

THE ASCENSION OF THE PROPHET AND THE STATIONS OF HIS JOURNEY

1

THE MİRĀJ AND THE THREE SACRED CITIES OF ISLAM
IN LITERATURE, MUSIC, AND ILLUSTRATED MANUSCRIPTS
IN THE OTTOMAN CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT

editors

Ayşe Taşkent

Nicole Kançal-Ferrari



DERGĀH

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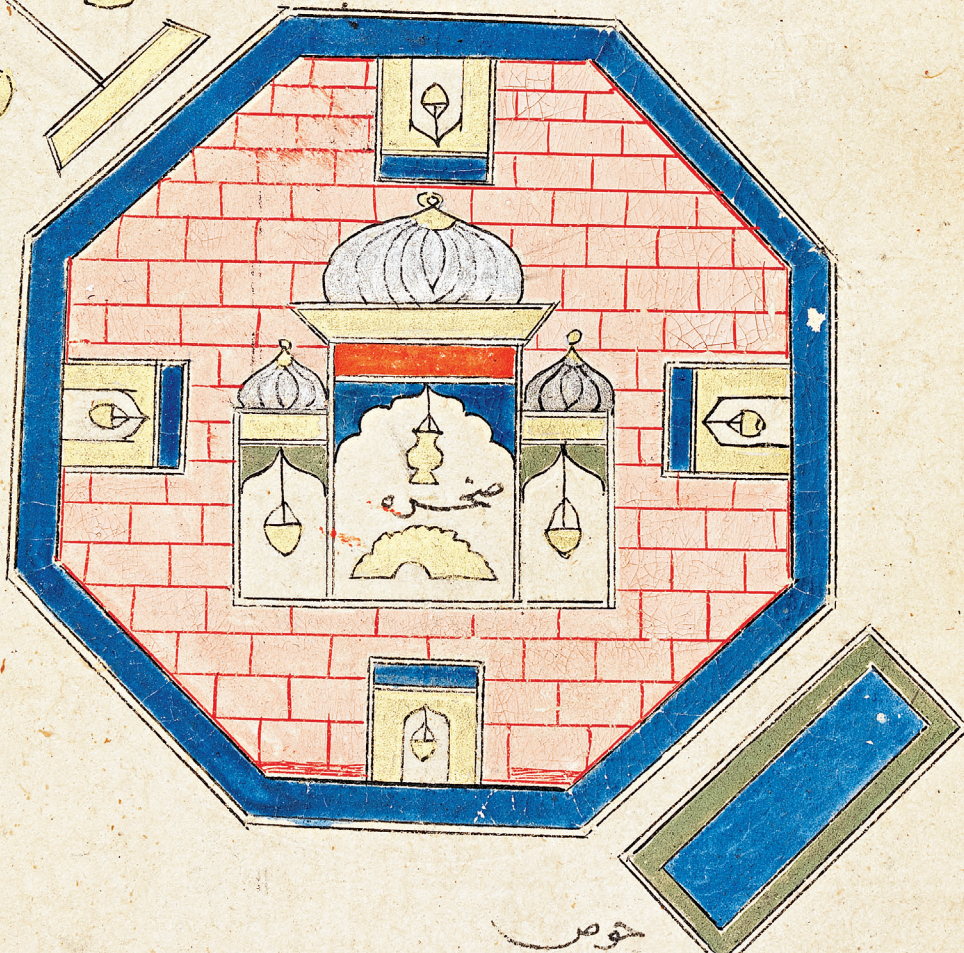
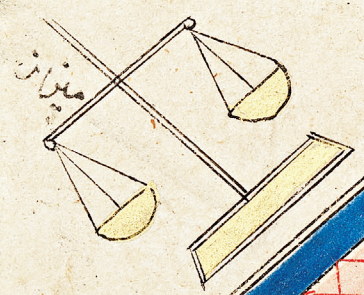
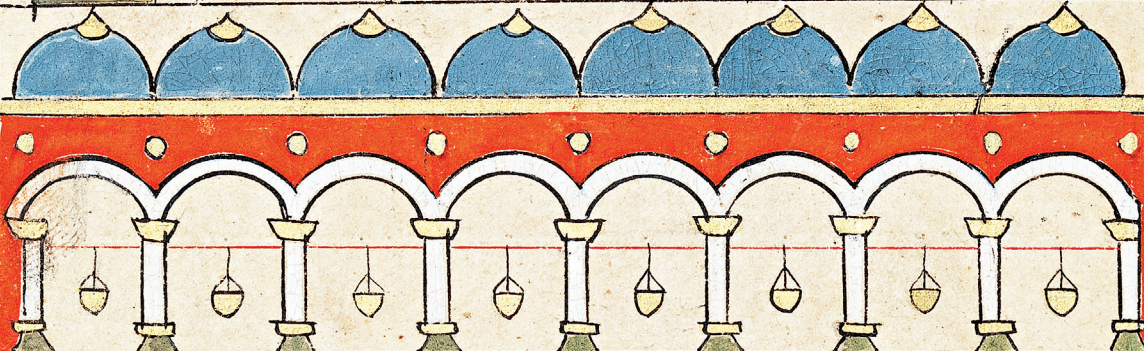
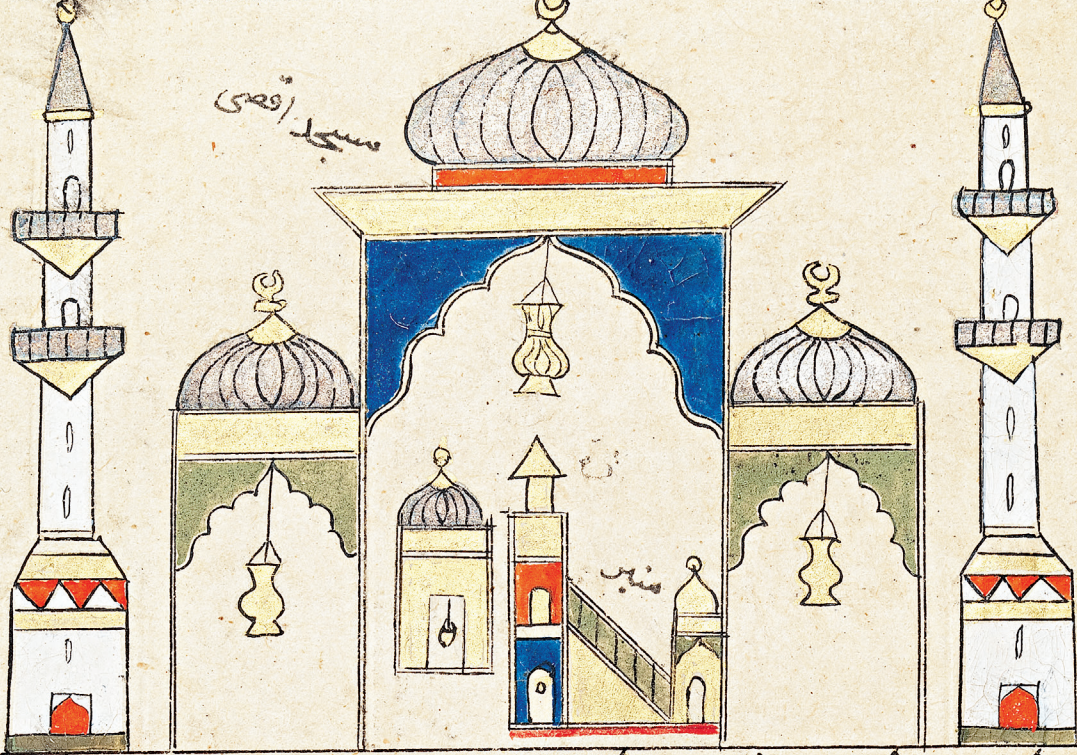
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شیخ از فلک بر
سین جان ملک





Exalted is He who took His Servant by night from al-Masjid al-Haram to al-Masjid al-Aqsa, whose surroundings We have blessed, to show him of Our signs. Indeed, He is the Hearing, the Seeing.

(Al-Isrā’/The Night Journey, 17:1)

1. By the star when it sets
2. indeed your companion is not astray
3. nor does he speak vainly.
4. It is nothing less than a revelation revealed
5. taught to him by a being of intense power
6. possessing strength. He straightened up
7. while he was on the highest horizon,
8. then he drew close and descended
9. and he was a distance of two bows or closer.
10. He revealed to his servant what he revealed.
11. The heart did not lie in what it saw.
12. Will you then argue with him about what he saw?
13. He saw him another time
14. at the Lote Tree of the Boundary
15. next to the Garden of the Refuge
16. when the Lote Tree was covered by what covered.
17. His vision did not stray, nor was it excessive.
18. He saw some of the greatest signs of his Lord.

(Al-Najm/The Star, 53:1-17)

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Volume 1

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Nizāmī, *Makhzan al-asrār* (Treasury of secrets), Isfahan, 1665. British Library, Add.
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Ertuğrul Ertekin*

The Legend of 'Alī Appearing in the Form of a Lion during the *Mi'rāj* and Its Reflection in Visual Culture: A Reading from the *Mi'rāçlama of Khaṭāyī*¹

Translation: Zeynep Mahmout

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Occasionally, prophets performed miracles—that is, certain supernatural acts designed to prove to people that the religion the prophets conveyed was based upon the revelations sent to them by God and that their path was the true path. The *mi'rāj*, Prophet Muḥammad's two-stage journey made by night from al-Masjid al-Ḥarām in Mecca to al-Masjid al-Aqṣā in Jerusalem (*isrā'*) and from there the ascension (*'urūj*) to the heavens, was such a miracle, realized with the objective of proving his prophethood.² There are three sources regarding our knowledge of miracles: (1) descriptions via revelations, verses conveyed by God, the One that has the power to effect miracles; (2) the words, or hadith, of the prophets, who most of the time are the miracle's agent but sometimes its object; and (3) the accounts of those who witnessed the miracle. In the case of the *mi'rāj*, Prophet Muḥammad himself performed this miracle in the darkness of the night, and the experiences he alone

witnessed reduce our sources to two: verses of the Qur'an and hadith. Qur'anic verses related to the *mi'rāj* are short and highly dependent on interpretation. The mention of Sidrat al-Muntahā, Ṭūbā, Kawthar, and similar heavenly entities in verses of the Qur'an, for example, requires interpretation and fails to reveal the actual nature of this miracle, which is essentially a mystery.³ Therefore, there is only one source of information remaining: the hadith conveyed by the Prophet, who personally experienced this miracle. As miracles materialize within the framework of a specific purpose, in principle, understanding the miracle of the Prophet's *mi'rāj* requires interpreting the short narratives of the relevant Qur'anic verses. Indeed, the *mi'rāj* of the Prophet was clearly interpreted in the existing hadith, and within a short time these narratives, conveyed by a large group of the Sahaba, attained an authentic structure.⁴

Nevertheless, the dialogical communication among the transmitters (*al-rāwī*) of hadith, the

1 The term *mi'rāçlama* holds a special place in the literature, doctrine, and rituals pertaining to the *mi'rāj* in the Qizilbash and Alevi traditions, and I have therefore chosen to keep the term in its original form. See Esat Korkmaz, *Ansiklopedik Alevîlik-Bektaşîlik Terimleri Sözlüğü* (Istanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 2003), 298.

2 For the assessment of the *mi'rāj* as a miracle, see Salih Sabri Yavuz, *İsrâ ve Mirac* (Istanbul: Pınar Yayınları, 2011), 169–205.

3 For more extensive information regarding the verses of the Qur'an that mention the *mi'rāj*, see Yavuz, *İsrâ ve Mirac*, 18–54.

4 For hadith on the *mi'rāj*, see Yavuz, *İsrâ ve Mirac*, 56–84.

process of enculturation, indigenous forms, and use of speech led to the transformation and mutation of the original form in narrations of hadith relating to the *mi'rāj*. In addition to transmitters, with the incorporation of storytellers (*al-quṣṣāṣ*), who from the early period of Islam onward played a significant role in the circulation of information and the transmission of hadith, we see a substantial increase and variation in hadith and narrations in the form of parables and legendary narratives. Particularly in regions where Islam spread during periods of conquest (*futūḥāt*) and was restructured in the process, *mi'rāj* narratives were subjected to radical transformation, localized, and blended—in other words, they were adapted to local culture.⁵

Although *mi'rāj* narratives, which became common in the Islamic world in a period when oral literature was more popular than written literature, had been transferred into written form in Arabic texts in Islamic literature since the eighth century, these only began to develop as a distinct literary tradition in the tenth century. After the Islamization of the Iranians and Turks, these narratives, which previously had mainly been found in religious texts, began to appear in Persian and Turkish literary texts in a variety of forms. These narratives, which remain understudied, tended to focus on particular meanings of the *mi'rāj*, some overt and some enigmatic, and were used as part of a specific pattern of religious, political, and ethical discourse rooted in the aspirational, environmental, historical, and literary contexts of the texts themselves.⁶ These narratives were continually reproduced, evolving according to the narrators' discretion, renditions in oral transmission, interaction with other texts, and practical concerns in reading and performing written transmissions. These accounts of the *mi'rāj* have been studied both singly and

comparatively, but all were informed by the religious and political discourse of their day and the evolving nature of religious paradigms that began to change from the early period.

The topic of this article is the *Khaṭāyī Mi'rāçlama*, one of the original *mi'rāj* narrations, so named because it was attributed to Shah Ismā'īl I (1501–24), founder of the Safavid Empire (1501–1736), who used the pseudonym “Khaṭāyī” in his poems. The purpose of this article, the second work drawn from my extensive study of the early descriptions and images of 'Alī in handwritten manuscripts, is to analyze the religious discourse contained in the *Mi'rāçlama*, which can be classified as the epitome of Ismā'īl's mahdist ideology, and assess the iconology of the first examples of the lion depictions in representations of the *mi'rāj* prepared on the order of Shah Ismā'īl.⁷ In this context, in the first part of this work, I will be focusing on the sources of the *Mi'rāçlama*. Analyzing *mi'rāj* narrations with an eye to the relevance of 'Alī—the main character in his own tradition of epic poetry (*manāqib*)—appearing before the Prophet in the form of a lion, I will explore the connection between the figure of 'Alī, which began to take shape in the early period of Islamic history, and the manifold structure of the *mi'rāj* narratives produced by Anatolian dervishes. In the second part, I will offer an interpretation of the *Khaṭāyī Mi'rāçlama* in the context of Shah Ismā'īl's perception of the perfect guide (*mürşid-i kāmīl*) and the theory and religious discourse of “kuṭb” (axis or pole) systemized by Otman Baba (d. 1478), the influential representative of the Abdal tradition. In the third and final part, I will analyze the iconography of the lion in pictorial *mi'rāj* depictions associated with the *Mi'rāçlama*.

⁵ For the interventions of transmitters, see Süleyman Doğanay, *Hadis Rivayetinde Râvi Tasarrufları ve Doğurduğu Problemler* (Istanbul: ISAM, 2009). For storytellers, see Hasan Cirit, *Halkın İslam Anlayışının Kaynakları Vaaz ve Kısacılık* (Istanbul: Çamlıca Yayınları, 2002); Jonathan P. Berkey, *Popular Preaching and Religious Authority in the Medieval Islamic Near East* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001). For the localization and integration of *mi'rāj* reports during conquest periods, see Maria E. Subtelny, “The Islamic Ascension Narrative in the Context of Conversion in Medieval Iran: An Apocalypse at the Intersection of Orality and Textuality,” in *Orality and Textuality in the Iranian World: Patterns of Interaction Across the Centuries*, ed. Julia Rubanovich (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 93–129.

