Transformations in Early Safavid Architecture:
The Shrine of Shaykh Safi al-din Ishaq Ardabili in Iran (1501-1629)

by

Kishwar Rizvi
M.Arch.
University of Pennsylvania, 1991

Submitted to the Department of Architecture in
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in Architecture: History and Theory of Architecture
at the
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

June 2000

Signature of author_
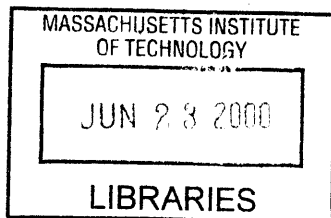
Department of Architecture
April 28, 2000

Certified by_

Professor Gülru Necipoğlu,
Harvard University
Aga Khan Professor of Islamic Architecture

Certified by_

Professor Nasser Rabbat
Associate Professor of the History of Architecture and
Aga Khan Professor in the History of Islamic Architecture

Accepted by_

Professor Stanford Anderson
Professor of History and Architecture
Head of the Department of Architecture
Chair, Department Committee on Graduate Students

DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

Professor Gülru Necipoğlu
Aga Khan Professor of Islamic Architecture
Department of History of Art and Architecture
Harvard University

Professor Nasser Rabbat
Associate Professor of the History of Architecture and
Aga Khan Professor in the History of Islamic Architecture
Department of Architecture - History, Theory, Criticism Section
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Professor Kathryn Babayan
Assistant Professor of Iranian History and Culture
Department of Near Eastern Studies
University of Michigan

Professor David Friedman
Associate Professor of the History of Architecture
Department of Architecture - History, Theory, Criticism Section
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Transformations in Early Safavid Architecture:
The Shrine of Shaykh Safi al-din Ishaq Ardabili in Iran (1501-1629)

by

Kishwar Rizvi

Submitted to the Department of Architecture
on April 28, 2000 in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in Architecture: History and Theory of Architecture

ABSTRACT

Shrines in the Islamic world may be viewed as spatial constructs of ideology that are built as monuments to secular, as well as religious, authority. However, owing to the diversity of their patrons, these institutions are also loci for the subversive power of customary ritual as resistant to that hegemony. Such supposed polarities are not necessarily antagonistic, but exist simultaneously and enrich our understanding of devotion and its cultural location. This dissertation provides a specific context within which shrine formation is studied during the early Safavid period (1501-1629), by focussing on the shrine of the fourteenth-century Sufi mystic, Safi al-din Ishaq in Ardabil, Iran.

The shrine of Shaykh Safi was a temporal and architectural aggregate, the evolution of which has never before been studied. As the ancestral shrine of the Safavid rulers of Iran, this monument provided a template for the development and propagation of sixteenth-century architecture. The shrine of Shaykh Safi was a theatre for the enactment of royal ceremonial as well as a dynamic public institution, both these aspects incorporated and negotiated through its architectural program. Moreover, as an interface between the Sufi image of the first Safavid shahs and the more imperial one favored by the later dynasty, the shrine of Shaykh Safi was a site of experimentation where Safavid architectural vocabulary was developed, one which chose selectively from past metaphors and transformed them according to the changing social and political climate of early modern Iran. In my research I investigate the complex relationships between politics and popular piety, charity and commerce, religion and sovereignty, and their resolution at this important site.

Thesis Supervisor: Professor Gülru Necipoğlu
Harvard University
Title: Aga Khan Professor of Islamic Architecture
Department of History of Art and Architecture

Thesis Supervisor: Professor Nasser Rabbat
MIT
Title: Associate Professor of the History of Architecture and
Aga Khan Professor in the History of Islamic Architecture

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

AT   Hasan Beg Rumlu, <u>Ahsan al-tawārīkh</u>, ed. 'Abd al-Husayn Nava'i, Tehran, 1349/1970.

BSOAS   Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies.

CIr   <u>Cambridge History of Iran</u>, Cambridge, 1986.

