scimitar to provoke him to war."[112] Indeed, Bostan Çelebi mentions weapons among Ismaʿil's gifts (*ġarāīb esliḥa*). Was this gift supposed to communicate that Ismaʿil did not lack appropriate weapons any more, as he did at the Battle of Chaldiran? And were the weapons indeed understood as threatening at the Ottoman court, or were they simply new things that expanded the shah's selection of gifts for the sultan? Regardless of what motivated Ismaʿil to send weapons as gifts for the first time, the adjective Bostan Çelebi uses to describe them (*ġarāīb*) highlights that he saw them as unusual and extraordinary, or even strange. But neither that author nor any other records a notable reaction from the sultan.

Ismaʿil's gifts therefore had once again become more abundant and extravagant than his previous gifts. But overall, they failed to incite any reaction from the Ottoman sultan. Whether overlooked or unnoticed, furthermore, they were accepted but not reciprocated. Süleyman's letter was given to Ismaʿil's ambassador to be carried back home. This silence contrasts with the manner in which objects forcefully taken from the Safavid court as booty were displayed with much pride for all to see on public celebrations. Only one year later in 1524, for example, at the marriage festivities of Grand Vizier Ibrahim Pasha, one of the three tents set up as war trophies at the Hippodrome in Constantinople once belonged to Shah Ismaʿil.[113]

Though received coldly, and seemingly gone unnoticed at the moment of their presentation, Safavid gifts at the Ottoman court dynamically acquired meaning as they accumulated. Shah Ismaʿil's successors diligently sent magnificent gifts to Ottoman sultans until the end of the century. All along, as mediators of a relationship governed by such varying attitudes, the meaning of Safavid gifts was never straightforward.

The Safavid gifts were neither gestures of socially compulsory refinement nor material tribute to match the submissive letters that accompanied them. The next chapters show how they remained eminently open to interpretation. Perpetual dispatches of unreciprocated Safavid gifts came to spark an expectation that they had to keep on coming. On several occasions, the Ottomans fervently demanded to receive symbolically loaded objects as gifts from Safavid shahs. Echoes of the past therefore crucially determined what would be gifted and how they would be received. As such, the history of Safavid gifts often shaped their future.



FIGURE 2.1. "The Court of Gayumars." Folio from the *Shahnama of Shah Tahmasp*, c. 1525. Attributed to Sultan Muhammad. Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper. Aga Khan Museum, Toronto, AKM 165.

2

An Exquisite *Shahnama*

A manuscript painting from a copy of the Persian epic *Shahnama* (Book of kings) now in the Aga Khan Museum Collection in Toronto masterfully depicts the court of King Gayumars in a dreamy scene of cascading mountains (fig. 2.1). That first king of Iran ruled over the whole world for thirty years. According to legend, Gayumars invented the ceremonial crown and the throne, and taught people proper ways of cooking and dressing. At the heart of the painting, the king appears in a nimbus that seems to have opened up tearing into the golden sky to make space for his colorful throne, made of jewel-like rocks. Order and prosperity are all around him: people wearing leopard skins have assembled in his court, at peace and in harmony with nature. Widely considered a masterpiece today, it received high praise in its own time. In 1544–45 in a rare commentary on any single Persianate painting in the early modern period, Safavid royal librarian and calligrapher Dust Muhammad discerned its finesse, noting that the complexity of the composition left all other artists in awe: "[Master Nizamuddin Sultan Muhammad] has developed depiction to such a degree that, although it has a thousand eyes, the celestial sphere has not seen his like."[1]

This exceptional manuscript painting was but one of 258 contained in the *Shahnama* completed for the library of the Safavid Shah Tahmasp (r. 1524–76). In their detailed study of the manuscript, Martin Dickson and Stuart Cary Welch have estimated that starting in about 1522, a large team of artists worked for nearly two decades to complete the book, a project likely initiated by Shah Isma'il. Sadly, that monumental manuscript, described by Sheila Canby as "the most opulent and exquisitely illustrated of all *Shahnama* manuscripts," is today dispersed.[2]

Starting in the 1970s, its last owner, Arthur Houghton, decided to dismantle the book in order to sell pages individually to maximize profit. Today, pages of Shah Tahmasp's *Shahnama* are spread throughout the world, some in major museum collections, and others in private collections, and individual pages containing paintings continue to change hands. In 2011, one such page from the book, "Faridun in the Guise of a Dragon Tests His Sons," was sold at auction for nearly £7.5 million (fig. 2.2). More recently, in 2022, "Rustam Kicking Away the Boulder Pushed by Bahman" fetched almost £5 million.[3]

One of the most ambitious productions a team of artists have produced at any period anywhere in the world, that colossal book, known today as the *Shahnama of Shah Tahmasp*, or the *Shāhnāma-i Shāhī*, was among the many gifts presented by the Safavid king to the newly enthroned Ottoman



FIGURE 2.2. "Faridun in the Guise of a Dragon Tests His Sons." From the *Shahnama of Shah Tahmasp*, c. 1525. Attributed to Aqa Mirak. Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper. Aga Khan Museum, Toronto, AKM 903.

sultan Selim II (r. 1566–74) in 1568 (see appendix 3).[4] This chapter details the ceremonial presentation of those gifts in light of new and unnoticed sources in addition to well-known ones. It considers the gifts' possible symbolic and rhetorical significance for Shah Tahmasp, Sultan Selim, and officials from both Safavid and Ottoman courts, as well as foreign representatives who witnessed the ceremony. This context is crucial since the shah's gifts were carried from Qazvin to Edirne in a series of public events, rather than handed from one king to the other in a private audience. Such a performative moment involved multiple actors with different investments, including participants of the exchange, and attentive audiences. As a result, this presentation of gifts was a public spectacle that portrayed existing and changing balances of power and reveals varying visions of self and other.[5]

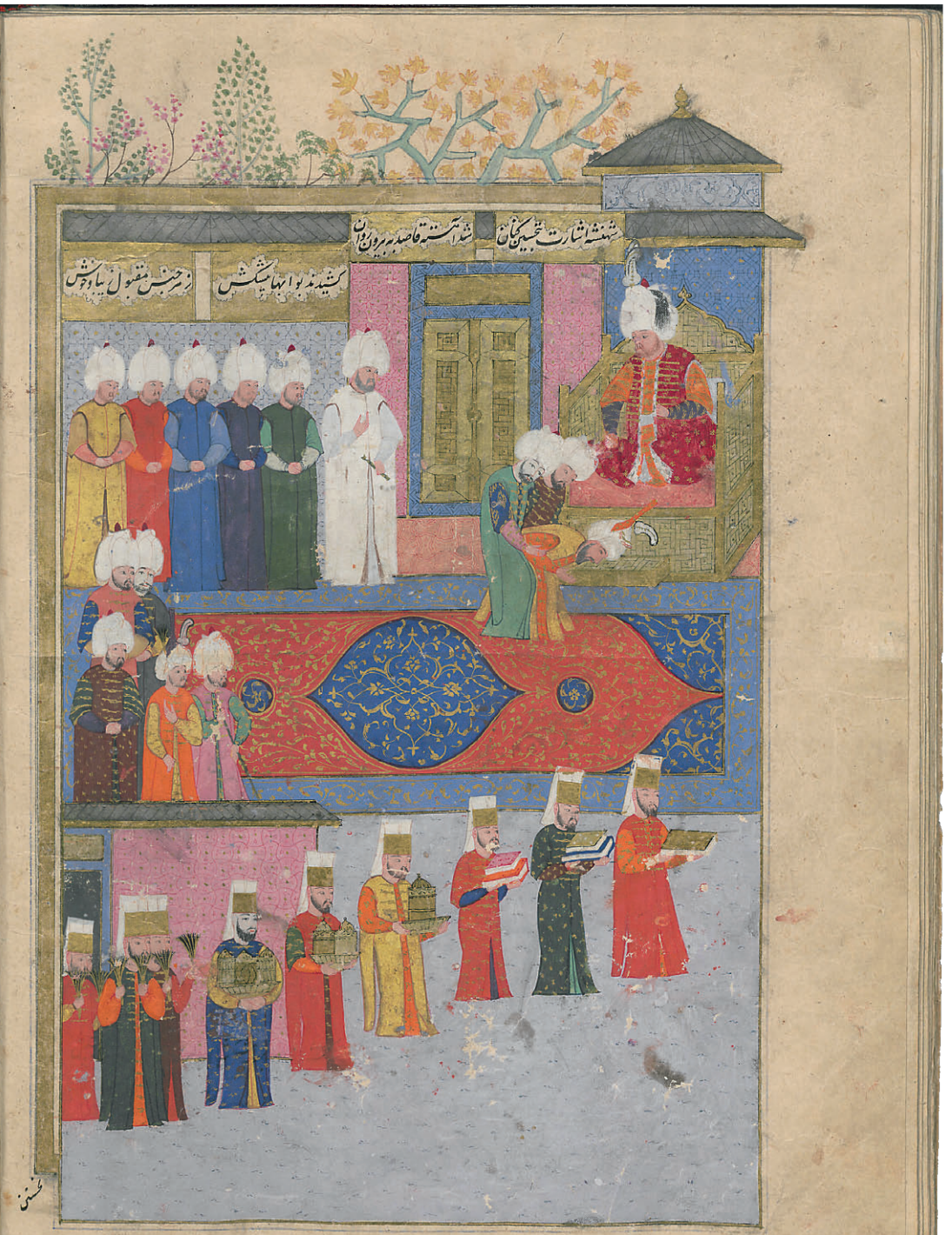
Sultan Selim's audience to the Safavid ambassador Shah Quli in 1568 at the Edirne Palace is recorded in two Ottoman manuscript paintings. One of these is in Feridun Ahmed Beg's *Chronicle of the Szigetvár Campaign* (*Nüzhetü'l-esrārü'l-aḫbār der Sefer-i Sīgetvār*), dated 1569, a year after the ceremony (fig. 2.3).[6] The other is found in the *Book of Kings of Sultan Selim* (*Şehnāme-i Selīm Ḫān*, *Shāhnāma-i Salīm Khān*), completed thirteen years later (fig. 2.4).[7] These well-known paintings depict only the brief moment



FIGURE 2.3. "Sultan Selim II Receiving Shah Tahmasp's Envoy in 1568." From Feridun Ahmed Beg, *Nüzhetü'l-esrārü'l-aḫbār der Sefer-i Sīgetvār*. Istanbul, 1568–69. Topkapı Palace Museum Library, Istanbul, H. 1339, fol. 247b–248a. Photo © Milli Saraylar İdaresi Başkanlığı.



FIGURE 2.4. "Sultan Selim II Receiving Shah Tahmasp's Envoy in 1568." From Loḳmān, *Şehnāme-i Selīm Ḫān* (*Shāhnāma-i Salīm Khān*). Istanbul, 1581. Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper. Topkapı Palace Museum Library, Istanbul, A. 3595, fol. 53b–54a. Photo © Milli Saraylar İdaresi Başkanlığı.


شهنشه اشارت خسین کنان
شد آهسته قاصد به بیرون روان
کشیدند بوا بهای بیشش
ز مرحبش مقبول نیاوحوشش

when the ambassador appears before the sultan. In both images, Shah Quli prostrates himself as two court attendants hold his arms. This image of Shah Quli, which will be discussed in more detail below, enhances the subordinate position he takes before the new sultan, who sits on an elaborate throne, and all the courtiers taking part in the solemn ceremony are oriented toward him and looking in his direction.

The story of Shah Tahmasp's gifts in 1568 is extraordinary on many levels, but primarily because the gifts included matchless objects. A rare copy of the Qurʾan, attributed to ʿAli ibn Abi Talib (d. 661), the cousin and son-in-law of Prophet Muhammad, accompanied the *Shahnama of Shah Tahmasp*. "It is hard to imagine two more potent symbols of Safavid ideology or to comprehend the value of each" wrote David Roxburgh, particularly singling out these two gifts: "—the first, if authentic was exceedingly rare, the second, unequaled before or since in number of illustrations and the expense of its materials and labor."[8]

The careful selection of these and other objects had dual purposes for the Safavid shah. On the one hand, it was designed to increase his chances of obtaining specific diplomatic concessions in his negotiations with the militarily and politically more powerful Ottoman sultan. It was also intended, on the other hand, as a public act of supreme generosity and magnanimity, which held the potential to elevate and consolidate the shah's image as a model ruler through his piety, his artistic patronage, and his ability to own but also give away objects of the highest quality and rarity.

Islamic Empires in War and Peace

Following three major Ottoman military campaigns on the Safavids between the 1530s and 1550s, the first official peace between the two courts was signed in 1555. During years of attack, Sultan Süleyman had marched on Iran armed with fatwas that justified the anticipated killing of Twelver Shiʿi Safavids. In fact, sidestepping sectarian polemics, these opinions crucially presented the conflict as holy war, charging Safavid kings and their devotee-soldiers (*qizilbash*) with disbelief and heresy. In a letter he wrote to Shah Tahmasp, Ottoman grand vizier Rüstem Pasha, for example, fiercely argued that "everyone in Iran, including the army and the subjects, [were] infidels."[9]

As in the time of Sultan Selim I, official correspondence before 1555 repeatedly itemized and expounded these accusations, which included the Safavid public cursing of the first three Sunni caliphs and the Prophet Muhammad's wife ʿAʾisha, along with the shah's alleged habit of excessive wine drinking, disrespect for the Qurʾan, and attacks on holy places such as shrines, tombs, and mosques. Accusations about such destructions could be sustained at the time of Shah Ismaʿil, who ordered them for conquest

and to establish political authority rather than express and punish sectarian difference.

During the reigns of Shah Tahmasp and Sultan Süleyman, Ottoman accusations came to be focused especially on mosque building and the practice of religious rituals. For about a century, Safavid kings did not build congregational mosques, and Friday communal prayers were not held because the performance of these obligatory prayers in the absence of the Twelfth and last Imam was disputed among Twelver Shiʿi theologians. The scarcity of mosques in Iran served as a powerful point of altercation, especially at a time when the Ottoman sultan increasingly promoted mosque building and enforced attendance.[10] As "caliph of all Muslims" (*halīfet'-ül müslimīn*), Gülru Necipoğlu points out, Sultan Süleyman ordered the construction of mosques throughout his domain, and wherever congregational mosques were accessible, Friday prayers in them were made compulsory through systematic policing of attendance.[11]

The years leading to the first Ottoman-Safavid peace were crucial, relatedly, for parallel developments were taking place at both courts, shaping two distinct and growingly institutionalized imperial ideologies. Leaving aside his earlier ambitions of world dominion, toward mid-century Süleyman came to fashion himself as universal sultan. As the sole defender of Sunni orthodoxy, his state apparatus began to strictly enforce imperial and religious law (shariʿa). The expanse of the Ottoman Empire, at the same time, reinforced Sultan Süleyman's "ecumenical vision of Islam," for Süleyman claimed the leadership of the entire global Muslim community, Sunni and Shiʿi.[12] Following his conquest of Baghdad in 1534, the sultan added to his titles "Overseer of the Regulations of the Two Mashhads (Najaf and Karbala)," in reference to his rule over and protection of the holiest Shiʿi shrines of Imams ʿAli and Husain. Highlighting publicly the Ottoman sultan's leadership of orthodox Shiʿis under his imperial domains, as Necipoğlu has shown, the names of Hasan and Husain (ʿAli's sons, Muhammad's grandsons, and the second and third Shiʿi imams) were incorporated into mosque inscriptions for the first time in the Süleymaniye Mosque, opened just two years after the peace treaty with the Safavids.[13]

On the Safavid side, Shah Ismaʿil's heterodox messianic movement gave way during the reign of Shah Tahmasp to a deliberate move toward the institutionalization of canonical Shiʿism. Internal and external conflicts, most significantly frictions with various *qizilbash* tribes and clashes with the Ottomans and Uzbeks, also played a key role in the shah's interventions and ideological move toward enforcing orthodox Shiʿism. In 1534 and 1556, Tahmasp issued edicts of Sincere Repentance, renouncing unorthodox behavior, including gambling, prostitution, and the consumption of alcohol.[14] The edicts immediately followed his loss of the most important Shiʿi shrines to the Ottomans in Iraq and the signing of the Peace of Amasya in 1555, which

obliged Tahmasp to respect and enforce shariʿa.[15] Religious scholars whom Tahmasp invited to his court clarified the Twelver Shiʿi character of the state in doctrinal and judicial terms, designating the shah as "the spiritual leader of the *shīʿa* movement which the entire Muslim community of the world could come forward and accept."[16] As noted earlier, the Shiʿa historically dispute the leadership of Sunni caliphs, arguing that Muhammad in his lifetime had designated ʿAli as his successor, and that subsequent caliphs should come from this family line. In order to show that the dynasty deserved this distinguished position, a new genealogy commissioned by Shah Tahmasp officially tied the Safavids back to Prophet Muhammad's family, both through his son-in-law and cousin ʿAli ibn Abi Talib and through the seventh Shiʿi imam.[17]

This background is crucial in the context of the sixteenth-century Muslim world, because these disagreements assumed a political character precisely as the Ottoman-Safavid conflict unfolded. During Sultan Süleyman's final two campaigns (1548–55) on Iran, correspondence became heated with provocations, accusations, and threats. Süleyman charged Tahmasp with blasphemy and questioned his legitimacy, manhood, and military might, accusing him of failing to confront the Ottoman army on the battlefield.[18] While Tahmasp assumed a convivial tone in general, he sometimes subtly objected to Ottoman accusations by declaring the superiority of the Safavid Twelver Shiʿi conviction over the Sunnism of the Ottoman state. God preferred ʿAli to be the true successor to the Prophet, wrote Tahmasp in one letter, which also stood as proof that the right and legitimate line of leadership belonged to the progeny of ʿAli and his wife, Muhammad's daughter Fatima. Tahmasp ended his letter with a daring statement of the eschatological consequences of failing to follow this path:

> On that day when kings and beggars are one and everyone is resolved to their faith, they will not be ashamed to appear before he who drinks from the Kauṯar river—ʿAli, the friend of God—and her Excellency Fāṭima (*sayyidah al-nisā*), and the Innocent Imams. . . . And for that earthly kingdom [the Ottomans] which rejects the hand of [Ṭahmāsp], they will say and know nothing of the mercy, grace, and the beneficence of ʿAli.[19]

During this period of conflict, Ottomans completely rejected Safavid claims to imamate, insisting that they were heretics.[20] Tahmasp's firmest response was written in 1554, a year before peace was signed. This letter, according to Colin Mitchell, provides "proof of Shāh Ṭahmāsp transitioning his court toward an orthodox, historically developed grasp of Twelver Shiʿite doctrine." Attacking the Ottoman sultan personally, the letter calls Süleyman "the chief priest of the idol temple, Istanbul," and refers to Sunni religious scholars as "idol-worshipping sodomites." The letter advances sev-

eral historical parallels between the contemporary Ottoman-Safavid conflict and the injustice and pain that ʿAli and his *shiʿa* (literally meaning "followers") experienced in their struggles with "the caliphal oppressors" (*zalimun*) in the seventh century and thereafter. With citations from the Qurʾan, this message positions the Safavid house as the true defender of faith: "I have adorned myself in the way of proper religion . . . and according to 42:23: 'Say, I ask no recompense of you for it other than love among kin,'[our heart] has been girded with the belt of love and respect for ʿAlī's family and guiding the imams." Such heated rhetoric did not last long, as peace was signed in 1555.[21] But, as we will see, the dispute cast a shadow that darkened the Safavid embassy's reception at the Ottoman court in 1568.

The Peace of Amasya marked a watershed, terminating Ottoman rhetorical assaults and military advances against the Safavid shah, who was no longer attacked as the head of a heretic state. For the Safavids, this Ottoman recognition was no small thing. In return, Shah Tahmasp agreed to respect the successors of the Prophet and stop the public ritual cursing of the first three caliphs. The shah therefore recognized the sultan's superiority, at a time when Süleyman claimed global leadership of all Muslims. The mid-sixteenth century was a time when other major conflicts were resolved to the advantage of the Ottomans. In 1547, for example, a peace treaty signed with Holy Roman Emperor Charles V and Archduke Ferdinand I of Austria obliged the Habsburg monarchy to pay Süleyman a yearly tribute of 30,000 Hungarian florins.[22] The unrivaled superiority of the sultan within a flawless global distribution of power and influence was proudly announced in this context by Ottoman authors.[23]

Conflicts with the Safavids were thus resolved in 1555 as far as the Ottoman state apparatus was concerned. Polite letters came to be written from Süleyman to Tahmasp with appropriate noble titles and without any trace of the preceding heated strife. In response, the Safavid shah was disproportionately submissive. His letters came to be increasingly more profuse in their praise of the sultan; following suit, his gifts multiplied. They expanded progressively as they grew in number, variety, and rarity. How was such excess to be interpreted at the Ottoman court? As material extensions of Tahmasp's submission and obedience, did their gifting invariably signify and confirm the superiority of the Ottoman sultan? An ostensibly benign gesture of sovereign friendship in 1557 refutes such a straightforward reading, laying bare diplomatic limits of humility and haughtiness, submission and defiance.

In the summer of that year, a Safavid ambassador attended the inauguration festivities of Süleyman's monumental mosque complex in Istanbul (fig. 2.5). In a public ceremony attended by many foreign representatives, the ambassador presented to the Ottoman sultan Tahmasp's gifts. The most praised of these were three copies of the Qurʾan, as the accompanying letter



FIGURE 2.5. (*left*) Sultan Süleyman and the Süleymaniye Mosque, Constantinople, 1574 (or earlier), altered in 1688 to represent Sultan Ibrahim I. Melchior Lorck (1559–1688). Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1959 (59.570.35).

FIGURE 2.6. (*below*) Süleymaniye Mosque, Istanbul. Photograph by İlhan Deniz Kılıçoğlu. Posted on Wikimedia Commons. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:S%C3%BCleymaniye_Mosque_interior_view.JPG. CC BY-SA 3.0.



indicated. Following a long section that praised the sultan, connecting him to historical and legendary kings and their virtues, Tahmasp's humble letter of congratulation then imparted a request: "The appointment of befitting carpets is a cause of ornament and perhaps a necessity for that mosque, and in that country there are no carpets as large as that mosque."[24] Eager to contribute to that magnificent complex, Tahmasp further explained that should the sultan provide the desired number, dimensions, and colors for the center and borders of those desired carpets, he could promptly have them made in Iran to be subsequently sent to Constantinople (fig. 2.6).

"What appeared in the guise of a humble gift offer," explains Gülru Necipoğlu, "was in actuality nothing but a reminder of Safavid artistic superiority, a subtext not lost on Süleyman." The sultan promptly and tersely rejected this offer of pious donation, explaining that all the carpets, oil lamps, lanterns, and other decorations for his mosque had already been ordered from producers within his own realms and would be provided in due course. Although the correspondence was free of overt sectarian disputes, Süleyman's letter expressly describes his mosque as a stronghold of Sunni orthodoxy, praising Muhammad and his companions, the "Four Pillars of the Illustrious Shariʿa," and ends with a warning that Shah Tahmasp should be respectful of the terms of the peace they had signed two years earlier.[25] Indeed, renewing peace was the main mission of the Safavid embassy that carried Shah Tahmasp's accession gifts to Sultan Selim II in 1568.[26]

Ceremonial Showdown

As the Safavid delegation of more than seven hundred people carrying Tahmasp's gifts and letter for Selim moved through Anatolia, the Ottomans took extraordinary measures to organize an impressive welcome.[27] The Ottoman court had moved to Edirne, where the sultan would receive all the representatives of foreign states coming to congratulate him and renegotiate peace. From Erzurum to Istanbul and Edirne, the pomp and complexity of reception protocols heightened at each stop.[28]

A witness to the Safavid embassy's progress recorded some of these in a letter addressed to the Ottoman grand vizier. The most distinguished and foremost Safavid courtiers were selected to accompany Ambassador Shah Quli, it explained, in order to "display their splendor and to demonstrate their capacity to dress well." There were 120 gentlemen on horseback with gold-embroidered turbans followed by another 200 men on horseback, all wearing gold-embroidered robes, and nearly 400 merchants. A camel carried trumpets, flutes, drums, and other musical instruments to be played by thirty musicians. Reciters of the Qurʾan were also present. When the Safavids reached the city of Erzurum, they were awestruck by the sheer number of Ottoman soldiers they saw.[29]

For an impressive welcome, eight thousand Ottoman soldiers had been assembled in Erzurum "from morning to night playing their musical instruments." Nearly one hundred of them appeared in gold-embroidered and sparkling robes, and about two thousand were wearing gilded and silvered helmets. The ornament and orderliness of the Ottoman soldiers astonished the ambassador himself, who said "the whole army in Constantinople must have come here." The initial series of encounters between the Ottoman and Safavid courtiers in Erzurum were performed as if they were tournaments of courtly pomp. The Safavid ambassador invited Ali Pasha to his residence to listen to their music; following suit, the Ottoman governor did the same.[30]

The forethought that Shah Tahmasp had put into selecting the members of the delegation was paralleled by his careful designation of gifts for the sultan. Indeed, the same report notes that the arrival of the ambassador was delayed because the preparation of Tahmasp's gifts took longer than anticipated. Among the gifts that Shah Tahmasp ordered to be made and assembled were: "two tents made of one piece, whose walls were made of gold-embroidered fabric, and embroidered with trees, and in addition to this, two books of history and two pearls weighing ten miṣḳāls (*miscali*), a large ruby resembling a small pear, and there were also stuffs (*robe*) valued at 82,000 tumans (*tumenlich*), . . . and forty falcons."[31]

Echoing Shah Tahmasp's negotiators, his gifts were thus carefully selected to impress the Ottomans. And, the news of their arrival was spreading concurrently with the movement of the embassy. The Ottoman chronicler Selaniki Mustafa Efendi wrote that when the sultan and his court had already settled at the wintering post of Edirne, news of the Safavid delegation approaching the city arrived: "He [Shah Quli] has an elaborate letter of condolence and congratulation, with one thousand redheads (*surḫser*) he comes bearing great tribute and presents (*pişkeş ü hedāyā*)." During the journey, according to the same author, the embassy was afforded every possible respect and esteem. The Safavids moved "contemplating the prosperity of the Ottoman country, fortunate and affluent with endless blessings; they saw all around them the ubiquitous grandeur of the king of kings [the Ottoman sultan] and the innumerable brave soldiers of war."[32]

Members of the embassy, Ottoman authors note, were indeed most impressed and overwhelmed with what they saw at the capital city. Sultan Selim had ordered that in Istanbul every effort should be made to display imperial power and majesty, which would accord with the prayers of the Prophet and the first four caliphs (*çehāryār-ı kirām*).[33] To this end, Grand Vizier Sokollu Mehmed Pasha sent specific instructions, which called for the mobilization of the entire naval and military forces. Thousands of soldiers were instructed to be dressed in their war uniforms, to bear weapons of combat, and to be properly organized at the Safavid embassy's arrival. To cross

the Bosphorus, imperial galleys were to be decorated, and to be placed in them as many cannons, gunmen, and archers as they could hold.[34]

Once the Safavid embassy embarked on those ships to reach Constantinople, indeed, their admiration and bewilderment incited by the beauty of the city and by the might of the soldiers turned into outright fright as the ships moved forward:

> The brave warriors therein fired guns and canons scattering fire like lightning and blustering like thunder. Blown away with amazement and affliction, the redheads [Safavids] in the galley cried "O Ali, help [us]!" (*yā ʿAli meded*) They kept saying: "O help us warriors (*gaziler*), find us a remedy, the sea makes us sick!"[35]

During Shah Quli's stay in Istanbul, Piyale Pasha took him on a tour of the city so he would see the bathhouses and imperial mosques of the city. The ambassador saw Hagia Sophia, the great Byzantine church converted into a mosque following the Ottoman conquest of the city, and the Süleymaniye and the Sultan Selim Mosques, where the Safavids were given permission to perform prayers.[36]

Accounts of the embassy's advance toward the sultan's court reveal more than a growing desire to accommodate and impress welcome guests. Even though this was a period of peace between the two countries, several accounts demonstrate the lingering of the official propaganda against the Safavids from before peace was signed. Members of the embassy, according to Selaniki, were incapable of appreciating all of the favors bestowed on them due to their "ungrateful nature." Referring to the Safavids as "demon-mannered" (*dīv-sīret*) here and "impostor-faced" (*deccāl-ṣūret*) there, Feridun Ahmed Beg's eyewitness account of the embassy declares that they were not true believers of Islam, for "their polluted minds" lacked an adherence to true faith, as they were accustomed to be "engaged in obscure blaspheming and heresy, and cursing the companions of our Prophet."[37]

Attempted Murder

The Safavid embassy thus entered Edirne on February 7, 1568, with a range of sentiments circulating within the hosting court. At Edirne, the crowds were so large that they overflowed the streets. The inhabitants of the city had been recruited to accompany the Ottoman army, in order to turn the event into a grand public spectacle, the scale of which is described in contemporary sources as surpassing any event that anyone had ever seen before.[38] In addition to commoners, soldiers, and courtiers, Habsburg and Venetian ambassadors were also in Edirne to present accession gifts and to conclude peace with the new sultan.[39]

Three days after settling in the city, the ambassador paid a formal visit to Sokollu Mehmed Pasha to present Shah Tahmasp's letters and gifts for the grand vizier. The Venetian *bailo* Giacomo Soranzo describes how Sokollu's house was beautifully decorated for this occasion and remarks that Shah Quli was treated with favors that no Christian prince would ever receive from the Ottomans.[40] The gifts included "excellent and exquisite books" and rare and specialized items from different regions of Persia: silk carpets, swords, felt caps, light and heavy silk fabrics, soaps, robes, draperies, and healing drugs.[41]

During those days, an important incident darkened the carefully orchestrated public spectacle of amity and benevolence. This seemingly spontaneous rage of an Ottoman novice was recorded by Marc'Antonio Pigafetta, who was among the Habsburg ambassador's retinue:

> The other day, to present the pashas [gifts], [Shah Quli] himself went to visit them, where on his way a strange event came about. A novice (*un giamoglano*) (while the ambassador went off to visit [Sokollu Mehmed Pasha]), appeared in front of him, and shot an arquebus to kill him, but missed him, instead hitting one of his own seniors, though only slightly on one of his arms. The Persian got terrified, believing he was ambushed, turned his horse around to return to his residence.[42]

Though completely absent in contemporary Ottoman accounts, the attempted murder is nevertheless mentioned also in the Venetian *bailo* Giacomo Soranzo's report to the Senate. As soon as Sokollu got news of what had happened, he ordered that the criminal be caught immediately. The grand vizier also sent his men to Shah Quli to apologize, assuring him that the criminal would be punished severely. This kind of behavior would not be tolerated or taken lightly. Soranzo notes, however, that all the efforts were fruitless.

Striking fear in the public, Sokollu then picked out a prisoner, who had already been condemned to death and declared him the criminal.[43] When questioned about his action before Sokollu and Shah Quli, the transgressor audaciously said that "he would not have done it had it not been for this ambassador who was a heretic, and was sent by a heretic king, enemy of their saints, and for this reason it was not appropriate that he came to make peace with his king, and that it was not suitable."[44]

If most of the encounters between members of the Safavid and Ottoman courts so far had been private formal events that generated a range of sentiments recorded as isolated and personal impressions in elite books, now the obscure tension was made public. This tension, fueled by decades of anti-Safavid propaganda, evidently lingered in public opinion even years after the peace treaty was signed in 1555. But a preemptive attack would not be tolerated. To avoid a full-blown diplomatic crisis, Sokollu Mehmed Pasha,

who had a deep understanding of the history and complexity of the tensions between the two courts, had to make a sacrifice. To this end, the designated criminal was brutally murdered before the public. He was condemned to be dragged on the streets of Edirne tied to the tail of a horse; with his hand cut off, he was then decapitated.[45]

Lasting public antagonism and enmity toward the Safavids were apparently fueled also by a recent dynastic crisis that ended with the death of an Ottoman prince at the Safavid court. The favored heir to the throne, Prince Bayezid, had fought his brother Selim, but then was forced to flee to Shah Tahmasp's court in Qazvin. After long negotiations, Tahmasp agreed to hand the prince over to Süleyman in 1562. The officials sent by the sultan to Qazvin to take Bayezid, however, killed the prince and his sons there on the spot. The memory of the elimination of Prince Bayezid from the contest for the throne, when Sultan Süleyman was still alive six years before, must have been still fresh in many people's memory. A ciphered section of Giacomo Soranzo's letter highlights efforts to reverse any prevailing negative sentiments among the Ottoman public:

> But so it would not last, that the [Safavid] ambassador and all of his [men] were not badly regarded by the public due to the treason done to Sultan Bayezid, when they met; the Great Sultan was mindful of showing benefits to each one, and that they would be honored and singled out.[46]

The story of the execution of Prince Bayezid might have been brought back to public spotlight by the embassy's arrival itself, for news that reached Mantova and Florence several months after mention how the Safavid embassy had also brought to Sultan Selim "arms, armature, camels, and all the other things" that had remained from the unfortunate Ottoman prince.[47]

Audience at the Sultan's Court

On February 22, Shah Quli and his entourage visited the sultan at the imperial palace, to present Shah Tahmasp's letters and presents. The procession of the embassy from their residence to the palace was a public performance that many observed closely and recounted as a visual spectacle that was delightful to behold. One wrote that it was "the most lavish of the embassies heretofore seen."[48] The distinct qualities of the Ottomans and Safavids are described in eyewitness accounts as if the procession was a competition for courtly beauty and elegance.

The Safavid embassy moved "in the most honorable manner," flanked by Ottoman soldiers on either side of the road leading to the imperial palace, all lined up with their hands tied in front of them.[49] At the very front came Ottoman courtiers including palace sergeants and members of the sultan's elite

corps. Both the Ottomans who went in front, and Persians who followed, were in robes made of extravagant fabrics. What made one group discernible from the other was the conspicuous use of figural embroidery in one and its strict elimination in the other (figs. 2.7 and 2.8):

> [The Ottomans were] all clothed in rich vestments, most of them in gold brocade, and velvet, and others in damasks, and other kinds of silk. Behind them came thirty Persians on horseback, dressed in the Persian style with robes of honor embroidered with various colors of wool, and others with different bits of ormesin silk and taffeta of varied colors, on which were delicately embroidered figures of men and women, horses and other animals, and other fabrics elegantly woven.[50]

Behind this group marched Shah Quli's personal servants on foot, who were followed by two hundred janissaries in Pigafetta's estimation. This observer goes on to explain, in the following manner, how the ambassador and his horse appeared behind this sea of soldiers:

> And at the back of these came only the ambassador himself and [his] horse most pompously decorated. [He was] wearing a crimson velvet robe, but one mixed with other colors. The saddle and the reins and the crownpiece of the horse on the reverse side were all decorated with jewels, and the very same fabric that they use, like the Turks and the Hungarians, placed at the back of the horse, as ornament, was profusely inlaid with turquoises. The ornaments, which crowned the turbans of the Persians by more than a palm and a half is named *metevenchia* by the Turks. [These were] all gilded and encrusted with different kinds of gems.[51]

The ambassador, together with his horse, was among those Safavids dressed most extravagantly. This was underscored by the appearance of the 140 from his retinue that walked behind him: "some [dressed] well, some badly, according to their power." Those with the gilded turbans, for example, stood out notably. At the same time, however, a foreign observer explains that in spite of all the display of Safavid imperial pomp in this procession, Ottomans appeared significantly more glamorous; their ceremonial robes, made of Venetian cloth, were superior, as they were more brightly colored than those worn by the Persians.[52] Furthermore, Pigafetta speaks more favorably of the gold brocades and velvets worn by the Ottomans: "Even though [the Safavids] have abundant silk and wool, they have limited access to plain cloths and velvets, for they have to get some from the Portuguese, who control their trade in the Persian Gulf."[53]

If indeed Shah Quli wore a red crimson velvet robe, it might have been made of a fabric similar to a fragment now in the Cleveland Museum of Art

(fig. 2.9). Feridun Ahmed Beg expands Pigafetta's classification by underscoring the element of ceremonial order, which even impressed Shah Quli himself, who "became convinced of Ottoman superiority when he encountered the countless obedient courtiers lined up in 'order, majesty, magnificence, and greatness.'"[54]



FIGURE 2.7. Seated Safavid young prince wearing a figural brocade coat. Signed by Muhammad Haravi. Herat, Afghanistan, mid-sixteenth century. Opaque watercolor and gold on paper. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. (Purchase–Charles Lang Freer Endowment, F1937.8).



FIGURE 2.8. Kaftan of Prince Bayezid (d. 1562). Mid-sixteenth century. Kemha (silk brocade). Topkapı Palace Museum, Istanbul (13/37). Photo © Milli Saraylar İdaresi Başkanlığı.

The imperial palace was sumptuously decorated for this occasion. When he entered, Shah Quli was awestruck. He saw there in great numbers various ranks of soldiers and other courtiers filling up the space waiting to receive the ambassador with utmost deference. This modest display of power through silence and still discipline aroused in all members of the embassy feelings of extreme admiration, but also shame, according to Feridun Ahmed Beg:

> Many people witnessed that the envoys, recollecting the shameful manner of their own king, became malevolent. They uttered: "May his sluggish state be gone! Instead of being a king to this sort of age, may [Tahmasp] be a doorkeeper and servant at the Ottoman imperial threshold." They said, "In reality, that would be a hundred times better and a thousand times superior."[55]

The Safavid ambassador's encounter with Sultan Selim II was the last of a series of interactions, certainly the most formal and perhaps the most intimidating. Before that audience, Shah Quli was first received by the grand vizier at the Imperial Council Hall. When he entered, Feridun Ahmed notes, the envoy was so stupefied and scared that courtiers had to encourage him to proceed. First, all the viziers stood up as a sign of respect. A seat was then placed opposite them for Shah Quli, who brought out two letters kept



FIGURE 2.9. Falconer and attendant in medallions. Fragment from a kaftan, mid-sixteenth century, Kashan, Iran. Brocaded velvet, pile-warp substitution; silk, gilt-metal thread. Cleveland Museum of Art. Purchase from the J. H. Wade Fund 1944.239.

in a gilded envelope, which itself was kept in a golden box encrusted with jewels. He was then taken to the next room for a great banquet given in his honor, where drinks and endless amounts of food were served. After this council and meal with the viziers, Shah Quli was led to the audience. Before he entered, he was given an Ottoman robe of honor from the sultan that he had to wear.

In the audience chamber, Shah Quli was taken before Selim, held on his arms by two gatekeepers who pushed him down to bow before the sultan. The illustrated double spread from the *Şehnāme-i Selīm Ḫān* captures this

moment (fig. 2.4). Sultan Selim occupies a large space sitting in an elaborate throne at the upper right. By the sultan's side, the grand vizier and other viziers are lined up in order, all oriented toward him and looking in his direction. The other participants of the solemn ceremony on the opposite end of the central large carpet do the same, underscoring the sultan's position as the main focus of attention.

The Safavid officials in the scene—most markedly Ambassador Shah Quli—are distinguished by their headdress (*tāj* or *tāj-i Haydarī*): a tall red baton around which the white turban was wrapped. It was Shah Ismaʿil's father Shaikh Haydar who introduced it, after a dream in which ʿAli ibn Abi Talib instructed him to wear such a distinctively red headdress.[56]

In the foreground, spread onto both pages, we see Ottoman court attendants holding one or more of Tahmasp's gifts for Selim. This parade of gifts begins on the right page, and proceeds to the left. Vertically aligned with the throne, the first gifts appear as bound books; then come plates holding metal objects, gilded aigrettes made of black heron feathers used to decorate turbans. The next group of gifts appear as rectangular color blocks with white frames. These must represent fabrics or small silk carpets mentioned in sources. Then come two rolled-up large carpets in red. The final gifts displayed at the upper left are a golden dome, doors, screens and gilded polls. Certainly, these are the disassembled parts of the great tent Shah Tahmasp had sent. Large boxes are also visible nearby, which must have been the containers used to transport all of these presents to Edirne. Shah Tahmasp's gifts were indeed carried by forty-four camels, ten of which were reserved for bringing Shah Quli's own gifts.

A Matchless Qurʾan

Shah Tahmasp's most distinguished gift was a very special copy of the Qurʾan, which is now lost. Sources other than the gift itself nevertheless undergird its uniqueness and transmit its significance and meaning. In earlier correspondence, the shah had substantiated the preeminence of Qurʾans, declaring them the superior gift. In Tahmasp's congratulatory letter for the opening of the Süleymaniye Mosque in 1557, he notes: "[We have dispatched] three exalted codices of the Qurʾan, as they are the most excellent of rarities and gifts, and the most fitting and the best for that supreme edifice."[57] The gifts highlighted as most important in the painting are the bound books, which appear at the head of the display. The text of the *Şehnāme-i Selīm Ḫān* confirms this reading, as books are the first to be mentioned in the lines running above the scene (fig. 2.4):[58]

> The King of Kings indicated his approval / The ambassador slowly went outside

Doorkeepers presented the gifts / Of every acceptable, pleasant and elegant kind
First, an illuminated Qurʾan / Inlaid with large jewels
Acceptable books and *Shahnama*s / Written in order and with assemblies

Most other sources that reference Tahmasp's gifts similarly mention books first. In Marc'Antonio Pigafetta's account, the list begins with "a Qurʾan with the sole authority of ʿAli [ibn Abi Talib], as is their belief. . . . It had a gilded cover."[59] In Feridun Ahmed Beg's list, the first gift is recorded simply as a volume of the most glorious word [of God] (*kelām-ı mecīd, bir cild*), with no reference to ʿAli at all. It is not possible to identify any of the Qurʾans currently in the collection of the Topkapı Palace Museum today as this particular volume with certainty. Recently, a Qurʾan fragment in a private collection has been suggested as possibly Tahmasp's gift to Selim.[60] This fragment, as Linda Komaroff noted, has a Safavid-era binding, bears an Ottoman mark (*pençe*), and a note inside attributing it to ʿAli. However, a clue given in Soranzo's report makes the attribution problematic, because it says that Tahmasp's gift had three lines per page (*Alcorano scritto à tre righe per facia*).[61] Even though Pigafetta is the only author attributing the book to ʿAli's hand, this detail also confirms that the gift was indeed a very early copy of the Qurʾan.

The value of the large jewels that decorated this copy of the Qurʾan, when compared to the rarity and importance of the book itself, was insignificant. Any traces of writing attributed to ʿAli ibn Abi Talib were extremely rare. Shah Tahmasp's bound volume, as an extraordinary relic therefore, was a Qurʾan with no equal, for it was written by the Prophet Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law, and the first Shiʿi imam. As such, it provided important circumstantial evidence to Safavid ties to the Prophet's family.

A fragment from an early Qurʾan manuscript with a colophon indicating that it was written by ʿAli is today at the shrine of the eighth Shiʿi imam ʿAli ibn Musa in Mashhad (fig. 2.10).[62] It was among the gifts endowed by Shah ʿAbbas to the shrine, where he went on a famous pilgrimage in 1601. Such Qurʾans bearing invented signatures of ʿAli and other imams, according to Sheila Blair, served a legitimating function for the Safavids, who claimed descent from the Prophet Muhammad through the line of ʿAli ibn Abi Talib. These objects were venerated as religious relics and their possession by the Safavid rulers provided tangible proof for this line of descent.[63]

In addition to royal descent, Tahmasp's gift would also support and sustain contemporary intellectual activities at the Safavid court because of a historically distinctive understanding of ʿAli as the master calligrapher and illuminator.[64] Confirming the existence of writings by ʿAli, Dust Muhammad, a Safavid author, wrote that "ʿAli b. Abi Talib was the first person to embel-

lish Korans with design and illumination (*ba-naqsh va tazhīb-i zīnat*)."[65] The agency of ʿAli, according to David Roxburgh, "took on a particular resonance among the Shiʿite audience of the Safavid court" in a collective scholarly attempt to elevate the status of calligraphy and illumination.[66] The tremendous respect and importance ascribed to the Qurʾan as the word of God in Islamic traditions rendered the art of copying it beautifully the principal form of decoration, whether in portable media or in monumental architecture. At both the Ottoman and Safavid courts, commissioning and collecting complete Qurʾan copies and calligraphic specimens in general were venerated princely practices. The active interest in collecting and copying classical texts of Persian literature as well as Qurʾans at the Safavid court in particular made possible an excellent environment, as Roxburgh has shown, an intellectual engagement with artistic production and its history.

Within the small but important corpus of Safavid treatises on art and biographies of artists and album prefaces produced in the mid to late sixteenth century, calligraphy is upheld as the most supreme form of artistic expression. In these texts, issues related to artists' lineages and sources of



FIGURE 2.10. Qurʾan fragment. Attributed to Imam ʿAli. Ink on parchment. Mashhad, Astan-i Quds, no. 6. Photograph by Hooperag. Posted on Wikimedia Commons. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Quran_by_Imam_ali.JPG. CC BY-SA 3.0.

artistic knowledge formed the driving force behind the authors' quest. In this construction, ʿAli ibn Abi Talib is designated as a key figure within the chain of transmission (*silsila*) of artistic knowledge, the one who gave meaningful form to writing and potentially possessed the power to instruct or guide generations of talented artists to come. In the *Gulistān-i Hunar* (Rose garden of art), a treatise on calligraphers and painters, Safavid author Qāżī Aḥmad praises ʿAli as the master of the kufic script:

> Then that writing which, like kohl, cleared the sight of men of understanding with divine revelation and the commands and prohibitions of His Holiness the prophet—God's prayer on him and his family!—was the *kūfī* writing. And there exist tracings by the miraculous *qalam*s of His Holiness the Shah, the Refuge of Sanctity (i.e., ʿAlī) which enlighten the sight of the soul and brighten the tablets of the heart. None wrote better than that Holiness—God's blessing on him!—and the most excellent *kūfī* is that which he has traced—God's peace on him![67]

The Qurʾan gifted to Selim II therefore would potentially highlight to its Ottoman audience Safavid royal descent and kingly cultural refinement by citing both the past and the present.

A Multivalent Shahnama

In the *Şehnāme-i Selīm Ḫān*, the three gatekeepers at the head of the parade of gifts, who stand closest to the sultan, hold bound volumes of books (fig. 2.4). In addition to the rare Qurʾan attributed to ʿAli, one of these objects is described by Feridun Ahmed Beg as "a *Shahnama* dedicated to the name of Shah Tahmasp, including 259 [258] paintings, bound in one jewel-encrusted volume."[68] This is none other than the *Shahnama of Shah Tahmasp*, the illustrated manuscript that opens this chapter.

The *Shahnama of Shah Tahmasp* is often noted as the most luxuriously illustrated copy of the epic and the most ambitious project undertaken by the Safavid royal artistic workshop.[69] Probably initiated by Shah Ismaʿil, the book was taken up during the reign of Shah Tahmasp and completed over the course of two decades. It was indeed a production of enormous scale with 759 large folios and 258 illustrations in the tradition of Firdausi's *Shahnama*—the eleventh-century versified epic recounting the deeds of ancient Persian kings and heroes. It reflects the work and collaboration of a team of artists over the years, including the legendary Bihzad, Sultan Muhammad, Mir Musavvir, and Aqa Mirak, who worked under the close supervision of Shah Tahmasp, himself a painter. In that post-Timurid courtly environment, artists combined the lively colors of Turcoman painting and the astounding detail typical of Timurid painting, merged into a distinctly

Safavid style in Tahmasp's *Shahnama* at the court workshop in Tabriz.[70] Furthermore, similar to earlier Safavid illustrated literary texts and portraits, the paintings in the book present history in a contemporary context. Even as the narrated events take place in pre-Islamic history, people in the epic appear in Safavid attire, and the spatial settings frequently depict Safavid gardens and palatial buildings, in which courtly rituals and objects from the sixteenth century are markedly recognizable.[71]

The historical singularity of the *Shahnama of Shah Tahmasp*'s production has been explored from a different perspective by Robert Hillenbrand, who has likened the book to "a giant among pygmies," for royal illustrated copies of the *shahnama* had become rare by the early sixteenth century. Thus *Shahnama of Shah Tahmasp*'s enormous scale dwarfed other similar examples, which contained a few dozen paintings at best. By comparatively examining the book's illustrations, Hillenbrand inventively demonstrates that one-third of these show battle scenes in which "the major theme is the enmity between Iran and Turan."[72] Interpreting the book in historical context, the recurrent theme of this struggle, according to Hillenbrand, projected a nationalist message: "Iran for the Iranians." The book's production intersected with internal and external struggles Tahmasp dealt with, therefore such a legitimating theme for his *shahnama* would be apt.[73] Furthermore, after 1556, the Safavid king withdrew from many pleasures of life and lost interest in the arts. By the time the book was gifted to the Ottoman sultan, however, those problems had been resolved. Tahmasp had established his authority as the new, prosperous king of Iran. The gift of his priceless *Shahnama*, in this construction, was a gesture to cement good relations with Sultan Selim II at a time of peace, when the shah's priorities had changed.[74] But if indeed the book itself was designed as an exceptional royal production with no close match in scale and quality for at least a century, and if it projected such pointed political messages, when it became a gift, would that not be lucid to its new Ottoman audience? And how would it be received?

Prismatically complex, the *Shahnama of Shah Tahmasp* was designed as a nexus interconnecting Safavid political and religious ideals with aesthetic aspirations of perfection. The book's astonishing scale, its political associations, and the high level of artistic achievement attained in it were semantically multivalent in an exchange context. It was a sophisticatedly flexible gift, for the meanings it would convey in its new context tightly depended on its audience. As a gift, it would have to be opened up, contemplated, and compared to other examples by a learned reader to appreciate its distinction and to decipher the "complex intentionalities" it embodied. Such a reading maintains that the *Shahnama of Shah Tahmasp* was a potent object, following Alfred Gell's definition of artwork embodying "intentionalities that are complex, demanding of attention, and perhaps difficult to reconstruct fully."[75] In its new life and form as a gift, the intelligibility of its meaning and

agency would depend on how informed its audience was and the care and thought they would dedicate to the book in that new context.

There is no record of how the book was received at the Ottoman court in 1568, but we can follow the example of Stuart Cary Welch and imagine ourselves as the sultan observing his new gift. Before the exquisite scene of "The Court of Gayumars" (fig. 2.1), an introduction opens the book, written by the Safavid prince Baysunghur Mirza. This section includes two paintings depicting poet Firdausi, the *Shahnama*'s author, following a densely decorated illuminated frontispiece dominated by gold and lapis lazuli. Prefacing the beginning of the text is a dedicatory page (fig. 2.11).

Likened to a sunburst, the heart of its central roundel bears an inscription against gold ground, dedicating the book to Shah Tahmasp: "Commissioned for the library of the Most Mighty Sultan, and the most just and beneficent *Khaqan* [Grand Khan], Sultan, son, grandson of sultans, Abu'l-Muzaffar, Sultan Shah Tahmasp, of Husayni and Safavi descent, *Bahadur* [The Valiant] Khan. May God, the Most Exalted, perpetuate His realm and His rule, and diffuse"—the smaller cartouche below completes the declaration—"his justice and his benevolence throughout the world!"[76] At the Ottoman court, this dedication would serve as an imprint recording the book's history, making it an inalienable gift, to tie it perpetually to its original owner.[77]

The first painting as the text begins has an unusual theme from Firdausi's prologue (fig. 2.12). In this story, now called "The Parable of the Ship of Shiʿism," seventy ships move forward toward a stormy sea. One ship among these is singled out because in it were the Prophet Muhammad, ʿAli, and "the *ahl-i bait-i nabi* and *vasi*," the Prophet's family and successor(s).[78] Firdausi's story emphasizes the importance for the faithful of making the wise decision to get on the correct ship, in order to follow the correct path: "If your eyes turn toward the other world, take your place by the Prophet and ʿAli." In her study of the paintings that depict this story, Raya Shani points to the rarity of *Shahnama* copies including this painting, and with meticulous comparisons of its representations, shows how "the Shiʿi potential inherent in the theological manifesto of Firdausi's rhymed prologue was manipulated in different ways until it achieved an unambiguous representation in the Safavid period."[79] In a more recent study, Christiane Gruber traces this trajectory more closely, noting how the paintings depicting the ship of salvation prior to the year 1500 "tended to show [Muhammad] surrounded by the four rashidun [first heads of the Muslim community to succeed the Prophet] rather than by his family, relatives, or descendants."[80] Later, as Gruber shows, a significant transformation took place, reflecting the formulation of a markedly Safavid concept of religion and vision of salvation. During the sixteenth century, the Prophet Muhammad came to be depicted in Safavid paintings with three novel visual markers: a white facial veil, the distinct Safavid turban (*tāj*), and an enlarged halo of flames. Further, Muhammad



FIGURE 2.11. Dedicatory rosette. Folio from the *Shahnama of Shah Tahmasp*, c. 1525. Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper. Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art.

shared some or all of these unique and stratified identifiers with those closest to him. Importantly, the Prophet's closest companions in these depictions noticeably sidestepped the first three caliphs to succeed Muhammad.[81]

Accordingly, Tahmasp's *Shahnama* unreservedly expresses a view of Twelver Shi'i salvation that is incorporated seamlessly into Safavid religious



FIGURE 2.12. Firdausi's "Parable of the Ship of Shi'ism." From the *Shahnama of Shah Tahmasp*, c. 1525. Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.1).

propaganda. The Shiʿi tradition emphasizes that in his lifetime Muhammad clearly designated ʿAli as his successor and likened his family and successors, the *ahl al-bayt*, to Noah's Ark as a vessel of salvation. The painting reflects this idea iconographically, according to Shani.[82] Four figures stand out in this historically most complex rendition of the scene, with their veiled faces and flaming haloes that encircle their heads, all placed in an elevated section above others (fig. 2.12). Two of them flank a canopy at the highest point on the ship. These figures must be Hasan and Husain, ʿAli's sons and Muhammad's grandsons. The two figures sitting under the canopy represent the Prophet and ʿAli, his cousin and son-in-law.[83] For the receivers of this gift, the omission of the Sunni caliphs from a painting about the right path would have visually paralleled the Safavid rejection of the legitimacy of the first three caliphs of the Sunni tradition. This is significant, for the peace treaty that Tahmasp had signed with Süleyman in 1555 had clearly stipulated the shah to cease the public ritual cursing of those holy figures.

All four figures in the scene are indexed clearly as Twelver Shiʿi Safavids, furthermore, for Muhammad and members of his family all wear the Safavid turban. In a comparable scene of the same theme produced around the same time now in the British Library (fig. 2.13), Muhammad and ʿAli are at the head of the ship. They are distinguished meanwhile from the rest spiritually, through their veiled faces, and spatially, through the insertion of a pole that separates them from the others. But Muhammad is further set apart from ʿAli as he is vertically elevated, seated higher on a platform. Holy figures in the scene—probably representing the Shiʿi imams—lack the facial veil but have flaming haloes as they also wear the Safavid turban, including ʿAli. But Muhammad wears a neutral headdress, which lacks the distinguishing tall red extension of the Safavid turban.[84]

The *Shāhnāma-i Shāhī* is more assertive in this connection. Without any obvious marks of identification—and as Martin Dickson and Stuart Cary Welch have pointed out—Muhammad and ʿAli are indistinguishable in the painting.[85] This representation would have served an unmistakable legitimating function for Shah Tahmasp, for it affirmed Safavid claims of descent from the Prophet and the first Shiʿi imams. To an Ottoman audience, however, this scene would say more than reiterating Tahmasp's religious orientation and dynastic claims.[86] The red hat with twelve folds was introduced by Shah Ismaʿil's father, but refined into the form seen here, and continued to be used as a militant political symbol by Ismaʿil, as mentioned above.

During years of the Ottoman-Safavid conflict in the first half of the sixteenth century, it was this headgear that became a major symbol of attack, a point of mockery, and a sign and material proof of the heresy of the shah's followers, whom the Ottomans collectively called redheads (*qizilbash* or *surḫser*) (see fig. 1.6). The appearance of the Prophet Muhammad as a *qizilbash* would certainly be unacceptable, even sacrilege, at least to some at



FIGURE 2.13. Firdausi's "Parable of the Ship of Shiʿism." From a *shahnama*. Dated 942/1536. Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper. British Library, Add. 15531, 12a. © The British Library Board.

the Ottoman court. The story of this embassy, as I recounted it, reveals the multifariousness of Ottoman views toward the Safavids, even though this was a time of peace between the two courts. Ranging from subtle verbal attacks and polite exchanges to attempted murder, Ottoman reactions were always directed toward a member of the Safavid delegation wearing that same turban.

What impression would the astonishing scale and the high level of artistic achievement achieved in the bejeweled *Shahnama of Shah Tahmasp* make on the sultan? Looking at the painting succeeding "The Ship of Shiʿism," we can consider these issues. "The Court of Gayumars" (fig. 2.1) would probably be breathtaking to the Ottoman sultan in 1568 as it was to its last owner. Indeed, in 1959, Stuart Cary Welch recounts, to authenticate the Tahmasp *Shahnama*, he looked through its pages, searching for Sultan Muhammad's "Court of Gayumars," described by Dust Muhammad as a painting "such that the hearts of the boldest painters were grieved, and they hung their heads in shame before it."[87]

But the images that follow complicate this line of argument, for the *Shāhnāma-i Shāhī*'s paintings were not all unmatchable works of art. Oleg Grabar wrote of them collectively: "Many are mediocre, but a dozen are among the masterpieces of world painting."[88] If the receiver of the gift could recall and compare the same scene from a different *shahnama* produced at the Ottoman imperial workshop dating to the same period (fig. 2.14), then Sultan Muhammad's composition could indeed be interpreted as strikingly impressive, even artistically competitive.[89] "The Court of Gayumars" attests to the highest level of creative intensity and aesthetic complexity that artists at Tahmasp's court engaged in, despite Sultan Selim I's transfer of artists from Shah Ismaʿil's court after Chaldiran.

Seen from this perspective, was Tahmasp consciously gifting to the new sultan an object that no team of Ottoman artists could reproduce? It is highly unlikely that the Safavid shah saw Sultan Süleyman's *shahnama*. But if Tahmasp was betting on that premise, his gift would be artistically competitive even when he was making a humble request of renewing peace with Selim II. In this regard, the book aligns with the shah's previous offer of Safavid carpets to be custom made for the Süleymaniye, which overtly highlighted Safavid artistic superiority, as noted by Gülru Necipoğlu.

As an object of exchange, however, the *Shāhnāma-i Shāhī* differs from the carpets in a significant way. Tahmasp's letter to Süleyman in 1557 indicated that large carpets to fit the sultan's new and magnificent mosque complex could only be produced in Safavid Iran, and his gift offer was instantly rejected by the sultan. The *Shāhnāma-i Shāhī* was by contrast accepted. Even if Tahmasp intended to make a statement of artistic superiority by giving his *shahnama* to the sultan, because he did not underscore that message its intelligibility remained dependent on the book's new audience. As a gift, the *Shahnama of Shah Tahmasp* thus presented itself as a multivalent object whose corresponding range of associations hinged on its new audience's active interpretation and engagement.