⁶ For the customization and textualization processes of the *mi'rāj* hadith, see Brooke Olson Vuckovic, *Heavenly Journeys, Earthly Concerns: The Legacy of the Miraj in the Formation of Islam* (New York and London: Routledge, 2005); Frederick S. Colby, *Narrating Muhammad's Night Journey: Tracing the Development of the Ibn 'Abbās Ascension Discourse* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008).

⁷ The first work drawn from my studies in this field, written in the early stages of that research, was published as Ertuğrul Ertekin, “Elyazması Tasvirlerinde Bir Halife ve Bir İmam Olarak Hz. Ali İmgeleri,” in *Tasvir: Teori ve Pratik Arasında İslam Görsel Kültürü*, ed. Nicole Kançal-Ferrari and Ayşe Taşkent (Istanbul: Klasik Yayınları, 2016), 319–52.

Ismāʿīl and the Sources of the *Khaṭāyī Miʿrāçlama*

Shah Ismāʿīl I, the founder of the Safavid Empire, was a poet who followed the tradition of Azari poems, which dated back to Nesīmī (d. 1417) and reached their peak with Fuzūlī (d. 1556).⁸ Writing under the pseudonym Khaṭāyī, Ismāʿīl was well versed in the tradition of classical poetry; more than twenty editions of his *Dīvān* of ʿarūz prosody poems have been published to date, and he has also been credited as the author of the *meşnevī* titled *Dehnāme*.⁹ Most researchers also credit him as the author of a set of poems written in syllabic verse (*vezinli*), though these were not included in his *Dīvān* and their true authorship is a matter of some debate. According to these researchers, the characteristic feature of Ismāʿīl's poems, whether in ʿarūz prosody or syllabic verse, is that they served as a propaganda tool for Ismāʿīl and the Qizilbash; some even argue that propaganda was their primary purpose and the principal factor behind Ismāʿīl's becoming a poet.¹⁰ Other scholars disagree. And the *Miʿrāçlama*—written in two versions, in both the ʿarūz and syllabic meters, and not included in Ismāʿīl's *Dīvān*—is at the center of the debate between these two groups of scholars.

Holding that poetry in syllabic verse did not reflect the aesthetic values of classic literature, scholars have until recently classified such poems as works of folk literature and thus as occupying a secondary tier in terms of their literary rank. Traditionally, scholars associated folk literature with “low” culture, as opposed to

“high,” and with the popular religiosity of the dervishes, as opposed to the ostensibly more erudite religiosity of the Qurʿan. Studies carried out in recent years, however, have challenged this simplistic scheme of classification. The first written examples of folk literature date to the end of the thirteenth century and the beginning of the fourteenth. If a divide between “low” and “high” cultures did indeed exist at the time, the appeal of these works appears to have cut across that divide, and they enjoyed wide popularity across the entire society.¹¹ Yūnus Emre (d. 1320) provides a case in point. He wrote poetry in both ʿarūz and syllabic verse. He was sometimes associated with low culture and sometimes with high—that is, sometimes with the popular religiosity of the dervishes and sometimes with Qurʿanic belief. Together with his followers, he was occasionally declared a disbeliever, and he stands as the most important representative of folk literature and the religious culture of the dervishes.¹² In time, the syllabic poetic style of Yūnus Emre and the poets that imitated him began to evolve into its own idiom, one that became synonymous with dervish religiosity, and, in doing so, drifted away from the language of official religious discourse and into a totally different world of meaning. This new, exclusive idiom allowed the poet to penetrate the world of his target audience, propagate his own beliefs and the doctrines of the religious group of which he was a member, and shape the beliefs and practices of his audience. This language, pertaining to the genre also known as *tekke* literature, occupied a transitional point in the

⁸ Regarding Azari literature, see Mehmed Fuad Köprülü, “Âzerî,” in *Edebiyat Araştırmaları* (Istanbul: Ötüken Yayınları, 1989), 2:13–81. For the Safavid period, see 43–55.

⁹ Muhsin Macit, *Hatâyi Divanı* (Istanbul: Türkiye Yazma Eserler Kurumu Başkanlığı, 2017), 45, 51. For a biography prepared on Shah Ismāʿīl as a poet and his literary environment, see Mohammad Karim Youssef-Jamali, “The Life and Personality of Shah Ismail” (PhD diss., University of Edinburgh, 1981), 18. For the Persian translation of this thesis, see Muḥammad Karīm Yūsuf-Jamālī, *Zandaqānī-i Shah Ismāʿīl-i Avval* (Kashan: Intishārāt-i Muḥtasham, 1376 [1997]).

¹⁰ See Fuad Köprülü, *Türk Edebiyatında İlk Mutasavvıflar* (Ankara: Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı Yayınları, 1966), 240; V. Minorsky, “The Poetry of Shah Ismail I,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 10 (1942): 1006a–1053a; W. M. Thackston, “The *Diwan* of Khatai: Pictures for the Poetry of Shah Ismail I,” *Asian Art* 1, no. 4 (1989): 36–63; Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, *Kaygusuz Abdâl Hatâyi Kul Himmet* (Istanbul: Kapı Yayınları, 2013), 28; Amelia Gallagher, “Shah Ismaʿil's Poetry in the *Silsilat al-Nasab-i Safawiyya*,” *Iranian Studies* 44, no. 6 (2011): 895–911. Muhsin Macit, who prepared a recent edition of the *Hatâyi Divanı*, considers it possible that Ismāʿīl recited poems in syllabic verse. See Macit, *Hatâyi Divanı*, 139. Ahmet Karamustafa argues that based on our information regarding his political career, the claim that Shah Ismāʿīl's poems are structurally propagandist is unfounded. See Ahmet T. Karamustafa, “In His Own Voice: What Hatayi Tells Us About Şah İsmail's Religious Views,” in *Shiʿi Esotericism: Its Roots and Developments*, ed. Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi, Maria De Cillis, Daniel De Smit, and Orkhan Mir-Kasimov (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2016), 604.

¹¹ See Ahmet T. Karamustafa, “Islamisation through the Lens of the *Saltuk-name*,” in *Islam and Christianity in Medieval Anatolia*, ed. A. C. S. Peacock, Bruno De Nicola, and Sara Nur Yıldız (Surrey: Ashgate, 2015), 349–50.

¹² For a biography of Yūnus Emre and a discussion of his Sufi thought and his followers, see Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, *Yunus Emre ve Tasavvuf* (Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1961). Regarding his being declared a disbeliever, see Osman Turan, “Selçuklular Türkiyesi Din Tarihine Ait Bir Kaynak: Fustât ul-Adâle fi Kavâid is-Saltana,” in *60. Doğum Yılı Münasebetiyle Fuat Köprülü Armağanı* (Ankara: Osman Yalçın Matbaası, 1953), 544–46. Also see Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, “Yunus Emre: 13–14. Yüzyıllar Arasında Bir Garip Derviş-i Kalender-reviş Yahut Önce Kendi Zaman ve Zeminin İnsanı,” in *Yunus Emre*, ed. Ahmet Yaşar Ocak (Ankara: T. C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları, 2012), 111–21.

second half of the fourteenth century and the beginning of the fifteenth; later in the fifteenth century, it would reach its zenith in the works of one of the leading representatives of the Rumelian Abdals and Bektaşî groups, Kaygusuz Abdal (d. 1444?), whose poetry is infused with and driven by its author's religious beliefs and elements of mahdism.¹³

From the thirteenth century onward, dervish poets who described their work as *ilâhî*, *hikmet*, *nuṭuk*, and *nefes* rather than poetry sought to emphasize the sacredness of the sources of inspiration. They left behind a legacy of texts known as *cönk*, which often took the form of private “scrapbooks” of poetry for use in religious rituals. These texts reveal hermeneutic circles centered on particular, knowledgeable individuals who were exalted among a certain group. The information these texts contain testifies to the observance of rituals accompanied by poems sung to music, including in such forms of worship such as *sema*, *devrân*, and *dhikr*. By means of these texts and rituals, the pioneer dervish poets ensured the continuation of the traditions they invented.¹⁴ The most familiar example of this is the form of poetry known as *hikmet*, written or recited by poets that are members of the Yesevî tariqa, or religious order. The first examples of *hikmets* are those personally recited by Ahmed Yesevî (d. ca. 1200), the founder of the order, and it was these that over time gave rise to the genre as a specific type of poetry. *Hikmets* were used by the order for both propaganda and ritual purposes; they were recited accompanied by music in the *zîkr-i erre meclis*, a ritual that distinguished the Yesevî order

from similar tariqas.¹⁵ As the dervish poets' work became more popular, so too did their beliefs, and as a result of the intertextual interaction that took place among the poem collections compiled in *cönks*, poems by poets of similar beliefs and poetic styles were combined. The poems by the Ḥurûfî poet 'Imâd al-Dîn Nesîmî (d. 1417) and Shah Ismâ'îl are examples of these blended poems.¹⁶

Like the pioneer dervish poets, Shah Ismâ'îl, the perfect guide (*mürşid-i kâmil*) of the Qizilbash, also took advantage of popular forms of poetry to gather his followers, the nomadic Turkomans, around a specific belief and ritual, and in time his poems introduced a poetic tradition known as Khaṭâyî. The travelogue of the Venetian Michele Membré (d. 1594), who visited Ṭahmâsb I, contains significant clues regarding the origin, development, and recital practices of the Khaṭâyî poems. While describing a Qizilbash ceremony he attended, Membré relates that Khaṭâyî poems were recited by Ismâ'îl and Ṭahmâsb in the presence of the chief *halife* in a *dhikr* assembly.¹⁷ Membré derived the term “Khaṭâyî” from the pseudonym used by Ismâ'îl, but he also used it while referring to the work of Ṭahmâsb, who used the pseudonym 'Âdil (the righteous) in his poems, thus indicating that in a short time the term Khaṭâyî had come to be synonymous with a particular style of poem, one that, at least in the beginning, was unique to the perfect guides. The honor and respect the Qizilbash-Alevîs displayed at the mention of the name Khaṭâyî appears to support this.¹⁸ Furthermore, Membré's account makes clear that these poems were recited at

13 For a biography of Kaygusuz Abdal that treats his Sufi thought, political-religious discourse, and works, see Zeynep Oktay, *Mesnevî-i Baba Kaygusuz* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Department of Near Eastern Languages and Literatures, 2013), 1–10; Zeynep Oktay, “Layers of Mystical Meaning and Social Context in the Works of Kaygusuz Abdâl,” in *Literature and Intellectual Life in Fourteenth and Fifteenth Century Anatolia*, ed. A. C. S. Peacock and Sara Nur Yıldız (Würzburg: Ergon Verlag, 2016), 73–99; Ahmet T. Karamustafa, “Kaygusuz Abdâl: A Medieval Turkish Saint and the Formation of Vernacular Islam in Anatolia,” in *Unity in Diversity: Mysticism, Messianism and Construction of Religious Authority in Islam*, ed. Orkhan Mir-Kasimov (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 329–42. The followers of the Ḥacı Bektaş cult were among the first converts to the Abdal group, and it is believed that the first Bektaşîs emerged from this group. See Ayfer Karakaya-Stump, “Subjects of the Sultan, Disciples of the Shah: Formation and Transformation of the Qizilbash/Alevî Communities in Ottoman Anatolia” (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2008), 84–129.

14 For examples of the verbal culture, texts, and practices of these dervish circles, see Arzu Öztürkmen, “Orality and Performance in Late Medieval Turkish Texts: Epic Tales, Hagiographies and Chronicles,” *Text and Performance Quarterly* 29, no. 4 (2009): 327–45. For *cönks*, see Orhan Şaik Gökyay, “Cönkler Üzerine,” in *Folklor ve Etnografya Araştırmaları* (Istanbul: Anadolu Sanat Yayınları, 1984), 107–73. Regarding the continuation of traditions via texts and rituals, see Jan Assmann, *Kültürel Bellek Eski Yüksek Kültürlerde Yazı, Hatırlama ve Politik Kimlik*, trans. Ayşe Tekin (Istanbul: Ayrıntı Yayınları, 2001), 33–159.

15 Regarding the Yesevî *hikmet* tradition, see Köprülü, *Türk Edebiyatında İlk Mutasavvıflar*, 101–7, 141. For more extensive information on the Yesevî order, see Necdet Tosun, “Yeseviyye,” in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (Istanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, 2013), 43:487–90.

16 For more on this topic, see Ferenc Csirkés, “Messianic Oeuvres in Interaction: Misattributed Poems by Shah Esmâ'îl and Nesimi,” *Journal of Persianate Studies* 8, no. 2 (2015): 155–94.

17 Michele Membré, *Mission to the Lord Sophy of Persia (1539–1542)*, trans. A. H. Morton (London: University of London, 1993), 42.

18 See Gölpınarlı, *Kaygusuz Abdâl Hatâyî Kul Himmet*, 28.

dhikr gatherings under the guidance of the chief *halife*. Studies on the dhikr assemblies briefly mentioned by Membré reveal that these were the ceremony of *tarik çalma*, which is a part of the Qizilbash *cem* ritual (*âyîn-i cem*) associated with the *mi'raj*.¹⁹

Membré's account is thus significant for disclosing the places where the Khaṭāyī poems were recited and for revealing that these poems were read during religious rituals, therefore showing them to have been a form of poetry which effectively served as the Qizilbash liturgy, structuring, conveying, and popularizing the Qizilbash belief.

That Khaṭāyī was a type of religious poem unique to Qizilbash belief helps explain why Ismā'īl's syllabic poems—namely, the Khaṭāyī poems mentioned by A. Gölpınarlı—may not have been included by those who compiled his *Dīvān*.²⁰ Shah Ismā'īl classified the Qizilbash doctrine as a secret, and in his *Naṣīhatnāme*, which he wrote as a handbook of guidance for his followers, he may well have intended for his Khaṭāyī poems exclusively to be memorized by or recorded in texts for his intended audience, namely, his followers.²¹ For in contrast to his other poems, their content was distinctive: they were a form of propaganda that directly conveyed the Qizilbash beliefs and practices and were recited during rituals. In fact, most of the written examples of the Khaṭāyī poems included in the *buyruḡ* (prescriptive) texts and the folklore poems

prepared by *zākirs* (chanters of liturgy) also suggest this. The first known example, the *buyruḡ* writings dated to the Ṭahmāsb period, were classified as divinely sourced sacred texts and kept secret. These writings, which were kept only in the *hilāfetnāme* of the Safavid shah (the perfect guide of the Qizilbash) and in the possession of the families of the *dedes* (religious leaders), were brought out on special occasions and recited in the *dedes'* religious assembly circles (*ṣoḥbet halkaları*), which formed a kind of interpretative community.²² The *buyruḡ* writings and oral transmission inculcated in these interpretative communities a particular religious lifestyle that took years to interiorize.²³ The *cönks*, as ritual texts, often played an important role in this process.²⁴ But from the sixteenth century on, Ismā'īl's pseudonym was taken up by other Qizilbash poets known as the Anatolian Khaṭāyī, who continued to produce “Khaṭāyī” poetry under Ismā'īl's pseudonym rather than their own names, thereby giving birth to the Khaṭāyī tradition. After the Qizilbash-Alevis converted to the Imami Shi'ism of the Safavid Empire, the culture of the shah as perfect guide came to be replaced by the culture of Hacı Bektaş. During this transition, Khaṭāyī poetry was blended for the first time with another genre of poems, known as *nefes*. The first examples of *nefes* poems date to the fourteenth century; and over time, they developed into a form of poetry unique to the Alevis and Bektaşīs.²⁵

¹⁹ For more information on the assemblies mentioned by Membré, see Alexander H. Morton, “The Chub-i Tariq and Qizilbash Ritual in Safavid Persia,” in *Etudes Safavides*, ed. Jean Calmard (Paris and Tehran: Institut Français de Recherche en Iran, 1993), 225–45.

