From Patrons to Poets:

Sultan Selīm I as a Poet-Sultan

by

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April 2024

A thesis submitted to McGill University in partial fulfillment of the
requirements of the degree of Master of Islamic Studies

To the Persian language,

which is both the wound and the remedy

Abstract

This thesis explores the complex role of Sultan Selīm I as both a poet and a sultan within the framework of sacral kingship in the Islamic world of the post-Mongol era. By delving into the interplay between his poetic endeavors, his sovereign image, and the broader cultural context, it highlights the strategic use of poetry and *tezkires* (biographical dictionaries of poets) in shaping the sultan's persona and his cultural policy. Through a meticulous analysis of sultan's dīvān—a collection of his poetry—alongside an examination of *tezkires* that document his contribution to literature, this study illuminates the significance of linguistic choice, thematic content, and integrating poetry with the visual arts in crafting an image of a Sufi poet-sultan. It argues that Selīm I's poetry and the portrayal of his literary persona in *tezkires* were critical tools in institutionalizing and transmitting sacral charisma, thereby reinforcing his legitimacy and authority as a ruler. This examination not only contributes to our understanding of Ottoman intellectual history, but also showcases the nuanced ways in which literature and art served as conduits for political and ideological expression during a transformative era in the Ottoman Empire.

Résumé

Cette thèse explore le rôle complexe du Sultan Selīm I en tant que poète et souverain dans le cadre de la royauté sacrée dans le monde islamique de l'ère post-mongole. En se penchant sur l'interaction entre ses entreprises poétiques, son image souveraine et le contexte culturel plus large, elle met en lumière l'utilisation stratégique de la poésie et des tezkires (dictionnaires biographiques de poètes) dans la formation de la personnalité du sultan et de sa politique culturelle. À travers une analyse minutieuse du dīvān du Sultan - une collection de sa poésie - ainsi qu'un examen des tezkires documentant sa contribution à la littérature, cette étude éclaire l'importance du choix linguistique, du contenu thématique et de l'intégration de la poésie avec les arts visuels dans la création d'une image d'un sultan poète soufi. Elle soutient que la poésie de Selīm I et la représentation de sa persona littéraire dans les tezkires étaient des outils essentiels dans l'institutionnalisation et la transmission du charisme sacré, renforçant ainsi sa légitimité et son autorité en tant que dirigeant. Cet examen contribue non seulement à notre compréhension de l'histoire intellectuelle ottomane mais montre également les façons nuancées dont la littérature et l'art ont servi de conduits pour l'expression politique et idéologique pendant une ère de transformation dans l'Empire ottoman.

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<u>Clarification of the Transliteration</u>

Navigating the transcription of the words, which often carry different pronunciations in Persian and Turkish transcriptions, was a challenge. To harmonize this issue, I opted for the Persian transcription when the text was in Persian and the Turkish transcription for texts in Ottoman Turkish and rarely Chaghatay Turkish. So, we can see both *Hasht Bihisht* and *Heşt Bihişt* for two different books. Then we understand the first is in Persian and the latter is in Turkish. The practicality of language resource accessibility drove this decision. However, given the thesis's primary focus on Ottoman literature, I used the Turkish transcription for words that appeared consistently in both Persian and Turkish contexts within the research to maintain clarity. The best example of this is the word "*tezkire*" instead of "*tazkire*." I provided both forms of each word at their first occurrence to ensure comprehensiveness. I kept the Arabic pronunciations for religious terms. Additionally, when a noun had a well-established English form, such as "Chaghatay" over "Çakatay," the English version was utilized to align with recognized scholarly conventions. In both Persian and Turkish, I performed the transliteration based on the IJMES system.

Introduction

The present dissertation concerns the figure of Sultan Selīm I (r.1512-1520) as a poet ruler in correlation to the phenomenon of sacral kingship in the post-Mongol era. Sacral kingship in the Islamic context emerged in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries as a phenomenon rooted in a new sociopolitical order which was shaped by the influence of Sufi orders and closely linked to messianic and saintly expressions of sovereignty. Muslim rulers of the largest empires of Islamdom embodied their sacrality in the manner of saints as spiritual models. Particularly, Azfar Moin's sociological-ethnographic study on Mughal and Safavīd kingship suggests analyzing the tangible actions and symbolic strategies employed by rulers in order to evoke sacral charisma, emphasizing the importance of routine and ritual social practice. [1] Within this framework, I will argue that the poetry composed by rulers was a valuable instrument in the production, institutionalization, and transmission of sovereign charisma to posterity.

Sacral kingship played a significant role in Ottoman intellectual history, particularly during the sixteenth century. The Ottoman sultan, as described by Hüseyin Yılmaz, was depicted as the legitimate, perfect ruler and true caliph, as God's deputy (*Halîfetüllah/ Khalīfat Allah*). [2] The Ottoman Empire's territorial expansion into Syria, Egypt, and the Hijaz, under the rule of Sultan Selīm I, encompassing the holy cities of Mecca and Medina, introduced a fresh discourse of

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[1] Azfar Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign: Sacred Kingship and Sainthood in Islam*, (New York: Columbia University Press. 2015), 29.

[2] Hüseyin Yılmaz, *Caliphate Redefined: The Mystical Turn in Ottoman Political Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018), 97-144, 196-217.

rulership. As a conqueror of the heartlands of the Islamic world, Selīm became the first Ottoman ruler who fully integrated the legitimizing structures, visual representations, and ideological expressions of the former Mamluk dynasty, including the prestigious title of "the Custodian of the Two Noble Sanctuaries." [3] To solidify Ottoman dominance in the Islamic world, it was imperative for Selīm I to employ more than just military force. Attaining the status of the "shadow of God" in addition to serving as the protector of the true religion against the newly established Shi'ite Safavids necessitated the formulation of cohesive responses to the politico-ideological challenges. Within this dynamic context, Selīm's reign marked a turning point in Ottoman history, characterized by his expansive imperial ambitions and the interplay between power and persona.

Recent research into Selīm's era has demonstrated how the historiography, both contemporaneously and particularly under his successor Sultan Süleyman I (r.1520-1566), underwent a process that mythologized Selīm's persona. As an example of this posthumous continuity of image-making, Christine Woodhead writes that early in his own reign, Sultan Süleyman I embarked on a series of initiatives aimed at restoring the honour and legacy of his father, Sultan Selīm I.[4] Underlying the assumption that courtly histories and literature, as commissioned works, were being written for the preservation of a ruler's name and reputation as a primary motivation for historical writing, she mentions that this preservation could only be ensured if the texts were widely known and comprehensible, with the propagandist message effectively conveyed.[5] Erdem Çıpa takes this discussion further. Employing a two-pronged

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[3] Hüseyin Yılmaz, *Caliphate Redefined, 16.*
[4] Christine Woodhead, "Reading Ottoman 'Şehnames': Official Historiography in the Late Sixteenth Century." *Studia Islamica*, no. 104/105 (2007): 67–80.
[5] Christine Woodhead, "Reading Ottoman Şehnames," 69.

approach to addressing the dialectical interplay between the past itself and the past as it is remembered, Çıpa explores the development of the textual iconography of Selīm's persona and rulership. Considering the historical fact that all these works were not commissioned works, highlights this deliberate and ultimately successful endeavour undertaken to rehabilitate Selīm's image. [6] These studies primarily examine the contributions of courtiers and historians, concentrating on two types of documents: *Nasihatnāmes/Nesîhatname* (advice letters) and *Selīmnāmes/Salīmnāmes* (vitas of Selīm). The latter comprises the collections of poetry inspired by a Persian epic work, *Shahnameh/ Şehnâme* (The book of kings) written by Firdowsi (d. 1025). These works, penned during the reigns of Selīm and Süleyman I, not only celebrate Selīm's remarkable battlefield achievements but also, as art historian Gülru Necipoğlu has addressed, represent an outcome of the strengthening of geographical boundaries in the late 16th century. [7]

Building on the valuable insights of previous research, this study aims to shift the perspective from viewing rulers solely as patrons of poetry to recognizing their pivotal role in shaping cultural policy and political discourse. This study examines Selīm I as a poet-sultan, highlighting the role of poetry in shaping his imperial image and its broader cultural significance within Ottoman kingship during a transformative era.

The main body of the current study will comprise three chapters. Chapter One of this study will engage in Sultan Selīm's poetry, emphasizing the strategic use of poetry and cultural representation in a special manuscript of his dīvān (collection of poetry), that integrates poetry with painting, crafted at his court. In my analysis, I will offer an interpretation concerning the

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[6] H. Erdem Çıpa, *The Making of Selīm: Succession, Legitimacy, and Memory in the Early Modern Ottoman World*, (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2017), 16-18.
[7] Gülru Necipoğlu, "A Kânûn for the State, a Canon for the Arts: Conceptualizing the Classical Synthesis of Ottoman Art and Architecture," (Paris: Documentation française, 1992), 195.

longstanding debate over Selim's linguistic preference for Persian over Turkish. This discussion will illuminate how this deliberate linguistic choice transcends mere rivalry with the Safavid ruler, Ismaeil I. I elucidate how Selīm's dīvān of poetry masterfully integrates the depiction of the caliph with the image of a Sufi poet, showcasing a distinctive fusion not evident in the works of his predecessors.

Chapter Two will focus on Selīm's odes. I highlight a distinct connection these odes have with the posthumous construction of Selīm's image during the reign of his successor. A critical examination of a manuscript authored by one of Selīm's close courtiers, Ebu'l-Fazl Mehmed Bidlisi (d. 1579), during Süleyman's era reveals insights into this phenomenon; yet a thorough review has been conducted on all odes across various manuscripts. This investigation uncovers a degree of fabrication in the Ebu'l-Fazl Bidlisi's narrative, unveiling its role in sculpting a legitimate portrayal of Selīm as a sultan who ascended to power by eliminating his father and brothers.

Chapter Three will delve into the role of *tezkires/tazkire* (biographical dictionary of poets) in sculpting the image of the sultan not merely as a patron of the arts but as an active participant in the literary arena. This exploration traces the evolution of this phenomenon through the Ottoman tezkires of the Süleymani period, beginning with Muhammad ibn-i Mubarak-i Qazvīnī (d. after 1529)'s work and culminating in the contributions of Aşık Çelebi (d. 1571). Through a chronological examination, the chapter unveils how these literary compendiums contribute to the dual portrayal of sultans as both triumphant warriors and esteemed figures of literary prowess.

Methodology

This section delineates the methodologies used to investigate the depiction of Sultan Selīm I as both a monarch and a poet against the expansive backdrop of Ottoman literary and political culture. It employs a historical-literary approach to this end. The research design is fundamentally qualitative, drawing primarily on literary sources to examine broader cultural phenomena. It is grounded in philological principles, integrating the New Philology approach, which emphasizes the manuscript as a living cultural artifact rather than static repositories of information. By incorporating the New Philology's emphasis on the broader socio-cultural context, this research explores the intricate relationships between text, authorship, and authority. It delves into how the Divān (collection of poems) of Sultan Selīm I and *tezkires* (biographical dictionary of poets) as cultural productions of the period served as a tool for legitimizing power and shaping imperial identity. This approach appreciates the multiplicity of texts and their variations, seeing these as essential to understanding the texts' historical and cultural significance. This approach is part of a broader postmodern reaction to history and authorship, challenging the nineteenth-century nationalist and positivist methodologies that sought a single authoritative text. [8]

In this study, the necessity of direct engagement with various manuscripts of the Dīvān, as opposed to reliance on existing critical editions, was paramount. This methodological decision stemmed from the lack of a comprehensive and trustworthy critical edition of the Dīvān, one that encompasses the entire range of textual variations. Currently, there are three critical editions of

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[8] For a comprehensive exploration of various dimensions of New Philology, see the articles in Stephen G. Nichols, ed., "The New Philology," Special Issue, *Speculum* 65, no. 1 (January 1990).

Selīm's Dīvān available. The first critical edition was produced by Paul Horn in Germany, using only seven manuscripts for its compilation. [9] The second edition was published in Iran, using only four manuscripts plus Horn's edition.[10] Last, there is the critical edition by Bandak Pèri. Despite its notable contributions to the field, this edition faces several challenges that deem it unsuitable for the objectives of this study. [11]

The most important issue that rendered the use of this edition impractical and necessitated a return to the original manuscripts first and foremost involve the lack of utilization of a dated manuscript close to Selīm's era, which forms the basis of a crucial part of the present research.[12] Another significant issue is the omission of certain verses that were present in the manuscripts available to Bandak Pari but were inadvertently excluded from this edition. For example, in ode (*Qaṣīda/Kasīde*) number four of his edition, five verses are missing, despite their presence in all the manuscripts to which Pari refers in the critical apparatus section. [13]

Considering the focus of this research on the intersections of power and language, it is also important to acknowledge the framework within which literary texts, such as *tezkires*, are analyzed. Drawing upon the insights offered by Nile Green and Mary Searle-Chatterjee, this study underscores the critical importance of recognizing the seamless integration of power within

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[9] For information about this work, see Klaus Kreiser, "A Dīvān for the Sultan: Between Producing of an Oriental Text and the German Art of Printing," ed. Bill Hickman, Gary Leiser, *Turkish Language, Literature and History. Travelers Tales,Sultans and Scholars Since the Eighth Century*, (London–New York: Routledge, 2017), 223–248.

[10] Sultan Selīm, Dīvān-i Sultan Selīm, ed. Abdulhussein Ismaeilnasab (Tehran, Iran: 2004).

[11] For some detailed discussions on the limitations of Peri's edition, see Anita Ahmadi, "A Critique of Benedek Pèri's Edition of Yāvūz Sulṭān Selīm's Persian Poetry," in Guzārish-i Mīrāth, v. 88-89 (Tehran, Mīrāth Maktūb, 2021), 207-218, İbrahim Kaya, "Benedek Péri'nin The Persian Dīvān of Yavuz Sultān Selīm, A Critical Edition İsimli Eseri Hakkında Bazı Görüş ve Öneriler, "*Artvin İlahiyat Dergisi,"* v.14 (2023).

[12] This manuscript is *Dīvān-i İdris-i Bitlisî and Sultan Selīm,* MS Râşid Efendi. Kayseri Eski Eserler Kütüphanesi, 1289. In chapter three I will discuss this manuscript and its importance. He also did not use two other manuscripts of Gulestan Palace 431 and University of Tehran.

[13] No explanation has been provided for this omission. See Benedek Péri, *The Persian Dīvān of Yavuz Sulṭān Selīm: A Critical Edition*, (Budapest, 2021), 78-79, 299.

the fabric of language. This viewpoint positions the literary text not simply as an object of aesthetic or historical interest but as a pivotal arena wherein the forces of religion, language, and power intermingle and influence one another. [14] Through this lens, each text becomes a site of significant inquiry into how these dynamics shape, and are shaped by, the socio-political contexts of their time.

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[14] Nile Green, Mary Searle-Chatterjee, *Religion, Language, and Power*, Routledge Studies in Religion, 10. (New York: Routledge.2008), 7-10.

Chapter one:

Selīm and His Poetry

In this chapter, the focus will be on Selīm's poetry, particularly through an examination of a manuscript of his dīvān produced at his own court. This exploration will delve into how the dīvān, a rich amalgamation of poetry, painting, and gilding, serves as a deliberate effort by the ruler to forge an image of a Sufi poet-sultan.

The Issue of the Language:

The primary issue to be addressed in analyzing Selīm's poems concerns the issue of language. The debate over the language of Selīm's poetry has been a point of contention since his death and continues into modern scholarship. [15] Two years after Selīm's death, one of his close courtiers, Muhammad ibn-i Mubarak-i Qazvīnī/ Kazvīnī (d. after 1529) writes:

It is not hidden that such excellent poems in Persian by someone whose native language is Turkish are evidence that his Turkish poetry will be of the utmost eloquence and the ultimate in articulateness and eloquence. For this reason, we did not mention his Turkish poetry. [16]

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[15] Contemporary discourse surrounding Selīm's Turkish poetry seems to have been significantly influenced by an Ottoman historian, Ali Emiri (d.1923), which assertively highlighted Selīm's contributions to Turkish literature. For more detailed information, See M. Fatih Köksel, "Yavuz Sultan Selîm'in Türkçe Şiirleri," *Türk Kültürü İncelemeleri Dergisi,* 1. n.40 (2019).

[16] Muhammad ibn-i Mubarak-i Qazvīnī, *Hasht Bihisht*, ed. *Hādī Bīdakī*, (Tehran, 2022), 477.

In another edition of Qazvīnī's *tezkire*, a statement has been added to this section saying that since the book was in Persian, it did not mention the Turkish poems of the sultan. [17] On the other hand, Sehi Bey (d.1548), the author of the first *tezkire* in Ottoman Turkish asserts that the Turkish poems ascribed to Selīm are inauthentic, claiming Selīm's dīvān contains no Turkish poems. [18] Latifi, a well-known tezkire-writer of the Süleymanic era, in the first edition of his *tezkire*, states that Selīm had ceased (*terk etmiş*) writing poetry in Turkish and dismisses those poems attributed to Selīm by the public as inauthentic. He also indicates that while Selīm was capable of composing poetry in the three languages, he preferred Persian. [19] While Latifi does not specify these three languages, first assumption might be that Arabic is third of them, but it seems that third one should be Tatar. Investigating a passage from the *Selīmname* of Celālzāde Mustafa Çelebi (d. 1567), one of the official scribes of Selīm, could potentially shed light on this. Celālzāde writes that Selīm's Persian, Turkish and Tatar *ghazals* (sonnets) are famous among the preeminent people. [20] Sa'dedin Efendi (d.1599) also in his *Tācū't-tevārīh* repeats this. [21] Latifi in the subsequent edition of his work, shows his intention to make clear which poems are genuinely attributable to Selīm and which are not. However, there seems to be no substantial evidence presented for such a categorization beyond a solitary Turkish couplet Latifi attribute to Selīm. [22] The second place we can find a couplet of a Turkish poem is Āşık Çelebi's *Meşā'irū'ş-şu'arā*. [23] The Turkish poems attributed to Selīm are predominantly from sources postdating the 16th

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[17] Qazvīnī, *Hasht Bihisht*, 328. In chapter three I will explain more about these different editions.
[18] Sehî Beg, *Heşt behest,* 20.
[19] Latifi, *Tezkiretü'ş-Şu'arâ*, MS. 1160, f.38a, 38b.
[20] Celâlzâde Mustafa Çelebi, *Selīmname*, ed. Ahmet Uğur and Mustafa Çuhadar (Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, Ankara,1990), 271.
[21] Hoca Sadeddin Efendi, *Tâcü't-tevârih,* ed. İsmet Parmaksızoğlu, v.2 (Ankara, 1992), 326.
[22] Latifi, *Tezkiretü'ş-Şu'arâ*, MS. 342. f. 8a.
[23] Āşık Çelebi*, Meşā'irü'ş-şu'arā*, 73.

century. In his comprehensive research, M. Fatih Köksel categorizes the Turkish poems attributed to Selīm into three distinct groups, offering a nuanced understanding of Selīm's literary output. The categorization confirms 23 poems as authentically written by Selīm, identifies 5 poems as highly likely to be written by him, and determines that 20 poems were not authored by him. Most of these poems are founded in 17th and 18th century *Mecmuas* (collections of poetry). [24]

My focal point here extends beyond merely contesting the existence of Selīm's Turkish poetry. Even Qazvini, a close associate of Selīm with a mission to translate Chaghatay works to Persian and an advocate for Persian who is considered as one of the theorists of Persian writing in the court of Selīm, acknowledges that there are poems in Turkish written by Selim. [25] But this leads us to question why Selīm opted for Persian during an era when Turkish was burgeoning as a poetic medium and his predecessors predominantly composed in Turkish.

During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the Ottoman Empire witnessed significant changes in the role of Turkish within its court, marking its ascent as the language of culture and the language of power. [26] Similar to the processes observed in the Greek West, where vernacular languages acquired prominence alongside Greek, Turkish began to expand its influence and absorb elements from Arabic and Persian, the prestige languages of the Ottoman Empire. We should also consider the influences of Chaghatay Turkish on the one hand, and on the other hand, the fact that even before the Ottoman Empire gained control over the region, Turkish had already

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[24] M. Fatih Köksel, "Y*avuz Sultan Selîm'inTürkçe Şiir*leri," *Türk Kültürü İncelemeleri Dergisi*, 1. n.40 (2019), 267 – 326.

[25] For information about this aspect of Qazvini, see Christopher Markiewicz, *The Crisis of Kingship in Late Medieval Islam,* 187.

[26] Ferenc Csirkés, "Turkish/Turkic Books of Poetry, Turkish and Persian Lexicography: The Politics of Language under Bayezid II" eds. Gülru Necipoğlu, Cemal Kafadar, and Cornell H. Fleischer, *Treasures of Knowledge: An Inventory of the Ottoman Palace Library (1502/3–1503/4)*, v1, (Leiden, Boston: Brill,2019), 675.

been the language used for oral communication and literary expression in various Turkophone courts such as Turkish principalities (*beyliks*). [27] After the conquest of Constantinople in 1453, the Ottoman Empire experienced a profound shift in its imperial consciousness. The Ottomans found themselves engaged in intense political, military, ideological, and religious competition with both Christian powers in the West and Muslim powers in the East. These rivalries necessitated cultural engagement and exchange, leading to a vibrant exchange of ideas, knowledge, and artistic expressions. This fusion of influences contributed to the flourishing literary output and cultural production. The reformation of the educational system soon after the conquest, coupled with the reconfiguration of palace ceremonies, land ownership, and religious foundations, undeniably altered the dynamics among the three predominant languages of that era, Persian, Arabic, and Turkish. This transformation decisively tilted the scales towards the Turkish language. [28]

In such an ambience, as the first Ottoman sultan with a dīvān produced during his reign and in his own court, the absence of Turkish poetry within Selīm's work invites a deeper examination of the motivations behind his linguistic preferences and the implications for his court's cultural orientation. Scholars often attribute this choice to the rivalry between the Safavid dynasty and the Ottoman Empire, emphasizing the tense relations between Selīm I and Ismāeil I. Ismail's rise coincided with Selīm's tenure in the empire's eastern regions, suggesting political motivations have influenced Selīm's cultural and linguistic stance. This assertion, started with the nineteenth century Ottoman historians like Ali Emiri, is most thoroughly articulated in

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[27] See Mecdut Mansuroglu, "The Rise and Development of Written Turkish in Anatolia*",* Oriens,7 n.2 (1954), 250–264.
[28] Ferenc Csirkés, "Turkish/Turkic Books of Poetry, Turkish and Persian Lexicography," 673-678.

Benedek Péri's work. [29] He presents an analysis of the intricate propaganda conflict between the Safavid and Ottoman empires. Peri's scholarly work delves into the multifaceted nature of this rivalry, highlighting the personal involvement of the rulers in a sophisticated war of words and symbolic gestures. Péri articulates that the essence of this conflict is reflected in the contrasting themes and styles of poetry employed by Selīm and Shah Ismail, representing their strategic use of literature as a tool in their political and ideological warfare. Selīm's poetry, as he suggests, is characterized by its intellectual appeal and adherence to the tradition of Timurid poetry, aiming to align with the esteemed Persian literary heritage through emulation of prominent poets, being influenced by Amir Alīshīr Nevā'ī/Navā'ī. On the other hand, Shah Ismail's poetry is described as emotionally charged, repetitive, and straightforward, with a propensity towards propaganda over poetic subtlety. Such characteristics were ostensibly designed to resonate with the uneducated Turkish nomads (*etrak-ı bi-idrak*) in an effort to garner their support through an emotional appeal. Péri further enriches his analysis by incorporating Nicholas O'Shaughnessy's framework on propaganda, which comprises three interconnected elements: rhetoric, symbols, and myth. This theoretical perspective allows him to delineate the strategic divergence in the poetic endeavours of Selīm and Ismail. While Ismail aimed to capture the hearts of the uneducated masses through emotionally laden poems, Selīm's intellectually stimulating *ghazals/gazel* (sonnets) targeted a more discerning audience, positioning his literary works as a counterpoint to the simplistic appeal of his rival. [30]

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[29] Ali Emiri, "Türk Edebiyatının İran Edebiyatına Tesiri," *Osmanlı Tarih ve Edebiyat Mecmuası,* 3, n.28 (1917), 22-27.

[30] Benedek Péri, "From Istāmbōl's Throne a Mighty Host to Irān Guided I;/Sunken Deep in Blood of Shame I Made the Golden Heads to Lie': Yavuz Sulṭān Selīm's Persian Poetry in the Light of the Ottoman-Safavid Propaganda War", *Archivum Ottomanicum,* n.34, (2017).