By 1568, the *Shahnama* had been copied, translated, and illustrated numerous times at the Ottoman court. But the Ottomans also engaged with Firdausi's text in novel ways. The most recent and ambitious project under-



FIGURE 2.14. "Court of Gayumars." From a *shahnama* bearing the seal of Sultan Süleyman. Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper. Topkapı Palace Museum Library, Istanbul, H. 1499, 14a. Photo © Milli Saraylar İdaresi Başkanlığı.

taken at court was in fact a unique interpretation of the *Shahnama* in a new five-volume world history written in Persian in the 1550s, titled *Shāhnāma-i āl-i ʿOṣmān* (Book of king of the house of Osman). Borrowing the title and some of the formal and conceptual characteristics of the *Shahnama*, that monumental work presented a narrative that tied Adam, the first prophets, and legitimate rulers of Islamic history directly to the Ottoman dynasty, culminating in the glorious reign of Sultan Süleyman. Although unique, the *Book of King of the House of Osman* project is paradigmatic of how the Ottomans came to prefer history writing over epics.[90] It also shows how history was used in imperial manuscripts to serve as a legitimating discourse that tied sultans to the Sunni tradition and earlier rulers of their own dynasty. In the meantime, Ottoman artists also developed unprecedented genres of illustrated manuscripts, such as a book containing city views of places on Süleyman's eastern campaign in the 1530s. Aside from the collection and patronage of epics, the range of genres that the Ottoman imperial workshop had produced by 1568 included books on navigation, city views, landscapes, and portraiture.[91]

This activity and the resulting corpus were unmatched in their range when compared to works produced at the Safavid court, which tightly kept their ties to earlier Persianate artistic traditions. Ottoman illustrated manuscripts differently kept close visual ties to both the eastern and western artistic traditions. Differences in artistic traditions developed at these courts thus complicate any straightforward and purely aesthetic considerations about what the Ottomans would have considered superior when turning the pages of the *Shāhnāma-i Shāhī*.

A Magnificent Tent and Other Lost Gifts

The Qurʾan and the *Shahnama* surely were unique objects with immense cultural and political significance. But Shah Tahmasp's collection of gifts for Selim II included many other things. An imperial tent among these is singled out in sources. It is the only gift mentioned by the Safavid author Qāżī Aḥmad Qummī: "[The shah sent] Shāh Qulī Sulṭān with other gifts and blessings (*ṭuḥaf u tabarrukāt*), for example a tent whose red interior was woven with designs, [and which was] European crimson voided velvet on the outside, whose jewels were set by Qāżī Kuchak Musharraf, a student of Maulana Malik Dailami."[92] In Giacomo Soranzo's account, which includes a list of all of Tahmasp's gifts (fig. 2.15), the tent is the object described in most detail: it was "hung with damascene cloth, and covered with crème-colored satin with a pole painted blue with silver inlay, and above a green cover, and three parasols to be placed at the entrance of the pavilion, one of Iranian gold, one of satin, and one of ermesine, and their center poles painted in blue with silver spokes that are gilded and jeweled and held together with two

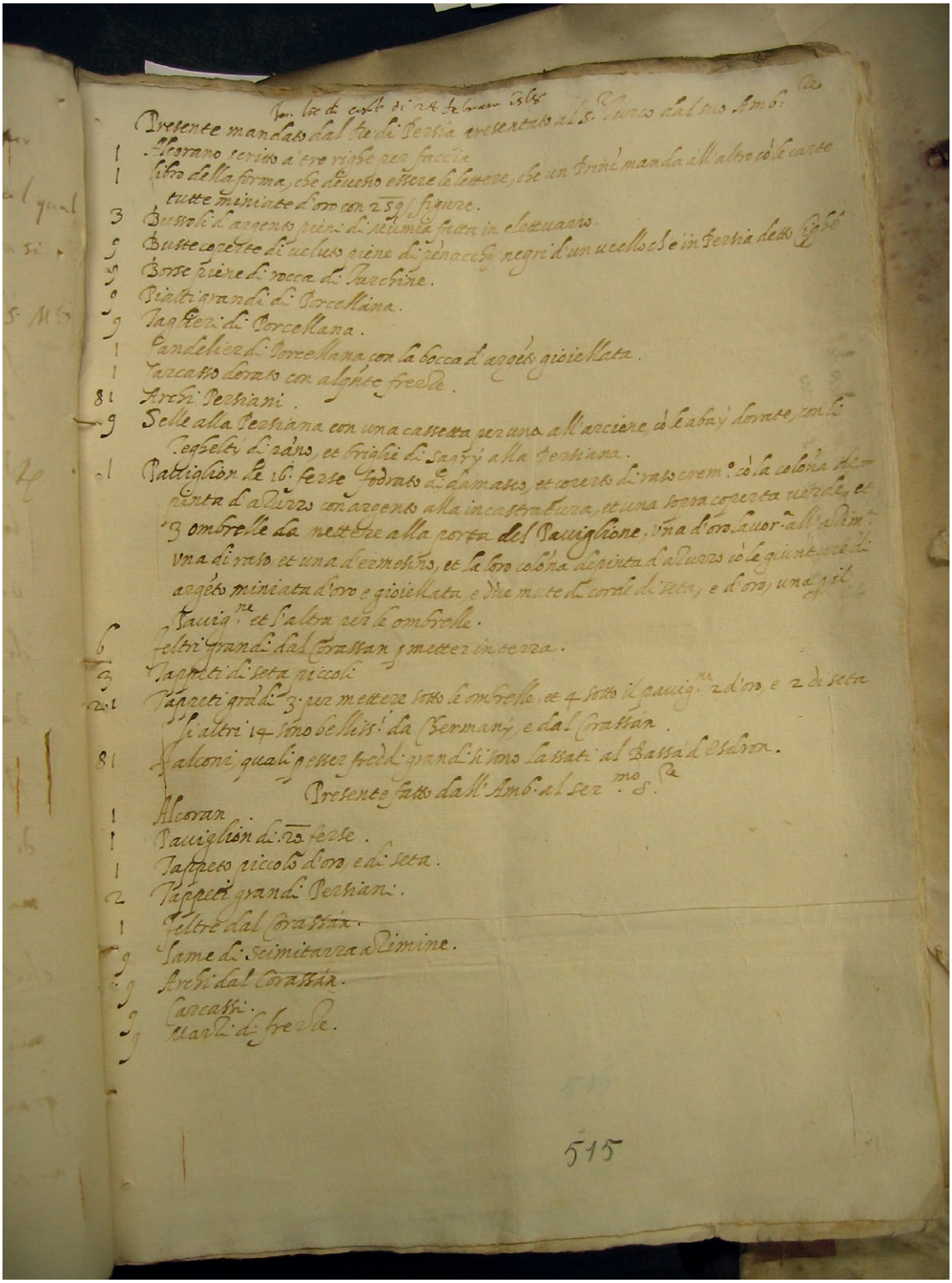


FIGURE 2.15. Presents sent by the king of Persia, offered by his ambassador to the Signor Turco. Archivio di Stato di Venezia. Senato, Dispacci Constantinopoli, Filza 2, 515a. Photo by Sinem Casale.

sets of cords made of gold and silk, one for the pavilion and the other for the parasols."[93] This tent must have been quite large, a massive portable palace. Twenty-one large carpets are mentioned in Soranzo's list, three of which are indicated to be placed under the parasols to front the tent's entrances. Four are said to be laid under the tent. Two of these are indicated as gold woven and the other two as silk. The remaining fourteen carpets are described as beautiful and from Kerman and Khurasan (*belliss[im]i da Chermani, e dal Corassan*).

A painting from the *Shahnama of Shah Tahmasp* would help us visualize the tent, since no Safavid tents have survived in their entirety from this period (fig. 2.16).[94] This painting pictures the mythical Iranian king Kay Khusrau, seated in an elevated hexagonal gold throne under a large tent, as he receives an envoy. Although its main colors are different from Tahmasp's gift, it is woven with different designs on the inside and outside, similar to Selim's new tent. The canopy to the left of the central tent under which three figures sit on an elaborate carpet is supported by a blue gilded pole, similar to the center poles pictured in the *Book of Kings of Sultan Selim* (fig. 2.4), just as the tent's crown and the screens echo the gift of the Ottoman sultan.

Shah Tahmasp's other gifts for Selim included many other objects that are now lost: three silver boxes full of panacea (*mumia*),[95] nine velvet cases filled with heron feathers, nine bags full of turquoise stones, a porcelain candlestick with jeweled silver neck, nine large porcelain plates, nine flat porcelain serving dishes, a gilded quiver, eighty-one bows, nine saddles, six large felts from Khurasan, three small silk carpets, twenty-one large carpets, and eighty-one falcons, which did not survive the journey.

Viewed as a meticulously curated selection of objects, these gifts highlight a shared culture of taste and distinction at both the Ottoman and Safavid courts. Ottomans collected and commissioned copies of the Qur'an and a range of epics that included Firdausi's *Shahnama*, as discussed above. The black feathers of the heron bird were used at both courts to decorate the turbans of rulers, members of the royal family, and highest-ranking officials (fig. 2.17).[96] In the manuscript painting that shows Safavid gifts displayed before Sultan Selim (fig. 2.4), the heron feathers arranged into gilded aigrettes are seen in the middle ground, connecting each portion of the composition, with four gate keepers holding one on each hand. In the same scene, only the turbans of members of the Safavid embassy and the sultan are adorned with feathers, gold ornaments, and gilded cloth. At the Safavid court, the distinctive turban was augmented, to signify rank with the addition of feathers, gold and jeweled attachments, and the color and mode of wrapping of the turban.

A painting from a quintet (*khamsa*) of the poet Niẓāmī can be used to see these Safavid marks of courtly distinction in action, for it is thought to depict the coronation of the Sasanian prince Khusrau in a contemporary context, at



FIGURE 2.16. "Kay Khusrau Receives Turanian Surrender Emissary." Folio from the *Shahnama of Shah Tahmasp*, c. 1525. Attributed to ʿAbd al-Vahhab. Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper. Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art.

Shah Tahmasp's court (fig. 2.18).[97] The scene takes place in a garden pavilion, where Khusrau sits in a colossal gold throne. Uniquely, his turban is wrapped almost to the tip of the red baton with gilded white cloth. Although some of the other courtiers have feathers attached with gold and jeweled pins, similar to the prince, his turban is the only one with different feathers.

Other signifiers of royal activity at this coronation feast are distinguishable, just as Sheila Canby has shown with specific reference to the *Shahnama of Shah Tahmasp*. A royal falconer approaches the prince with two others behind him, each holding a bird of prey. Several other marks of distinction in this scene stand out if we have Tahmasp's gifts to Selim in mind. Court attendants in the foreground carry dishes containing the food to be served, and courtiers surrounding the prince wear swords and belts with gold buckles that were typically adorned with various precious stones including lapis lazuli. As raw materials, such stones would adorn many Ottoman objects, though many recognizably different from Safavid examples in style, such as a mid-sixteenth-century Ottoman ivory belt (fig. 2.19).[98]

Considering materials from this perspective, the gift of panacea (*mumia*), a kind of cure-all drug, presents us with an idiosyncratic case, for we have no trace of it in either material form or in any visual representation. It appears as *mūmiyā* in Turkish and Persian, and as mumia or "Persian Mumia" (*mumia naturalis persica* or *mumia persica nativa*) in European sources, which describe it as a black, wax-like, bituminous substance found in mines or rock caves in Persia.[99] It was believed to heal fractures, dislocations, wounds,



FIGURE 2.17. Aigrette with heron feathers. Topkapı Palace Museum, Istanbul (2/531). Photo © Milli Saraylar İdaresi Başkanlığı.

and aches, and to be effective against poisons and a range of ailments, from ulcers to epilepsy. Since at least the twelfth century, juices extracted from embalmed bodies of ancient Egyptians came to be used similarly as a sort of universal medicine. Early modern authors make a distinction between this mumia (*mumia vera humana*) and the former, mineral type.[100] Mineral mumia (*mūmiyāʿ-i maʾdenī*) is recorded in sources as extremely rare and efficacious. In an eighteenth-century pharmaceutical dictionary, Venetian



FIGURE 2.18. Khusrau enthroned. From a *khamsa* by Niẓāmī. Dated 1539–43. Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper. British Library, Or. 2265, 60b. © The British Library Board.



FIGURE 2.19. Ivory belt ornamented with gold, rubies, and turquoise stones. Istanbul, mid-sixteenth century. Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts, Istanbul (482).

pharmacist Giovanni Battista Capello notes that this kind of mumia was unknown in Europe before the publication of German naturalist Engelbert Kaempfer's *Amoenitatum exoticarum* in 1712.[101] In that book, Kaempfer wrote that mumia originated from a cave near the city of Darab (Darabgerd) in the province of Fars in Iran and recounts a story that finds echoes in contemporary Ottoman dictionaries.[102] This ancient resource, writes Kaempfer, was rediscovered during the Safavid period, and its extraction and distribution became a royal monopoly in the sixteenth century:

> It is said that it was not collected during a few centuries, either because there was no more, or because of its location, due to the disorder of wars, had been lost and faded into oblivion. This place was rediscovered and its collection was restarted at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Since that time, with great pomp, they go each year to that mumia location. To ensure the legitimate origin of this precious liquid, above all because it belongs to the most precious treasures of the royal family, the mumia has to be collected in that very location in person by the supreme governor of the province.

The cave would be opened ceremonially every year on a hot summer day, and a naked man would be sent inside to collect it. The mumia would be taken by the governor to be melted and placed in a special silver container, made specifically for this purpose.[103] Along with the cave itself, the silver container would then be sealed, and promptly sent back to the shah. Only the Safavid shah would therefore have access to mumia, and it would certainly make a unique royal gift: "It is entirely reserved for the king and it is used within the circle of the royal family. In rare circumstances pieces are granted to magnates, by the king's benevolence, if he learns that one of them has been thrown by his horse (which happens during the hunt) and is in danger of dying."[104] Overall, Kaempfer estimates the amount collected annually for royal use to be quite small, about four ounces (twenty-five *misqāl*s).



The fact that Tahmasp's gift to Selim arrived in three silver boxes makes one wonder if three years' worth of mumia was sent, or if it was poured into smaller containers. Although sixteenth-century sources are silent on this question, what is clear is that this was a gift small in size but great in value and symbolic significance when considered alongside other gifts sent by Shah Tahmasp.

The material vocabulary of Tahmasp's gifts thus underscores shared elements of royal activity and signs of material distinction across the two courts. At the same time, they pointedly reflect Safavid artistic achievement and the shah's refined taste and acquisitiveness of the best things and materials within the expanse of his realm. Signifiers of sophisticated royal power, they were kingly objects. Kept out of routine circulation within the Safavid court—ʿAli's Qurʾan, Tahmasp's *Shahnama*, and the enormous tent in particular—they were things that would acquire currency when set in motion, when exchanged between kings. Shah Tahmasp's gifts collectively underscore this principle as they create an image of the Persian monarch as a perfect ruler, through harmonizing objects that denote wealth, piety, and descent from a noble line going back to the Shiʿi imam ʿAli and ancient Iranian kings.

At the same time, these gifts stand at a paradoxical nexus of intention and reception. The messages they carried were not immediately discernable. As potent objects, they compelled their new owner to look closely, make connections between them and other works of art, and conjure ideas about the meaning of their materials, iconographies, histories, scales, techniques, and possession. In fact, Shah Tahmasp's unusually lengthy letter to Selim followed this course of agency and was full of self-referential but concealed hyperbole.

A Prodigious Letter

Shah Tahmasp's long letter was kept in a golden box encrusted with jew-

els when it was presented to Sultan Selim.[105] Now lost, it has been copied nevertheless in its entirety in both Ottoman and Safavid records. According to Qāżī Aḥmad Qummī, one of the authors of the letter, Shah Tahmasp employed numerous poets and letter writers for this task, who worked on it closely with the shah. It took the authors eight months to bring it to perfection.[106] Colin Mitchell has called this unusual document "an epistolary leviathan," for it was unparalleled in the Safavid diplomatic tradition.

Several meters long in its original form, it was strikingly ornate. It praised the late Sultan Süleyman as the King of Kings, the most just sultan, shadow of God on earth, Alexander, and Solomon of the age. The new Sultan Selim, also compared to these kings and other ancient Persian kings, is likewise portrayed as an epitome of justice. A doubly pompous and exaggerated eulogy to the late Süleyman and the new king Selim on the surface, according to Mitchell, the letter indeed uses that same discourse to turn the praise on the Safavid king himself.[107]

A long initial section glorifying the last campaign of Süleyman in Szigetvár is followed by an account of Sultan Selim's accession to the throne. The repetition of the term *saʿādat* (felicity and good fortune) in reference to the new era that opens the rule of Selim, according to Mitchell, must be a deliberate choice to then glorify Tahmasp's new imperial garden complex in Qazvin, famously named Saʿādatābād (abode of felicity).[108] For the accession of Selim—referred to in the letter, for example, as "the sultan of exalted fortune"—many celebrations took place at the Abode of Felicity: "In those paradisiacal fields, where the sun and moon meet, flasks of silver and goblets of gold are filled with liquor mixed with cloves and cinnamon [*ṣurāḥīhā-yi nuqra va jāmhā-yi ṭilā pur az ʿaraq-i qaranful u dārchīnī*]."[109] The description of these celebrations opens a window into the abundance of food, fertility, and lavish materials that provided pleasures that made Saʿādatābād akin to paradise.

A long praise to a *Shahnama* in Shah Tahmasp's letter is woven into a section on craftsmen and their shops in Saʿādatābād, where matchless gems, books, carpets, silk textiles, and jeweled gold and silver objects, such as belts and swords decorated with rubies, emeralds, and lapis lazuli were put on display. The book is described in such superlative terms that it quite likely refers to the *Shāhnāma-i Shāhī,* Tahmasp's gift for Selim.[110]

The letter claims that artists had, with a jeweled binding akin to the celestial spheres, achieved intellectually overwhelming perfection in the book's countless paintings, calligraphy, gilding, and illumination. The name of the famed artist Bihzad is evoked multiple times, along with other artistic giants including calligraphers Yāqūt and Ṣulṭān ʿAlī. The fairy-like images of the book, according to the letter, were so flawless that if Mani—the legendary exemplar of painting—saw it, he would give it a hundred praises.[111] The poem thus places the *Shahnama* at the end of a historical trajectory of mastery,

in which excellence in all arts of the book was materialized in this single volume:[112]

> This youth [i.e., book] sitting in the atelier / Who is [such] an image that reason is perplexed by it
> The face of this youth [i.e., book] is so unique / That Bihzād went into a trance by its image
> When the dust of the down [on his lip] turns black [i.e., when his script is written] / No one will care anymore about the calligraphy of Yāqūt
> In every ornament and beauty, in every way and manner / Piled up a hundred sections [of the book]
> From the poems of the well-known Firdausī / Who had done justice to the word in the age
> A shāhnāmah was proffered / And his atelier was beautified by this gift
> It was gilded and illuminated most gloriously / It was bound with a hundred ornaments
> Its script was written by the master all over / Its writing is illuminated like the light of the eye
> From the work of the pupils who have trained with zarin-qalam / Each page had a design sketched on it
> One painting was done by Bihzād / But he departed and left behind regret
> The organization and adornment [of this Shāh nāmah] was such that / Reason and understanding were perplexed by it
> The cover was jewel-studded like the celestial spheres / And it was on par with the moon in the sky
> From the painting from the golden pen of Bihzād / Who used to paint for Kings
> It was unique in this world / It was very much approved by the people of perfection
> Many fragments of Khafī and great works / In the writing style of Yāqūt and Sulṭān ʿAlī
> Were placed in the atelier of that beautiful youth [i.e., book] / All these writings—like the down of the beautiful ones—were life-consuming[113]

The letter ends on a hopeful tone that emphasizes friendship, unity, and harmony, as if the two countries had always been at peace and those principles had always driven relations between them. The message thus skillfully sidesteps decades of conflict prior to the peace treaty of 1555 and the potential dynastic crisis avoided only recently with the escape of one of Selim's brothers to Tahmasp's court. At a time of delicate peace, therefore, Tah-

masp's long letter goes to extremes in its submissive message, emphasizing the shah's wish for the continuation of peace between the two countries.

When taken before Selim II, the Safavid ambassador repeated this message. Held under his arms by two gatekeepers in both paintings depicting that event (figs. 2.3 and 2.4), Shah Quli assumes a subordinate position, bent over in utmost respect. Giacomo Soranzo's report to the Venetian Senate additionally records a request expressed by the ambassador, absent from Shah Tahmasp's long letter:

> His wish is none other than confirming the friendship between them with words full of submission and reverence for this King, . . . recognizing also his greatness as head of the Muhammadan sect even though in certain matters pertaining to religion they are different. [Shah Quli] asked then that merchants might be allowed to trade freely between their respective countries and that the roads should be kept open for the Persians to travel to Mecca by means of Baghdad.[114]

All Muslims are obliged by religion to perform the pilgrimage, if they have the means to do so. Merely a religious requirement on the surface, the pilgrimage also had social, economic, and communicative functions. After 1517, when Mecca and Medina came under Ottoman rule, sultans adopted the title of "Servitor of the Two Holy Shrines," which gave them a special superior status and the heavy responsibility of providing protection to all the caravans traveling to the Holy Lands and to Mecca and Medina. Providing social and municipal services to pilgrims was the critical way in which Ottomans demonstrated this special role.[115]

Around 1568, Ottoman claims to sultanate and caliphate were enhanced by a vision of the empire beyond its borders. One of the masterminds of this project was Grand Vizier Sokollu Mehmed Pasha, who effectively used maritime trade and economic activity to support Ottoman ideological influence and reinforce religious ideology around the Indian Ocean as far as Indonesia, for example, as Giancarlo Casale has shown. During Sokollu's time in office in the 1560s and '70s, "the concept of the Ottoman sultan as 'universal sovereign' became ever more widely recognized, such that the sultan's name was read in the Friday call to prayer of mosques from the Maldives to Ceylon, and from Calicut to Sumatra." The sultan enjoyed unprecedented influence over maritime trade and provided in return safety and security along trade and pilgrimage routes.[116]

Similar to other Muslim communities that requested protection, the Safavid shah thus appealed to the sultan as well. But this request also attests to continuing problems encountered by Safavid pilgrims, for Shah Tahmasp had made the same request before.[117] Within the corpus of Ottoman letters sent to the Safavid court prior to the signing of the treaty, the issue of whether

or not the Safavids were Muslims is a prominent one. Against this background, the granting of permission for Safavid pilgrims to go on the hajj should be seen as an ideological victory for Shah Tahmasp, who frequently stated in his own letters to the sultan that he and the people living under his rule are Muslims and pointed out the futility of Muslims killing each other during Ottoman-Safavid wars.

To further complicate matters, problems that travelers encountered sometimes evidently involved the Safavid shah himself. Complaining that the Safavids were not letting pilgrims through their lands, Muslim rulers in Central Asia pressured the sultan. As a solution, sometimes those rulers strategically made alliances to support the Ottoman sultan to (re)conquer strategic places such as Astrakhan, a city to the north of the Caspian Sea.[118]

The agency and richness of meaning carried by Shah Tahmasp's gifts should also be considered from the perspective of the foreign witnesses to the Ottoman-Safavid encounter, whose accounts have served as major informants of my story of those gifts. Importantly, regardless of what messages Tahmasp might have intended his gifts to impart, they highlight how the Ottomans skillfully eschewed and redirected the meaning of Safavid gifts in a self-serving way. At the end of his report, the Venetian *bailo* Giacomo Soranzo wrote: "I should not forget to tell your majesty as there were many retainers of Christian ambassadors as well as my own outside the Divan, the Pasha [probably Sokollu Mehmed Pasha] asked all of them to come in and see the great gifts the abovementioned ambassador brought." Then, Sokollu "announced in a very loud voice, that they should see how a sultan should be treated by someone who comes to kiss his hand."[119] The grand vizier's tone demonstrates that the distinction of Tahmasp's gifts were well understood. But the public shaming of other ambassadors also implies that Sokollu wished the gifts to be interpreted by outsiders as nothing more than objects of submission.

What of Shah Tahmasp's request of safe travel for Safavid pilgrims and his wishes for unity, peace, and mutual trust? Soranzo's account notes that Selim responded favorably to the Safavid ambassador "with few words" in Edirne. A document written two months after that audience, in April 1568, reveals that the shah had also appealed to Selim for permission to distribute alms to the poor in Anatolia, for the soul of the late Sultan Süleyman. In this imperial order, Selim wrote: "Having been concluded that the orthodox Sunni community have no propensity for this type of charity, it has been ordered: . . . there is no use in giving money on this matter, and that if [the Safavid shah has] spare wealth to distribute to the poor, they might help the poor in their own country."[120]

Free of major conflicts, the Safavid and Ottoman courts were at peace during the rest of Selim's reign. Still, later records point to continued frictions that directly opposed Tahmasp's wishes. Just a few months later, one

of the shah's high-ranking court officials died on his way to perform the hajj. Seventeenth-century court chronicler Iskandar Beg Munshi blames the Ottomans for failing to protect Safavid pilgrims: "Maʿṣūm Beg Ṣafavī obtained permission from both monarchs to make the pilgrimage with his son Khan Mīrzā. But a group of Ottomans, disguised as Bedouins, treacherously attacked and murdered him and his son, and several of their companions, while they were actually with the pilgrim caravan and had donned the special pilgrims' robe."[121] A painting from the *Şehnāme-i Selīm Ḫān* illustrates the assassination, refuting Iskandar Beg's accusation (fig. 2.20).[122] In the foreground, the Safavid caravan is under attack, outnumbered and surrounded by Bedouins. The upturned figure in the middle whose turban has fallen on the ground must represent the unfortunate Masum Beg.

By the time the *Şehnāme-i Selīm Ḫān* was completed, the Ottoman and Safavid courts had entered a war that lasted for more than a decade (1578–90). The book's illustrations concerning Safavids therefore reflect on events that took place in a different era. The next chapter turns to manuscript paint-



FIGURE 2.20. "Safavid Caravan on Route to the Hajj under Attack by the Bedouins." From Loḳmān, *Şehnāme-i Selīm Ḫān* (*Shāhnāma-i Salīm Khān*). Istanbul, 1581. Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper. Topkapı Palace Museum Library, Istanbul, A. 3595, fol. 67b–68a. Photo © Milli Saraylar İdaresi Başkanlığı.

ings that display Safavid gifts before the Ottoman sultan in a time of intense conflict. These paintings manipulate the polyvocal agency and layered symbolism of singular gifts like the *Shahnama of Shah Tahmasp*, representing them as objects that were sent to the sultan eagerly, to uphold him as the king of the world.



FIGURE 3.1. "Sultan Süleyman Receives Shah Tahmasp's Envoy at His Court in 1532." From ʿĀrifī, *Süleymānnāme* (*Sulaimānnāma*). Istanbul, 1558. Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper. Topkapı Palace Museum Library, Istanbul, H. 1517, fol. 332a. Photo © Milli Saraylar İdaresi Başkanlığı.

3

King of the World

Magnificent Safavid gifts displayed before the Ottoman sultan at his court form the main theme of a remarkable series of manuscript paintings found within the pages of a unique genre of illustrated Ottoman court history specific to the second half of the sixteenth century, known as *şehnāme*s (books of kings) (fig. 3.1). These paintings appear in five separate illuminated manuscripts in all, each composed by the official Ottoman court historian (*şehnāmeci*) and illustrated in the imperial atelier of master illuminators at Topkapı Palace in Istanbul. Collectively, they were produced over four decades, spanning the reigns of three different Ottoman sultans, and therefore documenting a period of critical importance for the evolving Ottoman-Safavid relationship—a period that included several dynastic succession crises on both sides of the border, two violent and lengthy wars, and the signing of two historic peace agreements. Moreover, the exchange of embassies between the two courts continued throughout this time, occasioning the repeated presentation of Safavid gifts to the Ottoman sultan that were in turn incorporated into these chronicles' visual program. This unique visual record provides an exceptional opportunity to examine an often-noted but little-studied dimension of gift giving in art historical scholarship: the iconography of offering objects as gifts.

Perhaps the most iconic visual sources on historical exchanges of gifts—featured on the cover of Marcel Mauss's *Essai sur le don*'s English edition (*The Gift*) of 2000—are the relief panels from the Achaemenid Apadana (royal audience hall) in Persepolis, showing multiple rows of gift/tribute-bearing subjects parading up the steps of the Apadana (fig. 3.2).[1] Vassals carry here a

multitude of goods as manifestations of their allegiance to the Persian king, ranging from weapons and jewelry to animals, all in a highly formal ceremonial order (figs. 3.3–3.5). Such scenes "cumulatively index the terrain and wealth of the empire" and convey a political message about the extent of the Persian king's power and the place of his empire within the cosmos.[2]

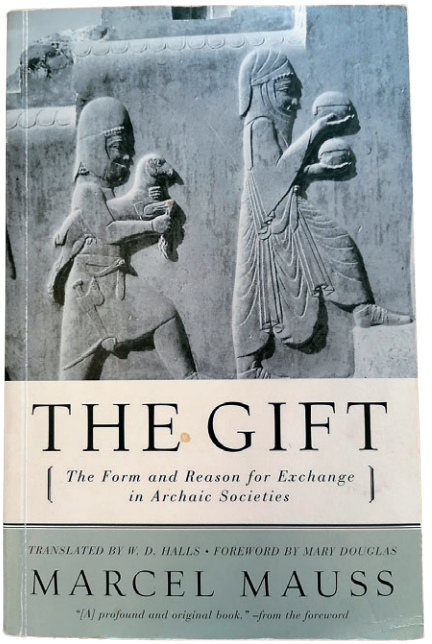


FIGURE 3.2. Cover of Marcel Mauss's *The Gift* (2000). Photo by Sinem Casale.

FIGURE 3.3. Tribute procession. Detail showing the Ionian delegation, from reliefs on the east staircase of the audience hall of Darius I, Apadana. Persepolis, Iran, c. 520–465 B.C.E. Oriental Institute, P29000. Courtesy of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.



Ottoman images examined in this chapter also document gift exchanges, but they are different from the Persian reliefs in significant ways. Rather than architectural panels decorating a palace, these are paintings found in manuscripts, each of which chronicles the reign of a specific Ottoman sultan. And rather than gifts brought to the king by subject peoples during yearly ritual



FIGURE 3.4. Tribute procession. Detail showing the Mede delegation, from reliefs on the east staircase of the audience hall of Darius I, Apadana. Persepolis, Iran, c. 520–465 B.C.E. Oriental Institute, PS-53. Courtesy of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.



FIGURE 3.5. Central façade of the northern stairway. The audience hall of Darius I, Apadana. Persepolis, Iran, c. 520–465 B.C.E. Oriental Institute, P58487. Courtesy of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.

celebrations, such as the Nowruz (New Year), they display objects sent to the sultan from a foreign ruler, which were paraded in the Topkapı Palace under the gaze of courtiers and other observers in a highly ritualized presentation ceremony. In their visual program, these manuscript paintings thus reflect the formality and the rigidity of reception practices at the Ottoman court through repetition. Nonetheless, the sameness of each scene does not necessarily reflect a dry realism. As Hilsdale pointed out, "ritualized depiction is not the same as ritual itself."[3] The depictions of gifting at the Ottoman court are in fact carefully composed to tailor a particular political message about the sources of the sultan's sovereignty. A new visual image for the sultan progressively develops over time in repeated compositions, in which the gifts form the main focus.

Repetition itself was a significant strategy in artistic practice and pedagogy in the Persianate artistic tradition.[4] As a growing corpus of research shows, the production of illustrated manuscripts—as well as single-page compositions—was a collaborative and interactive process.[5] Traditionally, apprentices were trained in artistic workshops under the supervision of master artists and learned their craft from earlier examples, by studying and copying previous compositions or individual figural and decorative schemes. At the same time, the self-referential nature of Persianate artistic traditions also allowed artists to demonstrate their creativity and technical skill. According to David Roxburgh, "imitations or intentional allusions did not abrogate originals but instead lent them a greater originality."[6] By responding to the work of contemporary and previous generations, artists simultaneously conveyed an awareness of their place in the art historical tradition and showcased their own skill, creativity, and mastery by "remaking and refining" previous models.[7] As Roxburgh argues, imitative practices in Persianate painting, similar to those of poetry, involved patrons and viewers in a way that demanded they conjure up previous models in order to judge and appreciate the artists' creative process.

In keeping with this tradition, models served a variety of purposes at the Ottoman artistic workshop. But rather than issues surrounding artistic creativity, authorship, and originality, I consider visual citations for their overall political message.[8] Recent scholarship notes repetition in late sixteenth-century Ottoman illustrated manuscripts as a key strategy in negotiating a new sultanic image, the result of fundamental transformations in court ritual and the balance of power at the imperial palace. Emine Fetvacı maintains that between the reigns of Süleyman the Magnificent and his grandson Murad III, a significant change took place in the visual image of the sultan in Ottoman illustrated manuscripts. Whereas paintings found in earlier books concentrated on the sultan's actions, drawing parallels between him and the eminent and well-known heroes of Firdausi's *Shahnama*, the central theme shifted in later books to the sultan's personality and lineage, to highlight his

sanctity in addition to his majesty. As such, in Murad III's manuscripts, "the image of the Ottoman ruler emphasizes his divinely ordained rule, and cultivates a focus on his lineage, his generosity, and his role as the leader of the Islamic community."[9] As Fetvacı shows, Ottoman paintings elucidate the sultan's piety, generosity, and divinely ordained rule in multiple ways. Repetition, for example, conveys "an unmistakable sense of order and hierarchy" to suggest the permanence of the new organization of the court and the sultan's place in it and the world at large.[10] During the late sixteenth century, the display of Safavid gifts in Ottoman manuscript paintings came to be closely tied to the sultan's new image; the changing portrayal of foreign gifts communicated the view that contemporary rulers recognized the sultan's superiority by sending him things of the highest quality within their reach.

Unfortunately, almost all of the gifts presented to the sultan during formal court ceremonies have either not survived or are impossible to identify with certainty, with the notable and unique exception of the *Shahnama of Shah Tahmasp*, as discussed in the previous chapter. This general uncertainty deprives us of the possibility of interrogating the agency of the gifts through an examination of their materiality as physical objects. Perhaps counterintuitively, the prominent place in the Ottoman *şehnāme*s of the act of giving provides a unique opportunity to explore the agency of gifts in a different way: through their representation in narrative painting rather than through their materiality.

While each of the individual paintings depicts a specific act of giving at a precise historical moment, a larger pattern emerges when we survey them as a group. Over time, the paintings develop a new mode to illustrate the ritual presentation of Safavid gifts that was designed to be read intervisually. Through repetition and association—a deliberate "sameness" staged against a recognizable background—each of these paintings builds on its predecessor to convey a sense of the seamlessness and universality of Ottoman rule.[11] Repetition and multiplication were used to create an illusion of historical reality. As gifts offered to the sultan actually diminished in number, they were pictured as more numerous in these paintings in order to communicate the idea that the sultan was recognized as the greatest and most powerful ruler. Anthropologists Gunter Gebauer and Christoph Wulf noted that "in an intertextual or interpictorial dialogue with the reference text or image, a new work emerges by way of the production and new combination of elements, forms, signs, and meanings."[12] In the Ottoman paintings, suggestively, Safavid gifts become more numerous as in reality they decrease, and at the same time they are represented as more luxurious than in previous images. Such a distortion of reality served to present a unique Ottoman worldview at the end of the sixteenth century, when the Ottoman sultan was fashioned as the king of the world.

Representations of Ottoman-Safavid ceremonial encounters acquired a

serial dimension as Safavid gifts came to be duplicated in Ottoman official histories produced during the last decades of the sixteenth century, when the two courts were at war, between 1578 and 1590. Most of the gifts portrayed before the sultan thus arrived at a time of heated conflict, in a context where Safavids once again came to be accused as heretics. In this specific historical context, these manuscript illustrations help us consider the rivalry between the two courts not from the perspective of territorial hegemony and sectarian disagreement, but from the perspective of art.

Invisible Gifts

The first official illustrated history of the Ottoman dynasty following the format of Firdausi's *Shahnama* is the *Süleymānnāme* (Book of Süleyman), so called because it was produced during the reign of Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent.[13] Significantly, it is also the first manuscript to include images of Ottoman-Safavid encounters involving material exchanges. Indeed, many gifts appear in the *Süleymānnāme*, but all of these paintings depict gifts in a manner that deemphasizes their materiality and specificity in visual representation.

The *Book of Süleyman* contains 617 folios with 69 illustrations. Composed in Persian by ʿĀrifī,[14] it recounts the events of the early decades of Sultan Süleyman's rule, during which time he actively built a large empire. In the visual program of the book, the sultan takes center stage as a powerful, sophisticated ruler and a talented military leader.[15] Personally involved in all matters of the state, he leads battles, directs his commanders, and ceremonially receives his own subjects and others.[16] The sultan's audience with representatives of foreign states, therefore, is only one role among many that he assumes in the book.

The first reception scene in the *Süleymānnāme* establishes the courtly setting and etiquette within which such ceremonies operated (fig. 3.6).[17] The event takes place during one of Süleyman's campaigns in Hungary. Several visual devices are used to distinguish and distance Süleyman from the courtiers and soldiers around him. Depicted alone in his tent, which appears as an enlarged halo that encircles him, he is shown seated on a high gold throne. The commander paying his respects lies prostrate before him, making a move to kiss the sultan's feet.

In the same book, the first reception scene of an envoy from the Safavid Shah Tahmasp emulates closely these courtly manners (fig. 3.1). This scene takes place in 1532, two years before Süleyman went on his initial eastern campaign. The envoy came with apologies from the shah; Süleyman had discovered his secret agreement to form an alliance with the Habsburg emperor Ferdinand I against the Ottomans.[18] In the painting, the envoy is made to bend over prostrate in a complete gesture of submission in emulation of



FIGURE 3.6. "Reception of the Commanders." From ʿĀrifī, *Süleymānnāme* (*Sulaimānnāma*). Istanbul, 1558. Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper. Topkapı Palace Museum Library, Istanbul, H. 1517, fol. 189b. Photo © Milli Saraylar İdaresi Başkanlığı.

the previous reception scenes. Here, though, a sharper hierarchy seems to be established between the sultan and the messenger of Shah Tahmasp. The sultan is seated cross-legged, with a large round pillow supporting his back, on a much larger and higher throne. The envoy, described as "an experienced old man" (*parvardaʾ-i sāl-khurd*), is distanced from Süleyman's feet, unable to touch, let alone kiss them. But his complete submission while kissing the ground beneath the sultan's feet is taken as mirroring Tahmasp's submission, as it is explained that he has kissed the ground on behalf of the shah.[19] Furthermore, in the couplet inscribed at the top-right corner of the painting, Tahmasp is given the title "petty shah," whereas Süleyman is identified as the "great shah" (*be shāh-i buzurg āmad az shāh-i khurd*). The construction of such a hierarchy is heightened by the inscription over the sultan's throne: "the sultan, the shadow of God" (*al-sulṭān ẓill Allāh*). Used almost like a slogan, this line is placed right above the sultan's head and highlighted by the use of contrasting colors of white and blue. The adulatory title designates the ruler as the sole representative of God on earth.[20] It underscores the sultan's

absolute authority over the world's Muslim community and elucidates his superior position to all other rulers, including the Safavid Shah Tahmasp.

As for the shah's gifts, the only sign of them are the small jeweled boxes held by the group of pages at the far right of the painting. Above them appears an iron-latticed window, which must be the ceremonial window of the sultan's audience hall, the Chamber of Petitions of the Topkapı Palace (fig. 3.7). It was here that the sultan customarily gave private audiences to foreign representatives. Contemporary accounts note that throughout the sixteenth century, gifts would be paraded before this window from the outside, allowing the sultan the opportunity to glance at them as they passed by.[21] In other words, by placing them away from the sultan and the envoy in a separate register, the painting communicates the gifts' exteriority to the main focus of the scene, which is the audience chamber.

Thus distanced from the sultan in the painting, the exact contents of the gifts sent by Shah Tahmasp are not revealed, for they are abstracted to two small boxes. This lack of visual clarity, however, presents an interesting contrast to the accompanying text, which goes to great lengths to detail the many gifts brought by the envoy. These included numerous jewels and precious stones, rare horses, exquisite books, and countless other objects



FIGURE 3.7. Iron-latticed ceremonial window of the Chamber of Petitions in the third courtyard, Topkapı Palace, Istanbul. Photo by Sinem Casale.

described as "elegant things akin to spring leaves" (*ẓarāīf chu barg-i bahār*).[22] The book explains that the shah sent such a great number of gifts because of his fear (*bīm*) of the sultan.

Two years later, in 1534, the Ottomans declared war and invaded Safavid lands, and for the next twenty years the two dynasties were in a state of intermittent but relentless warfare.[23] Ultimately, the war of the early 1550s was fought to a standstill in June 1555, when the Peace of Amasya was signed, putting an end to Ottoman-Safavid hostilities. Militarily, the Ottomans emerged victors, making huge territorial gains during the course of the war. Meanwhile, Tahmasp secured important ideological concessions. On the condition that Shah Tahmasp respect shariʿa and ended the public ritual cursing of the Sunni caliphs and the Prophet's wife ʿA'isha, the sultan officially recognized the Safavid shah as the head of a legitimate Muslim state. No longer attacking them as heretics, Süleyman also promised safe travel of Safavid pilgrims to Mecca and Medina. In the language of the treaty, such pilgrims were referred to explicitly as "Muslims" (*umūm Müslimīn*), representing an unambiguous recognition of a common religious identity.[24]

The gifts that Shah Tahmasp sent in 1555 with his envoy Farrukhzād Beg to ratify the terms of this treaty should be read in this context, confirming that Shah Tahmasp was a model Muslim ruler. The letter sent by the shah in 1555 states this quite clearly, noting, for example, that both rulers follow the same religion.[25] A copy of the Qurʾan among Tahmasp's gifts is particularly significant, noted as "the most noble Present of all" by Ambassador Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, who was also in Amasya, leading a Habsburg delegation.[26]

Other presents sent by the shah, while less ideologically charged, accorded with the gift-giving practices of both the Ottoman and the Safavid courts, expressing a common bond not of religion but of refined culture. In the *Süleymānnāme*, Tahmasp's gifts are collectively described as "many gifts fit for a king."[27] They were so valuable, according to the text's author, ʿĀrifī, that the treasury had to be emptied for each and every one. Despite a long and very detailed account of these gifts, however, there is no reference anywhere in his text to a copy of the Qurʾan sent by Tahmasp.[28] We can only assume that this is a deliberate omission, to disguise the sultan's sense of humiliation at accepting a copy of the holy book of Islam from the shah, whom he had charged with heresy and had vowed to destroy.

The ceremonial structure in the painting of Farrukhzād Beg's audience with Sultan Süleyman in Amasya takes its cue from other reception scenes in the *Süleymānnāme* examined above (fig. 3.8).[29] The great gold throne of the sultan and the orderly, respectful gestures of the courtiers participating in the scene highlight the formal nature of the reception. Donned in Ottoman robes of honor, the envoy stands near the throne, extending with both hands the letter sent by the shah. As in the first painting of a Safavid envoy encoun-



FIGURE 3.8. "The Safavid Envoy Farrukhzād Beg's Audience with Sultan Süleyman." From ʿĀrifī, *Süleymānnāme* (*Sulaimānnāma*). Istanbul, 1558. Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper. Topkapı Palace Museum Library, Istanbul, H. 1517, fol. 603a. Photo © Milli Saraylar İdaresi Başkanlığı.

tering the sultan (fig. 3.1), the gifts here are pushed away from the main scene in the upper left, confined to a small register in the lower right, in which four attendants hold small boxes in their hands. Represented as such, the Safavid gifts look like an afterthought in the painting, distanced horizontally and vertically from the sultan and hidden from view inside portable boxes. The "apologies" offered by Shah Tahmasp, expressed by his envoy, are thus given precedence here over the nature of the gifts so highly admired by Busbecq and ʿĀrifī alike.[30] The envoy's words of praise to the sultan are noted in the inscriptions on the lower right corner of the painting: "You are the king of the world!"[31]

The *Book of Süleyman*, therefore, displays Safavid diplomatic gifts in their ceremonial context for the first time in Ottoman manuscript painting. But gifts appear in this book only sporadically, and by contrast with the text that itemizes and praises them, visually they are always abstracted, hidden in boxes, wrapped in textiles, or else entirely absent, invisible from our view.

Conspicuous Gifts

The Ottoman-Safavid peace treaty signed in 1555 was respected by both sides throughout the remaining years of Sultan Süleyman's reign and beyond, until the outbreak of war once again in 1578. This long period of peace, particularly in the years after Süleyman's death in 1566, coincided with a significant transformation in court politics and the variety of roles assumed by the sultan, demanding a corresponding change in his representations in Ottoman illustrated chronicles. As noted above, in the *Süleymānnāme*, the sultan appears as the able head and leader of a sophisticated, powerful state. He engages in hunting, executes justice, and leads his armies into war, in addition to receiving members of his family and representatives of foreign rulers. Süleyman's son and grandson, by contrast, left the capital rarely and did not lead their armies into battle in person. During the second half of the sixteenth century, as Fetvacı has argued, illustrated manuscripts produced at the court's artistic workshop formulated, negotiated, and expressed new images for the sultan and the powerful courtiers surrounding him. However, as Fetvacı demonstrates, paintings contained in these books emphasize stasis rather than change:

> Replication of court ceremonial, of standardized compositions, of backgrounds, and even of contents in words and pictures is a characteristic feature of Ottoman court histories. By re-presenting events as well as their visual depiction, Ottoman artists and courtiers engaged in "a renewal and redetermination of legacy." This is not simply a reproduction of what came before, but rather a deliberate construction through the selection or omission of past visual forms and events, which creates a link with the past and also allows for minute social and ceremonial changes to be introduced.[32]

How, then, is a new visual sultanic image formulated in the illustrated chronicles during this period? In the new *şehnāme*s, there is a much higher concentration of paintings in which the ruler receives foreign ambassadors, since these were among the few occasions in which he appeared in public.[33] Significantly, in these paintings gifts play a crucial role, highlighting the sultan's new image as a ruler who claims world dominion because of his ability to receive magnificent gifts sent by other, or "lesser," rulers of the world, most notably the Safavid shah.

Interestingly, the first example of this new mode of representation can be seen in a painting that retrospectively depicts an episode from the end of the reign of Süleyman the Magnificent (fig. 3.9).[34] The single-page painting in question is from the *Ẓafernāme* (Book of victory), also known as the *Tetimme-i Aḥvāl-i Sulṭān Süleymān Ḫān* (Appendix to the events of Sultan

Süleyman), which details the events of the latter part of Süleyman's reign, between 1559 and 1566, although the manuscript itself was not completed until the late 1570s.[35] One of the twenty-six paintings contained in the book, it shows the sultan's audience with a Safavid ambassador during his negotiations with the shah about the return of Bayezid, an Ottoman prince who had risen in rebellion and then fled to Shah Tahmasp's court as an exile. The construction of the scene follows previous paintings in the *Süleymānnāme* about the sultan's audiences with foreign envoys, in particular envoys from Iran. The sultan sits on a high golden throne with two court attendants on one side and all the viziers lined up on the other.



FIGURE 3.9. "Sultan Süleyman Receiving a Safavid Envoy." From Loḳmān, *Ẓafernāme* (*Ẓafarnāma*). Istanbul, 1579. Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, T. 413, fol. 14b. © The Trustees of the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin.

This painting departs from previous models, nevertheless, for it conveys much more forcefully the formality of the ceremony, the greatness of the sultan, and the subservience of the ambassador. The raised, large throne gives the sultan unprecedented prominence. And the envoy not only appears bending down in subservience but is now seen to be held by two Ottoman courtiers, who grab him under his arms to push him down.

Perhaps the most striking contrast with the earlier conventions of the *Süleymānnāme* can be seen with regard to the gifts. Rather than being relegated to the margins of the page or completely absent, here the gifts are fully integrated into the main scene. Displayed by courtiers in the lower register of the page, they are aligned vertically with the sultan and the envoy. Furthermore, instead of being confined in boxes, they are rendered as real objects. The first gift held by a gatekeeper (*kapıcı* in Turkish, *bavvāb* in Persian) at the far right appears to be a bound manuscript, and the remaining gifts are shown as hunting birds. Curiously, by contrast with the *Süleymānnāme*, the accompanying text of the *Ẓafernāme* neither spells out the contents of the gifts at length nor praises them as such in terms of their rarity, value, and amount. This marks a complete inversion of the former logic: what was absent visually but present textually in the previous manuscript is here depicted in full but not described in detail.

As we turn to new paintings of Safavid gifts being presented before Ottoman sultans, we see that this new mode of representation is taken as a model for displaying Safavid gifts, as the new paintings refer back to the setup established by the artists of the *Ẓafernāme* by quoting and expanding this painting. Furthermore, this new visual mode in rendering Safavid gifts is intricately tied to the new visual image of the sultan projected in Ottoman *şehnāme*s. As the sultan makes fewer appearances in these official chronicles, gifts received from the Safavid shah—as well as other foreign rulers—act as major mediators of his contact with the outside world.

The *Şehnāme-i Selīm Ḫān* or *Shāhnāma-i Salīm Khān* (Book of Kings of Sultan Selim), dated 1581, is the second illustrated *Shahnama*-style Ottoman chronicle written by Seyyīd Loḳmān.[36] Among its forty-four paintings, the six in which the sultan makes an appearance are about significant historical events of his reign, such as his accession to the throne and meetings with his top officials.[37] In one other painting, Shah Tahmasp's gifts, which he sent to congratulate Selim II on his enthronement in 1568, are arrayed before the new sultan (fig. 2.4).[38] This double spread is, then, the only image where the sultan is seen in any sort of contact with the world outside his court. Here, the painters must have used the *Ẓafernāme* as a model, for they have designed a scene on the right side of the composition that closely emulates the spatial arrangement of the *Ẓafernāme* painting (fig. 3.9): the sultan sits in a similar—though smaller—throne at the top-right corner with his viziers standing by his side, the envoy is forced to bow by two attendants, and Shah

Tahmasp's gifts are held by gatekeepers who stand in a horizontal line across the lower register of the image.[39] This long line of gatekeepers continues on the left half of the composition, providing continuity between the two folios. At the upper register of the left page, other gifts are spread over the ground. Ottoman officials and members of the Safavid delegation also stand by, waiting for the envoy to be dismissed. Thus, as in the *Ẓafernāme*, this painting integrates gifts fully into the main action in the scene and visually underscores the variety of objects sent by the shah in a recognizable display.

In this new mode of presentation, the gifts are organized and arranged hierarchically so as to convey a novel sense of order and control. In the painting, the items deemed most important precede all else and are closest to the sultan.[40] These are manuscripts, including an exceptional copy of the Qurʾan, the *Shahnama of Shah Tahmasp*, and other significant gifts from Shah Tahmasp, as discussed in the previous chapter.

This orderly manner of visual display is accompanied by a textual narrative that identifies the gifts as tribute (*pishkash*). By contrast with the *Süleymānnāme*, however, Loḳmān, the author of the text, refrains from using hyperbole when describing Tahmasp's gifts. Rather, he merely praises them collectively as "of every acceptable, pleasant and elegant kind,"[41] before listing them individually, using succinct expressions and plain adjectives to introduce each gift. The first and most magnificent item, for example, is simply "[an] illuminated Qurʾan / Inlaid with large jewels"[42] Other items, such as the manuscripts, are referred to as "acceptable" (*maqbūl*), and the Persian textiles as "without compare" (*bī-qiyās*).[43]

As contemporary authors noted, Loḳmān's style of writing in general was very different from that of his predecessor ʿĀrifī, the author of the *Book of Süleyman*. Indeed, ʿĀrifī was both praised and criticized for his ornate poetry in Persian, just as Loḳmān was criticized, even ridiculed, for his straightforward, unassuming style. This shift, seemingly deriving from individual preferences and abilities, might possibly connote a wider transformation in literary preferences at the Ottoman court between the middle and later decades of the sixteenth century.[44]

It is important to emphasize that the new mode of visual and textual display of Safavid gifts is not a universal characteristic of Ottoman manuscripts in this period but is instead limited specifically to the Ottoman illustrated *şehnāme*s dating from 1579 and after. A different, earlier representation of the same scene is to be found in Feridun Ahmed Beg's chronicle *Nüzhetü'l-esrārü'l-aḫbār der Sefer-i Sīgetvār* (Chronicle of the Szigetvár campaign) (fig. 2.3).[45] Even as it depicts the sultan, the viziers, and the envoy in a way that conforms to the new mode characteristic of the *Ẓafernāme*, it entirely omits the magnificent gifts sent by the Safavid shah, despite the fact that these are itemized in the accompanying text.

If the new visual image of the Ottoman sultan in official illustrated

*şehnāme*s was first conceptualized during the reign of Selim II, it was consolidated in those books completed during the reign of his son, Sultan Murad III, who came to power in 1574. As Fetvacı has shown, by Murad's time, a new visual image for the sultan came to be formulated in imperial illustrated manuscripts. The focus of the sultan's legitimation shifted from his heroic actions to specific aspects of his personality, such as his generosity and piety, and his right to universal rulership over the Muslim community as caliph, as "heir to prophetic traditions."[46] The depiction of Safavid gifts in the same manuscripts expands the sultanic image by commenting on how the sultan's superior position is recognized outside his realm and by elevating him above every other contemporary king. The first volume of Sultan Murad's two-volume *şehnāme*, titled *Şehinşehnāme* or *Shahinshāhnamā* (Book of the king of kings), is particularly important, for this manuscript emphatically places the sultan at the top of a hierarchy of world rulers. Furthermore, the sultan's claim to world dominion is defined and represented in both textual and visual terms therein, through his right and ability to receive gifts from all rulers of the world.

Like the *Ẓafernāme* and the *Şehnāme-i Selīm Ḫān*, the *Şehinşehnāme*'s text was written in Persian verse by the Ottoman *shahnama* composer (*şehnāmeci* or *shāhnāmagūy*) Loḳmān.[47] The *Şehinşehnāme*'s fifty-eight paintings were done by a team of twenty-two artists, once again led by Nakkaş ʿOsmān.[48] The first volume, dated 1581, chronicles the events of the initial years of Murad III's reign, between 1574 and 1581. It was during this period that the sultan received the last envoy to be sent to Istanbul by the Safavid ruler Shah Tahmasp in 1576.

The book opens with the story of the new sultan's accession and praises Murad III as a world emperor who holds his position through the conquests of his victorious army. Significantly, the manner in which people and all the lesser rulers recognize his position and show him respect is by sending him gifts, booty, and tribute from all over the world:

> the world rejoiced upon his [Murad III's] accession
> the earth became his well-cultivated garden
> wherever his edict (*farmān*) goes
> subjects (*farmānbari*) offer exclusive gifts as tribute (*pishkash*)
> whenever his royal decree (*yarligh*) arrives before the Tatar [Khān]
> its influence [resonates] from China to the land of the Bulghars
> his renown has struck as a calamity in Iran
> [making] the Damāvand and Alborz [mountains] tremble in their place.[49]

The ideas that the whole world is dependent on and submissive to the sultan and that everyone is in awe of his splendor are repeated persistently.

Throughout the manuscript, text and image work together to communicate that the sultan's power resonated both within and beyond his domain.[50]

This principle of subjection is especially underscored with regard to the uninvited embassy sent by Shah Tahmasp to congratulate Murad III on his enthronement in 1576.[51] The section in the manuscript on this Safavid embassy opens with an account of the Ottoman military parade before the Safavid delegation. In a double-page painting, the sultan, his high-ranking officials, and many soldiers of the army parade before the Safavid ambassador Ṭuqmāq Khān (fig. 3.10).[52] At the top-left corner, the Safavids are recognized by their characteristic turbans, watching the parade from behind two windows in a viewing kiosk (*temāşāgāh*). On the right page, the sultan moves forward in the middle, mounted on his horse, surrounded by his attendants and courtiers and preceded by a sea of soldiers. Contemporary observers note the extraordinary number of these soldiers, all fitted out in their war uniforms and equipment.[53] According to the *Şehinşehnāme*, at the sight of the parade, all the Safavids there were amazed and awestruck.[54] The sight of Ottoman soldiers firing their guns is likened by Loḳmān to sparks coming out of a dragon's mouth, which scared "the enemies." The Safavids then said: "Oh God! The sultan is firmly obeyed by the entire world!"[55] Moreover, the sultan is frequently referred to in this manuscript as the "shadow of God on earth," a metaphor that conclusively places the sultan above all other rulers by highlighting his claim to caliphal status. Indeed, as Fetvacı shows, this manuscript and others produced during the reign of Murad III propagated the sultan's superior political and religious role as the caliph, as heir to the Prophet Muhammad. The Ottomans did not base their claim to such an elevated status through bloodlines, however, as did the Safavids. Illustrated manuscripts placed special visual emphasis on presenting the sultan's distinctive connection, and thereby his rule as divinely ordained, by putting him on a par with Islamic caliphs and prophets.[56]

The stress in this section on the superior power of the Ottoman state headed by the sultan is a theme that precedes and in fact governs the discussion of the subsequent section, which concerns the reception of the Safavid ambassador at the Topkapı Palace. The narrative sequencing here is significant. By prefacing the reception of Safavids at the palace with their contemplation of the Ottoman military parade, the book underscores the military superiority of Ottoman forces, which gave legitimacy to the sultan's claim to world leadership.

The double-page painting on the display and presentation of Shah Tahmasp's gifts to Murad III in the first volume of the *Şehinşehnāme* (fig. 3.11)[57] is based on the painting with the same theme from the *Şehnāme-i Selīm Ḫān* (fig. 2.4), which itself is inspired by the one found in the *Ẓafernāme* (fig. 3.9). The placement of the sultan, the viziers, the envoy, and the gifts running horizontally from the right page into the left closely emulates the model



FIGURE 3.10. "Ottoman Military Parade Passing before the Safavid Delegation in 1576." From Loḳmān, *Şehinşehnāme* (*Shahinshāhnāma*), vol. 1. Istanbul, 1581. Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper. Istanbul University, Rare Works Library, F. 1404, fols. 38b–39a.

provided in the *Şehnāme-i Selīm Ḫān*. But the strict principles of control and order that were first introduced in the *Şehnāme-i Selīm Ḫān* painting are stated more clearly here, as more Safavid officials enter the scene, flanked on both sides by Ottoman courtiers, who keep them in a straight line, firmly holding either their arms or hands. On the left page, the line of gatekeepers holding gifts also continues on a separate line, culminating at the top. While the sultan might be the focus of the painting,[58] the alignment of the gifts and the officials grouped in straight lines before him encourage multiple linear viewing experiences for the viewer.

The portrayal of Shah Tahmasp's gifts in the painting reiterates the new image of the sultan both by making a visual reference to an earlier painting of a similar theme and by forming a close textual association between the gifts and the idea of servitude (*bandagī*). The text indicates that Shah Tahmasp had sent beautiful gifts (*ṭuḥfahā-yi laṭīf*) as "the head of servitude."[59] Instead of communicating the sultan's superior position vis-à-vis the shah by



FIGURE 3.11. "Sultan Murad III's Audience with Shah Tahmasp's Envoy Ṭuqmāq Khān in 1576." From Loḳmān, *Şehinşehnāme* (*Shahinshāhnāma*), vol. 1. Istanbul, 1581. Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper. Istanbul University, Rare Works Library, F. 1404, fols. 41b–42a.