²⁰ See Gölpınarlı, *Kaygusuz Abdâl Hatâyî Kul Himmet*, 28. Although Tourkhan Gandjei cites the existence of a syllabic poem in the Paris copy of *Hatâyî Divanı* (dated 1541) as evidence against Gölpınarlı's argument, the lone example seems to me an exception that does not undermine the general rule. See T. Gandjei, “Pseudo-Khata'i,” in *Iran and Islam: In Memory of the Late Vladimir Minorsky*, ed. C. E. Bosworth (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1971), 265.

²¹ See A. A. Memmedov, *Şah İsmail Hatâyî Eserleri* (Baku: Azərbaycan Elmlər Akademiyası Neşriyatı, 1966), 1:365; İbrahim Arslanoğlu, *Şah İsmail Hatâyî ve Anadolu Hatâyîleri* (Istanbul: Der Yayınları, 1992), 242; Babek Cavanşir and Ekber N. Necef, *Şah İsmail Hata'i Külliyyatı* (Istanbul: Kaknüs Yayınları, 2006), 650; Nejat Birdoğan, *Şah İsmail Hatai Yaşamı ve Yapıtları* (Istanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 2001), 367.

²² Regarding the *buyruḡs*, see Ayfer Karakaya-Stump, “Alevî Dede Ailelerine Ait Buyruk Mecmuaları,” in *Mecmua: Osmanlı Edebiyatının Kırkambarı*, ed. Hatice Aynur, Müjgân Çakır, Hanife Koncu, Selim S. Kuru, and Ali Emre Özyıldırım, *Eski Türk Edebiyatı Çalışmaları*, vol. 7 (Istanbul: Turkuaz Yayınları, 2012), 361–79. For more detailed information on the same subject, see Doğan Kaplan, *Yazılı Kaynaklarına Göre Alevîlik* (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları), 2010. For the religious assembly circles, see Doğan Kaplan, *Şeyh Safî Buyruḡu Kitab-ı Mekânkib-i Şerif Kutbu'l-Ârifin Hazreti Şeyh Seyyid Safî* (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, 2015), 109. For the concept of “interpretative community,” see Tijana Krstić, *Contested Conversions to Islam: Narratives of Religious Change in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011), esp. chapter 2.

²³ See Tord Olsson, “Epilogue: The Scripturalization of Ali-Oriented Religions,” in *Alevi Identity Cultural, Religious and Social Perspectives*, ed. Tord Olsson, Elisabeth Özdalga, and Catharina Raudvere (Istanbul: Swedish Research Institute, 1999), 199–208.

²⁴ See Mehmet Ersal, “Cönkten Hizmet Defterine, İcradan Yazıya: Alevî Yazma Geleneği,” *Milli Folklor* 111 (2016): 87–99. For the Khaṭāyī pseudonym poems in the *cönks* and *mecmû'as*, see M. Fatih Köksal, “Hatâyî'nin Yayınlanmış Divanlarında Bulunmayan Şiirleri,” *Alevîlik Araştırmaları Dergisi* 3 (2012): 39–83.

²⁵ For the anonymization of the Khaṭāyī pseudonym, see Gölpınarlı, *Kaygusuz Abdâl Hatâyî Kul Himmet*, 28–29. For Anatolian Khaṭāyīs, see Arslanoğlu, *Şah İsmail Hatâyî*. For information on the *nefes*, see Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, *Alevî-Bektaşî Nefesleri* (Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1963). Regarding the rise of the Hacı Bektaş cult among the Qizilbash, see İbrahim Bahadır, “Hacı

The reason the *Mi'rāçlama* was not included in Ismā'il's *Dīvān* is likely that it was classified as a Khaṭāyī poem in the Qizilbash-Alevi tradition. Moreover, the *Mi'rāçlama* was not just any Khaṭāyī, but bore a special status within this tradition. Narrations of the *mi'rāj* were reproduced, transformed into sacred narrative epics, and ritualized. They were recited and enacted in religious rituals held at certain times of the year and in specific places open only to those who had been “purified”—that is, in the words of the Qizilbash, the companions who had adopted their beliefs and improved themselves on this spiritual path. These rituals, known as *cem* and performed in the *cemevi* (Alevi place of worship), were in fact enactments of the event related in the *Mi'rāçlama* accompanied by music.²⁶ In this respect, the narration of the *Mi'rāçlama* turned the text into part of a normative canon, becoming the foundational dogma of a religious tradition.²⁷ In view of this, the *Mi'rāçlama* was distinct from other Khaṭāyīs. It was unique: both an epistle that summarized the Qizilbash doctrines and a ritual guide that codified and communicated the practices of the Qizilbash belief. This is likely why the *Mi'rāçlama* was only memorized and conveyed orally and not recorded in *buyruq* and *cönk* texts, which would have been accessible to other groups.

In addition, during the Safavid state's transition from the beliefs of the Qizilbash to the *fiqh* (Islamic law) focus of Imami Shi'ism, written copies of the *Khaṭāyī Dīvān* were

purified of the remnants of Qizilbash belief dating from the period of Ṭahmāsb.²⁸ Some of these copies contained epic verse drawn from the *Mi'rāçlama*, or even summaries or alternative versions of the *Mi'rāçlama* itself.²⁹ One of the main motifs of Ismā'il's *Mi'rāçlama* is 'Alī's appearance as a lion during the *mi'rāj*; but as Ismā'il's poems in his *Dīvān* are undated, his only dated work on the epic of 'Alī is contained in his *meşnevī*, the *Dehnāme*.³⁰

In Islamic literature generally and in the literature of 'Alīd belief groups in particular, sacred poetry associated with a specific religious order generally contains references to longer prose narratives that render these types of poems intelligible to their audiences.³¹ That said, my research into the Arabic, Persian, and Turkish religious literature of the pre-Safavid period has failed to turn up anything that might have served as the basis for the *Mi'rāçlama*.³² Nor have I come across any such narrative among the many copies of the Twelver Imam epics the Safavid shahs are known to have ordered as part of their effort to promote their religious and political status.³³ The only version of 'Alī's epic I have been able to identify from within Iran during the Safavid period is a short prose narrative in the Turkish *buyruq* texts produced in this period and preserved by the *dedes*.³⁴ As for the literature produced outside Iran during the Safavid period, I have discovered two prose narratives, one Turkish and the other Persian, that do not fully correspond with the *Mi'rāçlama*

Bektaş Veli Tekkesi'nin Dinî Bir Merkez Olarak Yükselme Süreci,” in *Hacı Bektaş Veli: Güneşte Zerresinden Deryada Katresinden*, ed. Pınar Ecevitoglu, Ali Murat İrat, and Ayhan Yalçınkaya (Ankara: DİPnot Yayınları, 2010), 223–47.

²⁶ See Bedri Noyan Dedebaba, *Bütün Yönleriyle Bektaşilik ve Alevilik* (Istanbul: Ardıç Yayınları, 2010), 8:26–27.

²⁷ Regarding the canonization of texts, see Assmann, *Kültürel Bellek*, 96–110.

²⁸ See Gölpınarlı, *Kaygusuz Abdâl Hatâyî Kul Himmet*, 28; Gandjei, “Pseudo-Khata'i,” 264. Regarding the Safavid dynasty's transition from Qizilbash belief to Imami Shi'ism, see Kathryn Babayan, “The Safavid Synthesis: From Qizilbash Islam to Imami Shi'ism,” *Iranian Studies* 27 (1994): 135–61.

²⁹ See Sadeddin Nüzhet Ergun, *Hatâyî Divanı: Şah İsmail-i Safevi Hayatı ve Nefesleri* (Istanbul: Maarif Kitaphanesi, 1956), 166–67; Cavanşir and Necef, *Hata'i Külliyyati*, 419–21; Memmedov, *Şah İsmail Hatâyî*, 1:569–72.

³⁰ See Memmedov, *Şah İsmail Hatâyî*, 2:27; Arslanoğlu, *Şah İsmail Hatâyî*, 157, 164; Cavanşir and Necef, *Hata'i Külliyyati*, 516.

³¹ See Philip G. Kreyenbroek, “Orality and Religion in Kurdistan: The Yezidi and Ahl-e Haqq Tradition,” in *Oral Literature of Iranian Languages: Kurdish, Pashto, Balochi, Ossetic, Persian and Tajik*, ed. Philip G. Kreyenbroek and Ulrich Marzolph, *A History of Persian Literature*, vol. 18 (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2010), 70–88.

³² During my research, I discovered that the *Khaṭāyī Mi'rāçlama* is unknown in Iran today. In my discussions and correspondence with many Iranian scholars from various disciplines, including Prof. Muhammad Reza Shafi-i Kadkani, an expert on Persian literature, and Prof. Rasul Jafarian, an expert on Safavid history, I was surprised to hear that they had never heard of the *Mi'rāçlama* and the epic in which 'Alī appears in the form of a lion. I would like to take this opportunity to thank these two valuable scholars, as well as my Iranian friends Ahmad Khamahyar, Hamad Ataei-i Nazari, Bahruz Imani, Muhammad Husayn Hakim, Mahmud Omidsalar, and Ahmad Rahimirisa, for providing me sources for my research.

³³ Regarding religious literature produced during the Safavid period, see Rasūl Jafarian, “Tarjuma-i Mutūn-i Dīnī ba-Pārisī dar Davra-i Şafavī,” in *Siyasāt va Farhang-i Rūzigār-i Şafavī* (Tehran: Nashr-i 'Ilm, 1388 [2009]), 2:1347–88; Ghulām Muhsin Ḥusaynzāde Shanachie, “Tarjuma-i Kutub-i Sīra va Manāqib-i Imāmān dar 'Aşr-i Şafavī,” *Pajūheshha-yi Tārikhi* 2 (1388 [2009]): 35–48.

³⁴ In the *buyruq* texts, there are small variations in the prosaic narrative of the epic. See Fuat Bozkurt, ed., *Buyruk: İmam-ı Cafer Sadık Buyruğu* (Istanbul: Kapı Yayınları, 2013), 15–21; Sefer Aytekin, ed., *Buyruk* (Ankara: Emek, 1958), 7–9, 155–59; Esat Korkmaz, ed., *İmam Cafer Buyruğu* (Istanbul: Ant Yayınları, 1997), 102–3.

narrative. The Turkish text was included in the *Menâkıb-i Çehâryâr-i Güzîn* of the Halvetî shaykh Şemseddîn Sivâsî (d. 1639), completed in 1581.³⁵ The Persian text, which exists in both a short and a long version, was included in the book *Manâqib-i Murtaẓavî* by Muḥammad Şâlih Kashfî (d. 1650), a member of the Qadiriyya tariqa. This prose text corresponds exactly with Yemîni's prose text discussed below.³⁶ Given that there are three prose versions of this epic, how is one to ascertain which served as the basis for the *Mî'râçlama*?

The roots of the Safavid dynasty date back to the Safaviyya order established by Şafî al-Dîn Ishâq (d. 1334) in Ardabil in 1301.³⁷ Almost a century after the death of its founder, with the intervention of the Qara Qoyunlu ruler Jihan Shah (1438–67), a division occurred within the order and Junayd (d. 1460), the famous shaykh of the order, was

exiled from Ardabil in 1448, whereupon he began a long journey through Anatolia.³⁸ Anatolia was geographically an extension of Iran and Central Asia, and it shared their overriding religious and intellectual culture, playing host to various group who believed in mahdism and gathered around a charismatic leader.³⁹ This was true long before Junayd's arrival, beginning with the fall of the Abbasid Caliphate (750–1258) and continuing until the sixteenth century. The charismatic and mahdist groups that operated in Mongol-Turkoman Iran in the medieval period, which has been referred to as the "mahdist era" by some researchers, were inheritors of the belief system of the Kūfan Ghulât tradition, a tradition which had been active in the Umayyad period (661–750) and was particularly influential on Abbasid political ideology in the formative years of the dynasty.⁴⁰

In the same period as Junayd, another group

³⁵ Şemseddün Ahmed b. Muhammed es-Sivasî, *Menâkıb-ı Çehâryâr-i Güzîn* (Istanbul: Şirket-i Sahafiye-i Osmaniyye, AH 1325), 256; Şemsüddin Ahmed Sivasî, *Hülefâ-i Râşidîn Dört Büyük Halife*, ed. Mehmed Emre (Istanbul: Bedir Yayınevi, 2000), 266. This epic is not included in the edition of this work published by Sufi Kitap. See Şemseddin Sivasî, *Dört Halifenin Menkıbeleri*, 2nd edition (Istanbul: Sufi Kitap, 2016). Sivâsî's *Menâkıb* was published under the name Seyyid Eyyub, the author who extended the work. See Seyyid Eyyub bin Sıddık, *Menâkıb-ı Çihâr Yâr-i Güzîn: Dört Halifenin Üstünlükleri*, 36th impression (Istanbul: Hakikat Kitabevi Yayınları, 2012), 302–3. Regarding Seyyid Eyyub's extending Sivâsî's *Menâkıb*, see Âdem Ceyhan and Fatih Koyuncu, "Dört Halifeye Dair Menkıbeler ve Râfiziye Nasihatler," *Cumhuriyet Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 41, no. 1 (2017): 8.