As much as this claim is correct in its entirety, i.e. the existence of cultural competition between two dynasties, it has some limitations that should be investigated. The comparative analysis of the poetry of Selīm and Ismail, given their roles as adversaries on the battlefield, initially presents a compelling and persuasive subject of study. The prospect of exploring how their rivalry in war translated into the realm of poetry is undeniably intriguing. While their roles as leaders of conflicting empires provide a dramatic backdrop, the essence and value of their poetic works are rooted in distinct motivations and contexts. However, careful consideration and appropriate contextualization reveal a more complex narrative that diverges significantly from a straightforward comparison. The most important fact that we should consider is that, unlike the Dīvān of Selīm, which contains poems clearly attributed to Selīm himself, the authorship and originality of Ismail's poetry are far more ambiguous. The research conducted by Ferenc Csirkés about Ismail I offers critical insights into this discussion. [31] Csirkés elucidates how the oral tradition significantly influenced the composition and transmission of Ismail's poetry, leading to a dynamic corpus of work that reflects the collective contributions of its time and propagating Safavid ideology among the Alevi-Bektashis of Anatolia, rather than the singular voice of Ismail. So, the distinct nature of their poetic contributions—where one body of work lacks clear personal attribution while the other is closely tied to the individual—suggests that a direct comparison may not yield meaningful insights into their literary or historical significance.

An insightful aspect to consider is the diplomatic correspondence between the two courts, which serves as tangible evidence of the adversarial literary competition. The tradition of letter writing in Islamic courts is deeply rooted in rhetorical and literary practices, making the

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[31] Ferenc Csirkés, *Chaghatay Oration, Ottoman Eloquence, Qizilbash Rhetoric: Turkic Literature in Ṣafavid Persia.* PhD diss., (University of Chicago, 2016), 75-120.

Dīvānur-resail (Dîvân-ı İnşâ/ Tuğra) a critical and strategic component within the court's hierarchy. Among the preserved records, six letters highlight the exchange between these courts. Initially, Selīm directed three unanswered letters to Ismail, with a response eventually being made to Selīm's third attempt. This was followed by another letter from Selīm's court, and subsequently, two replies from Ismail post his defeat at Chaldiran. A detailed examination of the language and stylistic choices in these letters reveals Selīm's court affinity for Persianate culture and the Persian literature. First two letters are in Persian. Selīm introduces himself with these titles: Possessor of the glory of Fereydun (*Fereydunfarr/ fereydünfer*), Possessor of the court of Alexander (*Sikandardar/sekenderder)*, Justice and fairness of Kay Khusraw (*Kaykhusraw-yi ʿadl u dād/Keyhüsrev*), Possessor of a noble lineage of Dārā (*Dara-yi ʿālīnizhād*). In contrast, he introduces Ismail as the *Zaḥḥaāk* of the era and someone whose promis is like that of Afrāsīyāb. In the same letter and also the next one, he regards Ismail as the ruler of the land of *Ajam* and himself as the guardian of the Ottoman territories (*mamālik-i Osmanī/ memālīk*) Here, one can clearly see how the implications of Persianate Culture are merged with each other, without any distinction being made between them. Historically, Afrasiyab is associated with Turan. We see how Selīm's court blends his kingship with the historical Persian language, and how Ismail becomes simultaneously the ruler of Persia but inherits *Turanian* characteristics. In the second letter from Selīm's court, verses in the meter of the Firdawsī's *Shahnameh (baḥr-i mutaqārib)* are mentioned, where it is recited a challenge in the style of the *Shahnameh* to Ismail, "If you hold a crown (*tāj*), I have a sword, when my sword prevails, I will take your crown / My hope is such and the force of fate, that I will take both crown and throne from enemies." The third letter is in Turkish. Ismaeil's response to this letter is strikingly succinct and imbued with sarcasm. The stark contrast in their styles is evident: while the letter itself is concise, the message it conveys is

profound, revealing deep ideological differences between the two courts. Ismaeil attributes these assertions to Selīm's "addicted courtiers." He employs a piece of poetry to underscore the ideological chasm separating their realms: "We have greatly experienced in this place of prolonged retribution (*dār-i mukāfāt*), whoever conflicts with the family of ʿAli will ultimately fall." [32]

Here I argue, while the geopolitical contest between the Ottoman and Safavid empires in general, and Selīm and Ismail in particular, forms a backdrop to this analysis, it alone cannot fully account for the nuanced engagement of Selīm with the Persian language. To unravel the complexities of this engagement, the discussion will pivot around two factors: "Selīm's imperial ambitions" and "mystical aspirations". [33] Persian, as a prestigious cultural and literary language, served as a medium through which the Ottoman elite could articulate their authority and sophistication, aligning themselves with the illustrious Persianate traditions that spanned the Islamic world. This strategic adoption of Persian was not merely a cultural appropriation but a deliberate act of political and intellectual positioning, designed to legitimize Selīm's imperial claim and to foster connections with regions under Persian cultural influence. Even before ascending to the throne, Selīm's eastern policies and ambitions strengthened his claim to the sultanate. His involvement in quelling the Qizilbash Rebellions, known as *Şāhkulu İsyanı* proved to be a turning point in his career. The rebellion in 1511, instigated by a supporter of the Qizilbashs and Ismail I in the eastern parts of the Ottoman Empire (*Teke Sencağı*) marks a critical juncture in the empire's history. The insurgents managed to capture Korkut (d.1513), one

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[32] Abdulḥussein Navāʾī, Shāh Ismaʾīl Safavī: Macmuʿi-yi ʾAsnād va Mukātibāt-i Tārīkhī, (Iran, Tehran, 1988),

[33] I borrowed these two terms from this article: Murat Umut Inan "Imperial Ambitions, Mystical Aspirations: Persian Learning in the Ottoman World" in *The Persianate World: The Frontiers of a Eurasian Lingua Franca,* Ed. Nile Green. (California: University of California Press, 2019), 75-92.

of the princes and brothers of Selīm, significantly undermining the Ottoman leadership in that area. This revolt not only challenged Ahmed (d.1513), Selīm's elder brother and the initial heir apparent, but also led to the death of Ali Pasha, a key vizier under Bayezid II. The rebellion, posing a substantial threat to the established order, was ultimately quelled through the intervention of Selīm.[34]

I will discuss this in detail when we explain Selīm's relation with his brothers in the next chapter. Here we should consider the fact that, portraying himself as a champion of the true faith, by defeating those Qizilbash, Selīm could cultivate an image of a strong and devout leader compared to his brothers and bolstered his popularity among the Janissaries. [35] In one letter that he sent to Muhammad Bey Aq Quyūnlū/ Akkoyunlu (d. 1515), before he aims for Chaldiran War Selīm writes: "Because the noble intention is to reform the Islamic territories, especially the lands of Iran (*Irānzamīn/ zemīn*), and to conquer them from the hands of aggressive infidels…". [36]

Selīm's distinct focus on Persian culture and language significantly influenced the reception and treatment of Persian immigrants at his court, setting his reign apart from those of other sultans in terms of its openness and encouragement of Persian arts and scholarship. [37] Also, Āṣık Çelebi highlights the pivotal role of Selīm's reign in the flourishing of Persian within the Ottoman domain. According to him, the expansion of the Ottoman Empire into Persian-speaking territories under Selīm's leadership was a key driver of this cultural and linguistic embrace.

[34] M. Çağatay Uluçay "Yavuz Sultan Selīm Nasıl Padişah Oldu", *İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Tarih Dergisi,* v.9, (1953), 61-68.
[35] Erdem Çıpa, *The Making of Selīm*, 29-56.
[36] Abdulḥussein Navāʾī, *Shāh Ismaʾīl Safavī,* 149.
[37] For more information about the role of these immigrants, see Christopher Markiewicz, *The Crisis of Kingship in Late Medieval Islam: Persian Emigres and the Making of Ottoman Sovereignty,* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

Sultan's favour towards Persian was so pronounced that it inspired poets and scholars within the empire, traditionally aligned with the *Rumi* literary tradition, to pursue Persian styles in their works. [38] Intellectuals like İdris Bidlisī (1457-1520) and Qazvini, through their contributions in Persian, played a pivotal role in reshaping a broad spectrum of epistemological traditions. Their works became instrumental in defining the ideals and philosophies of sovereignty that permeated Selīm's court, drawing heavily from the Timurid vocabulary of the sovereignty. The adoption of Persian was not merely a linguistic preference but a deliberate choice for expressing and delineating the contours of ideal rulership, leveraging the depth of Persian literary and rhetorical traditions. [39]

Another example of this is the *Selīmname* genre, produced in the court of Selīm himself. Three out of five of these works, which are *Selīmname* by Edā'ī (d.1521), *Shahname-yi Selīm khānī* by Bidlisī and *Ghazavat-i Sultan Selīm* by Ghazizade Ardabili (d. 1526) produced in Persian and one of them is in Arabic. These works were written by Persophone immigrants and had the support of the Selīm's court. So, although the Turkish become over after the death of Selīm, during his reign we can see the predominance of Persian language as the language of image-making. Selīm's reign marks a significant phase in the evolution of Ottoman political thought, where Persian served as a conduit for redefining and elevating the ideals of rulership in alignment with the empire's expanding horizons and imperial ambitions. Another dimension of the Persian language that warrants attention in this discussion is its mystical connotations. The Naqshbandi community in Bursa and the adherents surrounding Mawlawi Sufi scholars draw inspiration from Persian mystic poets such as Jāmī and ʿAttār (d. 1221), deeply rooted in the

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[38] Āşık Çelebi, *Meşā'irü'ş-şu'arā*, 127.
[39] Markiewicz, *The Crisis of Kingship in Late Medieval Islam,* 20-22

Persian Sufi tradition, as previously outlined. [40] Based on this, I contend that the deliberate choice of Persian for royal self-expression was not merely linguistic preference but a strategic act that aligned with Selīm's positioning as a Sufi sultan. [41] Ideas that had taken root in the Ottoman court, including themes of *ghazā* (holy war) and the lineage of the Oğuz Turks, were further elaborated in Persian literary works. It was Bidlisī who synthesized diverse epistemological strands—astrological, mystical, and philosophical—into a cohesive framework. He aligned these concepts under the paradigm of *khilāfat-i rahmani/ hilāfet* (the divinely guided caliphate) to articulate a unified vision of kingship as exemplified by the Ottoman sultans. Of course, this conceptual evolution, crucial for legitimizing the Ottomans' expansion into Arab territories, subsequently continued to be expressed through the Turkish language, marking a linguistic transition in the narration of Ottoman imperial ideology. [42]

Selīm as a Sufi Sultan in His Poetry:

Selīm's reign is frequently described as a transitional period, a characterization that could stem from its relatively brief span (8 years). Scholarly attention has mostly gravitated towards the era of Süleyman for studies of imperial image-making, with a burgeoning interest in recent years on how Selīm was portrayed posthumously during the Süleimānic era (1520-1566). Here the examination pivots to Selīm's self-portrayal via his Persian poetry, exploring its instrumental

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[40] Murat Umut Inan, "Imperial Ambitions, Mystical Aspirations," 82-83.
[41] For a more extensive conversation about Persian as a sacred language in the 16th and 17th centuries, see Aslıhan Gürbüzel. "Bilingual Heaven: Was There a Distinct Persianate Islam in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire," Philological *Encounters.* 6, n. 1-2 (2021): 214-241.
[42] Markiewicz, *The Crisis of Kingship in Late Medieval Islam,* 22.

role in persona construction and the legitimization of his power. This analysis is situated within the framework of the Perso-Islamic cultural policy that prevailed at the court, thereby underscoring the significance of Selīm's poetic endeavors in shaping his imperial identity and authority. Adopting a visionary approach to governance, Selīm cultivates the persona of a Sufi poet-sultan, characterized by a dīvān filled with Persian poetry that embodies a deeply mystical worldview. Within this conceptual framework, my analysis will focus on the examination of a unique manuscript originating from his court, showcasing his innovative approach to poetry and a review of some poetic contributions.[43]

Following his triumph at Chaldiran and the subsequent capture of Tabriz, Selīm embarked on a transformative cultural mission. He relocated a vast number of artisans to Istanbul, thereby intertwining the destinies of two major cultural hubs. At the time, Tabriz boasted an exceptional royal workshop and stood as a pivotal centre of artistic excellence within the western realms of the Persianate world. This period marked a significant transfer of artistic heritage; notably, various masterpieces of Herat painting, previously brought to Tabriz's libraries after Ismail's conquest of Khurasan, were now transported to Istanbul. This shift dramatically enriched Istanbul's artistic landscape. [44] Among the notable figures Selīm relocated to Istanbul was Sultan Badi' al-Zaman, son of Sultan Husayn, who lived in Tabriz. A significant aspect of Badi' al-Zaman's move was the transfer of his personal library to Istanbul. This library featured several manuscripts of particular interest to our study: A copy of the Dīvān of Husayn Bayqara and Amir Ali Shir Nevā'īa'i both in Turkish. During this period, an exquisite and illustrated

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[43] Selīm I, *Dīvān-i Yavuz Sultān Selīm*, MS İstanbul Üniversitesi Kütüphanesi Nadir Eserler Bölümü, Farsī 1330. In my study I will refer to this manuscript as "the illustrated manuscript."
[44] Zeren Tanındı, *Türk Minyatür Sanatı*, (Ankara, Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1996), 17-19.

version of Selīm's Dīvān was created within his court, drawing inspiration from these works. This manuscript is produced between 1515 and 1520. [45]

This edition, visually inspired by the Dīvān of Sultan Husayn and Nevā'ī marks the first instance of illustrated dīvāns among the Ottoman sultans. It features two folios of illustrations that portray Sultan Selīm in different scenarios, each deserving of detailed examination. The first illustrated folio has two different pictures. In the picture on the right side of the folio (Figure1.1) we see Sultan Selīm seated within the opulence of his palace, engaging with two figures seated opposite him. Among them, an individual appears to be reciting from a book directly to the sultan, as it is mentioned by Zeren Tanındı.[46] This specific scene finds a direct parallel in the version of dīvān of Sultan Hossein. As it is obvious, this suggests an intimate moment of literary or poetic exchange. The adjacent picture (Figure 1.2) contrasts this scene of serene contemplation with one of action and movement: it portrays Sultan Selīm astride his horse, making his way back from a hunting expedition, flanked by a retinue of followers.

Here, I want to indicate another noteworthy detail in this picture. I believe There is a difference between the illustrations of these two dīvāns. In the dīvān of Sultan Husayn, he is seen on his special prayer niche and with luxuries. The sultan is socializing from a higher level, and his image is larger than those of others. In the illustration of Sultan Selīm (Figure 1.1), we encounter imagery that strikingly echoes a description by Qazvini, presenting an explicit connection not immediately apparent in other artistic depictions from Selīm's era. In this depiction, Selīm is illustrated seated on a carpet, positioned in front of two individuals, with no

[45] Zeren Tanındı "Müzehhep ve Musavver Şiirler: Sultan I. Selīm'in Dîvânı," ed. Nilüfer Alkan Günay, *Yavuz Sultan Selīm Dönemi ve Bursa,* (Bursa: Osmangazi Belediyesi, 2018), 449-450; Serpil Bağcı, Filiz Çağman, Renda Günsel, Tanındı, Zeren, *"Ottoman Painting"* (Ankara: Ministry of Culture, 2010), 63.
[46] Zeren Tanındı "Müzehhep ve Musavver Şiirler: Sultan I. Selīm'in Dîvânı," ed. Nilüfer Alkan Günay, *Yavuz Sultan Selīm Dönemi ve Bursa,* (Bursa: Osmangazi Belediyesi, 2018), 448.

significant difference in body size between him and the others. This observation is pivotal, as it marks a distinct divergence in the approach to image-making between the two sultans. Such a difference, rooted in specific literary references, has not been widely acknowledged or explored in analyses of Selīm's period's artwork, according to my knowledge. Now we go back to Qazvini's description:

> The light of his beauty shone among his friends, companions, and confidants in solitude, and during his reign, he never once offended any of his associates with harsh words. In short, he was a refined king, unparalleled in embodying all commendable qualities and virtues unseen and unheard by others. Despite the abundance of elements contributing to his majesty and dignity, he never favoured the trappings of greatness or arrogance. He sat like a dervish on a simple mat, not on a throne or luxurious bedding, always cheerful and smiling in company, often sharing, and enjoying jokes. Among the anecdotes about him, one day, a charming boy was mentioned at the house of Khwaja Mehdi, praised for his handsome appearance and pleasant character, saying the boy in Mehdi's house shone like the full moon. Hearing this description, the Sultan laughed and said, according to you, the moon is in the house of Taurus, indicating his fondness for wit, of which there was much more, as he rarely spoke without including such pleasantries.[47]

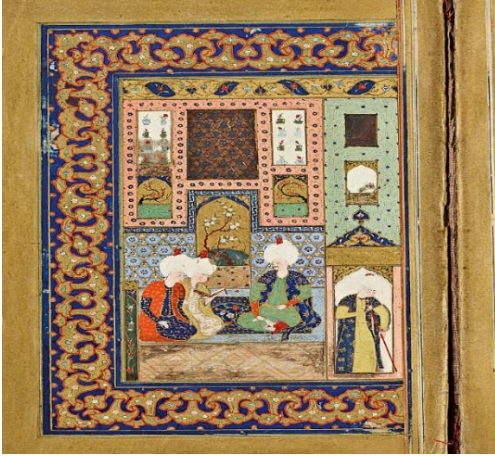[47] Qazvīnī, *Hasht Bihisht*, 267 and 425.

Figure 1.1

Sultan Selim I among his courtiers (Istanbul University Library, Rare Manuscripts Section, Farsi 1330,

f.29a)

Figure 1.2

Sultan Selim and his companions on a hunting trip (Istanbul University Library, Rare Manuscripts Section,

Farsi 1330, f.29b)

Cemal Kafadar argues about the characterization of sixteenth century as one of rapid social change and dislocation underlines the context in which self-narratives emerged, fostering self-consciousness and observation both personally and socially. The rise of author portraiture is presented as a visual manifestation of these broader phenomena, where authors sought to claim ownership of their work through portraits in manuscripts they oversaw, thus asserting artistic control and a personal connection to their creations. [48] Emine Fetvacı situates these developments within the wider historical and cultural context of the Ottoman elite, highlighting the interplay between social roles, relationships, and artistic expression. She argues that the tradition of author portraiture is traced back to its roots in the Islamic world, noting its peak in the 13th century and its role in linking a person's appearance with their deeds, as seen in the biographical and scientific traditions. The decline of this tradition after the 13th century and its resurgence in Timurid and Ottoman works underscore a continued interest in portraying individual identity and achievements within a social and cultural hierarchy. Her analysis also covers the transition of this tradition into the Ottoman period, emphasizing the influence of Timurid works on Ottoman art and literature. The illustrated Dīvān-i Ḥusaynī and its reception in the Ottoman court exemplify the blending of Timurid and Ottoman artistic traditions, and including author portraits in these works illustrates the evolving conception of authorship and individuality in the Ottoman context. So, the development of author portraiture in the Ottoman Empire reflects broader shifts in self-perception, social roles, and artistic expression during a period of significant political and social change. These portraits not only served as claims of ownership over one's work but also as expressions of individual identity within the larger social

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[48] Cemal Kafadar, "Self and Others: The Diary of a Dervish in Seventeenth Century Istanbul and First-Person Narratives in Ottoman Literature." *Studia Islamica*, n. 69 (1989): 125-127.

and cultural framework of the time. In one part of her discussion, she also refers to this picture of Selīm and discusses the nuanced tradition of author portraiture within the context of 15th-century Ottoman manuscript culture, emphasizing how these portraits were integrated into the narrative scenes of the texts rather than being presented as distinct frontispiece illustrations. This approach did not clearly differentiate the portrait of the author from the textual illustrations, merging the author's identity with the narrative content of the manuscript. The example of the Dīvān of Selīm I, created around the same time as the illustrated Dīvān of Sultan Husayn Bayqara reached Istanbul, is highlighted as a case where the manuscript contains images of the ruler and author engaged in various courtly activities. These depictions serve dual purposes: they are both portrayals of the sovereign in his royal capacity and illustrations of the poet within the literary context of his own poetry.[49]

This analysis forms the cornerstone of my argument concerning the manuscript, highlighting how the artwork bridges Selīm's identity as both sultan and Sufi-poet. Unlike the depiction of a Timurid king, Selīm is presented as a Sufi sovereign, an interpretation where the Persian language plays a crucial role, seamlessly integrating into his portrayal. Notably, the first illustrated manuscript produced by artists from the Tabriz-Herat-Istanbul school is an edition of Attar's Mantiq al-Tayr, succeeded by the manuscript of Jami's poetry, and works of Persian-language Timurid poets like Shahi. [50] The deliberate selection of these manuscripts suggests a strategic cultural positioning, aligning Selīm with the esteemed lineage of Sufi poets.

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[49] Emine Fetvacı, "Ottoman Author Portraits in the Early-modern Period," ed. Kishwar Rizvi, *Affect, Emotion, and Subjectivity in Early Modern Muslim Empires: New Studies in Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal Art and Culture,* (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2018*),* 69-73.
[50] Serpil Bağcı, Filiz Çağman, Renda Günsel, Tanındı, Zeren, "*Ottoman Painting"* (Ankara: Ministry of Culture, 2010), 60-61.

The second illustrated folio (Figure.2) is found several pages beyond the first. In her analysis, Tanındı suggests that the artist aimed to visually interpret the content of the last couplet on the page as accurately as possible. The verse she is referring to is "My nimble rider goes towards the hunt. O my tears, do not restrain his reins." [51] . Tanındı writes:

> four male hunters are shown hunting animals, with four other individuals watching them from behind the hills above… This depiction is placed amongst the lines of the poem where Selīm describes how his nimble beloved has gone hunting, while he himself experiences a love pain greater than that of Majnun.[52]
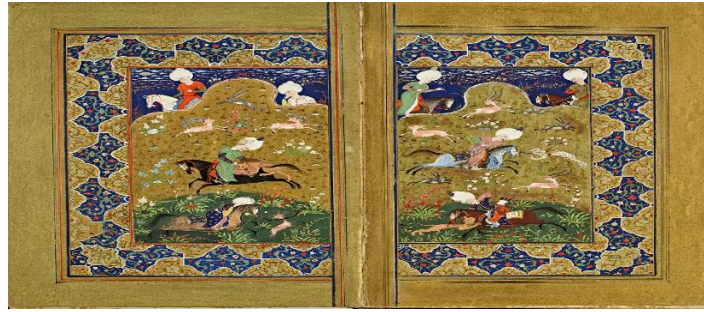
Figure 2.

Sultan Selim I is hunting

(Istanbul University Library, Rare Manuscripts Section, Farsi 1330, f.58a,58b)

It seems clear that the artist indeed considered the verse while creating the illustration. As she indicates, the abstract verses of Selīm did not lend artist easily to visualization. [53] Here I want to give another analysis which introduces a distinctive interpretation of the depicted scenes

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[51] 51 Selīm I, *Dīvān*, MS 1330, f.57b.
[52] Zeren Tanındı "Müzehhep ve Musavver Şiirler," 456.
[53] Zeren Tanındı "Müzehhep ve Musavver Şiirler," 456.

within the illustrated manuscript. Initially, it is pertinent to acknowledge a comparable illustration in the Dīvān of Nevā'ī which portrays Nevā'ī engaged in a hunt observed by spectators. This scene, vibrant with activity, establishes a contrast with the depiction of Selīm. Upon closer examination of Selīm's hunting scene, a novel perspective emerges: all four figures, interpreted as distinct individuals in Tanındı's explanation, are arguably representations of Selīm himself, each engaging in the hunt of different animals. This interpretation is bolstered by a delicate point: in contrast to his companions, most of the time Selīm is depicted with a bold mustache, with no beard, exactly like all the four figures in this picture. Furthermore, the narrative composition of the upper segment of the illustration invites deeper analysis. It suggests that three of the figures, the lover, are depicted multiple times—while the fourth figure reintroduces Selīm yet again. This is unlike the narrative content of the verses, which posits the beloved in the scenario of going to war. In the visual representation, it is Selīm who embarks on the warpath. The illustration captures a poignant moment on the right side, where the beloved and Selīm engage in dialogue before hunting. Notably, the beloved's depiction on the left side conveys a sense of melancholy, attentively observing the scene with a sorrowful demeanour. This scenario suggests that the artist, inspired by the verse's narrative, opted for a creative representation where the king partakes in the hunt while the beloved observes.