چه تخت از جواهر فلک پایه
ز بخشش خدا بر زمین سایه
زمین آسمان سایه بر او فکنده
پی سایه حق بپا داشته

attributing loftier qualities and titles for him, here the gifts are understood as the fundamental vehicles of this marked hierarchy. Furthermore, according to Loḳmān, the shah himself made this clear by appealing to the sultan and sending him magnificent gifts as a sign of his sense of subjugation.

The *Şehinşehnāme* itself, and a wide range of other contemporary sources, such as archival documents, chronicles, and a report to the Venetian Senate written by Giovanni Correr, all confirm that in 1576 many more gifts came from the Safavid shah than he had ever sent before.[60] For example, while the

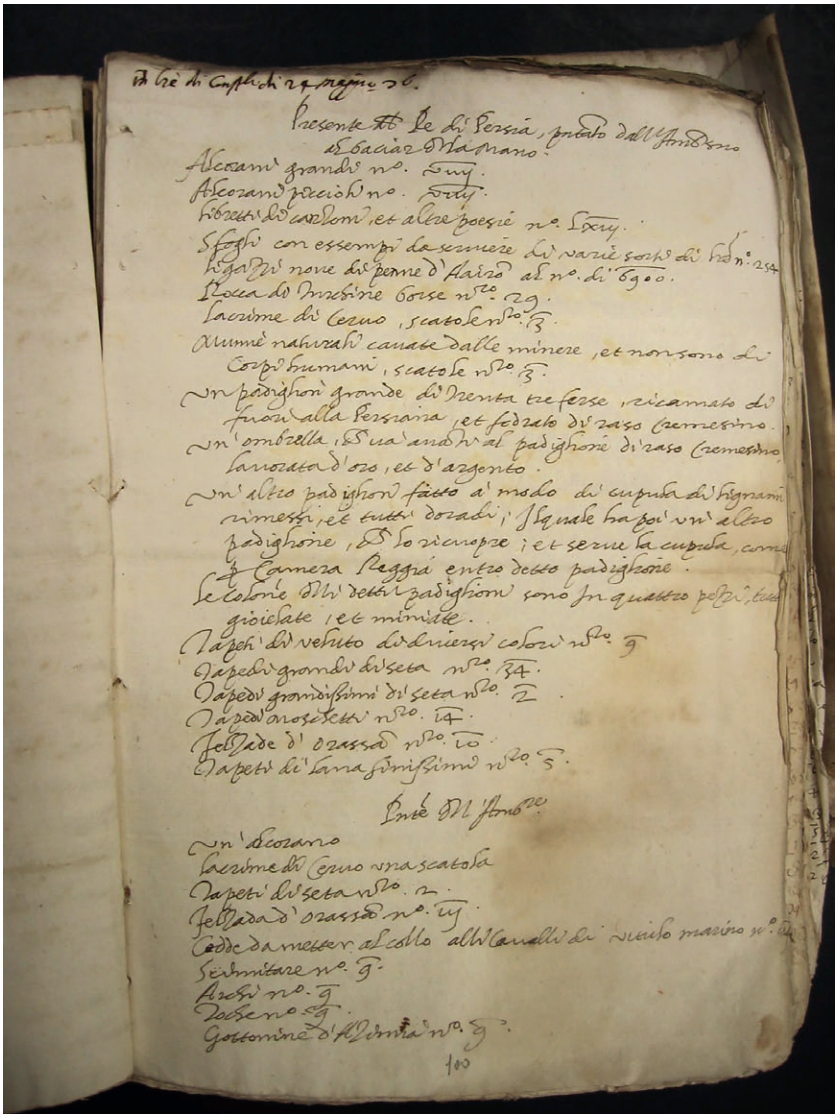


FIGURE 3.12. "Presents of the King of Persia, Carried by [His] Ambassador." Archivio di Stato di Venezia. Senato, Dispacci Constantinopoli, Filza 9, 100a. Photo by Sinem Casale.

gifts of earlier embassies had included less than a handful of books, among which was typically a Qurʾan, on this occasion the sultan was presented with eighteen copies of the Qurʾan. In his universal history, *Zübdetü't-Tevārīḫ* (The quintessence of histories), Seyyīd Loḳmān record these as "illuminated, with jeweled bindings."[61] The Qurʾans were accompanied by no fewer than sixty Persian epics and bound volumes of poetry.[62] In addition, Loḳmān specifies "a few volumes of painted albums," which appear in the Venetian *bailo*'s account as 254 unbound pages of Persian calligraphy (fig. 3.12).[63] The same source mentions in addition 6,900 individual bird feathers, which appear as 10,000 black heron feathers in the *Zübdetü't-Tevārīḫ*.[64]

These were followed in Correr's account by twenty-nine bags of turquoise stones, and three cases of bezoar stones. Bezoar is a word deriving from the Persian *pānzahr*, to mean a strong antidote against poison. These are known as stones because of their shape and texture, but they were in fact concrements formed in the gastrointestinal system of a kind of wild goat native to the city of Shabankareh in the Bushehr province in Iran, according to an eighteenth-century Ottoman treatise on antidotes based on an earlier Safavid work.[65] In his *Colóquios dos simples* published in Goa in 1563, Portuguese physician Garcia de Orta noted that bezoars formed around undigested straws; they were of aubergine color and looked like laminated onions. The larger the bezoar, the higher the price, wrote de Orta.[66]

In addition to these precious stones and antidotes, Correr listed seventy-eight felts with landscape design and gold-embroidered silk carpets.[67] Finally, Loḳmān records swords from Qum, Persian bows, and saddles with matching saddle blankets, among many other objects.[68] An Ottoman imperial order from 1576 shows also that Tahmasp had sent hunting animals. Five of these are indicated as a type of small leopard (*pārs*), and others were an unspecified number of birds (*toykun ve sunkurlar*).[69]

In the painting, little of the extravagance recorded above is immediately obvious, since the image conforms so closely to the conventions established in the depictions of earlier embassies, particularly the *Şehnāme-i Selīm Ḫān*. Similarly, the accompanying text provides little detail about the uniqueness of this group of gifts. But there is one point in which an interesting dissonance emerges between image and text: namely, in the rendering of the most spectacular gift among all of Tahmasp's gifts, the great tent, whose pieces are shown at the top of the left page.

In surviving accounts of the embassy, this tent, above all the other gifts, is unanimously admired and highly praised, as observers recount its magnificence and rarity. In the *Zübdetü't-Tevārīḫ*, the first gift Loḳmān mentions is the tent.[70] In the *Şehinşehnāme*, the same author likens its gold dome to the bright sun (*mihr-i munīr*) and writes that the tent had two gold-embroidered projecting roofs (*chīgh*) made of glittering silk. Correr writes that the tent's four columns were all jeweled and finely decorated, just as it is illustrated in

the painting.[71] In the Ottoman historian Selaniki's account, only the tent is mentioned among the gifts brought by Ṭuqmāq Khān, the Safavid envoy:

> Then, when the aforementioned envoy came to the Sublime Council hall and delivered the letter, a great crowd formed. So many countless and matchless gifts from Iran were presented that the great council hall was completely filled with those carrying the gifts. But it was only when a lofty-domed tent with forty sections, whose columns were studded with jewels and woven with figured fabrics was brought out, the following was recorded in the Protocol Register: No such gift has ever come to the Sublime Council from any other king.[72]

After the reception, when the envoy had left the palace, the sultan ordered tent pitchers to assemble the tent. These verses, recording the sultan's order, are inscribed on a single-page painting in the *Şehinşehnāme*, which shows the tent being installed as the sultan looks on (fig. 3.13).[73] Loḳmān writes that when the head tent pitcher fixed the dome on top of the tent's high columns, it seemed as if its apex touched the sky. This painting immediately follows the scene in which Ṭuqmāq Khān presents Shah Tahmasp's gifts to Murad III in 1576, which visually underscores the primacy and value of manuscripts over the remaining gifts, in line with the new visual mode. However, the inclusion of a separate painting in the manuscript with an entirely novel design dedicated to the tent points to this gift's beauty and distinction among all others. The formality of the envoy's reception ceremony is not repeated here, for the sultan observes the tent being raised in a very private setting, dressed in modest clothes and seated on a gold stool—rather than his throne—in a garden. We get a frontal view of the tent displayed in the foreground, as if it is turned toward us, so we can see how the sultan would have seen it. Murad III seems to contemplate the gift's beauty and splendor in a tranquil setting, beside a fountain. The accompanying text tells us that "the king of kings" came out into the garden and sat on a chair to see the tent. But then, in sharp contrast to his fixed position in the painting, it says that he glanced at it and quickly moved on, for it was too small for the greatness of the king.[74]

In other words, the sultan's motionless stance behind the magnificent tent highlights his gaze, stressing the act of observing—even enjoying—this object rather than his feeling of disappointment with it. From the perspective of the gift itself, its commanding visual presence in a painting of its own likewise points to admiration for and acceptance of it. Paradoxically, the text resists this aggrandizing message, noting instead that the pleasure it gave the sultan was only ephemeral. It is noteworthy that such a belittling comment should come in the context of a group of gifts that by far surpassed any other ever sent to the Ottoman court, be it in terms of amount, variety, or the



FIGURE 3.13. "Shah Tahmasp's Gift of a Tent Installed before Sultan Murad III in 1576." From Loḳmān, *Şehinşehnāme* (*Shahinshāhnāma*), vol. 1. Istanbul, 1581. Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper. Istanbul University, Rare Works Library, F. 1404, fol. 43b.

praise the objects received from contemporary observers. Remarkably, just when Safavid gifts turn into visual devices that redefine the new visual image of the sultan, the Ottoman illustrated *şehnāme* begins to resist and question the true sincerity of the shah and of the quality of the gifts he sends.

In the remaining illustrations of the manuscript, Murad III most frequently appears when he is giving audiences to foreign envoys and vassals—scenes in which he is invariably seen receiving gifts in a manner conforming to the visual standards established for the display of Safavid gifts.[75] The sultan's ability, as the sole ruler of the world, to attract objects from distant lands is again and again emphasized in these images through the repetition of the same visual trope. At the same time, the variety in the different types of gifts is singled out by the artists in each composition. In the case of the reception of a French envoy, the text of the manuscript records that the sultan was given a bejeweled gold clock, a mirror, and silks in different colors (fig. 3.14).[76] These gifts are shown as such and in that order from right to left in



FIGURE 3.14. "Sultan Murad III Receiving the French Envoy." From Loḳmān, *Şehinşehnāme* (*Shahinshāhnāma*), vol. 1. Istanbul, 1581. Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper. Istanbul University, Rare Works Library, F. 1404, fol. 141b.

the painting. The pleasing manner with which various sorts of "tributes and gifts" (*pishkash u tuḥfahā*) are accepted by the sultan became a marker of the presenter's subservience.

Gifts in Excess

The second volume of the *Şehinşehnāme* is the last Ottoman *Shahnama*-style chronicle ever to be written in Persian verse.[77] The work was completed in 1592, more than a decade after the first volume, and the years in between were marked by a new period of protracted warfare between the Ottoman and Safavid states. In fact, it is this war (1578–90) that dominates the visual program of the book,[78] including numerous battle scenes, which necessarily complicates the image of Murad III as a serenely detached world ruler to whom other kings voluntarily submit.[79] Nevertheless, the manuscript features two double-page paintings (figs. 3.16 and 3.18) that display the presentation of Safavid gifts from Shah Muḥammad Khudābanda (r. 1578–87), the

son of Shah Tahmasp. These paintings are of particular interest because they were produced in the midst of an ongoing war and depict retrospectively two attempts at the beginning of the war to bring the conflict to an end. The first embassy arrived in Istanbul in 1580, led by the ambassador Maqṣūd Khān, charged with the mission of requesting peace.[80] The second embassy came for the occasion of the circumcision festival of 1582, organized as a long public celebration for Prince Mehmed, Murad III's son.

By contrast with previous Ottoman paintings that show Safavid gifts, the two paintings illustrating Shah Khudābanda's gifts at the Topkapı Palace present a novel composition, which reorders the reception ceremonies for the ambassadors and the gifts they brought. Not only significant for its pictorial innovation, it is a narrative deviation ripe with political meaning. Even though these paintings portray Safavid gifts in a new context, an intervisual link is formed between them and paintings found in earlier Ottoman manuscripts. Intervisuality, as defined by Michael Camille, is a particularly apt term to understand these images:

> "Intervisuality" is the pictorial equivalent of what literary scholars call "intertextuality." It means not only that viewers seeing an image recollect others which are similar to it, and reconfigure its meaning in its new context according to its variance, but also that in the process of production one image often generates another by purely visual association. Once we accept this extra-textual and visual realm of meaning the possibilities of interpretation become less textually stratified and suggest a multiplicity of different available readings for different spectators.[81]

Similarities between the Ottoman presentation paintings are deliberate. Through selective replication, artists of these paintings encouraged a visual reading that is at once dependent on a recollection of earlier images, but at the same time open ended because of their new context. As Camille points out, the visual associations formed from one painting to the next allow for, and in fact encourage, a reading of them independent of the surrounding text. The text's diversion from the visual narrative is striking, which allows indeed for a multiplicity of readings of the ceremony. More significantly, intervisuality—especially as it involves imperial ceremonies—is adopted in these images for political purposes. The kind of associations produced by the juxtapositions of scenes, repetition, and switches in topoi serve to glorify the ruler rather than depict reality.

In the second volume of the *Şehinşehnāme*, an illustration of the Ottoman army's procession advancing before the onlooking Safavid delegation (figs. 3.15 and 3.17) precedes each of the two paintings showing the presentation of Safavid gifts to the sultan (figs. 3.16 and 3.18). Similar to the entry into Constantinople of the Safavid embassy sent by Shah Tahmasp in 1576, the arrival



FIGURE 3.15. "Ottoman Army Parades before the Safavid Embassy." From Loḳmān, *Şehinşehnāme* (*Shahinshāhnāma*), vol. 2. Istanbul, 1592–97. Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper. Topkapı Palace Museum Library, Istanbul, B. 200, fols. 24b–25a. Photo © Milli Saraylar İdaresi Başkanlığı.

در گاه معلّا یه سوار عجمدن ایلچیکله کلان



of the embassies of 1580 and 1582 were arranged to coincide with a military parade of the Ottoman army, to impress the Safavids with the extent and the strength of Ottoman forces.

The first of these paintings (fig. 3.15)[82] closely emulates one in the first volume of the work (fig. 3.10), forming an intervisual link between the two books. Members of the Safavid delegation, in a kiosk placed at the top-left corner of the composition, watch the parade. And as in the earlier painting, the sultan is extravagantly dressed, riding his horse, surrounded by countless soldiers, and seen near the middle of the right page. Significantly, the second painting (fig. 3.18)[83] departs from this model with subtle but notable changes. Here, the sultan is repositioned as a spectator and the Safavids as participants in the procession. In other words, the sultan has switched places with the Safavid embassy, watching the procession at the top-left corner. As the Ottoman army moves to the right, the Safavids have joined them, participating actively in the public ritual organized to display and celebrate the might of Ottoman forces.

The paintings found in the second volume of the *Şehinşehnāme* refer to a period of either high tension or open warfare between the Ottomans and the Safavids, when both sides had significant political stakes in conclusively proving military superiority. The two paintings of the Ottoman army's parade are designed to propagate the idea that the Safavids were convinced of Ottoman military superiority. Furthermore, that these paintings preface those displaying Safavid gifts before the Ottoman sultan serve to persuade the book's viewers of the gifts' mediating role: that they came from an inferior ruler to his superior counterpart, as tribute.

The text surrounding these paintings sharpens such a hierarchy, by expressing more powerfully the feelings of amazement and shame that Safavid embassies are said to have experienced at the sight of the Ottoman military. For example, the section recounting the bravery of each soldier and the strength of the whole army, likened to a mountain, is much longer in this volume than in the previous one. It records how the Safavid ambassador was told that many more Ottoman soldiers were fighting at the front, and that those he saw in the procession amounted to "a drop in the sea."[84] Nevertheless, a contemporary account points to the circulation of rumors in Istanbul that the Safavid delegation might have been less impressed with the Ottoman show of power than the collective message endorsed by the Ottoman *şehnāme*s:

> When an Ottoman herald (*çavuş*) asked the Safavid ambassador whether he enjoyed the procession, he responded by saying "not bad." Maqṣūd Khān then asked the herald where the sultan was coming from and why he was accompanied by such a large crowd. But when he learned that the sultan was coming back from a hunting party, he said: "Such a large crowd is

unnecessary for this purpose, and a display of such vanity is inappropriate during hunting. Also, where are those animals that they've hunted? They did not bring anything with them. If the sultan instead wishes to demonstrate his power with this crowd, then the number of people here is not sufficient for that." Just at that time, a line of janissaries holding guns were passing by, and the herald asked him whether such weapons were used in Iran. The ambassador responded: "We do not use these weapons; we only take them by force from the Ottomans during war!"[85]

In the second volume of the *Şehinşehnāme*, the two paintings displaying Safavid gifts before the sultan (figs. 3.16 and 3.18)[86] quote the new mode of representation established in the *Ẓafernāme* as discussed above. As in the earlier paintings, Safavid gifts are held by courtiers lined up horizontally in a strict hierarchy. At the same time, the compositional flow of these two



FIGURE 3.16. "The Safavid Shah Muḥammad Khudābanda's Gifts Displayed at the Ottoman Court in 1580." From Loḳmān, *Şehinşehnāme* (*Shahinshāhnāma*), vol. 2. Istanbul, 1592–97. Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper. Topkapı Palace Museum Library, Istanbul, B. 200, fols. 28b–29a. Photo © Milli Saraylar İdaresi Başkanlığı.



FIGURE 3.17. "Ottoman Military Parade." From Loḳmān, *Şehinşehnāme* (*Shahinshāhnāma*), vol. 2. Istanbul, 1592–97. Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper. Topkapı Palace Museum Library, Istanbul, B. 200, fols. 33b–34a. Photo © Milli Saraylar İdaresi Başkanlığı.

double-page paintings sets them apart from paintings with a similar theme found in other Ottoman illustrated *şehnāme*s. Both paintings present a view of the scene from an identical perspective. The second courtyard of the Topkapı Palace appears on the right page, extending onto the left page, where the Gate of Felicity opens into the third courtyard. The scene inside the Chamber of Petitions immediately beyond this gate, where the sultan received ambassadors, is placed in both images at the top left. This is a departure from the mode of illustrating Safavid gifts in previous Ottoman *şehnāme*s, which instead showed only the audience from the inside of the Chamber of Petitions, with the gifts spread on a horizontal axis at the bottom of the composition. The effect of this change is to completely reorder the focus of the painting, placing the central visual emphasis on the gifts themselves rather than on the audience chamber. Here, in a very literal sense, the sultan is marginalized in favor of the gifts.

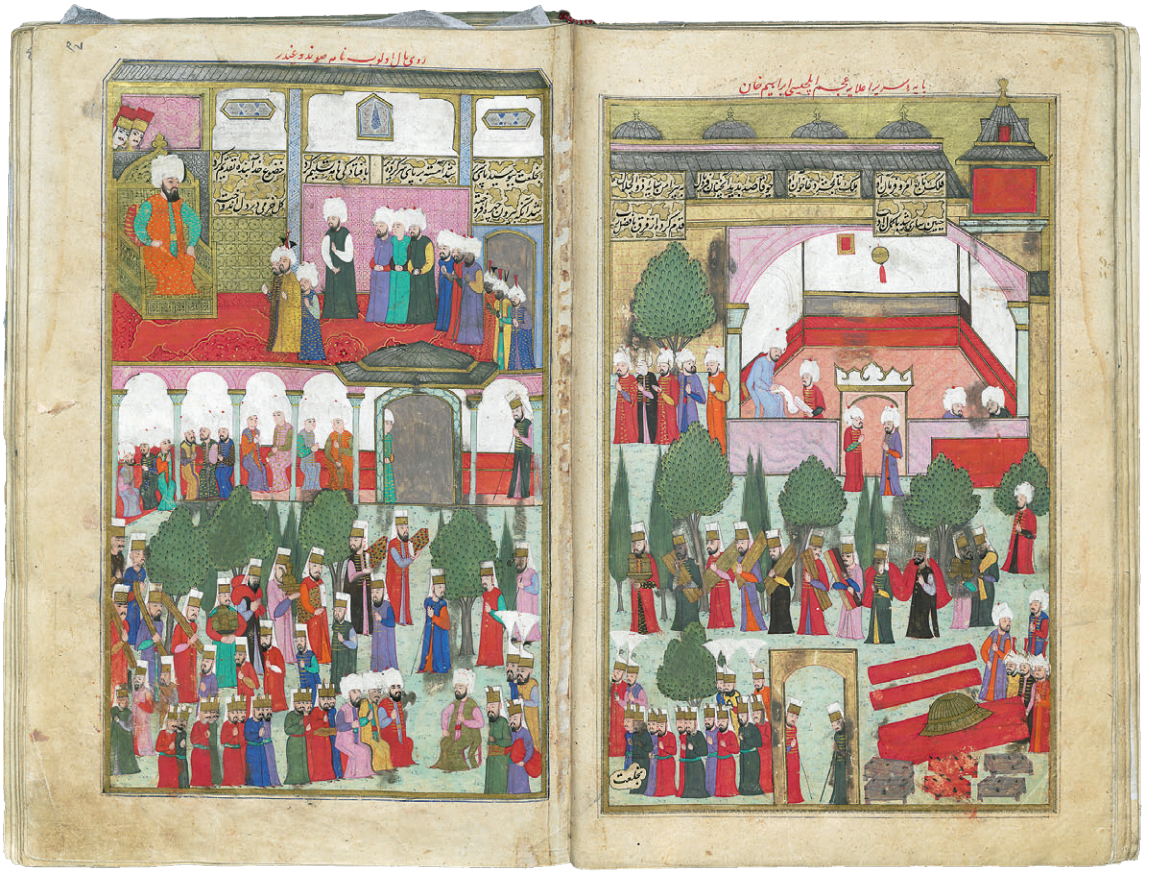


FIGURE 3.18. "The Safavid Shah Muḥammad Khudābanda's Gifts Displayed at the Ottoman Court in 1582." From Loḳmān, *Şehinşehnāme* (*Shahinshāhnāma*), vol. 2. Istanbul, 1592–97. Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper. Topkapı Palace Museum Library, Istanbul, B. 200, fols. 36b–37a. Photo © Milli Saraylar İdaresi Başkanlığı.

The visually imposed sense of control and order that governed earlier *şehnāme* paintings is also reworked in these two pictures. The rigid, formalized orientation of the sultan, the courtiers, and the envoy inside the reception hall is transformed in the *Şehinşehnāme*'s second volume to emulate the linear presentation of the gifts outside it. The grand vizier and the other viziers stand side by side with members of the Safavid delegation in a more relaxed pose, without restraining their hands or arms. Furthermore, ambassadors in these scenes are allowed to stand freely, without being held or forced into a subjugated pose.

Contemporary sources disagree about the exact gifts that arrived with the ambassador in the embassy of 1580. But it is clear that the gifts brought by Maqṣūd Khān fell short of earlier embassies in terms of both quality and quantity. The short account of these gifts (*pishkash*) in the *Şehinşehnāme* itself includes only Persian textiles, which are said to have come in great

quantities.[87] Silk fabrics (*dība* or *dībāh*) are said to have filled up the whole palace. The Venetian *bailo* Paulo Contarini's report to the Senate also mentions silks, in addition to bags of cash, which amounted to 100,000 aspers, gold-woven garments, and richly decorated horses.[88] Salomon Schweigger, a Protestant preacher who was in Constantinople with a Habsburg embassy, wrote instead that Maqṣūd Khān presented the sultan with only rough turquoise stones and two copies of the Qurʾan.[89]

Even though all three authors record a different group of gifts, clearly Khudābanda's gifts contrasted sharply on this occasion with those sent earlier by Shah Tahmasp in both amount and variety. In the painting, nevertheless, Khudābanda's gifts not only dominate the entire image but also, following earlier examples found in the *Ẓafernāme*, *Şehnāme-i Selīm Ḫān*, and the first volume of the *Şehinşehnāme*, they are shown in exactly the same order, and as if they were more abundant than those of earlier Persian embassies. The first gift, held by the gatekeeper closest to the Gate of Felicity, is a bound manuscript, succeeded by gold objects, boxes or bags, and finally fabrics, held either in bundles or rolled up.

As for the embassy sent for the circumcision festival of 1582, the *Şehinşehnāme* makes no mention of any gift other than Persian figured textiles.[90] In a different contemporary written source, the Ottoman historian and bureaucrat Mustafa ʿĀlī documents the entire group of these gifts. This list records eighteen manuscripts, including two copies of the Qurʾan, a copy of Firdausi's *shahnama*, a *khamsa* (quintet) of the famed Persian poet Niẓāmī Ganjavī (d. 1209)—whose paintings were executed by the legendary artist Bihzad—a copy of the *Iskendernāme* (Book of Alexander), a *muraqqaʿ* (calligraphy album), and a *dīvān* (collection of poetry) of Hafiz (d. 1391). All of these manuscripts were praised by Mustafa ʿĀlī as "gifts of sound minds."[91] Other gifts were silk textiles woven with gold on three sides, satins, velvets, carpets from Yazd and Khurasan, felts, a curtain covered with gold-embroidered designs, a jeweled container filled with an antidote to poisons, and three large dishes from China.[92] Mustafa ʿĀlī's account also shows that Muḥammad Khudābanda sent other gifts specifically for the queen mother and for the sultan's harem.[93]

The painting of Ibrahim Khan's audience with the sultan in 1582 (fig. 3.18) found in the *Şehinşehnāme*'s second volume alludes to the richness and sophistication of Khudābanda's gifts to Sultan Murad III, such as the manuscripts whose covers are studded conspicuously with large jewels carried by the first three gatekeepers. Some of the other gifts mentioned by Mustafa ʿĀlī, such as textiles and carpets, are also discernible in the painting. Nevertheless, even though the scale of this embassy was smaller than earlier Safavid diplomatic missions, the painting gives the impression that the gifts of the 1582 embassy were far more numerous and far more lavish than those of any previous embassy. Indeed, a close inspection of the painting reveals an

aspiration not only to reproduce the splendor of earlier embassies in visual terms but also to suggest that the gifts presented on this occasion surpassed them. Paintings of earlier embassies gave pride of place to manuscripts, which always appeared at the head of the line of gifts paraded before the sultan. In this image, we see books that conform to these earlier precedents, but now the volumes appear encased in gold and encrusted with large jewels. In earlier Ottoman *şehnāme* paintings, not even manuscripts that are known to have had jeweled covers—such as the *Shahnama of Shah Tahmasp* gifted in 1568—had been visually embellished in this way. Even more striking is the object at the bottom right corner of the composition, by far the most prominent of all, which is clearly recognizable as the disassembled parts of a ceremonial tent. No contemporary observer makes any mention of such a gift, and neither does the text of the *Şehinşehnāme* itself. The inclusion of this tent in the painting is meaningful, then, within an intervisual context, where, according to Camille, "images do not just 'reflect' texts innocently but often subvert and alter their meanings."[94]

While highlighting the arrival of a large number of gifts from the Safavid shah, what concerned Ottoman artists here, rather than documentary accuracy, was to evoke visual echoes from earlier *şehnāme* paintings of Safavid gifts displayed before the sultan, which careful observers would be able to recall. This sort of association established between illustrated Ottoman *şehnāme*s through the depiction of Safavid gifts as a tool for political persuasion was exclusively visual, for the text surrounding the painting makes the diametrically opposite statement, with no mention of any gift from the shah except textiles.

In the *Şehinşehnāme*'s second volume, the propensity to go beyond quoting earlier representations to surpass and exaggerate them at precisely the moment when Ottoman-Safavid relations were breaking down points to an analogous breakdown in the underlying logic of Ottoman sovereignty. In other words, to portray the arrival of Safavid gifts as the ultimate testament to the Ottomans' legitimacy as world rulers was no longer sustainable in a period of protracted Ottoman-Safavid warfare.

Indeed, this rupture is evident in later paintings in the *Sūrnāme-i Hümāyūn* (Imperial festival book), which reveal the unglamorous end of the same Safavid mission of 1582. A double-page painting depicts the public shaming of the ambassador when news of a military crisis in Shirvan arrived, and how he was made to leave in the midst of the circumcision celebration (fig. 3.19).[95] The right page shows the envoy, with four members of the Safavid delegation following behind him. These attendants have evidently packed their belongings, for each carries a large bundle. As they are led from the festival ground by Ottoman courtiers, janissaries take down the loggia that had been set up for the Safavid delegation. On the opposite page, we see a Safavid turban thrown on the ground and a man dressed in red

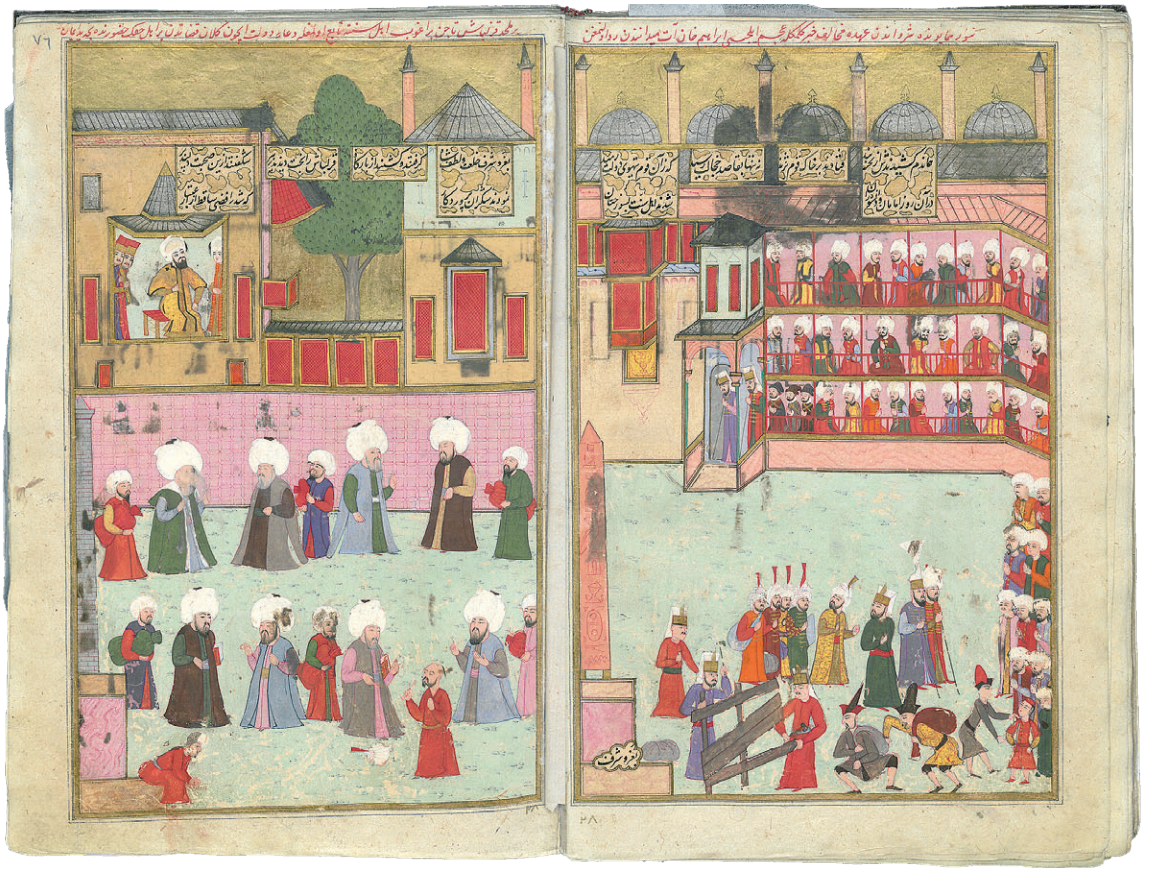


FIGURE 3.19. "The Safavid Ambassador Ibrahim Khan Expelled from the Hippodrome in 1582." From Loḳmān, *Şehinşehnāme* (*Shahinshāhnāma*), vol. 2. Istanbul, 1592–97. Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper. Topkapı Palace Museum Library, Istanbul, B. 200, fols. 75b–76a. Photo © Milli Saraylar İdaresi Başkanlığı.

with his bare head exposed. The ekphrastic commentary written in Turkish above the composition declares, "A heretic *qizilbash* had converted to Sunnism" (*bir mülḥid ḳızılbāş ehl-i sünniye tābiʿ olmaġla*). Various other written and visual sources allude to this incident, pointing up the military crisis between the Ottoman and Safavid states that surfaced during the festival and the resulting confessional humiliation that the Safavids are said to have experienced.[96]

In the second half of the sixteenth century, Ottoman-Safavid gift giving was a central point of reference for the articulation of the Ottoman concept of universal sovereignty. As expressed in the *şehnāme*s of the post-Süleymanic age, the ultimate manifestation of Ottoman supremacy was the fact that the Safavids voluntarily brought magnificent gifts to the Ottoman court. As a result, representations of the sultan in Ottoman manuscript painting, which followed a predictable and intervisually formulated set of topoi, became central vehicles for the construction of his image as the uni-

versal sovereign in relation to all rulers, Muslim and Christian alike. A moment at the height of this overbearing pride—when the Ottoman-Safavid War of 1578–90 ended with the forced dispatch of a Safavid prince-gift—is the subject of the next chapter.

4

Little Prince Bearing Gifts

In 1590, a little Safavid prince arrived at the Ottoman court in Constantinople. The six-year-old Haydar Mirza was sent there by his uncle Shah ʿAbbas the Great (r. 1587–1629) with an embassy carrying a large collection of gifts. The prince was to be a hostage rather than a visitor at the court of the Ottoman sultan Murad III, who had forced ʿAbbas to send him a legitimate heir to the Safavid throne in return for peace, to end the war he had started in 1578. The humiliating treaty that ʿAbbas agreed to sign granted Murad significant portions of Safavid territories. But Haydar Mirza's arrival at court trumped any ambition of conquest or military glory. The acquisition of the little prince placed a tangible seal on the agreement and served for the sultan as material proof of Safavid subordination.

Negotiations for peace took place amidst military and political crises of varying degrees on both sides of the border; the Ottoman army's discontent was fed by the weakening economy and the challenging geographical conditions of the region. Safavid Iran was on the brink of collapse when Shah ʿAbbas ascended the throne in 1587, taking down his own father. Internal unrest was accompanied by military assaults from the east and the west, of the neighboring powers of the Uzbeks and the Ottomans. In return for a cease-fire, ʿAbbas agreed to give Sultan Murad official license to annex all of the Safavid territories into which his armies had entered during the campaign. Peace negotiations were finalized only when the young Safavid king agreed to send a prince to the Ottoman court.

A painting found in an Ottoman chronicle glorifying the defeat of the Safavids in the 1580s includes a representation of the prince's last goodbye.

In the *Kitāb-ı Gencīne-i Feth-i Gence* (Book of treasury of the conquest of Ganja), Shah ʿAbbas appears in a last encounter with his nephew before the prince's departure for Murad's court (fig. 4.1).[1] The text around this imaginary scene explains that ʿAbbas was sending Haydar to the "abode of justice" with the request that he "go under the shadow of God"—words that, to an Ottoman audience, would indicate that the Safavid king, as a vassal of the Ottoman sultan, recognized his sovereignty.[2] The lines immediately above the painting supposedly record the words uttered by Shah ʿAbbas to Veli Agha, the Ottoman official who was there to accompany the prince on his journey: "From this day onward, [may the sultan] consider me, like his other subjects, his slave."[3]

Reduced to a marker of pure subordination, the mediating role of the little prince within the social relationships he weaved was nevertheless complex. Like a slave, the prince was treated as a commodity, deprived of his individuality. But distinctly, he was not bought or sold. Haydar served as the mediating currency for a peace treaty. He was thus made exchangeable by the two kings only in this specific context. On the conceptual duality between objects and subjects, between people and things, Igor Kopytoff has pointed out how "individualized persons and commodified things" were not strictly separate categories before modern times. "In every society," Kopytoff wrote, "there are things that are publicly precluded from being commoditized." In this formulation, such preclusion is enforced by individuals or groups holding political power, who "singularize" them, by limiting the use and exchange of symbolically loaded objects amongst themselves.[4] At once human and object, the prince stands at the nexus of intersecting and diverse intentionalities. At the time of the Ottoman-Safavid peace agreement, Haydar Mirza was distinctly reduced to a pawned object. And yet, his transfer was more meaningful than that for Sultan Murad. The prince would not simply live at court from then onward as a prisoner. Rather, he would eventually be incorporated into that tradition so he could potentially become shah himself to make Iran an Ottoman vassal state once and for all.

The story of Haydar Mirza's journey to and reception in Constantinople highlights this potential, and aligns the prince as a precious gift. Official Ottoman histories fervently maintain that favors from the sultan—in the form of feasts and entertainment, and material gifts (*inām*)—showered on the prince and the remaining members of the Safavid embassy. In turn, many sources insist that the Safavids were so impressed and shamed by the sultan's generosity, that they became convinced of Ottoman superiority.[5] This competitive dimension reveals that more than routine and compulsory tribute from an inferior adversary, the prince was understood as a gift.

Haydar Mirza's journey through Ottoman territories, his entry into Constantinople, and his reception at court are documented in a wide range of sources, which present differing, even contesting interpretations on the



FIGURE 4.1. "Safavid Prince Haydar Bids Farewell to Shah ʿAbbas." From Rahimizade Ibrahim Çavuş, *Kitāb-ı Gencīne-i Feth-i Gence*. Istanbul, 1590. Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper. Topkapı Palace Museum Library, Istanbul, R. 1296, fol. 46a. Photo © Milli Saraylar İdaresi Başkanlığı.

meaning of the prince's transfer. While highlighting some of these perspectives, this chapter focuses on the prince and other gifts from the shah in their potential as peacemakers following a long period of battle and rivalry between the Ottoman and Safavid Empires.

Little Prince in a Foreign Land

The embassy that carried Haydar Mirza from his home at the Safavid capital to Constantinople consisted of about six hundred people, led by the shah's ambassador Mahdiquli Khan, and the prince's guardian (*ātābeg* or *lālā*) Shahimquli Khalifa.[6] The movement of the delegation through Anatolia is recorded in detail in the *Book of Treasury of the Conquest of Ganja*, which includes a painting of a feast given for the embassy in the city of Erzurum (fig. 4.2). While giving a collective view of the most significant delegates of the shah, the illustration highlights the prince as the guest of honor, as he sits at the head of the long table, by the side of the Ottoman commander Ferhad Pasha and ambassador Mahdiquli Khan.

The entry of the Safavids into the Ottoman capital was organized as a series of attentively choreographed public and private events, similar to the late Shah Tahmasp's embassies to Sultan Selim in 1568 and to Sultan Murad III in 1576. The curiosity sparked by the arrival of the prince is highlighted by many eyewitness accounts. Stretching from the heart of the city into the far suburbs, extraordinary crowds formed to see and welcome the prince. Several manuscript paintings document this movement of the prince. As they show the prince on his way to the Ottoman court, these images communicate clashing views on the conditions under which the prince came to be brought to the sultan.

In a drawing from a Habsburg album probably dating to the early 1590s Prince Haydar appears on horseback (fig. 4.3). He is smaller compared to the Safavid attendants leading his horse, although the horse elevates him to their height. The prince's small turban is topped by a fan-shaped black feather, and decorated with a glittering gold band. The jewels of his turban match those on the trappings of his horse to underscore his sumptuous appearance. He is shown against a plain background, with no sign of any distinctive urban setting. We thus depend on the inscription below to provide that context: "The King of Persia's son, who by the wily plans of Sinan Pasha was sent to Constantinople in 1590."[7] While documenting the appearance of the Safavid prince, this drawing—made for Holy Roman Emperor Rudolph II's ambassador to the Ottoman court—presents more significantly an outsider's view on how peace was achieved: Rather than the shah's willing submission or the sultan's deserved accomplishment, it underscores political intrigues involved in the negotiations.



FIGURE 4.2. "Banquet Given in Honor of Prince Haydar and the Safavid Delegation in Erzurum." From Rahimizade Ibrahim Çavuş, *Kitāb-ı Gencīne-i Feth-i Gence*. Istanbul, 1590. Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper. Topkapı Palace Museum Library, Istanbul, R. 1296, fol. 48b. Photo © Milli Saraylar İdaresi Başkanlığı.



FIGURE 4.3. "Safavid Prince Haydar Mirza Enters Istanbul." Österreichische Nationalbibliothek Vienna, Cod. 8626, 128b.

A dispersed Ottoman manuscript painting from the turn of the seventeenth century likewise shows the entry of the prince to the Ottoman capital (fig. 4.4).[8] In this rendition, however, the prince is not immediately identifiable. A long military procession along city walls organized in three horizontal registers moves across the page from right to left, as curious city dwellers strive to get a glimpse of the Safavids. The centrality of an Ottoman



FIGURE 4.4. "Safavid Prince Haydar Mirza's Entry into Istanbul." From a *dīvān* of poet Bākī. Probably Baghdad, last quarter of the sixteenth century. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Bequest of George D. Pratt, 1935 (45.174.5).

figure in the heart of the scene—rather than the prince—led the illustration's earlier identification as Sultan Murad III leading his armies into a city. That figure mounted on a black horse, fronted by soldiers afoot whose guns seem to point to him, as Zeren Tanındı has shown, must however be Hasan Pasha, the official in charge of welcoming the prince into the Ottoman capital. One needs to look closely therefore to find the prince in the foreground on horseback, just below Hasan Pasha, similar to his appearance in the Habsburg drawing.

The Safavids move in the middle ground, sandwiched between Ottomans above and below in the painting. Ottomans and Safavids are distinguishable most noticeably by their turbans. The red extension of the Safavid headpiece (*tāj* or *tāj-i Haydarī*) appears shorter here than in earlier examples, in accordance with its transformed form during the reign of Shah ʿAbbas.[9] Only the turbans of the prince and his two attendants are decorated with tall, thick, and rounding white bird feathers attached to their turbans by jeweled gold aigrettes, highlighting their distinction. These contrast effectively with the Ottoman officials' tall round turbans, topped by black, fan-shaped heron feathers. Mirroring Hasan Pasha above, the prince is headed in front by members of the embassy on foot and followed by those on horses. By contrast with the pasha, however, the prince does not lead the horse on his own, for the reins are held in front by an attendant. Haydar is flanked by two Safavid dignitaries—unidentified, but possibly the ambassador and the prince's guardian. They look forward but with their hands they make certain that Haydar sits properly on the horse.[10]

This image of the dependent prince is significant. As Tanındı noted, the scene illustrates a panegyric poem for the sultan written by the famed poet Bāḳī, titled "In Praise of Sultan Murad Khan, on Whom Be God's Mercy and Pardon, by Way of Congratulations for the Arrival of the Son of the Shah of Iran."[11] The painting's focus therefore on the original manuscript's possible patron and the poem's focus on the sultan highlight, from different perspectives, Ottoman power, domination, and victory. The poem clarifies how the sultan received lesser rulers and commanders who came to pay homage to him: Some came eagerly, being struck with awe, such as the Khans of Crimea. Others, notably the Europeans, came to the Ottoman court halfheartedly and out of fear.[12] The Safavid prince in this connection came full of joy and enthusiasm, according to Bāḳī. Aligning Haydar Mirza with the longtime vassals of the Ottomans, other Ottoman authors have similarly turned the prince in their writings into an object of compliance, an exemplum of Safavid submission.[13]

An image of the subjugated prince was to be included in an incomplete illustrated Ottoman dynastic history, Seyyīd Loḳmān's *Şehnāme-i Āl-i ʿOs̱man* (Book of kings of the house of Osman) (fig. 4.5). This blank double spread is inscribed at the top as follows: "First went Hasan Pasha mounted on his

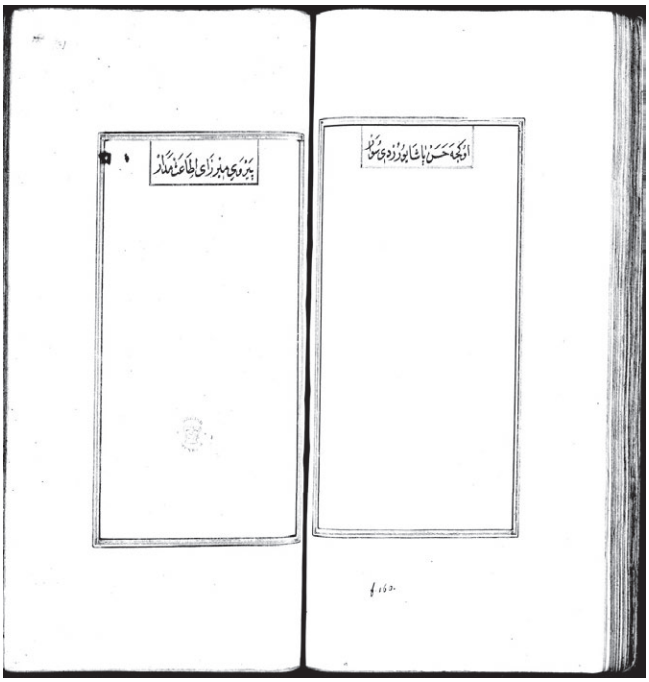


FIGURE 4.5. Incomplete double spread. From Loḳmān, *Şehnāme-i Āl-i ʿOs̱man*. Istanbul, 1590/91. Ink on paper. British Library, Add. 7931, 130b–131a. © The British Library Board.

horse / The axis of obedience, the prince, followed [behind.]"[14] The prince's transfer was thus understood in official accounts as a crucial, inevitable, and eager move on the part of the shah: "Persians opened their country from one end to the other / the Redhead saved his head thanks to the [arrival of the] hostage."[15] Significantly, Shah ʿAbbas's gifts to the sultan were to be received in similar terms at the sultan's palace.

The Prince and His Gifts

Sultan Murad received the embassy bringing Haydar Mirza on January 29, 1590. Extensive preparations had been made at the Topkapı Palace for an official ceremony. Two high-ranking officials of the court were sent to the prince's residence to lead the Safavids into the palace on horseback.[16] Seyyīd Loḳmān explains that the shah's gifts, described as "gifts of tax and tribute of the world" (*pīşkeşī bāc u ẖarāc-ı cihān*) had been brought there prior to the arrival of the embassy.[17]

Passing through the Imperial Gate (*bāb-ı hümāyūn*), the prince is said to be most impressed by the ornament and size of the first courtyard of the imperial palace (fig. 4.6).[18] In keeping with tradition, Haydar dismounted his horse at the Middle Gate (the Gate of Salutation) as did all others (fig. 4.7).[19] Awestruck by the magnificence of the palace, which signaled the reach of the sultan's power, Haydar Mirza "lowered his head with wonder / contracted his two eyebrows with shame," according to Loḳmān.[20] The prince was then

taken to the Imperial Council Hall together with his guardian (*lālā*) and the ambassador Mahdiquli Khan (fig. 4.8). There, he was given a seat between the grand vizier Sinan Pasha and the commander Ferhad Pasha. Across from them a chair was fixed for Mahdiquli to sit. Following this initial encounter and a feast with Ottoman officials, the prince proceeded to the third courtyard of the palace to be seen by the sultan. But first, Haydar stopped by the



FIGURE 4.6. Imperial Gate. Topkapı Palace, Istanbul. Photo by Sinem Casale.



FIGURE 4.7. Gate of Salutation. Topkapı Palace, Istanbul. Photo by A. Savin. Posted on Wikimedia Commons. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Topkapı_Palace#/media/File:Istanbul_asv2020-02_img14_Topkapı_Palace.jpg.

Gate of Felicity (fig. 4.9) There, in front of the Public Treasury, the prince was seated and given three robes of honor—one of them lined with sable fur.[21] The ambassador was given two robes, and fifteen most eminent men in the embassy were also distributed one each. (For all of these robes of honor, see appendix 5 and fig. 4.18.) As the Safavids waited to be received by the sultan, the sight of the lavishly dressed courtiers, wrote Loḳmān, stupefied Haydar Mirza, whose "lips spread, lost in thought."[22] Meanwhile, after the sultan settled in his throne in the Chamber of Petitions, the gifts were brought and paraded by gatekeepers in front of a ceremonial window of this hall so the sultan would see them (fig. 3.7).[23]



FIGURE 4.8. View of the Imperial Council Hall and the Tower of Justice. Topkapı Palace, Istanbul. Photo by Sinem Casale.



FIGURE 4.9. Gate of Felicity. Topkapı Palace, Istanbul. Photo by Sinem Casale.

Shah ʿAbbas's gifts, collectively praised in one source as "countless gifts" (*tuḥaf-ı bīḥesāb*), are recorded in full in an Ottoman archival document (see appendix 4 and fig. 4.17), and they are mentioned in the illustrated manuscripts the *Book of Treasury of the Conquest of Ganja* and the *Book of Kings of the House of Osman*. Additionally, the Venetian *bailo* Giovanni Moro, who was a witness to the Safavid procession, mentions them as "books, carpets, and similar things" (*libri, tapeti et simili cose*) in his report to the Senate.[24]

This remarkable list of objects—as in Moro's summary—indeed opens with eighteen books. First were three copies of the Qurʾan: one small, its cover was inlaid with jewels; the next two described as large, decorated and illuminated in gold (*münaḳḳaş ve müzehheb*). The titles of each of the other books are specified in the archival register. The selection reflects the presenter's refined taste in books, as it includes essential readings of the Persianate literary tradition, frequently commissioned and collected by kings and the elite across early modern Muslim courts. All of these books were recorded as follows:

Ancient sayings (Qurʾan), 3 volumes
- Small, jeweled gold, 1 volume
- Large, illuminated and illustrated, 2 volumes

Miscellaneous books, 15 volumes
- *Shahnama* (Book of kings) [composed c. 1010, by Firdausi], illuminated and illustrated, 1 volume
- *Khamsa* (quintet) of Shaikh Niẓāmī [Ganjavī (d. 1209)], 1 volume
- Complete works of Khāqānī [Shirvānī (d. 1199)], 1 volume
- Yusuf and Zulaikha [perhaps of Jāmī (d. 1492)], 1 volume
- *Bustan* (Orchard) [of Saʿdī (d. 1291/92)], 1 volume
- Collected poems of Ḥāfiż (d. 1390), 1 volume
- *Makhzan al-asrar* (Treasury of secrets) [of Niẓāmī Ganjavī], 1 volume
- *Haft Manzar* (Seven visages) of Hātifī (d. 1521), 1 volume
- *Rubaʿiyat* (quatrains) of Omar Khayyam (d. 1131), 1 volume
- Jamshīd u Khurshīd [of Salman Savaji (d. 1357)], 1 volume
- Complete works of Ahlī [Shīrāzī (d. 1535)], 1 volume
- *Shavāhid al Nubuvva* (Witnesses of prophecy) [of Jāmī], 1 volume
- *Khulāṣat al-akhbār* (Quintessence of histories) [composed 905/1499–1500, by Khvāndamīr (d. 1535/36)], 1 volume
- Complete works of Shaikh Saʿdī, 1 volume
- *muraqqaʿ* (calligraphy album), illuminated, 1 volume

Similar to Shah Tahmasp's earlier gifts to sultans Süleyman, Selim, and Murad, Qurʾans come first among the gifts of Shah ʿAbbas. An illustrated and illuminated copy of Firdausi's *Shahnama* follows, as in those earlier Safavid gifts. Next are the works of the most celebrated and emulated of poets: a

khamsa of Niẓāmī and the collected poems of Khāqānī. Of these two figures, orientalist Jan Rypka noted, "Khāqānī and Niẓāmī were to exert a lasting influence on the entire development of their respective genres: Khāqānī being the greatest exponent of the qaṣida and Niẓāmī the most brilliant writer of romantic epics." Most other titles include romantic epics, moralizing poems, and collected works of the most celebrated poets of the medieval Persianate tradition. The list above additionally includes a historical chronicle by Ghiyāṯ al-Dīn Khvāndamīr, the author of an official history of Shah Ismaʿil's reign.[25] The last item, a calligraphy album (*muraqqaʿ*) was glowingly described by Seyyīd Loḳmān as follows:

> a *muraqqaʿ* replete with numerous calligraphic specimens /
> its sections sweeten the heart and the soul, like honey
> most of it beautifully written in *talik* [script] /
> ruled with lines like the face of the beloved
> its rulings and illuminations [were] matchless / if an expert examined them
> he would be impressed in his mind and soul / he would think it is the essence of figuration.[26]

Besides these books, gifts of the Safavid shah in 1590 included a gold-embroidered turban cloth for the sultan, a gold-woven tablecloth, nine pieces of gold-woven woolen cloths, two pieces of felts from Khurasan, twelve small Persian carpets in total, a large tent, an antidote in a golden inkwell, and twenty-seven pieces of a mineral drug (*mūmiyāʿ-i maʾdenī*) in a red, sealed bag (detailed in appendix 4).

The large commanding tent is singled out in narrative sources. This twelve-part blue satin tent was gold embroidered inside and out, and through its jeweled silk robes ran gold threads. The dome likewise was decorated all over with precious stones. Loḳmān likens it to the firmament because of its magnificence and height. If it were to be set up, he says, one would think it was a mountain. While the Venetian *bailo*, too, describes the jewels and the large size of the tent, he shares a different view about how this gift was received at the Ottoman court. He wrote: "These jewels were more large than fine, and they say that these presents were greatly inferior to those that other Persian kings have sent here with their ambassadors."[27]

This is a significant counterpoint to other glorifying allusions to ʿAbbas's 1590 gifts in contemporary accounts. In the absence of the full collection of these objects, a comparison to earlier groups of gifts proves useful. Gifts—as itemized things—from Shah Tahmasp to Ottoman Sultans Selim II and Murad III for the enthronement of each sultan actually align well with Shah ʿAbbas's gifts. Whereas Shah Tahmasp's gifts increased considerably in number between 1555 and 1576, his largest spectrum of gifts was for Selim II. In

1568, Selim II received only two books: one Qurʾan and one *Shahnama*. But those were truly matchless, irreplaceable objects: a Qurʾan by the hand of Imam ʿAlī, and the famous *Shahnama of Shah Tahmasp*, as discussed in the second chapter above. That group of gifts included in addition antidotes and panaceas, heron feathers, turquoise stones, saddles, a quiver, a large candlestick, bows and arrows, felts, carpets and falcons (see appendix 3).

Many more gifts were sent from Shah Tahmasp to the sultan's court in 1576. But they had a narrower range. According to a detailed Venetian catalogue of those gifts, they included eighty-one books in total.[28] Nine large and nine small copies of the Qurʾan are followed by other books, collectively recorded in that document as literary works (*libretti di canzone, et altre poesie*)—totaling sixty-three.[29] There was also a significant collection of calligraphic specimens, or bound albums. Tahmasp's 1576 gifts for Murad included as well thousands of individual feathers of the heron bird, twenty-nine bags full of turquoise stones, three boxes of bezoar stones (*lacrime di cervo*), three boxes of panaceas (*mumie* or *mūmiyā*),[30] a magnificent thirty-three-part tent, a large parasol to be attached to the tent's entrance, ten large pieces of felt from Khurasan, sixty-four carpets of various sizes and colors, in silk, velvet, and fine wool, and birds and leopards trained for hunting.[31]

When new Safavid gifts arrived at the Ottoman court in 1580 and 1582, the two countries were no longer in a state of peace. Taking advantage of the power vacuum in Iran following the death of Shah Tahmasp, Murad III broke his father's promise to Tahmasp, and started a war that ended with the arrival of Haydar Mirza in Constantinople. From the Ottoman perspective, Shah Muḥammad Khudābanda's gifts were received at a time when the Safavids were declared heretics and attacked as enemies, as in the first half of the sixteenth century. In that war context, Khudābanda's ambassador arrived in 1580 asking for peace, and the gifts he had brought had markedly diminished compared to Tahmasp's gifts in the preceding decades. They are recorded in narrative sources as silk and gold-woven fabrics, horses, and bags full of cash.[32] The second embassy from Shah Khudābanda arrived—though uninvited—on the occasion of a public celebration that lasted for nearly two months organized to celebrate the circumcision of Prince Mehmed, along with hundreds of other boys in Constantinople. This time, the ambassador, who was humiliated and dismissed during ongoing celebrations at the Hippodrome under the gaze of other foreign representatives, had brought gifts that caught up with the richness in variety and the sophistication in content of Tahmasp's previous gifts. Khudābanda's gifts were recorded as two copies of the Qurʾan, sixteen other books—one including paintings done by Bihzad, textiles, carpets, felts, antidotes, and large plates from China.[33]

When weighed against the recent past, Shah ʿAbbas's gifts for Murad III in 1590 conform to the standards set by his grandfather Shah Tahmasp after the signing of the first Ottoman-Safavid peace treaty in 1555. Perhaps some

objects in ʿAbbas's selection were inferior in quality to those earlier gifts, as the Venetian *bailo* notes. But the combination of Qurʾans, illustrated and unillustrated manuscripts of poetry, history, and epics, as well as precious textiles, a palace-tent, gold-woven carpets, and other courtly objects show that these were princely gifts whose ownership and use demonstrated the religious and intellectual sophistication expected of any good ruler in the Muslim world. These gifts accommodated a variety of shared kingly activities, related to religious devotion, reading, feasting, and traveling. They also showed, from another perspective, the reach and expanse of the Safavid king's power and highlighted the riches that his country offered. Raw and cultivated materials including turquoise and silk were naturally found in superior quality in Iran. Taking advantage of these resources, objects such as the tent and the carpets additionally demonstrated the skill of artists and artisans under the shah's protection.

This collected message of refined power was one that was formulated by Shah Tahmasp, and followed with some variation by his son Shah Khudābanda in the 1580s and grandson Shah ʿAbbas in the 1590s. As this new decorum of giving was being conceived, the Ottomans came to recognize its parameters. And they came to expect similar groups of gifts with each new embassy, as their judgment of new gifts was invariably weighed against those of the very recent past. Gifts sent from Safavid shahs during this period, as we have seen in the previous chapter, acquired a significant new function at the Ottoman court. They became fundamental visual tools of representing the sultan as king of the world in official illustrated manuscripts. The rest of this chapter integrates Haydar Mirza into this process, showing how the little prince came to singlehandedly stand for Safavid gifts in Ottoman illustrated manuscripts, and how his presence at the Ottoman court became integral to the image of the sultan in those books.