³⁶ See Muḥammad Şâlih Kashfî, *Manâqib-i Murtaẓavî*, ed. Kurush Mañşürî (Tehran: Ruzna, 1380 [2001]), 23, 166. For his biography, see Rasûlî, "Tirmidhî, Sayyid Muḥammad Şâlih," in *Dānishnâme-i Âdâb-i Fârisî: Âdâb-i Fârisî dar Asyâ-i Miyâna*, ed. Ḥasan Anusha (Tehran: Intishârât-i Vazârât-i Farhang va Irshâd-i Islâmî, 1380 [2001]), 1:300. The sources of the short version related by Kashfî are the two books titled *Dustûr al-ḥaqâiq* and *Ganj al-asrâr*. The limited information available regarding *Dustûr al-ḥaqâiq* includes information about the author and content of the book. See Agha Buzurg Tahrâni, *al-Dâria ilâ tasâniif al-Shi'a* (Qum: Ismâiliyân, 1970), 20:285. According to information provided by Kashfî, *Ganj al-asrâr* belongs to Mu'în al-Dîn (d. 1236), a sage of the Chishti order. Although there are no books personally written by Mu'în al-Dîn, many books were attributed to him by dervishes, and the most popular of these books, *Ganj al-asrâr*, is believed to be the words (*melfûzât*) of his shaykh, 'Uthman al-Hârûnî (d. 1220), which he adapted into a book. For information on the book, see 'Alî Munzavî, *Fihristvârâ-i Kitâbha-i Fârisî* (Tehran: Markaz-i Dâ'ira al-ma'ârif-i Buzurg-i Islâmî, 1382 [2003]), 7:788. However, research shows that the *Ganj al-asrâr*, which emerged after the mid-fourteenth century under the guidance of Niẓâm al-Dîn Awliyâ (d. 1325) and his follower Amir Ḥasan (d. 1336) and is one of the earliest written records of the Chishti order's oral teachings (*melfûzât*), did not belong to Mu'în al-Dîn. Regarding these *melfûzât*, see Carl W. Ernst, "The Textual Formation of Oral Teachings in Early Chishti Sufism," in *Texts in Context Traditional Hermeneutics in South Asia*, ed. Jeffrey R. Timm (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 271–75. For assessments on the development of *melfûzât* books and the reason for their production, see Mohammad Habib, "Chishti Mystics Records of the Sultanate Period," *Medieval India Quarterly* 1 (1950): 1–42, in particular 39–42. On the other hand, although the fifth section of *Ganj al-asrâr*, also known as *Anis al-Arvâḥ*, has the title "Mî'râj va Rumûzât," it does not contain the epic cited by Kashfî. See Mu'în al-Dîn Chishtî, *Anis al-Arvâḥ* (Tehran: Markaz-i Dâ'ira al-ma'ârif-i Buzurg-i Islâmî Manuscripts Library), nos. 1093 and 1095. Although Kashfî wrote that the second version he narrated was from Waramini's (alive in 1343) *Aḥsan al-kibâr*, this epic is not included in *Aḥsan al-kibâr*. I would like to thank Dr. Ghufrani, who prepared a critical edition of the work, for allowing me to view the work before its publication. Kashfî also wrote that the epic was included in 'Alâ al-Dawla al-Simmânî's (d. 1336) *Chihil Majlis*. However, that work contains only the first episode of this version of the epic, together with the epic explaining the extraordinary event Salmân-i Fârisî experienced in the Arzan desert (Dasht-i Arzan). See 'Alâ al-Dawla al-Simmânî, *Chihil Majlis, taḥrîr-i Amir Iḳbal Sistânî*, ed. Abd Al-Rafî Ḥaqîqat (Tehran: Asatir, 1379 [2000]), 120–22. *Manâqib-i Murtaẓavî* was translated into Turkish by the Bektaşî poet Ali Nihani Yozgadi. See İsmail Yıldırım, "Bektaşî Şairi Ali Nihânî Yozgadî ve Menâkıb-ı Murtaẓaviyye'si," *Turkish Studies* 8, no. 4 (2013): 453–61.

³⁷ See Michel M. Mazzaoui, *The Origins of the Safawids* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1972), 41–71.

³⁸ For Shaykh Junayd's biography, see Walther Hinz, *Uzun Hasan ve Şeyh Cüneyd*, trans. Tevfik Biyıklıoğlu (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1992).

³⁹ Mazzaoui has argued for treating the religious and intellectual culture of the region of Iran and Central Asia in the 1258–1500 period as comprising a single cult. See Michel M. Mazzaoui, "Islamic Culture and Literature in Iran and Central Asia in the Early Modern Period," in *Turko-Persia in Historical Perspective*, ed. Robert L. Canfield (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 78–82.

⁴⁰ For the Kūfan Ghulât tradition and the connection between the Mongol-Turkoman and the mahdist movements in Iran, see William F. Tucker, "The Kufan Ghulat and Millenarian (Mahdist) Movements in Mongol-Türkmen Iran," in *Unity and Diversity: Mysticism, Messianism and the Construction of Religious Authority in Islam*, ed. Orkhan Mir-Kasimov (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2004), 175–95; Robert L. Canfield, "Theological 'Extremism' and Social Movements in Turko-Persia," in *Turko-Persia in Historical Perspective*, ed. Robert L. Canfield (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 132–60. On the role of the Kūfan Ghulât in the institutionalization of Abbasid ideology, see Hayrettin Yücesoy, *Messianic Beliefs and Imperial Politics in Medieval Islam: The Abbasid Caliphate in the Early Ninth Century* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press,

came to Anatolia. Known as Ismāʿilī summoners (*dāʿī*), they sought to spread their esoteric ʿAlīd doctrines and operated all over the Islamic world.⁴¹ One of their characteristic features was that they interiorized the notion (*taṣavvur*) of the Manifest (*mazhar*) ʿAlī, formulized in the early period by belief groups who were members of the Kūfan Ghulāt. This concept of the Manifest ʿAlī began to take shape while ʿAlī was still alive and immediately after his death, and it spread rapidly from there. According to this, ʿAlī was a heavenly, divine being—God made manifest—who could pass this characteristic to his followers and the imams that followed him. Throughout the first three centuries of Islam, a majority of the Shiʿite sect believed that the imams and their followers were divinely honored; this was virtually a tenet of the faith.⁴² The concept of the Manifest ʿAlī was reinforced in the multi-layered theological texts of the Kūfan Ghulāt, and even more intensively in *manāqibs*.⁴³

In Anatolia, this notion of the Manifest ʿAlī was embraced by shaykhs connected to the Wafāʾī order founded by Abū al-Wafāʾ al-Baghdādī (d. 1107). This order was influential in bringing together communities from outside the Sunni fold and in shaping the characteristic features of dervish piety just as it began to take hold and develop in Anatolia.⁴⁴ Baba Ilyas (d. 1240), the founder of the Babāʾī movement, was

a particularly devout adherent, but the notion was also taken up by the Qalandariyya, Abdal, Bayrāmī-Melāmī, and Bektaşī communities, as well as, to some extent, the Halvetīs.⁴⁵ As a result, from the thirteenth century onward, some dervish groups developed beliefs and practices focusing on ʿAlī. Some of these groups classified their founders or leading guides as the manifestations of ʿAlī's secret—that is, as the bodies in which ʿAlī's secret was manifested.⁴⁶ In practice, this doctrine interacted with the Shiʿite conception of guardianship/sainthood (*wilāya*) common among the Sufi circles encouraged by the *awliyā*/sainthood cult, which appeared in the ninth and tenth centuries and became more widespread in the eleventh century. And through this interaction, this doctrine produced militant mahdist guides that laid claim to rulership and obedient dervishes that classified loyalty to their shaykhs and saints (*kuṭb*) as the greatest form of worship.⁴⁷ The Babāʾī movement, which launched an insurgency against the Anatolian Seljuk sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn Kaykhusrav (1237–46) in 1240, is the earliest example of these mahdist movements.⁴⁸

After this, Turkoman dervishes followed the successive mahdist guides that began to emerge. The most prominent of these guides was Otman Baba (d. 1478), who claimed to be ʿAlī, emphasized the concept of *kuṭb* rather than that

2009), esp. chapters 1 and 2.

41 Zahide Ay, *Ortaçağ İrani'nda ve Anadolu'sunda Şiilik İzlerinin Arka Planı: Alamut Sonrası Nizari İsmaililiği (13–15. Yüzyıllar)* (Istanbul: Önsöz Yayınları, 2012).

42 For more information, see Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi, "Knowledge Is Power," in *The Spirituality of Shi'i Islam: Beliefs and Practices* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2011), 193–229; Heinz Halm, *Gnosiyon dar Islam Shi'ayan-i Ghali wa Aleviyan*, Persian trans. Ihsan Musavi Khalkhali (Tehran: Hikmet, 1394 [2015]), 9, originally published as Heinz Halm, *Die islamische Gnosis die extreme Schia und die Alawiten* (Zurich: Artemis Verlag, 1982); William F. Tucker, *Mahdis and Millenarians Shiite Extremists in Early Muslim Iraq* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

43 Regarding the Ghulāt's theological texts, see Mushegh Asatryan, "Shiite Underground Literature between Iraq and Syria: The Book of Shadows and the History of Early Ghulat," in *Texts in Transit in the Eastern Mediterranean*, ed. Y. Tzvi Langermann and Robert G. Morrison (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2016), 128–60.

44 For the religious beliefs of the Anatolian dervishes and their characteristic features, see Ahmet T. Karamustafa, "Origins of Anatolian Sufism," in *Sufism and Sufis in Ottoman Society: Sources-Doctrine-Rituals-Turuq-Architecture-Literature and Fine Arts-Iconography-Modernism*, ed. Ahmet Yaşar Ocak (Ankara: Turkish Historical Society, 2005), 67–95; Ahmet T. Karamustafa, "Anadolu'nun İslamlaşması Bağlamında Aleviliğin Oluşumu," in *Kızılbaşlık Alevilik Bektaşılık: Tarih-Kimlik-İnanç-Ritüel*, ed. Yalçın Çakmak and İmran Gürtaş (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları), 43–54.

45 See Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, "Babailer İsyanından Kızılbaşlığa: Anadolu'da İslâm Heterodoksisinin Doğuş ve Gelişim Tarihine Kısa Bir Bakış," *Belleten* 239 (2000): 129–59. Regarding the Wafāʾī order, see Haşim Şahin, "Selçuklu ve Erken Osmanlı Döneminde Vefâî Tarikatı," *Türk Kültürü ve Hacı Bektaş Veli Araştırma Dergisi* 70 (2014): 39–54. Regarding Babāʾīs, see Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, *Babailer İsyanı: Aleviliğin Tarihsel Altyapısı* (Istanbul: Dergâh Yayınları, 2016).

46 For the beliefs of the dervish groups active in Anatolia during this period, see Turan, "Selçuklular Türkiyesi Din Tarihine Ait Bir Kaynak," 531–64. Also see Resul Ay, "Erken Dönem Anadolu Sufiliği ve Halk İslam'ında Hulûlcü Yaklaşımlar ve Hulûl Anlayışının Farklı Tezahürleri," *Bilgi* 72 (2015): 1–24.

47 For the *awliyā* cult, see Ahmet T. Karamustafa, *Sufism: The Formative Period* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), chapters 4 and 5. It is suggested that the perception of shaykhs and *kuṭbs* in Sufi and dervish belief is connected with the Shiʿite perception of imams. Regarding this, see Arthur Buehler, "İslam'ın İlk Dönemlerinde Örtüşen Akımlar: Tasavvuf Şeyhi ve Şii İmam," trans. Mehmet Atalay, *e-makâlât* 7, no. 1 (2014): 209–39; Zachary Markwith, "The Imam and the Qutb: The Axis Mundi in Shi'ism and Sufism," *Sophia Perennis* 2 (2009): 25–65.

48 For more detailed information, see Ocak, *Babailer*. For a general assessment on the mahdist *kuṭbs* and shaykhs in the Ottoman period, see Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, "Sufism, Sufis, and Tariqahs, Private Dervish Lodges," in *Ottoman Civilization*, ed. Halil İnalçık and Günsel Renda, vol. 1 (Istanbul: T. C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 2003), 266–87.

of shaykh or guide, and encoded the mystery of ‘Alī in the *kuṭbiyye* theoretic form.⁴⁹ The *kuṭbs* (spiritual poles, perfect humans/guides) had great influence and competed with one another for physical power and spiritual authority. The Ottoman sultans were aware of this influence, and from the period of Murād I (1362–89) they began to promote beliefs centering on *kuṭbs* and sainthood. Particularly Bāyazīd II (1481–1512), who was in close contact with almost all of the shaykhs of his day, was depicted as a saint (*velī*) in the Ottoman chronicles and also in the *Kuṭbnāme* written by Firdevsī-i Rūmī after the Midilli campaign of 1501, a book of campaigns he named for the sultan.⁵⁰

This was the climate that Junayd encountered upon his arrival in Anatolia, and thus it was that he, a Safavid shaykh, turned into a mahdist Sufi leader.⁵¹ In fact, there is a famous report on this matter concerning a dispute between Junayd and the Zeynī shaykh ‘Abdullaṭīf Ḳudsī, the guide of ‘Āshīkpaşazāde (d. after 1484). This report makes clear that when Junayd came to Konya claiming sayyid-hood and implying that the divine essence of ‘Alī had been re-incarnated within him, he was seeking not only spiritual authority but also political power.⁵² Junayd’s letter dated 16 August 1457 indicates that his claim rested upon a clear conceptual framework.⁵³ In a short time, Junayd,

who was transformed into a perfect guide, turned to the ideal of *gazā* (holy war), which was used as a source of legitimacy by the sultans and dervishes, and to the *halife* network, which he institutionalized, to gather followers from among the Turkoman population.⁵⁴ His followers, who became militarized and took the name Qizilbash during the rule of his son Ḥaydar, also became the Safavid state’s main source of power in the period of Shah Ismā‘īl.⁵⁵

The acquaintance of the Turks with the ‘Alī *manāqibs* and their references to the secret of ‘Alī dates back much further. ‘Abd al-Jalīl Qazwīnī, who gave information regarding the social and cultural life of the twelfth century in his book known as *al-Naqd*, recorded that narrators of ‘Alī’s *manāqib* (*manāqibkhān*) walked around the streets explaining the virtues and the campaigns of ‘Alī and that these narrations were adopted and enjoyed by the Turkish people most of all.⁵⁶ ‘Alī, who had been heroized since the early period of Islam for the courage he displayed on campaigns, was frequently associated with a lion, based on the nickname Ḥaydar given to him by his mother. The name “Victorious Lion of God” (Asad Allah al-Ghālib), attributed to ‘Alī since the eleventh century, supported his image as a lion.⁵⁷ This image of ‘Alī as God’s victorious lion crystallized in books on campaigns that began to

49 For Otman Baba’s *kuṭb* theory, see *Otman Baba Velayetnamesi*, ed. Filiz Kılıç, Mustafa Arslan, and Tuncay Bülbül (Ankara: Grafiker, 2007), 1–14; Derviş Muhammed Yemini, *Faziletname*, ed. Yusuf Tepeli (Ankara: Türk Dil Kurumu Yayınları, 2002), 1:234–41.

50 See Halil İnalçık, “Kalenderiler ve Devlet: Otman Baba ve Fatih Sultan Mehmed,” in *Osmanlı Tarihinde İslamiyet ve Devlet* (Istanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2018), 106.

51 Some Safavid historians are of the opinion that Junayd did not have a doctrine before he came to Anatolia but instead developed one during his travels there. For an analysis of these views, see Rıza Yıldırım, *Aleviliğin Doğuşu: Kızılbaş Sufiliğinin Toplumsal ve Siyasal Temelleri 1300–1501* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2017), 160–85. For the Safavids’ relationship with the Turkomans, see Faruk Sümer, *Safevî Devleti’nin Kuruluşu ve Gelişmesinde Anadolu Türklerinin Rolü* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1992).

52 Āshīkpaşazāde, *Tevārīh-i Āl-i Osman’dan Āshīkpaşazāde Tarihi* (Istanbul: Matbaa-i Āmire, AH 1332), 264–66. Exactly when the Safavids began to lay claim to sayyidism is the subject of some dispute, but evidence of it goes back at least to a *şecerenāme* (book on genealogy) dated to the 1460s, which indicates that the claim may have been made during the period of Junayd. See Kazuo Morimoto, “The Earliest ‘Alī Genealogy for the Safavids: New Evidence for the Pre-Dynastic Claim to Sayyid Status,” *Iranian Studies* 43, no. 4 (2010): 447–69.

53 For Junayd’s letter, see Ahmad Khāmāhyār, “Maktūb-i Shaykh Junayd-i Şafavī ba Ibn Shammā‘-i Ḥalabī,” *Payām-i Bahāristān* 20 (1392 [2013]): 130–39.