Consequently, I argue this image is related to the metaphorical representations of love within the context of hunting in Persian literature. The depicted scene transcends the mere act of hunting, embodying a narrative of the sultan alongside his beloved engaged in this activity. In Persian literature, the imagery of hunting is intricately woven with the portrayal of the beloved, giving rise to some of the most vivid and metaphorical expressions of love. The beloved's attributes are likened to tools of the hunt, enriching the narrative with a layer of symbolic

meaning. The lover's hair transforms into a lasso, ensnaring the hearts of admirers with its allure. The eyelashes become razors, cutting through the defences of those captivated by their gaze. Similarly, the chin is depicted as a trap, ensnaring the unwitting lover in the beauty and charm of the beloved.

In fact, this interpretation differs from what is observed in the tradition of hunting illustration and the subject of sultans' hunting in the Ottoman context and is related to the hunting tradition in mystical-lyric literature. It is worthwhile here to take a brief look at the hunting tradition in historiography. The hunting tradition among the Ottomans, like all Islamic rulers, existed. It seems that the first indications in historiography relate to the death of Süleyman Pasha (d.1316), son of Orhan (r. 1323-1362), who reportedly died on his return from a hunting expedition. [54] Subsequently, discussions have emerged regarding most sultans and their hunting habits. [55] Historians typically view the hunting tradition as a multifaceted representation of a sultan's grandeur and authority. It is considered a symbol of bravery and prowess, while simultaneously serving as an exhibition of luxury and wealth. Through these events, the sultan demonstrated his martial skill, control over nature, and the resources to organize such grandiose pursuits. These occasions thus became a critical component of the court's ceremonial life, reflecting the socio-political hierarchies and the cultural ethos of the time. For example, Selīm himself is mentioned at least three times in historical accounts related to his hunting camps: once

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[54] For his death, see Aşık Paşazade, *Tevarih-i Al-i Osman,* ed. H.Atsiz (Ankara, 1985), 54-55.
[55] For information about the Ottoman royal hunt, see Melis Taner, *Power to Kill: a Discourse of the Royal Hunt during the Reigns of Süleyman the Magnificent and Ahmet I* (Master's thesis, Sabancı University, 2008).

in the winter before his accession to the throne in Edirne, another time hunting in Trabzon, and once during 1518-1519. [56]

The zenith of showcasing authority through hunting is notably captured in the historiographical records from the era of Süleyman the Magnificent. This period saw the creation of manuscripts adorned with illustrations that depict sultans partaking in hunting, symbolizing their power and command over both the natural and political realms.[57] Among these, the illustrations within the *Selīmnames* stand out, offering vivid portrayals of Selīm's own hunting exploits. [58] Indeed, a revaluation of the depiction of hunting in the dīvān of Selīm, relative to the more traditional representations found in historical texts, reveals a distinct perspective. Typically, hunting scenes in historical manuscripts are vibrant tableaux of combat and feasting (*bazm u razm/ bezm*), teeming with participants and an array of activities. Yet, the illustrations within Selīm's dīvān veer away from this dynamic complexity, presenting a more subdued and contemplative image. This divergence aligns more closely with the romantic and mystical themes permeating the dīvān's poetry. The illustrator's approach, whether deliberate or intuitive, seems deeply influenced by dīvān's overarching atmosphere and its spiritual undercurrents. This suggests that the visual portrayal of hunting in Selīm's dīvān is not merely a depiction of physical activity but is imbued with layers of symbolic meaning. It serves as a visual metaphor that complements the dīvān's textual content, integrating the physicality of hunting with the metaphysical exploration found within its verses.

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[56] Tülay Artan, "A Book of Kings Produced and Presented as a Treatise on Hunting," *Muqarnas*, 25 (2008), 299–330.

[57] The best example of that is Hünername by Fethullah Arifi Çelebi (d. 1561/62). For a comprehensive work on the Ottoman painting tradition, see Emine Fetvaci, Picturing History at the Ottoman Court. (Indiana University Press, 2013).

[58] See Yıldıray Özbek, "Şürkrî-i Bitlisî Selīmnâmesi Minyatürleri." *Erciyes Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 1.n.17(2004): 151-193.

Now, one must address what these mystical themes are. As previously discussed, lyrical literature intricately weaves the beloved's body with the imagery of hunting, melding the acts of love and the hunt into a single tapestry. In traditional portrayals, the lover finds themselves ensnared in the pursuit of the beloved, yet this ensnarement is embraced with a profound willingness. Persian poetry frequently illustrates the lover's eager consent to be 'hunted' by the beloved, portraying a dynamic where pursuit and surrender interlace with deep affection and desire.[59]

In the realm of mystical poetry, this imagery undergoes a significant transformation. The familiar roles of lover and beloved transcend their earthly bindings, adopting a more spiritual interpretation. Within this context, the 'beloved' transcends human form to represent the Divine, making God the ultimate object of the mystic's longing and pursuit. This shift highlights a fundamental change in the nature of love and pursuit depicted in poetry. The physicality and sensuality typical of earthly love give way to a quest for spiritual union and divine love. Here, the act of being 'hunted' or sought after symbolizes the soul's journey towards understanding, unity with the Divine, and the ultimate surrender to God's will. Rumi's Masnavī, for example, is replete with themes of hunting, but with a profound twist that turns conventional narratives on their head. One of the most compelling examples is found in the very first story, where a king becomes captivated by a maiden (*Kanīza/ Kenīzek*). This narrative serves as a powerful metaphor for the spiritual journey, with the king's physical pursuit transforming into a quest for spiritual fulfillment. Rumi uses the hunting motif to illustrate the idea that in pursuiting love—divine or earthly—the seeker often finds themselves caught, highlighting the paradoxical nature of love

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[59] For the most detailed study about hunting in the Persian Language and Literature in English, see William L. Hanaway, "The Concept of the Hunt in Persian Literature," *Boston Museum Bulletin*, 69. n.355/356 (1971): 21-69.

where the hunter becomes the hunted. Through this inversion, Rumi conveys the surrender of the ego and the soul's willing captivity to divine love, emphasizing the transformative power of love in guiding the seeker towards spiritual enlightenment and union with the beloved, who represents the Divine. [60]

This theme, with its Sufi implications, is abundantly found in the Dīvān of poems by Sa'adi, Hafez, and all lyrical poets. In the Selīm's Dīvān, too, there are numerous examples of this. Selīm expresses that had the beloved's attention not graced him the previous night, and had he not been ensnared by the beloved's hair, his heart was on the verge of being freed from the sorrow of separation that had assaulted him like an army. On the page preceding the miniature, nestled within the margin, is a poem penned by Selīm that skillfully weaves the conventional metaphors of hunting throughout its stanzas. The verses abound with the imagery of pursuit and capture, mirroring the thematic essence of hunting that pervades Persian literature. Selīm, in the climactic final verse, expresses that had the beloved's attempt not graced him the previous night, and had he not been ensnared by the beloved's hair, his heart was on the verge of being freed from the sorrow of separation, a sorrow that had assaulted him like an army. [61]

A dīvān of poetry, in this context, emerges as a symbolic artifact that reveals the Sufi sultan's pursuit of transcendence and spiritual fulfillment, bridging the worldly and the divine. Selīm's dīvān, crafted within his court, transcends the mere emulation of Sultan Hossein Teymuri's poetic collection. This work intricately weaves together the portrayal of the caliph and the path of a Sufi poet, presenting a unique blend not observed in the works of his predecessors. The endeavour to elevate the Persianate culture to a central position within Selīm's court was

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[60] Jalalu'ddin Rumi, "*The Mathnavi*," v.1, (Tehran: Zavvar, 1375), 45-46.

[61] دوش میرست از سپاه هجر دل/ گر نمیبود اهتمام زلف دوست . Selīm I, *Dīvān*, MS 1330, f.57a.

poised to significantly alter the landscape of Persian cultural hegemony within the Persian-Islamic courts. However, this potential took a different path in the Ottoman realm due to the short reign of Selīm and the death of key ideologues and cultural figures such as Bidlisi and Qazvini and culminated in the Ottoman language at the court of Süleyman.

In this section, I aim to analyze the content of the poems in this particular manuscript to uncover the narratives and portrayals of the governance they contain. I will explore the depiction of Selīm's concept of rulership within these poems. My focus shifts away from the traditional constructs found in Persian poetry, such *Shāh-i Khūbān/Şāh-i ḥubān, Sultan-i ʿishq/ʿaşk or Farmānravāy-i mulk-i jān, Fermānrevā-yi mūlk-i cān* etc. Instead, I examine verses that directly tackle governance, where he unequivocally presents himself as the ruler. The significant body of verses in question falls into two distinct categories: one where Selīm explicitly identifies himself as the ruler, and another where he addresses the notion of governance more broadly.

I will reference these verses belong to the first category and subsequently analyze them to show how they contribute to constructing the image of Selīm as a Sufi sultan poet.

I do not desire sovereignty, Selīmī; I am the servant of the beloved.

For I possess kingship from serving myself.[62]

My heart does not incline towards the thrones of Caesar and Kavūs[63],

For the threshold of the Friend's door has become attainable for us[64].

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[62] Selīm I, *Dīvān*, MS 1330. f.51a. نمیخواهم سلیمی پادشاهی بندهٔ یارم/ که من شاهنشهی از بندگی خویشتن دارم
[63] One of the mystic kings of Iran.
[64] Selīm I, *Dīvān,* MS 1330, f.23b. به تخت قیصر وکاووس نیست مایل دل/ که آستان در دوست شد میسّر ما

We do not seek the Fountain of Life like Alexander.

Love and trust in God are the guide (*pir*) of our journey.[65]

Even the dominion of the world was offered to us.

Nothing but the pain of love for the beloved would please our heart.[66]

The aim of sovereignty over the world lies in the pursuit of fame.

Why should we chase after this world which is a carrion?[67]

Selīm feels dishonor from the throne of sovereignty over all horizons.

For him, it suffices to rest his head upon the tavern of love's brick.[68]

The verses collectively underscore the transient nature and ultimate insignificance of worldly status and power when contrasted with the enduring and overpowering force of love . Love, a pivotal theme in Sufi literature, encompasses vast dimensions. Within the mystical love paradigm, roles are defined: a lover and a beloved, where traditionally, the lover merges with the identity of the mystic. Inherent to a lover or mystic is the tendency to deem worldly possessions and honours as insignificant, valuing only love above all. Yet, in these poems, the figure of the lover or mystic transcends this, embodying the figure of a sultan. Selīm's poetry introduces a

[65] Selīm I, *Dīvān,* MS 1330, f.23a. ما چون سکندر{از} پی حیوان نمی رویم /عشق و توکلست درین راه پیر ما.
[66] Selīm I, *Dīvān,* MS 1330, f23.b. بر ما اگر چه ملک جهان عرضه داشتند/ جز درد عشق یار نشد دلپذیر ما.
[67] Selīm I, *Dīvān,* MS 1330, f.16b. ای سلیم از شاهی عالم غرض آوازه ایست/ کی بود ما را پی این دنبی مردار بحث.
[68] Selīm I, *Dīvān,* MS 1330, f. 37b. عار دارد ز سریر همه آفاق سلیم/ زیر سر خشت در میکده عشق بسش

nuanced variation: the mystic also embodies a ruler, skillfully intertwining these two identities. Borrowing from Homi Bhabha, I call this third space an "interstitial space", which presents the mystic poet-sultan as a figure embodying both spiritual and temporal power. This identity challenges traditional notions of spiritual and temporal power being separate or even opposing realms and helps to make a divine image of the ruler.

This character, however, balances his spiritual persona with his martial achievements as a *ghazi* sultan. While he articulates his victories and conquests, he humbly acknowledges their limitations, attributing their true extent and significance to God's omniscience and writes "what does the black-hearted enemy know of this: that our army's conquest is the manifestation of the Lord?."[69] This acknowledgment not only highlights his devout humility but also reinforces the depth of his spiritual and temporal authority. He remains perpetually discontent with merely being granted a kingdom by God, yet he refrains from voicing complaints, accepting it as divine destiny: "Selīm, if from the valley of sorrow you risen to a royal throne, why lament? For since eternity, this has been God's decree." [70] Thus, he has accepted his role with a sense of reluctance and "never exchanges the world of revelry and love found in being a mystic, for the governance of khāqān/ ḥākān." This self-presentation is evident even in the poems he composed as imitation of the other poets *(Nazīre/ Nezīre, istiqbāl, taqlīd)*, where his voice reflects a consistent identity that intertwines his spiritual and regal facets. Benedek Péri, comprehensively argues Selīm's engagement with Persian 'classical poetry through imitation is noteworthy for its sophisticated interaction with established literary traditions. Instead of producing mere replicas of his model poems, Selīm's imitations often involve complex engagements with a broader paraphrase

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[69] Selīm I, *Dīvān,* MS 1330, f.9b. سليم خصم سيه دل چه داند اين حالت/ كه ظهور الهيست فتح لشكر ما

[70] Selīm I, *Dīvān,* MS 1330, f.15a. سليم از وادى غم گر به تخت شاهى افتادى/ چه رنجى كز ازل اين نوع تقدير خدا بودست

network, showcasing his works' intertextual relationship' not just with a single model poem but with an entire tradition of related poetic responses. Furthermore, Selīm consciously chose his models from esteemed poets of the 13th to 15th centuries, engaging deeply with the Persian poetic canon. His imitations are characterized by innovation within the constraints of traditional forms, demonstrating his ability to both honour and renew the classical tradition. [71]

I argue, this self-presentation as a Sufi poet-ruler manifests clearly in the poems he crafted in dialogue with other poets, showcasing a voice that seamlessly integrates his spiritual and sovereign identities. An exemplary demonstration of this can be seen in his *takhmis* of a ghazal by Jami, where his dual role as a Sufi poet and ruler is clearly expressed.[72]

In the second part of this poem, Selīm connects the romantic/Sufi-like (*ashiqāni/aşıkāne - Ṣūfiyāne*) content of Jami's *ghazal* to the realm of kingship:

I have revealed myself in the manner of Majnun.

In moments of love, thoughts of Caesar's throne and crown do not tread.

From your absence, I weep blood, for your ruby is not in sight.

"My honour's sole concern is preserving yours.

I bear no sorrow if the world shames me for your love." [73]

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[71]Benedek Péri, "Yavuz Sultan Selīm (1512–1520) and his imitation strategies: A case study of four Ḥāfiẓ ghazals," *Acta Orientalia* 73. n.2 (2020):233-251.

[72] In this format, the poet selects a sonnet from another poet and amplifies each verse by adding three additional stanzas. Consequently, the poem is structured into multiple sections, each comprising five stanzas. The final stanza of each quintet shares a common rhyme, while the rhymes of the preceding four stanzas within these quintets also align, creating a cohesive yet complex poetic structure. For more information, see P.F Kennedy, "Takhmīs", *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition, ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 10 March 2024. http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_7332.

[73] برآوردم به مجنونی سر وبر فرق أفسر نه / مرا در عاشقی پروای تاج و تخت قیصر نه/ زناموس خودم مقصود نام و ننگ توست ار نه/ زهجرت من که خون می گریم ولعلت برابر نه"/ مرا غم نیست کز عشق تو رسوای جهان باشم" Selīm I, *Dīvān,* MS 1330, ff. 63a-63b.

In another segment of the poem, his aspirations transcend the desire for victories; he does not pray to God for martial success. Instead, he yearns solely for a single day of companionship with his beloved, prioritizing this connection over worldly achievements:

O God, I do not ask for a throne of felicity,

Nor do I seek victory and conquest to acquire a realm's decree.

Grant me the chance to experience pain, to step on the path of love's domain,

Bestow upon this wretch that status and wealth,

That I may one day sit in the company of that era's Solomon, in stealth.[74]

Here we can say Selīm emerges as a figure who transcends the mere role of a ruler, embodying the ideals of Sufi mysticism within the framework of governance, thereby redefining the essence of rulership in the Sufi context. Moreover, Selīm not only personifies the integration of Sufi spirituality and monarchical authority in his poetry but also articulates recommendations concerning ideal governance. For example, in one a couplet he considers humility and not seeing oneself as unique as the conditions for attaining governance:

A king who constantly boasts that,

there is no one like him,

even if he collects tribute from all seven climes of the world,

does not truly possess sovereignty. [75]

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[74] نمی گویم خداوندا مرا تخت سعادت ده/ برای مملکت گیری ظفر یا فتح نصرت ده/ ز بهر کسب دردمرا طریق عشق فرصت ده / من سرگشته بیچاره را آن جاه و دولت ده/ که روزی همنشین آن سلیمان زمان باشم. Selīm I, *Dīvān,* MS 1330, f.63b.

In these poems, he presents himself as an advisor. In one of them he counsels rulers to adhere to two principles: first, to eradicate injustice and betrayal from the world, and second, to refrain from disrespecting the elders. [76] In addition, in a poem that can serve as a manifesto, Selim delineates the motivations behind his poetic endeavors. [77] Initially, he clarifies his lack of ambition for poetic fame, attributing his literary journey to the solitude of his social existence. The sultan expresses a poignant sense of loss, noting that the essence of true love has been elusive to him since time immemorial. Always accompanied by a book and papers, they became the receptacles for the expressions of his innermost feelings. On an occasion of relative leisure, he compiled these writings as a ghazal to his beloved, organizing them into a book. Towards the poem's conclusion, he contemplates the legacy of his poetic contributions, which would not detract from his kingdom's statutes. Furthermore, he petitions the divine, seeking the grace to unveil the mysteries known only to the articulate. Indeed, this poem distinctly echoes the voice of a figure who is both a Sufi poet and a sultan. It reflects on the dual aspects of his identity, contemplating governance while attributing his poetic output to his nature as a lover and mystic.[78]

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[75] Selīm I, *Dīvān,* MS ‬پادشاهی که دایما لافد / که چو من دیگری به کشور نیست/ گر خراجش رسد ز هفت اقلیم / منزل دولتش میسر نیست 1330, f. 65a.

[76] هر که را سلطنت و جاه مسلم گردید/ باید اول ز جهان ظلم و خیانت ببرد/ هم گهی گر به سخن گرم شود با امرا/ هیچ گه نام بزرگان به اهانت نبرد. Selīm I, *Dīvān,* MS 1330, f.65b.

[77] Selīm I, *Dīvān,* MS 1330, ff. 64a-64b.

[78] مرا ز شعر نبود این مراد دل هرگز/ که در زمانه شود شاعری شعار از من/ ولی چو هیچ رفیقی نیافتم که ازو/ غمی نکردم و او نیز دلفگار از من/ به تیغ عشق از اهل زمانه بریدم/ که ننگ صحبتشان باد بر کنار از من/ به تیغ عشق ز اهل زمانه ببریدم/ که ننگ صحبتشان باد بر کنار از من/ جمال عشق حقیقی به فن عشوه گری/ ربوده بود به روز ازل قرار از من/ همیشه داشتمی عزلت از جهان که دلم/ ز روزگار به جهان بود و روزگار از من/ جز از کتاب ندیدم مصاحبی جانی/ چو ز یار جدا بودمی و یار از من/ به ذکر دوست که خونابه ریختی چشمم/ شدی گهی ورق کاغذی نگار از من/ دلم که معدن عشقست و دیده گان عقیق/ پدید گشت گوهرهای شاهوار از من/ ز گفت و گوی محبت به کنج خلوت غم/ همی شدی دو سه بیتی که آشکار از من/ نه ز بد ز طبع که قطعا نه آورم به شمار/ چو آمد این گهری چند در شمار از من/ ز دود دل ورقی چند را سیه کردم/ وجود یافت غزل های آبدار از من/ نبود شغل دگر جمع کردمش روزی/ که شد وصیله کتابی به سوی یار از من/ کمال سلطنتم را چه عیب و

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Finally, there is a ghazal in which we can, ironically, see one of the Selīm's characteristics. All the verses of this ghazal are engaged with the issue of Selīm's rulership.

Through the sovereignty of love, I've collected tribute from west and east,

I am the king of the army of sorrow, and I fear not the gamblers.

By the grace of love, my sovereignty has reached such a place that,

I collect tribute from the seven climes.

I do not entertain thoughts of the throne in this transient world.

For me, my fortune is my throne, and victory is my crown.

The essence of my army lies in the sword.

With the high ambition I possess, I am in need of nothing.

The words of the minister and the commander do not please me.

Even if, with slyness, they speak well in jest[79].

Selīm is like a mountain of tribulation, and the envious one is like the glass of greed.

یا چه زیان/ چو ماند این غزلیات یادگار از من/ هزار شکر سلیمی سر عشق تمام/ شد آشکار به توفیق کردگار از من/ بزرگوار خدایا به حق اهل سخن/ که راز اهل سخن را نهان مدار از من. Selīm I, *Dīvān,* MS 1330, ff.64a-64b.

[79] Mehmet Çelebi notes an intriguing aspect of Selīm's character: his tendency to disregard his ministers' counsel. He mentions that Selīm was known for executing ministers due to their mistakes, to the extent that state dignitaries would curse each other by saying, "May you become a vizier to Sultan Selīm." Reflecting on this, a poet is quoted to have said: "There is no cure for the death of a rival/ Unless he becomes a vizier to Sultan Selīm." See S. M. Çelebi, *Solakzâde Târihi,* v2 (Ankara, KültürBakanlığı Yayınları, 1989), 104.

It is evident how glass fares in the presence of a mountain.[80]

In the poem mentioned above, Selīm adopts a tone distinct from his other verses, except for one, in this manuscript. The other one is even more than the one rough and the Sufi elements are significantly reduced. This poem is composed in a ghazal meter, yet with a tone that is markedly epic:

Even if the enemy's army stretches from Qaf to Qaf,

I swear by the Lord, I will not turn away from the battle.

Like the sun, I eradicate the darkness of infidelity,

When I draw my sword at dawn.

If the lion roars in battle,

I pierce his heart with an arrow as fine as a needle, stitching it.

If a claimant stands before me on the day of battle,

He will see that the claims of men are not made of mere boasts.

One must come forthrightly amid the fray,

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[80] به ملک عشق گرفتم ز شرق وغرب خراج/ شه سپاه غمم نیست باکم از قیقاج/ رسیده از کرم عشق دولتم جایی/ که همتم از اقالیم سبعه گیرد باج/ برای تخت جهان فنا چه فکر کنم/ مرا که بخت بود تخت فتح ونصرت تاج/ بود ز جوهر دریای تیغ لشکر من/ نیم به همت عالی به هیچ شی محتاج/ نیایدم سخن میر یا وزیر پسند/ ز حیله گرچه نکو حرف می زند به مزاج/ سلیم کوه بلا وحسود شیشه حرص/ معین است چه باشد به پیش زجاج کوه. Selīm I, *Dīvān,* MS 1330, ff. 17b-18a.

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Or else, people will speak of nonsensical words.

The enemy does not stand firm against the arrow,

Like a mat-weaver cannot do the work of an armor-maker

"Selimi! the enemy bears enmity towards me,

Otherwise, my heart is as clear as a polished blade.[81]

In these poems, the poet-sultan reveals another aspect of himself. He is a ghazi and a warrior ruler. The absence of a definitive historical context or an earlier version of Selīm's dīvān complicates efforts to recognize a process for this change. What we can discuss here is that these two poems share a boastful tone and minimal Sufi elements, reminiscent of another poem that I intend to discuss here that is absent from this manuscript, which suggests that it should be written or attributed to him after the completion of the illustrated dīvān:

As I drove my army from Istanbul towards Iran,

I drowned the Sufi crowning the blood of blame. [82]

The slave of my ambition became, with heart and soul, Egypt's protector,

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[81] گر لشکر عدو بود از قاف تا به قاف/ والله که روی بر نتابم از مصاف/ چون آفتاب ظلمت کفر از جهان برم/ گاهی که صبح برون تیغ برون آرم از غلاف/ گر نعره برکشد ز جگر شیر نر به جنگ/ دوزم دلش به سوزن پیکان جان شکاف/ گر روبرو شود به گه رزم مدعی/ داند که نیست دعوی مردان ز روی لاف/ باید به راستی به میان آمد ار نه خلق/ گویند بی شمار سخن از سر گزاف/ در پیش تیغ و تیر عدو پایدار نیست/ کار زره گران نکند هر حصیر باف/ دارد حسود کین سلیمی و گرنه هست/ ما را به مثل آینهٔ تیغ سینه صاف. Selīm I, *Dīvān*, MS 1330, f. 40b.
[82] Sufi in this couplet is Ismaeil I.

When I raised the banner of Joseph in the kingdom of Egypt.