The Sultan and the Little Prince

"Shah ʿAbbas, a loyal subject of the sultan, asks for mercy and forgiveness," the Safavid ambassador declared during his audience with the sultan. Continuing in the same tone, he added that all of the lands conquered by Ottoman armies belonged to the sultan. And if the sultan wished, what is left to the shah was also his. Indeed, according to the harsh conditions of the peace treaty signed afterward, the Safavids agreed to recognize Azerbaijan, Georgia, Qarabagh, Khuzistan, Shirvan, Kurdistan and even Tabriz as Ottoman territory. The treaty also dictated—as in the earlier Peace of Amasya signed between Shah Tahmasp and Süleyman the Magnificent in 1555—that the Safavids should cease cursing the first three caliphs.[34]

Safavid gifts to the sultan presented in 1590 against this background were understood by the Ottomans as signs of obedience and submission (*ʿubūdi-*

yyet). Even though narrower in variety, and perhaps inferior in quality, as a group they were nevertheless composed of objects that Ottoman sultans were accustomed to receiving from Safavid kings. However, it is the prince himself that stands out as the Safavid gift par excellence. In a poem about the embassy's reception at court, Ottoman author Rahimizade wrote:

> The Shah became your slave of servitude /
> And the captive [Prince Haydar] became your prisoner tied on his neck
> The world is humbled by your sword / And you have opponents no more
> From one end of the world to the other, there's nothing perpetual /
> That equals your peerless domain.

The prince, in this way, became an object that embodied Safavid subordination and the sultan's dominance over the shah's domain. The renowned Ottoman historian Mustafa ʿĀlī made a similar case in the opening couplet of a poem he wrote for Sultan Murad: "Oh king! Universal rulership became possible with your pure nature / The son of the king of Iran came and became a slave in your domain."[35]

Unlike Safavid gifts of the past decades, there are no visual renditions of Shah ʿAbbas's gifts to Murad in 1590, which this chapter has mined from written documents. The only surviving painting of the sultan's audience with the embassy departs dramatically from the established norms of depicting the Ottoman sultan giving audience to a Safavid ambassador (figs. 2.4, 3.9, and 3.11). These earlier depictions highlight the subservience of Safavid envoys, conveyed through their subjugated pose before the sultan, held on their arms and pushed down by Ottoman courtiers. In these earlier images, gifts coming from the Persian shah horizontally dominate the lower section of the painting, thereby participating in the envoy's action and taking part in the ceremony. In reality, however, they would be held and paraded by courtiers outside of the Audience Hall. More recent depictions (figs. 3.16 and 3.18), as we have seen, shift the perspective of the viewer, to present a broader view of the palace. Giving visual priority to the Safavid gifts filling up the second courtyard of the palace, the sultan and the ambassador's encounter is thus diminished to a detached detail in the upper left corner of these representations.

The sultan's audience with Prince Haydar Mirza is represented in a sole manuscript painting found in the *Kitāb-ı Gencīne-i Feth-i Gence* (fig. 4.10). The participants of the reception ceremony populate the scene, which is notably sparse in ornament and detail. The architectural setting here is in fact different from the actual place of the encounter, the Chamber of Petitions of the Topkapı Palace. As the center of focus, Murad III sits behind a blue-columned porch or arcade on a gold throne. The sultan appears as the largest



FIGURE 4.10. "Sultan Murad III Receives Haydar Mirza at the Topkapı Palace in Istanbul." From Rahimizade Ibrahim Çavuş, *Kitāb-ı Gencīne-i Feth-i Gence*. Istanbul, 1590. Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper. Topkapı Palace Museum Library, Istanbul, R. 1296, fol. 53a. Photo © Milli Saraylar İdaresi Başkanlığı.

figure, vertically elevated above others on either side of him, clustered into two groups in the foreground. To the left of the sultan, viziers have lined up in a row. To Murad's right, at the foot of his throne, we can distinguish a tiny figure, the Safavid prince, dressed in royal attire. Haydar's robe and turban echo those of his guardian and the ambassador, who stand close to him, in the lower left corner of the composition. With Veli Agha's assistance

behind him, Haydar holds Murad's robe with two hands to kiss it. Kissing the sultan's hand or his robe was a compulsory ritual of respect for Ottomans and foreigners alike.[36] In actual ceremonial practice and its representations, however, foreigners, especially Safavid ambassadors, were especially kept at a distance. Haydar's touch therefore signals a rare kind of intimacy with the sultan, who was depicted in manuscript paintings as untouchable before foreigners.

Other gifts of Shah ʿAbbas for the sultan are also markedly absent from the scene. A recognizable display of gifts had become by 1590 indispensable markers of Safavid obedience in Ottoman imperial books showing the sultan's audience to the shah's ambassadors. Here by contrast, the ritual and figural markers of that obedience—the overpowered ambassador and a large collection of gifts—have dissolved into the prince, who effectively stands for both.

Safavid prince Haydar Mirza and other gifts sent by Shah ʿAbbas thus illuminate Ottoman-Safavid relations and rivalry at an important conjunction. Many Ottoman authors highlight the transfer of the prince as proof of an undisputable Ottoman victory and a Safavid defeat in 1590. Authors Loḳmān and Mustafa ʿĀlī certainly note how Sultan Murad made the prince his dependent, his slave (*kul*), and thus rendered the shah of Iran slave to his command and servant to his domain along with his progeny. The exchange of embassies later in the 1590s only show, however, that it was difficult to maintain such an inflated view of domination.

Peace and Dispute

The Istanbul Peace Treaty of 1590 apportioned lands between the two empires in notably favorable manner to the Ottoman sultan. According to the treaty, Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan—including the city of Tabriz—and those territories that were loosely held or newly attacked by Ottoman forces, such as Nahavand, came under Ottoman rule. In modern scholarship, this peace treaty has been interpreted as a humiliating defeat for the Safavid shah.[37]

Doubts about the longevity of peace, however, were expressed by Giovanni Moro as early as 1590, at the time of negotiations. Moro's report to the Venetian Senate notes that Shah ʿAbbas surrendered his nephew to the sultan only to put an end to Ottoman attacks on his western borders. These were explained to him by the Safavid diplomats. ʿAbbas wanted to deal first with the Uzbek threat to the east. The Ottomans meanwhile, were afraid that if they put too much pressure on ʿAbbas, he might be unable to stand strong against the powerful Uzbeks. At the time of the Ottoman-Safavid peace therefore, Uzbeks evidently appeared as a more serious threat to the Ottomans than ʿAbbas.

The Safavids had therefore come to Istanbul knowing that the treaty would not be permanent because of its unacceptable conditions. Unable to learn the details of the peace agreement despite considerable effort, Moro suspected that the extravagant and expensive public celebrations were intended to convince the dissatisfied Ottoman soldiery about the health of the empire's finances, rather than celebrating a meaningful political victory.[38]

Disagreements about the exact place of borders continued until the conclusion of peace.[39] There is evidence that ʿAbbas did not agree to all of the terms of treaty. The Safavid historian Afushtah-i Naṭanzī relates that the shah was infuriated by how favorably Sultan Murad's letter spoke of Mahdiquli Khan and ordered the envoy's immediate execution after his return.[40] News of that execution must have traveled to Constantinople quickly, for it is brought up in a double portrait of Mahdiquli in the Vienna album (fig. 4.11). The Safavid ambassador moves forward on his horse accompanied by an elder Ottoman official on his side, also on horseback. Mahdiquli appears as a young bearded man dressed elegantly. A fanned black feather crowns his elaborate turban, whose jewels match those on the trappings of his horse. The gold, bright colors and jewels of Mahdiquli's dress and the human figures that decorate his inner robe are noticeably lacking in the Ottoman figure's dress to highlight the latter's modesty. The inscription below the painting reads: "The child's master of ceremonies, who brought [him] from Persia to Constantinople, later had his head struck off by his king, because he did not bring the child back again."[41]

Shah ʿAbbas indeed mentions in his letters to Istanbul that Mahdiquli Khan was executed because of his failure to raise some of the shah's objections to the Ottoman territorial demands.[42] In 1591, ʿAbbas explained that he did not agree to giving up Nahavand to the Ottomans. That letter was brought to Istanbul by ambassador Qara Ahmad Sultan, who had come with two more requests. First, could a new guardian be assigned to Prince Haydar Mirza? Second, would Murad provide military support to ʿAbbas against the Uzbeks? All of these requests were refused: Nahavand now belonged to the sultan: "The prince had a fine guardian!" And the Sunni Uzbeks were allies of the Ottomans. There is no record of gifts sent by ʿAbbas in 1591, and Qara Ahmad was given nothing but a robe of honor and some cash to cover his expenses.[43]

Tension rose even more in Istanbul with the arrival around the same time of an envoy from Khan Ahmad, the governor of Gilan. Upon seeing the lavish festivities organized for the reception of that envoy and the gifts and favors showered on him, ʿAbbas's ambassador Qara Ahmad was devastated. The governor of Gilan had complained about religious and political pressure that Shah ʿAbbas put on him, because he was a Sunni, asking for the sultan's help. In return, Khan Ahmad offered to give Sultan Murad half of the lands under his rule.[44] ʿAbbas immediately responded with a letter of protest in which he



FIGURE 4.11. "Safavid Ambassador on Horseback." Österreichische Nationalbibliothek Vienna Cod. 8626, 125b.

explained that Gilan had long been a tributary to the Safavids, and therefore it was not Khan Ahmad's territory to offer the sultan. Fearing the shah, Khan Ahmad fled to the Ottoman court, leaving behind his wife and daughter, who were also the daughter and granddaughter of Shah Tahmasp.[45]

The stakes were high for the control of Gilan. On the southwest corner of the Caspian Sea, the region of Gilan held great political, geographic, and commercial significance for both the Ottoman and Safavid states. It was one of the major providers of raw silk in Iran—besides Mazandaran and Shirvan—that Ottoman centers of silk production depended on. A major motivation for Ottomans in attacking the Safavids in the 1580s was in fact an anticipation of taking control over these regions.[46] The Ottoman response to Shah ʿAbbas was thus cautious, but vague at best. The sultan claimed that Gilan had long paid homage to the Ottomans, and that Khan Ahmad's request for protection was therefore not an impediment to the Ottoman-Safavid peace.[47] But it was Shah ʿAbbas who emerged victorious in the end, for he incorporated Gilan into his territories after Khan Ahmad fled.

With growing tension and mistrust in the aftermath of the 1590 peace treaty between the Ottoman and Safavid courts, ʿAbbas occupied himself with renewing the infrastructure of his state and dealing with the Uzbeks, who had attacked and taken a hold of Khurasan, including the cities of Herat and Mashhad.[48] The Ottoman sultan, too, was confronted with major challenges inside and outside the confines of his empire: in the west, war had broken out with the Habsburgs in 1593, when they refused to send the heavy yearly tribute they had been paying the Ottomans since the peace treaty of 1547. Unrest among the Ottoman military meanwhile erupted, which extended to the famous turn-of-the-century incidents of banditry and rebellion in Anatolia.[49]

But Prince Haydar Mirza's residence in Istanbul continued to keep the Ottomans at a true diplomatic advantage. Historian Selaniki, who was Haydar's host in Istanbul, wrote that during the Khan Ahmad affair, high-ranking Ottoman officials feared for Haydar Mirza's life, for they believed the Safavids were scheming to kill the prince in order to break the peace settlement.[50]

The Death of a Gift

The court chronicler of Shah ʿAbbas, Iskandar Beg Munshi, mentions among the events of the year 1595, one that "all the people of Iran, considered [as] yet another manifestation of the good fortune that attended this dynasty [the Safavids]." He was referring to the death of Haydar Mirza in Istanbul. This event provided much relief to the people of Iran: "Since he was the Shah's nephew and it was not fitting that a Safavid prince, a *seyyed*'s son and a Shi'ite of pure faith, should sire children while he was in Ottoman hands, among the enemies of the faith, it was a merciful providence that decreed he

should die a natural death of the plague at Istanbul, before he had had any children."[51] On the Ottoman side, by contrast, the sudden death of the child prince provoked much anxiety, and even suspicion. Looking back on the misfortune of Haydar, confirming Selaniki's claims, a foreign account notes how the "suspicious conditions" under which the prince died at such a young age circulated at court.[52] Several decades later, Ibrahim Peçevi confirms that the prince died suddenly of the plague, but he adds that at a later time Safavids secretly dug up his tomb in Eyüp, and took his body back to Iran, for they did not want it to remain on Ottoman soil.[53]

Haydar Mirza's short life was divided nearly equally between the Safavid and Ottoman royal circles. A highly valuable token of diplomatic leverage, the memory of his lost potential nevertheless remained indelible at the Ottoman court. The prince appears in a little-known double-page manuscript painting depicting Sultan Mehmed III's enthronement in 1595 (fig. 4.12). Untitled and undated, a note on the manuscript's flyleaf nevertheless confirms that it recounts Mehmed's Eğri (Erlau) campaign of 1596. The sultan



FIGURE 4.12. Mehmed III enthroned. From a manuscript of the sultan's Eğri (Erlau) campaign. The David Collection, Copenhagen (Inv. 19/2009, 15b–16a). Photo by Pernille Klemp.

appears enthroned in a large gold throne in the upper left. Haydar Mirza is seen as a small figure on the same page, just below two cypress trees. The text on the double spread reads: "With felicity Sultan Mehmed was enthroned / The exalted one commanded, and kettledrums were beaten, Soldiers kissed [his] hand, and donations were dispensed / As well as [to] the khans of Crimea and the Persian prince."[54]

The painting testifies to the significance the prince had come to hold by 1595. This rare painting showing Mehmed's accession departs significantly from other images of the same theme. Manuscript paintings showing the accessions of previous Sultans Selim I, Süleyman I, Selim II, and Murad III all follow a compositional and thematic program in accordance with previous models, legal codes, and protocol registers.[55] If the ceremony took place in the palace, the new sultan sat in his throne in the second courtyard, surrounded by the highest-ranking officials of the court (figs. 4.13 and 4.14). Those sultans who assumed the throne far from the capital, such as Selim I and Selim II, appear in manuscript paintings in imperial tents. With minor



FIGURE 4.13. "Enthronement of Murad III." From Loḳmān, *Şehinşehnāme* (*Shahinshāhnāma*), vol. 1. Istanbul, 1581. Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper. Istanbul University, Rare Works Library, F. 1404, fols. 11b–12a.



FIGURE 4.14. "Enthronement of Selim II." From Loḳmān, *Şehnāme-i Selīm Ḫān* (*Shāhnāma-i Salim Khān*). Istanbul, 1581. Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper. Topkapı Palace Museum Library, Istanbul, A. 3595, fol. 26b. Photo © Milli Saraylar İdaresi Başkanlığı.



FIGURE 4.15. Chamber of Petitions seen from the third courtyard. Topkapı Palace, Istanbul. Photo by Sinem Casale.

adjustments, the organization of the ceremony is consistent in all images: a soldier or a statesman pays his respects, kneeling before the throne. That single figure taking his oath of allegiance to the sultan indicated in those paintings the approval of the entire military and political establishment. Importantly, the accession of Ahmed I, the sultan to succeed Mehmed III, also follows those earlier examples.[56] But the scene of the accession of Mehmed bypasses that visual tradition (fig. 4.12). Distinct from earlier examples, the whole scene gives a bird's eye view of the Topkapı Palace. The second courtyard spans the right page, and the lower register of the left page. The upper register of the left page represents part of the third courtyard, accessed through the Gate of Felicity, recognizable in the middle toward the right edge of the left page. Whereas the sultan's large elevated gold throne, and state officials surrounding him draw our attention, the transfer of power to the new ruler is not the sole premise of this representation. Instead of the second courtyard, the sultan sits in the third courtyard's Chamber of Petitions, where he received foreign ambassadors (fig. 4.15). Horizontally aligned with the sultan, on the far upper right side of the double spread is the Imperial Council Hall. There, the head of the chancery, finance ministers and secretaries are busy at work. In the foreground on the same page, boxes and bags of cash to be distributed are spread on the ground. Along the lower edges of the page, soldiers are lined up in order, waiting to receive their share. Prince Haydar is not easily discernable, for he is only one of the many figures in the far end of the second courtyard, represented in the lower register of the page on the left. Haydar is almost indistinguishable from oth-

ers around him not just because he is so small, but because he blends in so well, depicted in Ottoman attire. Looking in closely, we see nevertheless that he wears a simple Safavid turban. Haydar appears thus as a composite, simultaneously Ottoman and Safavid figure. His appearance points this way toward his anticipated potential into the future. The reference to him in the text, "Persian prince" (*Mīrzā-yı ʿAcem*) has been suggestively written immediately above Sultan Mehmed's head. His alignment in the same couplet with the Khans of Crimea, the long-time vassals of the Ottomans confirms the prospect that Haydar was to grow up to be a semi-independent vassal of the sultan.

Although unlike other Ottoman accession scenes, this is not a completely novel composition. It rather follows a different tradition. This particular manner of organizing the second and third courtyards of the Topkapı Palace in a double spread recalls compositions in which the ruler receives foreign ambassadors. Compare, for example, Mehmed III's accession with the following paintings: his father Sultan Murad III's audience with the Moroccan ambassador in the second volume of the *Book of the King of Kings* (*Şehinşehnāme*) (fig. 4.16), and Murad's audiences to the Safavid king Khudābanda's ambassadors in 1580 and 1582, discussed in the previous chapter (figs. 3.16 and 3.18). Mehmed's accession is an unmistakable copy of these paintings in which the sultan receives a foreign ambassador whose gifts seem to fill up the entire palace.

Haydar Mirza might appear as an indistinct, obscure figure in the painting to us. But his presence would be intelligible to the painting's original audience at court. As a painting that breaks from tradition in a tradition-obsessed court, this image of the newly enthroned sultan makes a sophisticated political statement in a way that only the visually erudite courtiers would be able to discern. This would require conjuring those earlier images of foreign gifts displayed before the sultan in other royal manuscripts. Instead of foreign gifts, here the sultan's customary donations to his subjects (*inʿām*) are aligned with the sultan. The painting evokes exchange therefore, but in a different direction: from the sultan to all of his subjects.

This vision also makes an iconographic adjustment, by eliminating the submissive figure of the soldier or the statesman kneeling before the sultan. The enthusiasm, deference, and approval of the state establishment for the new sultan is augmented in this scene with the added submission of the Safavid prince, and the Khans of Crimea. The prince assumes a pose similar to those around him. As we have seen in previous chapters, foreigners were often pushed down to bow before the Ottoman ruler. In this image, the vassalage, submission and loyalty of the Safavid prince are expressed instead by his willing integration into the Ottoman court, not by a forced gesture.

This new alignment of the sultan and the prince expands the new visual image of the sultan discussed in the previous chapter. Safavid gifts had be-



FIGURE 4.16. "The Ottoman Sultan's Audience with the Moroccan Ambassador." From Loḳmān, *Şehinşehnāme* (*Shahinshāhnāma*), vol. 2. Istanbul, 1592–97. Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper. Topkapı Palace Museum Library, Istanbul, B. 200, fols. 142b–143a. Photo © Milli Saraylar İdaresi Başkanlığı.

come in the late sixteenth century an integral part of the visual image of the ruler in Ottoman *şehnāme*s, royal illustrated manuscripts. By the 1590s, these objects came to be represented as ever-increasing markers of the shah's submission to the sultan. Crucially, while compositionally evoking those earlier models displaying innumerable gifts before the sultan, in this painting object-gifts are absent. The prince alone has rendered all other Safavid gifts null.

Haydar Mirza's appearance as a concurrently Safavid and Ottoman subject of the sultan attests to his significance, a symbol associated in turn with the sultan's legitimacy and power in 1595. The painting of Mehmed's ascent to the throne suggests too, in my analysis, how Haydar replaced Safavid gifts. Interestingly enough, on the Safavid side, Haydar's agency as the most valuable gift was also well established. Shah ʿAbbas felt no need to send loads of object-gifts to Constantinople as long as the prince was there. A few months before his death, Haydar was received by Sultan Mehmed together with a



FIGURE 4.17. "Gifts Presented to Sultan Murad III by Shah ʿAbbas when He Dispatched His Nephew, Prince Haydar Mirza, on January 29, 1590." Başbakanlık Arşivi [Prime Ministry Archive], Kamil Kepeci 1772, fol. 153.

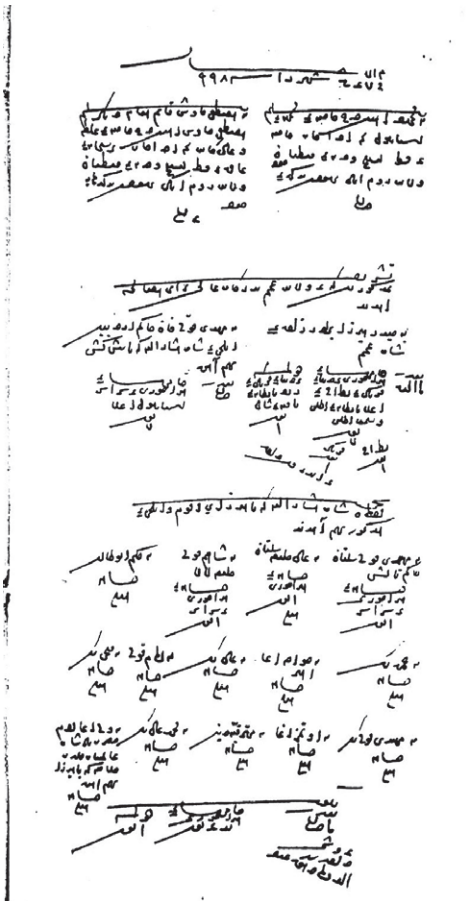


FIGURE 4.18. "Favors Given to the Safavid Prince Haydar Mirza and His Retinue, on January 29, 1590." Başbakanlık Arşivi [Prime Ministry Archive], Kamil Kepeci 1773, fol. 231.

Safavid ambassador. With that modest embassy, ʿAbbas had only sent "excellent Persian textiles" as gifts, and a new nurse for the child.[57]

After the death of the prince, as the next chapter will show, for one last time ʿAbbas's gifts to the Ottoman sultan conformed to the manner of exchange formulated by his grandfather Shah Tahmasp. With those gifts in 1597, the era of refined selections of Safavid gifts arriving in Constantinople came to a close. Challenging the Ottoman sultan on the battlefield and in commerce, Shah ʿAbbas transformed at the turn of the seventeenth century both the logic and the language of diplomacy between the two courts.

5

Diplomacy and Transaction

In August 1599, the Ottoman sultan Mehmed III (r. 1595–1603) received Muhammad-quli Beg Arabgirlu, an ambassador from Shah ʿAbbas, bearing a highly submissive letter that described the shah as the sultan's slave and the dust beneath his feet. Yet the gifts accompanying this message, twelve gold and twelve silver keys to fortresses that the shah claimed to have conquered in the name of the sultan, infuriated Mehmed—to the extent that, according to Venetian archival sources, he angrily ordered the keys to be returned to the ambassador. By then, Shah ʿAbbas had already been sending numerous embassies to European rulers asking for their support against the Ottomans in exchange for high-quality Persian silk.

The agency and instrumentality of gifts in negotiating power, at a time when power itself came to depend as much on the control of trade as territories, is the subject of this chapter. It opens with the story of ʿAbbas's large collection of accession gifts to Mehmed in 1597. Those gifts included precious objects of vast monetary, cultural, and historical value, similar to Shah Tahmasp's gifts for Ottoman sultans. That polite and traditionalist selection to Mehmed contrasts stunningly with ʿAbbas's provoking gifts of twelve sets of keys just two years after. A discussion of ʿAbbas's revolutionary military, administrative, and religious reforms to rebuild his state follows, because those reforms relate and respond specifically to the historical Ottoman-Safavid dialogue. As the Safavid king rebuilt his state, gifts figured as a primary mechanism that expressed the contours of a new language of diplomacy that he formulated.

Shah ʿAbbas's complete break with the established tradition of Ottoman-Safavid gift exchange involved a sea change not only in the types and amounts of objects sent and received, but also in the ceremonial etiquette of their presentation. In the opening decades of the seventeenth century, ʿAbbas's active search for political and commercial allies in Europe against the Ottomans eventually forced both the shah and the sultan to renegotiate the gifts they came to exchange. The nature of these new gifts was directly correlated to the extent to which Ottoman and Safavid rulers were able to participate in a globally connected trade network.

The End of the Era of Boundless Gifts

Shah ʿAbbas's accession gifts for Sultan Mehmed III in 1597 arrived after multiple dispatches of letters from the Ottoman court announcing the new sultan's ascent to power two years earlier. The Ottomans had grown increasingly impatient because of Haydar Mirza's death. When Sinan Pasha wrote to ʿAbbas in April 1596, the grand vizier reminded the shah that he should send one of his own sons to the sultan so that peace would be kept. Against those expectations, however, ʿAbbas was not going to send a different Safavid prince to Istanbul.[1]

But abiding by tradition, Shah ʿAbbas sent many gifts for Sultan Mehmed.[2] In this selection, ʿAbbas had unmistakably taken his cue from earlier Safavid gifts to Ottoman sultans (see appendix 6).[3] The books were fewer, but similar in variety, including religious, literary, and historical works. Two Qurʾans, recorded as copied by "Artimon di Brun" and "Isnat" appear first. Written in Italian echomimetic approximation, it is not possible to decipher these names. Following these are seven volumes of various other books, mostly Persian classics, consisting, for example, of collections of poems (*divan*) of Hafiz, Niẓāmī's romance in verse *Layla and Majnun*, and Saʿdī's stories in prose *Gulistān* (Rose garden). Similar to ʿAbbas's gifts for the conclusion of peace, it is possible that one of the books, recorded as *Murechagi*, could refer to a calligraphy album (*muraqqaʿ*). At least one was a book on history: "another book titled *Devanesai*, meaning chronicle of emperors," once again similar to the shah's gifts in 1590.[4]

Textiles, rather than books, stand out in this gift. Expensive pieces of fabrics were plentiful in number and variety, ranging from velvets and brocades to damasks, all woven with gold threads. The textiles in this regard stand in contrast to a few pieces of unimpressive items in the gifts of 1590. In its overall extensiveness and quality, the list of 1597 in fact follows more closely the example set by Shah Tahmasp's earlier gifts to other sultans. ʿAbbas's gifts to Mehmed concurrently highlight the Safavid taste and the economic and artistic reach of the shah's domain of power by stressing, just as in the time of Tahmasp, where some of the items came from in Iran. There were carpets

made in Kerman and Khurasan, mumias and bezoar stones, bows, arrows, and horses with their own damask blankets, and a large velvet tent, embroidered with gold and satin threads. The tent's silk ropes were decorated with gold rings and precious stones. The canopy to go over the entrance of the tent was of gold-woven velvet, with silk ropes and silver columns.

These gifts, then, conformed to the norms of exchange etiquette between the two courts. However, even though Shah ʿAbbas clearly followed the trend set by Shah Tahmasp in his selection of gifts on this occasion, as he did for the Istanbul Peace Treaty in 1590, the relations that this group of gifts evoked and the reactions they elicited were not the same. As we have seen in previous chapters, during the last decades of the sixteenth century, Safavid gifts to the Ottoman court had come to bear a definition close to tribute, symbolizing the shah's servitude to the sultan. A paradoxical quality of this servitude was the insistence in Ottoman sources that Safavid gifts came because it was the shah's obligation to do so. But Ottoman authors delightedly underscored that the shah's subjugation was also a deliberate and enthusiastic one.

By contrast, in 1597, the Ottoman delight in receiving Safavid gifts had turned bittersweet. Widespread suspicion about Shah ʿAbbas's character and the unpredictability of his future plans were mixed with contempt toward the seemingly discourteous ambassador. The giving of traditional gifts, in this context, far from reaffirming tradition, were rather understood as reminders of a moment in time that was by then lost. The court chronicler of Shah ʿAbbas, Iskandar Beg Munshi, wrote the following about ʿAbbas's gifts to Mehmed III: "On this mission, [Zulfaqar Khan] bestowed gifts with such liberality that certain mean-spirited Ottomans accused him of foolishness and extravagance."[5]

A ceremonial entry into the capital was organized for the embassy of 1597, as before. But the superfluous Ottoman displays of power, eyewitness accounts note, did not unswervingly incite wonder and amazement. This time, Safavids were unimpressed. As on earlier occasions, the Ottoman army and high-ranking state officials were all assembled in military and ceremonial gear to meet the embassy on the outskirts of the city. Additionally, this time, "one thousand five hundred members of the Community of Artists and Artisans of Istanbul" (*asitāne-i saʿādetde bin beş yüz nefer ehl-i hiref cemāʿatı*) joined them for the welcome festivities. The embassy passed the Bosphorus on lavish boats, feasting and watching the firing of cannons. The parade continued on the other side, filling the streets of Istanbul. In the plaza fronting the Imperial Gate of the Topkapı Palace, there was an unprecedented display waiting for the embassy to pass by: a giraffe, lions, and an elephant scattering coins.[6]

The Safavid embassy's arrogance, and indifference toward Ottoman displays of ornament and power were noted by many. Historian Selaniki wrote

that the Safavids were dressed "in a strange manner, not like the former *qizilbash* that came from the Eastern Land." The envoy's turban was different from all others, made of polychrome Indian silk. Some men in his immediate retinue rode their horses alongside him on jeweled Uzbek saddles, bragging that they had received those as tribute.[7] The Venetian *baili* (resident ambassadors) Marco Venier and Girolamo Capello similarly mention the Safavids' elegant dress, recording especially the "pearls and jewels decorating their turbans and robes."[8]

The display of military might was of high priority for the Ottomans. Contrary to Ottoman accounts, Venier and Capello state that the Safavid embassy was accompanied by relatively few soldiers and statesmen on horseback.[9] The sultan's triumphal entry into the capital after the Eğri campaign was made to coincide with the embassy's arrival. One of the four paintings in the *Şehnāme-i Sultan Mehmed-i Sālis* (Book of kings of Sultan Mehmed III), also known as *Eğri Fethi Tārihi* (History of the conquest of Eğri) is dedicated to this event (fig. 5.1).[10] Moving from right to left, the procession is formed around the sultan, who passes through two streams of curious spectators. Sultan Mehmed is dressed in royal garments decorated with jewels, and his large turban is topped by two plumes of heron feathers.[11] The only other turban to match its elegance is that of the Safavid envoy, who watches the sultan on his feet from an observation booth at the top-right corner of the painting. People standing closest to the procession on both sides hold up long pieces of luxurious textiles in different colors, forming a spectacular barrier between the spectators and the procession. In fact, these men have been identified as Istanbul's textile merchants, who had brought their most precious merchandise, silks, satins, and velvets of the highest quality.[12] Among the large crowd, other Safavids are distinguishable through their elegant turbans with extensions in gold-woven batons, holding the textiles. Selaniki records that the Safavids were especially handed these various types of European and Persian textiles. They were thus obliged to take part in the celebrations organized for the sultan's triumph, rather than being its passive observers.[13]

Competitive shows of power and elegance irritated rather than impressed. Ambassador Zulfaqar Khan haughtily refused to visit the grand vizier, saying "I have come for the *padshah*, not for the grand vizier; that is not our custom, I am a khan and commander-in-chief (*sipahsalar*)!"[14] Suspicious of the rank and distinction of ʿAbbas's ambassador, in turn, Ibrahim Pasha quizzed him on the day of his audience with the sultan: Who was the head of the religious classes (*sadr-ı ulemā*) at the Safavid court?[15] Did Shah ʿAbbas engage in intellectual pursuit, like his grandfather Tahmasp? What sciences and disciplines of knowledge interested the shah? To the surprise of Ottoman courtiers, Zulfaqar Khan did not have much to say. "They all saw that the envoy was highly ineloquent and undistinguished," wrote Selaniki;



FIGURE 5.1. "Sultan Mehmed III Enters Istanbul." From Talikizade, *Şehnāme-i Sultan Mehmed-i Sālis*. Istanbul, c. 1596–1603. Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper. Topkapı Palace Museum Library, Istanbul, H. 1609, fols. 68b–69a. Photo © Milli Saraylar İdaresi Başkanlığı.

"they all agreed he was a philistine; a rather undistinguished, ordinary man."[16]

If accurate, these small frictions must have added to the growing uneasiness and suspicion that Ottomans felt toward the Safavids and the continuation of peace with them. The sudden death of Prince Haydar Mirza might have raised tensions. Indeed, according to Venetian ambassadors, Zulfaqar's audience with the sultan lasted longer than usual because ʿAbbas demanded Tabriz, saying that he had agreed to give it up as long as Prince Haydar was alive. The Ottomans, as noted earlier, suspected that the prince had possibly been poisoned.[17]

There is no ambiguity in the peace treaty of 1590 about the territorial assignment of Tabriz; ʿAbbas agreed to recognize it as Ottoman territory. But the possibility of such a tension-raising issue in 1597 is also supported by the fact that Zulfaqar Khan remained in Istanbul for another two months.[18]

Soon after Zulfaqar Khan's return to Iran, Shah ʿAbbas was able to conquer the region of Khurasan, taken by the Uzbeks early in his reign. Sovereignty over this region must have been particularly important for ʿAbbas, for he was born and raised there, in the city of Herat, as was his grandfather Shah Tahmasp. Khurasan also carried the legacy of Timurid Iran, and was home to the shrine of Imam Riza in Mashhad, the most important Shiʿi holy site in Safavid Iran (fig. 5.2).[19]

ʿAbbas was proud. His success merited festivities. In celebration, the shah extended tax cuts to people living under his rule, and pompously announced his victory to neighboring rulers. To this end, as Iskandar Beg Munshi writes, ʿAbbas promptly dispatched embassies to the Ottoman and Mughal courts. Led by the courtier (*ishik-āghāsī*) Muhammad-quli Beg Arabgirlu, the embassy to Istanbul arrived in July 1599.[20] In his report, the Venetian *bailo* Girolamo Capello noted how much suspicion the arrival of this embassy aroused in Constantinople. The Ottomans were much disturbed by the sheer size of the delegation, which numbered over five hundred people.[21] Certainly,



FIGURE 5.2. Imam Reza Shrine complex. Photo by Iahsan. Posted on Wikimedia Commons. https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Provincia_Razavi_Khorasan#/media/Fișier:RezaShrine.jpg. CC BY-SA 3.0.

unlike this unexpected mission, throughout the second half of the sixteenth century, such impressive embassies from Safavid Iran had arrived at the sultan's court in response to official correspondence, most notably to congratulate enthronements. If the disproportion between the pomp and the purpose of the Safavid embassy mildly disturbed the Ottomans, the gifts that they brought were to astound, even scandalize them.

Shah ʿAbbas's victory over the Uzbeks truly marked a turning point in Ottoman-Safavid relations, manifested most concretely and significantly in the unusual gifts he sent for the sultan. In stark contrast to his previous gifts, which closely mimicked those of Shah Tahmasp in the preceding decades, this time, ʿAbbas sent nothing but keys to the fortresses and cities he had just conquered in Khurasan. The presentation of those highly symbolic gifts was described by Girolamo Capello:

> [The ambassador] during his audience, presented to the king twelve gold keys and twelve silver keys placed on two illuminated wooden platters. He said that his king—with the support of God, and with the kind friendship of the Gran Signore [the sultan]—had conquered and thereby stripped his country of his enemy and impostors. In an effort to renew and conserve peace with His Majesty, he was sending [the sultan] twenty-four keys to cities and fortresses that were reconquered, and these were being offered as if they were his.[22]

Against established diplomatic tradition, as Capello further writes, the keys came "with no other sort of present, neither with any offering (*donativo*) for the sultan, nor for the high-ranking officials (*bassà*), as is common practice."[23] Significantly, though some Ottoman sources mention the keys, the widespread disappointment with these ambitious gifts coupled with profound feelings of "doubt and suspicion" toward this Safavid mission are underscored only in the *bailo*'s report to Venice.[24]

Although there is no trace of these keys, they were surely ceremonial objects that perhaps looked like the keys Ottomans held to the Kaaba in Mecca, the holiest place for Muslims (fig. 5.3). The contents of ʿAbbas's gifts and their presentation were different from all other Safavid gifts in the living memory of any member of the Ottoman elite, including the sultan.[25] The keys evoke, however, some of the objects exchanged between Shah Ismaʿil, the first ruler of the Safavid dynasty, and his contemporary the Ottoman sultan Selim I in the early sixteenth century, as discussed in the first chapter. Those openly offensive gifts—from opium to Sufi paraphernalia and female garments—came with letters that had equally provoking, even insulting messages.

Shah ʿAbbas's twelve gold and twelve silver gifts by contrast made a calculated effort to disguise such an overt proposition. The shah's letter was humble and submissive, as if written by a vassal of the sultan. Similar



FIGURE 5.3. Key to the Kaaba in Mecca. Topkapı Palace Museum, Istanbul (2/2262). Photo © Milli Saraylar İdaresi Başkanlığı.

excess in reverence typically permeated eloquent messages written by Safavid shahs after the Battle of Chaldiran. Until his dispatch of two sets of twelve keys to the Ottoman court, ʿAbbas followed suit. Until 1599, ʿAbbas sent Constantinople a wide selection of gifts. Similar to Shah Tahmasp, he sent most significantly copies of the Qurʾan, illustrated and unillustrated manuscripts of history and Persian classical literature, large tents, luxurious textiles, silk carpets, horses, bows and arrows, and exotic rarities. Exuding compelling and evocative ties to the Safavid dynasty and its political identity, cultural heritage, and religious orientation, the meaning of those collections of significant objects nevertheless remained open to interpretation. Conveniently, the Ottomans preferred to accept them as objects of submission and obedience, complements to the submissive letters that accompanied them.

Shah ʿAbbas's keys came with a similar message, but the polyvalence of the customary Safavid gifts were voided now. This gift was completely unprecedented. Its content was new, for no Safavid shah had ever sent an Ottoman sultan keys to stand for offerings of territory. More notably, this gift was different because of its directness. The keys stood as a negative counterpart to the abundance of previous gifts. Unaccompanied by any other banal object of friendship and goodwill, the keys carried a straightforward and pompous message to their Ottoman audience.

That message was received with some delay, for the Ottomans were completely caught off guard. The rejection of the keys, and their return to the ambassador the next day, was recorded by Girolamo Capello in a report to the Venetian Senate: "[The ambassador] related, through the mediation of the dragoman, that [the Ottomans] accepted the keys; but then gave [them] back, to be returned to [Shah ʿAbbas], thanking him for the kindness he had shown with them. These were told to the dragoman by the ambassador with a laugh, telling him that they did not quite know how to interpret this

gift."[26] The presentation of these keys not only instigated a diplomatic crisis between the two courts, but it also intensified worries on the Ottoman side about the troubled political state of affairs within the empire. "The Turks are in deep thought," wrote Capello, for they suspected that the ongoing uprisings all over Anatolia (commonly known as the Celali Rebellions) might be backed in fact by the Safavids. In 1597, ʿAbbas had appealed to Mehmed, asking for the sultan's help against the Uzbeks. That request, as noted above, was rejected. The reconquest of former Safavid territories that had fallen to the Uzbeks and its announcement to the Ottoman sultan with a gift that shattered the Ottoman-Safavid diplomatic etiquette was therefore doubly provoking: ʿAbbas was no longer in need of military support. And his self-made strength would probably allow him to fight in more fronts than one.

Ottomans were rightly panic-stricken. The overwhelming anxiety and apprehension about the future of relations with the Safavids is correlated in Capello's report with favors given to this ambassador. An extraordinary feast was served to Muhammad-quli Beg at the Topkapı Palace before his audience with the sultan. He was presented with more robes of honor than was customary. All of these favors, according to Capello, pointed to how "afraid" the Ottomans were of the Safavid king. This was confirmed by the Safavid ambassador himself, who said: "This show of gifts and honor will not be sufficient to win over [my] lord, because his demand is that Tabriz be returned to him." Muhammad-quli further explained that even though he was sent there to discuss this issue, the Ottomans did not address it, focusing instead on impressing him with words and favors. In the end, he said, Shah ʿAbbas will have to claim Tabriz and Nahavand by force.[27]

The gifting of two sets of twelve keys to territories ʿAbbas supposedly conquered in the name of the sultan thus subversively communicated that he no longer accepted the terms of the Ottoman-Safavid peace. The peace had obliged ʿAbbas to give up territories that he never intended to abandon, and more significantly, forced him to send Prince Haydar to Constantinople as a hostage. The treaty of 1590 this way had symbolically diminished ʿAbbas to a vassal before the Ottoman sultan. ʿAbbas no longer accepted vassalage. His gifts, rather than official letters, were to deliver that message to the sultan.

ʿAbbas's treatment of Ottoman officials at his court provides further proof that the treaty was no longer valid in the eyes of the shah. Shortly before Shah ʿAbbas's defiant keys were presented to Mehmed III, an Ottoman embassy had arrived in Isfahan, in June 1599, with the request that Shah ʿAbbas should renew peace by sending his son as a hostage to the Ottoman court. The Carmelite friar Emmanuel de Santos relates this encounter:

> There arrived at two- or three-days' interval, one after the other, three ambassadors sent by the Sultan to the Persian king: they were demanding the latter's eldest son as a hostage, and guarantees of friendship. He (Fr.

> Emmanuel) says that the Persian king received with much honour and very great welcome those ambassadors, to whom, however he gave no answer, except on one day when he entertained them at a great banquet, at which were present all the nobles of Persia. Then he said at table in a loud voice these very words: "the Grand Turk (i.e., Sultan of Turkey) by these ambassadors who have come here demands of me my son, the prince, as a hostage: and I reply to you, the ambassadors, that my son, the Prince, is and will be king too of all I possess: and since I have no power to send a king as hostage to a king, you will make answer to the Turkish Sultan that I am not willing to send him my son," the Persian king saying this with great haughtiness. With that the three ambassadors in question received their dismissal.[28]

The shah's blunt refusal to replace Haydar Mirza with a new prince and news of his determination to recover Tabriz—as related by his ambassador elucidated the message carried by the twelve keys. Rather than directly challenging the sultan by openly questioning his power and legitimacy to provoke him into war, ʿAbbas's keys made an unabashed affirmation of his increasing military power and audaciously declared his religious identity. The gifting of those keys was a gesture that asserted both the shah's own ascending military power and his haughty claim to Twelver Shiʿi leadership.

Twelve Keys and Twelve Imams

Regardless of whether Shah ʿAbbas conquered twenty-four fortresses, their gold and silver keys on two trays before Sultan Mehmed III must be taken as an allusion to the Twelve Imams, so venerated by the Safavids. With this gift, ʿAbbas announced to Mehmed that his concept of religion firmly stood on Twelver Shiʿi principles. Whereas in their messages to Ottoman sultans, previous shahs also alluded to Shiʿism, they emphasized unity and harmony: in essence, both rulers were Muslims. Differently, ʿAbbas's keys markedly highlighted his difference from his rival. If the righteous sultan represented the stronghold of Sunni orthodoxy, ʿAbbas was his Twelver Shiʿi counterpart.

This appears as a paradox. Ottoman sultans assumed leadership of both Sunni and Shiʿi Muslims living under their imperial domains by the late sixteenth century. Universal rulership came to be highlighted particularly after the Ottoman conquest of Baghdad in 1534, when shrines of Imams ʿAli and Husain in Iraq came under Ottoman rule. Having established territorial and spiritual claim over those Shiʿi shrines, Sultan Süleyman's titles came to include "overseer of the Regulations of the Two Mashhads," in reference to the shrines in Najaf and Karbala. For the first time in Sultan Süleyman's mosque complex in Constantinople, the names of Shiʿi imams Hasan and Husain—

concurrently the grandchildren of the Prophet—were installed in monumental inscriptions.[29] The remaining imams, furthermore, were revered as part of the Prophet's family and successors (*ahl al-bayt*).[30]

In Mustafa ʿĀlī's late sixteenth-century universal history, *Künhü'l-Aḫbār* (The essence of events), for instance, a section on the "Lives of the Twelve Imams" follows the biographies of Muhammad and his successors and companions. In that book and other treatises, ʿĀlī dwelled on the science of numbers, highlighting the auspiciousness of twelve. Twelve represented the ideal number of hours of daytime and nighttime, the number of signs of the zodiac, the number of modal scales in music, the number of sciences, and the number of imams, among many other examples. As Sholeh Quinn demonstrates, ʿĀlī's assertions follow a tradition of numerological thinking in the Persianate world that emphasized the distinctiveness of the number twelve. Dating at least back to the Ilkhanid vizier and historian Rashid al-Din's treatise on the topic, intellectuals at Timurid, Safavid, and Mughal courts also wrote on the importance of the number twelve.

Against this background, it is meaningful to consider the preface to the chronicle *Futūḥāt-i Humāyūn* (Royal conquests), completed in 1598/99, on Shah ʿAbbas's recent successful campaign against the Uzbeks—the campaign that granted the shah two sets of twelve fortresses whose keys he presented to the Ottoman sultan. In this book, Safavid court historian Siyaqi Nizam tethered ʿAbbas to God, Muhammad, Imam ʿAli, and Amir Timur through an esoteric thread woven by the number twelve. In this construction, as Quinn notes, four remarkable phrases are singled out, for they contain twelve letters: each of the two parts of the Muslim profession of faith ("There is no God but God" and "Muhammad is the Messenger of God"), ʿAli ibn Abi Talib (Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law and the first of the Twelve Imams), Shah ʿAbbas Husaini, and finally "Lord of the Auspicious Conjunction" (a messianic title associated with Timur that several Ottoman and earlier Safavid, as well as Mamluk and Mughal, rulers adopted). In the book's preface, Siyaqi Nizam further explained: "The Supreme Lord of the Fortunate Conjunction [Shah ʿAbbas] is the propagator of the true religion of the Twelve Imams, and because of his kinship with the Revered True Guides (Imams), and without his design or desire, the major events of his increasingly glorious reign—from his accession to the throne of the sultanate to the royal departure towards various parts of the kingdom—add up to twelve."

Thus, at this juncture, Safavid claims to rightful rulership and descent from Muhammad, ʿAli, and the Twelve Imams were historicized and theorized in a manner that highlighted the chosenness of ʿAbbas. These ideas were furthermore fortified concretely by a military dimension. The shah's victory against the Uzbeks was but one of "the major events of his increasingly glorious reign." So, it was the clarity and the strength of the new Safavid

concept of rulership and Shiʿism that was objectionable from the Ottoman perspective, rather than the simple reference to the Twelve Imams.

Fighting Safavid Shiʿism as heretical during times of war, Ottomans purposely rejected it until 1599 in a variety of ways. After the conquest of Baghdad and the incorporation of Shiʿi shrines into Ottoman lands, for example, author Celalzade Mustafa wrote that the Safavids' failure to keep those lands proved that Shah Tahmasp did not have the benediction of the Twelve Imams.[31] This official discourse dramatically reversed during periods of peace. Recognized as orthodox Shiʿis with the peace treaties of 1555 and 1590, however, Safavids were asked both times to give up heretical acts. The shah in response recognized the sultan's dominance over the holiest places for the global Muslim community. From the Ottoman perspective, therefore, Safavids were not attacked during war because they were Twelver Shiʿis, but because of their unorthodox actions. These included the public cursing of the first three caliphs of the Sunni tradition and the shahs' failure to build congregational mosques.

But in 1599, the two states were not in a state of war. The twelve keys thus connoted unprovoked aggression. Their rejection and return certainly show that they did not convey sincere submission.

In light of ʿAbbas's long-term goals, the keys marked a historical watershed, for their gifting absolutely transformed the course of communication between the two courts. After 1599, established norms of Safavid gifting to the Ottoman court eradicated. Neither ʿAbbas nor any other Safavid shah sent a similar selection of gifts that by then the Ottomans had come to expect to receive. In this regard, the twenty-four keys made an intervention in political conversation similar to the insulting gifts exchanged in 1514 between Sultan Selim I and Shah Ismaʿil. But unlike those objects of personal insult, the keys were not tools of quick and immediate provocation. Instead, they served a more layered function, to be conveyed in hindsight. They foretold Shah ʿAbbas's reforms and how the shah was going to respond to Ottoman ideological challenges once he attacked the sultan. ʿAbbas was not only Twelver Shiʿi in name. He was the head of a state in which Twelver Shiʿism was clearly and effectively institutionalized.

Religious reforms ʿAbbas undertook were in intimate conversation with the Ottoman-Safavid rivalry. Especially important were the regulation of Friday prayers and the unprecedented construction of a congregational mosque in Isfahan (fig. 0.2).[32] Participation in Friday prayers not only fulfilled a religious obligation, and publicly declared one's faith, but also connoted allegiance to the ruler who led the prayer, or whose name was read before the prayer during the imam's sermon (*khutba*).[33] For Muslim rulers, this uttering of their name in the Friday sermon had traditionally been a fundamental source of political legitimacy both for the establishment and the continuous declaration of their authority.



FIGURE 5.4. Selimiye Mosque, Edirne. Photo by Hamza Atılgan. Posted on Wikimedia Commons. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Edirne_Selimiye_camii_-_panoramio_(3).jpg. CC BY-SA 3.0.

Whereas the legality of Friday prayers was an uncontested issue in the Sunni tradition, Shiʿi clerics disagreed on whether it was desirable or even permissible to perform them. Was it permissible to hold Friday prayer in the absence of the Twelfth Imam, hence without his consent? Relatedly, was it appropriate for the Safavid shah to build congregational mosques? Disagreement among clerics about the legality of Friday prayer prevented Safavid kings from building congregational mosques until the early seventeenth century.[34] In the Ottoman realm, great congregational mosques were built, proudly declaring the sultan's Sunni orthodoxy, adherence to the shariʿa, and universal authority in architectural terms (fig. 5.4).[35]

To highlight this contrast, during times of war, Safavid kings' failure to build congregational mosques frequently became a point of contestation in official correspondence, which directly questioned their religiosity and hence their authority as Muslim rulers. During Sultan Süleyman's eastern campaign, the grand vizier wrote the following letter to the shah:

> You [Shah Tahmasp] claim to be of the true faith of Islam. In your letters, you cite verses from the Qurʾan. [However,] those padshahs subscribing to the true faith have in their countries mosques and places of prostration (*cāmiʿler ve mescidler*), wherein are held communally the five daily prayers, following the call to prayer (*ezān* or *aḏhān*) [from these places of worship]. Friday prayers are held in those mosques, and Friday sermons

(*khutba*) are read, in which the Prophet, his family, and his companions are praised. In all fairness, then, can you say there is a hint of piety and Islam in your conducts?[36]

Safavid kings were infidels according to the letter because they allowed people under their rule to curse "the companions of the Prophet." But even worse, the grand vizier wrote, the shahs were heretics, for Christian infidels at least had their own places of worship, whereas Iran "even lacks churches."[37] Later, during the war of 1578–90, court historian Talikizade wrote that when Tabriz was conquered in 1585, the Aq Qoyunlu congregational mosque—previously abandoned under Safavid rule—was immediately put to use by initiating the call to prayer from the mosque and by holding the communal Friday prayer there.[38]

How was Shah ʿAbbas going to clarify his concept of religion, fulfill his social obligations, and thereby respond to accusations of blasphemy and illegitimacy? The face of religion and its relationship to the state in Safavid Iran transformed at the turn of the seventeenth century. To promote Twelver Shiʿism, ʿAbbas created an organized class of religious scholars (ʿ*ulamā*), who "lent support to imperial concerns with political integration, social discipline, and the Persianization of Shiʿism."[39] Clerics such as Shaikh Baha'i and Shaikh Lutf-Allah, who both served as the *shaikh al-Islam* (chief theologian) of Isfahan actively promoted the performance of Friday prayer. They were instrumental in codifying Shiʿi orthodoxy, thus involved in Shah ʿAbbas's larger design of weaving close ties between his state and shariʿa-based Twelver Shiʿism.[40]

The entire project of Shah ʿAbbas's rebuilding of Isfahan as the new capital, accordingly, gave architectural form and symbolic function to the political order he conceived and the spiritual legitimacy he sought: "The shah wanted its mosques, seminaries, and pious foundations to be the finest of their kind in Iran, and to rival the temple at Mecca and the mosque at Jerusalem."[41] Court chronicler Iskandar Munshi's comments thus disclose the bold ideas that ʿAbbas wanted to communicate with his construction of two mosques and other socioreligious institutions in Isfahan, "the capital of Shiʿism," according to Sussan Babaie.[42] Inscriptions of the small and private Masjid-i Shaikh Lutf-Allah (fig. 5.5) from 1603/4 referred specifically to the shah's spiritual leadership as the propagator of Twelver Shiʿism: "The greatest and most dignified sultan . . . the reviver of the customs of his forefathers, the propagator of the Infallible Imams . . . ʿAbbas, the Husaynid, the Musavid."[43] A few years later, ʿAbbas built the great Masjid-i Shah, the first congregational mosque to be built by a Safavid ruler. The mosque's two madrasas, or theological seminaries, flanking its great dome chamber promoted the education of orthodox Twelver Shiʿism, similar in principle to the Sunni madrasas attached to Ottoman sultanic mosques (figs. 5.6 and 0.2).[44]



FIGURE 5.5. Shaikh Lutf-Allah Mosque, Isfahan. Photograph by Bernard Gagnon. Posted on Wikimedia Commons. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/User:Bgag/Iran#/media/File:Sheikh_Lotfollah_Mosque,_Isfahan_03.jpg. CC BY-SA 4.0.



FIGURE 5.6. Aerial view of the Maydan-i Naqsh-i Jahan, Isfahan. Masjid-i Shah is visible in the foreground. Photograph by Pedram forouzanfar. Posted on Wikimedia Commons. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Naghshe_jahan_01.jpg. CC BY-SA 4.0

Shah ʿAbbas's promotion of the Twelver Shiʿi faith by commissioning religious institutions of learning and devotion was not limited to the mosques and madrasas he sponsored. ʿAbbas interlaced social projects with personal acts of devotion. Most noteworthy among these were his multiple well-attended pilgrimages on foot to the shrine of Shaikh Safi al-Din in Ardabil, and the shrine of the eighth Shiʿi imam Riza in Mashhad.[45] This public promotion of visits to and patronage of shrines (*ziyarat*) had economic and ideological implications in the context of the Ottoman-Safavid rivalry.

Since Mecca and Medina had come under Ottoman rule early in the sixteenth century, major pilgrimage routes were controlled by the Ottomans, and the sultan claimed the prestigious responsibility of providing safety to pilgrims coming from all over the world on their way to the holy lands of



FIGURE 5.7. Maydan-i Naqsh-i Jahan, Isfahan. From De Bruijn, *Voyages de Corneille le Brun par la Moscovie, en Perse, et aux Indes orientales* (Amsterdam: Wetstein, 1718). Image Source: Zentralbibliothek Zürich, NR 83–NR 84 | G, https://doi.org/10.3931/e-rara-55979 / Public Domain CC 1.0.

Islam. Rulers before ʿAbbas continuously appealed to Ottoman sultans for permission and promise of safe travel for Safavid pilgrims, as mentioned in previous chapters. One important feature of "the new and violent anti-Sunnism characteristic of Safavid Shiʿism" at the end of the sixteenth century, according to Said Amir Arjomand, was the emphasis ʿAbbas placed on *ziyarat*. Accordingly, the scholar Mir Makhdum wrote that *ziyarat* diminished one's desire to go on the hajj.[46] But beyond religious polemics and ideological considerations, Rudi Matthee has argued, Shah ʿAbbas had an important economic motivation for encouraging the visitation of the tomb of Imam Riza in Mashhad over the hajj: currency flight. Pilgrims had to carry gold ducats to pay for various expenses, including tolls, alms, and presents while performing the hajj. Diverting the flow of large amounts of gold out of the Safavid economy during the yearly hajj, then, was an important consideration for the shah.[47]

Religion, politics, and commerce were indeed closely tied building blocks of ʿAbbas's new concept of state. The royal square he built in Isfahan, Maydan-i Naqsh-i Jahan, was its microcosm (figs. 5.6 and 5.7).[48] The two new mosques, the royal palace, and the bazaar complex (*qaysariyya*) marked the main monuments of that square. Court, religion, and commerce therefore provided key sources of legitimacy and power for Shah ʿAbbas's new order. We thus turn in the next section to ʿAbbas's revolutionary political, military, and economic reforms, which allowed him to build the Safavid state anew. The design and execution of these were in part inspired by the Ottoman system. Beyond imitating successful aspects of that ideal, ʿAbbas's vision aimed to perfect it, in order to respond to, confront, and defeat the Ottomans. Backed by a strong army, ʿAbbas then reopened the western front, and subsequently took back almost all of the territory lost to the Ottomans with the Istanbul Peace Treaty of 1590.

From Devastated State to World Empire

Shah ʿAbbas inherited a state on the brink of collapse in 1587. Weak rulership of the past decade had failed to deal with ideological uncertainties, economic problems and foreign attack. Confrontations among courtiers and *qizilbash* elites permeated politics at court. Meanwhile, the neighboring powers, with whom the Safavid state had a considerable history of military and ideological struggle, were quick to take advantage of its vulnerabilities. The country was at war with the Ottomans in the west and Uzbeks in the east.[49] It was within this context that ʿAbbas agreed to the peace conditions put forth by the Ottomans, who claimed significant territories in Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan. As in the previous peace signed between Shah Tahmasp and Sultan Süleyman in 1555, the new shah also agreed to stop the ritual cursing of the first three caliphs of the Sunni tradition. And in line with

Ottoman demands, the child-prince Haydar Mirza was taken to Istanbul, to be held there as a captive.

First, ʿAbbas subdued rebellions. To avoid their reappearance, he constructed a strong military and administrative establishment. The *qizilbash*, so instrumental in building the state, had, until ʿAbbas constituted the Safavid military, summoned on an ad hoc basis. *Qizilbash* tribal leaders were appointed as generals and governors. But factional dissensions often undermined central authority and weakened the state.[50]

Building a central army formed by converted slave soldiers (*ghulam*)—similar in principle to the Ottoman military organization—was ʿAbbas's solution to the unpredictability of *qizilbash* support and loyalty on the one hand and the military vulnerability to his state to foreign attack on the other. Loyal slaves of the shah also constituted a newly designed elite administrative class, much like the Ottoman system. The shah's relationship to his new classes of military and administrative leaders inverted the "master-disciple" principle that had previously governed his relationship to influential tribal leaders, for *ghulam*hood depended on the slaves' complete break with their sociocultural backgrounds and their conversion to Islam.[51]

The new identity given to these slaves, combined with their economic and social dependence on Shah ʿAbbas, guaranteed full and continuous loyalty and devotion to the king. The new standing army consisted of cavalry, musketeers, and an artillery corps, equipped with the latest know-how, weapons, and firearms, in order to face up to the technologically up-to-date Ottoman army. In order to pay the army directly, the shah made appropriate changes to the Safavid land system. Fiefs previously assigned to the *qizilbash* were incorporated into crown lands so that taxes could be collected directly, with the aid of ʿAbbas's new slaves as administrators. This way, the shah limited the power and influence of the *qizilbash*, who previously acted as independent local princes.[52]

Thus by 1599, when the keys were presented to the sultan and refused by him, Shah ʿAbbas had defeated the Uzbeks, suppressed internal revolts, subdued oppositions, and established a permanent standing army. The capital was moved from Qazvin to Isfahan, whose urban fabric was being shaped according to ʿAbbas's vision of his new centralized state in line with Twelver Shiʿi principles.[53] Displaying the shah's political and religious ambitions, the spatial and functional organization of the royal square intersected politics and religion with commerce at the heart of Isfahan (figs. 5.6 and 5.7).[54] Establishing a state monopoly on foreign trade indeed was one of the pillars of Shah ʿAbbas's centralized state.