54 For the ideal of *gazā* among the Safavids, see Michel M. Mazzaoui, “The Ghazi Background of the Safavid State,” *Iqbal Review* 12, no. 3 (1971): 79–90; Tilmann Trausch, “Ghaza and Ghaza Terminology in Chronicles from the Sixteenth-Century Safavid Courtly Sphere,” *Persianate Studies* 10 (2017): 240–68. For the Safavid *halife* organization, see Willem Floor, “The *Khalifeh al-kholafa* of the Safavid Sufi Order,” *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 153, no. 1 (2003): 51–86. Regarding the perception of the perfect guide (*mürşid-i kāmīl*) in Safavid Qizilbashism, see Tilmann Trausch, “Representing Joint Rule as the Murshid-i Kamil’s Will: Consensus-Based Decision-Making in Early Safavid Iran,” *The Medieval History Journal* 19, no. 2 (2016): 1–37.

55 For information on the Ḥaydar period, see Yıldırım, *Aleviliğin Doğuşu*, 205–12.

56 Naşīr al-Dīn Abū Rāshid ‘Abd al-Jalīl Qazwīnī Rāzī, *Ba‘ḍu mathālib al-Nawāsib fī naqdi ba‘ḍu fada‘ih al-Ravāfiq*, ed. Mir Jalāl al-Dīn el-Ḥusaynī al-Urmavī (Tehran: Anjumān-i Āsār-i Millī, 1358 [1979]), 77–78.

57 Through an in-depth survey of early sources, I have found that while ‘Alī is commonly believed to have been given the nickname Asad Allah al-Ghālib in the early period, the nickname “lion of God” (Asad Allah) seems to have been used only for Ḥamza (d. 625), the Prophet’s uncle, in this period. The first use of the nickname Assad Allah al-Ghālib for ‘Alī can be traced to a hadith narrated by the Prophet and transmitted by Anas ibn Mālīk recorded in the work of two later Sunni Sufi scholars, Abū Sa‘īd al-Khargūshī (d. 1016) and the Karrāmī scholar Tulayhī (alive in 1038). See Abū Sa‘īd al-Khargūshī,

be written in the same period and that generated the portrayal of the Heroic ‘Alī in the collective memories of Muslims.⁵⁸ The concept of the Heroic ‘Alī blurred the boundaries between the Imam ‘Alī of Imami Shi‘ism, the Caliph ‘Alī of Sunnism, the Manifest ‘Alī of the Kūfan Ghulāt, the ‘Alī the Perfect Guide of Sufism, and the ‘Alī’s secret of the Anatolian dervishes and brought these distinct forms of religiosity closer together.⁵⁹ The depiction of Heroic ‘Alī nurtured by the sainthood (*awliyā*) cult that was a characteristic feature of dervish religiosity generated a belief focused on ‘Alī that was institutionalized as the ‘Alī cult of the present day.⁶⁰ The cult of ‘Alī was promoted by groups venerating Abū Muslim (d. 755), an Abbasid “summoner” (*dā‘ī*) who was posthumously incorporated into the Ahl al-Bayt (family of the Prophet Muḥammad) by the Kūfan Ghulāt. The religious *manāqibs* written from the second half of the eleventh century onward, including the *Ebū Müslimnāme*, *Dānişmendnāme*, *Batṭālnāme*, *Saltuḳnāme*, and other heroic religious epics, were blended with the ‘Alī cult of the Ghulāt groups and transformed into narratives of the Heroic ‘Alī.⁶¹ These epics were

read with great interest by dervish groups across a vast region, stretching from Iran and Central Asia to the Caucasus, Anatolia, and the Balkans, especially among the *fütüvvet* and *ahi* groups, which had the most widespread organizational networks of the period and accorded ‘Alī a distinguished status.⁶²

Yet my research indicates that the Turks were not content simply to listen to the ‘Alī *manāqibs*; various interrelated dervish circles also produced new legends regarding ‘Alī. In this respect, Aḥmed Yesevî conveyed a proverb (*hikmet*) relating that ‘Alī accompanied Prophet Muḥammad on the *mi‘rāj*,⁶³ and it appears that the legendary tale of ‘Alī in the form of a lion on the *mi‘rāj*, the main motif of the *Khatāyī Mi‘rāçlama*, was a product of these efforts by the Anatolian dervishes.

This tale was first brought to life in Turkish poetry by ‘Imād al-Dīn Nesīmī (d. 1417), who propagated Ḥurūfism, one of the most influential mahdist movements in Anatolia and Azerbaijan.⁶⁴ Abdal Mūsā (d. 1390–1410?) who participated in the Ottoman conquests and spread the Ḥacı Bektaş cult among soldiers in this period, made

Sharaf al-Nabī (Mecca: Dār al-Bashāir al-Islamiyya, 1424), 6:31–33; al-Ḥāfiẓ Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad bin ‘Alī bin Aḥmad al-‘Āsimī, *al-‘Asal al-muṣaffa min tadhib zayn al-fatā*, ed. Muḥammad Bāqir al-Maḥmūdī (Qum: Majmū‘a l-hya Thaqafa al-Islamiyya, AH 1418), 3:387–89. Although the latter book was attributed to al-‘Āsimī, M. K. Rahmati has demonstrated that it actually belonged to Tulayhī. See Muḥammad Kāzim Raḥmatī, “Zayn al-fatā va Muallif-i Ān,” *Āyina-i Pajūhash* 88 (1383 [2004]): 37–52.

- ⁵⁸ For one of the few studies on the neglected subject of the heroization of ‘Alī, see Hussein Rashid, “Truth, Justice, and the Spiritual Way: Imam Ali as Superhero,” in *Muslim Superheroes: Comics, Islam, and Representation*, ed. A. David Lewis and Martin Lund (Boston: Ilex Foundation and Harvard University Press, 2017), 208–34.
- ⁵⁹ For the Imami Shi‘i and Sunni depictions of ‘Alī, see Ertekin, “Elyazması Tasvirlerinde,” 319–52. For more information on the Sufi depictions of ‘Alī that I call ‘Alī the Perfect Guide (*mürşid-i kāmīl*), see Leonard Lewisohn, “Ali ibn Abi Talib’s Ethics of Mercy in the Mirror of the Persian Sufi Tradition,” in *The Sacred Foundations of Justice in Islam: The Teachings of Ali ibn Abi Talib*, ed. M. Ali Lakhani (Canada: World Wisdom, 2006), 109–45.
- ⁶⁰ For a similar interpretation, see Hans Robert Roemer, *Iran dar Rah-i Asr-i Jadid, Persian* trans. Azar Ahanchie (Tehran: Dānishgāh-i Tahrān, 1385 [2006]), 254–55, originally published in 1988 as *Persian auf dem Weg in die Neuzeit*.
- ⁶¹ For a biography of Abū Muslim and information on the Ghulāt groups venerating him, see Elton L. Daniel, *The Political and Social History of Khurasan under Abbasid Rule, 747–820* (Chicago: The Iran-America Foundation, 1979). Abū al-Ḥasan al-Karaki, who was shaykh al-Islam during the Ṭahmāsh period, banned the *Ebū Müslimnāme* because it conveyed the Ghulāt traditions. See Zabīh Allah Şafā, “Mājarā-i Ṭahrīm-i Abū Müslimnāma,” *Irannāma* 2 (1365 [1986]): 233–49. Around the same period, the Ottoman shaykh al-Islam Ebussū‘ūd Efendi (d. 1574) issued a *fetvā* declaring Sarı Saltuḳ (d. 1297–98) a Christian monk. See Machiel Kiel, “Sarı Saltuḳ,” in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (Istanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 36:147–50. Also see Karamustafa, “Saltuk-name,” 349–64.
- ⁶² Regarding the books on ‘Alī in the *cenknāme* genre, see İsmet Çetin, *Türk Edebiyatında Hz. Ali Cenknâmeleri* (Ankara: T. C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1997); Jean-Louis Mattei, *Hz. Ali Cenknâmeleri* (Istanbul: Kitabevi Yayınları, 2004). For the *Ebū Müslimnāme* and heroic religious epics connected with this, see Irène Mélékoff, *Türk-İran Epik Geleneği İçinde Horasan Teberdarı Ebu Müslim* (Ankara: Elips Kitap, 2012); Husayn Ismā‘īlī, *Abū Müslimnāma Bā-rivāyāt-i Abū Ṭāhir-i Ṭūsī* (Tehran: Intishirāt-i Mu‘in, 2001), 1, in particular the introduction. Regarding ‘Alī in the *fütüvvetnāmes*, see Lloyd Ridgeon, “Ali Ibn Abi Talib in Medieval Persian Sufi-Futuwwat Treatises,” in *Shi‘i Esotericism: Its Roots and Developments*, ed. Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi, Maria De Cillis, Daniel De Smit, and Orkhan Mir-Kasimov (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2016), 665–85.
- ⁶³ Ahmed Yesevî, *Divan-ı Hikmet*, ed. Ahmet Eğilmez Rıdvanoğlu (Istanbul: Sağlam Yayınevi, 2016), 212; Kemal Eraslan, *Divan-ı Hikmet’ten Seçmeler* (Ankara: T. C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1983), 303. The Ottoman *divān* poet Nev‘î (d. 1599) also mentioned that ‘Alī accompanied the Prophet on the *mi‘rāj*. Nev‘î, *Divan*, ed. Metol Tolum and M. Ali Tanyeri (Istanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Yayınları, 1977), 185.
- ⁶⁴ Hüseyin Ayan, *Nesimî Hayatı, Edebî Kişiliği, Eserleri ve Türkçe Divanının Tenkitli Metni* (Ankara: Türk Dil Kurumu Yayınları, 2014), 547, 768. For Nesimî’s biography, see Goncağül Erdoğdu, “Bir 14. Yüzyıl Şairinin Biyografisini Yazmak: Nesimî Örneği,” in *Ötekilerin Peşinde: Ahmet Yaşar Ocak’a Armağan*, ed. Mehmet Öz and Fatih Yeşil (Istanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 2015), 371–96. The *manāqib* is not included in Nesimî’s Persian *Divān*. See Veyis Değirmençay, *İmādüddin Nesimî ve Farsça Divanı* (Istanbul: Kurtuba Kitap, 2013). For Ḥurūfism and its founder Faḍl Allah, see Shahzad Bashir, *Fazlallah Astarabadi and the Hurufis* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2005).

reference to this tale in one of his poems.⁶⁵ However, Kaygusuz Abdal, a devoted follower of Abdal Mūsā and the father of Bektaşī literature, made no reference to the tale, though he was the first to mention the religious doctrine of ʿAlī in Bektaşism and described him as “Kuṭbu’l-aḳṭāb” (Pole of Poles) in his work *Vücūd-nāme* (Book of existence).⁶⁶ Şādiḳ Abdal (d. before 1460), who first used the term “Bektaşī order” in the fifteenth century and whose references to Kaygusuz’s *Dil-Güşā* (Key to the heart) in his *Dīvān* provide some insight into the interaction and cohesion between Bektaşī groups in the period, makes no mention of the tale in his poems either.⁶⁷

Following Nesīmī and Abdal Mūsā, it appears that the tale of ʿAlī’s appearance in the form of a lion during the *mīrāj* vanished from Turkish texts for a long time, though a poetic version of the tale different from that in the *Mīrāçlama* did find a place in Yemīnī’s 1519 *Fazīletnāme*, a version which he said was based on the “reports of transmitters” and the “stories of the those who know” and whose deficiencies, he said, were “known by the knowledgeable.”⁶⁸ Eşrefoğlu Rūmī (d. 1469), for example, an author who believed it was necessary for the perfect guide to be devoted to Ahl al-Sunna doctrines and emphasized that everyone was obliged to remain loyal to the members of the house of the Prophet Muḥammad, did not include the tale among the legends of ʿAlī he compiled in his *Tarīkatnāme*;

nor did Seyyid Gaybī (d. 1490) or Rażavī (d. after 1524), both authors writing firmly within the fold of Qizilbash groups in Anatolia, include it in their respective works, the *Huṭbetü’l-Beyān* and *Fütüvvetnāme*.⁶⁹

Given this silence, it is noteworthy that the tale of ʿAlī appeared in the work of two Turkish poets at a time when the differences between the various ʿAlīd religious groups were becoming more apparent and factionalism was on the rise. While Otman Baba and the Bektaşīs sought to organize the Abdals and attract more followers to the fold, the Qizilbash and the Bektaşīs coalesced around Balım Sultan (d. 1516?) in the wake of the Ottoman intervention, and the Qizilbash *halīfes* sought to draw followers to their side from the dervish groups in Ottoman lands, including the Abdals, Bektaşīs, and Qalandarīs. At the same time, Ottoman scholars and authors actively sought to neutralize the propaganda of the dervish groups, chief among them the Qizilbash, by redefining and re-identifying two key elements these groups had instrumentalized in their religious and political discourse: Imam ʿAlī and the Ahl al-Bayt.⁷⁰ In this environment, both poets emphasized that the shah, as the perfect guide, and the sultan, as the *kuṭb*, were manifestations of the secret of ʿAlī and therefore the legitimate holders of spiritual and material authority, obedience to whom was a fundamental requirement of the faith.

⁶⁵ See Ocak, “Babaîler İsyanından Kızılbaşlığa,” 81. Because none of Abdal Mūsā’s texts survive, while this poem may belong to Abdal Mūsā, it may also belong to another poet of the Abdal literary tradition, or to a poet of the Alevi-Bektaşī literary tradition that adopted and interiorized the Abdal tradition. For a biography of Abdal Mūsā, see Ramazan Uçar, “Pir-i Sani: Abdāl Musa,” in *Anadolu’da Alevîliğin Dünü ve Bugünü*, ed. Halil İbrahim Bulut (Sakarya: Sakarya Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2010), 273–87. For the poem, see Sadeddin Nüzhet Ergun, *Bektaşī Şairleri ve Nefesleri* (Istanbul: Maarif Kitaphanesi, 1944), 22–23. There are two other different versions of this poem. See Turgut Koca, *Bektaşī Alevî Şairleri ve Nefesleri: 13. Yüzyıldan 20. Yüzyıla Kadar* (Istanbul: Maarif Kitaphanesi, 1990), 18; Cahit Öztelli, *Bektaşī Gülleri: Alevî-Bektaşī Şiirleri Antolojisi* (Istanbul: Milliyet Yayınları, 1973), 18–19. The version given in Öztelli may also be found in İsmail Özmen, *Alevî-Bektaşī Şiirleri Antolojisi: 13. 14. 15. Yüzyıl* (Ankara: Saypa Yayın Dağıtım, 1995), 219–20.

⁶⁶ The works of Kaygusuz Abdal that I have studied include Mustafa Sever, *Divan-ı Kaygusuz Abdāl* (Istanbul: Helke Yayınları, 2017), 201; Kaygusuz Abdāl, *Dil-güşā*, ed. Abdurrahman Güzel (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, 2009); Kaygusuz Abdāl, *Saraynāme*, ed. Abdurrahman Güzel (Ankara: T. C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1989); Kaygusuz Abdāl, *Gülistan*, ed. Mustafa Sever (Ankara: Sage, 2014); Uslu, *Mesnevî*, 79–173. One possible exception is the *Kitāb-ı Maglata*, in which Kaygusuz relates the spiritual journey of a dervish who was in the Majlis of the Forty (discussed below). Though he does not mention the Prophet or the *mīrāj*, Kaygusuz explains that the protagonist had a dream in which he saw revealed the stages of the ascension, including ʿAlī before a group of dervishes. See Abdurrahman Güzel, *Kaygusuz Abdāl’ın Mensur Eserleri* (Ankara: T. C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1983). Regarding *Kitāb-ı Maglata*, see Zeynep Oktay Uslu, “L’Homme Parfait dans le Bektachisme et l’Alévisme: Le Kitāb-ı Maglata de Kaygusuz Abdāl” (PhD diss., l’École Pratique des Hautes Études, 2017). For Kaygusuz’s multi-form doctrine, see Uslu, *Mesnevî*, 27–29.