When I strummed on victory's harp in triumph's assembly,
That melody shifted from Iraq tune to the Hijaz tune[83].

Transoxiana, by my blade, drowned in blood,

I wiped the eyes of enemies clean of the antimony of Isfahan.

The Oxus flowed from my enemy's every hair,

Sorrow's fever made him sweat when I cast my gaze on him.

My cunning army left the king of India checkmated,

When, on the kingdom's chessboard, I played at the chess of fortune.

O Selīmī, the coin of the world's kingdom was stamped with my name,

When I melted it like gold in the crucible of love and loyalty.[84]

The thematic similarities between these poems show that the last two poems of the

illustrated dīvān likely belong to a later period in Selīm poetic oeuvre. In an analysis of letters

penned by Selīm which are one year apart, before and after the conquest of Egypt, observes a

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[83] The text exhibits a clever interplay between the names of lands conquered by Selīm and musical tunes (Iraq and Hijaz), showcasing a unique blend of historical narrative and poetic device.

[84] تا ز استنبول لشكر سوى ايران تاختم/ تاج صوفى غرقه خون ملامت ساختم/ شد غلام همتم از جان ودل والى مصر/ تا لواى يوسفى در ملك مصر افراختم/ كرد از ملك عراق آن پرده آهنگ حجاز/ چنگ نصرت را چو در بزم ظفر بنواختم/ ماوراءالنهر از تيغم شده غرقاب خون/ چشم دشمن را ز كحل اصفهان پرداختم/ آب آمو از سر هر مو روان شد خصم را/ شد عرقريز از تب غم چون نظر انداختم/ شاه هند از لشكر فرزانه‌ام شد پيل مات/ بر بساط ملك چون شطرنج دولت باختم/ اى سليمى شد به نامم سكهٔ ملك جهان/ تا چو زر در بوتهٔ مهر ووفا بگداختم Qazvīnī, Hasht Bihisht, 327.

notable transformation in the iconography utilized in this legal code, highlighting a profound change in his self-representation as a ruler. This shift underscores the impact of the conquest on Selīm's perception of his royal identity, suggesting that the acquisition of Egypt played a pivotal role in redefining his image and the symbolic language he employed to convey his sovereignty. [85] While it cannot be definitively stated, the evidence presented, along with the unique tone of these poems, suggests that it was likely written towards the end of his reign.

Here I need to delve into the reason, thus far in my research, I have focused exclusively on a single version of the dīvān. Initially, it is important to note that this particular manuscript, produced within Selīm's own court and likely under his supervision, merits its own dedicated study, especially for my study which is in some parts related to the self-conscious image making of Selīm. Second, the condition of existing manuscripts of his dīvān, coupled with the historical context following Selīm's reign, through the era of Süleymān, and the process involved in shaping Selīm's image, encompasses all facets related to his portrayal. Consequently, any scholarly investigation into Selīm's poetry necessitates a meticulous examination of the manuscripts until a reliable critical edition becomes available. Otherwise, without focusing on different manuscripts, many research findings will be unreliable. [86] Thus, it becomes necessary to thoroughly review the copies and editions of Selīm's dīvān. One of the complexities involves

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[85] Erdem Çıpa, *The Making of Selīm*, 211.

[86] One of the examples of this mistakes is a statement regarding Selīm's illustrated dīvān, started by Zeren Tanındı. In her research about this manuscript, she writes the presence of a poem referring to a trip to Egypt and bearing Selīm's own seal indicates that this dīvān must have been produced between 1510 and 1518. She cannot read Persian and therefore references to the poems that were translated into Turkish by Ali Nihad Tarlan (d.1987). Tarlan, in his translation, utilized a dīvān published by Paul Horn, who had selected the poems based on a compilation of different manuscripts. This simple mistake has led to everything written about illustrated dīvān referencing this particular date. The issue is that this particular poem does not exist in this manuscript. this means that Selīm either wrote this poem after the production of this manuscript or he did not write the poem at all. So, this version should have been written before 1518 in a date between 1515 and 1520. See Zeren Tanındı "Müzehhep ve Musavver Şiirler," 452; *Yavuz Sultan Selīm Dīvānı (Türkçe tercümesi), tr.* Ali Nihat Tarlan, (Istanbul, 1946); Dîvân-ı Sultan Selîm, ed. Paul Horn, (Berlin 1904).

verifying the authorship of the final sonnet, a subject that will be explored in more depth in the third chapter. This investigation is essential, starting with the identification of the earliest source that mentions this poem, a key discussion slated for the third chapter.

<u>Conclusion:</u>

In conclusion, this chapter explores the poetry of Selīm, the sultan whose poetic endeavour transcends mere literary pursuits to become a multifaceted tool of imperial and personal expression. Through the dissection of language, authenticity, and thematic exploration within Selīm's dīvān, the analysis sheds light on the complex interplay between political ambition, cultural diplomacy, and mystical aspirations that characterized his reign. The examination of the contentious language issue—where Persian, not Turkish, becomes the chosen medium—reveals a strategic alignment with the Persianate cultural hegemony and a deliberate assertion of Selīm's identity as a Sufi poet-sultan. This choice underscores a conscious effort to link Selīm's legacy with the esteemed Persian literary tradition, elevating his status as a cultured ruler amidst his time's intense political and ideological rivalries. The chapter argues that Selīm's poetic oeuvre, especially his nuanced engagement with Persian poetry and the creation of an illustrated dīvān, is a deliberate act of persona construction. It positions him as a ruler who adeptly navigates the complex interconnections between governance, cultural patronage, and spiritual leadership.

The exploration of Selīm's poetry unveils a ruler whose literary and cultural endeavours were integral to his imperial strategy, reflecting a sophisticated understanding of the power of

language and art in the construction of royal identity and legacy. This chapter, therefore, not only contributes to the historiography of Ottoman cultural practices but also offers insights into the intricate ways in which literature and art function as vehicles of power, identity, and diplomacy in the early modern Islamic world.

Chapter Two:

Selīm's Odes

In this chapter, the focus shifts to one of Selīm's poems less examined genre—his odes. By delving into this I intend to offer a new interpretation of these odes, drawing on a manuscript of Selīm's dīvān authored by one of his close courtiers. Through a detailed analysis, it will be showed how these odes help to craft and disseminating the sultan's image as a legitimate ruler.

Selīm' Ascension to the Throne:

One of the fundamental topics within the political framework of the Ottoman Empire pertains to the methods employed in succession to the throne. It is noteworthy that this process was accessible to all male members of the House of ʿOsman and constituted a framework in which personal fortune and divine mandate were combined and corresponded to "state" (*devlet*). [87] The definitive form of the *devlat* was realized through the confrontations between claimants to power, which marked the culmination of this phenomenon. These instances of power struggle were frequently marked by many fatalities, most notably fratricide. [88]

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[87] For the main discussions about the nature of this matter in the Ottoman court, see Halil İnalcık, "Osmanlılar' da Saltanat Verâseti Usulü ve Türk Hakimiyet Telâkkisiyle İlgisi" [The Method of Succession of Sultanate in the Ottomans and its Relevance to the Turkish Dominion Concept",] in Ankara Üniversitesi SBF Dergisi, V. 14, N.1 (1959,) 69-94; Anthony. D Alderson, The Structure of the Ottoman Dynasty, (New York: Oxford University Press. 1956); Cemal Kafadar, Between two worlds: the construction of the Ottoman state, (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1995.)

[88] For detailed information regarding fratricide tradition in the Ottoman context, see Joseph Fletcher, "Turco-Mongolian Monarchic Tradition in the Ottoman Empire", in *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, V.3-4, N.1 (1979-80), 236-51; Alderson, "*The Structure of the Ottoman Dynasty,*" 30-31.

Selīm I's ascension to power not only conformed to this pattern, but it also stood out as one of the most contentious instances. It represented a unique case where not only all claimants to the throne were eliminated, but also the transfer of authority occurred before the incumbent ruler's demise by dethroning him during the confrontation between the son (Selīm) and the father (Bayezīd II), commonly known as "the Battle of Çorlu." [89] This unprecedented occurrence lacked historical precedent among the Ottomans both before and after his reign and it was the court historian's focus during Selīm and his successor Suleimān I. Contemporary historiographical research, characterized by a discerning analysis of historical narrative sources, has unveiled fresh perspectives in comprehending this complex issue. The scholarly exploration of this domain traced its origins to the seminal contributions of Çağatay Uluçay and Selahattin Tansel and was further advanced through the comprehensive investigations of Ahmet Uğur. [90]. Recent scholarship has been significantly enriched by the pioneering works of two distinguished researchers, Erdem Çıpa and Riza Yildirim, whose contributions have introduced novel perspectives within the field. [91] The distinction is that, where the former account primarily emphasizes the backing of Rumelian and Janissaries, while the latter account focuses on the actions of the Qizilbashs along the Anatolian frontiers, as well as the endeavours of Selīm's

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[89] For information about this battle see Çıpa, "*The Making of Selīm,"48-52*.

[90] For Turkish works that encompass Selīm's ascension to the throne, see M. Çağatay Uluçay "Yavuz Sultan Selīm Nasıl Padişah Oldu", *İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Tarih Dergisi*, v.9, (1953), 53-90, v.10 (1954), 117-142, V.11-12 (1955), 185-200.; Selâhattin Tansel, *Yavuz Sultan Selīm*, (Ankara: Milli Eğitim. Basımevi, 1969); Ahmet Uğur, *Yavuz Sultan Selīm*, (Kayseri, Erciyes universitesi, 1992); Faruk Söylemez, "Yavuz Sultan Selīm'in Taht Mücadelesi", *Erciyes Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 1 n.33 (2012), 63-86. Mehmet Hanefi Bostan, "Yavuz Sultan Selīm'in Şehzadelik Dönemi (1487-1512)," *Türk Kültürü İncelemeleri Dergisi,* v.4 (2019).

[91] These advancements are the result of Ph.D. dissertations and subsequent research endeavors conducted during similar periods. Riza Yildirim, "An Ottoman Prince Wearing a Qizilbash Tāj: The Enigmatic Career of Sultan Murad and Qizilbash Affairs in Ottoman Domestic Politics, 1510-1513" in *Turcica* V. 43 (2011): 91-119; Erdem Çıpa, *The Making of Selīm: Succession, Legitimacy, and Memory in the Early Modern Ottoman World,* 29-62.

adversary, Ahmed and notably his son's affiliation with the Qizilbashs. [92] Integration of these two studies provides a thorough comprehension of the topic matter, encompassing all facets thereof.

The investigation into the fraternal dynamic derived from historical records unveils a pervasive pattern of intense rivalry, as expected, for the succession to the kingdom between the two brothers. [93] Aḥmed enjoys unwavering backing from his father's court, affirming his position as the rightful heir to the throne. It seems the earliest record of objections between Selīm and his father dates back to 1487, when Selīm was sent to the administration of Trabzon. [94] Selīm, being the younger offspring, demonstrates a distinct disregard for the court's directives, consistently exhibiting a recalcitrant demeanour that incurs frequent and severe reprimands from his father, even where he achieves triumphs in border conflicts in the eastern regions of the Ottoman territories.[95] Regarding the relationship between two brothers, the information is extremely brief before the issue of Bayezīd II' s succession, raised during the final years of his reign. One of the specific pieces of information pertnarrains to the time when Selīm suggested to Bayezīd II that he send his son Süleyman as governor (*sancakbeylik*) of two places which were part of Aḥmed's territories, but Aḥmed declined. [96] Another tension happened when Selīm, left Trabzon to the Kefe which means from the east of the Ottoman Empire (close to Aḥmed) to the west and close

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[92] For an analysis regarding the nature of the Janissaries' devotion to one ruler in the process of "making a sultan" see Cemal Kafadar, "Janissaries and Other Riffraff of Ottoman Istanbul: Rebels without a Cause," *in Identity and Identity Formation in the Ottoman World: A Volume of Essays in Honor of Norman Itzkowitz* (Wisconsin, 2007): 113-134.

[93] Çıpa and Yildirim conducted a comprehensive analysis of the narratives found in "Selīm-names" and chronicles, employing documentary evidence to discern the political dimensions of the relationship between those two princes. In the present study, their research findings have been referenced, with primary sources being consulted exclusively in cases where they are directly pertinent to the subject matter under investigation. See Çıpa, "*The Making of Selīm*", 29-30; Riza Yildirim, "An Ottoman Prince Wearing a Qizilbash Taj". For more comprehensive information in Turkish see M. Hanefi Bustan, "Yavuz Sultan Selīm'in Şehzâdelik Dönemi (1487-1512)/ [Principality Period of Selīm I]" *Türk Kültürü İncelemeleri Dergisi* [The Journal of Turkish Cultural Studies], v.40, (2019): 1-86.

[94] Çıpa, "*The Making of Selīm*", 35.

[95] Çıpa, "*The Making of Selīm*", 37.

[96] Kemal Paşazade, in Ahmet Uğur, *The reign of Sultan Selīm I in the light of the Seīlm-nāme literature*, (Berlin, 1985),151.

to his father. It seems Aḥmed felt stressed out by the news of Selīm's departure to the west and the capital of the empire. [97] From this point forward until Aḥmed was murdered by Selīm in 1513, there was nothing but competition, antagonism, conflict, and hostility.

As mentioned in the first chapter, the chronicles of Selīm's period, as well as subsequent *Selīmname* literature, conspicuously avoid discussing the death of his father. This omission can be interpreted as a strategic move to construct a legitimate image of Selīm by erasing certain memories.[98] However, the same cannot be said regarding Ahmed. Both *Selīmnames* and chronicles openly acknowledge the deaths of Ahmed and Korkut at the hands of Selīm. Yet, within these accounts, the narrative focus shifts towards Ahmed's rebellion against Selīm after his ascension to the throne. For example, Kemal Paşazade (d.1534) mentions that Aḥmed declares rebellion upon the death of Bayezīd II and does not declare submission to Selīm. [99] İdris-i Bidlisî, Celālzāde, Kemal Paşazade and Şükri-i Bidlisî (d.1531) shared common narrative about Aḥmed being seduced by falsified letters and coming to the capital and being killed by Selīm.[100] In fact, Aḥmed, who was the desired successor of his father and courtiers, in the official chronicles left in the Ottoman court, is finally introduced as the most rebellious member of the family. Selīm's ascendancy to power, in contrast to Ahmed, can largely be attributed to his success in quelling one of the major Ḳızılbāş rebellions in the eastern regions, led by Şahkulu. Ahmed, on the other hand, not only failed to suppress this insurrection but also encountered an additional setback with his son Murad's collaboration with the Ḳızıbāşs and his allegiance to

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[97] "Sultan Selīm Hanun Kefeye geçdügin işidüb [Ahmed] bi-huzür oldı." Kemal Paşazade, in Ahmet Uğur, *The reign of Sultan Selīm I in the light of the Seīlm-nāme literature*, 48.
[98] Çıpa, "*The Making of Selīm"*, 142-144.
[99] "Bu dasitan sultan-ı cihan serir-i saltanata cülüsün Sultan Ahmed işidüb izhar-ı ʿisyan itdügin…" Kemal Paşazade, in Ahmet Uğur, *The reign of Sultan Selīm I in the light of the Seīlm-nāme literature*, 69.
[100] Ahmet Uğur, *The reign of Sultan Selīm I in the light of the Seīlm-nāme literature*, 221-224.

Ismail.[101] Despite any documents indicating Ahmed's cooperation with his son in this matter, any hint of association with the Ḳızılbāş Shiites at that time was perilous. It was in the wake of this controversy that the Janissary forces lent their support to Selīm.[102]

Here it is helpful to refer to Erdem Çıpā's argument, which points to the development of imperial ideology and the textual iconography of Selīm I and its continuation and development during the Sūleymānic era (1520-1566). In the analysis of this historiographical process, the author delineates three principal components that have incrementally contributed to the construction of Selīm's image over time. Initially, there was a concerted effort to forge the portrayal of a legitimate sultan. The question of Selīm's legitimacy is intricately linked to the manner of his accession to power. Distinguished as the sole sultan to usurp the throne by displacing his predecessor prior to the latter's demise, Selīm's legitimacy remained perpetually under scrutiny. The death of the preceding sultan, Bayezid II (d. 1512), under mysterious circumstances shortly thereafter, further complicates this narrative. The deliberate obfuscation of Bayezid II's death by the court scribes in Selīm's favour effectively facilitated the reconstruction of Selīm's reign's image, thereby securing his position and authority. [103] *Selīmname* literature, distinguished itself by outperforming all other contemporary texts in terms of effectively reconstructing and endorsing Selīm's image as a legitimate sultan. This superiority is attributed to their nuanced portrayal and strategic emphasis on legitimizing narratives, which helped to

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[101] For more information, see Riza Yildirim, "An Ottoman Prince Wearing a Qizilbash Taj".
[102] Çıpa, "*The Making of Selīm*", 43-48.
[103] H. Erdem Çıpa, *The Making of Selīm: Succession, Legitimacy, and Memory in the Early Modern Ottoman World*, (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2017), 136-140.

consolidate his authority and legitimize his rule.[104] Starting during the reign of Selīm I and continued and developed during the reign of Süleymān I (d.1566), many *Selīmnames* narrated Selīm's remarkable achievements on the battlefield. By highlighting the threat of the Ḳızılbāş in the east and Selīm's decisive actions against them, the *Selīmname* literature contributes to an image of Selīm I as a strong, decisive leader who acted in the best interests of the Ottoman Empire. This narrative supports the idea that Selīm's challenge to his father's rule and his subsequent actions were justified by the need to protect the empire from internal and external threats. [105]

The second element of textual iconography of Selīm that Çıpa recognizes, as illuminated through the *Neṣīḥatnāme* literature, revolves around depicting Selīm as an idealized ruler. [106] This tradition, deeply entrenched in the Ottoman intellectual and literary landscape, stems from a rich heritage of advice literature known as "Mirrors for Princes." These works, originally inspired by Persian *Pandnāme* or *Neṣīḥatnāme* and introduced to the Islamic world in the eighth century, aimed to guide rulers in the principles of justice, social harmony, and adherence to divine law. The genre includes notable examples, such as the *Siyāsatnāme/ Sīyāsetnāme* by Nizām ʿl-Mulk (d. 1092) and the *Naṣīḥatu 'l-Mulūk/ Nesīḥatū 'l-Mūlūk* by Ghazali (d.1111), emphasizing the ruler's role as the embodiment of justice and his accountability to God's law. [107] Çıpa argues that the main intention behind the *Neṣīḥatnāme* literature was not to idealize the memory of Selīm I. However, the outcome of such literature, during the reign of Süleymān I,

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[104] For a comprehensive examination of the narrative presented in *Selīmnames* regarding Selīm's accession to the throne, see Vesile Albayrak Sak, "Selīmnâmelerde Yavuz Sultan Selīm'in Tahta Geçişi," *Turkish Studies,* 12 n.16 (2017): 25-52.
[105] Erdem Çıpa, *The Making of Selīm*, 140-175.
[106] Erdem Çıpa, *The Making of Selīm*, 181- 209.
[107] Howard Douglas , "Ottoman Historiography and the Literature of "Decline" of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," *Journal of Asian History*, 22, n.1 (1988): 52–77.

often led to a glorified portrayal of Selīm as a warrior-sultan who achieved significant victories against both the Safavids and the Mamluks. These texts paint Selīm as a discerning administrator and a ruler whose leadership qualities were comparable to those of Alexander the Great and Prophet Muhammad, emphasizing his value for consultation with learned men. [108]

Çıpa also mentions another element which is a significant shift in the royal self-representation of Selīm after 1517. [109] As also Hüseyin Yılmaz suggests, the exceptional claims within Ottoman sources transcend mere rhetoric or propaganda. He highlights Selīm I's conquest of Egypt and the Holy Cities of Mecca and Medina in 1517, and the advent of the Islamic millennium, to argue that the Ottomans sought to position themselves within a broader eschatological framework. This period marked a significant evolution in Ottoman political thought, particularly regarding the caliphate. As caliphs transitioned into symbolic figures, Ottoman jurists developed sophisticated theories concerning the succession, the nature of the caliphate, eligibility for the office, and the necessary qualifications. Contrary to the prevailing scholarly assumption that the historical caliphate, as conceptualized by Muslim jurists during the Abbasid era (circa 750–1258), persistently influenced the definition of the concept and institution, Yılmaz contends that in the Ottoman milieu, the caliphate concept was transformed. He suggests that through engagements with Sufi thought and practices, the Ottoman sultan emerged as a mystic caliph, symbolizing the unity of spiritual and temporal authority. The Ottoman dynasty, thus, positioned itself as the divine instrument destined to endure until the end of time. Yılmaz's analysis reveals that the caliphate functioned as an anchor concept within Ottoman political discourse, reshaped by esoteric Sufi influences and infused with apocalyptic

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[108] Erdem Çıpa, *The Making of Selīm,* 207.
[109] Erdem Çıpa, *The Making of Selīm*, 211.

and messianic themes. [110] The authors referred to Selīm as the Custodian of the Two Noble Sanctuaries, and some saintly titles like *ṣāḥib-qīran* (Master of the Aspicious Conjunction), *ẓil-Allāh* (Shadow of God), *mahdī* (Messiah), *dhu'l'qarneyn* (AlexandriWorld Conqueror), *mu'a'yad min Allah* (Succored by God) *and Mujaddid* (Renewer of the Religion). These divine references, largely proliferating posthumously, rendered him a quasi-saintly figure attributed with miraculous abilities, such as receiving prophetic communications from ethereal saints (*rijāl-i ghayb/ gayb*) and the precise interpretation of dreams and finally the divinely ordained ruler. [111]

Dīvān's Manuscripts and Selīm's Odes:

In addition to the *Selīmname* literature, there were concerted efforts to compile the dīvān of Selīm during the reigns of Süleyman and Selīm II. The extant manuscripts of Selīm's Dīvān, which are considerable in number, exhibit a wide array of differences. [112] Among these, only two copies can be definitively identified as having been copied one from the other, indicating that the collection of his poems was an ongoing process. It is important to recognize that not all such endeavors to assemble his poems can be directly associated with the royal court. However, evidence strongly suggests that the court itself was involved in these efforts. First, five distinct

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[110] Hüseyin Yılmaz, *Caliphate Redefined: The Mystical Turn in Ottoman Political Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018).

[111] Erdem Çıpa, *The Making of Selīm*, 215.

[112] Benedek Peri tries to categorize these manuscripts. He divided them to two core groups and then lots of sub-groups inside them. The poems encompassed within these subgroups exhibit such pronounced differences that categorizing them does little to elucidate the process of how these versions have evolved over time. It is likely that the number of manuscripts that remain undiscovered (they are either destroyed or we could not yet get access to them) is so substantial that bridging the gap between the existing manuscripts poses a significant challenge.

versions of the Dīvān penned by an individual named Vahid Mashhadi exist.[113] According to Muṣṭafá Alī's *Epic Deeds of Artists* this person was among the calligraphers of Sultan Süleymān.[114] Second, we have a manuscript written by Ebu'lfazl Mehmed Efendi (d.1579), who is the son of İdris-i Bidlisî (d.1520), featuring an introduction that yields significant insights. [115]

Ebu'lfazl was also commissioned by Süleymān to continue his father's *Selīmşahnāme*. [116] His prepared manuscript of dīvān has a unique form. The poems of Selīm are in the margins and the body of the text is his *nazires* to each of Selīm's poem. Incorporating the New Philology's emphasis on the manuscript's materiality and its broader socio-cultural context, this unique arrangement, first of all, shows the manuscript's role as a cultural artifact, revealing the intricate layers of authority, reverence, and literary dialogue characteristic of the period. The act of writing *nazire* to the sultan's poetry is a gesture to underscore the ruler's esteemed position in the literary hierarchy. This manuscript thus becomes a space where the sultan's literary legacy is continuously reinterpreted and celebrated, reflecting the dynamic interplay between text, context, and the construction of literary and political identities. The manuscript's layout, with the Sultan's poetry in the margins, serves as a visual and textual manifestation of the sultan's influence in the literary realm.