Silk, Silver, Fur, and Weapons

In 1603, Shah ʿAbbas declared war on the Ottomans. At the same time, he

set out to create an international network of silk trading that bypassed his western neighbor. In the early seventeenth century, silk proved to be a key item within Ottoman-Safavid rivalry in a way that involved more contenders than these two courts. Royal power, for ʿAbbas, entailed much more than territorial domination and its benefits. It also resided in control of trade routes and the movement of things across imperial borders. In this attempt, Shah ʿAbbas sent loads of high-quality Persian silk as diplomatic gifts to various European powers, asking for political and military alliance against the Ottoman sultan and anticipating direct purchases of silk (figs. 5.8 and 5.9). As embassies between Iran and Europe continued to be exchanged, ʿAbbas used gifts creatively and strategically, tailoring them to his specific audiences, in order to incite curiosity and consumer desire. As a medium of both diplomacy and trade, Safavid silk laid bare limits of those categories of exchange, and oscillated distinctly between gift and commodity. In consequence, the Ottomans' own attitude toward Safavid gifts changed in a way that highlights this double function of silk.



FIGURE 5.8. "Doge Marino Grimani Receiving the Gifts Presented by the Persian Ambassador in 1603." Gabriele Caliari. Oil on canvas. 367 × 527 cm. Sala delle quattro porte, Palazzo Ducale, Venice. © Photo Archive—Fondazione Musei Civici di Venezia.



FIGURE 5.9. Carpet. Museo di San Marco, Venice. No. 26. © Per gentile concessione della Procuratoria di San Marco.

In Safavid Iran, the commercial infrastructure of silk production and distribution built by Shah ʿAbbas was unprecedented.[55] To be sure, ʿAbbas built on the historical importance of his country as a major source of superior raw silk, and a conduit of trade along Silk Roads. Making money

was important. But competition with the Ottomans equally advanced Shah ʿAbbas's economic agenda.

Economic competition was deeply rooted in the Ottoman-Safavid rivalry. Around the Battle of Chaldiran in 1514, Ottoman sultan Selim I imposed an embargo on all Iranian silk imports.[56] Possessions of any merchant caught with Iranian raw silk on Ottoman territory were to be confiscated. Many silk merchants were thrown in jail between 1514 and 1518. These measures blocked European access to Iranian silk to a large extent, but they also caused merchants living under Ottoman or Safavid rule to suffer losses. In the long run, as a result, the embargo had dire financial consequences in both countries. During Selim's reign, and again during the Ottoman-Safavid wars between 1578 and 1590, the setback in trade caused raw silk prices in Bursa to skyrocket.[57] Selim's son, Sultan Süleyman, who was known for his justice, lifted the embargo in 1520 but continued to attack the Safavids through political and military means.[58] Intermittent periods of conflict surely impacted silk trade after that; but economic activity never broke completely for extended periods of time. Meanwhile, gaining control over trade routes and hubs, such as Azerbaijan, and centers of production for key products—especially silk—proved to be significant motivations for Ottoman-Safavid military clashes.[59]

Shah ʿAbbas monopolized silk production to maximize royal revenue with a carefully executed plan.[60] The measures he took ranged from establishing his own local administration for the harvesting, collecting, and the storing of silk to marketing and selling it in international markets.[61] To complement these technical and logistical measures, the shah oversaw the expansion of the caravan network in Iran and guaranteed safety for travelers and merchants. In the domestic market, ʿAbbas stimulated the economy by encouraging the consumption of cotton cloth "to reduce the importation of Indian cloth and to increase domestic silk exports." Eventually a ban was issued on the export of gold and silver to discourage currency flight.[62] Finally, Shah ʿAbbas kept close to him the primary exporters of Iran's international silk trade. Armenian merchants, who lived in Julfa in Azerbaijan, were forcibly settled in New Julfa in the outskirts of his new capital of Isfahan.[63] Integrated fully into the Safavid royal system as merchants and diplomats, the wealthy Armenian community facilitated the exchange of Persian silk for European silver. The royal monopoly on silk production and distribution was also crucial for ʿAbbas's overall centralizing policies, since the silver that Armenians brought into Iran paid the salaries of the shah's new elite class of slaves and his standing army.[64]

Silk was thus ingeniously used by Shah ʿAbbas to maximize royal revenue, and as a conduit for provocation and attack on the Ottomans in a manner and scale unmatched by any Safavid ruler before him. With his new military and effective administrative institutions, ʿAbbas was going to claim

lands he had to concede to the Ottomans with the 1590 peace. But to hinder the enemy's economy, ʿAbbas also initiated a search for alliances against the Ottomans.

Many Safavid embassies reached Europe carrying large amounts of high-quality silk to be presented as diplomatic gifts. Those gifts concurrently represented the shah's sincerity in his promise of alliance, and they bespoke future orders of silk to be purchased directly from ʿAbbas. Frequently, embassies reached their destination circumventing Ottoman lands to show the feasibility of those alternative routes. Some moved through Hormuz in the Persian Gulf and even around the Cape of Good Hope, rather than the traditional routes that passed through Aleppo, Bursa, and Izmir, under Ottoman rule. To be sure, ʿAbbas aspired to strip the Ottoman economy of all the taxes and other profits resulting from the passage of large amounts of Persian silk through their territory.

In 1599, when Shah ʿAbbas's keys arrived at the Ottoman court, his plan to establish contacts with the outside world to promote Iran's raw silk and to seek support for his struggle with the common enemy was already set in motion. During the 1590s, embassies that carried large amounts of silk were sent to Russia, a country that openly shared ʿAbbas's anti-Ottoman sentiments. While there, these embassies also traded Iran's luxurious textiles for Russia's sable fur and weapons.[65] A more focused diplomatic offensive began in late 1598, when the English gentleman Anthony Sherley persuaded Shah ʿAbbas to be his negotiator. As Safavid ambassador, Sherley traveled with Husain Ali Beg to Moscow, Prague, and Rome (fig. 5.10).[66] Despite favorable responses, the mission almost fell apart. Sherley left the embassy before it reached Spain, where three others left, having converted to Christianity. But ʿAbbas was not discouraged. A more organized diplomatic campaign to Europe followed his attack on the Ottomans.

The shah's bargaining power lay in the high-quality silk he could supply, and his methods in communicating this varied widely. In 1600, ʿAbbas sent Marino Grimani, the Venetian doge, a large custom-made gold-woven silk velvet fabric depicting the scene of the Annunciation of Virgin Mary. In 1603, ʿAbbas's gifts to Venice included a gold-embroidered velvet fabric with the figures of Mary and Jesus, a silk gold-woven mantle (*manto*), a silk velvet carpet worked with gold and silver threads, and six other garments: all were silk, some similarly gold-woven, and others executed in various colors to showcase the distinct palette of Safavid silk producers.[67] The reception of Ambassador Fathi Beg has famously been depicted by Gabriele Caliari in a painting that decorates the Sala delle quattro porte at the Palazzo Ducale (fig. 5.8). In Venice, Fathi Beg clarified the care ʿAbbas put into the selection and production of his gifts. The mantle, for instance, was specially produced for the doge, in one single piece, without any stitching. The shah in his message wished the doge to take it as a sign of his friendship with the hope that



FIGURE 5.10. Sir Robert Sherley, by Sir Anthony Van Dyck. Oil on canvas. Petworth House and Park, West Sussex. © National Trust Images/Derrick E. Witty.

he would wear it thinking of him. For the silk carpet, Fathi Beg said that "the shah, having understood that every year the Treasury of San Marco is put on display, sent this carpet, which is of the highest quality produced in Persia, so that every time the treasury is displayed, this beautiful carpet will also be put on view." These gifts therefore epitomized and promoted the visual, tactile, and technical possibilities that Shah ʿAbbas's silk network could offer.

Importantly, some displayed Christian-themed subjects from a uniquely Safavid perspective. Custom-made gifts to the doge, such as the Madonna and Child silk velvet, both showed the sincerity of ʿAbbas's offer of friendship and alliance and underscored his difference from the Ottoman sultan, even though they were both Muslim rulers.

Diplomatic exchanges were accompanied by commercial transactions in Europe. And gifted objects and purchased goods frequently intersected. In Venice, for example, the Safavid ambassador purchased tens of body mail and weapons among other things. Grimani's gifts in 1603 for Shah ʿAbbas likewise included four archebuses, which were hand guns, decorated on one end with gold and studded with pearls, a full body mail, a gold-plated bowl engraved with figures, and two silver flasks studded with glass.

The future possibilities proposed by this embassy markedly disturbed the Ottomans. By the time the ambassador reached Syria on his way back to Persia, the Ottoman-Safavid war had already begun. Ottoman authorities in Aleppo confiscated all of the items purchased by Fathi Beg in Venice, together with Grimani's gifts for ʿAbbas.

Embassies from Shah ʿAbbas to Europe resulted in neither long-term contacts of commerce nor his anticipated political alliance against the common enemy.[68] But the shah kept on dispatching them in the 1610s and 1620s. With these missions, ʿAbbas was offering to attack the Ottoman economy with his proposals of trade partnership with European powers, just as he was entering into military conflict with the Ottomans himself.

Loads of Silk

In 1610, the Ottoman-Safavid war came to a standstill. Seven years before, that war was initiated by Shah ʿAbbas, who, according to Ottoman sources, was constrained to request truce once the Ottoman army reached Tabriz. The offer of Sultan Ahmed I (r. 1603–17) in response to this was to recognize with some adjustments the stipulations of the first Ottoman-Safavid peace, signed between Sultan Süleyman and Shah Tahmasp in 1555.[69] But there was another significant condition: ʿAbbas had to send a large amount of silk to the sultan. The transfer of this silk-cum-tribute made the agreement possible, according to the Ottoman author Katip Çelebi, who meanwhile criticized the grand vizier's mediating role in the negotiations: "Since Nasuh Pasha favored the wishes and followed the path of the vulgar redheads, and hastened the arrival of an ambassador, the ungrateful ʿAbbas, seizing the opportunity, appointed as ambassadors a heretic holding the rank of military judge (*kadıasker*) by the name of Kadı Khan, with two sinners, the judge of Qazvin and the judge of Isfahan, who took the silk ʿAbbas had pledged to Diyarbekir, where, having delivered it to the aforementioned pasha, they reached the capital all together [soon after]."[70]

Silk is highlighted by court chronicler Mustafa Sāfī as well, who wrote that in October 1612, the Safavid embassy presented to the sultan "200 ass-loads of silk and other tributes" (*dü-vist ḫır-vār-ı ḥarīr ve pīşkeşhā-yı diger*). Safavid historian Iskandar Munshi recorded all of the items carried by the embassy as gifts for the sultan: "silken stuffs, cloth woven with gold thread and silver thread of many different kinds, and other precious articles from Iran."[71]

An anonymous pamphlet on this Safavid embassy published in Paris one year later makes no mention of a large shipment of silk. But it itemizes ʿAbbas's other gifts displayed at court. Precious stones, bezoars (fig. 5.11), and rock turquoise—instead of silk—open this list: "First, three men passed, each holding a porcelain plate, in which were three bezoars; one of them had one the size of an egg; and lots of small papers full of diamonds and rubies." Secondly, there were "9 bags in red leather, full of turquoise stones." The bezoars must have been as rare and valuable as the other precious stones. In 1618, an English merchant noted that the best bezoars were found near the Persian Gulf, and that "the king [Shah ʿAbbas] hath prohibited their sale except unto himself."[72] Other gifts noted in the French account consist of precious textiles, carpets, and animal skins:[73]

Eighteen large pieces of tapestries, to be placed on sitting benches
Twenty camel skins, to be placed on the floor, for sitting
Ten large carpets
Sixteen pieces of gold cloth
Seven gold-woven horse blankets
Twenty-one pieces of velvets of diverse colors
Twenty-five pieces of satins
Thirty-two pieces of taffetas
Twenty-seven turbans lined with gold
Thirty-five regular turbans
One gold-woven carpet
Nine Persian lambskins
Nine tiger skins
Forty-five arches
Forty-five silk boccassins,[74] and
Twelve silk handkerchiefs.

With the treaty of 1612, Ottoman chroniclers note, Shah ʿAbbas agreed to send Constantinople two hundred bales of silk yearly. Although the recorded terms of the treaty make no mention of such tribute, Simon Contarini's report from the same year confirms this. Contarini explained that the shah would send the sultan silk thereafter as tribute in return for keeping Tabriz.[75]

Against these expectations, no silk came during the next few years. "[Even though] Shah ʿAbbas had previously agreed to send one hundred



FIGURE 5.11. Bezoar stone with case and stand. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Gordon S. Haight, 1980 (1980.228.1, .2a, b, .3).

loads of silk and one hundred loads of unequaled goods," wrote Ottoman court historian Naʿīmā, "he did not send any of these within the course of the next two years, exclaiming 'Will I be subjected to extortion?'"[76] The agreement was thus short-lived because of border disputes and the Safavid shah's failure to send the silk-tribute.[77]

In the following years, the warfront reopened despite ʿAbbas's efforts to reverse the Ottoman army's mobilization and advance. Before a lasting agreement could be reached, tens of thousands of soldiers died and numerous messengers and ambassadors were exchanged—some of them imprisoned, or held for months against their will at both courts. In 1618, the Ottoman army arrived dangerously close to Ardabil, threatening to sack the shrine of Shaikh Safi, the center of the Safavid order where its founder was buried, along with previous shahs of the dynasty. ʿAbbas thus had to give in to the demands of the Ottomans and agreed to pay the reduced amount of one hundred bales of silk plus an equal amount of unspecified gifts yearly to the sultan.[78]

These gifts-cum-tributes are represented in Ganizāde Nādirī's *Şehnāme*, an Ottoman illustrated manuscript on the short reign of the current sultan, Osman II (r. 1618–22).[79] A double-page painting displays the embassy as it approaches the Topkapı Palace in September 1619 (fig. 5.12). On the left

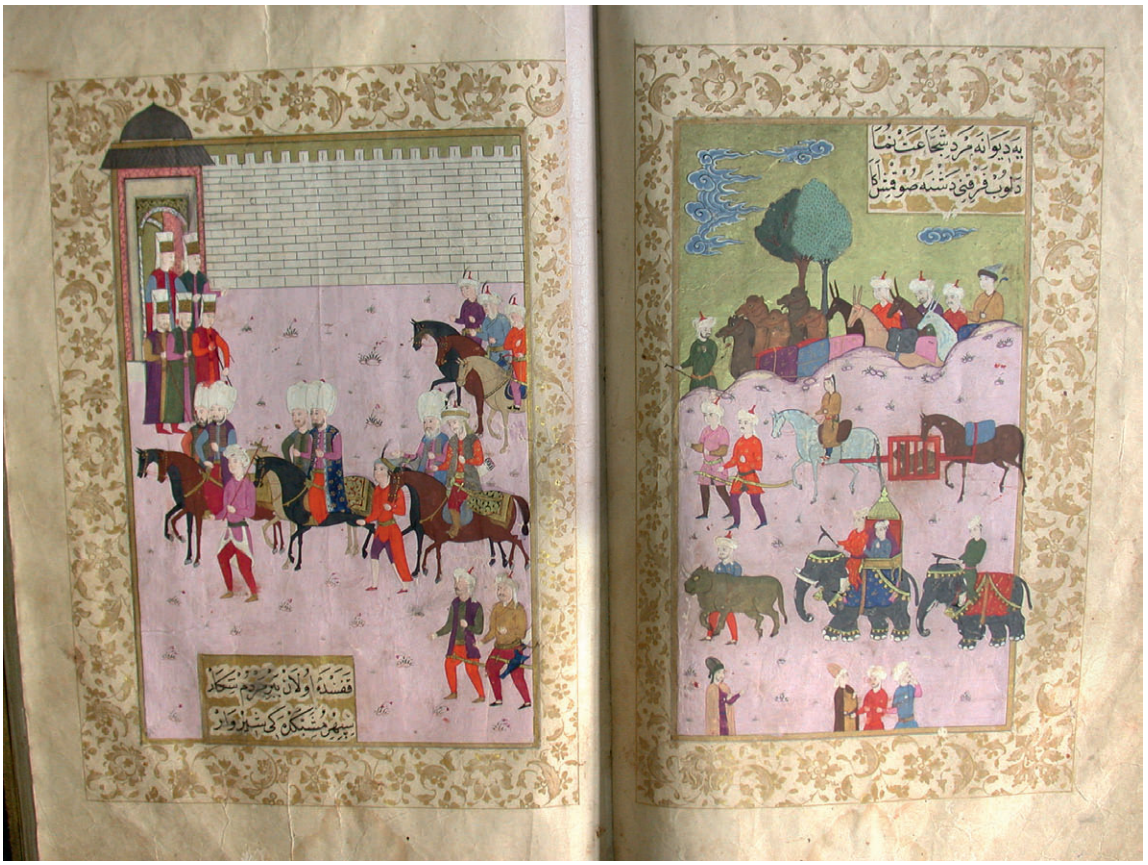


FIGURE 5.12. "Safavid Embassy Approaching the Topkapı Palace in Istanbul with Gifts from Shah ʿAbbas in 1618." From Ganizāde Nādirī, *Şehnāme*. Istanbul, c. 1622. Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper. Topkapı Palace Museum Library, Istanbul, H. 1124, fols. 24b–25a. Photo © Milli Saraylar İdaresi Başkanlığı.

page, the procession is headed by Ottoman officials who accompany the ambassador and his retinue on horseback. The ambassador is recognizable through his flat cylindric turban, with a gold sash wrapped around it, contrasting effectively with the tall bulbous turbans of the Ottomans. Behind, the silk and other presents from Shah ʿAbbas follow, filling up the entire right page. Camels carry the promised silk on their backs at the top. A red cage is visible in the middle ground, propelled between two horses. It probably represents one or more tigers, for in the following year the large size and beauty of two tigers were especially noted in a contemporary account. Elephants are covered with elaborate textiles or carpets and carry ostentatious gold bells and trappings in the Indian style. One of them bears a large gold howdah, or elephant throne, with a person riding in it. A rhinoceros can also be discerned here, whose dark color and especially its single horn suggests that it was an Indian rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros unicornis*), same species of a different gift that inspired Albrecht Dürer's famous print a century before.

Contradicting other Ottoman authors, Nādirī in this *Şehnāme* uses words indicating "gift" (*hedāyā* and *tuḥaf*) to refer to these in his text, rather than "tribute" (*pişkeş*). Assigning these offerings to a single category of exchange proves difficult. Silk certainly should be considered as tribute. But the additional items were defined as gifts in the agreement. They were not itemized; rather, their collective value was dictated in the terms of the treaty. I thus refer to these offerings as gift-tribute, to capture and highlight their in-betweenness.

During the previous century, Safavid gifts were represented and interpreted as tributes many times at the Ottoman court, as we have seen in previous chapters. Although shahs consistently presented large collections of gifts to sultans, nevertheless, the contents of these items were never contractually specified. That changed in the 1610s. The agreement finalized in 1619 stipulated that ʿAbbas should send one hundred bales of silk, plus gifts whose value equaled that of the silk. What were these gifts, and why were they not collectively represented in the *Şehnāme*'s double spread?

The gift-tribute's transfer came to be repeated every year, as agreed. An account written by Tommaso Alberti on how it arrived next time, in November 1620, details all of them and it can thus be taken as representative. The silk, Alberti wrote, was carried on the backs of fifty camels. It was accompanied by rare animals, precious gems, a robe, a sword, and many items of porcelain and carpets:[80]

> Four great elephants decorated with superb and rich carpets, with a canopy on their backs
> Two donkey-sized tigers, most beautiful
> A rhinoceros, with a body as large as an ox, but with short legs, without any fur, of the color of the buffalo, his mustache similar to an ox, but much longer; on his nose he has a bone, or a horn in the shape of a loaf of sugar-bread, small ears without horns, a short tail
> A box filled with valuable jewels
> A very beautiful richly draped robe lined with sable
> A damascene steel sword inlaid all over with precious stones
> Fifty camels loaded with silk
> Twenty-five camels laden with porcelain
> Twenty-five camels laden with very beautiful carpets
> A very beautiful horse equipped with a saddle and bridle, all richly and superbly jeweled.

Nādirī's *Şehnāme* underscores many times that ʿAbbas had sent precisely one hundred bales of silk in 1619, whose excellence it lauds. The painting's display of only animals alongside the silk shows that they were the most memorable items in ʿAbbas's gift-tribute. In Katip Çelebi's chronicle too, all

of these are recorded as: "One hundred bales of silk and four elephants and one rhinoceros and some other gifts."[81] Nādirī's *Şehnāme* itself describes the elephants and the rhinoceros as marvelous beings, emphasizing the wonder that these gifts incited in Istanbul, and collectively describes them as "curious presents."[82]

This emphasis on the singularity of the Safavid gift-tribute—with the predetermined amount of silk and rare animals—signposts a metamorphosis within Ottoman-Safavid gift exchange in content and context, and in their presentation and reception. At the turn of the seventeenth century, this moment of transformation—from diplomatic gifts into tributes—captures how the Ottoman and Safavid Empires engaged with the current global political and economic environment.

Shah ʿAbbas's growing military power and pompous pronouncement of his Twelver Shiʿi identity, as we have seen, brought about a renegotiation of Ottoman-Safavid disagreements and hostilities at military, political, and religious levels. As the new century opened, each empire's powers equally came to be tested against each other within a globally linked economy. In consequence, the objects that traveled between the Ottoman and Safavid courts came to be defined as much by long-distance commerce as tradition and the personal ambitions of their givers and receivers.

Playing on the real and potential functions of objects and materials in different forms of circulation, ʿAbbas had a deliberate plan to distribute his superior silk into an international network driven by diplomacy and commerce. ʿAbbas's gifts to Europe in search of trading and military partners fluctuated between essential social gestures and things with a negotiable price, between gifts and commodities.[83] Ultimately, the shah failed in his attempt to fully turn Safavid gifts into lucrative commodities by securing lasting alliances against the Ottomans. Yet his inventive reformulation of power and kingship that involved moving valuable materials and distinct Safavid objects across borders had an unintended consequence that irreversibly changed Ottoman attitudes toward victory and domination.

Silk—the chief Safavid commodity—came to be folded into the negotiations in the first decades of the seventeenth century, weighing for the first time as much as territorial and ideological clashes. Key issues of dispute between the two courts, since the beginning of the sixteenth century, involved control of lands and religious practice. Peace treaties starting in 1555, as a result, detailed agreements on the elimination of unorthodox rituals, and land distribution, use, and travel. While all of these had economic implications, trade was mainly kept active between the two domains. Diplomatic gifts between the two courts formed a parallel but separate stream of communication, as previous chapters have shown. For the first time, significantly, the peace of 1618 included additionally an item specifying that loads of silk and other gifts had to be sent to keep the peace.

Showcasing this transformation, Safavid gifts appear remarkably different in Nādirī's *Şehnāme* from their representations in earlier royal illustrated manuscripts, discussed above. Earlier paintings of this genre showed gifts in a diplomatic context, displayed before the sultan at his palace inside the restricted Chamber of Petitions. In that series of paintings, as time passed, gifts progressively became more plentiful and visually itemized with increasing detail. Safavid gifts were shown in them as being presented by a subservient ambassador, and those objects were received as icons of the shah's willing obedience. Earlier images furthermore communicated the ceremonial presentation of Safavid gifts as significant sources of the Ottoman sultan's power. The image in this *Şehnāme* illustrates instead ʿAbbas's gift-tribute being transported to the Topkapı Palace, showing the silk and the animals in motion, as freight (fig. 5.12). Highlighting thus their transfer rather than their courtly reception, this painting shifts the emphasis from ceremonial display to commercial transaction. This new image as such communicates that ʿAbbas's offering was tribute, whose amount was negotiated previously, and its routine schedule of shipment was predetermined.

But in fact only the silk was named as a tribute in the agreement. Other things to be sent were specified as gifts. The painting displays most prominently the rare animals. A tiger, a rhinoceros, and two elephants follow the silk carried by camels. By aligning them together, the image thus associates the rare animals with the silk, and presents all of these as tribute. Meanwhile, other gifts do not take part in the scene. Small, delicate, and personal gifts—porcelain, carpets, sable robe, sword, and the box full of jewels—are not visible. Compared to the animals and the silk, these hold more private and ceremonial functions, for they would be presented by the ambassador to the sultan at the Ottoman palace, in the restricted vicinity of the sultan. They would then be exhibited and used in that same context. Collectively summarized in most textual accounts simply as "gifts," they are eclipsed in the painting by those large, awe-inspiring, and "new" gifts from ʿAbbas, because this was the first time large, rare animals were sent as gifts from a Safavid shah to the Ottoman court. The overlooked gifts instead include the types of objects that were routinely sent throughout the sixteenth century.

The painting in Nādirī's *Şehnāme* thus marks a major change of attitude toward Safavid gifts on the Ottoman side. This representation of the shah's offering highlights especially the silk as tribute. By contrast with previous images of Safavid gifts displayed before the sultan, it favors motion instead of stasis and tradition. Displaying things sent out of obligation instead of dutiful submission, it reveals how ʿAbbas's disobedient gifts from 1599 came to be corrected. Folding ʿAbbas's gifts into his tribute, it also discloses a shift in the offering's reception. What inspired awe, appreciation, and approval was no longer objects associated with sophisticated, intellectual, and kingly activities. Spectacular animals took their place.

But this selective emphasis was curated by ʿAbbas himself. Constrained to send the sultan silk—the same material he had set out to deny the Ottoman economy—the shah was nevertheless free to select the gifts he was also obliged to dispatch every year. ʿAbbas chose not to include objects that communicated cultural refinement and historical distinction, in the same manner as he and other shahs had done before 1599. The absence in his selection of objects such as a rare Qurʾan, a unique illustrated manuscript, or a jeweled palace-tent is significant. ʿAbbas's gifts to the sultan thus conveyed a new mode of competition that approached and defined value differently. They were diamonds, rubies, turquoise and bezoar stones, fur, velvets, satins, porcelain, and rare animals—natural materials, manufactured objects, and wonderous beasts that were widely marketable and sought after everywhere. Some of them originated in Iran, but many others came from elsewhere. If ʿAbbas envisioned a globally connected network, Iran formed its central commercial and diplomatic node. The shah's gifts mapped out this vision by making visible what he acquired through ambassadors and merchants at his disposal. ʿAbbas's gifts thus displayed his reach and influence, for they came from within his larger network.

A New Era of World Making

In 1610, during a campaign on Tabriz—a prelude to the war that started in 1612—Ottoman grand vizier Murad Pasha sent a letter to Shah ʿAbbas explaining that the sole motivation behind his advance toward the border was to negotiate peace. At this point, Murad had stopped and kept with him a Safavid ambassador who was already on his way to Constantinople. If the shah sincerely wished for peace, Murad wrote, "it was not conducive to friendly relations to send an ambassador without providing him with suitable gifts." In his response, ʿAbbas explained that he was willing to conclude peace if the sultan agrees to renew the Peace of Amasya, signed between Sultan Süleyman and Shah Tahmasp in 1555. With regard to Murad's other request, ʿAbbas wrote:

> As for your remarks about gifts, since no truce has yet been agreed upon, it is not appropriate to send gifts while fighting is still going on. However, since you think it advisable for me to do so, and since I do not want to wreck your efforts for peace at the very outset, I am sending you forthwith a perfumed pomander of gray ambergris weighing one thousand eight hundred *meṣqāls*, in a filigree bowl cunningly fashioned by Indian goldsmiths from eight *man* of red gold, a gift to me from the Mogul Emperor Salīm. It is not a usual gift, for it is rare to find a piece of raw, unrefined gray ambergris of such a size; such a piece will not be found in the treasuries of kings and princes. I send it now to the Ottoman Sultan so that

my letter may not be devoid of content. If I perceive any hint of amity and concord on the part of the Ottoman Sultan, and if genuine negotiations for peace are entered into, from that time onward my ambassadors shall not set out emptyhanded.[84]

This might have been the first occasion in which ʿAbbas made an offering to the Ottoman sultan Ahmed following his provocative keys to the previous sultan in 1599. At a time of heightening military tension, the shah declared his gift to convey a sincere wish for peace. ʿAbbas nevertheless had to be nudged by the grand vizier. The Safavid ambassador on route, therefore,



FIGURE 5.13. Youth holding a candle and an incense burner. Iran, c. 1640. Opaque watercolor and gold on paper. Collection of the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University. Acquired through the George and Mary Rockwell Fund; 2002.009.001. Image courtesy of the Johnson Museum.

either did not have any gifts, or Murad Pasha estimated what he was carrying to be lacking in worth.

The gift was unusual, as ʿAbbas stressed in his message. More than a new type of object among Safavid gifts to the Ottoman court, its solitude was peculiar and perhaps would be unexpected. ʿAbbas thus defended his choice. He explained that this gift contained a remarkably large piece of ambergris presented in a massive gold openwork round fumigatory object, or container. Ambergris was a waxy substance formed in the digestive system of the sperm whale, and it would often be mixed with other fragrant materials and burned as incense in a range of private and public contexts, including the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal courts (fig. 5.13). The association of pleasing fragrances with cleanliness and purity, and their paradisiacal and prophetic connotations in the Islamic tradition rendered their use especially popular among early modern Muslim rulers.

In her study of Ottoman fumigatory practices and their context and meaning, Nina (Ergin) Macaraig aptly wrote: "In view of the ingredients in the fumigatory mixtures intended for the sultan personally—ambergris, musk, agallochum, rosewater and so on—the olfactory persona of the ruler was shaped by the fragrances favored by the Prophet Muhammad. . . . Hence, the relation between the fragrance of the ruler and the fragrance of the divine was an extremely close one, offering a sensory cue about the sultan's status as divinely appointed caliph (successor to the Prophet)."[85] Although incense burners and containers made of precious materials for royal use have largely disappeared, a few examples remain, and other records attest to their function, importance, and widespread use. An openwork egg-shaped gold container decorated all over with small emeralds and rubies at the Topkapı Museum Treasury displays what ʿAbbas's gift might have looked like (fig. 5.14).[86] Such delicately worked containers and incense burners as they appear in manuscript paintings indeed conjure up a shared culture of fragrance across Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal courts, the royal contexts that ʿAbbas's gift weaved together.

In his message, ʿAbbas highlighted especially the gifts' composite rarity: the raw ambergris was enormous in size, and its vessel was extraordinary, both because of the sheer weight of its precious substance—gold—and because it displayed the spectacular craft of Indian goldsmiths. The gift thus charted the reach of ʿAbbas's power to the east in two distinct ways. The widely desired fragrant raw material coming from around the Indian Ocean showed what the resources at ʿAbbas's disposal could buy. The heavy piece of gold masterfully fashioned by artists at the court of the Mughal emperor Jahangir meanwhile displayed what the shah was able to obtain as a gift, not simply because he had amassed an incredible wealth but rather because he was a mighty ruler. ʿAbbas pompously announced its double-sided feat to the sultan when he wrote: "Such a piece will not be found in the treasuries



FIGURE 5.14. Gold case encrusted with emeralds and rubies. Topkapı Palace Museum, Istanbul (2/3669). Photo © Milli Saraylar İdaresi Başkanlığı.

of kings and princes." The shah's gift thus tapered to a single composite object that shrewdly combined illustrious royal associations with rare material substance.

ʿAbbas's concept of royalty and superior kingship encompassed also the age-old ideal of making meaningful conquests, especially into non-Muslim lands. Just as the Ottoman-Safavid warfront was reopening amidst failed negotiations in 1615, ʿAbbas went on a successful campaign in Georgia, after which he incorporated parts of the Caucasus into Safavid territory, ordered many churches to be converted into mosques, and funneled into his new military and administrative system a significant number of Georgian slaves. It was then, the Safavid court historian Iskandar Munshi tells us, that the treasury of the king of Kakheti, and of the former Safavid vassal Tahmuras Khan,



FIGURE 5.15. Bishop mitre. Alaverdi, Kakheti, seventeenth century. Gold, precious stones. Sh. Amiranashvili Art Museum, Georgian National Museum. Photo: Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz–Max-Planck-Institut. Photographer: Dror Maayan.

was found. The booty ʿAbbas's forces acquired included "a crown, encrusted with pearls and rubies, which was worn by the priest in charge of the church at Alaverdi at services on holy days and major Christian festivals, and was regarded by the congregation as a sacred relic. Expert jewelers valued it at five hundred royal Iraqi *tomān*."[87] It is very difficult to know what this distinguished crown might have looked like. There is a jeweled gold ecclesiastical headdress, made in Isfahan according to Georgian sources, and donated to the Alaverdi Church by Queen Elene Diasamidze in 1683 (fig. 5.15). It leaves us wondering whether its design was based on earlier models, in particu-

lar the crown that ʿAbbas took.[88] Upon his return to Iran, Iskandar Munshi notes that ʿAbbas promptly dispatched to the Ottoman court an embassy carrying some of his spoils in Georgia, among them the jeweled crown.[89]

Like the Mughal jeweled ambergris container, the Georgian crown carried associations that tied it to a foreign land and permanently placed it in a royal context other than the Safavid court. But the notable past and artistic virtuosity held by these unique gifts operated in a different "regime of value" in the early seventeenth century. Unlike an offering like the *Shahnama of Shah Tahmasp*, each gift's worth in a recognizable currency was additionally spelled out—by ʿAbbas himself and Iskandar Munshi, as noted above. This was no longer a time when kingly objects were too precious to have a price tag. Yet ʿAbbas's gifts manifested complex value. They were rare and hard-to-reach, beautiful, and exotic. They were intimately tied to the shah, by displaying ʿAbbas's diplomatic, military, and commercial achievements, by tying them to specific places and cultural contexts. But they were also exchangeable.

With the conclusion of a peace that obligated ʿAbbas to send the sultan silk in regular, predetermined amounts, the Ottomans showed how they were willing to participate in a form of exchange that intersected largesse and transaction, diplomacy and commerce. The fascination that the elephants and rhinoceros exuded in Constantinople in 1619 shows how much ʿAbbas's foreign gifts satisfied. Were the Ottomans informed of their Indian origin? That they had in fact come from the Mughal court? The amazing animals had recently arrived in Iran as gifts from the Mughal emperor Jahangir with the famous embassy led by Khan ʿAlam (fig. 5.16).[90] On many occasions, ʿAbbas selectively redistributed the rare things he acquired from distant lands. When the Mughal ambassador left the shah's court the same year in 1619, among the gifts he carried from ʿAbbas to Jahangir were a falcon (*shunqār-i ablag*) gifted from Russia, and "jewelry; precious stuffs from Turkey, Europe, Russia, and Iran; rare items from many places; and countless numbers of Arabian horses."[91]

Many of ʿAbbas's gifts indeed had foreign origins, but only very few of them had extraordinary economic value and distinct histories. During the 1610s and 1620s, as we have seen, Safavid gifts comprised jewels like diamonds and rubies; precious stones and raw materials like bezoars and ambergris; and porcelain, fur, carpets, and precious textiles. By contrast with the exceptional gem-covered ambergris or the ancient crown, they were thus mostly coveted commodities that held conspicuous consumption higher than tradition and cultural refinement.[92]

Categorically, they were not new. Many of them frequently formed part of the Safavid gift to the Ottoman sultan during the sixteenth century, especially in its later decades. Textual sources in those earlier times listed these gifts below more prized items such as copies of the Qurʾan and illustrated

manuscripts. Surviving images revealed their lesser importance by displaying them behind the more significant pieces, or by eliminating them altogether. Previously appearing thus as supporting actors, in the early decades of the seventeenth century, they took center stage.

This pattern prevailed over Shah ʿAbbas's gifts at the end of 1627. The shah's last offering to the sultan before his death were recorded in an Ot-



FIGURE 5.16. "Shah ʿAbbas Receiving Mughal Ambassador Khan ʿAlam." India, c. 1800 copy of original by Bishn Das. Opaque watercolor and gold on paper. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London (IS.219-1951).

toman protocol register with the monetary value of each item in Ottoman *akçe*s:[93]

Three lumps of ambergris [weighs] 120 misqal, value 24,700
Two pieces of bezoar stones [weighs] 14 misqal, value 2,500
Thirty pieces of gilded turban-cloths, value 9,600
Four lumps made from of a fragrant aromatic herb (*tefārīḳ*), 42 pieces, value 5,460
Two gilt-metal-wrapped silk bedspreads (*yorgan-ı serāser*), value 10,400
Two gold-embroidered bedspreads (*yorgan-ı zerdūz*), value 14,500
Two silk prayer rugs, value 3,600
Eight garment-length gilt-metal-wrapped silks (*serāser-i alʿā, ṭonluḳ*), value 56,000
Two silk carpets, value 24,000
Musk [of weights in dirham], 134, value 10,680

By this time, Shah ʿAbbas had attacked Iraq—under Ottoman control, taking hold of Baghdad, Najaf, and Karbala in 1624, a few months after Sultan Murad IV (r. 1623–40) took the throne at the age of eleven. This invasion started a new period of war. The Safavids were fought once again as heretics for the next fifteen years, at the end of which Murad took back Baghdad and the last peace treaty between the two courts was signed.[94]

Counteracting a tradition that stretched over the previous century, meanwhile, the sultan came to return the shah's gifts. The Ottomans uncharacteristically began to reciprocate in kind, with matching objects. In 1623, just before the outbreak of war, a request was sent from the court master of horses (*miraḥūr-i evvel*) to Sultan Mustafa I (r. 1617–18, 1622–23) for permission to release two horses—one chestnut and one bay-colored—to be dispatched as gifts to the Safavid shah.[95] The document lists many additional items of silver and gold sets of equipment and armor. These include a jewel-encrusted headpiece, trappings, stirrups, breast and leg bands and chains, gold- and silver-embroidered saddle covers, a jeweled mace, a sword, and velvet and silk blankets. Two items specify their place of production: one horse blanket was of Bursa velvet (*yapūḳ ʿan ḳaṭifeʾ-i Burusa*), and another one was indicated as Istanbul gilt-metal-wrapped silk (*yapūḳ ʿan serāser-i Istanbul*)—two kinds of textiles of the highest quality produced in the Ottoman realm. A near contemporary portrait of Sultan Osman II on horseback details such horse equipment and armor, in glittering gold, encrusted with colorful gems (fig. 5.17). Few examples of these items have survived from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (fig. 5.18), and the sizeable collection of Ottoman horse equipment at the Topkapı Palace and elsewhere await comprehensive systematic study.

Sultan Mustafa's horse-gifts to the shah carried high monetary value,



FIGURE 5.17. (*above*) "Sultan Osman II on Horseback." Attributed to Ahmed Nakşi. Istanbul, c. 1620. Opaque watercolor and gold on paper. Topkapı Palace Museum Library, Istanbul, H. 2169, 13a. Photo © Milli Saraylar İdaresi Başkanlığı.



FIGURE 5.18. (*right*) Ceremonial horse headgear. Turkey, seventeenth century. Leather, linen, gold metal threads, silver, gold, bronze, nephrite, with turquoise stones and rubies. The National Museum in Krakow / The Princes Czartoryski Museum (MNK XIV-514). Laboratory Stock National Museum in Krakow.

notably similar to ʿAbbas's gifts to the Ottoman court in the 1610s and '20s. Opulent but not too unusual or rare, each item would be easily exchangeable within the Safavid court, or could be regifted to other monarchs. Indeed, as we have seen, just as ʿAbbas redirected Mughal gifts to the Ottoman court, he similarly redistributed Ottoman gifts to the Mughal court and elsewhere as gifts. When redistributed by ʿAbbas, the sumptuous materials of the sultan's gifts—gold, silver, and jewels—and the visual and tactile cues that tied them to an Ottoman place of production would take on new associations. As Safavid gifts, they would project ʿAbbas's novel concept of kingly power that displayed his geographic expanse, the commercial and diplomatic bonds he had established far and wide.

Shah ʿAbbas thus reformulated the entire tradition and language of diplomatic conversation between the Ottoman and Safavid courts in three stages: from his earlier refined collections of gifts; to his scandalous sets of twelve keys; to his gift-tributes that included silk by design, accompanied by a range of foreign and domestic objects, animals, and rarities that charted his economic and political ambitions.

Those gifts are now lost. Many of them have since moved on. They were regifted, repurposed, melted down, taken, or stolen, they died, or otherwise they are still in Istanbul or elsewhere, but unlabeled; thus, their individual histories remain unknowable. What we are left with is a handful of objects at the Topkapı Palace Museum on display inside the Treasury Section (hazine dairesi) today, which represent the entire Ottoman-Safavid dialogue: the dazzling objects that Sultan Selim I is said to have taken from Shah Ismaʿil's palace in Tabriz after the war they fought in 1514. In the epilogue, we weigh the blinding presence of what remains against the absence of all of the countless gifts that journeyed between shahs and sultans for more than a century. Those bygone gifts should provoke art historians, curators, and everyone else to ponder how we select our objects of study, and how we reconstruct and tell our stories about the past.

Epilogue

> Perhaps the immobility of the things that surround us is forced upon them by our conviction that they are themselves, and not anything else, and by the immobility of our conceptions of them.
>
> MARCEL PROUST, *In Search of Lost Time*

Stories of countless gifts fill the pages of this book. Their remains, however, are disproportionately little. My journey into the world of gifts exchanged between Ottoman and Safavid courts began one summer in Venice, when I came across a dispatch on Shah Tahmasp's embassy to Sultan Selim II in 1568—the subject of the second chapter above. The long list of gifts attached to the report was captivating (fig. 2.15). Some of its items were categorically recognizable: it began, after all, with an early, rare copy of the Qurʾan, and a manuscript that included many paintings. That illustrated manuscript was none other than the famed copy of Tahmasp's own *Shahnama* (Book of kings). Other items were perplexing. Immediately below the books, the dispatch mentioned "three silver cases full of mumia made as an electuary" and "nine bags filled with the feathers of a black bird called *cighé* [*jīqa* or *jigha*] in Persian." What were these exactly? What did they look like? How were they used? And if they were so highly valued, why did they not make an appearance more frequently in studies beyond obscure publications and in public collections of Islamic art? One aim of this book is to document and highlight the richness displayed in gifts that on many occasions, as we have seen, defy disciplinary categorizations and challenge

our concepts of value and worth and, by extension, our notions of what art is and what merits study.

Manuscripts, carpets, tents, and porcelain plates rather than antidotes, feathers, and falcons were most familiar to me as a graduate student at that time. Immediately upon beginning research, I realized however that nearly all of them had disappeared, with the notable exception of the *Shahnama of Shah Tahmasp*, widely considered among Islamic art historians to be one of the most spectacular objects ever produced. No longer at the Topkapı Palace, that book is now dispersed, which makes it an object impossible to study.

This physical absence of the gifts opposed art historical methods I knew. Partaking of recent studies that confront similar challenges, the many lists and accounts examined in this book defend a truly broad concept of art and its relationship to politics even though they are physically unrecoverable, and unseeable as individual things and as collections as they were presented from one king to the other.

Distinct rhythms of gifts emerged through a composite approach of looking closely and broadly into individual gifts and patterns through time. In some cases, gifts allowed a study of agency and reception. Single gifts—inalienable and priceless like Tahmasp's *Shahnama*, or scandalous like Ismaʿil's opium-filled casket and ʿAbbas's twelve keys—performed significant interventions that changed the course of history. In other cases, lost gifts became more visible in seemingly banal lists when I weighed them in a temporal projection against what accompanied them and their predecessors and successors. Materiality encompasses, according to Fabio Barry, "the ideas that materials carry with them, the substances they represent, and the sensations they provoke."[1] Following this definition, gifts like rare ambergris and Indian elephants illuminated old questions on artistic patronage and economic history in new ways.

Balanced exchanges amidst scandal, as we have seen in chapter 1, characterized Ottoman-Safavid relations at the turn of the sixteenth century. It was then interrupted by provocations in which gifts themselves became the scandal. The ensuing war in 1514 was so potent that comparable return gifts were not sent back to Safavid kings in its aftermath for a century. We have found, then, in that long period a distinct kind of harmony and solidarity in asymmetrical exchanges. As Safavid gifts became increasingly more lavish and plentiful, they engaged nevertheless in subtle competition. Each new group of gifts referred back to the immediate past, citing what was dispatched before and signaling what was to come. But as they increased in number and extravagance, their meaning nevertheless remained open to interpretation. This harmony changed shape only when the ambiguity of subtle competition dissolved into open defiance and confrontation. At the turn of the seventeenth century, the political and religious provocation carried

by Shah ʿAbbas's seemingly submissive gifts was too hard to dismiss for the sultan, who rejected and returned them. With renewed military struggles between the two courts, the defiant Safavid gifts overlapped nevertheless with a new global era in which commerce and imperial politics distinctly coincided, transforming Safavid gifts into tributes.

What other lessons can we derive from the case of the Ottoman-Safavid cultural exchange? What theoretical contributions could it potentially make? The long period of asymmetry that governed Ottoman-Safavid gift exchange stands in conflict with anthropologist Marcel Mauss's seminal formulation of gift giving in his *Essai sur le don* (1925), a work that has been illuminating for generations of anthropologists and others who have studied any aspect of gift exchange. At the heart of Mauss's theory is that while gifts may appear spontaneous and disinterested, they are in reality binding. Mauss places gifts within cyclical series of exchanges that bound givers and receivers to give, receive, and return: "exchanges and contracts take the form of presents; in theory these are voluntary, in reality they are given and reciprocated obligatorily."[2] Such a concept of reciprocal exchanges of goods and services (*prestations totales*) highlights bonds formed between the giving and receiving parties, and fall within the interconnected social domains of politics, law, and economics. Acting as an unwritten social contract, it binds the exchangers to enter into a circular relationship that requires them to give, receive, and return gifts. The giving and receiving of gifts, in this view, appear as an arena of rivalry and competition rather than amity and harmony.

Competition indeed served as a major force that drove Ottoman-Safavid exchanges, as I have argued. But Safavid shahs and Ottoman sultans, as presenters and receivers, did not amplify gifts in cycles of give-and-take, with gifts and countergifts. Maussian reciprocity was thus not a fundamental characteristic of these exchanges. Ottoman-Safavid relations followed instead a logic of unrequited exchange. This became apparent when we have examined the social context. As an art historian, moreover, I have also examined the historical and material contexts of exchanges.[3]

This composite approach has revealed that competition propelled parallel and intersecting patterns of giving and receiving. Safavid shahs kept expanding the range and number of gifts they presented to Ottoman sultans during the course of the sixteenth century. Giving more became the basis for competition. More was more. But what was to be gained from all of that loss? Philosopher Georges Bataille has associated power with loss and waste in his analysis of the potlach tradition of the Pacific northwest coast. Taking up what Mauss had only referred to as "the pleasure of generous artistic spending" (*le plaisir de la dépense artistique généreuse*), Bataille has identified giving rather than gaining as the more significant aspect of gift exchange in *La Part maudite* (1949): "The problem posed is that of the expenditure of the surplus. We need to give away, lose or destroy. But the gift would be sense-

less (and so we would never decide to give) if it did not take on the meaning of an acquisition. Hence *giving* must become *acquiring a power*."[4] It was thus through a spectacle of giving that Safavid gifts relayed power for the shah. Giving more became as such the means of competition for that long period in the sixteenth century.

In response, the Ottomans appeared to repudiate this logic of competition. Ottomans accepted Safavid gifts as if they were routine gifts from other foreign powers or tributes from their vassals. However, these other kinds of offerings lacked such a competitive aspect of increasing expansion. Furthermore, since Safavid gifts were not bound by contractual obligation, the Ottomans came to judge them on every new occasion with reference to previous gifts. Memories of past gifts in rising amounts were crucial for how new gifts were received. Thus, receiving more and not giving anything comparable in return became the Ottoman standard of competition. From the Ottoman perspective, that signaled power. The Ottomans were for this reason alarmed, as we have seen, when this system was interrupted, when the gifts diminished, or when they diminished in quality even as they were more copious.

This study has emphasized that modes of giving and receiving staged in formal public ceremonies are illuminated by the gifts themselves, even as most of them may be missing and unrecoverable. Recent studies inspired by Alfred Gell's *Art and Agency* have demonstrated that art objects carried significant agency, in addition to, independent of, and sometimes even contradicting other historical sources. I have considered the agency of a surviving gift in the case of the *Shahnama of Shah Tahmasp*. My other cases did not allow looking closely into a single gift as noteworthy and uniquely meaningful as that manuscript. In those other cases, flows of gifts through time displayed important relations as well as historical continuities and breaks. Following anthropologist Tim Ingold's view on agency, some gifts therefore revealed meaning through a "processual and relational" reading, rather than through direct observation of singular objects.[5] If agency is not always a force innate to objects, then we need to differentiate between different kinds of gifts. The exchange of gifts between the Ottoman and Safavid courts demonstrates therefore that distinct and indistinct gifts carry different types of agencies that historical and art historical approaches can unfold. Distinct gifts like the Qurʾan attributed to Imam ʿAli may illuminate its exchange context. By contrast, an entry of a single tent or a few carpets in a treasury record may appear empty of significance and historical specificity. But when read in relation to other records through time, and in relation to how gifts are represented in visual records, they acquired meaning.

Tellingly, therefore, the Ottoman-Safavid dialogue demonstrates the limits of contexts in which gift exchanges are indeed reciprocal. Competition, rivalry, and especially ambiguity acted as key driving forces in pre-

sentations and receptions of gifts in this dialogue. As we have seen, power was located in shifting and sometimes contrasting ways by the exchangers. It was only in moments when that ambiguity was disrupted that gifts were rejected. Shah ʿAbbas's twelve keys unambiguously declared the shah's rising military power. They also were different from his previous gifts. In fact, they were unlike any set of gifts dispatched by any Safavid shah to an Ottoman sultan in living memory. For that, they were unacceptable and were returned to ʿAbbas's ambassador. A few decades later, when military and political rivalry between the two courts faded and transformed into indirect competition, Ottoman sultans began to dispatch what subsequently became routine gifts to Safavid shahs. In turn, Safavid gifts also came to be regularized, lacking the increasing aspect of the sixteenth century.

When I first arrived at the Topkapı Palace Museum in Istanbul with my research permission secured months in advance, I was naively excited about all the gifts I was going to find there. In every trip, I toured the museum's Treasury Section (hazine dairesi) and had many conversations with its curator, who assured me that there are no gifts from the Safavids in the collection besides what is on display. Thus, in that dimly lit space (fig. 6.1), for the



FIGURE 6.1. Interior view of the imperial treasury (hazine dairesi) at the Topkapı Palace Museum, Istanbul, between 2001 and 2021. Photo by Mustafa Cambaz. With the kind permission of Alpaslan Cambaz.



FIGURE 6.2. Detail of the vitrine displaying a belt, an armband, and a pot associated with Shah Ismaʿil (the belt and the pot bear Ismaʿil's name) at the imperial treasury (hazine dairesi) of the Topkapı Palace Museum, Istanbul, between 2001 and 2021. Photo by Mustafa Cambaz. With the kind permission of Alpaslan Cambaz.

general public, a few iconic objects that bear the name of Shah Ismaʿil stand for the entire Ottoman-Safavid exchange in any form: a jeweled belt, an armband, and a nephrite jug inlaid with gold arabesques (fig. 6.2).[6]

In a large niche displayed together, those objects are known widely to have arrived in Istanbul in 1514, captured by Sultan Selim I at Shah Ismaʿil's palace in Tabriz after their famous battle at Chaldiran. Those objects might indeed have entered the treasury as gifts from Ismaʿil, for as we have seen, they appear as object types, without any identifying description, in numerous records. But the larger point of this book is to show how we treat what has remained and what has been lost as we study the past.

If it were possible to exhibit all of the gifts the Ottoman and Safavid rulers exchanged in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, they would fill up the entire palace. But they have since vanished, or were repurposed, regifted, or stolen, and are otherwise unidentifiable wherever they might be in the world. In an academic field in which never-before-studied subjects are so numerous that selecting one and claiming territorial authority over it until the next generation seem most sensible, I hope that this book will present a few different intriguing puzzles. Seeing long-gone gifts as they continue to exist in hard-to-find written records in multiple languages, following their trajectories, debating their forms, and interpreting the ideas they carried and the impressions they provoked are challenges to be taken up by more books than one.

Appendix 1

Favors Presented to Head Chancellor Ahmed Beg, Ambassador of Shaikh Ismaʿil, on July 25, 1505

Atatürk Kitaplığı Muallim Cevdet O. 71, 138; Gök, "İnamat Defteri," 385–86.

Teşrīf-i Aḥmed Beg ser-pervāneciyān, ḳāṣıd-ı İsmaʿīl Şeyḫ, mīr-i vilāyet-i ʿAcem. Fī ʿışrīn-i Ṣafer sene 911:
Naḳdiye, 40000:
ʿUlūfe, 5000. Teşrīf, 35000.
Çuḳa-i Egin an ḳadīfe-i müẕehheb-i benek-i ḳırmızı-i Firengī, sevb.
Cāme-i mirāḫūrī an ḳadīfe-i ḳırmızı-i Firengī-i sāde, sevb.
Maşraba-i memzūc, 4.
Tepsi an nuḳra 4.
Aḳdāḫ:
Deveṭabanı, 4. Lārī, 6.
Ḳadīfe-i müẕehheb-i benek-i Burusa, 2.
Ḳadīfe-i alaca-i Burusa, 2.
Ḳadīfe-i rişte-i Burusa, 2.
Kemhā-i ḳırmızı-i Amasiye, 2.
Pūrī, 10.
Post-ı semūr, taḫtacıyān.
ʿĀdet-i ḫazīnedārī, 8430.
ʿĀdet-i çavūşī, 1160.

Note on the appendices: these are six documents I have selected to transcribe in full in their original languages. They are not translated into English because of the difficulty of interpreting and translating many of the terms and descriptions given in these records.

Be-cihet-i merdümān-i ilçi:

Neferān:

Nakdiye, fī 3000 (6000).

Cāme-i çatma-i Burusa, sevbān.

Nefer: Cāme-i benek-i Burusa, sevb.

Neferān: Cāme-i münaḳḳaş-ı Burusa, sevbān.

3 Nefer: Cāme-i mirāhūrī-i kemhā, 3 sevb.

İnʿām be-parsciyān bā-ḳāṣıd-ı Şeyḫ İsmaʿīl behem āmedend fī 24 minh fī 1000, 4 nefer 4000.

Appendix 2

Remittance in Installments to Shaikh Ismaʿil Carried by Hasan Beg on November 11 and 30, 1510

Remittance to Shaikh Ismaʿil on November 11, 1510

Atatürk Kitaplığı Muallim Cevdet O. 71, 404; Gök, "İnamat Defteri," 1163–66.

İrsāliye be-Şeyḫ İsmaʿīl, mīr-i vilāyet-i ʿAcem be-naḳl-i Ḥasan Beg zaʿim, fī tāsiʿ-i Şaʿbān sene 916:

Ḳadīfe-i müẕehheb-i çatma-i Firengī-i mütenevviʿa be-zirāʿ-i Burusa, fī 7 [zirāʿ] 5 ḳadd:

Ḳırmızı-i aʿlā, ḳadd.
Ḳırmızı-i vasaṭ, ḳadd.
Sürmāī, ḳadd.
Benefş, ḳadd.
Aʿlā, ḳadd.

Ḳadīfe-i ḳırmızı-i dühavī-i Firengī-i sāde be- zirāʿ-i Burusa, fī 7 [zirāʿ] ḳaddān:

Ḳırmızı, ḳadd.
Sāde, ḳadd.

Aṭlas-ı Firengī-i mütenevviʿa be-zirāʿ-i Burusa, fī 7 [zirāʿ] 5 ḳadd:

Çatma, ḳaddān.
Benek, ḳaddān.
Ḳırmızı-i sāde, ḳadd.

Kemhā-i Firengī-sāde-i mütenevviʿa be-zirāʿ-i Burusa, fī 7 [zirāʿ] 5 ḳadd:

Ḳırmızı, ḳaddān.
Līmonī, ḳaddān.

Asmānī, ḳadd.
Ḳadīfe-i müzehheb-i Burusa:
Çatma, 4.
Benek, 4.
Ḳadīfe-i alaca-i Burusa, 4.
Kemhā-i kefterī-i Burusa, 2.
Kemān, 2 ḳabẓa.

Remittance to Shaikh Ismaʿīl on November 30, 1510

Tevcīh, fī 28 minh, be-naḳl-i Ḥasan el-meẕbūr:
Maşraba-i memzūc, 9.
Tepsī an nuḳra, 9.
Sürāhī, 9.
Maşraba-i ābī, 5.
Aḳdāḥ:
Engürüs bā-zīb ve ḳabaḳ, 2.
Dubrovnikī 9.
Deveṭabanı, 9.
Trabzonī, 9.
Ḳadīfe-i müẕehheb-i sengīn-i ḳırmızı-i Firengī be-zirāʿ-i Burusa, ḳaddān fī 7 [zirāʿ].
Ḳadīfe-i müẕehheb-i benek-i Firengī be-zirāʿ-i Burusa, 4 ḳadd fī 7 [zirāʿ].
Aṭlas-ı müẕehheb-i çatma-i Firengī be-zirāʿ-i Burusa, ḳaddān fī 7 [zirāʿ].
Ḳadīfe-i Firengī-i sāde be-zirāʿ-i Burusa, 7 ḳadd fī 7 [zirāʿ].
Ḳırmızı, 3 ḳadd.
Sebz-i dühavī, ḳadd.
Sürmāī, ḳaddān.
ʿAlā ḳadd.
Aṭlas-ı müẕehheb-i benek-i Firengī, 3 ḳadd fī 7 [zirāʿ].
Aṭlas-ı Firengī-i sāde, 3 ḳadd fī 7 [zirāʿ].
Ḳadīfe-i müẕehheb-i benek-i Burusa, 1.
Ḳadīfe-i alaca-i Burusa, 5.
Ḳadīfe-i rişte, 9.
Kemhā-i kefterī, 7.
Murabbaʿ, 9.
Posthā-i mütenevviʿa, 9 taḥtece:
Semūr, 3.
Ḳaḳım, 3.
Kiremut, 3.
Pūrī, 9.
Çuḳahā-i mütenevviʿa be-zirāʿ-i Burusa, 9 ḳadd fī 2.5 [zirāʿ].
Ḳırmızı sıḳarlaṭ, 4 ḳadd.

Mor sıḳarlaṭ, 5 ḳadd.
Kemān, 7 ḳabza.
Dendān-ı māhī, 9 ḳabza.