HS   Ghiyas al-din Muhammad Husayni Khwandamir, <u>Habīb al-siyar fī akhbār afrad al-bashār</u>, Tehran, 1334/1955.

IJMES   International Journal of Middle East Studies.

JESHO   Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient.

KT   Qazi Ahmad Qummi, <u>Khulāsat al-tawārīkh</u>, 2 vols. ed. Ehsan Eshraqi, Tehran, 1359-1363/ 1980-1984.

NA   Muhammad Afushtah Natanzi, <u>Naqāwat al-athār fī dhikr al-akhyār</u>, ed. Ehsan Eshraqi, Tehran, 1350/1971.

SM1   <u>Sarīh al-milk</u>, Zayn al-'Abidin 'Abidi, (Shawwal 977 AH). Mss. 3598, microfilm 10; Iran Bastan Museum.

SNS   Husayn Ibn Abdal Zahidi, <u>Silsilāt al-nasab safavīyah</u>, Berlin, 1924.

SS   Ibn Bazzaz Ardabili, <u>Safwat al-safa</u> (759/1358), ed. Ahmad Karim Tabrizi, Bombay, 1911; reprint, 1990.

TA   Jalal al-din Yazdi Munnajim, <u>Tārikh-i 'Abbāsi, ya rūznāma-yi Mulla Jalāl</u>, ed. S. Vahidniya, Tehran, 1344/1963.

TAAA   Iskander Munshi, <u>Tārikh-i 'Alam Ara-yi 'Abbāsi</u>, 2 vols. ed. Iraj Afshar, Tehran, 1314/1975.

(Savory)   R. Savory, <u>History of Shah 'Abbas the Great</u>, Colorado, 1978.

TazT   Shah Tahmasb, <u>Tazkira-i Shāh Tahmāsb: sharh-i vāqayi va ahvālāt-i zindigānī-yi Shāh Tahmāsb biqalam-i khudash</u>, ed. Abd al- Shukur, Berlin-Charlottenburg, 1343/1964.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 0.
INTRODUCTION

A postcard arrived from Oxford, England in the spring of 1996, with an image of a beautifully tiled, resplendent building: the shrine of Shaykh Safi al-din Ishaq Ardabili. The card was from Reza Jafari, a resident of Ardabil, whose family still lived in Iran. Reza had generously offered me the hospitality of his brother's home while I studied the architecture of the shrine of Shaykh Safi. I am still moved by the few lines he wrote on that card, memories of his childhood growing up in the shadow of this once spectacular monument. He wrote of playing amid the debris and cobwebs which now blanket many parts of the shrine, and the dark nooks and crannies that provided fodder for a young child's imagination. He also wrote with bitterness of how the shrine had been ravaged in the past hundred and fifty years, its artifacts stolen and dispersed, its architecture fallen into disrepair. As my own research continued over the years, I encountered many of those once-cherished objects, now valued for their art, but no longer for the worship they articulated. A bronze lamp in one museum, a blue and white porcelain ewer in another, an illustrated manuscript encased in yet another glass covered museum stand; many are attributable to the shrine of Shaykh Safi where they were once considered to be sacred objects. Their worth is witnessed in the waqf statement which is emblazoned on almost all the books from the shrine library: "The dog of the threshold of His Presence, 'Ali b. Abi Talib, 'Abbas al-Safavi, has made the book waqf for the shrine of Shaykh Safi, for anyone who wishes to read, provided they do not take it outside the shrine. Anyone who does so is to share in the guilt of the blood of Imam Husayn."[1] The humble manner in

---

[1] Translation is from Anthony Morton, "The Ardabil shrine in the reign of Shah Tahmasp I," Iran, part I, vol. 12, (1974) :31-64 and part II, vol. 13 (1975) :39-58; I, p. 35.

which the Shah of Iran is represented points not only to his own piety (this was a title he had assumed), but also to the elevated status of the shrine and the significance of his endowments. At the same time as his endowments, Shah 'Abbas (d. 1624) commissioned the building of a magnificent Chīnīkhnāna (porcelain house) within the shrine, where the books and wares were to be housed. Unfortunately, the patron's desire to protect them was not honored, and it is with pathos that one sees again and again these words, now meaningless, inscribed on precious objects once valued by the great Shah 'Abbas.