But another unique feature of this edition is the author's introduction to his work. After offering customary praises, the collector elucidates his motivation for assembling the dīvān,

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[113] See Benedek Peri, *The Persian Dīvān of Yavuz Sulṭān Selīm: A Critical Edition*. (Budapest, 2021), 46-63.
[114] Mustafa Âli, bin Ahmet, ed. Esra Akın. *Muṣṭafá Alī's Epic Deeds of Artists: A Critical Edition of the Earliest Ottoman Text About the Calligraphers and Painters of the Islamic World.* Islamic History and Civilization. Studies and Texts, v.87. (Leiden The Netherlands: Brill, 2011), 226-227.
[115] Dīvān-i İdris-i Bitlisî and Sultan Selīm, MS Râşid Efendi. Kayseri Eski Eserler Kütüphanesindeki 1289. In the first page of the manuscript written by mistake that it is Idris's dīvān which is incorrect. Since it is catalogued under this name, I would keep reference it to the name of the catalogue.
[116] For information about his life as a courtier, see Mehmet Törehan Sedar, "Ebu'l Fazl Mehmed Efendi (Defterdar Mehmed Efendi)" Artuklu *İnsan ve Toplum Bilim Dergisi, v.*1 n.1 (2016),81-92.

attributing it to a desire to retreat into a hermitage in his old age for prayer and worship. However, his profound admiration for the sultan and his poetry drove him to seek out copies of the sultan's poems that had circulated among the populace and had subsequently suffered from inaccuracies and alterations. Lacking access to the authentic copies held at the court, he endeavoured to amend the errors within his reach, while unavoidably leaving untouched those mistakes for which corrections required the original manuscripts. He notes that among these papers were odes dedicated to his father Bayezid during the period Selīm was leaving him, as well as a poem addressed to his brother Ahmed during his stay in Trabzon, but it has been thought that these poems were composed during Selīm's infatuation with one of the court's beauties. [117]

In this context, it merits closer examination of the odes that are referenced and those others which are available to us, because one important differentiation among the manuscripts of Selīm's dīvān is whether they contain odes or not. As outlined in the preceding chapter, the dīvān compiled at Selīm's court notably lacks any odes. On the other hand, the earliest dated manuscript that we have, Jerusalem, contains three odes, which are precisely the same trio of odes preserved in Ebu'lfazl Mehmed Efendi's manuscript. Biographical details suggest he was a teenager in 1511 and passed away in 1579. He reflects in the introduction that he has surpassed the age of sixty. Additionally, historical records note that although Ebu'lfazl experienced a temporary dismissal, he resumed his duties in 1566. Assuming he was around 12-13 years of age in 1511 upon his initial involvement in the administrative body, he would have been between 60

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[117] "Dīvān-i İdris-i Bitlisî and Sultan Selīm, MS Râşid Efendi Eski Eserler Kütüphanesindeki (1289), ff. 8-9-10.

to 70 years old during 1560 to 1566. [118] It is plausible to surmise that the work he refers to during his period of absence was composed around this time, thus, shortly after the Jerusalem version, within a span of less than a decade. Upon reviewing the manuscripts, a total of eleven odes and two *ghazals* of praise have been identified. These will be discussed in the context of the odes, as they are directed towards a specific figure of praise and include his name within the poems. The three aforementioned odes are the most frequently encountered in the manuscripts, followed by three other odes that are relatively more common across sources, and four odes that are unique to a single copy. [119]

Attention must now be directed towards the distinct attributes of these odes that prompted a prominent courtier to address the rumors surrounding them explicitly in his introduction. The first thing is the general fact that these are absent from the illustrated manuscript. One plausible explanation might be that these odes were composed subsequent to the assembly of the Dīvān. This hypothesis gains some traction when considering that there are over 150 sonnets present in other versions of the Dīvān that the illustrated version omits. Each of these discrepancies warrants thorough investigation. Given the condition of the extant manuscripts, it is conceivable that a definitive explanation may remain elusive. Alternatively, it is possible that these poems were not authored by Selīm. This leads to another argumentation that merits exploration.

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[118] Mehmet Törehan Sedar, "Ebu'l Fazl Mehmed Efendi (Defterdar Mehmed Efendi)" Artuklu *İnsan ve Toplum Bilim Dergisi, v.*1 n.1 (2016), 83.

[119] Majlis.13392. Among all the manuscripts analyzed, this particular version stands out for containing the most extensive collection of poems, both *ghazals* and odes. The exact date of this version's composition remains unknown. However, there is two notes on that. First note is in Ottoman and says, "The copy is a purchased dīvān of Selīm by the late Mir Seyfa-yi Baghdadi, which is said to be his own handwriting." And another note from 1336. however, it can be bifurcated into two distinct parts. The first part exclusively comprises ghazals, arranged alphabetically by their rhymes, while the second part amalgamates both ghazals and odes in a non-alphabetical sequence. This arrangement suggests that the compiler might have augmented the initial collection with poems from various versions that were absent in the first part.

In undertaking this analysis, it is imperative to explore the concept of authorship within manuscript culture. David Reisman, in his scholarly article about Avicenna's works provides an in-depth examination of various terminologies associated with authorship, illuminating the complexities and nuances of authorship and misattribution within the specialized domain of philological study.[120] He mentions pseudepigraphy, which refers to the accidental misattribution of works to an author, often as a result of historical misunderstandings rather than intentional deceit. This contrasts with forgery, where there is a deliberate attempt to create and falsely attribute a work to a reputable figure, misleading others about its true origin. The term falsification is introduced to describe the intentional alteration of an existing text to change its intended message or meaning, which can involve adding new material or modifying existing content. Lastly, plagiarism is discussed as the act of claiming another's work or parts thereof as one's own, neglecting to acknowledge the original creator.[121]

We do not have enough reasons to consider these odes as forgery. I agree with the statement that the initial interpret should proceed from the assumption of authenticity unless we have some external evidence. [122] I argue this is actually what Reisman calls falsification. To rectify this, an analysis is imperative—one that delves into these odes' intrinsic characteristics, examining their thematic depth, and historical context.

In the exploration of these poems, a salient characteristic that emerges prominently is the explicit mention of the name of the object of praise, identified as Ahmad:

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[120] David C. Reisman, "The Pseudo-Avicennan Corpus, I: Methodological Considerations," ed. Jon McGinnis, *Interpreting Avicenna: Science and Philosophy* in Medieval Islam, Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Science. Texts and Studies, v.56 (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 30 Aug. 2004).
[121] David C. Reisman, "The Pseudo-Avicennan Corpus," 6-8.
[122] David C. Reisman, "The Pseudo-Avicennan Corpus", 12.

A witty with the demeanour of Ayaz and the countenance of Mahmud.

Ahmed whom the fortress of my heart and soul has been conquered by him.[123]

King Ahmed, the person whose injustice surpasses even justice,

A jester whose glance's blade wields fairness. [124]

Ahmed, whose beauty rivals that of Joseph and whose words are as those of Jesus, is a

celestial being of God's paradise.[125]

Amir of the realm of faithlessness and the tyrant king of beauty,

Sovereign of the throne of charm, Ahmed, whose words areas those of Jesus. [126]

King Ahmed, whose fidelity is akin to Mahmud's, and whose hair and face, [in their

beauty], merely reflect the essence of the rose and violet. [127]

King of the World's beauties, *Ahmad*, of Mahmud-like virtues,

Whose the tulip cleanses the earth beneath his feet.[128]

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[123] شوخ ایازسیرت ومحمود صورتان/احمد که هست ملک دل وجان مسخرش. Selīm, *Dīvān,* MS Kitābḫāne va Markaz-i Asnād-i Majlis-i shuʾrā-yi Islāmī. 13392. f. 64b.
[124] شاه احمد آنکه هست به از عدل ظلم او/ شوخی که تیغ غمزه اوراست کار عدل. Selīm, *Dīvān,* MS Millet Kütüphanesi. Farsça 324. f. 12a.
[125] یوسف جمال احمد عیسی نفس که هست/ حور بهشت قدرت پروردگار هم. Selīm, *Dīvān,* MS 13392. f.57a.
[126] میر ملک بیوفایی شاه بیدادان حسن/ پادشاه تخت خوبی احمد عیسی بیان. Selīm, *Dīvān,* MS 13392. f. 108b.
[127] شاه احمد محمود وفا کز رخ و زلفش/ گل هست مثالی و نمودار بنفشه. Selīm, *Dīvān,* MS 13392. f. 98a.
[128] شاه خوبان جهان احمد محمود خصال/ کش برد از دل وجان خاک کف پا لاله. Selīm, *Dīvān,* MS 13392. f. 100b.

The moon of the beauty firmament, loyal <u>King Ahmed,</u>

for whom the sun stirring up the dust.[129]

The light of the eye, heart, and soul of His Majesty <u>King Ahmed Khan</u>.[130]

King of the realms of beauty and tyranny, <u>King Ahmed</u>, for whom the dagger is but a

mere symbol of his fiery wrath.[131]

The Ottomans were inheritors of a profound tradition where the spiritualization of love

and the physical manifestations of sexual desire or attraction were interpreted as the soul's

longing to reunite with a divine wholeness, a union disrupted by its birth into the material realm.

Political upheaval, religious reformations, and cultural shifts intertwined during the 16th

centuries, alongside the envisioned establishment of a divine kingdom on Earth and the awaited

arrival of a Messiah to inaugurate a unified reign of the singular true faith. In such a milieu,

characterized by significant transformations and the consolidation of absolute monarchal

authority wielding considerable worldly power, the prominence of the concept of self-sacrificing

love emerges as a compelling yet unsurprising development. [132] In the context of eulogy, the ode

typically addresses a tangible entity, with the explicit mention of the object's name serving to

ground the poem more firmly within the material world. Thus, I contend that the omission of

[129] ماه سپهر خوبی شاه احمد وفادار/ کز راه اوست خورشید برخاسته غباری. Selīm, *Dīvān,* MS 13392. F. 107a.
[130] نور چشم دل و جان حضرت شاه احمد خان Selīm, *Dīvān,* MS 324. f. 42a.
[131] شه ممالک حسن و ستمگری احمد/ کز آتش غضبش هست یک نشان خنجر Selīm, *Dīvān,* MS 13392. f.55b.
[132] Andrews, Walter G., and Mehmet Kalpakli. *The Age of Beloveds: Love and the Beloved in Early-Modern Ottoman and European Culture and Society.* (Duke University Press, 2005), 17, 27.

these poems from the illustrated dīvān was a deliberate act, intended to avoid any impediment in the image's construction of a Sufi-poet ruler. The inherent nature of eulogy stands in stark contrast to the portrayal of such a ruler, whose essence is ideally depicted as transcending the material realm. This discrepancy between the material associations of the ode and the spiritual aspiration of Sufism suggests a calculated effort to align the ruler's image with the latter's ideals.

Before delving into the rationale behind Ebu'lfazl 's attribution of the odes' subjects to his father and his brother Ahmad it is imperative to highlight another noteworthy characteristic of these odes, which is their so-called Ahl al-Baytism content. No, you have to explain Ahmed first before you shift away from it. Otherwise, the quotations above are out of place.

Ahl al-Baytism in Selīm's Poerty:

From the 17th century onwards, the dominant manifestations of Ḥanafī Sunni Islam assumed a hegemonic position throughout the geographical area that included the regions of Rum. Some scholars discuss this issue in its Ottoman framework under the term "confessionalization".[133] However, in the 13th and 14th centuries, no such a categorization was established, and, as Cemal Kafadar conceptualized, there was a kind of "metadoxy" without any district lines of Sunni/Shi'i. [134] Within a broader contextual framework encompassing the entirety of Islamic territories, it becomes evident that while the schism between Shi'i and the

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[133] For example, see Tijana Krstić and Derin Terzioğlu *Historicizing the Study of Sunni Islam in the Ottoman Empire, c. 1450–c. 1750*, (Brill, 2021); Vefa Erginbas ed. *Ottoman Sunnism: New Perspectives,* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press,).

[134] Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State*. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995), 75.

conventional Sunni tradition has been a hallmark of Islamic history since the passing of Prophet Muhammad, this division has been imbued with myriad intricacies and complexities. Andrew Newman delves into the socio-political context of the 9th and early 10th centuries, highlighting the emergence of Sunni traditionalism amidst political turbulence within the Abbasid court. However, he also underscores the resurgence of Shiism during this period, which remarkably established delicate alliances with the court despite its fragility. [135] In his seminal article, "How Did the early Shi'a Became Sectarian, Hodgson, extensively addresses the subject matter while also emphasizing a pivotal aspect that holds greater significance within this paper: loyalty to ʿAli Ibn-i. Abī Ṭāleb) as a contributing factor that mitigated divisions between Sunni and Shi'i. [136] He also mentions:

> …An "Alid loyalism" pervaded not only various explicitly Shi'i sects, but many sectors of Jama'i-Sunnism; for with the wide adoption of Sunnis among the city population in the Earlier Middle Period, a Shi'i heritage was retained.[137]

Kazuo Morimoto further illustrates the blending of sectarian distinctions, where Sunni and Shi'i viewpoints became intertwined with each other.[138] Within a more extensive exploration of historical Muslim contexts, Thomas Bauer introduces the concept of "tolerance of ambiguity" among pre-modern Muslims. This notion is specifically invoked within the discourse on Sufi

[135] Andrew J. Newman, *The Formative Period of Twelver Shi'ism: Hadīth as Discourse Between Qum and Baghdad*, (Routledge: 2010).
[136] Marshall G. S. Hodgson, "How Did the Early Shi'a Became Sectarian," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 75 n.1 (1955):
[137] Marshall G. S. Hodgson, *The venture of Islam*, v.2, (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1974), 445-446.
[138] Kazuo Morimoto, "How to Behave toward Sayyids and Sharifs: A Trans-sectarian Tradition of Dream Accounts" ed. Kazuo Morimoto, *Sayyids and Sharifs in Muslim Societies: The Living Links to the Prophet*, (2012): 15-17. Is the whole article 3 pages long?

beliefs, underscoring their paradoxical essence and the imperative for concealed practices within Sufi circles.[139] The notion of ambiguity has previously been introduced by John E. Woods with the term of "confessional ambiguity" in the realm of Islamic historiographic scholarship. [140] This concept has subsequently been examined by numerous scholars in various regions of the Islamic world. In Its Ottoman framework, Derin Terzioğlu points out that the word ambiguity is a slippery word and what is ambiguous in our opinion was not necessarily ambiguous for the Ottoman Muslims.[141] She tries to show this ambiguity was itself a contentious and changing feature of Ottoman policies of piety. In this scholarly analysis, the convergence of philo-Alidism and Sufism during the late medieval period is explored. The twelfth century marked a significant shift where both currents intersected, finding expression through various institutional contexts like young men's associations (*futuwwa*), Sufi networks, and brotherhoods (*akhīs/aḥīs*). The infusion of Sufism with elements of Neoplatonism, Shi'i agnosticism, and occultism contributed to the increasing ambiguity of religious affiliations during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The author underscores the paramount significances of *Karbalā* and the associated *Muḥarram* cultural practiced within the context of Rumi Muslim communities. [142] Also, of particular significance is also the observation that amidst the process of vernacularizing in the Ottoman Turkish language, one of the earliest genres to emerge was that of the martyrdom narrative of

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[139] Thomas Bauer, *A Culture of Ambiguity: An Alternative History of Islam*, (Columbia University Press, 2021).

[140] "Paralleling the flowering of Imami Shi'ism in the highest levels of the Ilkhanid state, many of these popular movements were strongly coloured by extreme 'Alid concepts, so that it is no exaggeration to say that the prevailing religious winds during this period were popular, Shi'i, and 'Alid, even in circles nominally Sunni. This confessional ambiguity may be seen in many facets of life in the central Islamic lands before the rise of the Safavids." See John E. Woods, *The Aqquyunlu; Clan. Confederation. Empire* (Minneapolis Bibliotheca Islamica, 1976), 4.

[141] Derin Terzioğlu, "Confessional Ambiguity in the Confessional Age: Philo-Alidism, Sufism and Sunni Islam in the Ottoman Empire, 1400-1700." ed. Tijana Krstić and Derin Terzioğlu, *Entangled Confessionalizations? Dialogic Perspectives on the Politics of Piety and Community-Building in the Ottoman Empire, 15th-18th Centuries.* (*Gorgias* Press, 2022), 564.

[142] Derin Terzioğlu, "Confessional Ambiguity in the Confessional Age," 567-574.

Ḥusayn (*maktel /maqtal*).[143] In accordance with Terzioğlu's analysis, a discernible shift in Ottoman policies within this domain became detectable in the wake of the Şāhkulu rebellion. [144]

However, in such a historical framework, the existence of literary compositions extolling the virtues of the Prophet's family is not a case that seems an anomalous phenomenon. Vefa Erginbaş examines at least four different sources that expound upon this concept from various perspectives. Through this comprehensive analysis, he demonstrates that despite the inherent contradictions stemming from the emergence of the Safavid governance within proximity of the Ottoman realm, Ottoman intellectuals did not strictly adhere to an unwavering Sunni discourse.[145]

One of the examples of this is the ideas of Lami'ī Çelebi (d.1532) who earned the title of *Jamī-yi Rum* (the Jami of Rum). He was the poet of Selīm's court and has many poems in praise of Selīm, and philo-Alidism concepts can be seen in many of his translations of Jami. [146]

To date, there appears to be no existing scholarship that delves into the attitudes of Ottoman sultans towards loyalty to Ali and other Imams, especially in relation to their behaviors and expressions in poetry. Remarkably, within Selīm's odes, there is a notable frequency of references to these figures in a manner not typically associated with the Sunni poetic tradition, which generally recognizes them as among the four caliphs. This section will analyze specific

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[143] See Gökhan Alp, "Türk Edebiyatında Kerbelâ Hadisesi: Konuyu Kendi Realitesine Uygun Konumlandırma Çabası -Eksiklikler", *International Journal of Filologia*, 3, n.4 (2020), 56-90; Riza Yildirim, "In the Name of Hosayn's Blood: The Memory of Karbala as Ideological Stimulus to the Safavid Revolution," *Journal of Persianate Studies*, 8, n.2, (2015), 127-154.

[144] Derin Terzioğlu, "Confessional Ambiguity in the Confessional Age,"*579.*

[145] Vefa Erginbaş, "Problematizing Ottoman Sunnism: Appropriation of Islamic history and ahl al-baytism in Ottoman literary and historical writing in the sixteenth century" *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 60, n.5 (2017), 614-646.

[146] Vefa Erginbaş, "Problematizing Ottoman Sunnism," 622-626.

poems to shed light on these unique portrayals and their implications. Selīm uses these concepts mostly woven into Sufi concepts.

> The arrow of your gaze is like the *Zu 'l-Faqār* (sword) of the Vilāyāt.
>
> You are the agent of access to the alchemy of felicity.

> I swear to the one who created such a face from the light.
>
> I swear to Aḥmed (Prophet Muhammad) and Khāji-yi qanbar (ʿAli Ibn-i Abī Ṭālib).[147]

Zu'l-Faqār (Zülfakar), the double-bladed sword symbolically associated with 'Ali Ibn-i Abī Ṭālib, played a significant role in Ottoman military and cultural traditions, particularly among the Janissaries and also during the reign of Sultan Selīm I. The Janissaries, an elite military corps deeply influenced by the Bektashi Sufi order, revered Zulfikar not only as a symbol of 'Ali Ibn-i Abī Ṭālib's valor but also as an emblem of their own martial prowess and spiritual allegiance. Selīm I also leveraged the symbolic power of Zulfikar by incorporating it into his military insignia. During his conquest of Egypt, for instance, Selīm I planted banners bearing the image of Zulfikar, thereby underlining the sword's association with divine favor and imperial ambition.[148] Selīm in this poem also after he swears by the name of the Prophet (*Aḥmad-i Murṣal*), mentions the title of Alī *(Khājiy-i qanbar)*. In other poems he mentions the family of the prophet:

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[147] به ذولفقار ولایت که تیغ غمزه تست/ به کیمیای سعادت که یافت از تو نظر/ به حق آنکه چنین صورت آفرید ز نور
به حق احمد مرسل بخواجه قنبر. Selīm, *Dīvān*, MS 13392. f. 66a.
[148] Jane Hathaway, "The Forgotten Icon: The Sword Zülfikâr in Its Ottoman Incarnation," *The Turkish Studies Association Journal,* 27, n.1/2 (2003), 1-13.

You have the behaviour of the Prophet [Muhammad] and the speech of Moses.

. O Yusuf II! Your hands have the characteristics of Ali's hands [which is generosity][149]

I swear you are more important than my life and you are my life.

I swear to to Ḥayder (ʿAli) and Shabīr (Ḥasan) and Shubayr (Ḥusayn)[150]

O God, in the name of Ahmed and then his pure lineage,

it is from the light of his locks that night follows day.[151]

O God, by the spirit of the Messenger of Allah and his offspring, may the wind be at your

wish, seeking whatever you desire and achieving as you will.[152]

I swear to the prophet that as a miracle,

has a nation like you, learned and well-spoken.[153]

I swear by the Ahl al-Bayt and dignified people,

that nothing is hidden from them.[154]

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[149] هم اخلاق نبی داری وهم نطق کلیم الله/هم اوصاف علی دارد گفت، ای یوسف ثانی .Selīm, *Dīvān,* MS 13392. f. 69.b

[150] بیشم ز جان عزیزتری بلکه جان تویی/شاها قسم به حیدر وشبیر و شبیرش .Selīm, *Dīvān,* MS 13392. f.64.b

[151] یا رب بنام احمد وآنگه به آل پاکش/ کز نور گیسوی اوست هر لیل را نهاری .Selīm, *Dīvān,* MS 13392. f.107.b

[152] بر مرادت هر چه جویی وانچه خواهی انچنان/ یا رب از روح رسول الله واولادش که باد .Selīm, *Dīvān,* MS 13392. f.109a

[153] هم به حق حضرت پیغمبری کز معجزه/ امتی همچون تو دارد فاضل ونیکوبیان .Selīm, *Dīvān,* MS 13392. f.108a

[154] هم به حق جمله اولاد واصحاب کبار/ کز خردشان نیست مخفی آشکارا ونهان .Selīm, *Dīvān,* MS 13392. f. 109a

I swear to Mustafa and his affection towards two nations.

I swear to Ahl al-Bayt and the honor of Abulhasan [Ali].[155]

In this verse, he presents one of the most controversial topics of Islamic hadith studies in its mystical context which is *Ḥadith-i Iftiraq*. This particular hadith, which reports the prophet Muhammad to have said " my nation will divide into 73 sects; one of which is in the Heaven and 72 of which are in the Hell" occupies a significant position within the annals of Islamic history due to its contentious nature, particularly within the domains of theology and sectarianism and a range of diverse and occasionally contradictory stances have emerged in relation to it.[156] The historical trajectory of referencing this hadith within the discourse of Sufis can be traced back to the viewpoints of Ghazali. [157] The issue of segregation (*Iftiraq*) between different sects in the tradition of Sufi literature is an issue that is referred to as a cause of division and a form of acceptance of all sects can be seen in them. For example, in Hafez's famous poem:

Forgive them for the war of seventy-two nations and accept their excuse.

Because they did not see the path of truth, they went astray.[158]

Indeed, the depiction of Ali within the poem of Selīm serves to concurrently elevate the status of both the poet, Selīm, and the object of his praise, Ahmed. To elucidate this, it would be

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[155] هم به حق اهل بيت وآبروی بوالحسن/ هم به حق مصطفی ومهر او با امتان Selīm, *Dīvān,* MS 13392. f.109a.

[156] This hadith is recorded in texts with different words, yet it can be asserted that a shared signification is discernible across all textual iterations. For example, see Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad,* v.3, p. (Egypt, 2009), 145.

[157] Toshihiko Izutsu, *The Concept of Belief in Islamic Theology: A Semantic Analysis of Iman and Islam,* (Tokyo: Keio Institute, 1965), 170-183.

[158] جنگ هفتاد ودو ملت همه را عذر بنه./چون ندیدنت حقیقت ره افسانه زدند Hafiz-i shirazi, *Dīvān-i Hafiz,* ed. Muhammad khanlari, v.1 (Tehran, 1992), 144.

beneficial to refer to a particular petition by Selīm's subject named Seyyid Kemal. This unknown person recounts a dream in which Ali appeared, advising Sultan Selīm, "Who does not submit to you, you should destroy." Erdem Çıpa contends that, given the contemporaneous challenges posed by the Safavid state under Shāh Ismāʿīl—which not only contested the foundational legitimacy of the Ottoman Empire but also threatens its territorial cohesion in eastern Anatolia—the depiction of Selīm alongside Ali, coupled with the latter's endorsement of the former, forges a legitimizing connection between the Ottoman sultan and the first Shi'it Imam. [159]

In this context, the deeper meanings of his poems become more comprehensible. However, it is also crucial again to acknowledge that these poems are odes praising a real person. This specificity might be the reason they were not included in the illustrated dīvān. Nonetheless, these poems were documented and, over time, disseminated from one individual to another, eventually being incorporated into different compilations of Selīm's poetry.