Total Sum of Remittance in Installments to Shaikh Ismaʿīl by Hasan

Yekūn-ı biʾd-defaʿāt be-irsāliye-i Şeyḫ İsmaʿīl be-naḳl-i Ḥasan zaʿim:
Maşraba-i memzūc, 9.
Tepsī an nuḳra, 9.
Sürāhī, 2.
Maşraba-i ābī, 5.
Aḳdāḥ:
Engürüsī bā-zīb ve kabak 2.
Dubrovnikī 9.
Deveṭabanı, 9.
Trabzonī, 9.
Ḳadīfe-i müẕehheb-i sengīn-i ḳırmızı-i Firengī be-zirāʿ-i Burusa, ḳaddān fī 7 [zirāʿ].
Ḳadīfe-i müẕehheb-i çatma-i Firengī mütenevviʿa be-zirāʿ-i Burusa, fī 7 [zirāʿ], 5 ḳadd:
Ḳırmızı-i aʿlā, ḳadd.
Ḳırmızı-i vasaṭ, ḳadd.
Sürmāī, ḳadd.
Benefş, ḳadd.
ʿAlā, ḳadd.
Ḳadīfe-i müẕehheb-i benek-i Firengī be-zirāʿ-i Burusa, 4 ḳadd fī 7 [zirāʿ].
Ḳadīfe-i Firengī-i sāde be-zirāʿ-i Burusa 9 ḳadd fī 7 [zirāʿ].
Ḳırmızı, 5 ḳadd.
Sebz, ḳadd.
Sürmāī, ḳaddān.
ʿAlā, ḳadd.
Aṭlas-ı Firengī-i mütenevviʿa be-zirāʿ-i Burusa, fī 7 [zirāʿ].
Çatma, 4 ḳadd.
Benek, 5 ḳadd.
Sāde, 4 ḳadd.
Kemhā-i Firengī-i sāde-i mütenevviʿa be-zirāʿ-i Burusa, fī 7 [zirāʿ], 5 ḳadd:
Ḳırmızı, ḳaddān.
Līmonī, ḳaddān.
Esmānī, ḳadd.
Ḳadīfe-i müẕehheb-i Burusa:
Çatma, 4.

Benek, 5.
Ḳadīfe-i alaca-i Burusa, 9 ṭāk.
Ḳadīfe-i rişte, 9.
Kemhā-i kefterī, 9.
Murabbaʿ 9.
Pūrī, 9.
Kemān, 9 ḳabza.
Dendān-ı māhī, 9.
Posthā-i mütenevviʿa, 9 tahtace:
Semūr, 3.
Ḳaḳım, 3.
Kiremut, 3.
Çuḳahā-i mütenevviʿa be-zirāʿ-i Burusa, 9 ḳadd fī 2.5 [zirāʿ].
Ḳırmızı sıḳarlaṭ, 4 ḳadd.
Mor sıḳarlaṭ, 5 ḳadd.

Appendix 3

Gifts Presented to Selim II from Shah Tahmasp on the Occasion of His Enthronement in 1568

Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Senato, Dispacci degli Ambasciatori Constantinopoli, Filza 2, 515a–515b. Signed by *bailo* Giacomo Soranzo, 24 February 1567 (m.v.) [1568]

Presente mandato dal Re di Persia presentato al S[igno]r Turco dal suo Amb[asciato]re

1 Alcorano scritto à tre righe per faccia

1 Libro della forma, che deveno essere le lettere, che un Princ[ipe] manda all'altro co[n] le carte tutte miniate d'oro con 259 figure

3 Bussoli d'argento pieni di mumia fatta in elettuario

9 Buste coperte di veluto piene di pen[n]acchi negri d'un uccello che in Persia detto Cighé [*jīqa* or *jigha* in Persian]

9 Borse piene di rocca di Turchine

9 Piatti grandi di Porcellana

9 Taglieri di Porcellana

1 Candelier di Porcellana, con la bocca d'arge[n]to gioiellata

1 Carcasso dorato con alq[ua]nte frezze [freccie]

81 Archi Persiani

9 Selle alla Persiana con una cassetta per una all'arcione co[n] le abay dorate, con li Teghelty di pa[n]no, et brighe di sagry alla Persiana

1 Paviglion de 16 ferse fodrato di damasco, et coperto di raso crem[esin]o co[n] la colo[n]na depinta d'azzurro con argento alla incastratura, et una sopra coperta verde, et 3 ombrelle da mettere alla porta del Paviglione, una d'oro la lavor[at]a all'azimatura? una

di raso et una d'ermesino, et la loro colo[n]na depinta d'azzuro co[n] le giunture di arge[n]to miniata d'oro e gioiellata, et e due mute di corde di seta, e d'oro, una p[er] il Pavig[lio]ne et l'altra per le ombrelle

6 Feltri grandi dal Corassan [Khurasan] p[er] metter in terra.

3 Tappeti di seta piccoli

21 Tappeti gra[n]di 3 per mettere sotto le ombrelle, et 4 sotto il pavig[lio] ne 2 d'oro et 2 di seta li altri 14 sono belliss[im]i da Chermani [Kerman], e dal Corassan [Khurasan]

81 Falcone quali p[er] esser freddi grandi di sono lassati al Bassa d'Esdron [Erzurum]

Appendix 4

Gifts Presented to Murad III from Shah ʿAbbas, Dispatched by Haydar Mirza, on January 29, 1590

Başbakanlık Arşivi [Prime Ministry Archive], Kamil Kepeci 1772, fol. 153

[Yev]müʾl-ehad. Fī 22 şehr-i RA (Rebīʿüʾl-evvel) sene 998.
ʿAn pişkeş-i ʿAbbās Mirzā Şāh-ı Vilāyet-i ʿAcem der vaḳt-i firistāden-i Mīrzā Ḥaydar birāderzāde-i ḫod be-dergāh-ı ʿālī berā-yı meṣāliḥ. Fī 22 Rebīʿüʾl-evvel sene 998

- Kelām-ı ḳadīm, cild 3
  - Küçük, ʿan zer-i muraṣṣaʿ, cild 1
  - Büzürk münaḳḳaş ve müẕehheb, cild 2
- Kitabhā-i mütennevi ʿa, cild 15
  - Şāhnāmeʾ-i müẕehheb ve muṣavver, cild 1
  - Ḫamse-i Şeyḫ Niẓāmī, cild 1
  - Külliyāt-ı Ḫāḳānī, cild 1
  - Yusuf u Zelīḫā, cild 1
  - Būstān, cild 1
  - Dīvān-ı Ḥāfıẓ, cild 1
  - Maḫzen al esrār, cild 1
  - Heft Manẓar-ı Hātifī, cild 1
  - Rubāʿiyyāt-ı Ḫayyām, cild 1
  - Cemşīd u Ḫurşīd, cild 1
  - Külliyāt-ı Ehlī, cild 1
  - Şevāhidʾün-Nübüvve, cild 1
  - Ḫulāṣat al aḫbār, cild 1
  - Külliyāt-ı Şeyḫ Saʿdī, cild 1

Muraḳḳaʿ-i müẕehheb, cild 1
Destār-ı ḫākānī altun doḳuma, ʿaded 1
Ṣofra-i zer-duḫte, ḳıtʿa 1
ʿAbā-yi zer-duḫte, ḳıtʿa 9
Ḳāliçehā-i ʿAcem, ḳıtʿa 3
ḳadīfe-i zer duḫte, ḳıtʿa 1
zerd-i dīz zer-duḫte, ḳıtʿa 1
ʿan zer-duḫte, ḳıtʿa 1
Keçehā-i Ḫorasānī, ḳıtʿa 2
Ḫayme-i aṭlas-ı muḳaṭṭaʿ maʿa ṭınāb dīz u bilezik zer-i muraṣṣaʿ ve muşammaʿ ʿan ṭınāb dīz, bāb 1
Ḳāliçehā-i ʿAcem, ḳıtʿa 9
ʿan zerd-i dīz zer-duḫte, ḳıtʿa 2
ḳadīfe-i heft-renk, ḳıtʿa 1
ʿan dīz u tār zer-duḫte, lāciverd, ḳıtʿa 2
ʿan dīz u tār zer-duḫte ḳırmızı, ḳıtʿa 4
Pān-zehr bā-ḥoḳḳaʾ-i zer, ḳıtʿa 1
Mumyān-ı maʿdenī, aded 27
Bā-kiseʾ-i tāfta-i ḳırmızı, memhūr

Appendix 5

Favors Presented to Haydar Mirza and His Retinue on January 29, 1590

Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (Prime Ministry Archive, BOA), Kamil Kepeci 1773, fol. 231

[Yev]müʾl-ehad. Fī 22 şehr-i RA (Rebīʿüʾl-evvel) sene 998.
Teşrīf be-meẕkūrīn ki ʿan vilāyet-i ʿAcem be-dergāh-ı ʿālī berā-yı muṣālaḥa āmedend
Be-Ḥaydar Mīrzā birāderzāde-i Şāh-ı ʿAcem
Naḳdiye 100.000
Cāmehā-i mirāḥūrī ʿan dībāʾ-i frengīʾ-i baṭrāḳīʾ-i āʿlā bā-bitāneʾ-i aṭlas ve sencef-i aṭlas, sevb 2,
baṭrāḳī, sevb 1
frengī, sevb 1
Dolama ʿan dībāʾ-i frengīʾ-i zerd bā-bitāneʾ-i taftaʾ-i Şāmī, sevb 1.
ʿAn Enderūn dāde
Be-Mehdī Ḳūlī Ḫan ḥākim-i Erdebil, elçiʾ-i Şāh-ı müşārünileyh ki bā-pişkeş behem-āmede
Naḳdiye 50.000
Cāmehāʾ-i mirāhūrī ʿan serāser-i İstanbul ʿalā, sevb 2
Be-ciḥet-i merdümān-ı Şāh-ı müşārünileyh ki bā-Mīrzā-yı merḳūm ve elçiʾ-i meẕkūr behem āmedend
Be-Mehdī Ḳūlī Sultan Hākim-i Tāleş
Cāmeʾ-i mirāḥūrī ʿan serāser, 1 sevb
Be-ʿAli Ḫalīfe Sultan
Cāme-i mirāḥūrī, 1 sevb, misli

Be-Şāhım Ḳūlī Ḥalīfe Lala
Câme-i mirāhūrī ʿan serāser, 1 sevb
Be-Hakem Ebū Ṭālib
Câme, misli
Be-Ḥamza Beg
Câme, misli
Be-Ḥāce Aġa Emīr
Câme, misli
Be-ʿAli Beg
Câme, misli
Be-İmām Ḳūlī
Câme, misli
Be-Fetḥi Beg
Câme, misli
Be-Mehdī Ḳūlī Beg
Câme, misli
Be-Otmaz Aġa
Câme, misli
Be-Mihter Ḳubbedīn
Câme, misli
Be-Muḥammad ʿAli Beg
Câme, misli
Be-Velī Aġa merdüm-i Ḥażret-i Pādişāh-ı ʿālempenāh -hullidet hilāfetuhū-ki bā Mīrzā behem āmede
Câme, misli
Yekūn: Naḳdiye 150.000, guruş dāde şüd, 1875 aded
Câmehāʾ-i mirāḥūrī, 18 sevb
Dolama, 1 sevb

Appendix 6

Gifts Presented to Mehmed III from Shah ʿAbbas in January 1597

Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Senato, Copie ottocenteschi dei dispacci, Registro XI, 257–59. This is a report to the Venetian Senate, signed "14 Genaro 1596 (m.v.) [1597], Marco Venier & Girolamo Capello, *baili*." From a register that was copied from the damaged original collection of dispatches to the Senate (*Dispacci*). The illegible parts in the original are marked here with ellipses.

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Nota del presente fatto al Gran Signor dall'Ambasciator del Re di Persia

Un libro d'Alcoran [Qurʾan] scitto di mano di Artimon di Brun.
Un altro scritto di man di Isnat.
Un libro che si chiama Murechagi [*muraqqaʿ* (calligraphy album)?]

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Un libro che si chiama Nusetusafà che vuol dire paradiso di allegrezza [*Raużat al-ṣafāʾ* (Garden of Purity) of Mirkhvand?]
Un altro simile.
Un libro nominato Gralistan [Gulistān], che vuol dire Rosario. L'autore di questo libro è stato Sesade [Saʿdī] predicatore.
Un altro libro che si chiama Divanafis [Dīvān-i Ḥāfiż] che vuol dire libro di rime.

Un libro che si chiama Seilvemegranon [Laila u Majnun] che vuol dire inamoramento.
Un altro libro che si chiama Devanesai che vuol dire croniche de Imperatori.
Veluti tessuti a oro con opera vesti N 9
Brocadi tessuti con opera oro veste N 18
Rizzo sopra rizzo d'oro (. . . . . .) veste N 9
Bezuar pietre contra veneni [veleni] legate in oro et muschio N 5
Mumia miticali 27 che vuol dire un peso veludi di diversi colori schietti veste N 18
Damasco (. . . . . .) Veste N 18
Damasco a opera (. . . . . .) Veste 9
mezzo raso veste N 27} fatte nella città
tabino veste N 18} di Grè.
Un padiglione da campo di velluto ricamato d'oro, et raso con le corde di seta et con le vere d'oro con gioie.
Un baldacchin di veluto ricamato d'oro a opera con corde di seta et mazze d'argento
Tappedi grandi fatti in Chiermani [Kerman] N 2
di brazza 14 di lunghezza

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Tapedi fatti in Corassan [Khurasan] N 2
di brazza 10 l'uno
Tapedi fatti in Nesaheti tessuti con oro grandi N 2
Tapedi di velluti tessuti con oro N 2
Tapedo tessuto con oro N 1
Chiezze fatti a opera in Chierman [Kerman] N 3
Pelizze del color del cielo N 9
Archi fatti in Coresson N 27
Frezze [freccie] mazzi 9 a 30 per mazzo
Spade schiette N 27
Cavalli corsieri con le stoffe et coperte di damasco (. . . . . .) N 9
Chacchi? in Gen (. . . . . .) N 9
Carcassi da frezze (. . . . . .) N 9

Acknowledgments

Writing a book about magnificent gifts has constantly reminded me that a perfect gift is only an illusion. Thinking about the selection, the preparation, and the presentation of those gifts has put every single gift I have given anyone in my life to shame. This book has thus taught me to express gratitude in multiple ways, knowing nevertheless that it can never be adequate.

This project began in Venice on a hot summer day when I came across a document that captivated me. Of course, at the time, I was completely unaware of where it would lead me. My greatest debt is to Cathy Asher, who was the reason I was in that archive and who subsequently encouraged me to turn my fascination into something bigger. To this day, I am convinced that Cathy took a gamble with me when she accepted me as a student who had not a clue of what art history was. I learned much later that Nina (Ergin) Macaraig advocated for me. It has been my great luck to have had Cathy and the late Rick Asher as mentors. They taught me a lot. Most of all, I am grateful that they taught me, by example, to work hard, to ask tough questions, and to never lose sight of what matters in life. Cathy and Rick will always be my role models, as excellent scholars, friends, and parents. I also gratefully acknowledge the indispensable support and guidance of Steven Ostrow, Rosemary Stanfield-Johnson, and the entire Department of Art History at the University of Minnesota. Gülru Necipoğlu also deserves special thanks for encouraging me from the very beginning and for generously giving her time whenever I needed it. One time, I called her from the Topkapı Palace

in despair. Had she not answered the phone that day, I may have walked out and never returned.

I completed this book in Florence on a fellowship from the Kunsthistorisches Institut (KHI). My gratitude to Gerhard Wolf for that opportunity is beyond words. His advice and questions stayed with me as I wrote, and I will always be in awe of his wisdom and ingenuity. Thanks also to Elizabeth Cropper, who shared with me a crucial piece of advice in Florence that made all the difference in giving myself a hard deadline. For many months, I asked myself every single day—even in my dreams—"Have you decided yet?"

Research and writing of this book would not have been possible without the support of a Max Weber Postdoctoral Fellowship at the European University Institute (EUI) in Florence, a Grant-in-Aid from the University of Minnesota, an American Council of Learned Societies Fellowship, and fellowships and grants from the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts (CASVA), the Social Science Research Council (SSRC), the American Research Institute in Turkey, and the Consulate General of Iran in Istanbul. Very early on, two SSRC workshops organized by Anne Higonnet and Vanessa Schwartz were eye opening. Communities of fellows and other scholars at CASVA, the EUI, and the KHI have contributed to my thinking in very significant and sometimes unexpected ways. Thanks to all who listened, asked questions, and made suggestions. I feel very fortunate to have experienced the challenge of presenting material from this book to groups of wonderful art historians, as well as law scholars, economists, historians, and other social scientists.

Through the years, many other scholars, colleagues, and friends have supported me and have generously given their time to share ideas and sources, to discuss difficult texts in Persian, Ottoman Turkish, and Italian, and to think with me about questions to which I would either not be able to find answers on my own, or would have taken ages to find. Big thanks to Nancy Um, Massumeh Farhad, Cecily Hilsdale, Melis Taner, Luca Molà, Marco Spallanzani, Matthew Canepa, Zeren Tanındı, the late Filiz Çağman, Linda Komaroff, Lale Uluç, Emine Fetvacı, Christiane Gruber, Shreve Simpson, Sheila Blair, Sussan Babaie, Kishwar Rizvi, Tülay Artan, Serpil Bağcı, Zeynep Tarım Ertuğ, Idris Bostan, Sara Nur Yıldız, Lucienne Thys-Şenocak, Hilal Kazan, Antony Eastmond, James Allan, Jim Tracey, Stefano Pellò, Irene Giviashvili, Jaś Elsner, Giorgio Riello, Hannah Baader, Hana Gründler, Zafer Şık, Anne Gerritsen, Giampiero Bellingeri, Vera Costantini, Rosita D'Amora, Zoltán Biedermann, Ayşe Baltacıoğlu-Brammer, Mohsen Goudarzi, Akif Yerlioğlu, Esra Akın-Kıvanç, Zeynep Çelik Atbaş, Sevgi Ağca Diker, Maggie Ragnow, Anne Good, Matt Saba, Jessica Keating, Giovanni Tarantino, Vera Wolff, Amanda Phillips, Peyvand Firouzeh, Jason Di Resta, Barry Wood, Sanja Savkić Šebek, Umberto Signori, Vera-Simone Schulz, Annette Hoffman, Janna Israel, Julie Deschepper, Katharine Gerbner, Anna Seastrand,

Jessica Richardson, and my amazing colleagues in the Department of Art History at the University of Minnesota.

Many librarians, archivists, and curators have generously answered my questions and assisted me as I studied materials in their care. I thank staffs at the following collections: Topkapı Palace Museum, Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi, İstanbul Üniversitesi Kütüphanesi, Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Cumhurbaşkanlığı Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı, Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Museo Correr, Archivio di Stato di Firenze, Palazzo Ducale di Venezia, Museo di San Marco, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek Vienna, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, Kitabkhana-i Milli, Reza Abbasi Museum, Tehran University Library, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Aga Khan Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum, Galleria degli Uffizi, Freer Gallery of Art, Cleveland Museum of Art, Bodleian Libraries, Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien, İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi, Atatürk Kitaplığı, The David Collection, Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz, Princes Czartoryski Museum, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, Harvard Fine Arts Library, British Library, Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, Chester Beatty Library, Petworth House, and Johnson Museum of Art at Cornell University. An earlier version of chapter 3 appeared in *Art Bulletin* 100, no. 1 (2018) under the title "Iconography of the Gift: Diplomacy and Imperial Self-Fashioning at the Ottoman Court," copyright © College Art Association, reprinted by permission of Taylor & Francis Ltd., http://www.tandfonline.com on behalf of College Art Association.

The publication of this book has been made possible by funds from the Luce Foundation and grants from the Barakat Trust and the Persian Heritage Foundation. Working with the University of Chicago Press has been a truly delightful experience. I am deeply grateful to Professor James Millward, who greeted the project with encouraging enthusiasm from our very first correspondence, and my extraordinary editor Mary Al-Sayed, whose vision and support have been instrumental in the creation of this book. Thanks also to the meticulous work of Tristan Bates, Michael Koplow, Elizabeth Ellingboe, and the entire editorial and production staff. The insightful comments, questions, and suggestions of the two anonymous readers for the press have been tremendously helpful in the final revision of the book. My friend Melis Taner kindly read the entire manuscript and gave generous feedback. Thanks are also due to Sultan Toprak, Sima Sajjadiani, Parisa Moghadam, Zahra Bahmani, Amirpouyan Shiva, Anya Badaldavood, and Johnathan Hardy, who read sources with me, chased footnotes, provided technical support, and helped correspond with museums and libraries.

My journey with this book is full of wonderful memories that stretch over many years and places. My dear friend Jessica Richardson has been my best advocate and guide in this journey. Jessica's elegance, astute mind, and big heart gave me purpose and inspiration. Anna Seastrand arrived in

Minneapolis just in time and became much more than a friend and an excellent companion—in art history, extreme sports, and delightful foods and drinks. I have shared a very long journey with Selen Özakhun between Istanbul and Minneapolis—from our daily commutes between Suadiye and Rumelifeneri, and many hours spent studying for history exams to our more recent, exhausting but hilarious trips to the Mall of America with our kids to get on bumper cars, and much more. Kadir also deserves special thanks, of course, most especially for all the delicious fish he cooked for us as we wrote. I thank Jenna Rice, Matt Rahaim, Reem El-Radi, and Diyah Larasati for their true friendship, and for all the meals, dance parties, köfte-making contests, backyard BBQs, and bonfires, which even hellish snowstorms could not impede. I also thank Ahu Gemici, Louis Fishman, and Joe Logan for the gleeful memories and all the laughter we have shared. I cannot imagine the writing of this book without Francesca Bortoletti, Alessandro Bartolomucci, Luca and Nora. In Italy, I have been very lucky to amass friends who have been looking forward to the publication of this book. They have tirelessly given me encouragement and have eagerly celebrated every milestone, from the completion of chapters to the final submission. For that, I thank especially Simge Bingeli, Rosa Molinari, Alessandro Focosi, Elena Iorio, Massimo Fedel, Francesca Pasini, Sami Abou Haidar, Valentina Lepri, Zahira Vicioso, Andrea Ghezzi, Marta Franceschin and Stefano Butti, Silia Passeri, Mario, Martina, and Clementina Lingria, Giulia Stellari, Arnaut Van De Rijt, Marta Achler, Maciej Eckstein, Ginevra Ciampinelli, moms of the legendary Beato Angelico, parents at the Istituto Padri Scolopi, Alba Akwei, Gerhard Paul, Veronica Soldani, Stefano Bianchi, Alessandro Staderini, Signora Rita at Hotel Firenze Capitale, Eva Mussotter, Ester Fasino, and Adriana Mastrangelo.

This book is dedicated to my mother, who made many sacrifices to raise me and my sister. I owe her everything. Her prayers and readings of my coffee cups comforted and strengthened me. My other parents-in-law in the wonderfully complicated Casale family, Jean, Frank, Alan, and Pat, and my siblings-in-law, Mia, Gabriele, Dominick, Elliot, Kelly, and Mert, have supported and encouraged me. My sister has been a champion of this book from the very beginning. Sena spent many hours listening to all my discoveries big and small as I tried to make sense of them. I owe her more than gratitude for her genuine interest, excitement, and trust that I would be able to tell a compelling story about all the gifts that fill the preceding pages. Finally, I thank Lilia for giving me innumerable hugs and high-fives; I thank Mina for insisting that there are many more important things in life than old gifts every time she asked, "Are you *still* writing your boring book?" Spontaneous dance parties and trips to gelaterias no doubt had precedence, so I had to hurry up! For making everything more fun and meaningful, I am grateful to them both, and Giancarlo. Giancarlo's love and patience gave me strength and hope. His immense brilliance and foresight inspired me in countless

ways. Many times, his tremendous, razor-sharp intellect helped me see ideas worth pursuing faster and better than I ever could have done on my own. Most of all, I thank Giancarlo for never failing to find a way to make me laugh—even when I wept and typed at the same time. No gift can convey my gratitude for his presence in my life.

Notes

Introduction

1. *Né debbo tacer quello che si racconta in questo proposito di sultan Soliman, l'esempio del quale è molto stimato e riverito da ogn'uno. Dicono che aprendo un Alcorano statogli portato di Persia, perché quel re nelli presenti che fa sempre ne manda molti, facendo Persiani professione di scriver bene et di far bellissime miniature, vi trovò dentro un grano di frumento, et subito se le porse in bocca; poi, voltosi ad uno che era presente, disse ridendo: "Grand'obbligo devo havere al re di Persia che mi fa mangiare del suo frumento stando a casa commodamente, che se in altri tempi ne ho voluto mangiare, non ho potuto farlo senza molto travaglio."* Giovanni Correr, "Relatione del clarissimo messer Giovanni Corraro . . . (1578)," 235–36.

2. Dressler, "Inventing Orthodoxy"; Scherberger, "The Confrontation between Sunni and Shiʿi Empires"; Krstić, "Illuminated by the Light"; Terzioğlu, "How to Conceptualize Ottoman Sunnitization"; Shafir, "Moral Revolutions." See also Arjomand, *Shadow of God*, esp. 109; Stanfield-Johnson, "Sunni Survival in Safavid Iran"; Babayan, *Mystics, Monarchs, and Messiahs*; Abisaab, *Converting Persia*. And the recent essays in Erginbaş, ed. *Ottoman Sunnism*; Peacock et al., *Islam and Christianity in Medieval Anatolia*.

3. See Bosworth, "al-Khulafāʾ al-Rāshidūn."

4. In Shiʿism, prophets are believed to be accompanied and succeeded in their mission by minor prophets, imams, and saints, or descendants of imams (sing. *imāmzāda*), collectively referred to as "Friends of God" (*valī*, pl. *avliyāʾ Allāh*). In Twelver or Imami Shiʿism, this group consists first and foremost of the Fourteen Infallible or Impeccable Ones: the prophet, his daughter Fatima, and the Twelve Imams (*iṯnāʿashar*). The Twelfth Imam is believed to have disappeared, only to reappear in the future as the *mahdi*, or messiah. For an introduction to the principles of Twelver Shiʿism, see Momen, *Shiʿi Islam*; Ghaemmaghami, *Encounters with the*

Hidden Imam; Nasr, "Ithnā ʿAshariyya"; Amir-Moezzi, "Shiʿite Doctrine." For the Fourteen Infallible Ones, see Algar, "Charhārdah Maʿṣūm."

5. During the lifetime of Ismaʿil's father and grandfather, the Safavid Sufi order had already become "a militant *ghāzī* movement" characterized by millenarian militarism. For an introduction to this history and its development into Ismaʿil's rule, see Arjomand, *Shadow of God*, 79–82, 105–8; Mazzaoui, *The Origins of the Ṣafawids*, 72–73.

6. Literally meaning "redhead," *qizilbash* refers to the headgear invented in the late fifteenth century as a mark of loyalty to the Safavid movement. *Qizilbash* later became a derogatory term used by the Ottomans to refer to the supporters of the Safavid movement, Savory, "Ḳizil-bāsh." For the origins and the change of its meaning over time in the Safavid and Ottoman contexts, see Bashir, "Origins and Rhetorical Evolution"; Baltacıoğlu-Brammer, "One Word, Many Implications."

7. Arjomand, *Shadow of God*, 81, 178–87; Amoretti, "Religion in the Timurid and Safavid Periods"; Algar, "Iran." On the establishment of Shiʿi orthodoxy in Iran, see also Arjomand, *Shadow of God*; Babayan, *Mystics, Monarchs*; Abisaab, *Converting Persia*.

8. Erginbaş, "Problematizing Ottoman Sunnism," 629. See also Yıldırım, "Shīʿitisation of the *Futuwwa* Tradition"; Yıldırım, "Sunni Orthodox vs. Shiite Heterodox?"

9. Imber, *Ebu's-Suʿud*, 86. Frequently, fatwas noted how the *qizilbash* denigrated the Prophet's wife, ʿAʾisha, and publicly cursed the first three Rightly Guided Caliphs. In a comparative analysis of these legal opinions, Abdurrahman Atçıl points out how later fatwas advance an ideological dimension to ritualized or singular misconducts. Jurist Ebussuud refuted, for example, Safavid claims to descent from the Prophet Muhammad's family. Further, and by extension, Ebussuud refrained from referring to the Safavids in sectarian terms, as Shiʿis. For the famous fatwas issued by the Ottoman jurist (*shaikh al-Islam*) Ebussuud on the Safavids, see Düzdağ, *Şeyhülislam Ebussuud Efendi*; Imber, *Ebu's-Suʿud*; Atçıl, "The Safavid Threat." Others disagreed. For example, bureaucrat Celalzade considered the Safavids as infidels, but he refused to call attacks on them holy war. Yılmaz, "Koca Nişancı of Kanuni," 125.

10. Shiʿis fiercely rejected the authority of the first three Rightly Guided Caliphs, who succeeded the Prophet in leading the Muslim community. In Safavid Iran, the cursing of the first three Rightly Guided Caliphs, together with the Prophet's wife, ʿAʾisha, was performed as a public ritual. At times of war throughout the sixteenth century, the Ottomans accused the Safavids of blasphemy precisely for practices of this kind. Peace treaties between the two courts, signed for example in 1555 and 1590, stipulated specifically that these public cursings be stopped. For Safavid ritual cursing and its importance within the context of Safavid-Ottoman rivalry, see Mitchell, *Practice of Politics*, 77–79, and chapter 1, below.

11. Fleischer, "The Lawgiver as Messiah"; Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 48.

12. Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, esp. 34–35. The reference from Hadidi's chronicle is cited and translated at 34.

13. Rizvi, "The Incarnate Shrine," 290.

14. On Friday prayers in Safavid Iran, see Newman, "Fayd al-Kashani"; Stewart, "Polemics and Patronage"; and chapter 5 below.

15. Necipoğlu, "A Kanun for the State, a Canon for the Arts," 202. See also

Necipoğlu, "Early Modern Floral"; Necipoğlu, "L'idée de décor."

16. Pope, "The Emperor's Carpet."

17. Österreichisches Museum für Angewandte Kunst, no. T8334. Walker, "Carpets ix. Safavid Period"; Völker, *Die orientalischen Knüpfteppiche*, 224–29.

18. *duʿā-yi shah-i jihān mikonand va migūyand / ki bād tā abadʿazz u jāh bar khurdār*. The entire poem is transcribed and translated in Zaharia, "The Emperor's Carpet," 259. See also Denny, *How to Read Islamic Carpets*, 120–21.

19. For a comparative overview, see Day, *Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal*, esp. 54–59.

20. Refik, *On altıncı Asırda Rafızîlik ve Bektaşilik*, 30.

21. Imber, "Persecution of the Ottoman Shīʿites," 246.

22. Ahmed, *What Is Islam? The Importance of Being Islamic*.

23. *Si dice che non hanno gran copia di oro né di argento, ma però non si sa che in questa così lunga guerra habbino mai havuto bisogno; abbondano di sede finissime, et in grandissima quantità, et di lane tanto fine che sono stimade più delle sede, et delli tapeti persiani, che di bellezza de colori superano tutti gli altri; sono stimati più belli quelli di lana che quelli di seta. Hanno anco spade finissime, armature et altre cose . . .* Soranzo, "Relatione dell'eccellentissimo signor Giacomo Soranzo," 292.

24. Davis, *Gift in Sixteenth Century France*, 9.

25. For the Ottoman context, Reindl-Kiel, "Osmanlı Yöneticileri, Lüks Tüketimi ve Hediyeleşme" provides an excellent summary.

26. Komaroff, "The Art of the Art of Giving," 20. Indeed, periodic events such as enthronements, royal weddings, circumcisions, urban festivals, and religious holidays occasioned intense exchanges of objects and cash as favors at early modern Muslim courts. For circumcisions, see Reindl-Kiel, "Power and Submission"; Şahin, "Staging an Empire."

27. Rosenthal, "Gifts and Bribes"; Suleman, "Gifts and Gift-Giving"; Komaroff, "The Art of the Art of Giving." See also H. Busse, "Hiba, iv.—Persia"; B. Spuler, "Hiba, v.—Ottoman Empire"; Lambton, "Pīshkash," in *Encyclopedia of Islam*.

28. For an overview, see Behrens-Abouseif, *Practicing Diplomacy*, esp. 11–26. An important eleventh-century source is Anonymous, *Book of Gifts and Rarities*.

29. Matthee, "Gift Giving." For robes of honor, see Stillman, "Khilʿa"; Gordon, *Robes and Honor*; Phillips, "Ottoman Hilʾat"; Houghteling, "Emperor's Humbler Clothes," esp. 93–94; Reindl-Kiel, "East Is East and West Is West," 119–20; Mahir, "Hilat Mersimleri."

30. Matthee, "Gift Giving."

31. İpşirli, "Elçi."

32. Kurz, *European Clocks and Watches*; Burschel, "A Clock for the Sultan"; Karl, "Objects of Prestige"; Hitzel, "Diplomatik Armağanlar"; Keating, *Animating Empire*.

33. Molà, "Material Diplomacy"; Raby, "The Serenissima and the Sublime Port"; Pedani, *Venezia porta d'Oriente*, 100–109. Requests were made in other contexts as well. For example, the Ottoman queen mother wrote to Elizabeth I asking for perfumed oils, silks, and jewelry among other things. See Skilliter, "Three Letters from the Ottoman 'Sultana.'"

34. Significant studies include: Grabar, "The Shared Culture of Objects"; Littlefield, "The Object in the Gift"; Cutler, "Gifts and Gift Exchange"; Raby, "The Serenissima and the Sublime Port"; Molà, "Material Diplomacy"; Rothman, "Accounting for Gifts"; Reindl-Kiel, "Power and Submission"; Casale, "Persian

Madonna and Child"; Muhanna, "The Sultan's New Clothes"; Behrens-Abouseif, *Practicing Diplomacy*; Kauz, "Gift Exchange between Iran, Central Asia, and China"; Simpson, "The Morgan Bible and the Giving of Religious Gifts"; Simpson, "Gifts for the Shah"; Keating, *Animating Empire*; Theunissen, "Dostluğun Bedeli"; Swan, "Birds of Paradise"; Swan, *Rarities of These Lands*.

35. For significant recent contributions, see Findlen, "Early Modern Things"; Holly, "Notes from the Field: Materiality"; Gerritsen and Riello, *The Global Lives of Things*; Wilson and Vanhaelen, "Introduction—Making Worlds"; Mochizuki, "Connected Worlds"; Bleichmar and Mancall, *Collecting across Cultures*; Bleichmar and Martin, *Objects in Motion in the Early Modern World*. For the material turn in art history, see Roberts, "Things: Material Turn, Transnational Turn"; Kumler, "Materials, Materia, 'Materiality'"; Overbey and Tilghman, "Active Objects."

36. Jardine and Brotton, *Global Interests*. For critical and thoughtful considerations of the subsequent literature and vigorous new case studies, see Savoy, *The Globalization of Renaissance Art*.

37. An important recent exception is Anderson, *Cosmos and Community*.

38. For example, Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlı-İran Siyâsî Münâsebetleri*.

39. Inspired mostly by Alfred Gell's *Art and Agency*, influential new approaches developed in related disciplines include Appadurai, *The Social Life of Things*; Thomas, *Entangled Objects*; Weiner, *Inalienable Possessions*; Daniel Miller, *Material Cultures*; Latour, *Reassembling the Social*; Smith, *The Body of the Artisan*; Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*.

40. Buettner, "Past Presents," 619. For a more developed articulation of the distinction between the terms "prestation" and "gift," see Hilsdale, "Gift."

41. Building on earlier work by Buettner, "Past Presents," and Cutler, "Gifts and Gift Exchange," a significant body of work has accumulated in the past two decades on medieval and early modern gifts. Recent monographs include Hilsdale, *Byzantine Art and Diplomacy*; Heal, *The Power of Gifts*; Behrens-Abouseif, *Practicing Diplomacy*; Keating, *Animating Empire*; Proctor-Tiffany, *Medieval Art in Motion*.

42. See Komaroff, *Gifts of the Sultan*. An important source of inspiration for these exhibitions as well as other scholarly work on the role of gifts in cross-cultural interactions in the medieval and early modern periods has been the publication of the English translation of an eleventh-century manuscript on gift exchanges between Byzantine and Islamic courts. See Anonymous, *Book of Gifts and Rarities*.

43. In a similar vein, Flood argues for a "routes-not-roots" approach to objects in *Objects of Translation*. Shalem, "Histories of Belonging," 2; and Shalem, "Multivalent Paradigms of Interpretation." Shalem draws on Bruno Latour's conception of network, as developed in *We Have Never Been Modern*, and also *Reassembling the Social*.

44. For a thoughtful overview, see the introduction by editors Christy Anderson, Anne Dunlop, and Pamela Smith to *The Matter of Art*; Kumler, "Materials, Materia," esp. 109–10.

45. Wood, "Image and Thing, A Modern Romance," 131.

46. Mauss, *The Gift*, 13. More recent discussions involve objects broadly, not only those in an exchange context. See for example, Brown, "Thing Theory"; Osteen, "Questions of the Gift"; Daston, "Speechless."

47. Ingold, "Materials against Materiality," 1.

48. For example, Bilirgen, "Gifts and Spoils of War."

49. For an excellent recent overview of exchanges more broadly, see Farhad, "Safavid Arts and Diplomacy"; and Soudavar, "Early Safavids and Their Cultural Interactions." Foundational work on manuscripts as gifts between the Safavid and Ottoman realms include Tanındı, "Additions to Illustrated Manuscripts"; Çağman and Tanındı, "Remarks on Some Manuscripts."

50. *Naẓm-ı Türkī Sikenderī-nāme / Meclis ü ḫaṭṭı behre Aʿcāmʾa*; Bağcı, "Minyatürlü Ahmedi İskendernameleri," 38, 235–36; Mustafa ʿĀlī, *Cāmiʿuʾl-buhūr der Mecālis-i Sūr*, 24–26.

51. Uluç, "Ottoman Book Collectors," 98; Uluç, "Gifted Manuscripts," 144.

52. Hallett and Santos, "Interwoven Knowledge," esp. 260–61; Mills, "The Salting Group"; Frances, "Some Wool Pile Persian-Design Niche Rugs."

53. Michael Frances and Jon Thompson in various publications have presented differing views on the exact date and origin of these carpets. See Frances, "Darius 'Tiger' Carpet," 52–54; Frances, "Some Wool Pile Persian-Design Niche Rugs"; Thompson, *Milestones in the History of Carpets*, 216–17; Thompson, "Prayer Rug."

54. Frances, "Some Wool Pile Persian-Design Niche Rugs," 40–41; Denny, *How to Read Islamic Carpets*, 84–87.

55. The Portuguese traveler Pedro Teixeira noted that the highest-quality carpets in Iran were produced in Yazd, followed by Kerman and Khurasan. Teixeira, *Travels of Pedro Teixeira*, 243, 250. However, as Jon Thompson has pointed out, it is not possible to safely match any carpets with these places of production. Thompson, "Early Safavid Carpets," 271–72.

56. Ağa-oğlu, *Ṣafawid Rugs and Textiles*, 17–18; Baker, *Islamic Textiles*, 113; Stanley, "Ottoman Gift Exchange," 151, 156.

57. This is a broader challenge for historians of the medieval and early modern periods, as mentioned among others by Hilsdale, "Constructing a Byzantine Augusta," 458.

58. For excellent overviews, see especially Matthee, "Gift Giving." See also Busse, "Hiba, iv.—Persia"; Spuler, "Hiba, v.—Ottoman Empire"; Suleman, "Gifts and Gift-Giving," 295–96.

59. Hedda Reindl-Kiel effectively demonstrates this point with regard to the Ottoman gifting of textiles, especially to foreign courts, in "The Empire of Fabrics."

60. Mauss, *The Gift: Expanded Edition*, 73.

61. Georg Simmel wrote that "every interaction is properly viewed as a kind of exchange. This is true of every conversation, every love (even when requited unfavorably), every game, every act of looking one another over." Simmel, *On Individuality and Social Forms*, 43–44.

Chapter One

1. Angiolello, *A Short Narrative*, 122.

2. The literature on Chaldiran in Turkish and Persian is vast. For a general introduction in English, see McCaffrey, "Čālderān"; Kia, *The Ottoman Empire*, 1: 14–16. See also especially Walsh, "Historiography of Ottoman-Safavid Relations"; Genç, "Safevi Kroniklerinde Çaldıran Savaşı"; Genç, *İranlı Tarihçilerin Kaleminden Çaldıran*.

3. *ersen meydana gelesin*

4. Savory, *Iran under the Safavids*, 43.

5. Hoca Sadüddin, *Tācü't-Tevārīḫ* [The crown of annals], 2: 282–83.

6. Bağcı et al., *Ottoman Painting*, esp. 56–57; Genç, "From Tabriz to Istanbul."

7. Tekindağ, "Selim-nameler," 214; Tekindağ, "Yeni Kaynak ve Vesikaların," 72; Allan, "Early Safavid Metalwork"; Genç, "From Tabriz to Istanbul."

8. In his *Essai sur le don*, Marcel Mauss characterized gift exchange as agonistic. Matthew Canepa adopts and expands this idea and details it as a historical concept in his study on cross-cultural exchanges between Roman and Sassanian courts. See Canepa, *The Two Eyes of the Earth*, 21.

9. Shah Ismaʿil's promotion of religious conversion has been interpreted as a tactical move to distinguish his new state from its Sunni neighbors, most especially the Ottomans. See Savory, "Ismaʿil."

10. Even though Ismaʿil's claims were unprecedented, the order had already departed from its purely mystical associations during the lifetime of Ismaʿil's immediate ancestors. Having assumed divine status and adopted noble titles, Ismaʿil's grandfather Junayd and his father Haydar led their followers to holy war (*ġazā*). Mazzaoui, *Origins of the Ṣafawids*, 72–73.

11. For Ismaʿil's poetry and his messianic claims, see Minorsky, "The Poetry of Shah Ismail I"; Gandjei, *Il Canzoniere di Sah Ismail Hata'i*; Thackston, "The *Diwan* of Khātāʾī"; Karamustafa, "Esmaʿil I Ṣafawī, ii. His Poetry"; Babayan, "The Safavid Synthesis"; Gallagher, "Shah Ismaʿil's Poetry in the *Silsilat al-Nasab-i Safawiyya*"; Csirkes, "Messianic Oeuvres in Interaction."

12. Such a transformation in the political and religious fabric of the region has been interpreted aptly as a revolution. See Savory, *Iran under the Safavids*.

13. For the formulation and the changing historical connotations of this term, see Veinstein, "Les premières mesures"; Bashir, "Origins and Rhetorical Evolution"; Baltacıoğlu-Brammer, "One Word, Many Implications."

14. Kathryn Babayan writes, in "Ismaʿil (1487–1524)," 264: "Within a decade, Ismaʿil marshaled the support of Persian and Turkish speaking devotees who were ready to sacrifice their lives."

15. *E quando li è donato danari, tutti li dispensa a suo' populi bisognosi e niente tiene per lui*. Sanudo, *I Diarii*, 4: 313.

16. This event took place before Ismaʿil conquered Tabriz and declared himself shah in 1501. Angiolello, *A Short Narrative*, 104. Angiolello had previously served at the Ottoman court during the reign of Mehmed II, captured initially as a prisoner. See Piemontese, "Giovanni Maria Angiolello."

17. For Ismaʿil's reception in Europe, mainly based on sources in Italian, see Brummett, "The Myth of Shah Ismail Safavi"; Meserve, "The Sophy."

18. Cited and translated in Meserve, "The Sophy" 591. For the original Italian text, and other popular responses to Ismaʿil, see Ponte, "Attorno a Leonardo da Vinci."

19. For example, Sümer, *Safevî Devleti'nin Kuruluşu*, 12–13; Tansel, *Sultan II. Bayezit'in Siyasi Hayatı*, 240. The contemporary historian Kemalpaşazade, conversely, says Bayezid was firm on Ismaʿil and ready to attack if he needed to: Kemalpāşazāde (İbn Kemal), *Tevārīḫ-i Āl-i Oṣmān VIII. Defter*, 243. See also Şahin and Emecen, *Ahkam Defteri*; Sarwar, *History of Shāh Ismāʿīl Ṣafawī*; Allouche, *Ottoman-Safavid Conflict*.

20. Şahin and Emecen, *Ahkam Defteri*, XXV. The nature of relations between the Safavid order and the Ottoman state transformed during the second half of the

fifteenth century. Before the Safaviyya turned into a military and political movement during the lifetime of Ismaʿil's father and grandfather, for instance, Ottoman sultans regularly sent yearly donations (*çerağ akçesi*) to the center of the order in Ardabil, a custom discontinued by Mehmed II. Anonymous, *Haniwaldanus Anonimi'ne Göre*, 35–36. Furthermore, by the time of Ismaʿil's appearance in the political arena, Bayezid had already developed a complex relationship with various Sufi orders. He was extremely supportive of some, but harsh on others. It is related that because of this, a Kalenderi dervish might have been behind the failed assassination of the sultan in 1492. Ocak, "Kalenderi Dervishes," 249–50.

21. Translated in Floor, "The Sophy in European Anti-Ottoman," 281; Anonymous, *Haniwaldanus Anonimi'ne Göre*, 45.

22. Tansel, *Sultan II. Bayezit*, 237; Baltacıoğlu-Brammer, "Neither Victim nor Accomplice," esp. 11–12.

23. There are two sets of exchanges. These undated letters are recorded in Feridun Ahmed Beg, *Münşeʿātü's-selāṭīn*, 1: 338–40, and summarized briefly in Browne, *A Literary History of Persia*, 67–68. Adel Allouche dates Ismaʿil's first letter to 1500, while many other authors give a date of 1502–3 (908). See Allouche, *Ottoman-Safavid Conflict*, 74–78; Sümer, *Safevî Devleti'nin Kuruluşu*, 25; and Sarwar, *History of Shāh Ismāʿīl*, 72.

24. Sanudo, *Diarii*, 4: 432: *E dito Sophì mandò a la Porta uno ambasador, el qual'è lì, vol audientia dal signor, e il signor voi li bassà l' aldi, e lui non vol; è venuto a dir la causa trati mal li Sophì, che sono boni sulmani . . . Poi infine dice, l' orator di Sophì à 'uto audientia dal signor, sarà spazà quest' altra Porta, ma mal si pò intender, perchè non va ni turchi ni zudei a la Porta*.

25. Khwandamir, *Habibu's-siyar*, 572. The Persian text reads: *va iḥrāq-i jasad-i Ḥusaīn Kīā va Muḥammad Kurra va mutābiʿānish dar ḥuẓūr-i ān ilchī bivuqūʿ anjāmīd. Lājaram dar kamāl-i khūf u andīsha rāh-i diyār-i khīsh pīsh girift va baʿad az vuṣūl-i Rūm shamma az ishtiʿāl-i ātish-i khishm-i pādshāhī biʿarẓ-i Ildirim Bayezid risānīd*. Ghiyāṯ al-Dīn b. Humām al-Dīn Ḥusaīnī Khvāndamīr, *Tārikh-i Habīb al-Siyar*, 4: 481. In this and other occasions, Khvāndamīr frequently refers to Bayezid II as Ildīrīm (Yıldırım in Turkish). Literally meaning "thunderbolt," that was in fact an appellation associated with Sultan Bayezid I (r. 1389–1402). For this chronicle, see Bashir, "Perso-Islamic Universal Chronicle."

26. Husain Kia Chulavi was the former governor of Firuzkuh, Damavand, and Khvār u Semnān, and Muhammad Kurra was formerly the governor of Abarqūh. For Kia and Kurra, see also Ḥasan Beg Rūmlū, *Aḥsanu't-Tawārīkh*, 2: 33–37; Eskandar Beg Monshi, *Shah ʿAbbas the Great*, 1: 48–49; Khwandamir, *Habibu's-siyar*, 570–72; Bashir, "Shah Ismaʿil and the Qizilbash"; Savory, "Consolidation of Safawid Power." By the time of their burning in Isfahan, both Kurra and Kia were probably already dead. See for example Khwandamir, *Habibu's-siyar*, transl. Thackston, 570; Ḥasan Beg Rūmlū, *Aḥsanu't-Tawārīkh*, 1: 80; Amīnī Haravī, *Futūḥāt-i Shāhī*, 247.

27. Ms Elliot 328, Bodleian Library, University of Oxford. fol. 91a. Robinson, *A Descriptive Catalogue*, 164–65. The most thorough study of the *Shāhnāma-i Ismāʿīl*, commissioned by Shah Ismaʿil himself, is Wood, "The Shāhnāma-i Ismāʿīl." Wood discusses this book's popularity throughout the Safavid period. It has survived in thirty-nine copies, seven of which were illustrated in the sixteenth century. The painting is also discussed by Wood, especially in chap. 4, 290, 305. Importantly,

Wood notes that the text of Qāsimī's *Shāhnāma* makes no mention of the roasting of Murad Beg even though it is depicted in the painting.

28. *ghāziyān Murād Beg rā bavāsiṭaʾ-i ʿibrat kabab kardand*. Qāżi Aḥmad Ghaffārī Qazvīnī, *Tārikh-i Jahān Ārā* [World illuminating leaves, 972/1564–65], 268; Shīrāzī, *Takmilāt al-akhbār* [Completion of news, c. 1570], 43.

29. This officer's name is given alternatively as Murād Beg Jahānshāhī, Jahānshāhlū, and Turcoman. Bashir, "Shah Ismaʿil and the Qizilbash," esp. 238–41; Savory, "Consolidation of Safawid Power," 74. According to Shahzad Bashir, accounts of cannibalism during this early period should be interpreted within the context of the nature and strength of the bond between the shah and his devotee-soldiers. Bashir interprets these acts as signifiers of the extreme that the soldiers were willing to go in order to prove their loyalty to Ismaʿil. Bashir, "Shah Ismaʿil and the Qizilbash."

30. Khwandamir, *Habibu's-siyar*, 571–72. In the *Takmilāt al-akhbār*, ʿAbdī Beg Shīrāzī writes that in March/April of 1505, the corpse (*jasad*) of rebel Muhammad Kurra, together with his entire household—including men and women—were burned in Isfahan: *va dar chahārshambih bīst u shishum-i Shaʿbān bi Iṣfahān tashrīf āvardand. Muḥammad Kurra dar rāh khūd rā kushta būd. Jasadash bā tamāmī mutaʿalliqān z̲ukūran va ināṉan dar Shavvāl-i īn sāl bisūkhtand*, 44; Yaḥya b. ʿAbd al-Laṭīf Qazvīnī's *Lubb al-Tavārikh* (Essence of histories), 398, records that the author personally witnessed the burning of Husain Kia and others.

31. In the *Aḥsan al-Tavārīkh* (Best of histories, 1577) historian Ḥasan Beg Rūmlū alludes to the burning of Kurra along with his followers at the public square in Isfahan on the one hand (*sūzānīdand*), and the reception of Bayezid's ambassador on the other, but without any insinuation that the Ottoman embassy witnessed that event. Ḥasan Beg Rūmlū, *Aḥsanu't-Tawārīkh*, 1: 84, 86–87. For the *Futūḥāt-i Shāhī*, a panegyric commissioned by Shah Ismaʿil around 1520, see Wood, "The *Tarikh-i Jahanara*," 100–101; Wood, "Shāhnāma-i Ismāʿīl," 124–28; Quinn, *Historical Writing*, 15.

32. Amīnī Haravī, *Futūḥāt-i Shāhī*, 248.

33. Amīnī Haravī, *Futūḥāt-i Shāhī*, 243–45.

34. Amīnī Haravī, *Futūḥāt-i Shāhī*, 245. A translation of Bayezid's letter into Persian is given in Falsafī, "Jang-i Chāldirān," 53–55.

35. Falsafī, "Jang-i Chāldirān," 54–55.

36. Matthee, "The Safavids." Some sources report that Ismaʿil was so full of hatred that he even murdered his own mother because she was an Aq Qoyunlu. For example, Uğur, *The Reign of Sultan Selīm I*, 89, 229.

37. Newman, "The Myth of the Clerical Migration," esp. 79–80.

38. Khwandamir, *Habibu's-siyar*, 570; Savory, "Consolidation of Safawid Power," 74.

39. Aubin, "L'avènement des Safavides," 44–45. Andrew Newman discusses references to Ismaʿil's persecutions of Sunnis, highlighting especially how later sources tend to exaggerate casualties, in *Safavid Iran*, 155–56n21.

40. Khwandamir, *Habibu's-siyar*, 572.

41. Amīnī Haravī, *Futūḥāt-i Shāhī*, 246. Bayezid's gifts are mentioned in later chronicles, but not enumerated. See for example Ḥasan Beg Rūmlū, *Aḥsanu't-Tawārīkh*, 1: 86–87, who writes that these were "worthy and suitable gifts" (*tuḥfāt-i lāʾiq va pīshkashhā-yi muvāfiq*). Shīrāzī, *Takmilāt al-akhbār*, 43–44.

42. Amīnī Haravī, *Futūḥāt-i Shāhī*, 249; Khwandamir, *Habibu's-siyar*, 572; Ḥasan Beg Rūmlū, *Aḥsanu't-Tawārīkh*, 1: 87.

43. Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign*, 81.

44. Membré, *Mission to the Lord Sophy of Persia*, 41, 36, 44, cited and discussed also in Floor, "The *Khalifeh al-kholafa* of the Safavid Sufi Order."

45. Khwandamir, *Habibu's-siyar*, 563.

46. Some of these accounts note that Bayezid did not want to see the ambassador because of how his own messenger had previously been disrespected by the shah: "The reason for the act of not letting him kiss the hand, it is said, is because of a similar act Signor Sophi [Isma'il] had done to his ambassador, that is, of Signor Turco [Bayezid], and that the Signor Sophi, so long as they say, made the Turkish ambassador eat pork, saying: I eat that, and why don't you want to eat?" Sanudo, *Diarii*, 6: 222, similarly 247–48. Reports on this embassy are listed in Sanuto, *Šāh Ismā'īl I nei «Diarii»*, 81–83.

47. Sanudo, *Diarii*, 6: 221, also 238, 240. Isma'il claimed the former territories of Byzantine Trebizond, possibly because his grandmother was Princess Theodora of Trebizond, who married the Aq Qoyunlu ruler and Isma'il's grandfather Uzun Hasan in 1458, just three years before the conquest of Trabzon by Sultan Mehmed II.

48. Sanudo, *Diarii*, 6: 222, 238.

49. Atatürk Kitaplığı Muallim Cevdet O. 71 (hereafter MC O.71), 138. For a full transliteration of this register and previous bibliography, see Gök, "İnamat Defteri." See also Kazan, *Sarayın Sanatı Himayesi*; Reindl-Kiel, "Empire of Fabrics." This type of jug (*mashraba*) first became popular in Timurid Iran, and continued to be collected, produced, and exchanged at Ottoman and Safavid courts. See Komaroff, *Golden Disk of Heaven*; Melikian-Chirvani, *Islamic Metalwork*.

50. For the ambiguity of the epithet *firengī*, see Rogers, "An Ottoman Palace Inventory," 44, 48.

51. Reindl-Kiel, "Empire of Fabrics," esp. 145–46. This list might also be compared to other embassies that were treated with the highest level of honor at court. The gifts match, almost exactly for example, with those given a year earlier to an envoy from Aq Qoyunlu Prince Alvand, whose title is recorded as "ruler of the province of Iran (*mīr-i vilāyet-i 'Acem*)." Ömer Lütfi Barkan, "İstanbul Saraylarına Ait Muhasebe Defterleri," 365–66. By contrast, those given to the Polish and Hungarian ambassadors a few months before include some of the same items, such as Bursa velvets. Nevertheless, these are lacking in number and variety, attesting to the lower position of their receivers in the hierarchy of foreign visitors. MC O. 71, 106, 107; Gök, "İnamat Defteri," 338–41.

52. Allouche, *Ottoman-Safavid Conflict*, esp. 91; Fisher, *Foreign Relations of Turkey*, 95–96.

53. Sanudo, *Diarii*, 7: 15; mentioned in Brummett, "Myth of Shah Ismail," 354n4. A set of letters are recorded in Feridun Ahmed Beg's collection of correspondence, which Adel Allouche dates to 1507. The ambassadors referred to here possibly carried these letters. See Allouche, *Ottoman-Safavid Conflict*, 89–90; Sarwar, *History of Shāh Ismā'īl*, 72.

54. Isma'il fought 'Alā al-Dawla, a Mamluk vassal whose alliance with the Aq Qoyunlu Prince Murad angered him. Isma'il wrote an apologetic letter to Bayezid, reassuring him that he had no intention of an assault on Ottoman lands. Allouche, *Ottoman-Safavid Conflict*, 89–90; Fisher, *Foreign Relations of Turkey*, 95–96.

55. The contemporary Ottoman historian Kemalpaşazade writes that Sultan Bayezid did not trust Isma'il and was watchful of him and ready to engage in war if he needed to. Kemalpāşazāde (İbn Kemal), *Tevārīḫ-i Āl-i Oṣmān VIII. Defter*, 243. Some foreign observers commented by contrast that Bayezid avoided conflict with Isma'il because of his fear that Isma'il's army might be stronger. Fisher, *Foreign Relations of Turkey*, 95–96. See also Tansel, *Sultan II. Bayezit*, 240–45; Çıpa, *Making of Selim*, 35–36.

56. Çıpa, *Making of Selim*, 36; Tansel, *Sultan II. Bayezit*, 246–47; Sanudo, *Diarii*, 7: 631.

57. MC O. 71, 242 and 806–7; Gök, "İnamat Defteri," 686–87, 806–7. A version of the 1508 list is also given in Sanudo, *Diarii*, 7: 637.

58. *Presenti fati per l'orator dil Sophì al signor turco. Peze 40 damaschini a la persiana, con fiori d'oro. Peze 30 rasi. Peze 15 talassi fini. XII casachi, o ver fazuoli da zenzer, bellissimi, de valuta de aspri 6 in 7 milia l'uno. Alcune sexe da tulopani fine*. Sanudo, *Diarii*, 7: 636. I have taken "talassi" to be a form of "atlas," satin-faced silk textile. I am grateful to Luca Molà and Amanda Phillips for their generous help making sense of this list.

59. Durri, "Baghdād"; Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 63; Khūrshāh, *Tārikh-i īlchī*, 36.

60. Çıpa, *Making of Selim*, 45–48; Allouche, *Ottoman-Safavid Conflict*, 91; Fisher, *Foreign Relations of Turkey*, 96–97.

61. Ḥasan Beg Rūmlū, *Aḥsanu't-Tawārīkh*, 1: 122, 2: 54–55; Vilāyatī, *Tārikh-i ravābit-i khārijī-yi Īrān dar ʿahd-i Shāh Ismāʿīl Ṣafavī*, 64–65. See also Amīr Maḥmūd b. Khvāndamīr, *Irān dar ruzgār-i Shāh Ismāʿīl va Shāh Tahmasb Ṣafavī*, 54; Khūrshāh, *Tārikh-i īlchī*, 54; Allouche, *Ottoman-Safavid Conflict*, 93.

62. Sanudo, *Diarii*, 12: 513. See also 273, 508–9, 510.

63. Rabie, "Safavids of Persia and the Mamluks of Egypt," 78–79.

64. The list is titled "Remittance to Shah Isma'il, ruler of the province of Iran." MC O. 71, 404, and Gök, "İnamat Defteri," 1163–66. See also Reindl-Kiel, "Empire of Fabrics," 145. For examples of objects made out of walrus ivory from the Ottoman period, see Gál, "Objects Made from Bone, Antler, and Tusk," esp. 133–43. A steel knife whose handle is carved from walrus ivory, and dated to the first half of the sixteenth-century Ottoman court is in the David Collection: Inv. 9/2005.

65. MC O. 71, 230, 260, 289, 338, 398, 410, and Gök, "İnamat Defteri," 646, 747, 816, 969, 1147, 1183; and MC O. 71, 244, 393, 427, 459, 491, and Gök, "İnamat Defteri," 693, 1134, 1242, 1320, 1395.

66. For Bayezid's gifts in 1511 see MC O. 71, 456, and Gök, "İnamat Defteri," 1314.

67. Çıpa, *Making of Selim*, esp. 43–61.