This dissertation aims to replenish the shrine of Shaykh Safi, if not with material treasures, then through a reconstruction of its social, historical and architectural environment. Like the renovations that are currently taking place of the buildings of the shrine, there is an urgent need to preserve and restore its architectural history. It is, of course, difficult to remove either of these projects from their own modern biases, but I have attempted to provide as much information about the shrine as I could, hoping that the reader may judge for herself the many strands of influence that were woven into its narrative. A public institution like the shrine operates on many levels of meaning; the distance of historical time makes the ability to reconstruct entirely what the 'original' shrine was impossible. However, we can intuit the significance different buildings and, hence, rituals, had for sixteenth-century clients, shahs and dervishes alike.

The shrine was founded by the Sufi shaykh, Safi al-din Ishaq Ardabili, who died in 1334. His sons inherited the spiritual authority of the Shaykh and continued the religious traditions of his order. The story of the shrine is bound to the fortunes of its revered shaykhs - as their power and influence grew, so too did the popularity of their

spiritual home; in time, they developed his once humble abode into a powerful institution. In 1501 Shaykh Isma'il b. Haydar (d. 1524) grasped power in the capital, Tabriz, and declared himself king. When the Sufis of Ardabil became the Shahs of Iran, their increased prestige was proudly displayed at the ancestral shrine, through built projects and generous endowments. The shrine's unique relationship to imperial power brought it a great deal of attention, by chroniclers, foreign travelers, and of course, its royal patrons. However, by the end of the Safavid rule in the eighteenth century, the shrine's importance also began to wane. The Russian occupation of Azerbaijan in the nineteenth century wrought immense damage on the estate of the shrine, such that a major portion of its library was removed to St. Petersburg where it now resides, at the Russian National Library (called the Dorn collection). This state of neglect and depredation continued and the buildings were allowed to deteriorate until the beginning of the last century, when the Iranian government began renovations there. Later in the twentieth century, what remained was taken away to be housed in museums in Teheran. Since the 1979Islamic Revolution, the shrine's fortunes have changed: it is now the crowning glory of Ardabil, albeit more as a tourist attraction than a religious sanctuary. Perhaps it is because the people of Ardabil pride themselves in being staunch believers and see the shrine as representative of their early links to Iran's conversion to Shi'ism. In posters about the province of Ardabil (recently separated from the jurisdiction of Tabriz) the shrine symbolizes the new political and cultural renaissance envisioned by the state authorities - a situation ironically similar to that in the sixteenth century! Unfortunately, its prestige has been gained at the cost of its past - the graves have been removed and the place is 'sterilized' to the extent that it is difficult to imagine its original vibrancy.

It may be because of its religious associations that the shrine of Shaykh Safi has been largely ignored by modern architectural historians. Or perhaps it is because its history can only now be unraveled, thanks to the accessibility of more published Safavid manuscripts and the subsequent surge in scholarly interest in the period. In most surveys of Iranian architecture the shrine is mentioned fleetingly in the context either of Shah 'Abbas' porcelain endowments[2] or the famous 'Ardabil carpets' that were rumored to be from the shrine.[3] None of them utilize original primary data, rather they restate old, simplified assumptions about the buildings. Lisa Golombek does include the shrine of Shaykh Safi in her survey of Timurid buildings, but relies mostly on the work of Anthony Morton and Martin Weaver.[4] Recent historians have paid greater attention to the shrine, notably in regard to its Sariñ al-milk land registers. Monika Gronke's work on the economic and social context of Ardabil is informative, but only covers the pre-Safavid period, and is thus unable to comment on the shrine's major phases of architectural development.[5] Another study of economic history is given by Fariba Zarinebaf-Shahr, in which she limits herself to documenting women's endowments at the shrine.[6]

Although many travelers visited there during the Safavid rule, the earliest (and only) comprehensive Western study of the shrine's architecture was by Friederich Sarre,

---

[2] Arthur Upham Pope, Chinese Porcelains from the Ardebil Shrine, (New York, 1956).