In revisiting Ebul'fazl's compilation of Selīm's poetry, I would argue that the introductory attributions he makes—identifying Bayezid and Ahmed as the subjects of certain odes—constitute an act of falsification. Through this Ebul'fazl contributes to the legitimization of Selīm's actions towards his family members. In his portrayal, Selīm emerges as a eulogist mourning his father and brother, despite having been responsible for their deaths. Ebul'fazl presents Selīm as a poet who laments his father, declaring, "I swear to God that I have no interest in this world except your sorrow. May the property of the Ottomans be sacrificed to the soil under your feet," and who expresses devotion to his brother with the words, "I possess nothing

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[159] Çıpa, "*The Making of Selīm,"* 222-224.

worthy of serving you; my heart and my very being are devoted to you." [160] Such representations serve to obscure the more controversial aspects of his ascent to power. The implications of such editorial decisions extend far beyond the realm of literature, touching upon issues of historical memory, legitimacy, and the power dynamics inherent in the recording of history.

Conclusion:

In the intricate tapestry of Ottoman imperial history, the ascent of Selīm I to the throne emerges as a pivotal juncture, illustrating the multifaceted dynamics of power, legitimacy, and divine sanction within the House of ʿOsman. This chapter has meticulously examined the complex interplay of fraternal rivalry, military prowess, and ideological construct that characterized Selīm's rise, against the backdrop of Ottoman political and social stratification. Through a detailed exploration of the historical narratives and Selīm's odes, the chapter has unveiled the posthumous processes that crafted his enduring legacy as a poet sultan. Central to this narrative is the phenomenon of fratricide. The strategic elimination of rivals, including his brothers, and the dethronement of his father, Bayezid II, underscore the ruthless pragmatism that characterized his claim to power and illuminated the role of historiography and literary productions in shaping the image of Selīm I. These textual artifacts, as analyzed, serve not only as historical documents but also as tools of ideological construction, reinforcing Selīm's legitimacy and portraying him as a compassionate sultan.

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[160] MS 13392. f.107.b. MS 13392. f.108.b.

Chapter Three:

Selīm I as a Poet-Sultan in Ottoman Tezkires (1520-1574)

In this chapter, through a close examination of the literary historical sources from Süleyman's era, I delve into the evolving perception of Selīm as a poet-king. I aim to demonstrate how Ottoman literary documents contributed to framing the sultans within the literary discourse, not merely as patrons but as active literary figures themselves.

Tezkire in the Ottoman Empire:

Writing *tezkire*, integral to the literary traditions of the Ottoman Empire, has its origins deeply rooted in the broader Islamic practice of biographical compilation. [161] This genre encompasses works dedicated to compiling the lives, works, and merits of poets, offering both biographical sketches and critical evaluations of their poetry. The practice of documenting the lives and contributions of significant individuals, initially focused on religious figures to authenticate *hadith* transmissions and Islamic jurisprudence, developed to include poets and

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[161] H.A.R Gibb, "Islamic Bio-graphical Literature," B. Lewis and P. M. Holt, *Historians of the Middle East* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1968), 54.

scholars. [162] This evolution mirrors the Islamic world's recognition of poetry as a pivotal medium for cultural expression, moral instruction, and intellectual discourse. As such, the biographical compendium of poets not only serves as a literary repository but also as a historical record, preserving the cultural heritage and reflecting the societal values of the time. In the Ottoman context, the *tezkire* tradition not only perpetuates its legacy within novel cultural and linguistic realms but also introduces distinctive contributions regarding genre and thematic interests. [163]

Writing biographical compendiums of poets, according to the vast majority of scholars, made its entry into the Ottoman literary-historical domain via ʿAlī Shīr Nevāʾī (1441–1501)'s / *Mecālis-ün-Nefāis/ Majālis al-Nafāʾis.* Over recent decades, this genre has been subjected to multifaceted analysis, with virtually every *tezkire* undergoing separate scrutiny. In general, the analysis of instances in these studies shows two main patterns in the criteria used for selection. To begin with, there are specific inquiries that include Turkish *tezkires* written outside of the Ottoman Empire, specifically in the 16th century, which mention Ottoman poets. For instance, certain studies have highlighted the work of Garībī' (d. 1529*), Tezkire-yi Mecālis-i Şūʾarā-yı Rūm*, composed in Turkish and featuring Ottoman poets, yet notably crafted for Safavid rulers. [164] Some research focuses solely on *tezkires* that were written in Turkish within the boundaries of the Ottoman Empire. Simultaneously, these analyzes occasionally encompass *tezkires* that were

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[162] J. Stewart Robinson, "The Teẕkere Genre in Islam." *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 23, no. 1 (1964): 58-60.

[163] For more detailed exploration about this genre among the Ottoman writers, see J. Stewart Robinson, "The Ottoman Biographies of Poets." *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 24, no. 1/2 (1965): 57–74; Filiz Kılıç "Edebiyat Tarihimizin Vazgeçilmez Kaynakları: Şair Tezkireleri". *Türkiye Araştırmaları Literatür Dergisi*, no. 10 (2007): 543-64.

[164] See Israfeel Babacan, "16. Asırda Osmanlı Sahası Şairleri Hakkında Yazılmış "Tezkere-i Mecalis-i Şu'ara-yı Rum" Adlı Tanınmayan Bir Tezkire," *Bilig / Türk Dünyası Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 0, no.40 (2007): 1 – 16.

originally written in Arabic but later translated into Turkish, integrating them into their academic evaluations. [165]

In this study, the primary approach adopted is to conceptualize the *tezkire* as a matter of discourse. This perspective allows for an in-depth exploration of the *tezkire* not merely as historical or literary artifacts, but as dynamic entities within cultural discourse, offering insights into the socio-political, cultural, and literary landscapes they inhabit. Accordingly, while my analysis will, expand beyond Turkish language *tezkire*s to include Persian language *tezkires* focusing not solely on the Turkish language, it will include only those works that directly pertain to the Ottoman court and are written as a tribute to Ottoman sultans. Initially, this study will explore the distinct evolution of the *tezkires* during the reign of Süleimān the Magnificent, highlighting a pivotal transformation in the discourse of power. This transformation is characterized by the incorporation and subsequent emphasis on royal figures within these literary compilations, showing a profound fusion of literary recognition and political dominion. The analysis will focus on the depiction of Sultan Selīm I — the first ruler to be commemorated as a poet in an Ottoman *tezkire*. This study intends to dissect the intricate relationship between literary productions and the hierarchical structures of power by examining the representation of Sultan Selīm I as both a ruler and a poet. Through this perspective, I will argue these texts not only reflect the prevailing power dynamics but actively participate in molding them. This results in a unique portrayal of Selīm I, and rulers more broadly, enhancing their stature to an unprecedented level of prominence. Such a portrayal marks a critical shift in the narrative construction of rulership, significantly affecting the cultural and political discourse of the period.

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[165] For example, see Haluk İpekten, *Türk Edebiyatının Kaynaklarından Türkçe Şu'ara Tezkireleri,* Atatürk Üniversitesi Fen-Edebiyat Fakültesi Yayınları, (Erzurum, 1986).

I aim to show the pivotal role of *tezkire* literature in reimagining the Ottoman sultan's persona. The integration of poetry, with its inherent mystical dimensions, and the celebration of figures such as Nūr ad-Dīn 'Abd ar-Rahmān Jāmī (d.1492), a well-known Sufi-poet figure, served as instrumental in crafting a sanctified and mystical representation of the ruler. The subsequent analysis will demonstrate how *Tezkirecis* (writers of *tezkires*), through their literary contributions, not only introduce the sultans as patrons but also position them as the epicenter of poetic creation. Unlike traditional portrayals where the sultan is merely praised, this era witnesses his emergence as a dynamic participant in the literary domain, effectively orbiting the sphere of literary production around him. This shift towards a literary-active sultanate holds implications for establishing a legitimate, idealized, and divinely sanctioned image.

Qazvīnī's Translation of *Majālis-u Şu'arā:*

In studies of Ottoman literature, the contributions of Muhammad ibn-i Mubarak-i Qazvīnī (d. after 1529) are often overlooked, with his work typically mentioned only in passing and relegating his work to the margins of scholarly discussions. In this study, I aim to start my examinations from the efforts of this figure, rather than Sehī Bey (d. 1548-9). Qazvīnī's work, frequently acknowledged as a rendition of Nevā'ī's *Mecālis*, needs a reassessment, because the final part of Qazvīnī's book is a separate compilation, created for the court of sultan Selīm I. Although this part conforms to the preexisting model set by Nevāʾī' 'or sultan Ḥusayn Bāyqarā (d. 1506), the exclusion of that fails to acknowledge its crucial contribution to the development of Ottoman literary practices and the portrayal of royal figures within them.

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Qazvīnī's work, written between 1522 and 1524, comprises eight chapters, each denoted as *Bihisht* (heaven). Probably the use of this title, coupled with the common practice of naming history books as *Hasht Bihisht* (the Eight Paradises), contributed to the work being colloquially referred to as the *Hasht Bihisht*. [166] Aşık Çelebī (d.1571) and Ḳınālızāde Ḥasan Çelebī (d.1604) known that as an appendix to the work of Nevāʾī'. [167] This work has largely been overlooked by Ottoman scholars, who have regarded it as a translation that deviates from the original text in certain respects. [168]Nevertheless, Qazvīnī's contributions, particularly in sections that purport to be direct translations, reveal a notable departure from exact replication. The modifications he implemented at both structural and content levels signify a notable shift in the portrayal of governance among the Ottomans, marking its integration into literary discourse. First, he reorganized the chapter structure of the *Mecālis* repositioning the chapter dedicated to Sultan Ḥusayn Bāyqarā from the eighth to the seventh section. He then split the original eighth chapter (*bihish-i hashtum*) of his book into two distinct parts (*rawża*). In the initial section, he cataloged classic Persian poets preceding Selīm I while in the subsequent section, he focused on Selīm I and his poetry, followed by poets from his era. Indeed, Qazvini's choice of *Bihisht* over *Majlis/ Meclis*, as a motif not only imbues the entire work with a religious connotation, mirroring the prevailing trends in historiography of that period, but also specifically elevates Selīm to eighth heaven. This level, according to Islamic traditions, represents the highest stage of heaven,

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[166] I will refrain from using the title for two reasons. Firstly, it lacks support from our documents. Secondly, it has the potential to create confusion with Sehi Bey's biographical compendium of poets. The name appears on the first page of the Ms. Fatih 4524.

[167] Āşık Çelebi, *Meşāʾirüʾş-şuʿarā*, ed. Filiz KILIÇ (Ankara: T.C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 2018), 595-597; Kınalızâde Hasan Çelebi. *Tezkiretüʾ ş - ş uʾarâ*. ed. Aysun Sungurhan. (Ankara: T.C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı. 2017), 468.

[168] The sole detailed examination of Qazvini's work is an article that conducts a comparative analysis with another contemporaneous translation produced in the Safavid court. See Ahmet Kartal, "Ali Şîr Nevâî'nin Mecâlisüʾn-nefâ'is İsimli Tezkiresi ve XVI. Asırda Yapılan Farsça İki Tercümesi," *Türk Dünyası Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, n. 13 (Ankara 2000): 21-63.

exclusively reserved for the Prophet and the guardians of God[169]. He has also modified the content across various sections, notably those concerning the Timurids sultans. A significant aspect of this work is that, given the limited editions available, we encounter two editions of the same book, with only one manuscript existing for one of these versions. [170] The variations between these texts extend beyond mere scribal differences, suggesting more substantive alterations.

To date, six manuscripts of this work have been cataloged, of which only four remain accessible.[171] According to my findings, the earliest version of this book is the manuscript number 31931. Despite the absence of explicit dating on these manuscripts, their interconnectedness and the comprehensive analysis by the editor indicate that the scribe of the initial manuscript made amendments in the subsequent versions, including manuscript number 31931. [172] The earliest manuscript is annotated with the year 1685, signifying not the date of its authorship but rather the year it was acquired, suggesting its composition occurred earlier.[173]

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[169] This topic, which is one of the topics related to the interpretation of the Qur'an, has received various descriptions in different Islamic schools.

[170] This work has been published only twice. The first edition does not addresss this variation and has the translation done in the court of Safavīds. See ʿAlī Shīr Navāʾī, *Majālis Al-nafāyīs*. ed. Alī Aṣghar Ḥikmat (Tehran: Maṭbaʿi-yi Bank-i Milli. 1944). In the more recent edition by Hādī Bīdakī, the discrepancies between the two versions is mentioned. See Hādī Bīdakī, "Introduction to Hasht Bihisht," 67-85.

[171] Tragically, one manuscript was lost to a fire in Sarajevo. The beginning and the end of that are documented in the catalog of Tehran University's Central Library. (See, Muhammad ibn-i Mubarak-i Qazvīnī, Tarjumi-yi Majalis'al-Nafais, microfilm, The Central Liberary of the University of Tehran, Tehran, Ms. 2016/29.) Additionally, a copy resides within the 'Arif Ḥikmat Library in Saudi Arabia. Despite many requests submitted through the manuscript collection's website, access to this particular copy has remained elusive. The manuscript number 3877, located in the ʾEsʿad ʾEfendī collection, together with the manuscript number 4523 of Fātiḥ collection at the Süleymāniye Liberary, and manuscript number 6523 maintained by Saʿīd Nafīsī Collection at the University of Tehran, are recognized as part of the same family of manuscripts, showing remarkable similarities to one another. a manuscript number 31931 of Siyyid Muḥammad Khubrechī's collection in the National Library of Iran is different.

[172] Hādī Bīdakī, "Introduction to Hasht Bihisht", 81-87.

[173] The editor of the book believes that one of the manuscripts was written during Qazvini's lifetime or shortly after his death in 1524. His argument is that this version has a colophon with the name of Ibn-i Müeyyed, which was one of the well-known courtiers of Bayezid II and Selīm I, who introduced Qazvini to the court of Bayezid II. The editor writes that although the date of this person is mentioned in 1516, it is possible that his death was recorded incorrectly, and he was alive until that year. In addition, he believes that the handwriting of another manuscript

This study focuses on the sections of the book that discuss the poetry of the rulers. Through the comparative analysis of the original text of *Mecālis* and Qazvīnī's work, it is observed that Qazvīnī has preserved the sections about the Timurid sultans with minimal alterations to the overarching poetical content and their poetry. However, notable modifications are evident in the descriptions of these sultans and their epithets. For example, In the entry for Teymūr-i Gūrkān (Timur the Lame), Nevāʾī introduces him in a very literary manner as the *sultan-i salatin-i jahan/ Selātīn-i cehān* (Sultan of the Sultans of the World), further augmenting this portrayal by likening him to a jewel amidst the sea of royalty. [174] In contrast, Qazvīnī, at the beginning of the same entry, eschews this elaborate depiction, electing to omit it entirely and confine his description to bestowing upon Timur the singular title of *ṣāḥib-qīran*.[175] As discussed by Azfar Moin, Timur'' life and career served as the principal ideological reference for all Muslim rulers of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, who adopted the traditional Perso-Islamic and Turko-Mongol nomenclature. [176] This paradigm shifted following Selīm'' conquests, with the Ottomans not only extending their dominion beyond the territories conquered by Timur but also assuming the mantle of Sunni Islam'' Caliphate. In light of these developments, Qazvīnī reserves the title "*Sultan of the Sultans*" exclusively for Ottoman sultans, thereby acknowledging the

assigned to Ibn-i Müeyyed is the same as this manuscript. Unfortunately, I could not get access to the latter manuscript, but the narratives around the death of this Ibn-i Müeyyed is stronger than we can easily end up to this conclusion. First, Taşköprizâde, his companion, has an ode about his death which has the date of that. See Taşköprizâde, al-Shaqāyiq al-nʿumānīyye, 176-179. Second, according to the book History of Turkish Libraries, there is a list of his books that were transferred to the Royal Library by order of Selīm after his death. See İsmail E. Erünsal, Türk Kütüphaneleri Tarihi II: Kuruluştan Tanzimat'a Kadar Osmanlı Vakıf Kütüphaneleri, (Ankara 1988), 38-40.

[174] ʿAlī Shīr Navāʾī, *Majālis al-Nafāʾis*, ed. Sevime Ghaneyvā (Tashkent, 1961), 195.

[175] Qazvīnī, *Hasht Bihisht*, 267 and 425.

[176] Azfar Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign: Sacred Kingship and Sainthood in Islam*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), 31-37; 59-60.

significant transformation in the landscape of Islamic rulership and the distinctive status accorded to the Ottomans.

Upon analyzing the distinction between two different versions or editions of Qazvīnī 's work on the Timurid sultans, also there are subtle yet significant variations. The revision of sentences, the addition of about thirty entries, along with the omission of descriptors like *ʿādil* (just) regarding Sultan Ḥusayn Bāyqarā, in other manuscripts serve as evidence suggesting that this edition (the manuscript. 31931) likely represents the earliest edition. In this manuscript, he writes "[Sultan Ḥusayn Bāyqarā] is a sultan endowed with grace, perfection, justice, and more… The grace and justice of all the kings in the world are but a drop from his ocean of grace and justice." [177] Given the statement "Sultan Selīm Ḫān, was a king (*shāh/ şeh*) whom the ever-rotating eye of the cosmos in this unstable world had not seen the likes of… and no ear had heard of such nobleness and justice," we can infer that in the next edition, the authors were more discerning when assigning attributes to other sultans, even if they were Timurid sultans. [178]

In both editions of the book, Qazvini initiates his account of Selīm's poetic achievements by stating that Selīm conquered two kingdoms of *Arab* and *Ajam* and directs the reader to historical texts for further details. Notably, he employs the term *"Tarikh-i ū"* (His history) explicitly, which serves as a nod to the corpus of *Selīmnames* and the *Ghazavātnames* (Record of Military Expeditions in Islam) that had been composed up to that point. Then he gives a mystical description of Selīm in a form of introduction. He attributes two divine qualities of *Jamāl/celāl* (beauty) and *Jalāl/Celāl* (majesty) to Selīm. [179] These two are the specific Qurʾanic nomenclature of God and in the context of Qurʾanic interpretation "*Jamal*" refers to those

[177]Muhammad ibn-i Mubarak-i Qazvīnī, *Hasht Bihisht*, ed. Hādī Bīdakī (Tehran, 2022), 428.
[178] Qazvīnī, *Hasht Bihisht,* 473.
[179] Qazvīnī, *Hasht Bihisht,* 324, 474.

attributes associated with beauty, kindness, and grace of God, while "*Jalal*" refers to the attributes associated with majesty, grandeur, and awe.[180] Attributing God's name to *ʾawlīyā Allah* (Friends of God) also has a mystic connotation. In the mystical tradition, the concept of *ʾInsān-i Kāmil*, or the perfect human, serves as a pivotal symbol for the manifestation of God's names and attributes. This concept embodies the idea that the perfect human is both a reflection and a recipient of divine qualities, acting as a conduit through which the full spectrum of God's characteristics are revealed and actualized in the world. It underscores the belief in the potential for human beings to embody divine attributes, thus representing a critical intersection of the divine and the human in Sufi cosmology.[181] As Yilmaz elaborates, the Sufi-minded within the Ottoman dynasty perceived the Ottoman rulers as direct representatives of God, imbuing them with spiritual qualities and powers akin to those of the *quṭb* (axis mundi). The *quṭb*, an unseen, perfect human being, is believed in Sufi cosmology to be entrusted by God with the stewardship of His entire creation. This perspective positions the Ottoman caliphs at the pinnacle of the spiritual hierarchy, illustrating their perceived role as divine deputies endowed with profound spiritual authority and responsibility. [182]

Qazvini further elaborates, noting that the sultan exhibited his coercive power (*Jalāl*) solely towards tyrants and oppressors, ensuring that during his reign, no individual was subjected to insult or harsh words.[183] This portrayal emphasizes the sultan'' exercise of authority, distinguishing between justice and tyranny in his governance and significantly contributes to legitimizing his actions, framing them within a narrative that underscores both the moral

[180] Davud al-Qaysari, *Sharḥ-i Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, ed. Jalal Āshtīyānī, v.1 (Tehran: 1995), 42.
[181] For an English scholarly work in this regard, see Fitzroy Morrissey, *Sufism, and the Perfect Human*: *From Ibn 'Arabī to al-Jīlī*. ed. Taylor and Francis, (Routledge: 2020).
[182] Hüseyin Yılmaz, *Caliphate Redefined*, 215-217.
[183] Qazvīnī, *Hasht Bihisht,* 324, 474.

justification and the strategic necessity of his governance style. Ottoman historiography on Selīm I is replete with anecdotes that graphically depict the violence inflicted by the Sultan upon those in his circle. Notably, he executed all of his viziers, sparing only one, and the narrative of the decapitation of his five small nephews in his presence is well-documented. [184] However, all of Selīm's actions, including the deposition of his father and the alleged brutal murder of his two brothers, are interpreted within contemporary history books as the execution of a just policy aimed at preserving the universal order (*niẓām-i ʿālim*), thereby bestowing upon them a veneer of legitimacy. [185]

What makes *tezkire's* narrative different from the narrations of other historical accounts is that *tezkirecis* do not merely recount the Sultan's benevolent deeds or justify his actions through anecdotes. Instead, they embed the sultans within Sufi discourse directly via their poetic works. This approach, by drawing upon the deep symbiosis between poetry and Sufi thought, allows for a nuanced portrayal of the sultans. Thus, poetry, with its profound Sufi connections, serves as a vital instrument for depicting the sultans' actions and spiritual predispositions, enriching the conventional historical narratives without contradicting them. [186]

Qazvini continues by noting that Sultan Selīm possessed exceptional proficiency in the propaedeutical (*Riyāḍiyya*) science, a discipline described as his hereditary science, suggesting a legacy of scholarly aptitude within his lineage. [187] Moreover, Qazvini asserts that Selīm's

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[184] Erdem Çıpa, *The Making of Selīm*, 131-136.
[185] Erdem Çıpa, *The Making of Selīm*, 134.
[186] For the relation between the Persian poetry and the mystery, see J. T. P. De Bruijn, *Persian Sufi Poetry: An Introduction to the Mystical Use of Classical Poems* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 1997). For some information about Ottoman mystical poetry, see Mahmud Erol Kılıç, *Sufi ve Şiir: Osmanlı Tasavvuf Şiirinin Poetikası*, (Istanbul: Kurtiş Matbaası, 2004).
[187] For information about the classification of the sciences in Ottoman, see İlker Evrim Binbaş, "Structure and Function of the Genealogical Tree in Islamic Historiography (1200-1500), ed. İlkerm Evrim Binbaş, Nurten Kılıç-Schubel, *Horizons of the World. Festschrift for İsenbike Togan*, (Istanbul: Ithaki, 2011), 465-544.

mastery extended beyond this, positioning him as surpassing all contemporary scholars across the entire scientific disciplines. [188] Following the account of Selīm's *dervīşāne* (dervish-like) conduct, such as his preference for sitting on a rug rather than a throne, the narrative swiftly transitions to his poetry. In both texts, except for one point of contention that will be explored in greater detail subsequently, the selection of Selīm's'poems leans heavily towards those with the most mystical themes. This choice underscores the attempt to present Selīm I not only in the light of a Sufi practitioner through his actions but also as a contributor to Sufi literature through his poetry, thereby weaving a cohesive portrayal of his spiritual persona. This sultan, who composed poetry in the manner of Khusrow-i Dihlavī (d.1325) and Hafiz-i Shīrāzī (d. 1390), masters of Persian poetry, in his verses introduces himself both as "the King of the Realm of Pain," an" a ruler who vows "Should the enemy's force stretch from *Qaf* to *Qaf,* by Allah, I shall not shy away from the clash." [189] The pain (*dard*) is a motif deeply embedded in Persian Sufi literature where it is portrayed as a necessary passage to attain true love. [190] In contrast, he portrays himself as a *ghazi* sultan, fearless in the face of his adversaries. So, the portrayal of a legitimate, ideal, and divinely appointed ruler finds its development within the discourse of poetry and literature and the selection of his own poems plays a crucial role in crafting this image.