⁶⁷ Regarding Sādiḳ Abdal’s *Dīvān*, see Mark Soileu, “Sadık Abdāl Divanı’nda Bektaşīliğin Teşekkülü,” in *Alevî-Bektaşī Klasikleri Sempozyumu* (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, 2016), 79–88. For the *Dīvān* itself, see Dursun Gümüşoğlu, *Sadık Abdāl Divanı* (Istanbul: Horasan Yayınları, 2009).

⁶⁸ Yemīnī, *Fazilet-nāme*, 1:168.

⁶⁹ See Eşrefoğlu Rumi, *Tarīkatnāme*, ed. Esra Keskinçiliç (Istanbul: Gelenek Yayıncılık, 2002), 25; Seyyid Hüseyin İbn Seyyid Gaybī, *Şerhu Huṭbetü’l-Beyān*, ed. M. Saffet Sarıkaya (Isparta: Fakülte Kitabevi, 2004); Rażavī, *Fütüvvetname-i Kebir*, ed. Sadullah Gülten and Hacı Yılmaz (Istanbul: Yazma Eserler Kurumu Yayınları, 2014).

⁷⁰ See Derin Terzioğlu, “Sufis in the Age of State-Building and Confessionalization,” in *The Ottoman World*, ed. Christine Woodhead (London: Routledge, 2012), 86–99; Vefa Erginbaş, “Problematising 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 (2017): 614–46; Ertekin, “Elyazması Tasvirlerinde,” 327–33.

The first of these poets was Shah Ismā'īl. As noted above, Shah Ismā'īl took up the tale of 'Alī in the *Mi'rāçlama*, a canonical and normative work for the Qizilbash that laid out the beliefs and practices of the faith. He also alluded to it in the propagandist poems he recited with the aim of expanding his flock. Less is known about the second poet, Yemīnī. Based on his writings, he is known to have remained loyal to the memory of Otman Baba, who established his own order, with its own path (*tariq*), headgear (*tāc*), and lodge, who was referred to with the titles of sultan, shah, and padishah, and whose memory was sustained by his caliph Aқыazılı Sultan.⁷¹ Because *manāqibs* were conveyers of religious discourse among the people, the fact that the tale of 'Alī's appearing in the form of a lion during the *mi'rāj* was taken up by these two poets in this period suggests that this was part of a conscious effort to reinforce, strengthen, and spread the political theology underlying these tales and the doctrine of the secret of 'Alī they alluded to.⁷² In view of this, focusing on the *Khaṭāyī Mi'rāçlama*, I will attempt to interpret and explain this specific tale in the context of the poems by Ismā'īl and Yemīnī.

Views on the Religious Discourse of the *Khaṭāyī Mi'rāçlama*

There are two known poetic variants of the tale of 'Alī in lion form on the *mi'rāj* in Turkish literature. One of these was created by Ismā'īl, who self-identified as the “consubstantiation of 'Alī” (*Murtaẓā 'Alī zātlu*) and was viewed by the Qizilbash as their perfect guide (*mürşid-i kāmīl*).⁷³ The other was created by the dervish Yemīnī—a follower of Otman Baba, who claimed to be the manifestation of 'Alī. Both of these poems draw from the two earlier *manāqibs* in the *Khaṭāyī Mi'rāçlama*: the *manāqib* of 'Alī in the form of a lion on the *mi'rāj*, which dates at least to the time of Nesīmī, and the *manāqib* of the Majlis of the Forty, which dates at least to the time of Yūnus Emre.⁷⁴ In poems in his *Dīvān*, Ismā'īl made reference to these two *manāqibs* several times, sometimes separately and sometimes together.⁷⁵ Yemīnī, in turn, told the tale of the *mi'rāj*, which was perceived and conveyed as a real event in Persian literature since at the least the twelfth century and from there made its way into Turkish literature, following the “Dasht-i Arzan” of Salmān al-Farsī (d. 656?), one of the Companions of the Prophet.⁷⁶ Here, I will be focusing only on the *manāqib* of 'Alī appearing as a lion on the *mi'rāj*.⁷⁷

In brief, the *mi'rāj manāqib* related by Ismā'īl and Yemīnī is as follows: In order to

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- ⁷¹ See İnalçık, “Kalenderîler ve Devlet,” 99. For Yemīnī's biography and detailed information regarding the content of the *Fazilatnâme*, see Aydın Kırman, “Yemīnī'nin Faziletname'si” (PhD diss., Ege University, 2004); Rıza Yıldırım, “Abdallar, Akıncılar, Bektaşılık ve Ehl-i Beyt Sevgisi: Yemīnī'nin Muhihi ve Meşrebi Üzerine Notlar,” *Bellekten* 272 (2011): 54–79.
- ⁷² Regarding the ideological functions of the *manāqibs*, see İlber Ortaylı, “Menakıb,” in *Osmanlı Devleti'nin Kuruluşu: Efsaneler ve Gerçekler* (Ankara: İmge Kitabevi, 2000), 11–22.
- ⁷³ See Tourkhan Gandjei, *Il canzoniere di Şah İsmail Hatai* (Naples: Istituto Universitario Orientale, 1959), 22; Memmedov, *Şah İsmail Hatâyî*, 379–80; Cavanşir and Necef, *Hata'i Külliyyatı*, 276–67, 482–83; Birdoğan, *Şah İsmail Hatai*, 110.
- ⁷⁴ The *manāqib* of the Majlis of the Forty is not found in Arabic or Persian literature. The first reference to it in Turkish literature was made by Yūnus Emre in a poem. This poem, which Abdūlbaki Gölpinarlı said was included in all the old and new manuscripts, contains references to the main motifs in the *manāqib* of the Forty in Ismā'īl's *Mi'rāçlama*. See Abdūlbaki Gölpinarlı, *Yūnus Emre Divanı I-II* (Istanbul: Ahmet Halit Kitabevi, 1943), 196, 224. For a slightly different version of the poem, see Mustafa Tatçı, *Yūnus Emre Divanı* (Ankara: Akçağ Yayınları, 1998), 193. On the other hand, when Ismā'īl composed the *Mi'rāçlama*, he may well have used a *mi'rāj manāqib* on the Forty by the Pamir Ismā'īlī, who are known to have been active in Anatolia and Iran during the Mongol-Turkoman period. Indeed, there are a surprising number of similarities between Ismā'īl's version and this latter *manāqib*. For the *mi'rāj manāqib* of the Pamir Ismailis, see Abdulmamad İliiev, *The Ismaili Sufi Sage of Pamir: Mubarak-i Wakhani and the Esoteric Tradition of Pamiri Muslims* (New York: Cambria Press, 2008), chapter 4.
- ⁷⁵ See Ergun, *Hatayî Divanı*, 41, 47, 48, 57, 59, 63, 71, 73, 76, 79, 148, 149, 167, 205; Gandjei, *Il canzoniere*, 5, 12, 19, 452; Arslanoğlu, *Şah İsmail Hatâyî*, 66, 124, 273, 274; Cavanşir and Necef, *Hata'i Külliyyatı*, 232, 356, 415, 465, 467; Memmedov, *Şah İsmail Hatâyî*, 1:31, 50, 130; Macit, *Hatâyî Divanı*, 242, 258, 570; Birdoğan, *Şah İsmail Hatai*, 43, 44, 51, 53, 55, 71, 90, 102, 212, 311, 342.
- ⁷⁶ See Muḥammad Rızā Taraki, *Pārsa-i Pārsi Salmān-i Fārsi ba-Rivāyat-i Mutūn-i Fārisī* (Tehran: 'Ilm va Farhangī, 1387 [2008]), 271–84. There are also attributions to this *manāqib* in Ismā'īl's poems included in his *Dīvān*. However, the *manāqib* was not associated with the *mi'rāj manāqib* in any of these poems. For the poems, see Gandjei, *Il canzoniere*, 12, 13, 24; Arslanoğlu, *Şah İsmail Hatâyî*, 62; Cavanşir and Necef, *Hata'i Külliyyatı*, 208, 413; Memmedov, *Şah İsmail Hatâyî*, 62; Macit, *Hatâyî Divanı*, 247, 251, 486.
- ⁷⁷ The *manāqib* of the Majlis of the Forty was analyzed in the context of the *Khaṭāyī Mi'rāçlama* in the following two articles: Amelia Gallegher, “Shah Ismail Safevi and the Mi'rāj: Hata'i's Vision of a Sacred Assembly,” in *The Prophet's Ascension: Cross-Cultural Encounters with the Islamic Miraj Tales*, ed. Christiane Gruber and Frederick Colby (Bloomington: Indiana University Press 2010), 313–29; Vernon Schubel, “When the Prophet Went to the Miraç He Saw a Lion on the Road: The Miraç in the Alevî-Bektaşî Tradition,” in *The Prophet's Ascension: Cross-Cultural Encounters with the Islamic Miraj Tales*, ed. Christiane Gruber and Frederick Colby (Bloomington: Indiana University Press 2010), 330–43.

protect himself from the rage of a roaring lion he encountered on his celestial journey, the Prophet removed a ring he was wearing on his finger and threw it into the lion's mouth. When the lion calmed down, the Prophet continued on his journey and spoke with God at the divine court. Then, according to Ismāʿīl, the Prophet came across ʿAlī on his return journey when he stopped at the Majlis of the Forty, and ʿAlī returned the ring the Prophet had thrown into the lion's mouth on the *mīrāj*. In Yemīnī's version, the encounter between the Prophet and ʿAlī occurs after the Prophet returns to earth, but the version is otherwise the same. In both cases, when ʿAlī returns the ring, the Prophet realizes that ʿAlī possesses the secret of guardianship.⁷⁸

Yemīnī states that he wrote his *Fazīletnâme* for the Rumelian warriors, or ghazis.⁷⁹ As explained in Vāhidī's 1523 book *Menākīb-i Hâce-i Cihân ve Netice-i Cân*, a characteristic feature used to identify the Rumelian ghazis and Abdals, in a period when traveling dervish groups were spread out all over Anatolia and Rumelia,⁸⁰ was their devotion to guides (*walī*) connected to ʿAlī, his family, and his line.⁸¹ The ghazis were also one of the main audiences for Ismāʿīl's poems.⁸² Shah Ismāʿīl, who integrated the guardianship/sainthood (*wilāya*) and ghazi ideals as his father and grandfather had done, addressed the ghazis. Therefore, Ismāʿīl's propagandist poems that included references to the *manāqib* of ʿAlī appearing in the form of a lion on the *mīrāj* were welcomed in the spiritual world of the ghazis.

This *manāqib* is the story of the Prophet realizing the secret of ʿAlī, which Ismāʿīl claimed can only be perceived through submission to a perfect guide.⁸³ In other words, according to this *manāqib*, the secret the Prophet attained

on the *mīrāj* was the secret of the guardianship of ʿAlī, who transformed into the perfect guide shah, according to Ismāʿīl, and the *kuṭb* sultan, according to Otman Baba. The unique guide and *kuṭb* inherently held not only spiritual authority but also physical power, and obedience to him was an obligation.⁸⁴ In fact, in Islamic culture, the Prophet's ring, which disclosed ʿAlī's secret, became the symbol of both spiritual authority and physical power. Among groups of madhist belief, there is a much different story behind the Prophet's ring, which is believed by a majority of Muslims to have been lost when ʿUthmān (d. 656) dropped it into a well in 650.⁸⁵ Mahdist groups believe this ring was hidden together with the legacy of the House of Muḥammad, and that whoever finds it is the true Mahdi or the true representative of the lost imam Mahdi.⁸⁶ Therefore, in this tale, in addition to the reference it makes to the imamate of ʿAlī centuries before, this ring was also turned into a symbol justifying the spiritual authority and physical power of the guide honored with the secret of ʿAlī. This interpretation contains a clue that helps explain why ʿAlī appeared in the form of a lion and not in his own form in this tale.

As mentioned above, in Islamic culture, the lion symbol is associated with ʿAlī, who was given the monikers Ḥaydar and "victorious lion of God." Considering that these *manāqibs* were created by ʿAlīd belief groups associated with the Imami Shiʿi traditions, we can assume the ʿAlī portrayed in the *Mīrāçlama* to have replaced the representation of ʿAlī in the fourth heaven mentioned in the Imami Shiʿi traditions. According to these traditions, the representation of ʿAlī that the Prophet encountered in the fourth level of heaven was a figure created by God to

⁷⁸ I am relying here on the two following versions of the *Khatâyî Mīrāçlama*: Birdoğan, *Şah İsmail Hatai*, 189–91; Yusuf Ziya Yörükan, *Anadolu'da Aleviler ve Tahtacılar*, ed. Turhan Yörükan (Ankara: T. C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1998), 62–63. For Yemīnī's narration, see Yemīnī, *Faziletname*, 1:348–60.

⁷⁹ Yemīnī, *Faziletname*, 167–68, 545, 601–2.

⁸⁰ Karamustafa, "Anadolu'nun İslamlaşması," 49.

⁸¹ See Vahidi, *Hâce-i Cihân ve Netice-i Cân*, ed. Turgut Karabey, Bülent Şığva, and Yusuf Babür (Ankara: Akçağ Yayınları, 2015). About the book, see Ahmet T. Karamustafa, "Menākīb-i Hoca-i Cihan," in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (Istanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, 2004), 29:108–10.

⁸² See Gandjei, *Il canzoniere*, 18, 22; Cavaşir and Necef, *Hata'i Külliyyati*, 201, 276–77, 280, 482–83; Birdoğan, *Şah İsmail Hatai*, 47, 110; Memmedov, *Şah İsmail Hatâyî*, 379–80.

⁸³ Birdoğan, *Şah İsmail Hatai*, 66.

⁸⁴ Eşrefoğlu is of the same opinion regarding the uniqueness of the *kuṭb* and the obligation of obedience to him. See Eşrefoğlu, *Tarikatname*, 25.

⁸⁵ See J. Allan, "Hâtem," in *İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (Istanbul: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 1964), 5:359; Necati Fahri Taş and Nebi Bozkurt, "Mühür," in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (Istanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, 2006), 31:528–30; Mustafa Sabri Küçükbaşçı, "Yüzük," in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (Istanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, 2013), 44:55–57.

⁸⁶ See Sean W. Anthony, "The Mahdi and the Treasures of al-Talaqan," *Arabica* 59, no. 5 (2012): 459–83.

14.1 (cat. no. 48): Ascension scene with a lion (detail). Single folio. Probably Tabriz, beginning of the 16th century. Free Library of Philadelphia, Lewis P51. © Free Library of Philadelphia..

14.2 (cat. no. 49): Ascension scene with a lion (detail). Single folio from the so-called *Fālnāma of Tahmāsb* Qazvin, ca. 1550. Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC: Purchase — Smithsonian Unrestricted Trust Funds, Smithsonian Collections Acquisition Program, and Dr. Arthur M. Sackler, S1986.253.

14.1



calm the angels who yearned to see Imam ‘Alī.⁸⁷ However, these traditions contain no mention of any interaction between the Prophet and the figurative form of ‘Alī.