[3] Sheila Blair, "Texts, Inscriptions and the Ardabil Carpets," in Iran and Iranian Studies: Essays in honor of Iraj Afshar, ed. K. Eslami, (Princeton, 1998).

[4] Lisa Golombek and Donald Wilber, The Timurid Architecture of Iran and Turan, (Princeton, 1988). An earlier article also mentions the shrine, Golombek, "The Cult of Saints and Shrine Architecture in the Fourteenth Century" in Near Eastern Numismatic, Iconography, Epigraphy and History, ed. D. K. Kouymjian, (Beirut, 1974), :419- 430.

[5] Monika Gronke, Derwische im Vorhof der Macht: Sozial-und Wirtschafttsgeschichte Nordwestirans im 13. und 14. Jahrhundert, (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1993).

[6] Fariba Zarinebaf-Shahr, "Economic Activities of Safavid Women in the Shrine-City of Ardabil," Iranian Studies 31/2 (1998) :247-261.

who photographed the buildings in 1897 and published them in 1910 and 1924.[7] His

work is primarily documentary, and in that is its value: the photographs are an important

record of the shrine before the twentieth-century renovations which repaired and replaced

much of the original epigraphy. They also show the shrine before it was 'cleaned up' and

the gravestones removed.

Two worthwhile modern studies are a survey by Martin E. Weaver and its 'sister'

article by Anthony H. Morton. Weaver was part of a 1970 Unesco team that was

advising the Iranian government about conservation of monuments, including the shrine

in Ardabil, and he provides an engineer's analysis of the condition of the shrine. His

work's contribution is in dating some of the structures, such as the Chīnīkhāna, which

was considered until his work proved it otherwise, to have been built by Shah 'Abbas (he

shows that is from the early fourteenth-century). He also reproduces some older

photographs and inventories much of the metal objects still remaining in the Chīnīkhāna.

More than twenty-five years old, Morton's analysis of the Sarīh al-milk and

corresponding buildings is still the seminal work on the shrine. However, he does not

profess to be an architectural historian, nor does he delve very deeply into the history of

the shrine. He does a thorough survey of travelers' observations, which are also quoted

by Weaver. His greatest contribution, beyond bringing the shrine to the attention of

contemporary scholars, is his detailed review of the Sarīh al-milk manuscripts and the

background information he gives on their acquisition. He juxtaposes the description of

---

[7] Friedrich Sarre, Ardabil, Grabmoschee des Schech Safis, (Berlin, 1924). I have not yet been able to see
the photographs of Morgan that Morton mentions; Jacques de Morgan, Mission Scientifique en Perse,
(Paris, 1894).

the shrine given in the Sarīh al-milk to the extant buildings and speculates upon their use. However, Morton leaves out the poetry that accompanies the descriptions and which adds a qualitative dimension to the understanding of the complex. Such lack of interest in the buildings as perceived and experienced in their own time, is sadly endemic to all studies of the shrine of Shaykh Safi.