68. Khwandamir, *Habibu's-siyar*, 604.

69. Hans Roemer discusses Isma'il's self-promotion as a god-king prior to Chaldiran: "For Shah Ismā'īl Chāldirān did not mean merely the loss of a battle and of extensive tracts of land. In the eyes of his followers he had also lost the nimbus of invincibility, even if the defeat had done nothing to impair his reputation of sanctity." Roemer, "The Safavid Period," 225.

70. These are recorded in Feridun Ahmed Beg, *Münşeʿātü's-selāṭīn*, 1: 351–53, 354–55, 355–56, 357–58. The first two letters were written in Persian, and the final two, in Turkish. For these letters and other sources that record them, see Emecen, *Yavuz Sultan Selim*; Yıldırım, "Turkomans between Two Empires," 565–76; Tansel, *Yavuz Sultan Selim*, 43–45.

71. The first letter is dated 23 April 1514: Feridun Ahmed Beg, *Münşeʿātü's-selāṭīn*, 1: 351–53. It was composed by Tacizade Cafer Çelebi, and was delivered to Ismaʿil by a certain Kılıç. Tansel, *Yavuz Sultan Selim*, 40; Tekindağ, "Yeni Kaynak ve Vesikaların," 58. The second letter is undated in Feridun Ahmed Beg, *Münşeʿātü's-selāṭīn*, 1: 354–55. An English translation of the second letter can be found in Woods, "Letters from Selīm and Ismāʿīl," 338–42.

72. The Safaviyya Sufi order's claim of descent from Prophet Muhammad as political propaganda was in circulation as early as the late fifteenth century, even though its precise origin is unclear. See Morimoto, "The Earliest ʿAlid Genealogy"; Karadeniz, "Safevi Tarikatı'nın Seyidliği."

73. Woods, "Selīm and Ismāʿīl," 338–39.

74. Woods, "Selīm and Ismāʿīl," 339; Feridun Ahmed Beg, *Münşeʿātü's-selāṭīn*, 1: 351. The third and fourth letters do not list the titles of each ruler. Defying imperial epistolary protocol to belittle the recipient, they address him solely as "Ismaʿil Bahadur [the Valiant]."

75. Masters, "Fatwa (fetva)," 217. For the fatwas obtained by Selim I, see Kemalpāşazāde, *Tevārīḫ-i Āl-i Osman: IX. Defter*, 96–97; Tekindağ, "Yeni Kaynak ve Vesikaların"; Tansel, *Yavuz Sultan Selim*; Bacqué-Grammont, *Les Ottomans, Les Safavides*, 50–55; Eberhard, *Osmanische Polemik gegen die Safawiden*; İnanır, "Tokatlı Şeyhülislam Ibn Kemal," 295–310; Emecen, *Yavuz Sultan Selim*, 107–9.

76. Tekindağ, "Yeni Kaynak ve Vesikaların," 54–55, quoting from the fatwas of Ibn Kemal.

77. Feridun Ahmed Beg, *Münşeʿātü's-selāṭīn*, 1: 352.

78. Calmard, "Tabarruʾ." For a history of this practice during the Safavid period, see Stanfield-Johnson, *Ritual Cursing in Iran*; Mitchell, *Practice of Politics*, 77–79; Stanfield-Johnson, "Sunni Survival"; Babayan, *Mystics, Monarchs*, 222–24; Stanfield-Johnson, "The Tabarraʾiyan."

79. Selim's second letter says: "If God almighty wills, the lightening of our conquering sword shall uproot the untamed bramble grown to great heights in the path of the refulgent Divine Law and shall cast them down upon the dust of abjectness to be trampled under the hooves of our legions . . . the thunder of our avenging mace shall dash out the muddled brains of the enemies of the Faith as rations for the lion-hearted *ghazi*s [Ottoman soldiers]." Woods, "Selīm and Ismāʿīl," 340.

80. Qurʾan 6: 165. Feridun Ahmed Beg, *Münşeʿātü's-selāṭīn*, 1: 351–52.

81. Qurʾan 71: 26. Feridun Ahmed Beg, *Münşeʿātü's-selāṭīn*, 1: 355.

82. Tansel, *Yavuz Sultan Selim*, 40–41; Emecen, *Yavuz Sultan Selim*, 111, citing Selim's first letter.

83. Feridun Ahmed Beg, *Münşeʿātü's-selāṭīn*, 1: 355; Woods, "Selīm and Ismāʿīl," 341; Allouche, *Ottoman-Safavid Conflict*, 117.

84. *chu mardī maydān-i mardān darāy*. Feridun Ahmed Beg, *Münşeʿātü's-selāṭīn*, 1: 353.

85. *ḫırz-ı selāmetde perde-nişīnlik iḫtiyār idenlere erlik adī ḫaṭādır ve ölümden ḳorḳan kimesnelere ḳılīç ḳūşānūb āta binmek nāsezādur*. Feridun Ahmed Beg, *Münşeʿātü's-selāṭīn*, 1: 356.

86. Feridun Ahmed Beg, *Münşeʿātü's-selāṭīn*, 1: 352. See also Tansel, *Yavuz Sultan Selim*, 40.

87. Feridun Ahmed Beg, *Münşeʿātü's-selāṭīn*, 1: 356–57. See also Celālzāde Muṣṭafā, *Selīm-nāme*, 142.

88. *pas tajruba kardīm dar īn dair-i mukāfāt / bā āl-i ʿalī har ki dar uftād bar uftād*. Feridun Ahmed Beg, *Münşeʿātü's-selāṭīn*, 1: 357. Translated in Woods, "Selīm and Ismāʿīl," 344.

89. There is another letter recorded by Idrīs-i Bidlīsī, who notes it is a summary of letters that arrived in response to Selim's first letter. This message similarly defends Ismaʿil's religious beliefs by stressing that the Shiʿi imams come from the Prophet's family, through Muhammad's daughter Fatima. See [Sultan Selim], *Selīm Şāh-nāme*, 163. Although this letter has mainly gone unnoticed, it is discussed in Emecen, *Yavuz Sultan Selim*, 105–7.

90. *huqqaʾ-i ẕahabī mamlū az kaifīyat-i khāṣṣa makhtūm bi-muhr-i humāyūn*. Woods, "Selīm and Ismāʿīl," 343.

91. *Didi bu tiryāk mest itmez meni / Gönderen tek ḫūd-perest itmez meni / Līk vardur mende bir tiryāk-i mest / Leşker-i iḥsāsa andandūr şikest*. Şükrī-i Bitlisī, *Selīm-Nāme*, 150.

92. Bidlīsī, *Selīm Şāh-nāme*, 152; Nişāncı Meḥmed Paşa, *Tārīḫ-i Nişāncı*, 208; Tansel, *Yavuz Sultan Selim*, 45; Sarwar, *History of Shāh Ismāʿīl*, 77.

93. According to one source, soldiers encircled the sultan's tent to list their grievances. Feridun Emecen writes that they wanted to convince the sultan to return to the capital and declare the shah's absence as proof of his refusal to fight, and therefore as his de facto defeat. Emecen, *Yavuz Sultan Selim*, 112–23.

94. *mübtelā oldīğıñ derdiñ devāsı maʿlūmuñ imiş olmaḳūle nesne istiʿmāl itmekle ḳuvvet-i ḳalb taḥsīl idermişsin imdi gāyet mücerrebiñ olanı istiʿmāl eyle bāşed ki muḳābeleye cürʾet ḳoymağa bāʿiṣ ola*. Feridun Ahmed Beg, *Münşeʿātü's-selāṭīn*, 1: 357–58.

95. *Eger min baʿd daḥī berḳarār u vażʿ-ı sābıḳ kunc u zāviyeʾ-yi ruʿb u hirāsda münzevī olasın erlik adī saña ḥaramdır. Miġfer yerine miʿcer ve zirh yerine çādır iḫtiyār eyleyūb serdārlıḳ sevdāsından ve sepehsālārlıḳ hevāsından ferāġat eyleyesin*. Feridun Ahmed Beg, *Münşeʿātü's-selāṭīn*, 1: 358. See also Adāʾī, *Adāʾī-yi Şīrāzī ve Selim-nāmesi*, 76 (Turkish translation), 63 (Persian text).

96. . . . *taʿn u tevbīhı vāfir ve serzīşi mütekāsir nāmeler ile gāh nezkeb ü gāh çenber gönderirlerdi. "Senin gibi nā-merde destār u miġfer yerine bunlar lāyıkdır" diyū muhannesliğini tasrīh kılurlardı ve gāh "Sen bir sofī-zādesin. Taht-gāh-ı saltanata lāyık bir fürū-māye üftādesin. Sana münāsib olan bunlardur" diyū hırka, ʿabā ve şāl ve misvāk ve ʿasā gönderüb, 'Sana zāviye-nişīn olmak münāsibdir' diyū bildirirlerdi*. Mustafa ʿĀlī, *Künhü'l-Aḫbār*, 2: 1091; . . . *ʿibret-engīz nāmeler ve ṣūfī-beçeye ḫırḳaʿ-yı yeşmīn ile zāviye-nişīn olmaḳ layıḳ idügin iʿlām içün ʿaṣā ve ʿabādan cāmeler gönderdiler*. Hoca Sadüddin, *Tācü't-Tevārīḫ* 2: 251, 252. Also mentioned in Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, 2: 250–51; Falsafī, "Jang-i Chāldirān," 84, mentions additionally a rosary and a beggar's bowl (*tasbiḥ va kashkūl*); Vilāyatī, *Tārīkh-i ravābiṭ-i khārijī-yi Īrān dar ʿahd-i Shāh Ismāʿīl Ṣafavī*, 159; Emecen, *Yavuz Sultan Selim*.

97. *sürḫa-ser melʿūnı defʿ idem tamam*. Şükrī-i Bitlisī, *Selīm-Nāme*, 186, mentioned in Emecen, *Yavuz Sultan Selim*, 136–39. See also Mustafa ʿĀlī, *Künhü'l-Aḫbār*, 2: 1109; Navāʾī, *Shāh Ismaʿīl Ṣafavī*, 140–41.

98. Contacts between the two courts after Chaldiran and Ismaʿil's embassies to Selim at that time are discussed in detail in Bacqué-Grammont, *Les Ottomans, Les Safavides*, esp. 73–127.

99. Hoca Sadüddin, *Tācü't-Tevārīḫ* 2: 274–75; Mustafa ʿĀlī, *Künhü'l-Aḫbār*, 2:

1103–5. For a more detailed discussion of this embassy and on Abdalvahhab, see Bacqué-Grammont, *Les Ottomans, Les Safavides*, 75–87. While court intellectuals debated the legitimacy of wars on Muslims, the Ottoman military additionally had practical concerns and objections to another attack on Safavid Iran both because of the casualties at Chaldiran and because Isma ʿil effectively announced that he was accumulating weapons, which he lacked before. See, for example, Sanudo, *Diarii*, 25: 592–93. For Isma ʿil's military reforms, see Matthee, "Firearms"; Matthee, "Unwalled Cities and Restless Nomads."

100. A copy of this letter in Persian is given in Feridun Ahmed Beg, *Münşeʿātü's-selāṭīn*, 1: 364–66. It has been transliterated, translated into French, and discussed in Bacqué-Grammont, *Les Ottomans, Les Safavides*, 90–104.

101. *una centura d'oro con zoje e uno libro con li Evanzelii soi di la fede, con la coperta di zoje, si stima valuta ducati 100 milia*. Sanudo, *Diarii*, 21: 456, 408.

102. See Tanındı, "Safavid Bookbinding," 168–72.

103. *hediyehā-yı cüzī*. Hoca Sadüddin, *Tācü't-Tevārih*, 2: 288; *una sella d'oro e altri presenti molto richi*. Sanudo, *Diarii*, 19: 440.

104. *ḫüdāvendigāra ve anasına ve Sinān Paşa ile Yūnus Paşaya ḥayatda ṣanub ümīd-i ṣulḥ i içün müstaḥil mektūblar ve tuḥfeler ve hediyyeler göndermiş ḫüdāvendigāra ḫod bi-miṯl ü naẓīr tuḥfeler ve bī-mānend fīrūzeler ve incüler ve kitāblar ve lāciverd irsal eylemiş*. Haydar Çelebi, *Rūznāme*, 1: 444.

105. Cited in Bacqué-Grammont, *Les Ottomans, Les Safavides*, 227–28. Most available sources on this embassy are cited there, 210–34.

106. One of the first things Süleyman did was to release Iranian merchants that his father had imprisoned to resume commercial activity. Indeed, Isma ʿil had appealed to Selim after Chaldiran, asking him to allow travelers and merchants to move freely between the two countries. See Feridun Ahmed Beg, *Münşeʿātü's-selāṭīn*, 1: 364–66; Sümer, *Safevî Devleti'nin Kuruluşu*, 40.

107. Asrar, *Kanunî Sultan Süleyman Devrinde*, 111–12.

108. Feridun Ahmed Beg, *Münşeʿātü's-selāṭīn*, 1: 473–74. The ambassador, as mentioned also in the letter, was a respectable religious scholar, Tāj al-Dīn Ḥasan Khalīfa, the former *sadr* of the province of Khurasan. Mitchell, *Practice of Politics*, 57. The embassy is said to have been composed of over five hundred people on horseback. Sanudo, *Diarii*, 35: 258.

109. Bostān Çelebi, *Tārih-i Sulṭān Süleymān*, Vienna Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Codex 8626 (hereafter Cod. 8626), H.O. 42a, 82r–82v; Bacqué-Grammont, *Les Ottomans, Les Safavides*, 369.

110. The Venetian ambassador Piero Zen's report, though not fully copied, confirms this: *haveano presentà li presenti*, videlicet *uno cavallo con fornimenti bellissimo, con zoie, veste d'oro et. . . .* Sanudo, *Diarii*, 35: 326.

111. Both letters have been fully transcribed and translated into French in Bacqué-Grammont, *Les Ottomans, Les Safavides*, 370–76; Isma ʿil's letter is discussed in Mitchell, *Practice of Politics*, 57–58. Bacqué-Grammont rightly suggests that the letters fail to provide a full picture of the true negotiation and each ruler's attitude toward the other.

112. *el qual portava al Signor una simitara disfidandolo a la guerra*. Sanudo, *Diarii*, 35, 258.

113. Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial and Power*, 245.

Chapter Two

1. Thackston, *Album Prefaces*, 16. Discussed and analyzed in Roxburgh, "On the Brink of Tragedy"; Roxburgh, *Prefacing the Image*, 152; Canby, *Princes, Poets and Paladins*, 48. Stuart Cary Welch, who identified the then-lost Tahmasp *Shahnama* by recognizing "The Court of Gayumars" in the book, wrote that it "may well be the greatest of all Iranian paintings." "The Most Beautiful Book in the World?," 46. It has recently been described by Sheila Blair as "the finest Persian painting ever produced" in "Reading a Painting," 525. For a compelling view against describing Persianate painting as merely "beautiful" or "exquisite," see Roxburgh, "Micrographia," 16.

2. Canby, *Shahnama of Shah Tahmasp*, 15–16. All of the manuscript's paintings are reproduced in color therein with a bibliography. The most detailed study of the manuscript remains Dickson and Welch, *Houghton Shahnameh*, who suggested that many artists, painters, calligraphers, illuminators, binders, gold sprinklers, margin rulers, and paper burnishers must have collaborated to make it. See also Welch, "Most Beautiful Book"; Welch, *A King's Book of Kings*; Welch, "The *Shāhnāmeh* of Shah Tahmasp," 68–93; Canby, "Safavid Painting," 80–103.

3. https://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2011/c-welch-part-ii-l11227/lot.78.html?locale=en and https://www.christies.com/lot/lot-6361844/?intObjectID=6361844.

4. After its presentation to the Ottoman sultan in 1568, it was housed for several centuries in the Topkapı Palace in Istanbul. In the beginning of the nineteenth century it was removed under unknown circumstances and its contents were dispersed later, starting in the 1970s. For a brief history of the manuscript after 1903, when it reappeared in Paris, see Blair, *Reading a Painting*, 533–34.

5. J. L. Austin's theory of "speech acts," which lay the foundation for performance studies, as well as Mikhail Bakhtin's engagement with and expansion of the concept through a model that empowers the audience of a speech act inform my approach here. See Austin, *How to Do Things*, and Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*.

6. Topkapı Palace Museum Library (hereafter TSMK), H. 1339, 247b. A facsimile has been published as Feridun Ahmed Beg, *Nüzhet-i Esrârü'l-Ahyâr*, eds. Arslantürk and Börekçi. On this manuscript, also known as *Nüzhetü'l-esrārü'l-aḫbār der Sefer-i Sīgetvār*, see Fetvacı, *Picturing History*, 108–22, for a discussion of the book's patronage, especially its strong ties to the grand vizier Sokollu Mehmed Pasha.

7. TSMK, A. 3595. Karatay, *Farsça Yazmalar Kataloğu*, 273; Çağman, "Şehname-i Selim Han ve Minyatürleri"; Bağcı et al., *Osmanlı Resim Sanatı*, 121–23; Fetvacı, "Şehnāme-i Selīm Ḫān."

8. Roxburgh, *The Persian Album*, 317; see also Dickson and Welch, *Houghton Shahnameh*, 1: 270, who note that "the most costly of all the gifts were two books."

9. *vilāyet-i ʿAcemde olan sipāhīden ve reʿāyādan cümlesi kāfirlerdür*. Peçevi, *Tārīḫ-i Peçevī*, 1: 319.

10. Peçevi, *Tārīḫ-i Peçevī*, 1: 320.

11. For the systematic integration of Sunni orthodoxy into Ottoman state identity and its relationship to state-sponsored architecture, including the legal enforcement of Friday prayers, Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 47–70.

12. Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 191.

13. Süleymaniye was the first to include the names of Hasan and Husain in its eight monumental roundels, in addition to Allah, Muhammad, and the Sunni caliphs (Abu Bakr, ʿUmar, ʿUthman, ʿAli). Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 191.

14. Babayan, *Mystics, Monarchs, and Messiahs*, 295–348; Babaie, *Isfahan and Its Palaces*, 47, 57; Newman, *Safavid Iran*, 26–29.

15. Necipoğlu, "Qurʾanic Inscriptions," 83; Necipoğlu, "Early Modern Floral," 136.

16. Quoted in Mitchell, *Practice of Politics*, 69. For the institutionalization of Twelver Shiʿism under Shah Tahmasp, see also Arjomand, *Shadow of God*; Arjomand, "Two Decrees of Shah Tahmasp"; Newman, "Myth of the Clerical Migration"; Stanfield-Johnson, "Sunni Survival"; Stewart, "Notes on the Migration"; Abisaab, *Converting Persia*.

17. Shah Tahmasp ordered a new edition of the *Ṣafvat al-Ṣafā*, a fourteenth-century hagiography of the order's founder Shaikh Ṣafī al-Dīn Abu'l-Fath Isḥaq Ardabīlī. This version corrected, according to Michel Mazzaoui, Ṣafī al-Dīn's "genealogy (*nasab*) and religious affiliation (*madhhab*)." See Mazzaoui, "A 'New' Edition of the Ṣafvat al-ṣafā."

18. The sultan also threatened to attack the center of the Safavid order at Ardabil. Kırzıoğlu, *Kafkas-Elleri*, 210–38; Solak-zāde, *Tarih*, 2: 225–44; Eskandar Beg Monshi, *Shah ʿAbbas the Great*, 1: 124–31; Ḥasan Beg Rūmlū, *Aḥsanu't-Tawārīkh*, 2: 161–68.

19. Quoted in Mitchell, *Practice of Politics*, 81.

20. Atçıl, "Safavid Threat," 307.

21. References to Tahmasp's letter are from Mitchell, who discusses and contextualizes it in *Practice of Politics*, 81–88. For negotiations, see Eskandar Beg Monshi, *Shah ʿAbbas the Great*, 1: 130; Kırzıoğlu, *Kafkas-Elleri*, 238–39; Kılıç, *Osmanlı-Iran*, 70. For the treaty, see also see Diyanet, *Ilk Osmanlı-Iran Anlaşması*; Şahin, *Empire and Power*, 131–39.

22. Petritsch, "Der Habsburgisch-Osmanische"; Tracy, "Habsburg Monarchy in Conflict."

23. Yılmaz, "Koca Nişancı of Kanuni," 144.

24. Cited in Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 67. My discussion of the letter relies on Necipoğlu's excellent analysis and interpretation. For the inauguration ceremonies of Ottoman mosques, see Rüstem, "Spectacle of Legitimacy."

25. Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 67. Mitchell has also summarized and discussed the letter in *Practice of Politics*, 113–15.

26. Ḥasan Beg Rūmlū explains: "The Shah sent Shah Quli Sultan Ustajlu with gifts and a letter seventy cubits long to congratulate the sultan and to confirm peace." Ḥasan Beg Rūmlū, *Aḥsanu't-Tawārīkh*, 2: 191. Qāżī Aḥmad Qummī gives a similar account in his *Khulāsat al-tavārīkh* [Summary of histories, 1590–91], 1: 478.

27. A member of the elite corps of officers at the Ottoman court (*müteferriḳa*), Mehmed Agha was previously sent to Persia to announce Sultan Süleyman's death and Selim's accession to the throne. TSMK, H. 1339, 210b. Tahmasp then appointed Shah Quli, the powerful governor of Yerevan (now Armenia) and Nakhichevan (now Azerbaijan), as his ambassador. Ottoman historian Selaniki confirms Shah Quli's prominent position: "Shah Quli was famed for his dignified oratory and because of his distinguished eloquence he was appointed ambassador." *Şah-Kulı dahi kızılbaş içinde sözi bellü kişi ve cangu ādemīsi olup yahşi söz bilmek ile meşhūr ve*

müteʿayyen sühandān olmağla ilçilik hidmetine taʿyīn olunmış olup. Selānikī Mustafa Efendi, *Tarih*, 1: 70.

28. Letters were dispatched to governors on route with orders to direct the embassy to Edirne, and to display utmost respect and hospitality. TSMK, H. 1339, 208b–209a.

29. *Ma con tutto cìo questa pompa venendo appresso all'essercito ad Arsrum tutti li Persiani si stupirno a veder la bella ordinanza delli Ottomani*. The letter was written by a messenger (*chiaus*, *çavuş* in Turkish), which was somehow obtained by Marc'Antonio Pigafetta, who gives it in Italian translation in *Itinerario da Vienna a Costantinopoli*, 230–31.

30. Pigafetta, *Itinerario da Vienna*, 230.

31. Pigafetta, *Itinerario da Vienna*, 230. For the pearls and the unit of measurement given here, see Potts, "Pearls, ii. Islamic Period."

32. *hürmet ü riʿāyetlerinde ihtimām u ikdāmda dakīka fevt olunmayup, memleket-i Osmāniyye ne vechile maʿmūr u ābādān olup ve envāʿ-ı niʿam-ı bī-pāyān ile muğtenim u mütenaʿim, haşmet ü şevket-i şehenşāhī her yerde ferāvān ve leşker-i dilāverān-ı kārzār-ı bī-şümārı müşāhede ederek*. Selānikī, *Tarih*, 1: 67, 68. The governor of Erzurum, Ali Pasha, also wrote to the sultan to give news of the ambassador's arrival "with grandeur, numerous men, and great presents" (*ʿaẓametle, vāfir ādemle ve ʿaẓīm pişkeşle*). TSMK, H. 1339, 211a.

33. The question of how to prepare the city was posed to the sultan by the city's superintendent Piyale Pasha: *risālet ṭarīḳiyle biñ nefere ḳarīb ādemle ve ʿaẓīm pişkeşlerle geliyorlar. Dārü's-salṭanatü'l-maḳbūl maḥmiye-i Istanbul'a duḫulları ḳarībdür. Istiḳbāl bābında ve riʿāyet ādabında ne vechile tedārik olunmaḳ gerekdür diyū südde-i saʿādete ʿarż ü iʿlām iylemişler*. TSMK, H. 1339, 211b.

34. "When the envoy reaches the other side [of the strait], between Üsküdar and Gebze, the village of Kartal, summon all of the naval commanders, captains, and the marines. They should be dressed up, according to custom, in their uniforms and be equipped in their weapons and armature. Other than these, the corps of the armorers (*cebeci*) and artillery (*topçu*) should likewise be clothed in their designated garments and embellished in their war equipment and arms of combat. The combination of these three squadrons of foot soldiers should number approximately several thousand people. Early in the morning that day, all of these soldiers should be properly prepared and organized, and proceed, with their chiefs and commanders, to meet the envoy to lead him (*öñünce yürüyeler*). Other than this, decorate many ships, that is, imperial galleys (*ḫaṣṣa ḳadırgalar*), and assign in each a gunman (*tüfenkçi*), a guardsman (*ḥarbeci*), and an archer (*tīrendaz*.) In due order, every bench in every galley should be adorned. In every gallery, place as many cannons (*ṭop ve bocoloşkolar*) as possible. Also, gather however many janissaries are present in the city of Istanbul and have them, according to custom, gather their firearms and be prepared, adorned (*mücemmel*) and armed (*müsellāh*), ordered alongside their chiefs at the landing station." TSMK, H. 1339, 212b.

35. Selānikī, *Tarih*, 1: 69. The ambassador and his immediate retinue were settled at the Hançerlü Sultan Sarayı, a waterfront palace near the Hippodrome.

36. For these mandatory urban excursions to show Ottoman congregational mosques off to the Safavids, see Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 67–68.

37. TSMK, H. 1339, 250b.

38. TSMK, H. 1339, 213a, 213b. At the remarkable sight of the Ottoman army,

notes Selaniki, Şemsi Ahmed Pasha brought up the Ottoman definitive victory over the Safavids decades before, following which Shah Isma'il's wife was taken captive: "Yes, it was these same soldiers who brought the bride from Chaldiran!" Selānikī, *Tarih*, 1: 67.

39. Hammer-Purgstall, *Histoire de l'Empire ottoman*, 6: 319. The Venetian *bailo* (resident ambassador and consul of the Venetian State) Giacomo Soranzo's previously unknown report on the embassy, including a detailed list of Tahmasp's gifts for Selim II is important: Archivio di Stato di Venezia (hereafter ASVe), Senato, Dispacci degli Ambasciatori Constantinopoli (hereafter Dispacci Constantinopoli), Filza 2, 512a–515b. The Safavid ambassador was curious to know who the foreigners were, recounts Feridun Ahmed Beg: "Consequently, speaking of the aforementioned infidel envoys, the [Safavid] envoys said, 'What amazingly luminous and magnificent people they are!' What ill-bred enemies these are that attribute to the infidels, who are in essential error and disbelief, luminosity. The absurd manners of these people are clear to me and there is sufficient proof that their figure is well-known and agreed-upon. Nevertheless, whereas the appearance and character of these lowly redheads (*ḳızılbāş*) is evidently wicked, there are so many individuals who befriend these people, respect and sympathize with them; even in certain matters prefer them. May God protect us! These sorts of people are worse than them. Blessings of the sultan for those ungrateful people are illegitimate."

40. . . . *de quali favori non se ne fà pur uno a qual si voglie amb.r de principe X.no* . . . ASVe, Senato, Dispacci Constantinopoli, Filza 2, 512a. See also Selānikī, *Tarih*, 1: 71.

41. Other formal visits to lower-ranking viziers followed, in which Shah Quli presented them similar assortments of gifts, fewer in number: *oltra che tutte le preditte cose erano piu ricche una belliss[im]a fodra de Zebelini doppò mandò esso Amb[asciato]r à parte un'altro presente fatto da lui particolarm[en]te de tapedi, spade, et altre cose d'azemia*. ASVe, Senato, Dispacci Constantinopoli, Filza 2, 513; *kā'ide-i kadīme üzre diyār-ı Şark tuhafından vükelā-i saltanata ibrişim kaliçe-i Hemedān ü Dergezīn ve tekye-i nemed-i Cām ve kütüb-i nefīse-i a'lā herbirine çekilüp*. Selānikī, *Tarih*, 1: 72; *l'ambassadeur offrit au grand-vizir et aux autres vizirs un choix des productions naturelles et industrielles de son pays: des tapis de soie de Hamadan et de Derghezin, des bonnets de Ghadjan, du savon d'Ardjan, des tabliers de Mehrouyan, des tapis de Darabdjerd, des housses de Djehrem, de la momie de Nirin, des étoffes légères de soie d'Yezt, d'autres plus fortes de Koum, des vêtemens de Bésa, et des lames de sabre de Schiraz*. Hammer-Purgstall, *Histoire*, 6: 323. Hammer-Purgstall's account is based on a letter written in Italian, which is a translation of a report by an attendant in the ambassador's retinue. He does not provide full citation for the letter.

42. *Il giorno dietro, presentati li passà, egli stesso poi andò a visitarli, dove nell'andare gl'intravenne un caso st[r]ano. Un giamoglano (mentre l'ambasciatore s'era inviato per andare a visitar Mahometto per lo primo), se gli fece incontro e gi sparò un'archibugiata per ammazzarlo, ma non lo colse, ma fu colto in vece sua, legiermente però, un gentiluomo principal suo, in un braccio. Il Persiano spaventatosi, credendo di esser tradito, voltò il cavallo per ritornarsene all'alloggiamento*. Pigafetta, *Itinerario da Vienna*, 234. *giamoglano* refers to *acemi oğlan* in Turkish. Literally meaning inexperienced youth, they were soldiers being trained to later join higher ranks within the janissaries, the Ottoman elite soldiers.

43. *et di subito fu fatta grandiss[im]a diligentia trovar quello che havea fatta la bota ma non si trovando et puolendo pur il mag[nifi]co Bassà metter terror al populo, et insieme dimostrar di tener conto del Amb[asciato]r fece di subito cavar di prigione un condannato alla morte, et fattolo strasinar per la città lo fecero morir credandosele avasse che era quello ch'havea sparata la preditta archibusata*. ASVe, Senato, Dispacci Constantinopoli, Filza 2, 512a–512b. A suitable criminal is quickly chosen, in Pigafetta's account, as promised, and brought before Sokollu and Shah Quli.

44. *Il giamoglano senza turbarsi rispose che ciò per altro egli non avea fatto, che per esser quello ambasciatore un eretico, e mandato da un re eretico, e inimico delli lor santi, e che perciò non era conveniente che venisse a far pace col suo Signore, e che di quella non ne era degno*. Pigafetta, *Itinerario da Vienna*, 244.

45. *Il che udito dal passà, fu condannato il giorno dietro ad esser strassinato per la città a coda di cavallo, e tagliatali una mano, esser decapitato*. Pigafetta, *Itinerario da Vienna*, 244.

46. This section is written in cipher on folio 512b. A decipherment is given in the next folio, by a different hand: *Ma non per cio resta, et ch l'Amb[asciato]r et tutti li soi non siano malissimo veduti da tutta il populo esplorandoli il tradimento fatto à Sultan baiesit ma all'incontro il S[erenissi]mo Sig[no]r memore del beneficio havuto ogni di commanda, che siano piu honorati, et accanzzati*. ASVe, Senato, Dispacci Constantinopoli, Filza 2, 513a.

47. Archivio di Stato di Mantova, AG, b. 1500, f. I, cc 121–123, reproduced in Sogliani, *Le Collezioni Gonzaga*, 112–13; Archivio di Stato di Firenze, Medici 3080, 43b–44a; *E il re di Persia ha mandato tutte l'armature di Soltan Baiazith, con li suoi camelli tutti, e anco tuta l'altra roba*; Pigafetta, *Itinerario da Vienna*, 230.

48. Quoted in Dickson and Welch, *Houghton Shahnameh*, 1: 270.

49. TSMK, H. 1339, 245b.

50. *L'ambasciatore veniva onorissimamente accompagnato così da Turchi, come da suoi gentiluomini. Andavano innanzi, oltra molti altri, in bella ordinanza, una pomposa cavalleria de spahi e chiaussi e altri cortigiani tutti bene a cavallo, e riccamente vestiti, molti con vesti di broccato d'oro, e di veluto, e altri con damaschi, e altri sorti di sete. Dietro a costoro poi venivano da trenta persiani a cavallo, vestiti alla persiana con vesti tessute di vari colori di lana, e altre di vari pezzetti di ormesini e taffetà di diversi colori, facendone minutissime figure d'uomini e donne, di cavalli, e d'altri animali, e altre vesti fatte a foggioni*. Pigafetta, *Itinerario da Vienna a Costantinopoli*, 246.

51. . . . *e nella fine di questi veniva solo l'ambasciatore, egli e il cavallo pomposissimamente addobato. Aveva di sopra una vesta di velluto cremesino, ma con altri colori mischiata. La sella e le redine e la testiera del cavallo nei debiti luoghi erano tutte lavorate di gioie, e quel drappo medesimamente che usano così essi, come i Torchi e gli Ungari di porre per ornamento sopra la groppa del cavallo era tutto riccamato di turchine. Quel corno, che avanza di sopra dal turbante dei persiani più d'un palmo e mezo, da turchi chiamato metevenchia, era tutto lavorato d'oro e di diverse sorti di gemme*. A slightly different version of the movement of the Safavid ambassador is also given in Hammer-Purgstall, *Histoire de l'Empire ottoman*, 6: 323–24.

52. Hammer-Purgstall, *Histoire de l'Empire ottoman*, 6: 323–24.

53. *Ve ne erano ancora alcuni con vesti di broccato d'oro, ma non così bello, come il turchesco, e qualchedun altro con vesti di velluto, e pochissimi con vesti di panno, perché di questo e di quello, anchorché abondino e di seta e di lana, non ve ne hanno,*

se non lo pigliano da Portoghesi che trafficcano a quelle parti per lo Golfo Persico. Pigafetta, *Itinerario da Vienna*, 246.

54. Cited in Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power*, 68.

55. TSMK, H. 1339, 246b.

56. Sources emphasize the turban's reference to Twelver Shiʿism, some stating that the turban was folded twelve times around the red baton, and others saying that the baton itself was divided into twelve sections. For visual representations of the Safavid headgear throughout the sixteenth century, and its transformation during the reign of Shah ʿAbbas, see Schmitz, "On a Special Hat."

57. *va badīn taqrīb sa jild muṣḥaf-i aʿlā ki aḥsan-i tuḥaf u hadāyā va nisbat-i bidān aʿlā binā az tuḥaf-i dīgar ansab va avvalī ast ihdā va irsāl raft*. Feridun Ahmed Beg, *Münşeʿātü's-selāṭīn*, 1: 527.

58. Fetvacı suggests that these lines might have been purposefully aligned to appear on this image. "Şehnāme-i Selīm Ḫān," 280.

59. *un Alcorano con l'autorità sola d'Alì, secondo essi tengono e cìo è di costume loro sempre rappresentargliene uno*. *Aveva le coperte riccamate d'oro*. Pigafetta, *Itinerario da Vienna*, 245. To my knowledge, this is the only contemporary observer who attributes the Qurʾan to ʿAli.

60. This Qurʾan fragment, currently in a private collection, was on view at the exhibition *Gifts of the Sultan* held at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in 2011. See Komaroff, *Gifts of the Sultan*, 18–19, 261 (cat. 148). It was previously sold in 1992 at auction. See *Islamic Art, Indian Miniatures, Rugs and Carpets London 20 October 1992 Christie's*, lot 232, 94–97.

61. ASVe, Senato, Dispacci Constantinopoli, Filza 2, 515a.

62. Mashhad, Astan-i Quds, no. 6. Written on parchment, the manuscript has fifteen lines per page. For other copies attributed to Imam ʿAli, see Farhad and Rettig, *The Art of the Qur'an*, 35, 65–66, cat. 11; Canby, *Shah ʿAbbas*, cat. 94–95; Blair, *Islamic Calligraphy*, 15, 127.

63. Blair, *Islamic Calligraphy*, 102.

64. See comments of Roxburgh, *Persian Album*, 317, mentioned previously above. Roxburgh, *Prefacing the Image*, 90–91, 131–32, 155, 171; Thackston, *Album Prefaces*, 11.

65. Cited in Roxburgh, *Prefacing the Image*, 170–71; Thackston, *Album Prefaces*, 11.

66. Roxburgh, *Prefacing the Image*, 90.

67. Qāżī Aḥmad, *Calligraphers and Painters*, 53–54, 107; Thackston, *Album Prefaces*, 7. See also Roxburgh, *Prefacing the Image* 131, 188.

68. *Şāh Tahmāsbuñ kendü adına dinilmiş ikiyüz elliṭokuz yirde taṣvīr-i meclis olunmuş muraṣṣaʿ cildle bir ḳıṭʿa şāhnāme*. TSMK, H. 1339, 246b. Other authors highlight the importance of the book by mentioning it immediately after the Qurʾan. In Giacomo Soranzo's list, this gift appears as a "book of the form, which must be letters, of the kind one prince sends another, with all pages in gilded calligraphy and illustrated with 259 figures." *1 libro della forma, che deveno essere le lettere, che un Princ[ipe] manda all'altro co[n] le carte tutte miniate d'oro con 259 figure*. ASVe, Senato, Dispacci Constantinopoli, Filza 2, 515a; Pigafetta lists it as a "book of history." The manuscript had 258 paintings, one fewer than what contemporary sources indicate. This might be a scribal error, as Dickson and Welch have noted. Dickson and Welch, *Houghton Shahnameh*, 1: 271.

69. For example, see the Metropolitan Museum of Art's online essay on the manuscript: Leoni, "The Shahnama of Shah Tahmasp"; Blair and Bloom, "Illustration, VI. C. 1500–c. 1900, 2. The Style of Tabriz, 1502–1548," 239–40.

70. Dickson and Welch, *Houghton Shahnameh*, 1: 4; Welch, *A King's Book of Kings*, 33; Canby, "Safavid Painting," 80–84.

71. For close readings of specific images as sources of Safavid material culture, see Canby, "The Material World of Shah Tahmasp"; and Canby, "Safavid Painting," 84–103.

72. *Turan* is a geographical term used to refer to the central Asian steppes. Hillenbrand wrote that by the 1520s, "the age of magnificent royal Shah-namas had long since passed." It was a time when shorter texts with fewer illustrations were produced. Hillenbrand, "Iconography of the Shāh-nāma-yi Shāhī," esp. 54–57.

73. Hillenbrand, "Iconography of the Shāh-nāma-yi Shāhī," 69.

74. On Tahmasp's renouncement of the arts, Welch, *A King's Book of Kings*, 68–73.

75. Gell, "Vogel's Net," 36.

76. Welch, *A King's Book of Kings*, 79. For the illuminations of the book, see Canby, "Illuminating Shah Tahmasp's *Shahnameh*," 329–33.

77. Annette Weiner calls inalienable possessions those objects "that are imbued with the intrinsic and ineffable identities of their owners, which are not easy to give away." When compared to similar objects that lack such qualities, because of their prestigious and memorable histories, inalienable possessions carry more authority as they change hands. Weiner, *Inalienable Possessions*, 6.

78. Most of the text of this section is reproduced and translated in Shani, "Parable of the Ship," 33–36. On the concepts of the prophet's family and successor or legatee, see Goldziher et al., "Ahl al-bayt," and Kholberg, "Waṣī."

79. Shani, "Parable of the Ship," 30.

80. Gruber, *Praiseworthy One*, 203. For an excellent analysis of the paintings of the ship of salvation, and their iconographic transformation in the sixteenth century, see chapter 4, "Safavid Paintings and a 'Shiʿi' Muhammad," 199–250. For the first four "rightly guided" caliphs, see Bosworth, "al-Khulafāʾ al-Rāshidūn."

81. Gruber, *Praiseworthy One*, 199–214.

82. Shani, "Parable of the Ship," 28–29; Gruber, *Praiseworthy One*, 204-6. As Shani mentions as well, according to a well-known tradition, the prophet said once: "The people of my house (*ahl al-bayt*) may be compared to Noah's Ark; whoever rides in it is saved and whoever hangs on to it succeeds and whoever fails to reach it is thrust into hell."

83. Gruber, *Praiseworthy One*, 204–6.

84. This painting is discussed in detail in Gruber, *Praiseworthy One*, 209–12.

85. See also Gruber, *Praiseworthy One*, 208–9.

86. There is no Ottoman commentary or other detailed sources on the reception of the *Shahnama of Shah Tahmasp* at the time of its gifting or later in the early modern period. The early nineteenth-century glosses on its paintings in Ottoman Turkish are superbly analyzed in Rüstem, "Afterlife of a Royal Gift."

87. Welch, *A King's Book of Kings*, 16.

88. Grabar, *Mostly Miniatures*, 67. Similarly, Eleanor Sims noted: "Some of its paintings are superlatively fine and merit every word of praise, contemporary or modern, ever lavished on them, others are good but undistinguished illustrations; still others are compositionally banal, even boring," *Peerless Images*, 64.

89. TSMK, H. 1499, 14a. Esin Atıl dates this manuscript bearing Sultan Süleyman's seal to 1520s–1530s. Atıl, *Age of Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent*, 74.

90. See Fetvacı, *Picturing History*.

91. For an overview, see Bağcı et al., *Ottoman Painting*.

92. Qāżī Aḥmad Qummī, *Khulāsat al-tavārīkh*, 1: 478. Malik Dailami was a master calligrapher at Tahmasp's court. See Simpson, *Sultan Ibrahim Mirza's Haft Awrang*; Roxburgh, *Prefacing the Image*, 33–34.

93. ASVe, Senato, Dispacci Constantinopoli, Filza 2, 515a. *Ermesine* ("ermesino" in the document) also appears as *ermisino* or *ormesino* in Italian sources. According to Luca Molà "ormesini" were "plain, light and inexpensive silk cloths of Levantine origin widely produced in Italy in the sixteenth century." Molà, *Silk Industry*, 405. In 1863, Giuseppe Tassini wrote that the name was associated with the island of Hormuz, where this kind of silk was thought to have originated: "Sotto il nome di ormesini comprendevansi certi drappi di seta provenuti in origine da Ormus città dell'Asia." Tassini, *Curiosità Veneziane*, 94.

94. Canby, *Shahnama of Shah Tahmasp*, 247, 349–50.

95. *Mumia*, or *mumiya* in Persian and Turkish, refers to bitumen used as a drug against poisoning and for healing wounds and aches and many other conditions. See below for more on this topic.

96. İrepoğlu, *Imperial Ottoman Jewelry*, 191–233.

97. British Library, Or. 2265, 60b; Canby, "Safavid Painting," 118.

98. See also İrepoğlu, *Imperial Ottoman Jewelry*, 250–59.

99. I am grateful to Akif Yerlioğlu, who generously shared with me his broad knowledge on this topic and patiently answered my questions. For a general introduction, see Dietrich, "Mūmīyā ʿ," and for a more in-depth discussion and sources, see Yerlioğlu, "Paracelsus Goes East," esp. 101–31.

100. Yerlioğlu, "Paracelsus Goes East"; Bachour, "Mumiya als Arznei"; Dannenfeldt, "Egyptian Mumia."

101. Capello, *Lessico farmaceutico-chimico*, 234.

102. Yerlioğlu, "Paracelsus Goes East," 102.

103. Kaempfer, *Exotic Attractions in Persia*, 365–71. Kaempfer actually identifies here another, less efficacious type of mumia, also found in Iran. I thank Rudi Matthee for his generous help on mumia, and for directing my attention to this recent edition of Kaempfer.

104. Kaempfer, *Exotic Attractions in Persia*, 365; Capello, *Lessico farmaceutico-chimico*, 234.

105. *et l'Amb[asciato]r presenter alla M[aes]tà sua una lettera del Re suo messa in una casetta d'oro Zogielata*. ASVe, Senato, Dispacci Constantinopoli, Filza 2, 514a.

106. Qāżī Aḥmad Qummī, *Khulāsat al-tavārīkh*, 1: 478. The letter is copied there, 478–545, and also in Sarı Abdullah Efendi, *Düstūr'ul-Inşā*, 298a–331a.

107. Mitchell discusses the letter in *Practice of Politics*, 128–37.

108. The construction of this new garden-palace began during the 1540s, and it was completed in 1557, two years after the Peace of Amasya. Shah Tahmasp moved his capital from Tabriz to Qazvin as it was less prone to Ottoman attack and was famous for its fertile land and abundant water supply, as Ehsan Echraqi notes in "Le *Dār al-Salṭana* de Qazvin," 105–15.

109. Mitchell, *Practice of Politics*, 132, 130. Qāżī Aḥmad Qummī, *Khulāsat al-tavārīkh*, 1: 521.

110. Colin Mitchell wrote that this section recounts the production and the presentation of the *Shahnama of Shah Tahmasp*. However, it seems to me that this is only implied because the poem places the *Shahnama* in a book shop (*dukkān-i ṣaḥḥāf*).

111. *Nashasta dar ān dilbarī chūn parī chū Bihzād dar fann-i ṣūratgarī / ba ṣūrat chanīn āmada bī-qarīn ki Mānī badu karda ṣad āfarīn*. Qāżī Aḥmad Qummī, *Khulāsat al-tavārīkh*, 1: 516. For Mani, see Sundermann, "Mani"; Roxburgh, *Prefacing the Image*, 174–181.

112. This vision is in keeping with Safavid art historical theory, in which significant artistic achievement was understood as being comparable to, or surpassing older masters of a particular craft. Roxburgh, *Prefacing the Image*. For a specific example, see 92–96, 126.

113. Cited and translated in Mitchell, *Practice of Politics*, 133–34.

114. . . . *dimandò appresso che li mercanti avessero libero commercio dall'una et l'altra parte, et che fusse aperta et sicurata la strada che essi persiani potessero andar alla Meca per via di Babilonia* . . . ASVe, Senato, Dispacci Constantinopoli, Filza 2, 513a.

115. Faroqhi, *Pilgrims and Sultans*.

116. Casale, "Global Politics in the 1580s"; also Casale, *The Ottoman Age of Exploration*, esp. 117–52.

117. In response to Tahmasp's appeal, Süleyman promised safe travel for Safavid pilgrims in the Peace of Amasya in 1555, declaring that that the holy lands of Islam were open to all Muslims (*umūm Müslimīn*). Kırzıoğlu, *Kafkas-Elleri*, 244, quoting the treaty as recorded by the Ottoman official and chronicler Celalzade Mustafa (d. 1567). For the Peace of Amasya, see also Kılıç, *Osmanlı-Iran*, 71–78. A copy of the shah's letter is recorded in Peçevi, *Tārīḫ-i Peçevī*, 1: 329–36; Feridun Ahmed Beg, *Münşeʿātü's-selāṭīn*, 1: 507–10; ʿĀrif Çelebi, *Süleymānnāme*, 603b–604b.

118. McChesney, "The Central Asian Hajj Pilgrimage," 133. See also Khodarkovsky, *Russia's Steppe Frontier*, 115.

119. ASVe, Senato, Dispacci Constantinopoli, Filza 2, 514a.

120. Ahmet Refik, *Rafızîlik ve Bektaşilik*, 24.

121. Eskandar Beg Monshi, *Shah ʿAbbas the Great*, 1: 253.

122. TSMK, A. 3595, 68a.

Chapter Three

1. Mauss, *The Gift*.

2. Hilsdale, "Visual Culture," 299–300. For the scenes of gift-bearing processions at the Achaemenid palace complex and related bibliography, see also Root, "Achaemenid Imperial Architecture"; and Mousavi, *Persepolis*, esp. 51–56.

3. Hilsdale, "Constructing a Byzantine Augusta," 458.

4. For repetition in Persian painting, see Swietochowski, "Book Illustration in Pre-Safavid Iran," 51; Adamova, "Repetition of Compositions"; Roxburgh, "Kamal al-Din Bihzad"; and Roxburgh, *Persian Album*, esp. 137–47.

5. Key scholarship on royal or elite artistic workshops (*kitābkhāna* or *naqqāshkhāna*) include Simpson, *Sultan Ibrahim Mirza's Haft Awrang*; Seyller, *Workshop and Patron*; Roxburgh, *Persian Album*; and Fetvacı, *Picturing History*.

6. Roxburgh, *Persian Album*, 143.

7. Roxburgh, *Persian Album*, 140.

8. For the Ottoman imperial workshop, see Fetvacı, *Picturing History*. For a recent comparison of Ottoman and Safavid artistic practice and artists' differing use of prototypes, see Necipoğlu, "Early Modern Floral," 142.

9. Fetvacı, *Picturing History*, 150.

10. Fetvacı, *Picturing History*, 178. The purpose and function of repeated scenes are especially at the heart of Fetvacı's discussion of the *Sūrnāme* (The festival book), 175–85. For a discussion of the Ottoman concept of "world order," see 80.

11. For an enlightening interpretation of repetition in late sixteenth-century Ottoman manuscript paintings as evoking an ideal, perpetual world at a time of significant political tension and reorganization of power inside the court and outside, see Fetvacı, *Picturing History*, esp. 149–88, 267–82.

12. Gebauer and Wulf, *Mimesis*, 91.

13. Illustrated histories at the Ottoman court were produced prior to the *Süleymānnāme*. But as Fetvacı argues, the Ottoman-style *shahnama* as a genre dates between 1557 and 1623. The *Süleymānnāme* is understood as the forerunner of this genre, with close structural and semantic ties to the eleventh-century Persian epic, but takes contemporary history to be its subject matter. See Fetvacı, *Picturing History*, esp. 15–20, for a general overview. For histories written at the Ottoman court in the style of Firdausi's text, see Tanındı, "The Illustration of the *Shahnama*." For an alternative view on the reception and popularity of Firdausi's *shahnama* at the Ottoman court, see Schmidt, "Reception of Firdausi's *Shahnama*." The *Book of Süleyman* was completed in 1558. It is the final book in the five-volume set of the *Şehnāme-i Āl-i ʿOs̱mān* (Book of kings of the house of Osman), conceived as a world history, beginning with the creation of mankind and ending with the Ottoman dynasty. Only the first and the fourth volumes, *Enbiyānāme* and *ʿOsmānnāme*, are extant. See Atıl, *Süleymanname*, 55–61; Grube, *Islamic Paintings*; Eryılmaz, "*Shehnameci*s of Sultan Süleyman," 76–215.

14. The author's full name is Fethullah ʿĀrif Çelebi. For ʿĀrifī's life and career at the Ottoman court, see Woodhead, "An Experiment"; Eryılmaz, "*Shehnameci*s of Sultan Süleyman," 22–36; Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual*, 30; Atıl, *Süleymanname*; and Yazıcı, "Aref Čelebī."

15. Woodhead, "Murad III and the Historians," esp. 90–91; and Fetvacı, *Picturing History*, esp. 269–78. In a recent study, Sinem Eryılmaz argues additionally that the book portrays the sultan as "the seal of kingship and faith," linking him directly to the Prophet Muhammad: "The tenth Ottoman sultan [Süleyman] is both the last of the great kings of universal dominion and the last of the saints with Muhammedan light." Eryılmaz, "*Shehnameci*s of Sultan Süleyman," 207, 170–75. For other authors who had conceived of Süleyman's mission along similar lines, see Fleischer, "The Lawgiver as Messiah." Fleischer argues in fact that Süleyman himself "actively participated in the formation of his messianic image, and for a time at least seems to have believed in his own apocalyptic role in history." Fleischer, 166.

16. However, as Gülru Necipoğlu has argued, rather than the personal charisma of Süleyman himself, the visual program of the book glorifies "the just power of an imperial state machine." In the paintings of the manuscript, the sultan is either surrounded by his ruling elite or he is completely absent, which has been interpreted as a conscious choice that underscores the efficiency of the state's administrative and military system. Necipoğlu, "A Kanun for the State, a Canon for the Arts," 212.

17. ʿĀrif Çelebi, *Süleymānnāme*, 189b.

18. ʿĀrif Çelebi, *Süleymānnāme*, 332a: *maʿẕirat khāstan*. The envoy is recorded to have expressed this plea during his audience with the sultan. ʿĀrif Çelebi, *Süleymānnāme*, 332b: *ṭalab kard ʿafv-i gunāh*.

19. ʿĀrif Çelebi, *Süleymānnāme*, 332a: *nukhust az lab-i shāh-i Irān-zamīn / z[a] lab kard khāk-i zamīn gauharīn*.

20. This title has roots and a long history in both the Islamic and ancient Iranian traditions. Kramers and Bosworth, "Sulṭān"; and Crone, *God's Rule*, 153.

21. As Gülru Necipoğlu has shown, this practice went back at least to the late fifteenth century. After they were made visible to the sultan, diplomatic gifts would be taken around the palace so that everyone else there would also have a chance to observe them. Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power*, 96–102.

22. ʿĀrif Çelebi, *Süleymānnāme*, 331b.

23. For these campaigns and relevant bibliography, see Şahin, *Empire and Power*, 88–122.

24. Kırzıoğlu, *Kafkas-Elleri*, 244, quoting the treaty as recorded by the Ottoman official and chronicler Celalzade Mustafa (d. 1567).

25. ʿĀrif Çelebi, *Süleymānnāme*, 604a: *judā nīst az hamdigar dīn-i mā*. For this letter, see also Diyanet, *Ilk Osmanlı-Iran*, 5–8; and Şahin, *Empire and Power*, 133.

26. Busbequius, *Travels into Turkey*, 78.

27. *basī hadīya va tuḥfa-yi shāhvār*. ʿĀrif Çelebi, *Süleymānnāme*, 602a.

28. ʿĀrif Çelebi, *Süleymānnāme*, 602b.

29. ʿĀrif Çelebi, *Süleymānnāme*, 603a.

30. Faẓlī Khuzānī, a seventeenth-century Safavid court chronicler, by contrast presents the dispatch of Farrukhzād Beg as a response to Sultan Süleyman's own request for peace in 1553–54. Abrahams, "Afzāl al-Tavārikh," 133–34.

31. *chanīn guft shāhā tuyī dar jihān*

32. Fetvacı, *Picturing History*, 10–11.

33. Woodhead, "Murad III and the Historians," 91, confirms this observation about the *Şehinşehnāme* (Book of the king of kings), the multivolume *şehnāme* produced for Murad III (discussed below). She writes that this project "narrates the significant military and political events but mainly from the standpoint of Istanbul, beginning with a lengthy description of Murad's accession ceremonies, and compensating for the sultan's absence from military action by showing him more often seated in state in the capital receiving envoys, gifts, and news."

34. Loḳmān, *Ẓafernāme*, 14b.

35. Loḳmān, *Ẓafernāme*. Minorsky and Wilkinson, *Chester Beatty Library*, 19–21. This manuscript is also often referred to as the *Tārih-i Sulṭān Süleymān Ḫān* (History of Sultan Süleyman). Completed in 1578–79, it was written by Seyyīd Loḳmān (d. 1601) and its paintings were executed by a group of artists working under the direction of Nakkaş ʿOsmān. It is thought to be a continuation of ʿĀrifī's *Süleymānnāme*, for it details the events of the latter part of Sultan Süleyman's reign, between 1559 and 1566. Atıl, *Süleymanname*, 53; Nyitrai, "Rendering History Topical"; and Fetvacı, *Picturing History*, 122–25. For Seyyīd Loḳmān, see Refik, "Bizde Şehnamecilik"; Woodhead, "An Experiment"; Kütükoğlu, "Şehnameci Lokman"; Fetvacı, "Office of the Ottoman Court Historian," 7–21; and Kazan, "Şehnameci Seyyid Lokman."

36. Loḳmān, *Şehnāme-i Selīm Ḫān*; Karatay, *Farsça Yazmalar*, 273; Çağman,

"Şehname-i Selim Han," 411–15; Bağcı et al., *Osmanlı Resim Sanatı*, 121–23; and Fetvacı, "Şehnāme-i Selīm Ḫān," 263–315. Paintings in this manuscript, like those of the *Ẓafernāme*, were executed by a team of artists led by Nakkaş ʿOsmān and Ali. Kazan, "Şehnameci Seyyid Lokman," 120.

37. Fetvacı, "Şehnāme-i Selīm Ḫān," 266.

38. Loḳmān, *Şehnāme-i Selīm Ḫān*, 53b–54a.

39. Ottoman historian and bureaucrat Feridun Ahmed Beg, in his *Nüzhet-i esrārü'l-aḫbār der Sefer-i Sīgetvār*, 248a, describes this custom in his account of the ambassador's audience with the sultan: *kapucībaşılarī müşārileyh Şāh Kūlī Sulṭānıñ ḳoltuġına girüb adāb-ı taʿẓīm ü tekrīm birle pāyeʾ-i ʿālī serīr-i gerdūn naẓīre getürüb*. See also Feridun Ahmed Beg, *Nüzhet-i Esrârü'l-Ahyâr*, eds. Arslantürk and Börekçi, 352.

40. Uluç, *Turkman Governors*, 469–505.

41. Loḳmān, *Şehnāme-i Selīm Ḫān*, 53b: *z[a] har jins-i maqbūl zībā u khūsh*.

42. Loḳmān, *Şehnāme-i Selīm Ḫān*, 54a: *muẕahhab qalām-i qadīm bi-jild-i muraṣṣaʿ bi-qadr-i ʿaẓīm*.

43. Loḳmān, *Şehnāme-i Selīm Ḫān*, 54a–55b.

44. For a discussion of the respect and envy that ʿĀrifī's work elicited, see Eryılmaz, "*Shehnameci*s of Sultan Süleyman," esp. 41–47. For the Ottoman historian Mustafa ʿĀlī's well-known criticism of Loḳmān, see Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual*, 105–6.

45. TSMK, H. 1339, 247b. See also Feridun Ahmed Beg, *Nüzhet-i Esrârü'l-Ahyâr*, eds. Arslantürk and Börekçi, 352, 353, 419.

46. For the new visual imperial iconography presented in late sixteenth-century Ottoman manuscript paintings more broadly, see Fetvacı, *Picturing History*, esp. 149–88, 267–82.

47. Loḳmān, *Şehinşehnāme*, vol. 1 [1581]. For this manuscript, see Aksu, "Sultan III. Murad Şehinşehnamesi"; and Bağcı et al., *Osmanlı Resim Sanatı*, 124–28.

48. Kazan, "Şehnameci Seyyid Lokman," 120–21.

49. Loḳmān, *Şehinşehnāme*, vol. 1, 20a, quoted in Yıldız, "Ottoman Historical Writing in Persian," 477. I have altered the translation only slightly.

50. For example, a painting about the presentation to the sultan of the Prophet Muhammad's newly discovered sword in Egypt (Loḳmān, *Şehinşehnāme*, vol. 1, 25a) underlines Murad III's claim to world dominion. The text above the painting reads: "The whole world is dependent, submissive to his splendor / the noble and the plebeian to his sovereignty" (*jahān jumla tābiʿ shahānash muṭī / bifarmān-ravā-yī sharīf u vażīʿ*). According to Fetvacı, *Picturing History*, 153, 279–80, in keeping with a wider trend of emphasis on Murad III's piety and its integration into this sultan's political and public image, this painting also attests to a new source of religious legitimacy sought by the Ottoman dynasty, for the transfer of this relic would designate the Ottoman sultan as the rightful heir to the Prophet.

51. Kütükoğlu, "Şah Tahmasb'ın III," 1.

52. Loḳmān, *Şehinşehnāme*, vol. 1, 38b–39a. Military parades of this sort, in which the sultan ceremonially enters the capital, were not unusual. In pictorial terms, however, it was previously not a popular theme in Ottoman manuscripts.