On the other hand, in Iranian and Turkish literature, the lion was associated with guides and leaders who were classified as sacred individuals; in fact, there is even a belief that they can appear in the form or guise of a lion.⁸⁸ If we narrow the scope to traditions focusing on ‘Alī, both in the Sharia-based Imami Shi‘ism and in the charismatic tradition of the mahdist Kūfan Ghulāt, we come across epics relating that ‘Alī appeared in lion form.⁸⁹ It is clear from the information Membré gave in his travelogue that the Qizilbash were inclined to envisage ‘Alī in the form of a lion. In the words of a Qizilbash sayyid, “To men it appeared

that he was a man, but he was a lion, sent by God to destroy the idolators.”⁹⁰ Thus, might the Qizilbash also have believed it possible for Ismā‘īl to appear in the form of a lion, given that he classified himself as the secret or embodiment of ‘Alī and associated himself with ‘Alī in the poems in his *Dīvān*?⁹¹ I believe so. In addition, in terms of the religious belief of the people of that period, the fact that metamorphosis was a common, impressive miracle that any saint could perform would have made it possible for the ghazis Yemīnī and Ismā‘īl addressed to believe that the perfect guide shahs and *kuṭb* sultans, whom they believed to be the secret of ‘Alī, could appear in lion form. In view of this, we can assume that the lion in the epic specific to the Qizilbash symbolizes both ‘Alī, who was granted the imamate by the Prophet, and Ismā‘īl, who was honored with the secret of ‘Alī. The ‘Alīd dervishes used similar epics, and Shah Ismā‘īl was popular in their spiritual world. Shah Ismā‘īl was therefore successful in his propaganda activities, employing the dervish storytellers to relate the epics wherever they went and to gather together dervishes from different sectors of the community. In brief, Shah Ismā‘īl’s call for submission (*sajda*) to him as the perfect guide and shah received a significant response from ‘Alīd groups.⁹²

From Epics to Paintings: Lion Depictions in *Mi‘rāj* Paintings

As there is no chronologic classification of lion depictions in the *mi‘rāj* paintings preserved today in museums or libraries, the question of when and for whom these paintings were produced has been a longstanding issue. In a substantial 2005 article, Raya Y. Shani attempted to answer this question, a question I believe essential in analyzing the iconography of the paintings correctly. Shani studied the illustrated, handwritten manuscripts produced in the Safavid royal workshop during the early years of Shah Ismā‘īl’s rule and compared them to a painting held at the Philadelphia Free Library (fig. 14.1; cat. no. 48). Analyzing the

⁸⁷ For hadith regarding the symbol of ‘Alī, see Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi, “The Imam in Heaven: Ascension and Initiation,” in *The Spirituality of Shi‘i Islam* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2011), 167–91.

⁸⁸ See Yaşar Çoruhlu, *Türk Sanatında Hayvan Sembolizmi* (Konya: Kömen Yayınları, 2014), 83–103, 208.

⁸⁹ See Khalid Sindawi, “The Role of the Lion in Miracles Associated with Shi‘ite Imams,” *Der Islam* 84, no. 2 (2007): 356–90.

⁹⁰ Membré, *Mission*, 39–40.

⁹¹ Regarding Ismā‘īl associating himself with ‘Alī in his poems, see Karamustafa, “In His Own Voice,” 601–11.

⁹² Cavanşir and Necef, *Hata‘i Külliyyatı*, 276–77, 482–83; Memmedov, *Şah İsmail Hatâyî*, 1:379–80; Gandjei, *Il canzoniere*, 22; Birdoğan, *Şah İsmail Hatai*, 110. Regarding the formation of the symbol of submission (*sajda*), see Kaplan, *Şeyh Safi Buyruğu*, 57, 61.

14.2



painting in terms of the use of colors, rendering of space, and workmanship, Shani determined that this painting was produced for Shah Ismāʿīl in the Tabriz workshop, and therefore dated this painting to before 1524.⁹³ Considering that this painting is the first example of a lion depicted in a *mīrāj* scene, and given that rulers, who maintained the privilege of art patronage in the Islamic world, ideologically intervened in the iconography of illustrated manuscripts, dating this particular work to the time of Shah Ismāʿīl is quite significant.⁹⁴ And its significance is only strengthened by the fact that the iconography in this painting corresponds exactly with the theme in the *Khaṭāyī Mīrāçlama*, which can be classified as a summary of Shah Ismāʿīl's claim as mahdi based on his being the manifestation or embodiment of ʿAlī's secret.

In all likelihood, the painting, focusing on the moment when the Prophet encountered ʿAlī in the guise of a lion on the *mīrāj*, as narrated in the *Mīrāçlama*, represents the scene as it would have been envisioned by an audience that had previously listened to recitations of the same epic. The focal point of the painting is the Prophet sitting on al-Burāq, with a tail of a peacock and the head of a human, and a lion sitting opposite. The Prophet, whose face is covered with a white veil and who is surrounded by halos of fire, is holding out a ring in his right hand to the lion, which is also surrounded

by halos of fire and is clearly roaring, because his mouth is half open. Around them are six angels arranged in a circle carefully watching the event. All the angels are wearing half-sleeved cloaks of different colors tied with a belt over long-sleeved undergarments. An angel depicted immediately under the Prophet, assumed to be Gabriel because he is accompanying the Prophet and, unlike the other angels, has a crown on his head, is holding a green flag and a long pole in his hand with waving red banners. There is nothing written on the flag, the banners, or the globe on the end of the pole held by the angel.

In all likelihood, this small painting, which exists today on a single page, was taken from a text of poetry and enlarged by pasting it onto a decorative page, likely sometime between 1560 and 1580.⁹⁵ It is possible that in this process, the painting came to be used in a new and different textual context. A ritual the Venetian Membré related in his book of travels provides an idea regarding how the painting may have been used after it was removed from its original place: "The Sophians paint figures, such as the figure of ʿAlī, riding on a horse, with a sword; and when they see the said figure of ʿAlī, they take hold of their ear and bow their head, which is a kind of reverence. In their squares there are many Persian mountebanks sitting on carpets on the ground; and they have

⁹³ See Raya Y. Shani, "The Lion Image in Safavid Mīrāj Paintings," in *A Survey of Persian Art from Prehistoric Times to the Present*, vol. 18, ed. Abbas Daneshvari (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 2005), 324–35.

⁹⁴ Regarding art patronage and rulers' intervention in the iconography of illuminated manuscripts in the Islamic world, see Thomas W. Lentz and Glenn D. Lowry, *Timur and Princely Vision: Persian Art and Culture in the Fifteenth Century* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Washington, DC: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989); Anthony Welch, *Artists for the Shah: Late Sixteenth-Century Painting at the Imperial Court of Iran* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976).

⁹⁵ See Shani, "The Lion Image," 325.



certain long cards with figures; and the said mountebanks hold a little stick and point to one figure after another, and preach and tell stories over each figure. [...] There are also others with books in their hands, reading of the battles of 'Alī and the combats of the Princes of old, and of Shah Ismā'īl.⁹⁶

These observations of a traveler who visited Iran less than a quarter of a century after the death of Shah Ismā'īl indicate the presence of images that were in circulation in the early Safavid period.⁹⁷ So, could the first lion depicted in *mi'rāj* paintings, after having being displaced

from its original location and remaining outside the closed covers of an album until at least 1560, have been the source of inspiration for the lion images that were sometimes found on wall paintings⁹⁸ or on the paintings of a *parda-khān*? Although existing evidence does not permit a definitive answer to this question, certain clues do indicate that this might have been the case.

Mi'rāj depictions featuring a lion continued to be produced under Ṭahmāsb and were alluded to in the *manāqib* of another Anatolian dervish, the Qizilbash poet Garībī, who left the Ottoman palace in the first half of the sixteenth century and joined the Safavid palace.⁹⁹

The lion *mi'rāj* scenes in the illustrated manuscripts produced during this period and afterward indicate that in a short time, the iconography in the paintings prepared on the order of Shah Ismā'īl was standardized.

The first example of a lion depicted in *mi'rāj* paintings produced in the Ṭahmāsb period appeared in a *fālnāma* (book of omens), a literary form that appeared among the Safavids for the first time in the sixteenth century and that, as the name indicates, was used in predicting the future (fig. 14.2; cat. no. 49). As a form of literature, the *fālnāma* texts date as far back as the fourteenth century. They are believed to have been inspired by popular oral traditions and written epics such as the parables of the Prophet. In the illustrated *fālnāmas* that emerged in the third quarter of the sixteenth century attributed to Jā'far al-Ṣādiq (d. 765), a new method was observed which reversed the interaction between text and illustration. The layout in the illustrated *fālnāmas* gave prominence to the paintings and changed the standard relationship between text and illustration in the art of book illustration.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶ Membré, *Mission*, 52. The word "mountebank" here is used for the Persian term *parda-khān* or *parda-dar*, a stage performer who told stories, usually about important early Shi'ite figures, against the backdrop of a large painting (*parda*). See *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, s.v. "Dastan-sarā'i," by William Hanaway, accessed March 2, 2020, <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/dastan-sarai>.

⁹⁷ This is based on Ismā'īl's having determined the iconography of the first *mi'rāj* paintings featuring a lion. As Serpil Bağcı has shown, certain images that were already in circulation served as models for the pictures in book illustrations. In view of this, it seems likely that the model here would have been an image of Ismā'īl already in circulation. Serpil Bağcı, "Kitap Resimlemeciliğinin Kaynakları: Dolaşan İmgeler," *Anadolu Sanat Dergisi* 3 (1995): 35–50.

⁹⁸ Regarding religiously themed wall paintings during the Safavid period, see 'Alī Aşghar Mīrzāimahr, *Naqqāshihā-i Buq'ā-i Mutabarrika dar Iran* (Tehran: Farhangistān-i Hunar, 1386 [2007]).

⁹⁹ Garībī's *manāqib* was included in the eulogy to 'Alī he dedicated to Ṭahmāsb. See İsrāfil Babacan, "Garībī'nin Şia Miracıyesini Esas Aldığı Hazret-i Ali Övgüsü," *Alevilik Araştırmaları Dergisi* 5 (2013): 91–102. For a biography of Garībī, see Garībī, *Tezkire-i Mecâlis-i Şu'arâ-yı Rum*, ed. İsrāfil Babacan (Ankara: Vizyon Yayınları, 2010).

¹⁰⁰ See Massumeh Farhad, "Between the Past and the Future: The Falnama (Book of Omens) in the 16th and Early 17th Centuries," in *People of the Prophet's House: Artistic and Ritual Expressions of Shi'i Islam*, ed. Fahmida Suleman (London: Azimuth Editions, 2015), 138. There are also illustrated *fālnāmas* that were produced on the order of Ottoman sultans. For detailed information on the four existing illustrated *fālnāmas*, see Massumeh Farhad and Serpil Bağcı, *Falnama: the Book of Omens* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2009). Regarding the text-illustration connection in Islamic pictorial art, see Sheila S. Blair, *Text and Image in Medieval Persian Art* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014).

Themes in the paintings in the *fālnāma* were based on the miracles of the Prophet, ʿAlī, Ḥasan (d. 669), Ḥusayn (d. 680), and the eighth imam, ʿAlī al-Riḍā (d. 819). The *fālnāma* paintings highlighted the miracles of these figures by emphasizing the status of the Prophet and Ahl al-Bayt based on revelations and portrayed them, with examples of their characteristic features, as a bridge between the physical world and the spiritual world.¹⁰¹ The inclusion of lion depictions in the *mīrāj* scenes in the illustrated *fālnāmas* is an indication that they were included in a context of meaning independent from that of the texts.

The earliest known examples of the illustrated *fālnāmas* were produced in the mid-1550s and early 1560s in the Qazvin workshop on the order of Shah Ṭahmāsb. In line with his tastes and interests, the main motifs in the Safavid literature of that period were the miracles, heroism, and virtues of the Shiʿi imams, in particular Imam ʿAlī. In this period, there was virtually no Safavid poet who did not write a eulogy, ghazal, *rubāʿī*, verse, or at least a couplet about Imam ʿAlī and the Ahl al-Bayt imams.¹⁰²

Of the various lion *mīrāj* paintings, the best example, in aesthetic terms, is the one in the Safavid *Ṭahmāsb Fālnāma* (fig. 14.2).¹⁰³ The short poem at the beginning of the page, which includes a text on *fāl* (fortune-telling) and is currently preserved in another museum, contains no reference to the ʿAlī epic. The poem relates that ʿAlī accompanied the Prophet on the *mīrāj* and the next day explained every detail of the celestial journey.¹⁰⁴ In a previous article, I compared this Safavid painting with the distinctive iconography of the *mīrāj* painting prepared for the Ottoman sultan Murād III (1574–95) included in *Zūbdeṭü't-Tevārīh*, and I suggested that this latter painting was a response to the one in the *Ṭahmāsb Fālnāma*.¹⁰⁵

Another representation of the lion in a *mīrāj* painting is found in a *fālnāma* which was completed toward the end of the sixteenth or the beginning of the seventeenth century but which also has paintings dating to the 1540s (fig. 14.3; cat. no. 50).¹⁰⁶ A distinctive feature of this painting is that the Prophet is depicted sitting on Burāq in the form of a ball of light. This iconography was later followed by the Ottoman, Kashmiri, and Deccan workshops.¹⁰⁷ A *mīrāj* depiction in an illustrated manuscript prepared for the chief harem eunuch (*darussade aḡası*) Meḥmed Aga (d. 1590) in *Zūbdeṭü't-Tevārīh* also portrayed the Prophet on Burāq as a ball of light, thus breaking from the tradition of Ottoman art.¹⁰⁸ In all likelihood, this iconography was adopted from the *mīrāj* painting in the Safavid *Fālnāma*. However, it is also possible that this was an example of a new iconography developing in this period.

Apart from the *Timurnāma*, a text on history by the Iranian poet Hātifi (d. 1521), it was literary texts that were principal home of the lion *mīrāj* depictions, which, judging by the available examples, were produced until the end of the seventeenth century (fig. 14.4; cat. no. 52). Classified as masterpieces of Persian and Turkish literature, these literary texts include the *Khamsas* of Nizāmī (d. 1214) and Amīr Khusraw Dihlawī (figs. 14.5–9; cat. nos. 53, 60, 61, 14, 55); the *Būstān* (Orchard) of Saʿdī (d. 1292) (fig. 14.10; cat. no. 62); the *Ḥayretü'l-ibrār* by the first Turkish *khamsa* poet, ʿAlī Şīr Nevāʿī (d. 1501) (fig. 14.11; cat. no. 63); and the *Leylā vü Mecnūn* of Fuzūlī (d. 1556) (fig. 14.12; cat. no. 64). This list shows that between the thirteenth and the seventeenth centuries, a majority of the *mīrāj* representations with a lion were in classic works in Persian, the common literary and cultural language of the Islamic world.¹⁰⁹ These Persian classics were tools of competition among rulers and elites and were

14.3 (cat. no. 50): Ascension scene with a lion (detail). Folio from a *Fālnāma*. Qazvin, ca. 1550. Saxon State and University Library (SLUB), Mscr.Dresd.Eb.445, fol. 26v. © SLUB Dresden / Digitale Sammlungen.

¹⁰¹ See Farhad, "Between the Past and the Future," 142.