As a consequence of his being the most detailed study to date, Morton's hypotheses about the shrine complex are used by later art historians as facts, and perpetuate many misconceptions. One example of these 'Chinese whispers' is given by S. Blair, who writes that "Morton first identified the Jannat Sarāy as Tahmasb's tomb in his lengthy and thorough analysis of the tomb based on the description in the Sarīh al-milk."[8]

Meanwhile, Morton actually wrote, "As in the case of the Chīnīkhāna, the choice seems to lie between assuming the building was meant for some ritual function special to dervishes or that it was a tomb. If it was a tomb, one might even suggest that from its size it was intended for the burial of Shah Tahmasp, who at one time may have thought of imitating his father's example and being buried at Ardabil, although in fact he was buried at Mashhad."[9] The if and might not withstanding, Morton's entire discussion of the Jannatsarā ("Paradisal palace") is speculative, raising questions such as why a young king, at the age of twenty three and at the height of his power, would build a mausoleum, especially one he would not need for another fifty years! Both Blair and Robert Hillenbrand marvel at the openness of the building, yet curiously do not consider that

---

[8] Sheila Blair, "Texts, Inscriptions and the Ardabil Carpets," p. 141. See also Robert Hillenbrand, "Safavid Architecture," in Cambridge History of Iran, vol. 6, (Cambridge, 1986); p. 771.
[9] Anthony Morton, "The Ardabil shrine in the reign of Shah Tahmasp I," II, p. 43.

perhaps the reason for such easy and available access could be that this was the setting

for some public ritual, for example, an initiation ceremony. The doors open onto the

graveyard and the gardens which were frequently visited, and the kitchen from which

food would be served to the gathering in the Jannatsarā. My dissertation aims to redress

some of the over-simplified portrayals of the shrine of Shaykh Safi in order to open up

new and better contextualized interpretations of Safavid architecture.

In Iran, most of the studies associated with the shrine are by those involved with

its conservation, such as Isma'il Dibaj, who published a survey of the shrine in 1955 and

1965; he was involved with the shrine's restoration and notes the inscriptions and repairs

to the buildings.[10] Similar to his are books written by S. Jamal Torabi-Tabatabai and

Baba Saffari which state the history of the shrine and record its inscriptions.[11] That of

Torabi-Tabatabai, who was the director of the Tabriz Museum, is probably the better one

in terms of fuller epigraphic documentation, but he, too, sometimes misreads the

inscriptions (such as Mahmud Nuqtavi instead of Muhammad al-Baghdadi in the

genealogy written in the Dār al-ḥuffāz). The Iranian Ministry for Heritage (Sāzmān-i

mīrās-i farhangī) has an active office in Ardabil which has been surveying and drawing

up the extant buildings of the shrine.[12] In their publications they have updated the plan of

---

[10] Isma'il Dibaj, Rāhnama-yi āsār-i tārīkhī-yi Azerbayjan-i Sharqī, (Tabriz, 1955); reprint, (Tabriz, 1964).

[11] S. Jamal Torabi-Tabataba'i, Asār bāstānī-yi Azerbayjān: Asār o abnīya-yi tārīkhī-yi shahristānhā-yi Ardabīl, Arsbarān, Kalkhorān, Sarāb, Mishgīnshahr, Mughān, 2Vol., (Tabriz, 2535 Shahanshahi); Baba Saffari, Ardabil dar guzargāh-i tārīkh, 3 vols. (Tehran, 1971).

[12] Mohammed Ali Mukhlis, Fehrist-i binhā-yi tārīkhī-yi Azerbaijan-i Sharqi, (Tehran, 1371/1992); Buyuk-i Jama'i, Nigāhī ba āsār o abnīya-yi tārīkhī-yi Ardabil, (Tehran, 1374/1995).

the shrine, but they repeat Torabi-Tabatabai's epigraphic analyses.[13] The work of Mr. Mahmud Mousavi from the Ministry for Heritage, who has been conducting archeological digs at the shrine, promises to shed important light on its development.[14]