53. Stephan Gerlach noted that nearly 10,000 soldiers attended the parade. Gerlach, *Türkiye Günlüğü*. Loḳmān gives the much more exaggerated number of 120,000. Loḳmān, *Şehinşehnāme*, vol. 1, 35b: *fuzūn az ṣad u bīst bīvar hazār*.

54. The couplet inscribed on the left page reads: *z[a] rūzan ki shud chashm-i qāṣid birūn / qizilbāsh rā gasht ḥayrat fuzūn*. Loḳmān, *Şehinşehnāme*, vol. 1, 39a.

55. Loḳmān, *Şehinşehnāme*, vol. 1, 38a: *biguftand yārab khudāvandgār biʿālam muṭaʿī būd bar qarār*.

56. See Fetvacı, *Picturing History*, esp. 164–75.

57. Loḳmān, *Şehinşehnāme*, vol. 1, 41b–42a.

58. Fetvacı, *Picturing History*, 79.

59. Loḳmān, *Şehinşehnāme*, vol. 1, 42b: *bihangām-i pā-būs u afkandagī / pay-i pīshkash az sar-i bandagī*.

60. Many of these are cited in Kütükoğlu, "Şah Tahmasb'ın III," 6. There is additionally a Venetian archival document (dated May 27, 1576) that lists them: ASVe, Senato, Dispacci Costantinopoli filza 9, 96a–103a.

61. *on sekiz mücelled muraṣṣaʿ ü müzehheb kelām-ı ḳadīm-i rabbānī*. Loḳmān, *Zübdetü't-Tevārīḫ*, 91b. Historian Meḥmed Zāʿīm mentions ten Qurʾans. See Zāʿīm, *Cāmiʿ'üt-Tevārīḫ*, 308b.

62. Correr mentions sixty-three volumes in Persian, whereas Loḳmān records these as "more than sixty." ASVe, Senato, Dispacci Costantinopoli filza 9, 100a; Loḳmān, *Zübdetü't-Tevārīḫ*, 91b.

63. The record in the *Zübdetü't-Tevārīḫ* is as follows: *birkac ḳıṭʿa muṣavver muraḳḳaʿ ḫutūt-ı sabʿa ve taʿlīḳ ve reyḥānī*. A catalog entry for the famous Shah Tahmasp Album (IUK, F. 1422) claims that it was one of the gifts sent by Tahmasp in 1576. This claim is based on a note written much later on the flyleaf: "Formé pour Shah Tahmasp par Shah Quli Khalifah son garde des sceaux, cet album a du faire partie de présents du Shah, offerts à Murad III, en 1576." Edhem and Stchoukine, *Les manuscrits orientaux*, 40–43. For this album, see Roxburgh, *Persian Album*, 196–212. The album currently has eighty-nine folios. Roxburgh (343–44n35) has argued that folios might have been removed from it through the years, but "these can only be few in number, a hypothesis based on the premise that the thickness of the current gathering corresponds to the width of the spine." Since Loḳmān noted multiple volumes, it is entirely likely, as Roxburgh has argued, that the mid-sixteenth-century albums he has studied were among these. See *Persian Album*, 317. I am very grateful to Esra Akın-Kıvanç for sharing her thoughts on Loḳmān's entry.

64. *ve emtiʿa ẕeylinde onbīñ dāne siyah balıkcıl telī*. Loḳmān, *Zübdetü't-Tevārīḫ*, 91b.

65. *lacrime di cervo, scatole n[ume]ro 3*. In Ottoman Turkish, just as in Italian, bezoars were likened, according to legend, to tears formed in the eyes of deer that had just been bitten by a snake. See Tuğ, "Guynetü'l-Muhassılīn," 100, 108. Loḳmān, *Şehinşehnāme*, vol. 1, 42b, notes that the bezoar cases were many in number, all made of silver: *basī ḫuqqa-yi sīmīn pur pādzahr*. See also Potts, "Ibex, Persian." On the origins, circulation, and various attitudes toward the effectiveness of bezoar stones in the early modern period, see Borschberg, "Euro-Asian Trade," 29–44; Fricke, "Making Marvels—Faking Matter."

66. Cited and discussed in Barroso, "Bezoar Stones," 196. Barroso distinguishes different types of bezoars according to place and animal of origin and efficacy.

67. Only Correr itemizes these in detail, as thirty-four large silk carpets, two very large silk carpets, and fourteen "mosque carpets," which must be prayer rugs. See Rogers, "Europe and the Ottoman Arts," 2: 721. Correr's list also includes nine velvet carpets in diverse colors, in addition to five very fine wool carpets.

68. Loḳmān, *Şehinşehnāme*, vol. 1, 42b.

69. Kütükoğlu, "Şah Tahmasb'ın III," n.24. For hunting birds, see also Reindl-Kiel, "Dogs, Elephants, Lions"; Veinstein, "Falconry in the Mid Sixteenth Century"; Borromeo, "The Ottomans and Hunting."

70. Loḳmān, *Zübdetü't-Tevārīḫ*, 91a–91b.

71. ASVe, Senato, Dispacci Costantinopoli filza 9, 100a: *tutti gioielate, et miniate*.

72. Selānikī, *Tarih*, 1: 114: *Baʿdehu Dīvān-ı adālet-unvāna ilçi-i mezbūr gelüp nāmeyi teslīm eyledükde azīm kalabalık dīvān oldı. Tuhaf u hedāyā-yı memālik-i Acem be-gāyet bī-hadd u bī-kıyās çekildi. Dīvān-ı muʿallānun dār u medārı tamāmen pişkeş çekenler ile mālī oldı. Yalnız kırk hazīnelük murassaʿ u mücevver sütün ile ve akmişe-i rengīn ile duhte bir otak-ı gerdūn-nitāk çekildi. Teşrīfāt defterinde dahi bu tavr üzre yazıldı. Hiç bir tārīhde şāhān-ı pīşīnden Divān-ı ālīye gelmiş ve yazılmış değildi*. Selānikī, *Tarih*, 1: 114.

73. Loḳmān, *Şehinşehnāme*, vol. 1, 43b.

74. Loḳmān, *Şehinşehnāme*, vol. 1, 44a: *bikursī nashast az pay-i sayr u gasht / naẓar kard bar khaima va bāz gashtguzasht az tamāshā-yi ān khaima zūd / ki andar khur-i himmatash tang būd*.

75. Loḳmān, *Şehinşehnāme*, vol. 1, 54a, 122a, 141b.

76. Loḳmān, *Şehinşehnāme*, vol. 1, 141b.

77. Loḳmān, *Şehinşehnāme*, vol. 2 [1592]. Karatay, *Farsça Yazmalar*, 274–75. This volume covers Murad III's reign, between the years 1580 and 1584. Completed in 1592, it was presented to Sultan Murad III's son Mehmed III in 1597/98 (1006). Bağcı et al., *Osmanlı Resim Sanatı*, 152. It contains ninety-five paintings. Atasoy, "III. Murad Şehinşehnamesi"; and Bağcı et al., *Osmanlı Resim Sanatı*, 152–55.

78. Among the ninety-five illustrations contained in the manuscript, the theme of contacts with the Safavids is prominent. These include scenes of the sultan's appointment of commanders to the front, military clashes, and diplomatic receptions.

79. By contrast with the first volume of the *Şehinşehnāme*, the role assumed by the sultan in the paintings of the second volume is not restricted to that of a sedentary ruler whose only contact with the world beyond his palace is audiences he gives to foreign envoys and his own vassals. While the sultan is similarly always depicted in the capital, he participates in various activities besides giving audiences to envoys. Nevertheless, he makes few appearances, thus emphasizing the strength of his state's administrative and military institutions, which run perfectly well without his constant approval or presence. For the variety of roles assumed by the Ottoman ruling elite and military commanders in illustrated manuscripts, see Fetvacı, *Picturing History*.

80. Loḳmān, *Şehinşehnāme*, vol. 2, 29b.

81. Camille, *Mirror in Parchment*, 339.

82. Loḳmān, *Şehinşehnāme*, vol. 2, 24b–25a.

83. Loḳmān, *Şehinşehnāme*, vol. 2, 33b–34a.

84. Loḳmān, *Şehinşehnāme*, vol. 2, 26a.

85. Schweigger, *Sultanlar Kentine Yolculuk*, 87–88.

86. Loḳmān, *Şehinşehnāme*, vol. 2, 28b–29a, 36b–37a, respectively.

87. Loḳmān, *Şehinşehnāme*, vol. 2, 26b: *jihān gasht pur az qumāsh-i ʿAjam*.

88. ASVe, Senato, Dispacci Costantinopoli filza 14, 223a.

89. Schweigger, *Sultanlar Kentine Yolculuk*, 89.

90. Loḳmān, *Şehinşehnāme*, vol. 2, 36a: *qumāsh-i ʿAjam jumla bā kash u fash*.

91. Mustafa ʿĀlī, *Cāmiʿuʾl-buhūr*, 25: *her biri tuḥfe-i ulüʾl-elbāb*. See also Reindl-Kiel, "Power and Submission," 46–47; Uluç, *Turkman Governors*, 463–66; Uluç, "Ottoman Book Collectors."

92. Mustafa ʿĀlī, *Cāmiʿuʾl-buhūr*, 26.

93. Other members of the Safavid court joined the shah in offering gifts, for it is recorded that Khudābanda's mother, Sultanum Bekum, sent some to the Ottoman queen mother, and his sister to the female attendants of the court. The Safavid crown prince, Hamza Mirza, also sent two groups of gifts, for the sultan and for Prince Mehmed. Each of these individual lists emulates the gifts sent from Khudābanda to Murad III, taking it as a template. Mustafa ʿĀlī, *Cāmiʿuʾl-buhūr*, 26–28.

94. Camille, *Gothic Idol*, xxvii.

95. Loḳmān, *Şehinşehnāme*, vol. 2, 75b–76a.

96. Terzioğlu, "Imperial Circumcision Festival," 85–86.

Chapter Four

1. This is a heroic account of Ferhad Pasha's eastern campaign and the Ottoman conquest of Ganja. Penned by Rahimizade Ibrahim Çavuş, it was presented to Murad III in 1590 by the chief black eunuch Mehmed Agha. Two copies of the work exist: the lavish copy illustrated with twenty paintings is found in: TSMK, R. 1296. The other, unillustrated copy completed a year later, is in IUK, TY 2372, 99a–160b. The Topkapı manuscript was recently published in full: Rahimizade Ibrahim Çavuş, *Kitāb-ı Gencīne-i Feth-i Gence*, eds. Karaağaç and Eskikurt. On this book, see also Fetvacı, *Picturing History*, 185–87; Tanındı, "Bibliophile Aghas (Eunuchs)," 334–35; Çağman and Tanındı, "Remarks on Some Manuscripts," 144–45; Uluç, *Turkman Governors*, 486–87, 490–91.

2. *perverdeʾ-i sāyeʾ-i ẓıll-ı ilāhī olmak ricāsıyla*.

3. *ben pādişāh-ı islām ḥażretlerinüñ sāʾīr ḳullarī gibi bendesiyim muḳaddemā iġvā-yı şeyṭān-ı bedkār ve ilḳā-yı aʿvān [u] enṣārile ṭārīḳ-ı ʿināda sālik olduḳca ḳuvvet-i ḳāhireleriyle cemīʿ vilāyetüm ḳabż u żabṭ idüb elümde bāḳī ḳalancasınuñ daḫi māl u menāl talān ve ricāl ü nisā ü etfālün nālān itdiler bu āna dek itdügimüz efʿāle peşīmān olub ʿafv u iḥsānları ricāsına ḳarındaşum oġlī sulṭān ḥaydarī sizüñle der-i ʿadālet-i destgāha irsāl eylemege muḳarrer itmişimdür*. TSMK, R. 1296, 45b.

4. "Singularization" is developed in Kopytoff, "The Cultural Biography of Things," 64, 73–77. Theories that attribute agency to things in social relations are useful. But most focus on objects, while the case of the prince considers agency from the point of view of an objectified human. Appadurai, "Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value"; Gell, *Art and Agency*, 3–63; Latour, *Reassembling the Social*; Miller, *Stuff*.

5. Marcel Mauss famously discussed gift exchange as a reciprocal and competitive dialogue in *The Gift*.

6. TSMK, R. 1296, 46b. Only the envoy's name is mentioned by the Safavid historian Iskandar Beg Munshi. See Eskandar Beg Monshi, *Shah ʿAbbas the Great*, 2: 587.

7. Cod. 8626, 128a. *Des kinigs [Koenigs] aus Persia son [Sohn] so 1590 auff Constandinopll durch list unnd prattica des Sinam Wascha ist geschickt worden*. Cod.

8626, 128. I thank Professor James Tracy for the translation. For the album, and this drawing, see Arbasino, *I Turchi*; Unterkircher, "The Imperial Codex." Unterkircher dates the album between 1590 and 1593, the dates of the Persian prince's entry into the Ottoman capital and the beginning of the Ottoman-Habsburg war. Babinger, "Drei Stadtansichten von Kostantinopel"; Tanındı, "Transformation of Words"; Casale, "A Peace for a Prince," 46–48.

8. See also Milstein, *Miniature Painting in Ottoman Baghdad*, 99. Recently, Melis Taner has brought to light an illustrated copy of the poet Bāḳī's collection of poetry, which includes another painting of the prince's entry into Istanbul. See Taner, "Harvard Sanat Müzesi'nde Bulunan."

9. Schmitz, "On a Special Hat."

10. For these dignitaries, see Tanındı, "Transformation of Words," 136; Taner, *Caught in a Whirlwind*.

11. Bāḳī, *Bākī Dīvānı*, 15. In some copies of Bāḳī's *dīvān*, the title is simply: "In praise of Sultan Murad Khan" (*der sitāyiş-i Sulṭan Murad Ḫan*). For example, Bāḳī, *Dīvān-ı Bāḳī*, 23.

12. Loḳmān presents a similar view: "What was unknown became visible with [the aid of] those who arrived at the truth / God rendered the Redheads powerless / With war, the East opened just as the West / God spoke and the enemy was struck / No man of obstinacy was left in the world / [They] became submissive to the king, full of firm belief."

> *ḥażır olub ġāyib erenlerle hep / ḳıldī ḳızılbāşī berüftāde rab*
> *ġarb gibī şarḳ açılūb ḥarble / ḳāʾil-i ḥaḳ oldī ʿaduvv żarble (darble)*
> *ḳalmadī ʿālemde bir ehl-i ʿinād / oldī muṭīʿ şaha pāk iʿtiḳād.*

Loḳmān, *Şehnāme-i Āl-i ʿOs̱man*, 131b.

13. *o şāh-ı nāmversin kim Ḳırım Ḫān'ı ʿAcem şāhı.* "you are that renowned king, who are the Khan of Crime or the Shah of Iran?" Mustafa ʿĀlī, *Divan*, 1: 230–231. Also Loḳmān wrote: *ḫān-ı ḳırım bendeʾ-i dīrīnesī / şāh-ı ʿacem çāker-i bī kīnesī.* Loḳmān, *Şehnāme-i Āl-i ʿOs̱man*, 133a.

14. *öñce Hasan Paşa yürürdī süvār / peyrevī mīrzāy iṭaʿāt medār*. Loḳmān, *Şehnāme-i Āl-i ʿOs̱man*, 130b–131a. The manuscript is dated 999 (1590/91) on 178b. The text of this manuscript is complete but most of the marginal decorations and paintings in it are unfinished. It only includes portraits of sultans Osman, Orhan, and Mehmed I. See Rieu, *Catalogue of the Turkish Manuscripts*, 16–17; Tanındı, "Transformation of Words," 134–36.

15. *açdī ʿacem milketinī serbeser / rehn ile ḳurtardī başın sürḫser*. Loḳmān, *Şehnāme-i Āl-i ʿOs̱man*, 132a.

16. Everyone was dressed lavishly for the occasion (*müretteb ü mükemmel*). TSMK, R. 1296, 52a; Loḳmān, *Şehnāme-i Āl-i ʿOs̱man*, 138b–139a.

17. *oldīlar āgāh ḳızılbāşlar / yüklediler çādırī ferraşlar*
oldī ḳaṭār ile muḳaddem revān / pīşkeşī bāc u ḫarāc-ı cihān.
Loḳmān, *Şehnāme-i Āl-i ʿOs̱man*, 138b.

18. *saḥaʾ-i zībende arīż u vesīʿ / bünyeʾ-i cüdrānī metīn ü refīʿ*
çekse alayī ānda hezārān süvār / yüzbīñ alayuñ daḫī boş yerī vār.
Loḳmān, *Şehnāme-i Āl-i ʿOs̱man*, 138b.

19. Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial and Power*, 50–52. Rahimizade instead calls it the Gate of Felicity (*bāb-ı saʿādet*).

20. *ḫayretle dikdī yere başınī / çātdī ḫacāletden ikī ḳāşınī*. Loḳmān, *Şehnāme-i Āl-i ʿOs̱man*, 139a.

21. The robes probably came from the treasury. Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial and Power*, 79.

22. *ḳāldī bu āyīne şah oġlī ʿaceb / fikre ṭālūb ḫayretle āçdī leb*
itdī ne ḫoş leşker-i zībendedür / resm-i dilfürūz u şekībendedür.

Loḳmān, *Şehnāme-i Āl-i ʿOs̱man*, 144a.

23. Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial and Power*, 66, 101–2; Reindl-Kiel, "East Is East and West Is West," 115.

24. ASVe, Senato, Dispacci Costantinopoli, filza 30, 390.

25. Similarly, ʿAbd-Allah Hātifī was a poet educated in the late Timurid period who later found work at the Safavid court. He is the author of the historical tale for Ismaʿil, *Shāh-nama-yi Shāh Ismāʿīl*, and other long poems emulating Niẓāmī, such as the *Haft Manzar* (Seven countenances), a copy of which was among the gifts brought with Haydar Mirza in 1590, as in the list above. See Safa, "Persian Literature," 957.

26. *dürlū ḫuṭūṭile muraḳḳaʿ tamām / ḳıṭʿalarından dil ü cān şehdkām*
ekz̲erī taʿlīḳ ile ḫoşḫaṭṭ idī / çehreʾ-i cānān gibī muḫaṭṭat idī
cedvel ü tez̲hībleri bī mis̱āl / baḳsa teṣāvīrine ehl-i kemāl
fikr idinūb ʿaḳl ile cānlar cānī / rūḥ-ı muṣavver ṣānūr idī ānī.

Loḳmān, *Şehnāme-i Āl-i ʿOs̱man*, 145a.

27. ASVe, Senato, Dispacci Costantinopoli, filza 30, 390.

28. Dispatch of *bailo* Giovanni Corraro ASVe, Senato, Dispacci Costantinopoli filza 9, 100a. See also Loḳmān, *Zübdetü't-Tevārīḫ*, 91a, 91b. Loḳmān's account is discussed at length in Kütükoğlu, "Şah Tahmasb'ın III."

29. ASVe, Senato, Dispacci Costantinopoli filza 9, 100a. In *Zübdetü't-Tevārīḫ*, Loḳmān confirms this, though he indicates the number as "more than sixty": *ve altmış cildden ziyāde muʿteber farisī naẓm u nez̲r kitāb-ı şirindastānī*. Loḳmān, *Zübdetü't-Tevārīḫ*, 91b.

30. ASVe, Senato, Dispacci Costantinopoli filza 9, 100a; and *üç hokka mūmiyāʿ-i maʾdenī ve panzehr-i hayvānī*, Loḳmān, *Zübdetü't-Tevārīḫ*, 91b.

31. Hunting animals are recorded in an Ottoman document, as discussed in Kütükoğlu, "Şah Tahmasb'ın III," 6–7.

32. As noted above in chapter 3, Loḳmān, *Şehinşehnāme*, vol. 2, 26b: *jihān gasht pur az qumāsh-i ʿAjam*; ASVe, Senato, Dispacci Costantinopoli filza 14, 223a. Salomon Schweigger mentions only two copies of the Qurʾan and turquoise stones in *Sultanlar Kentine Yolculuk*, 89.

33. These are listed in their fullest extent by Mustafa ʿAli, as also mentioned in chapter 3: Mustafa ʿĀlī, *Cāmiʿuʾl-buhūr*, 25–26.

34. The terms of the treaty are recorded in Feridun Ahmed Beg, *Münşeʿātü's-selāṭīn*, 2: 157–60. See also Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlı-Iran*, 197; Kılıç, *Osmanlı-Iran*, 129–31.

35. *Şehā ṣāḥib-ḳıranlıḳ z̲āt-ı pāküñle temām oldı / ʿAcem şāhınuñ oġlı geldi kūyuñda ġulām oldı*. The poem is titled "Panegyric Poem in Praise of the Esteemed Prince for the Coming of the Son of the Shah of Iran" (*ḳasīde der-medḥ-i şehzāde-i muhterem berāy-ı āmeden-i püser-i şāh-ı ʿacem*). Mustafa ʿĀlī, *Divan*, 1: 230–31.

36. For the ritual practice of kissing the sultan's hand, see Brummett, "A Kiss Is

Just a Kiss." The first illustration in the same book shows, for example, Ferhad Pasha kissing the tip of the sultan's robe. TSMK, R. 1296, 5b, reproduced in Fetvacı, *Picturing History*, 84.

37. For example, Newman, *Safavid Iran*, 52; Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlı-Iran*, 197; Kılıç, *Osmanlı-Iran*, 126–32. See also Feridun Ahmed Beg, *Münşeʿātü's-selāṭīn*, 2: 157–60.

38. ASVe, Senato, Dispacci Costantinopoli, filza 30, 390.

39. For example, whether the region of Karacadağ (or Qarajadāgh) should remain under Safavid rule was an issue of debate during the negotiations. There was disagreement even among Ottoman officials on whether that region was conquered, which encouraged the Safavid envoy to insist that he could not agree to leave those lands to the Ottomans. Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlı-Iran*, 202–6.

40. Naṭanzī is openly critical of the shah on this issue, for he refers to Mahdiquli Khan in this instance as "that aggrieved guiltless one" (*ān bī-gunāh-i maẓlūm*). Afushtah-i Naṭanzī, *Nuqavat al-āṯār fī ẕikr al-akhyār* [1598], 383.

41. *Des Kindts [Kindes] Hoffmeister ders [der es] aus Persthia hatt gen [gegen] Constantinopll bracht ht im darnach von seinem kinig [Koenig] den kopff abgeschlagen worden das er das kindt nicht hatt wider [wieder] gebracht*. Cod. 8626, 125b. I thank Professor James Tracy for this translation.

42. Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlı-Iran*, 203.

43. Qara Ahmad Sultan arrived in Istanbul at the end of August 1591. Seeing that the shah's letter raised objections about leaving the region of Nahavand to the Ottomans, Ottoman courtiers pressured Qara Ahmad to not even mention this issue to the sultan durng the audience. Selānikī, *Tarih*, 1: 251–53; Kılıç, *Osmanlı-Iran*, 135. For the dispute over Nahavand, see also Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlı-Iran*, 204–6.

44. Selānikī, *Tarih*, 1: 252–55. According to Selaniki, the Ottoman establishment did not credit such a pressure from Shah ʿAbbas, for no such news had previously come to their attention. They also did not want to jeopardize the peace treaty they had just signed with ʿAbbas. For a detailed discussion of the correspondence between the Ottoman court, Khan Ahmad, and Shah ʿAbbas, see Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlı-Iran*, 207–8n20.

45. Shah Tahmasp's daughter Maryam Sultan Begom was married to Khan Ahmad in 1578. Eskandar Beg Monshi, *Shah ʿAbbas the Great*, 1: 339, 2: 622–24. After his three-month-stay in Istanbul, Khan Ahmad headed for Iraq to visit the holy Shiʿi shrines in Najaf and Karbala (with Ottoman permission and financial support). Later, he planned to appeal to the Uzbeks but failed and returned to Istanbul. For Khan Ahmad's stay in Istanbul, see Selānikī, *Tarih*, 1: 267, 295–301. For further discussion of the Khan Ahmad incident, including Ottoman and Safavid sources regarding the issue and how the issue continued to dominate Ottoman-Safavid relations in the first of half of the 1590s, see Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlı-Iran*, 206–13; Kasheff, "Gīlān."

46. On the importance of Gilan in silk production see Inalcık, "The Ottoman State," 219–30; Matthee, *Politics of Trade*, esp. chaps. 2 and 3. For an overview of the competition over this area, see Kortepeter, "Complex Goals."

47. Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlı-Iran*, 209–210. It is also clear from the correspondence between the two courts that the Ottomans were threatened by the shah's offensive on Gilan.

48. McChesney, "Conquest of Herat."

49. Akdağ, *Dirlik ve Düzenlik Kavgası*; Griswold, *Great Anatolian Rebellion*;

Barkey, *Bandits and Bureaucrats*. For a recent analysis that takes as the main source of troubles drastic changes in climate, see White, *Climate of Rebellion*, 163–187.

50. *ve bunda Südde-i saʿadet-medārda olan Hamza Mirza oğlı Haydar Mirza'ya bir tarīk ile gezend irişdürmek kızılbaş-ı bed-maʿāş tāʾifesinün aksā-yı merāmları olup ve mā-beynde olan sulh u salāhı ber-taraf eyleyüp, yine keʾl-evvel hāl-i ālem zārī olmak içün kār-zāra başlamak evbāşlarınun murādı idüği rūşen ü müberhendür' diyü hūşmendān iş ʿār eylediler idi*. Selānikī, *Tarih*, 1: 268.

51. Eskandar Beg Monshi, *Shah ʿAbbas the Great*, 2: 707.

52. ASVe, Senato, Copie Ottocentesche dei Dispacci, Registro 11, 254; Selānikī, *Tarih*, 1: 268; Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlı-Iran*, 216.

53. Peçevi, *Tārīḫ-i Peçevī*, 1: 320; also Hasan Bey-zāde Ahmed, *Hasan Bey-zāde Tārīhi*, 2: 365.

54. *Saʿādetle sulṭān Meḥmed cülūs / buyurdī bülend oldī avāz kūs*
el öpdī sipah çıḳdī inʿām hem / Ḳırım ḫānlarī, Mīrzā-yı ʿAcem.

David Collection, 19-2009, fols. 15b–16a. The book was sold at auction in 2009: *Arts of the Islamic World Including Fine Carpets and Textiles London 7 October 2009* (auction catalogue), Sotheby's, lot 58.

55. These paintings are analyzed in Tarım Ertuğ, "Depiction of Ceremonies." See also Tanındı, "Osmanlı Sarayında Safevi Şehzadeler."

56. Tarım Ertuğ, "The Depiction of Ceremonies," 255–58. As Tarım Ertuğ argues, a novelty in the painting of Ahmed I's accession is the depiction of the second court from a wider angle. Differently from previous examples, the statesman before Ahmed I kisses his hand.

57. *Şehzāde Haydar Mirza'yı pürsiş-i hātır itmek ve dāyesin getürmek takribiyle*. Selānikī, *Tarih*, 2: 446. Mehmed III's letter to Shah ʿAbbas gave news of Murad III's death, his subsequent enthronement, and asked for the prayers and good wishes of the Safavid religious establishment in the western campaign the sultan was preparing to embark on. Mehmed III also granted permission that ʿAbbas send two officials to Baghdad, which was under Ottoman rule, so the poor and needy around the holy Shiʿi shrines there would be fed. The sultan did not, however, allow the Shah to complete the project of changing the path of the Euphrates, so it would go by the holy Shiʿi shrine in Najaf, which was a project first formulated by Shah Ismaʿil. A copy of the letter is in Feridun Ahmed Beg, *Münşeʿātü's-selāṭīn*, 2: 352–55. Shah ʿAbbas's letter to Sultan Murad is partly cited and discussed in Falsafī, *Shah ʿAbbas-i Avval*, 5: 1688–91.

Chapter Five

1. The letter is summarized in Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlı-Iran*, 217.

2. Zulfaqar Khan Qaramanlu, the governor of Ardabil, left Khurasan at the end of May 1596. Yazdī, *Tārikh-i ʿAbbāsī*, 147; Eskandar Beg Monshi, *Shah ʿAbbas the Great*, 2: 688, notes three hundred men in the embassy. Selaniki records a thousand people. Selānikī, *Tarih*, 2: 653.

3. ASVe, Senato, Copie ottocenteschi dei dispacci, Registro XI, 257–59, dated January 1597. A copy of the same list was also sent to Florence. It is published in Spallanzani, *Carpet Studies*, 174–75. Ottoman and Safavid chronicles mention these gifts in passing.

4. *Un altro libro che si chiama Devanesai che vuol dire croniche de Imperatori*; see appendix 6. In the Florentine list, this is given as *Roanisai*, as reproduced in Spallanzani, *Carpet Studies*, 174. Although "Devanesai" sounds like *Dīvān-i Shāhī*, which would refer to the collected poems of Amīr Shāhī Sabzavarī (d. 1453), the description negates that reading. Neither of these words help us decipher the title back into the original Persian or Turkish. I thank Stefano Pellò and Sheila Blair for kindly thinking with me about the undecipherable names and titles in this document.

5. Eskandar Beg Monshi, *Shah ʿAbbas the Great*, 2: 688.

6. Selānikī, *Tarih*, 2: 640. The display of these animals is also mentioned in a report from the Venetian ambassadors to the Senate. ASVe, Senato, Copie ottocenteschi dei dispacci, Registro XI, 156.

7. *ve şimdiye dek Asitāne-i saʿādete diyār-ı Şark'dan gelen kızılbaşlar tavrına muhālif uslūb-ı garīb ihtirāʿ eyleyüp, taçları gayet küçük ve sendereslu ve sarıkları müdevver edebde sūfiyāne haşa irsāliyyesi de var ve üstüne murassaʿ balıkcın sorguç dahi takınmışlar ve Han'un saruğı hindī alaca harīrden vākı olmuş hatta önünce bir yedek sarūğı dahi getürülüp giderdi. Ve yanınca peykler ve ardınca tīr u kemān ile kafadarları ve yedi yorgun ve turgun murassaʿ eğerlü yedekleri ve üç eğeri Özbek'den alınmış murassaʿ kaltaklar ki aktarmamızdur diyü arz-ı kālā eylediler*. Selānikī, *Tarih*, 2: 639–40.

8. ASVe, Senato, Copie ottocenteschi dei dispacci, Registro XI, 253.

9. They say this was due to the current shortage of horses, poor treatment of the existing ones, and broader problems within the military organization in Istanbul: *La causa di cosi poca compagnia Turchesca che viene attribuita al mancamente de cavalli essendo comparsi anco maltrattati quelli che vi erano et perchè ancora la gente di questa militia si trova in male stato*. ASVe, Senato, Copie ottocenteschi dei dispacci, Registro XI, 253–254.

10. TSMK, H. 1609, 68b–69a. This manuscript, in the genre of *gazanama* (campaign monograph), tells the story of Mehmed III's western campaign in which he conquered the Fortress of Eğri, and his defeat of the Habsburg army at the Battle of Haçova (Mezökeresztes). The text was written by Talikizade Mehmed in verse, who personally attended the campaign. For Talikizade, see Woodhead, "From Scribe to Litterateur." Paintings of the manuscript were executed by Nakkaş Hasan. For this manuscript and its paintings, see (Tanındı), "Nakkaş Hasan Paşa"; Fehér, *Turkish Miniatures*; Çabuk, "Eğri Seferi Şehnāmesi"; Woodhead, "Ottoman Historiography," 469–477; Woodhead, "The Ottoman *gazaname*," 55–60; Bağcı et al., *Osmanlı Resim Sanatı*, 180–81.

11. Çabuk, "Eğri Seferi Şehnāmesi," 243.

12. *alʿā serāser ve dībālar ve atlas ve kemhālar ve çatmalar ve sirenkler* (serenkler). Selānikī, *Tarih*, 2: 652. For these fabrics, see Tezcan, *Atlaslar Atlası*, 30–34; Raby and Effeny, *Ipek*, 341.

13. *envā ve ecnās-ı akmişe-i Acem ve Frengi çeküp kızılbaşlar'un ellerine virüp*. Selānikī, *Tarih*, 2: 653; Çabuk, "Eğri Seferi Şehnāmesi," 242–49.

14. Considering sultanic favors and provisions provided for his household insufficient, Zulfaqar Khan is said to have gone shopping for more provisions at high prices in Istanbul. He also refused to stay at the palace prepared for him because it was previously assigned to the hostage Safavid prince Haydar Mirza, who had died there. Selānikī, *Tarih*, 2: 634, 640, 675–77. For the office of the *sipahsalar*, see

Minorsky, *Tadhkirat Al-Muluk*, 75–76; Savory, "The Office of *Sipahsalar*"; Floor, *Safavid Government Institutions*, 17–18.

15. For the office of *sadr* in the Safavid administrative system, which had roots in the Timurid and Turkoman courts, see Minorsky, *Tadhkirat Al-Muluk*, 111; Savory, "Safavid Administrative System"; Arjomand, *Shadow of God*, 123–125; Turner "Ṣadr"; Floor, "The *sadr* or Head."

16. *Gördiler ki ilçinün suhan-verlik ile münāsebeti yok āmiyāne kişi mikdārınca söylediler*. Selānikī, *Tarih*, 2: 656–57.

17. According to Selaniki, Zulfaqar Khan presented ʿAbbas's letter and was allowed to speak only briefly; he simply wished that the sultan's rule be blessed, and his opponents be forever suppressed. The letter expressed the shah's condolences for the death of Murad III and congratulations to the new sultan Mehmed III on his enthronement. Shah ʿAbbas also apologized for the delay in the dispatch of the embassy, which was due to his military engagement in Khurasan. This letter is partly cited in Falsafī, *Shah ʿAbbas-i Avval*, 5: 1693–95. According to the report to the Venetian Senate *[il] Persiano habbia egli mandato questo suo Ambasciatore a far l'ufficio di congratulatione; ma essendo stato l'Ambasciatore lungamente dentro la camera del Gran Signore a trattar seco ciò ha dato occasione molto di discorrere dicendosi che nella capitolatione di pace seguita tra questi due potentati il Gran Signore habbi promesso di tenir in deposito Tauris sino a tanto che il figliuolo del Persiano all'hora piccolo fusse pervenuto a certa età ma che essendo morto il detto figliuolo con sospetto che possa esser stato avitato da questa parte l'Ambasciator a nome del Re di Persia ricerche hora che le sia restituita questa piazza, il tempo farà conoscere la verità di queste trattationi*. ASVe, Senato, Copie ottocenteschi dei dispacci, Registro XI, 254–55.

18. The envoy left for Iran in March that year, having had a final audience with the sultan, after which he was presented with many gifts. Zulfaqar Khan received a horse with silver chains and saddle and many precious robes of honor. For Shah ʿAbbas, he was given a horse with gold chains and saddle. Additionally, fifty men in his retinue were given precious robes of honor of the highest quality (*hilʿat-ı serāser-i fāhireler*). Selānikī, *Tarih* 2: 675. Among Safavid sources, only Iskandar Beg Munshi mentions briefly that Zulfaqar Khan arrived in Iran "bearing appropriate gifts." Eskandar Beg Monshi, *Shah ʿAbbas the Great*, 2: 689.

19. Rizvi, *The Safavid Dynastic Shrine*, see esp. 159–86. For ʿAbbas's struggles with the Uzbeks, see Eskandar Beg Monshi, *Shah ʿAbbas the Great*, 2: 727–63. For Safavid-Uzbek relations during the reign of Shah ʿAbbas, see Falsafī, *Shah ʿAbbas-i Avval*, 4: 1435–52.

20. Eskandar Beg Monshi, *Shah ʿAbbas the Great*, 2: 773. Bellan, *Chah Abbas I*, 76–86; Ross, *Sir Anthony Sherley*, 26–27. As Kütükoğlu points out, Iskandar Beg Munshi does not give the name of the ambassador. *Osmanlı-Iran*, 220. It is noted as "eşik ağası Karahan Ağa" in Selānikī, *Tarih* 2: 814.

21. ASVe, Senato, Dispacci Costantinopoli filza 49, 307a.

22. *Egli nell'audientia sua presentò al Re dodeci chiavi d'oro, et dodeci di argento sopra due piatti di legno miniate; et disse, che havendo che suo Re con il favor di Dio, et con le buona amicitia del Gran Sig[no]re soggiogato, et superato il suo nemico, et impostori cosi del suo paese, egli riconoscendo il tutto della pace, che conserva con S[ua] M[aes]tà le mandava à presentar quelle chiavi do venti quattro città, et castelli requistati, le quali egli come sue le offeriva*. ASVe, Senato, Dispacci Costantinopoli

filza 49, 340b–341a. The Ottoman historian Selaniki phrases the message from the shah in the first person: "My fortresses and my own self belong to the padshah, the refuge of the world." Selānikī, *Tarih* 2: 814.

23. ASVe, Senato, Dispacci Costantinopoli filza 49, 341a.

24. Two Ottoman sources briefly mention the keys, as Bekir Kütükoğlu has noted. The seventeenth-century Ottoman chronicler Karaçelebizade Abdülaziz wrote: "When the shah of Iran claimed Khurasan and Mashhad without litigation, he sent twenty-four keys to fortresses he had conquered as a gift to the Porte of the king of kings by way of reverence" (*ṣüret-i ṣadāḳatden tuḥfeʾ-i dergāh-ı şehinşāh sitāre*). Karaçelebizade Abdülaziz, *Ravżatü'l-Ebrār*, 487. In Selaniki's account, the twenty-four keys are said to have been presented in one gold and one silver tray (*biri altun tebsi ve biri gümüş tebsi içinde koyup*). Selānikī, *Tarih* 2: 814.

25. At the Topkapı Palace Museum, there remain a few dozen keys of fortresses that have either been conquered or presented to sultans through the centuries. Most of these, especially those that bear inscriptions and dates are from the nineteenth century. For these keys, see Ünal, "Kale Anahtarları"; Aslanapa, "Kale Anahtarları." Though we know little about the ceremonial use of these keys to various fortresses, there is relatively more information about the keys to the Kaaba, which were also held, with great pride, by the Ottomans. For the keys to the Kaaba, see Yılmaz, *The Holy Kaʿba*; Aydın, *Sacred Relics*; Beyoğlu, "The Ottoman and the Islamic Sacred Relics." See also Öz, *Hırka-i Saadet Dairesi*; İslam and Alsan, *Mukaddes Emanetler*; Şehsuvaroğlu, "Müslümanlığın Mukaddes Emanetleri."

26. *Disse medesimam[en]te al Dragomano, che havevano questi accettate le chiavi, mà restituite poi p[er] essere ritornate al Rè ringratiandolo di questa sua cortese dimostratane, il che fù detto dall'Amb[asciato]re al Dragomano con riso, dicendogli, che non havevano bene intesa la interpretatione di questo presente, ne volse passar più oltre*. ASVe, Senato, Dispacci Costantinopoli filza 49, 396b–397a.

27. The *bailo* notes that he relates these remarks through the mediation of the ambassador's dragoman. ASVe, Senato, Dispacci Costantinopoli filza 49, 396b.

28. Anonymous, *A Chronicle of the Carmelites in Persia*, 1: 79–80.

29. Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 191.

30. Erginbaş, "Reappraising Ottoman Religiosity," 72.

31. Şahin, *Empire and Power*, 97–100.

32. Sussan Babaie has argued that even though the foundations for the Masjid-i Shah were not laid till 1611, "the reasons for raising such a congregational mosque must have been rooted in the very initial plans for the refashioning of Isfahan as the capital." As Babaie points out, unlike his predecessors, Shah ʿAbbas did not make any additions to the Great Mosque of Isfahan, the venerated Seljuk mosque that had received some sort of architectural imprint from all of that shah's predecessors. Rather, he devoted his complete attention to building a new capital city. Babaie, *Isfahan and Its Palaces*, 86.

33. Qurʾan, 62:9–10. See also Goitein, "DJuma."

34. Shah Tahmasp ordered the performing of Friday prayers under his rule, but the practice could never be institutionalized and was enforced only intermittently. During the reign of the same king, Syrian ʿAmili scholars, al-Karaki in particular, encouraged participation in Friday prayer by arguing that a deputy (*mujtahid*) of the Hidden Imam could lead the prayer; in that case, the ritual could be optional, but not obligatory. During the reign of Shah ʿAbbas, leading religious scholars

concurred that it was "licit but optional." Abisaab, *Converting Persia*, esp. 20–22, 37–39, 56, 79–86, 112–114; Stewart, "Notes on the Migration"; Arjomand, *Shadow of God*, 134–44. In fact, the debate had roots in the tenth century. See Algar, "Emām-e Jomʿa." For this debate and the various treatises on the issue written in Safavid Iran, see Stewart, "Polemics and Patronage"; Newman, "Fayd al-Kashani."

35. Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 31–32, 34–35. For Ottoman mosque complexes, see also Goodwin, *History of Ottoman Architecture*. For the systematic integration of Sunni orthodoxy into Ottoman state identity and its relationship to state-sponsored architecture, including the legal enforcement of Friday prayer, see Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 47–70.

36. Peçevi, *Tārīḫ-i Peçevī*, 1: 320.

37. Peçevi, *Tārīḫ-i Peçevī*, 1: 320.

38. Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 34.

39. Abisaab also shows how ʿAmili theologians came to prominence, with the support of Shah ʿAbbas, after a period in which they had fallen out of favor in the aftermath of Shah Tahmasp's death. During the reign of Shah ʿAbbas, ʿAmili commentaries on important legal texts were made more accessible through their translation into Persian, which was used effectively to promote and reinforce the Shiʿi tradition not only among the religious elite but also in the daily activities and worship of a wider public. The contents of predominant debates, together with the resulting edicts and rulings by religious scholars on mundane issues indicate a conscious effort for "political control from above and the gradual diffusion of social discipline from below." Abisaab, *Converting Persia*, 53–87.

40. For example, Bahaʾi wrote an important treatise in Persian on this. Commissioned by Shah ʿAbbas, this work "made accessible to the court the principles of Imami faith; as such it contributed significantly to the court-sponsored process of the Persianization of Shiʿism." Babaie, *Isfahan and Its Palaces*, 98–99. Friday prayer was not favored by all contemporary theologians. For Bahaʾi and Lutf-Allah, see Newman, "Towards a Reconsideration"; Stewart, "The Lost Biography of Bahaʾ al-Din al-ʿAmili"; Newman, "Fayd al Kashani"; Abisaab, *Converting Persia*, 53–87.

41. Iskandar Beg Munshi also records that in fact, the chronogram for the laying of the Masjid-i Shah declared: "A second Kaaba has been built." Eskandar Beg Monshi, *Shah ʿAbbas the Great*, 2: 1038–39. Similar to the nearby Lutf-Allah Mosque, Masjid-i Shah's inscriptions praised God, the Prophet Muhammad, his daughter Fatima, and his son-in-law Imam ʿAli, in addition to the remaining Shiʿi imams, from whom Shah ʿAbbas claimed descent. These inscriptions were carefully selected to promote the Twelver Shiʿi orthodoxy instigated by Shah ʿAbbas's new state. In fact, as Gülru Necipoğlu has noted, rather than Qurʾanic verses, these inscriptions feature disproportionately more prophetic traditions (*hadith*) such as the famous "I am the city of knowledge and ʿAli is its gate," which is frequently cited in Shiʿi traditions as attesting to Muhammad's own designation of ʿAli as his successor. The weaving together of the names of the Fourteen Infallibles with such sayings of the Prophet aimed therefore to announce and clarify Safavid genealogical claims to rulership. As such, the Masjid-i Shah proudly declares Shah ʿAbbas's position as the protector and propagator of the Twelver Shiʿi faith. The inscriptions have been interpreted here as discussed in Necipoğlu, "Qurʾanic Inscriptions," 69–104. The inscriptions are given in Hunarfar, *Ganjīna*, 427–64.

42. Babaie, *Isfahan and Its Palaces*, esp. 85–87, 90–98.

43. The inscription is dated 1012/1603–4. Partial translation is in Newman, *Safavid Iran*, 57. Full inscription is given in Hunarfar, *Ganjīna*, 402. For more on the Lutf-Allah Mosque, see Hunarfar, *Ganjīna*, 401–15; Hillenbrand, "Safavid Architecture," 784–86; Blake, *Half the World*, 147–50; Babaie, *Isfahan and Its Palaces*, 85–86.

44. Momen, *Shiʿi Islam*, 111. For the Masjid-i Shah, see Hillenbrand, "Safavid Architecture," 786–89; Blake, *Half the World*, 140–47; Babaie, *Isfahan and Its Palaces*.

45. For ʿAbbas's pilgrimages and patronage of shrines, see esp. Rizvi, "Sites of Pilgrimage"; Canby, *Shah ʿAbbas*, 186–95; Rizvi, *Safavid Dynastic Shrine*, 174–85; McChesney, "Waqf and Public Policy"; Melville "Shah ʿAbbas and the Pilgrimage to Mashhad"; Farhat, "Islamic Piety and Dynastic Legitimacy," 174–229; Soudavar, "A Chinese Dish"; Mawer, "Shah ʻAbbās and the Pilgrimage to Mashhad."

46. The recent liberation of Mashhad from the Uzbeks, who had raided the shrine there, stripping it of its valuable Safavid additions, is also significant. In 1599, ʿAbbas ordered the persecution of Sunnis in Surkheh, or Simnan, in northwestern Iran. There is also a record of the execution of a local leader (*kadkhuda*) in Hamadan in 1608, on account of his maltreatment of Shiʿis under his jurisdiction. Shah ʿAbbas punished the Sunnis by other methods as well, for example by excluding them from occasional tax exemptions. Arjomand, *Shadow of God*, 120–21, 165.

47. Matthee, "Between Venice and Surat." For the hajj during the early modern era and the Ottoman responsibility of protecting pilgrims, see Faroqhi, *Pilgrims and Sultans*; Pearson, *Pilgrimage to Mecca*; Farooqi, "Moguls, Ottomans, and Pilgrims."

48. Isfahan replaced Qazvin as capital in 1597/98. Eskandar Beg Monshi, *Shah ʿAbbas the Great*, 2: 724. On Shah ʿAbbas's Isfahan, see Babaie, *Isfahan and Its Palaces*. See also Babaie et al., *Slaves of the Shah*, esp. 80–113; Blake, *Half the World*; McChesney, "Four Sources on Shah Abbas."

49. ʿAbbas faced opposition on dynastic grounds when he came to power, for his father was still alive. Added to this, a spiritual challenge was initiated by millenarian Sufi movements such as the Nuqtavi, whose "prophetic forecast" predicted new leadership at the beginning of the new millennium. Babayan, *Mystics, Monarchs, and Messiahs*. For an overview of the reigns of Ismaʿil II (1576–77) and Muḥammad Khudābanda (1578–87), see Newman, *Safavid Iran*, 41–49; Canby, *Golden Age of Persian Art*, 81–91.

50. A previous civil war that had broken out following the death of Shah Ismaʿil, between 1524 and 1536, propelled Shah Tahmasp to pursue an alternative military force formed by Circassian, Georgian, and Armenian slaves (*ghulam*). However, "it was Shah ʿAbbas who fully institutionalized military and domestic slavery and broke with the Safavid tribal and messianic past." Babaie et al., *Slaves of the Shah*, 6; see also Savory, *Iran under the Safavids*, 76–78.

51. ʿAbbas also selectively recruited individual tribal members, referred to as *shahsevan*, or those who love the shah. The *shahsevan* had a secular attachment to the shah, distinct from the militant supporters of Shah Ismaʿil, who were expected to have a spiritual attachment, or *ṣūfīgārī* (conduct suitable for Sufis). Babaie et al., *Slaves of the Shah*, 7; Minorsky, "Shah-sewan," 267–68; Roemer, "The Safavid Period," 214; Momen, *Introduction to Shiʿi Islam*, 111; Tapper, *Frontier Nomads of Iran*.

52. For the various units of the army before and after Shah ʿAbbas's reign, see Haneda, "Army, iii. Safavid Period." On various occasions, Shah ʿAbbas ordered firearms from Europe, or received them as gifts. For the use and history of firearms during the Safavid period, see Matthee, "Firearms, i. History"; Matthee, "Unwalled Cities," 389–416. Roger Savory estimates the full army to number about 40,000 soldiers. In addition, Shah ʿAbbas expanded the royal bodyguard to about three thousand officials, formed entirely by the *ghulam*s. For a comparison of Shah ʿAbbas's slaves to their Ottoman counterparts (*kapıkulları*), see Savory, *Iran under the Safavids*, 79–80.

53. In addition to the religious institutions he established, such as the two mosques and the madrasas in the royal square in Isfahan, Shah ʿAbbas endowed pious institutions in honor of the Fourteen Infallibles, which were supported by his entire wealth and income. These included income from the imperial bazaar complex (*Qaysariyya*), *khan*s and baths in Isfahan, and valuable objects such as rare manuscripts in Arabic with religious content, other literary and historical books in Persian, porcelain, jewels, goldware, and silverware. For these pious endowments and their ideological underpinnings, see McChesney, "Waqf and Public Policy." Among other architectural expressions of the strong tie between Shah ʿAbbas's new state and his devotion were a shrine attached to the royal palace in Isfahan and a stone associated with the first Shiʿi imam, ʿAli, which was placed in front of the palace's gate overlooking the imperial square (ʿAli Qapu). For the shrine, the stone, and the rituals associated with it, see Necipoğlu, "Framing the Gaze," 309.

54. Necipoğlu identifies commerce as the royal quadrangle's principal purpose in "Framing the Gaze," 310.

55. Minorsky, trans. and ed., *Tadhkirat Al-Muluk*, 14. From the Mongols to the Ottomans, Tabriz and Bursa appeared as two hubs of silk trade and production. For silk trade and production see Inalcık and Quataert, *Economic and Social History*; Inalcık, "Ḥarīr"; Dalsar, *Bursa'da Ipekçilik*; Matthee, *Politics of Trade*, 19.

56. Inalcık, "The Ottoman State," 228. Selim's embargo could hardly be maintained on legal grounds, as Halil Inalcık noted.

57. Silk production in Bursa depended on a continuous flow of cheap raw silk from Iran. Inalcık, "The Ottoman State," 228–29.

58. Bacqué-Grammont, "The Eastern Policy of Süleyman," 219–28.

59. On their way to Europe, spices and other goods coming from India passed through the Persian Gulf into the Levant. Those lands, including Baghdad and Aleppo, came under Ottoman control in the 1530s. The area around the Ottoman-Safavid border, however, remained mostly under Safavid control until the 1580s. The Istanbul Peace Treaty of 1590 signed between Shah ʿAbbas and Murad III gave the Ottomans definitive territorial authority over Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Shirvan, wherein were major centers of silk production. Gilan and Mazandaran, equally significant centers of silk cultivation, were conquered by ʿAbbas at the end of the sixteenth century. Then, Azerbaijan and Shirvan were reclaimed by the Safavids during the first decade of the seventeenth century, as ʿAbbas reopened the warfront with the Ottomans.

60. Minorsky conceived of ʿAbbas as a mercantilist and a true capitalist. Minorsky, *Tadhkirat Al-Muluk*, 14. For a critical discussion, see also Matthee, *Politics of Trade*, 69–74.

61. Steinmann, "Shah ʿAbbas and the Royal Silk Trade," 68–74; see also Steensgaard, *The Asian Trade Revolution*.

62. Matthee, *Politics of Trade*, 67–68. The shah's active encouragement of his people to go on pilgrimage to Shiʿi shrines in Iran while banning the hajj is one such measure. The ban was issued in 1618.

63. Gregorian, "Minorities of Isphahan"; Herzig, "The Rise of the Julfa Merchants"; Baghdiantz-McCabe, *The Shah's Silk for Europe's Silver*; Matthee, *Politics of Trade*, 84–90; Babaie et al., *Slaves of the Shah*.

64. For a discussion of Armenian merchants' financing of the Safavid treasury, see Babaie et al., *Slaves of the Shah*, 49–79.

65. Matthee, *Politics of Trade*, 77–78.

66. Ferrier, "European Diplomacy of Shah ʿAbbas."

67. Berchet, *Venezia e la Persia*, 43–47, 192–93, 197; Gallo, *Il Tesoro di S. Marco*, 260–61; Casale, "Persian Madonna and Child."

68. During the Ottoman-Safavid war, Shah ʿAbbas proved extremely successful, recovering almost all the territories he had lost in 1590, including the major centers of silk production in that area. But the lack of a concrete promise from Europe for collective political support, combined with the signing of the Ottoman-Habsburg peace treaty in 1606, led him to be more aggressive in his quest for diverting the silk route from Anatolia. A mission sent to Spain in 1608, for example, directly expressed this idea to the king. The envoys explained to the king that if he sent ships to Goa on the western coast of India and Hormuz in the Persian Gulf twice a year, both sides would benefit immensely, which would also inflict a heavy blow on the Ottoman economy. The embassy had also brought a very large amount of silk. Even though the shah expected his envoys to sell it in Spain, to see how much profit it would yield, it was presented as a gift to Phillip III. Infuriated, the shah executed the responsible envoy upon his return to Iran. Another embassy to Portugal traveled around the Cape of Good Hope to reach there, in order to demonstrate the feasibility of alternative routes in carrying silk.

69. Yazdī, *Tarikh-i ʿAbbāsī*, 427; Mustafa Sāfī, *Zübdetü't-tevārīh*, 2: 144.

70. Kâtib Çelebi, *Fezleke*, 1: 448.

71. Mustafa Sāfī, *Zübdetü't-tevārīh*, 2: 142; Eskandar Beg Monshi, *Shah ʿAbbas the Great*, 2: 1058.

72. Ferrier, "An English View," 201. See also chapter 3 above.

73. Anonymous, *Les Cérémonies de l'entrée*, cited in Börekçi, "Factions and Favorites." I located only one copy of this pamphlet at the Bibliothèque nationale de France.

74. A kind of cotton fabric. *Boccassini* in Italian comes from *bogasī* in Turkish. Amanda Phillips describes it as a coarse cotton twill. Phillips, *Sea Change*, 252.

75. Contarini, "Relazione," 194. Katip Çelebi summarizes the peace contract (*sulhname*): Kâtib Çelebi, *Fezleke*, 1: 449, 460; Mustafa Sāfī, *Zübdetü't-tevārīh*, 2: 144; Peçevi, *Tārih-i Peçevī*, 2: 340; Topçular Katibi Abdülkadir Efendi, *Tarih*, 2: 602. For the treaty, see Feridun Ahmed Beg, *Münşeʿātü's-selāṭīn*, vol. 2; Küpeli, *Osmanlı-Safevi Münasebetleri*, esp. 89–91.

76. *Şah Abbas her sene yüz yük harīr ve yüz yük emtiʿa-i bī-nazīr göndermeğe müteʿaddid iken iki sene mürūr edip göndermemekle ve "Ben harāca mı kesilsem gerek" demekle* . . . Naʿīmā, *Tārih*, 2: 421; Peçevi wrote that according to the treaty

of 1612, Shah ʿAbbas was supposed to send the Ottoman sultan every year two hundred loads of silk, plus one hundred loads of other goods. Peçevi, *Tārih-i Peçevī*, 2: 340; della Valle, *Viaggi di Pietro della Valle*.

77. Küpeli wrote that border issues weighed heavier in restarting the war in 1615. *Osmanlı-Safevi Münasebetleri*, 80.

78. *muʿayyen o miḳdār ipek her yıle / yanınca hedayā-yı bīḥad ile.* Nādirī, *Şehnāme*, 28a; Külekçi, "Ganī-zāde Nādirī," 352.

79. TSMK, H. 1124, 24b–25a. For a discussion of this manuscript and its place within the Ottoman tradition of royal history writing, see Değirmenci, "Resmedilen Siyaset," esp. 167–72. The entire text of the manuscript has been edited and transliterated in Külekçi, "Ganī-zāde Nādirī." My references to the text are from Nādirī's *Şehnāme* at the Süleymaniye Manuscript Library: Ahmed Paşa 280.

80. Alberti, *Viaggio a Costantinopoli*, 56–57.

81. *yüz yük ipek ve dört fil ve bir gergedan ve baʿzı hedāyā*. Kâtib Çelebi, *Fezleke*, 1: 516.

82. *Garāyib hedāyası var cümleden / Getürdi nice pil ile gergedan*. Külekçi, "Ganī-zāde Nādirī," 352.

83. Earlier anthropologists conceived of gifts and commodities as distinct, even diametrically opposed forms of circulation: Gregory, *Gifts and Commodities*. Others have objected to and revised this strict division, by pointing out, for example, that a commodity "is not one kind of thing rather than another, but one phase in the life of some things." Appadurai, "Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value," 17. See also Strathern, *The Gender of the Gift*; Gell, "Inter-tribal Commodity Barter," 142–68.

84. Eskandar Beg Monshi, *Shah ʿAbbas the Great*, 2: 1026–27.

85. (Ergin) Macaraig, "The Fragrance of the Divine," 74.

86. Köseoğlu, *The Treasury*, 207.

87. Eskandar Beg Monshi, *Shah ʿAbbas the Great*, 2: 1088.

88. Kacharava, "Archbishops of Alaverdi."

89. By the time ʿAbbas returned to Iran, Tahmuras had already written to the Ottoman sultan to express his loyalty and to seek protection. The Georgian campaign altogether disturbed the Ottomans, who interpreted it as proof of ʿAbbas's insincerity for peace. The embassy that brought the crown was accompanied by an Ottoman ambassador who had been held against his will. Eskandar Beg Monshi, *Shah ʿAbbas the Great*, 2: 1093–94.

90. The Mughal emperor Jahangir sent artist Bishn Das to document the embassy's experience and reception by the shah. His paintings inspired numerous copies into the nineteenth century. See Canby, *Shah ʿAbbas*, cats. 19–21.

91. The falcon is mentioned in the letter from ʿAbbas to Jahangir: Islam, *Indo-Persian Relations*, 1: 190. For ʿAbbas's gifts to Jahangir, Eskandar Beg Monshi, *Shah ʿAbbas the Great*, 2: 1172.

92. Here, I follow Igor Kopytoff's definition of commodity, as "a thing that has use value and that can be exchanged in a discrete transaction for a counterpart," in "Cultural Biography," 68.

93. BOA, KK 667, 28, cited and summarized in Ünyay, "Hediye ve Hediyeleşme," 225. For the fragrant herb tefarik (*Pogostemon patchouli*), see Abdülaziz Bey, *Osmanlı Âdet, Merasim ve Tabirleri*, 555.

94. For Ottoman-Safavid relations after 1639, see Güngörürler, "Diplomacy and Political Relations."

95. TSMA, D5903r, unpaginated. Since this document concerns only the horses to be drawn from the imperial stables, the sultan's gift might have included other items.

Epilogue

1. Barry, "Walking on Water," 646.

2. Mauss, *The Gift*, 3.

3. Cecily Hilsdale advances this distinction between the dominant anthropological approach on the one hand, and an art historical one, in "Gift."

4. Bataille, *The Accursed Share*, 69; Mauss, *The Gift: Expanded Edition*, 182.

5. Ingold, "Materials against Materiality."

6. The Treasury Section of the museum is appropriately located where the Inner Treasury of the Topkapı Palace used to be. For the history of that building, constructed by Mehmed II, see Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power*, 124–41; Necipoğlu, "Spatial Organization of Knowledge."

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