Another noteworthy difference between the two editions is the inclusion of a poem by Selīm in the latter, which stands out for its uniqueness within Selīm's poetry. In chapter one I

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[188] Qazvīnī, *Hasht Bihisht,* 324, 474.
[189] Qazvīnī, *Hasht Bihisht,*327, 477.
[190] شه ممالک دردم بلا پناه منست. This thematic concern is a recurrent element in the works of seminal Sufi poets such as Sanai, Attar, and Mawlana. For a study about that regarding the poetry of Attar. For example, see N. Panahi, M.Taghavi, M. Fotoohi, "Mowlavi's Survey in the Allegorical Presentation of Human Pain and Suffering(The Dialogue of the Sufi and the Judge)", *Gawhar-i Guya* 12, no.2, (2018), 85-106.

mentioned this poem and wrote that this most celebrated poem of the Selīm which is not mentioned in the illustrated manuscripts. The earliest manuscript of dīvān that I could reach, whose dating is verifiable, was penned in 1554. [191] There exists a manuscript believed by scholars Şadi Aydın and Benedek Peri to have been transcribed either towards the end of Selīm's reign or a few years after it. [192] Both manuscripts exhibit a notable characteristic pertinent to our discussion which is the absence of this poem. This poem can be found in the versions that we are sure were all written at the end years of Süleimān's era in which we have at least seven manuscripts dated after 1555. But this poem is found in *tezkires* before entering the dīvāns that we have available. The oldest dated manuscript I could find is a copy of *Hesht Bihişt* by Sehi Bey written before 1543, and for this reason it is almost certain that Sehi included this poem in his *tezkire* which was written in 1538. [193] This poem is also mentioned in all the manuscripts of the second edition of the Qazvini's *tezkire,* but none of these manuscripts have a date. There are two hypotheses here. The first is that this poem was first mentioned by Qazvini and entered later sources through his book. It is possible that Selīm wrote the poem at the end of his life and Qazvini mentioned it. But this question arises, why is there no such well-known and specific poem in the first writing of Qazvini? My second guess is that after the first writing of the book, either by Qazvini's own decision or by order of Süleymān, this poem was added to the book.

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[191] Yahuda collection, National Library of Israel, Project Warraq, Ar. 1128. This statement is the result of meticulous research, including an extensive review of previous scholarly work and relentless three-year exploration of catalogues.

[192] Dīvān-i Sultan Selīm, Süleymaniye Yazma Eser Kütüphanesi, Esad Efendi 3422. See Şadi Aydın, Türk Edebiyatında Farsça Divânlar ve Divânçeler (Ankara: Anekdot Yayınevi, 2010), 76–83; Benedek Péri, The Persian Dīvān of Yavuz Sulṭān Selīm: A Critical Edition, (Budapest, 2021), 52.

[193] The manuscript has the seal of Mehmed, Süleyman's son (d.1543). Sehi Bey, *Hasht Bihisht*, manuscript O. no. 3544, Ayasofya, Süleymaniye Kutuphanesi. See Halûk İpekten, et.al, "Introduction to Heşt behest", (Ankara, 2017), XXVIII.

Although there is no conclusive evidence to determine whether the poem is the creation of Selīm or not, but if it was written by him, it would have been at the end of his life.

In this context, the focal point is not necessarily the authenticity of the poem's attribution to Selīm, but rather its inclusion within the poetic *tezkire*. The poem, like a manifesto, encapsulates the entirety of Selīm's accomplishments, highlighting victories, such as those over Ismail I, along with campaigns in Iraq and Egypt. However, its scope extends beyond historical events to reference two fictitious occurrences: a campaign in Transoxiana and a victory over the ruler of India. These references might be interpreted as emblematic of Selīm's aspiration for universal sovereignty, rather than concrete historical ambitions towards further eastern conquests. This distinction suggests that the poem serves more as a symbolic assertion for Selīm's dominion and his perceived role within a broader imperial narrative, rather than a factual account of his military exploits.

Another notable distinction between two editions of the work is the inclusion of a unique mystical description in the first edition. The author writes:

> Indeed, just as he reigns supreme among the sultans of his time, so does he excel in every science and virtue. For in his era, he served as the conduit of grace (*fayḍ*) for perfections and virtues from the Divine Source (*mabdaʾi fayḍ*) upon the world and its inhabitants. Thus, the first outpourings of divine virtues and perfections were bestowed upon him, and from him, they flowed to others. [194]

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[194] Qazvīnī, *Hasht Bihisht,* 477.

The claims presented in this paragraph are absent from other manuscripts and appear at the conclusion of the entry dedicated to Selīm and his poetry. Following this paragraph, the text transitions with the phrase "among the poets of his time…", indicating a deliberate placement that serves both to summarize Selīm's contributions and segue into a discussion of his contemporaries. [195] Indeed, it is posited that divine grace was bestowed upon Selīm, with his poetry emerging as a manifestation of divine inspiration. This notion suggests that Selīm, characterized as the perfect human (ʾInsān-i Kāmil), a divine caliph, and a pole (quṭb) within the Sufi cosmology, served as a conduit through which this celestial inspiration was transmitted to other poets.

In his portrayal of poets and their works, Qazvini adopts a concise approach, focusing on broad characteristics of the poets' personas and their artistic talents, including calligraphy and painting. He provides only a handful of examples from their poetry and seldom delves into their life events. Notably, Qazvini departs from this only when discussing poets with connections to Selīm and Ismail I, where his descriptions become more detailed. For instance, in the case of Mir Abdul Baqi (d.1514), a descendant of the Shāh Niʿmatullāh Valī (d.1431) a well-know poet and quṭb. Qazvini notes Mir's roles as the minister of Shah Ismail the Sufi and his stand-in for Ismail during the Sufi war (Jang-i Sufi), which is the Chaldiran War. Because of a misidentification, the sultan killed Mir, believing him to be Shah Ismail. [196] Qazvini also elaborates on Sayyid Sharīf (d.1514), who was a descendant of the eminent Hanafi scholar, Ali ibn-i Muhammed al-Jurjāni (1339-1414). He details how Seyyid, distinguished in jurisprudence and theology, converted to

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[195] Qazvīnī, *Hasht Bihisht,* 477.
[196] Qazvīnī, *Hasht Bihisht,* 346, 487.

the Shi'i' and became *Rāfezi* (heretic) because of the influence of Ismail the Sufi and was subsequently killed by Sultan Selīm in the same conflict that claimed Abdul Baqi. [197]

As described by Âşık Çelebi, Qazvini, was one of the sultan's favorite courtiers. [198] Throughout his tenure, he emerged as a pivotal cultural tastemaker within his own right. Simultaneously, as a member of the Persian émigré literati at the Ottoman court, he dedicated his efforts to enhancing the prestige of Persian literature and émigrés within Ottoman territories. His endeavors aimed at catering to the Ottoman audience were instrumental in elevating the status of Persian cultural and intellectual contributions in the region. [199] On the other hand, Qazvini's decision to explicitly name these two individuals and elucidate the reasons behind their death by Selīm serves as a multifaceted justification for the sultan's actions for the Sunni audience of his work. These figures hailed from lineages deeply esteemed within the Sunni Sufi tradition. Their death, as narrated by Qazvini, was not a mere act of tyranny but was framed within the context of religious correction. They were eliminated due to their deviation from the true path of Islam. Selīm I, portrayed as a *mujaddid* (renewer) and a revivalist of the faith, was thus justified in his action.

In the book, Qazvini portrays the sultan as a Sufi monarch whose reverence for Sufi figures is highlighted through the generous honor bestowed upon Sufi figures, such as Sheikh Abdullah Shabestarī, a descendant of the esteemed Mahmūd Shabestarī (d.1340), one of the most celebrated Persian Sufi poets, demonstrated by a substantial gift of five thousand Ottoman *akçe*

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[197] Qazvīnī, *Hasht Bihisht,* 347, 489.
[198] "Although he was the chief of the court's physicians, he simultaneously held the position of the chief of the court's minstrels and was present at most gatherings. Even other physicians envied him." See Āşık Çelebi, *Meşā'irü'ş-şu'arā*, ed. Filiz Kılıç (Ankara: T.C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 2018), 595-599.
[199] Christopher Markiewicz, *The Crisis of Kingship in Late Medieval Islam: Persian Emigres and the Making of Ottoman Sovereignty,* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 186-189.

(minted coin).[200] This act underscores the sultan's deep respect and patronage for individuals within the Sufi tradition, aligning with the broader theme of spiritual leadership and generosity. The narrative delineates a clear boundary between those who align with the sultan's religious and ideologies and those deemed outside of this fold. This narrative construct serves to amplify the ruler's dual role as a spiritual guide and a defender of the faith, wielding both generosity and strictness as tools in maintaining religious cohesion and authority within his realm.

The divergence in the conclusions of the two editions of the text highlights an intriguing aspect of historical narrative construction and the shifting focus of commemoration within the Ottoman Empire. The first edition, purportedly completed in the year 1522 culminates with an entry dedicated to a poet whose name is Seyyed Rafiuddin, and his poem celebrating the conquest of Belgrade.[201] This choice of ending shifts the narrative spotlight from Selīm I, under whose auspices the work was initially commissioned and translated into Persian, to his successor, Sultan Süleyman I. This narrative shift is emblematic of the transition in power and focus within the Ottoman historical context, where the legacy of Selīm's conquests and policies begins to pave the way for the glorification and legitimization of Süleimān's reign (1520-1566). The inclusion of Seyyed Rafiuddin's poem, by commemorating the conquest of Belgrade in 1521, acts as a literary and symbolic bridge connecting the achievements of the father to those of the son, thereby ensuring a seamless narrative of continuous Ottoman expansion and divine favor. The second edition of the text modifies this ending significantly, still concluding with Süleymān I but altering the emphasis or content in a manner that reflects either a changed political context, an evolution in the historiographical agenda, or both. The modifications made in the second

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[200] Qazvīnī, *Hasht Bihisht,* 480.
[201] Qazvīnī, *Hasht Bihisht,* 497.

edition of the text, particularly the last three entries dedicated to poets who loud Sultan Süleymān, alongside the adjustment of Sheikh Abdullah Shabestari's entry, present a nuanced shift in the thematic and political orientation of the work. By removing the narration about Selīm in relation to Sheikh Abdullah Shabestari and instead incorporating the Sheikh'' poetry in praise of Süleymān during the conquest of Rhodes, the text aligns more closely with the glorification of Süleyman'' reign and his military and spiritual leadership.

Considering these modifications, the removal of the paragraph concerning Selīm's grace, a statement characterized by its strong claims and philosophical depth regarding Sultan Selīm, from subsequent versions of the text, could also be interpreted as reflective of the historical and political context in which the work was produced. Writing at the dawn of Sultan Süleyman's reign, (only two years after the death of Selīm) the author or editor(s) might have faced uncertainties about how to appropriately portray Sultan Selīm's legacy in a manner that would align with the emerging narrative of Süleimān's rule. Another nuanced distinction between the two texts may contribute to a more profound comprehension of the narrative. In the manuscript I identify as the initial version, Qazvini asserts that during Selīm's reign, no one surpassed him in the composition of both Turkish and Persian poetry, whether in *Ajam* or *Rum* (the Ottoman realm). [202] This claim, however, is modified in the second text to solely extol his mastery over Persian poetry.[203] It may be inferred that Süleyman, whose proficiency in Turkish poetry significantly eclipsed his Persian compositions, ought to be celebrated as the sultan of Turkish verse. The early years of a new sultan's reign often involve a delicate balancing act of honoring the predecessor's achievements while establishing the new ruler's distinct identity and authority.

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[202] Qazvīnī, *Hasht Bihisht,* 474.
[203] Qazvīnī, *Hasht Bihisht,* 324.

In this period, the construction of a ruler's image is not only about celebrating past achievements but also about setting a tone for the future direction of the reign. The claim of divine grace bestowed upon Selīm, being one of the most philosophically and politically charged assertions found in historical accounts, might have been seen as too bold or potentially contentious in the context of Süleyman's court, where the process of defining the new sultan's image and legitimizing his rule was still underway. The decision to remove this paragraph might have been a strategic choice aimed at avoiding the implications of competing narratives of divine favour, ensuring that the portrayal of Selīm's reign would support rather than complicate the establishment of Süleyman's reign and authority.

In sum, Qazvini's contributions to the literary and intellectual landscape of the Ottoman Empire are deeply rooted in the mystical traditions of governance, influenced by the profound writings of Ibn-i Arabi and his interpretations of ideal rulership.[204] Ottoman scholars, steeped in this intellectual tradition, explored the nuances of sovereignty through a mystical lens, profoundly impacting the discourse of governance in their era. Qazvini, by integrating himself into this tradition, not only absorbed its essence but also played a pivotal role in disseminating and expanding upon these ideas. His work is particularly notable for bridging the established Ottoman intellectual discourse on sovereignty with the broader narrative of Islamic literary tradition, especially within the context of tezkires. By doing so, Qazvini effectively translated the sophisticated vocabulary of political and divine legitimacy, which had been meticulously developed by Ottoman thinkers, into a new literary and cultural context. This transition not only preserved the core philosophical insights on rulership and divine sanction but also allowed for

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[204]. For an overview on Ibn ʿArabī's reception within the Ottoman empire, see Ahmed Zildzic, 'Friend and Foe: The Early Ottoman Reception of Ibn ʿArabī' (PhD Diss., University of California, 2012).

their elaboration and adaptation within the evolving dynamics of Ottoman literature. Through his efforts, the intricate dialogue on divine grace, ideal rulership, and the nature of legitimate power found a renewed expression, echoing through the annals of Ottoman literary and political thought.

Turkish Language Tezkires:

The first Turkish language *tezkire* within the Ottoman Empire, authored by Sehî Bey (d. 1548) eighteen years after Qazvini's contributions, bears the title *Heşt Bihişt* and was composed in 1546. [205] Sehî, like many *tezkerecis,* employs the *ṭabaqāt* genre for his work. This genre is characterized by depicting the history of a specific tradition, whether it be of religious affiliation or scholarship, adhering to a chronological framework that extends from a foundational authority to the generation (*ṭabaqhe)* immediately preceding the author. The choice of biographies included within a *tezkire* work serves as a means to define the tradition it represents. This is achieved by constructing a diachronic community, the identity of which is outlined through the attributes of its individual members. This genre holds significant importance within the tradition of Turkish and Persian historiography, particularly in the context of documenting the lives and teachings of Sufis and poets. This method of historiography enables a comprehensive portrayal of Sufi lineages and spiritual legacies, highlighting the continuity and evolution of Sufi thought

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[205] Sehî Beg, *Heşt beheşt,* ed. Halûk İpekten, Günay Kut, Mustafa İsen, Hüseyin Ayan, Turgut Karabey. (Ankara: 2017), XV-XVII.

and practice across generations.[206] Sehî's work's noteworthy in my research for being the first *tezkire* of poets in the Islamic world to begin with a chapter dedicated to rulers, setting a precedent that was adopted in the Persian *tezkire* literature after this work's compilation. This book, penned during the reign of Süleimān, dedicates its initial section exclusively to Süleimān. It is important to clarify that this dedication extends beyond its mere introductory homage.[207] In the introduction, the author delves into the significance of poetry, highlighting Jāmī's dedication of a section of his book, *Baharistan,* to poets as a compelling testament to the esteem in which poetry is held among mystics. [208] Then he writes:

…The renowned sultans, whose noble names are minted in the realm of eloquence (*feṣāḥat iḳlimi*), have become prevalent in the bazaar of rhetorical standards, and it is necessary that they be written and inscribed in the notebooks of knowledge (*irfān defterlerin*) and the memorials of dervishes (*rindān tezkirelerin*) …[209]

Subsequently, he offers detailed accolades to Süleymān I. In his encomium, beyond the attributes previously delineated, such as *muayyid* and *zil-Allah*, he extols his master, in a very long panegyric ode, as a repository of divine mysteries (*ganjīniy-i esrār-i Ilāhī*) and the essence

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[206] For a comprehensive study about *tabaqat* for Sufis*,* see, J. A. Mojaddedi, *The Biographical Tradition in Sufism: The Ṭabaqāt Genre from Al-Sulamī to Jāmī.* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 2001).

[207] Sehî Beg, *Heşt beheşt,* 6- 10.

[208] To explore Jami's standing among the Ottomans as an Iranian Sufi poet, see Hamid Algar, "Jāmī and the Ottoman," ed. Thibaut d'Hubert and Alexandre Papas, *The Reception of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Jāmī's Works in the Islamicate World, ca. 9th/15th-14th/20th Century*, (Brill, 2018): 63-135.

[209] Sehî Beg, *Heşt beheşt, 5.*

of the divine spirit (*rawh Allāh*). Following this extensive introduction, he allocates the first chapter (*ṭabaghe*) to Süleimān again. [210]

Following that, in the second section (*ṭabaqah*), Sehi Bey proceeds to detail other Ottoman sultans in a chronological sequence. He describes these sultans, adorned with the praises of prophetic law, as *ghazi* sultans whose virtues and intellectual prowess enabled them to compose poetry. [211] He starts his narration with Murad II (r.1421-1444/ 1446-1451) as the first Ottoman ruler who had poetry and includes Muhammad II (r.1444-1446/1451-1481), Bayezid II (r. 1481-1512), and Cem Sultan (r. 28 May–20 June 1481) and limited Turkish verses of them. However, it is Selīm I's section, which is distinguished by its length and the inclusion of a more substantial collection of verses, all in Persian. [212]

The entry dedicated to Selīm in Sehi Bey's work opens with an account of how he ascended the throne, explicitly stating that Selīm seized the throne from his father, despite his father having designated his son Ahmed as his successor.[213] As Çıpa contends, Ottoman chroniclers dedicated significant effort to obfuscate any remembrance of the contentious circumstances enveloping Selīm's actions toward his father and brothers. Their accounts mention the episode in passing, yet conspicuously avoid delving into its specifics. [214] Sehi, too, acknowlevent yet event, yet portrays it as an act of unparalleled bravery (*behādīrlīk ve dilaverīik*) unseen since the era of Alexander.[215] Following a concise narrative of the triumph over Ismāeil I and the conquests in Egypt, the author delineates the attributes of him. Subsequent

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[210] Sehî Beg, *Heşt beheşt, 10-13.*
[211] Sehî Beg, *Heşt beheşt, 13.*
[212] Sehî Beg, *Heşt beheşt*, 13- 23.
[213] Sehî Beg, *Heşt beheşt*, 19.
[214] Erdem Çıpa, *The Making of Selīm*, 136-138.
[215] Sehî Beg, *Heşt beheşt*, 19.

to this in the portrayal of Selīm I, everything serves to underscore a notion replete with affection, kindness, and divine love, from which his exceptionally beautiful verses emanate, as if directly bestowed by God. His disposition, as Sehi writes, is characterized by both romantic (*aşıkāne*) and masculine (*merdāne)* qualities. He further highlights that despite the general populace attributing Turkish poetry to him, Selīm has no Turkish poems; all the poetry found in his *dīvān* is exclusively in Persian.[216] Notwithstanding, Qazvini presents a different account, noting that while Selīm composed poetry in Turkish as well, he focused on Persian poems due to the language of his book. He clarifies, however, that Selīm exhibited a stronger preference for Persian poetry. [217]

Subsequently, Sehi presents the aforementioned poem that commemorates Selīm's conquests, followed by additional verses that are considered among his most mystical poetry. [218] Sehi also brings up Selīm's brother korkut (d.1513) after mentioning Selīm, starting the narrative with Sultan Mehmed II's demise. He writes that Korkut was young and resided in the old palace. As the Janissaries began spreading corruption throughout the city, one of the pashas (Ishaq Pasha), in the absence of other claimants, positioned Korkut on the throne until Bayezid's come to power and he was responsible for the increase in the salaries of the Janissaries. However, this decision was met with disapproval by Bayezid. Ultimately, the dissatisfaction among the Janissaries led to their refusal to support Bayezid, resulting in Sultan Selīm being placed on the throne instead. [219] Şehzade Korkut is recognized as one of Bayezid II's most scholarly son', renowned and cherished among scholars for his extensive contributions to religious subjects and

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[216] Sehî Beg, *Heşt beheşt*, 20.
[217] Qazvīnī, *Hasht Bihisht,* 328, 477. In the subsequent chapter, I will delve into the topic of language within Selīm's poetry in comprehensive detail.
[218] Sehî Beg, *Heşt beheşt*, 21-22.
[219] Sehî Beg, *Heşt beheşt*, 22.

also poetry.[220] His prominence ensured that his name remained in the *tezkires*. Despite being strangulated once Selīm ascended to the sultanate—a fact not omitted by Ottoman chroniclers—Sehi notably mentions nothing about his death. Introducing this subject immediately following the detailed and vivid descriptions of Selīm's passion and his mystical poetry likely was not the most suitable choice. In fact, it can be argued that *tezkires*, through their selective silence on certain narratives about the sultan, can construct a more divine image of the sultans than can be found elsewhere. Although not primarily concerned with historical accountability, *tezkires* do not entirely shy away from discussing historical events. While chronicles may endeavor to depict Selīm not as a fratricidal sultan but rather as a brother-mourner, showcasing acts of charity and sacrifice following executions, Sehi's omission of the events between Selīm and Korkut and their rivalry—whether intentional or not—serves to foster a perception of Selīm as a Sufi figure characterized by profound kindness and love.[221]

The second Turkish *tezkire* in chronological order titled *Tezkiretū'ş-Şū'arā*, was authored by Latifi in 1546, eight years following Sehi's *tezkire*. A notable aspect of his work is its composition in two distinct phases: initially in 1546, dedicated to Sultan Süleimān, and he finished a new version in 1574, during the reign of Sultan Murad II. [222] This bifurcation has been overlooked in the editions of the text, with both known editions defaulting to the 1574 version as the foundational text. [223] Walter Andrews is the first person who addressed this issue in his PhD

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[220] See Nabil al-Tikriti, "Şehzade Korkud (ca. 1468-1513)," ed. Kemal Çiçek, *Pax Ottomana: Studies in Memoriam Prof. Dr. Nejat Göyünç*, (Ankara, 2001), 659-674.

[221] "Nihadında ışk u mahabbet muvaneset ü ülfet tutup derünı vü birüni ışk ile memlü." Sehî Beg, *Heşt beheşt*, 20.

[222] Walter Andrews, Ayşe Dalyan, "İki farklı Latifi tezkiresi ve nüshaları," *Türk Dili Araştırmaları* 68, 49-68.

[223] Latifi, Tezkiretü'ş-Şu'arâ ve Tabsıratü'n-Nuzamâ, ed.Rıdvan Canım (Ankara, 2018).

thesis. [224] For my research, it was essential to consult both versions of the text. However, my aim was not to edit these texts but rather to track the changes related to the depiction of the sultans, focusing particularly on Selīm I. [225] I aimed to acquire an overarching understanding of the textual evolution rather than delineating every specific change. It is important to note that, apart from Andrew's study and Ayşe Dalyan there has been no research specifically addressing these differences. Scholarly articles that have analyzed the text and its characteristics have only considered its final version. Relying on the findings of these works can introduce inaccuracies and there is a need for different editions of this work.

It is documented that, subsequent to the presentation of this work, Süleimān recognized Latifi's contributions by appointing him to a governmental position. [226] The structural organization of Latifi's book distinguishes it from Sehi's work. The book is methodically segmented into three main chapters, complemented by an introductory section and an ending section (*ḥātime*). [227] In the introduction to his work, Latifi elaborates on the significance of poetry, providing insights that are crucial for our analysis. There is no significant difference in this section between the two editions and it seems that this section was written in the same way in the first edition. Certainly, Latifi is neither the inaugural nor the ultimate Ottoman writer to offer perspectives on the essence and indispensability of poetry. The discourse surrounding the role and value of poetry has sparked religious debates among Muslims from the earliest times,

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[224] W. Andrews, *The Tezkere-i Şu'ara of Latifi as a source for the critical evaluation of Ottoman poetry*. Unpublished Ph. D dissertation. The University of Michigan. 1970.

[225] To this end, I selected the oldest available manuscripts for each version as representative samples—not necessarily the most accurate versions—and one other manuscript of each of the editions referred to other manuscripts as necessary.

[226] Rıdvan Canım, "Introduction of Tezkiretü'ş-Şu'arâ ve Tabsıratü'n-Nuzamâ," (Ankara: 2018), 6-7.

[227] Rıdvan Canım, "Introduction of Tezkiretü'ş-Şu'arâ ve Tabsıratü'n-Nuzamâ," (Ankara: 2018), 16.

engendering a spectrum of views ranging from staunch opposition to fervent support. [228] In this analysis, I concentrate on how Latifi advocates for the spiritual essence of poetry and the esteemed status of poets within the introductory section of his work. Subsequently, I examine how he extends these themes to the segment dedicated to poet sultans, establishing a connection between the valorization of poetry's spiritual dimension and the recognition of monarchs who engage in poetic expression.