The extant buildings of the shrine of Shaykh Safi are the most important data that we have concerning its history. Although much of their epigraphy has been repaired, and sometimes replaced, a significant amount remains and provides information about the buildings' designation. Sarre's photographs are useful here as they help determine which parts were replaced in the twentieth century. Two texts are supplemental to the buildings. They are, first, the fourteenth-century Safwat al-safa written by Ibn Bazzaz Ardabili, which is a biography of Shaykh Safi's life. Written shortly after his death, the book presents important information about the shrine's establishment and architectural development. In addition, one can gather material that assists in understanding the lived qualities of the shrine, such as specific rituals that the Shaykh performed, which buildings were given most attention, and the shrine's popular appeal. A complement to the legendary history of the Safwat al-safa is the Sarīh al-milk, a list of the shrine's property transactions, that was compiled in 1570 by orders of Shah Tahmasb. The writer was 'Abidi Beg Shirazi, the famous poet and court historian, whose descriptions of the shrine were used in part by Morton. Another Sarīh al-milk, of Muhammad Tahir Isfahani, was written at the end of Shah 'Abbas' reign and was meant to be an addendum to the first. The Sarīh al-milks, especially the former, contain detailed information about the shrine's

---

[13] The Ministry for Heritage was, nonetheless very generous in allowing me to make blueprint copies of their documentation, which have been helpful in discerning recent changes to the shrine.

[14] The one excavation I saw was of what I believe is the old Sharbatkhāna, as described by 'Abidi Beg Shirazi.

land holdings and monetary gifts, which were sometimes made for the shrine's upkeep and embellishment.

Safavid chronicles offer a range of information, depending on the authors' own disposition and background.[15] For example, a sixteenth-century writer, Hasan Beg Rumlu, covers the period up to 1577 and gives important details about the inception of the Safavid dynasty. Being a Qizilbash notable himself, he was knowledgeable about the dynamics of the tribal consortiums and seems also familiar with the shrine and city of Ardabil.[16] In contrast there is Qazi Ahmad Qummi, who does not appear to be too familiar with the physical shrine, but gives a great deal of information about the myths surrounding it. His interest in architecture is obvious in other places, such as his accounts of Qum, his familial city. Shah Tahmasb's memoirs are an important trajectory into the ruler's mindset and self-image, and give essential details into the reconstruction of his ancestral shrine, including his building of the Jannatsarā. Shah 'Abbas' astrologer, Jalal al-din Yazdi is perhaps the best known of the Safavid historians in regard to the shrine of Shaykh Safi, for he reports about the Shah's visits there and his important endowments to the shrine. He also gives a rare eye-witness account of the architectural repairs that were

---

[15] Shohleh Quinn's research explores in detail the historiography of Safavid chronicles. See S. Quinn, "The Historiography of Safavid Prefaces," in ed. C. Melville, Safavid Persia: the History and Politics of an Islamic Society, (London and New York, 1999):1-26; Historical Writing during the Reign of Shah 'Abbas I, (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1993). Quite often, though, the later ones merely repeat information found in earlier ones. There are notable exceptions whose specific contributions are highlighted in the dissertation.

[16] According to Morton, a similar text is the Afzal al-tavārīkh of Fazli Isfahani, in whose first volume (at Eton College) is are given many details about the shrine's administration. Anthony H. Morton, "The early years of Shah Isma'il in the Afzal al-tavarikh and elsewhere," in C. Melville ed., Safavid Persia: the History and Politics of an Islamic Society, (London and New York: I.B. Tauris), 1996, :27-52. However, I have so far only been able to consult the second, British Library, volume, which is not as helpful in that regard (OR 4678). A third volume was recently discovered by Charles Melville, about which he reports in his article, "A Lost Source for the reign of Shah 'Abbas: the Afzal al-tawārīkh of Fazli Khuzani Isfahani," Iranian Studies, 31/2 (1998) :263-266. The volumes cover, respectively, the reigns of the shahs Isma'il, Tahmasb, and 'Abbas I.

ordered at this time, such as the building of a royal loggia in the Dār al-huffāz (Hall of readers). There is also a late seventeenth-century account given by a Zahidi relative (cognates of the Safavids), Shaykh Husayn Zahidi, who was intimately familiar with the shrine as his father had been the mutawalli (administrator) there. Zahidi gives information about the origins of the buildings, which may not be true, but were part of the local lore, as well as specific details about repairs made by his father.[17] The diversity witnessed in this small sample of texts is indicative of the range of information that such chronicles and histories contain; however, it is important to be aware of the context in which they were written. For example, it appears that Zahidi's purpose for writing the family account is in validation of his family's claims upon the shrine's administration.