¹⁰² See Farhad, "Between the Past and the Future," 137. Regarding Shiʿite poems in Safavid-era poetry, see Ishaq Tughyānī, *Tafakkur-i Shiʿa va Shiʿr-i Davra-i Şafavī* (Isfahan: Intishārāt-i Dānishgāh-i Isfahan, 1385 [2006]).

¹⁰³ See Shani, "The Lion Image," 335; Farhad, "Between the Past and the Future," 137.

¹⁰⁴ The page containing the *fāl* text is kept in the Worcester Art Museum in Connecticut. A small photo of the page is published in Farhad and Bağcı, *Fālnāma*, 263.

¹⁰⁵ See Ertekin, "Elyazması Tasvirlerinde," 331. For a different version of the painting in *Zubdat al-Tawārīkh*, see Christiane Gruber, *The Praiseworthy One: The Prophet Muhammad in Islamic Texts and Images* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2019), 261–67.

¹⁰⁶ See Farhad, "Between the Past and the Future," 137.

¹⁰⁷ See Shani, "The Lion Image," 338.

¹⁰⁸ See Günsel Renda, "Chester Beatty Kitaplığındaki Zūbdeṭü't-tevarih ve Minyatürleri," in *Bekir Kütükoğlu'na Armağan*, ed. Mübahat S. Kütükoğlu (Istanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Yayınları, 1991), 485–506, fig. 2.

¹⁰⁹ For more on the Persian language in the Islamic world, see Bert Fragner, *Fars-zabani: Qalamrav, Huviyat va Rabīṭa-i Zabānī dar Tārīkh-i Asia*, Persian trans. Saʿīd Firuzābādī (Tehran: ʿIlmī va Farhangī, 1394 [2015]), originally published as "Die

14.4 (cat. no. 52): Ascension scene with a lion (detail). Hâtifî, *Timûrnâme*. Probably Bukhara, ca. 1560. British Library, Add MS 7780 fol. 8v (BL3502472). © British Library, London, UK/Bridgeman Images.



14.4, 5

14.5 (cat. no. 53): Ascension scene with a lion (detail). Niẓāmî, *Khamsa*. Shiraz or Qazvin, 1560–61. National Library of France (BnF), Paris, Département des manuscrits, Supplément Persan 1956, fol. 88r. © Bibliothèque nationale de France.



14.6, 7

14.6 (cat. no. 60): Ascension scene with a lion (detail). Niẓāmî, *Iskandarnâme*. Shiraz, 1584. Harvard Art Museums/Arthur M. Sackler Museum, the Norma Jean Calderwood Collection of Islamic Art, 2002.50.33.



14.8, 9

14.7 (cat. no. 61): Ascension scene with a lion (detail). Niẓāmî, *Khamsa*. Isfahan, 1590–1610. Topkapı Palace Museum Library, Istanbul, TSMK R.881, fol. 48r. Courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum.



14.8 (cat. no. 14): Ascension scene showing the constellations, the signs of the zodiac, and a lion (detail). Niẓāmî, *Lāyla vu Majnûn*. Isfahan, 1665. British Library, Add. 6613, fol. 92r (BL 3282862). © British Library Board. All Rights Reserved/Bridgeman Images.



14.10, 11

14.9 (cat. no. 56): Ascension scene with a lion (detail). Amîr Khusraw Dihlawî, *Khamsa*. Shiraz or Qazvin, late 16th century. Süleymaniye Manuscript Library, Istanbul, Halet Efendi 377, fol. 45r. Photograph: Hadiye Cangökçe.



14.12, 13

14.10 (cat. no. 62): Ascension scene with a lion (detail). Sa'dî, *Bûstân*. Probably Shiraz, 1624–25. British Library, London, Islamic 843, fol. 94r (BL3590720 IO). © British Library Board. All Rights Reserved/Bridgeman Images.



14.11 (cat. no. 63): Ascension scene with a lion (detail). Nevâ'î, *Hayretü'l-ibrâr*. 1598. British Library, London, Add 7909 fol. 13v (BL3702810). © British Library Board. All Rights Reserved/Bridgeman Images.



14.14, 15

14.12 (cat. no. 64): Ascension scene with a lion (detail). Fuẓûlî, *Leylâ vü Mecnûn*. 1664. British Library, London, Or 405 fol. 11r (BL3702812). © British Library Board. All Rights Reserved/Bridgeman Images.



14.13 (cat. no. 57): Ascension scene with a lion (detail). Nishâbüri, *Qışaş al-Anbiyâ*. Qazvin, 1575–76. Topkapı Palace Museum Library, Istanbul, TSMK H.1227, fol. 190v. Courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum.



14.14 (cat. no. 51): Ascension scene with a lion (detail). Nishâbüri, *Qışaş al-Anbiyâ*. Shiraz, 1557. Berlin State Library, Diez A fol. 3 950, fol. 226v. © bpk / Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

14.15 (cat. no. 59): Ascension scene with a lion. Nishâbüri, *Qışaş al-Anbiyâ*. 1579–80. Topkapı Palace Museum Library, Istanbul, TSMK R. 1536, fol. 190v. Courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum.

14.16



14.16 (cat. no. 54): Ascension scene with a lion (detail). Nishābūrī, *Qīṣaṣ al-Anbiyā*. Qazvin, 1576. Topkapı Palace Museum Library, Istanbul, TSMK H.1228, fol. 152r. Courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum.

14.17 (cat. no. 55): Ascension scene with a lion (detail). Nishābūrī, *Qīṣaṣ al-Anbiyā*. Qazvin, late 16th century. Süleymaniye Manuscript Library, Istanbul, Hamidiye 980, fol. 159v. Photograph: Hadiye Cangöğçe.

14.17



highly valued gifts, frequently changing hands; they were also bearers and conveyers of religious discourse and images that made reference to Safavid religious thought.¹¹⁰ It is known that the Safavid shahs, who claimed to be members of the Prophet's household, patronized the illustrated handwritten manuscripts of *siyar* and epic texts to boost their own religious status.¹¹¹ The lion representations in *mīrāj* paintings were not only

portrayed in the classics of Persian and Turkish literature but also often depicted in religious texts, such as the illustrated manuscripts of *Qīṣaṣ al-Anbiyā* by Abū Ishāq Nishābūrī (d. 1035), which relates stories of the prophets (figs. 14.13–17; cat. nos. 57, 51, 59, 54, 55). In a short time, this Arabic work, also known as *Arā'is al-majālis*, was translated into Persian and Turkish, and it long maintained its popularity among Muslims.¹¹²

Persophonie: Regionalität, Identität und Sprachkontakt in der Geschichte Asiens."

¹¹⁰ Regarding the use of artwork as a tool in political rivalry, see Tuba İnsü Durmuş, "Siyasi Rekabetin Bir Enstrümanı Olarak Ortaçağda Sanat," *Divan Edebiyatı Araştırmaları Dergisi* 12 (2014): 65–76. Regarding illustrated books changing hands between the Ottoman and Safavid states, see Filiz Çağman and Zeren Tanındı, "Osmanlı Safevî İlişkileri (1578–1612) Çerçevesinde Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Figureli El Yazmalarına Bakış," in *Aslanapa Armağanı*, ed. Selçuk Mülayim, Zeki Sönmez, and Ara Altun (Istanbul: Bağlam Yayınları, 1996), 37–62; Lale Uluç, "On Altıncı Yüzyılda Osmanlı-Safevî Kültürel İlişkileri Çerçevesinde Nakkaşhânenin Önemi," *Doğu Batı Düşünce Dergisi* 54 (2010): 23–31; Zeren Tanındı, "Osmanlı Sarayında Safevî Şehzadeler ve Elçiler," *Uluslararası Sanatta Etkileşim Sempozyumu*, ed. Zeynep Yasa Yaman (Ankara: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2000), 236–41.

¹¹¹ See Rachel Milstein, *Miniature Painting in Ottoman Baghdad* (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 1990), 19.

¹¹² Regarding *Qīṣaṣ al-Anbiyā*, see Günay Tümer, "Arâisü'l-Mecâlis," in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (Istanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, 1991), 3:265–66; M. Süreyya Şahin, "Kısa-ı Enbiyâ," in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm*

14.18 (cat. no. 7): Ascension scene (detail). An illustration from an album. Probably Shiraz, 1590. © Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A), no. 132-1885 (1).



14.18

Examples of these illustrated manuscripts that do not reflect the style of the palace workshop signify that apart from the Safavid shahs, distinguished Safavids and Qizilbash leaders, who over time adopted palace life and competed with the elite, also contributed to the patronage process.¹¹³ Nevertheless, because of the inadequacy of the catalogue information, we are unable to classify all of these illustrated manuscripts according to their patrons. The lion representations in the *mi'rāj* scenes were repeated in relatively plain, simple illustrated manuscripts believed to have been produced by a group of roaming artists traveling between Khorasan, Isfahan, Tabriz, and Baghdad.¹¹⁴ The *khamsas* and illustrated compositions of the *Qiṣaṣ al-Anbiyā* prepared between 1574 and 1581 and not attributed to any school of art in the sixteenth century can be given as an example of works in this group (figs. 14.9 and 14.13–17).¹¹⁵ These works appear to have been popular among the wealthy, in particular among Qizilbash tradesmen.

Although there are certain stylistic variations in the *mi'rāj* lion representations, they all seem to follow a similar iconography. Apart from one of the paintings (fig. 14.3), the Prophet is always depicted on Burāq with his face veiled. Halos, a symbol of sacredness, surround the Prophet and Burāq in the paintings prepared during the lifetime of Shah Ismā'īl (fig. 14.1); in other examples, the halo rises above the Prophet's head. The lion figure that represents 'Alī was sometimes shown simply, without any signs of sacredness (figs. 14.2, 14.5–7, 14.11–12, 14.14–15), occasionally with halos surrounding his head and body (figs. 14.1, 14.4, 14.8–10, 14.13, 14.18; cat. no. 7), and sometimes in a cosmic cloud (figs. 14.13, 14.16–17). While the lion is depicted as moving downward from the top corner of the scene in some paintings, and thereby animating the scene related in the epic (figs. 14.2–5, 14.10–11, 14.14, 14.18), in others the lion is depicted standing opposite the Prophet (figs. 14.1, 14.9, 14.12–13, 14.16–17).

Ansiklopedisi (Istanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, 2002), 25: 495–96.

¹¹³ Shani, "The Lion Image," 339–44; Welch, *Artists for the Shah*, in particular chapters 5 and 6; Roger M. Savory, "The Qizilbash, Education, and the Arts," *Turcica* 6 (1975): 168–76.

¹¹⁴ See Necla Kaplan, "Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi Hamidiye 980 Numaralı Kısa-ı Enbiyâ Nüshası ve Tasvirleri" (master's thesis, Pamukkale University, 2013), 84–85.

¹¹⁵ For more information on the illustrated manuscripts of *Qiṣaṣ al-Anbiyā*, see Rachel Milstein, Karin Rührdanz, and Barbara Schmitz, *Stories of Prophets: Illustrated Manuscripts of Qisas al-Anbiya* (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 1999).

These scenes appear to reflect the point in the epic when the lion calms down after being given the ring. In three paintings, only the lion's head is visible, not the body (figs. 14.7–8, 14.15). This method was possibly used to portray the sudden confrontation mentioned in the epic.

Apart from one example that is iconographically distinct (fig. 14.3), *mi'rāj* lion depictions all center on the moment when the Prophet gives his ring to the lion. The sole exception is a painting in which the Prophet is represented while pulling his hand back under his cloak (fig. 14.7). In this example, the objective of the painter was probably to recreate the tension and fear the Prophet experienced when he was suddenly confronted by the lion.

There are angels surrounding the scene in all the paintings focusing on the Prophet and lion. These angels, with their colorful garments and wings, are represented carrying bowls full of fruit, censers, boxes, swords, or various garments, including sandals, cloaks (*hülle*), and belts, presented as gifts to the Prophet.¹¹⁶ Angels in the top of the scene generally appear pouring light and gems upon the Prophet. In one scene, an angel is holding a canopy, the symbol of a ruler, over the Prophet (fig. 14.5). Because Gabriel was a guide on the *mi'rāj* journey, he holds a green banner in front of the Prophet. An inscription is only visible on a banner in one of the paintings. The inscription on this banner is “The best of creation [*khayr al-bashar*] ya Muḥammad ya ʿAlī” (fig. 14.11), possibly indicating the religious disposition of the person who ordered or purchased the painting.

Only one of the lion *mi'rāj* paintings has architectural elements (fig. 14.18). Classic *mi'rāj* paintings generally depict the starting point of the celestial journey, al-Masjid al-Ḥarām, or, according to some interpretations, the stopping place, al-Masjid al-Aqṣā. This painting, however, depicts a structure resembling the tombs of the Ahl al-Bayt imams in Iran and Iraq.

Conclusion

In time, the hadith on the Prophet's *mi'rāj* came together with changing religious, political, and cultural conditions to produce a variety of *mi'rāj* epics that were both bearers and conveyers of

religious discourse. The *Khaṭāyī Mi'rāçlama*, one of the Khaṭāyī poems by the founder of the Safavid state, Shah Ismāʿīl, is one of these epics. The *Mi'rāçlama* codified doctrines that Ismāʿīl's grandfather Junayd, responsible for the transformation of the Safavid tariqa, had developed in interaction with the groups of Turkoman dervishes in Anatolia. My research shows that in composing the *Mi'rāçlama*, Ismāʿīl drew upon two epics originally created by Anatolian dervishes. The first of these, the epic of ʿAlī in the guise of a lion appearing on the *mi'rāj*, was reproduced by Nesīmī and Abdal Mūsā; and the second, the *manāqib* of the Forty, was first reproduced by Yūnus Emre.

These epics bear traces of the Kūfan Ghulāt tradition of the Manifest ʿAlī, the belief that ʿAlī bore or was honored with divine essence. These epics were clearly recognized among the mahdist dervishes who embraced these beliefs. In fact, during the period when Shah Ismāʿīl produced his *Mi'rāçlama*, the poet Yemīnī, a member of the Otman Baba tradition that systemized the secret of ʿAlī in the context of a *kuṭbīst* theory, reproduced the epic after it had long disappeared from written sources. In the epic, the portrayal of ʿAlī, who was heroized in the collective memory of Muslims, as a lion, the symbol of courage, allowed the epic to be understood more easily by the audience. Yet in all likelihood, the lion in Ismāʿīl's *Khaṭāyī Mi'rāçlama*, as the symbol of both saints (*walī*) and rulers (both classified as sacred individuals in Iranian and Turkish cultures), also symbolized Shah Ismāʿīl himself, who was believed to be the manifestation of ʿAlī and his secret. Thus, the connection the Qizilbash made between the lion and ʿAlī—and between ʿAlī and Shah Ismāʿīl as the perfect guide—was reflected in the sources of the period.

Shah Ismāʿīl also conveyed and, in a sense, enriched the epic he used in his *Mi'rāçlama* in a visual language. The first examples of the lion depicted in *mi'rāj* paintings produced by order of Shah Ismāʿīl were standardized in the illustrated manuscripts prepared during the reign of Ismāʿīl's son Ṭahmāsb. The lion scenes produced from the sixteenth century to the end of the seventeenth century became more widespread with their appearance in the *Qiṣaṣ al-Anbiyās*, the Persian classics, and other popular religious texts, and they continue to attract interest today.

¹¹⁶ Regarding these gifts brought to the Prophet, see Nicole Kançal-Ferrari, “The Prophet's Turban and Celestial Crowns: Headgear in Ascension Scenes,” in this volume.