Latifi employs a literary style and convey that "poets' hearts are a treasury of God's mercy." [229] Latifi references Niẓāmī Ganjavī (d.1209), esteemed as the paramount romantic epic poet in Persian literature, quoting the celebrated verses that describe poets as "masters of words." [230] He further aligns eloquence as a foundational trait shared by prophets, positioning poets just below prophets in the hierarchy of greatness. [231] This elaborate introduction not only underscores the esteemed status of poets but also ascribes a unique superiority to them within the cultural and spiritual fabric of society. Following a comprehensive introduction, the author transitions to lauding Süleimān, where a subtle divergence is observed between the two editions of the text. He changes the title *ḫāḳān-i ʿaẓīm-u shaʾn* (the magnificent khān) to *Deryāy-i ʾIskender nishān* (Dara [one of the ancient kings of Iran] with the mark of Alexander). [232] He also adds these sentences: he is a lord of auspicious whom, from the era of Dhul-Qarnayn to this day, the eyes of men and the sight of stars have not seen an equal or a peer."[233] Under the heading of *ʾibtidā-i*

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[228] See Annemarie Schimmel, *As Through a Veil: Mystical Poetry in Islam*, Lectures on the History of Religions Sponsored by the American Council of Learned Societies, New Series, v. 12 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982).

[229] Latifi, *Tezkiretü'ş-Şu'arâ ve Tabsıratü'n-Nuzamâ*, MS. 1160, f.2b; Ms.3725, f. 3b.

[230] "الشعرا علما الكلام". Latifi, *Tezkiretü'ş-Şu'arâ*, MS. 1160. f. 3a; Ms.3725. f. 3b

[231] "پس شعرا آمد و پیش انبیا". Latifi, *Tezkiretü'ş-Şu'arâ*, MS. 1160, f. 3a; MS. 3725, f. 2b.

[232] Latifi, *Tezkiretü'ş-Şu'arâ,* MS. 1160, f.6b; MS. 3725, f. 6a.

[233] Latifi, *Tezkiretü'ş-Şu'arâ,* MS. 1160, f.6b; MS. 3725, f. 6a.

kitāb (The Beginning of the Book), in both editions, he implicitly outlines his rationale for the sequence of chapters. He highlights his objective is to acknowledge the poets of Rum; however, invoking the names of Friends of God (ʾawlīyā) is believed to attract mercy. [234] Therefore, due to their significance and the blessings they bring (*tayammūnan ve teberrūken*), the author first mentions *sheikhs* (hierarch) and sultans—considered the earthly shadows of God.[235]

Latifi's approach to organizing his work on poets alphabetically, rather than chronologically, distinguishes his method from the traditional Islamic classification and subsequent *tezkire* writing practices. He provides an explanation for this distinctive organization in the introduction of his work:

From the time of Sultan Murad of the Ottoman dynasty to our Sultan Süleymān, when the year reached nine hundred and fifty-three of the Hijra, the glorious names and renowned places were recorded in this *tezkire* on the basis of the alphabet letters.[236]

However, Latifi deviates from this alphabetical arrangement when addressing the Sheikhs and sultans; alphabetical exception applies solely to the book's final chapter. In the first two sections, he adopts a chronological order. Beginning with a brief introduction that reiterates the esteemed status of poets, he proceeds to discuss the most renowned Sufi poets. In this introduction, he posits that the language of poets serves as a conduit to the divine, a passage leading to heaven.[237] However, this sanctification of poetry does not extend to all forms. For

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[234] "عند ذكر الاولياء تنزل الرحمة" Latifi, *Tezkiretü'ş-Şu'arâ,* MS. 1160, f.14a; MS. 3725, f. 14a.
[235] "السلطان ظل الله فى الأرض" Latifi, *Tezkiretü'ş-Şu'arâ,* MS. 1160, f.14a; MS. 3725, f. 14a
[236] Rıdvan Canım, "Introduction of Tezkiretü'ş-Şu'arâ", 16.
[237] Latifi, *Tezkiretü'ş-Şu'arâ,* MS. 1160, f.20b; MS. 3725, f. 15a

instance, he condemns the facetiousness genre (*hazl*) as forbidden and illegitimate, both logically (ʿ*aqlan*) and according to Sharia law (*sharʾ*). He categorizes any poetry devoid of piety or incapable of righteous interpretation as a verse from the devil's psalms (*mazāmīr*). [238] It is a heavenly poem that has two faces (*dhul-wajhayn*), because as the Friends of God intuit in their spiritual journey, conceal the secrets, and true meanings from the uninitiated, presenting the unseen mysteries through metaphorical expressions. The poetry of sultans and ʿ*ulema* (scholars) is highlighted because it embodies the principles of those devoted to truth and the path followed by the companions of the Sufi way (*ṭarīqat*). [239] So, the sultan'' poetry, along with Sufis serves as a manifestation of these spiritual and ethical ideals. Upon listing sixteen Sufis known to have engaged in poetry, the narrative shifts its focus to sultans.[240] It is noteworthy that, with few exceptions, the majority of these figures are not celebrated for their poetic contributions but are primarily recognized for their roles as Sufis and mystics.

In his portrayal of the sultans' poetry, Latifi offers insights of considerable significance. He crafts a dual image of rulers: they are depicted both as victorious leaders on the battlefield and as masters of eloquence in the literary domain. Latifi underscores the divine endorsement of their authority, suggesting that sultans are not merely God's representatives on Earth but are also entrusted with the cosmic order (*naẓm-i niẓām-i ʿalam*) and the gift of poetic expression. According to him, the essence of poetry in the sultans' discourse is a reflection of divine inspiration within their hearts. Similar to Sufis experiencing moments of divine joy and ecstasy,

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[238] الشعر مزمار من مزامير الابليس'' "MS. 1160, f.20b; MS. 3725, f. 6a.
[239] '' Latifi, *Tezkiretü'ş-Şu'arâ,* MS 3725. ff. 30a, 31b.
[240] The Sufis he mentions: hazret-i Rumi (Mevlânâ Celâleddîn-i Rûmî), Sultan Veled, Sadreddin Konevî (d.1274), hazret-i Aşık Paşa, Şeikh Elvân-ı Şîrâzî, hazret-i Şeikh Vefa, Şeikh Rûsheni, Şeikh Abdullah İlâhî, hazrat-i Şeikh Seyyed Ahmad Bukhârî, hazret-i Şeikh İbrâhim Gülşenî, Yazıcızâde Mehmed Çelebi, Süleyman Çelebi, Şeikh Bâyezîd. See Latifi, *Tezkiretü'ş-Şu'arâ*, MS, 3725, f. 14a.

sultans are endowed with inspired utterances (*ṣudūr*). Being the pinnacle of creation (*ʾashraf-i anām*), their speech imbues eloquence with a distinguished honour (*sheref*), elevating the stature of their words. [241]

Latifi initiates this chapter intriguingly, choosing Sultan Murad as the inaugural Ottoman poet sultan, rather than Süleimān. While the portrayal of each sultan in this work is commendable, none matches the comprehensive depth found in Sultan Selīm's profile. A comparative analysis of the two editions reveals a notable expansion in both Selīm's and Süleimān's entries in the subsequent edition, highlighting an enhanced emphasis on their poetic legacies. The substantial increase in the number of sentences added to this section warrants specific attention. One of the notable enhancements in the second edition is a narrative that exemplifies what Erdem Çıpa terms "Otherworldly Signs of Legitimacy." [242] Latifi narrates:

In the treatises on the virtues and merits of Rustam and Esfandiar of the world (Selīm), it is narrated that at the time of his birth, on his auspicious body, moles appeared corresponding to the number of the seven planets, and these were not ordinary moles, but each indicated a great sign and a major event. At the same time, one of the sages of the era, who was aware of the mysteries of the unseen and whose pure language was a mirror of the divine forms, inevitably came to the royal court since the mentioned newborn had come from the realm of the unseen (*ʿālam-i ghayb*) to the realm of visibility and said: The wise child that has been born is a unique pearl in the oyster of the Earth, and utmost efforts should be made to protect him, for he has seven moles on his body and he will

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[241] "الشعرا علما الكلام". Latifi, *Tezkiretüʾş-Şuʿarâ*, MS. 1160, f. 3a; MS.313, f.15a; MS. 342, f. 3b.
[242] Erdem Çıpa, *The Making of Selīm*, 216.

seize the fate and throne of seven sovereign rulers. He hinted and promised that, like Alexander, he would conquer the seven climes. Eventually, he seized every corner of the sky and was such a warrior ruler and enemy slayer that he conquered from *Qaf* to *Qaf*, and if his enemies were like Pashang and Giv (ancient champions of Iran), he would not turn away from any of them, and if their spears went into his eye, he would not look away from them. [243]

This narrative, parallelling many historical accounts and petitions within Ottoman records, portrays Selīm's ascension to the throne as divinely ordained. From the outset, his path to sovereignty was depicted as aligning with a predestined purpose. As Bernard Lewis elucidates the legitimacy of a Muslim ruler's authority—regardless of its acquisition or execution—was deemed a divinely sanctioned imperative, positioning the Sunni community as the enduring vessel for divine will and guidance. [244] Incorporating poetry into the narrative of Sultan Selīm's divinely sanctioned rise to power, Latifi also employs a couplet that symbolizes the intertwining of celestial favor with royal authority: "A royal robe has been tailored for his stature; a sign of kingship has been bestowed upon him." [245] Latifi's immediate addition that Sultan Selīm's era was replete with virtues, articulated through the adage "people follow the religion of their kings," positions the ruler not merely as a temporal ruler but as a pivotal conduit of divine grace to his subjects. [246]

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[243] Latifi, *Tezkiretü'ş-Şu'arâ*, MS. 1160, f.20b; MS. 3725, f. 15a

[244] Bernard Lewis, *The Political Language of Islam*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press,1988), 24-26.

[245] شهریاری جامه ای بر قامت او دوخته/ پادشاهی آینی در شآن او منزل شده. Latifi, Tezkiretü'ş-Şu'arâ, MS. 3725, f. 31a.

[246] الناس على دين ملوكهم. Latifī, Tezkiretü'ş-Şu'arâ, MS. 3725, f. 31a.

Sibel Üst Erdem suggests that Latifi'' portrayal of sultans in his work leans more towards employing stylized epithets and cliché, such as *Rustam and Esfandiar of the world* and *sultan-i salatin-i jahan*, rather than detailing their historical achievements, indicating a potential critical stance through omission. [247] However, a closer examination of Latifi's text, I believe, reveals a nuanced understanding of the imperial discourse of the Süleimānic era, suggesting that these descriptions are not mere literary clichés but are rooted in Latifi's sophisticated awareness and interpretation of the period's rhetoric. Although the initial edition of his work also mirrors the contemporary discourse regarding sovereignty, the subsequent edition evolves to present a more nuanced and elaborated perspective, particularly influenced by Selīmname literature. Latifi'' text adopts an epic tone that elevates the narrative to a grandiose level. He situates him within a lineage of legendary valour, drawing parallels with Rustam and other esteemed heroes of the Persianate world. This comparison is not merely a stylistic choice but a strategic elevation of Selīm's image to that of mythic proportions, aligning his achievements and persona with a hero. Such a portrayal not only enhances the grandeur of Ottoman reign but also embeds his legacy within a broader cultural and historical narrative, suggesting that his rule and victories were not only significant in the Ottoman context but resonant with the timeless qualities of legendary heroism. This alignment with mythical heroes serves to immortalize Selīm's achievements, casting his rule in an almost divine light and reinforcing his enduring legacy in history. Latifi's text adopts an epic tone that elevates the narrative to a grandiose level. This evolution indicates Latifi's deliberate engagement with the period'' literature to craft a compelling imperial narrative. Moreover, *tezkires* serve as an ideal medium for depicting rulers, providing a space

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[247] Sibel Üst Erdem. "Latîfî Tezkiresine Göre Sultan Şairlerin Özellikleri." *Anemon Muş Alparslan Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 10. n.1 (2020), 477-489.

where the royal image can be meticulously crafted and disseminated. As Cornell Fleischer notes, Süleimān's efforts to shape public opinion through sheikhs, poets, authors, and astrologers underscore the strategic use of literary outputs in forging a favourable imperial image. [248]The portrayal of Selīm, a revered and almost divine light, not only enhances his legitimacy but, by extension, bolsters Süleimān's own.

In terms of chronology, the subsequent *tezkire,* Ahdi's *Gūlşen-ī Şūarā,* penned in 1564-65, is dedicated to Prince Selīm (Selīm II), Süleimān's son. However, this *tezkire* exclusively acknowledges Süleymān and his poet princes, omitting any mention of Selīm I and other sultans. Ultimately, in 1568, a significant literary work emerged within Ottoman literature, as identified by scholars. While serving as a *kadı* (judge), Pir Mehmet Aşık Çelebi (d.1572) dedicated his work, *Meşairū'ş-şūarā*, to Sultan Selīm II, marking it as one of the most pivotal contributions to the literary canon.[249] Judging by the number of copies, his book has become the most replicated and, consequently, the most read *tezkire* following Latifi's work. [250] Based on the narrative provided by him, Aşık Çelebi and Latifi, in consultation with each other, decide to embark on the endeavor of writing a *tezkire*. As they displayed on their respective projects, they agreed upon distinct approaches for their books. Aşık Çelebi was to organize his work according to an alphabetical scheme, while Latifi planned to adopt a pattern-based structure, reminiscent of Sehi Bey's *Heşt Bihişt.* However, as their work progressed, Latifi shifted from his initial pattern-based strategy to an alphabetical layout. This unexpected change deeply disappointed Aşık Çelebi,

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[248] Cornell Fleischer, "Public Opinion under Sultan Süleymân." ed. Cemal Kafadar and Halil İnalcık, *Süleymân The Second and His Time*, (Isis Press, 1993), 52-54.

[249] For a study on Meşairü'ş-şuara as a literary canon, see Zeynep Altok, "Âşık Çelebi ve Edebî Kanon" ed. Hatice Aynur, Aslı Niyazioğlu, *Âşık Çelebi ve Şairler. Tezkiresi Üzerine Yazılar,* (Istanbul, 2011), 117-132.

[250] Aynur, Hatice. "Autobiographical Elements in Aşık Çelebi's Dictionary of Poets," ed. Ralf Elger and Yavuz Köse. *Many Ways of Speaking about the Self: Middle Eastern Ego-Documents in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish (14th-20th Century)*, (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2010)*,* 17.

leading him to temporarily abandon his project. It was only after a hiatus of twenty years that Aşık Çelebi resumed his work, this time opting for a chronogrammatic framework. This strategic pivot allowed him to distinguish his *tezkire* as a unique contribution within the realm of Ottoman literature. [251]

A notable aspect of this *tezkire* is its detailed exploration of the history of poetry and its characteristics, surpassing previous works in depth. [252] What makes it particularly relevant to our study is its presentation of a universal narrative of poetry and poets, effectively constituting a form of general history. The author begins with *Adam,* incorporating stories of prophets like *Hud* and *Shuaib* from Arabic sources. The narrative then progresses to accounts from the Prophet Muhammad's time, through the era of the four caliphs, mentioning each one in turn along with anecdotes about poetry during their reigns. The discussion extends to figures such as Fatima, the Prophet's daughter, and jurists and theologist like Abū Ḥanīfa and Shafi'i' including debates on the permissibility of poetry in Islam and in Arab territories.[253] The author dedicates the next entry to Persian mystic poets, highlighting the virtue of poetry with mentions of Abū Saʿīd Abū'l-Khayr (d. 1'49), very well-known Sufi figure, and Jami before transitioning to a detailed comparison of Ottoman sultans with historical rulers and kings. This comparison extends beyond short sentences and general notes typical of other *tezkire* and history writers, listing ancient Iranian kings and dynasties, such as *Pishdādīyān* and *Sasānīyān*, a departure from the references like *Anushiravān* and *Khusraw*, made by predecessors. [254]This detailed approach can suggest an influence from Firduwsī's *Shahnameh*, reflecting the author's personal style and deep

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[251] Āşık Çelebi, *Meşā'irü'ş-şu'arā*, ed. Filiz Kiliç (Ankara: T.C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 2018), 95-96.
[252] For some studies on different aspects of this book, see Hatice Aynur, Aslı Niyazioğlu, *Âşık Çelebi ve Şairler. Tezkiresi Üzerine Yazılar,* (Istanbul, 2011).
[253] Āşık Çelebi, *Meşā'irü'ş-şu'arā*, 37-61.
[254] Āşık Çelebi, *Meşā'irü'ş-şu'arā*, 65-67.

engagement with history. Additionally, the work draws comparisons not only with Eastern and Arab rulers but also with European (*Ferenc*) monarchs and infidels. [255]

The author concludes with verses in praise of the Ottoman sultans, one of which stands out for its significance: "From religion, a crown was made, and from Islam, a throne; the foundation was set upon the essence of fortune." [256] As Hatice Aynur suggests, Aşık Çelebi's inclusion of poems in his work is strategic rather than merely decorative. She emphasizes these poems are selected and placed purposefully, aiming to deepen thematic resonance, highlight philosophical insights, or clarify historical contexts, thereby serving a function beyond mere aesthetic enhancement. [257] By concluding his comparison of Ottoman sultans with world rulers using a specific verse, the author underscores fortune or divine favor (*kut*) as a foundational principle of Ottoman sultanate, along with the sacred source of authority.

He connects this debate to Osman I, the first Ottoman sultan. This is the first *tezkire* in which we see the name of sultans before Murad II. This approach bears a resemblance to the practices observed in *Mecālis al-Nefā'is.* ʿAlī Shīr Nevā'ī introduces Timur as the paramount sultan, with discussions centering on his affinity for poetry, alongside anecdotes of the poems he recited across various contexts. [258] The language of Aşık Çelebi, however, is entangled in mystical-philosophical literature and influenced by Ibn-i Arabi's ideads. [259] He refers to Osman as a spirit that has given body to poets. He considers him an example of the first intellect from whom the other Ottoman sultans originated. And then he describes Orhan being the second

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[255] Āşık Çelebi*, Meşā'irü'ş-şu'arā*, 67.
[256] Āşık Çelebi*, Meşā'irü'ş-şu'arā*, 67.
[257] Aynur, Hatice. "Autobiographical Elements in Aşık Çelebi's Dictionary of Poets," 17-18.
[258] ʿAlī Shīr Navāʾī, *Majālis al-Nafā'is*, 76.
[259] See Zildzic, 'Friend and Foe: The Early Ottoman Reception of Ibn ʿArabī' (PhD Diss., University of California, 2012), 119-16; Hüseyin Yılmaz, *Caliphate Redefined,* 206-217; Mustafa Tahralı, "Muhyiddin Ibn Arabî ve Türkiye'ye te'sirleri", *Kubbealtı akademi mecmûası,* 23. n. (1994).

sultan in this way: "the categories (*maqulāt*) of the sultans are the fixed entities (*ʾaʿyān-i sābite*), and Orhan is their second intelligible (*maʿqūl*)" meaning the second manifestation of the fixed entities. The interest in Sufi interpretations of Islamic history and the doctrines of Ibn-i Arabi was widespread during the reigns of Selīm and Süleymān, drawing the attention of scholars such as Ibn Kemāl Pāshā (d.1534). However, Aşık Çelebi appears to integrate this Sufi perspective into his Turkish *tezkire* to a greater extent than any other *tezkirecis*. He asserts that Osman and Orhan were pivotal in fostering science and knowledge, Subsequently, the emergence of Turkish poetry is traced back, with examples cited from the earliest Turkish literary works and the sultans being listed in succession up to Sultan Mehmed II (d.1481). He mentions that from God, the blessing (*fayz*) that is bestowed upon other sultans was also bestowed upon him, and grace was also granted to him and after mentioning his triumph in Istanbul in a literary language he mentions that although all the Ottoman sultans were composing poetry, but he is the first person who had a *mahlas* (penname). [260]

The entry of Selīm is shorter than other *tezkires*. From the very beginning, he integrates the image of Selīm into the concepts of Islamic astrology and calls him "*Falak-i Atlas*". According to that, there are nine spheres, and the last sphere called the Primum (*Falak ul-aflak*), the *Atlas* Sphere or The Determiner of Directions (*Muhadded-i jihat*). This sphere encompasses all other spheres and represents the ultimate boundary of the material world. [261] A look at the special features of this sphere makes Aşık Çelebi's point clearer. Avicenna, in his book *Al-Isharat wa'l-Tanbihat*, provides an explanation on this topic. He writes that this sphere is the swiftest of

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[260] Āşık Çelebi, *Meşāʾirü'ş-şuʾarā*, 71.
[261] This sphere it seems that is introduced by Ibn Sina (Avicenna). He views the universe as consisting of nine concentric spheres. See Syamsuddin Arif, "The Universe as a System: Ibn Sīnā's Cosmology Revisited," *Islam & Science,* 7, n.2 (Winter 2009), 127-136.

all spheres and its movement is from the east to the west. [262] Aşık Çelebi links this issue with Selīm's conquests and how he is superior to all other sultans because he is the ninth sphere, and the extent of his sovereign is more than his ancestors. And ultimately, poetry too advanced during his time, because he not only conquered the lands of the Arabs and Ajams/Acems, but the eloquent Arabs composed odes for him, and the rhetoricians of the non-Arabs remained at his side. He also indicates that, in comparison with his poet ancestors (*ajdād-i şāʿir*), Selīm was more inclined towards poetry than the others. Despite the complexity of Sufi thought concerning governance that permeates the section dedicated to Selīm, the narrative, articulated in the literary language of the era, is notably brief. This concise section culminates in a selection of Selīm's Sufi poetry, offering a glimpse into his spiritual and poetic inclinations. [263]

<u>Conclusion:</u>

Tezkires emerged as a significant historical source during Süleyman's reign, reflecting the Ottoman court's efforts to reshape its image. The prevalence of *tezkires,* evidenced by the numerous surviving copies, underscores their wide reception and influence. Researchers note the customary inclusion of sultans at the beginning of *tezkires,* a practice so ingrained that its historical uniqueness often goes unrecognized. This marks a distinct shift in the cultural history of Islam, portraying sultans as engaged in a cultural production like never before. This involvement highlights the sultans' roles not only as patrons but also as contributors to the cultural and intellectual landscape of their era. The project of sculpting Sultan Selīm's image

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[263] Āşık Çelebi*, Meşāʾirüʾş-şuʾarā*, 72-73.

during Süleyman's era, and to some degree in Selīm II's time, through *tezkires*, aligns with a broader array of sources. This initiative signifies the genesis of the poet-sultan in Ottoman historiography. A detailed chronological examination unravels the evolution of this portrayal, initiating with Selīm and progressively encompassing Süleyman and previous sultans up to Murad II. This effort culminates in the work of Aşık Çelebi, who ambitiously extends the narrative to encompass all sultans from the Ottoman Empire's inception. His comprehensive inclusion and portrayal of each sultan, woven through their poetic contributions, provides a vivid tapestry of the evolving role of poetry within the sultanate. This careful construction not only solidifies the sultans' legacies as patrons and practitioners of poetry but also highlights the strategic cultivation of their images, reflecting the intertwined nature of power, poetry, and image-making in the Ottoman imperial tradition.

Conclusion:

Despite its brevity, Sultan Selīm I's reign stands as a critical juncture in the vast continuum of Ottoman intellectual and cultural history. Yet, Selīm's image transcends mere historical facts; he occupies a space woven from both the threads of documented events and the fabric of memory. The image of Sultan Selīm reaching into the realms of literary history as well. As delineated in this research, Selīm's character as a poet is an integral facet of his persona, acting as a bridge between his roles as a caliph and a Sufi poet. Notably, Selīm himself played an active role in crafting this multifaceted image. Highlighting the integration of imagery and themes within Selīm's poetry, particularly the portrayal of the sultan as a Sufi figure, this study has dissected the multifaceted role of Selīm I's poetry in sculpting his imperial image. Through an exploration of the dīvān and the odes, it becomes evident that Selīm's poetic oeuvre was a deliberate act of image construction, positioning him as a ruler who adeptly navigate the complex intersections of governance, cultural patronage, and spiritual leadership. Hence, this study not only contributes to the historiography of Ottoman cultural practices but also illuminates the intricate mechanisms through which literature and art serve as conduits of power in the early modern Islamic world.

On the other hand, over time, the portrayal of Selīm as a sultan-poet has been continuously reinterpreted and reproduced, reflecting the evolving perception of his legacy in the collective cultural memory. The ongoing modifications and adjustments to the manuscripts pertaining to Sultan Selim I as a poet, including the continual revisions of his dīvān, signify a

persistent endeavor. This reveals that Selim's poetic facet, though less emphasized, held considerable significance within the cultural strategy of Süleyman's court.

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