The variety of material evidence about the shrine is not limited to historical texts alone. This study utilizes many different media, from silver door plaques to pilgrimage manuals, to provide as comprehensive an understanding of the shrine as possible. Although it is generally agreed that there is not much information on Safavid popular religion, the shrine and other 'non-historical' sources do indeed give a glimpse of ritual life in the sixteenth century - however limited it may be to clients and patrons of the shrine. Manuscripts, such as stories of the Shi'i Imams or Sufi masters, that were illustrated at this time, are an additional source for picturing the image of piety held by the Safavid readers of these books. Poetry about the palaces of Tahmasb and of the shrine of Shaykh Safi, both written by 'Abidi Beg Shirazi, furthers our understanding of

---

[17] Hasan Beg Rumlu, Ahsan al-tawārīkh, ed. 'Abd al-Husayn Nava'i, (Tehran, 1349); Qazi Ahmad Qummi, Khulāsat al-tavārīkh, 2 vols. ed. Ehsan Ishraqi, (Tehran, 1359-1363); Jalal al-din Yazdi Munnajim, Tārikh-i 'Abbāsi, ya rūznāma-yi Mulla Jalāl, ed. S. Vahidniya, (Tehran, 1344/1963). Husayn b. Abdal Zahidi, Silsilāt al-nasab safavīyah, (Berlin, 1924).

the very ambiguous nature of Safavid panegyric and how anything associated with the Shah, including architecture, was elevated to a semi-Divine status.

This dissertation touches upon distinct moments in the shrine's development, from its inception as a Sufi zawiya to its apogee as the dynastic mausoleum of the Safavid shahs. Architecture is considered in a broad sense to be inclusive of disparate modes of use, perception, and inhabitation. Its representations could be allegorical, or poetic; the buildings may be studied in terms of their materiality, or the rituals they housed. The patronage of the shrine could be undertaken by local Ardabili men and women, whose charity was a pious obligation, or by the Safavid kings and queens, whose power was displayed through their financial and architectural endowments. The importance of the shrine of Shaykh Safi lay precisely in its appeal to all strata of society and its central position in sixteenth-century Iranian political culture. As a highly frequented and popular edifice, the shrine's architecture could also be viewed as a template for studying the emerging Safavid aesthetic; one which merged the royal with the religious, the palatial with the sacral, in an innovative and resourceful manner.

Although the focus of the study is on the early Safavid shrine, it was not possible to isolate that period or to ignore the previous two hundred years of its history. The longue durée method is appropriate here, as it gives a more holistic view of the shrine. It hints at the shrine's past, but more importantly, highlights what that past was perceived to be in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Thus, each chapter (except Chapter IV) begins with the pre-Imperial shrine, as depicted in the <u>Safwat al-safa</u> and <u>Sarīh al-milk</u>. The shrine is regarded as a complex institution whose architecture and history are heterogeneous; as a result, the chapters in this dissertation are arranged topically, rather

than in a chronological manner. The issues addressed are not independent of each other, but rather present different angles from which to view the shrine. The chapters are treated as layers that blanket our knowledge of the shrine of Shaykh Safi, and each one reveals a particular facet of its evolution. As such, there are sometimes necessary overlaps; but each subsequent chapter brings us a little closer to understanding this recondite establishment.

The dissertation ends with Shah 'Abbas I, whose projects had the greatest impact on the built environment of the shrine, unmatched by the minor changed rendered by his heirs. Beyond the architectural dimension was the socio-political one, such that Shah 'Abbas may be viewed as a hinge about which two different periods of Safavid history are hung: the early period with its tangible connections to the past, and the later one in which that past was ossified. In the latter period, the shrine's centrality to Safavid culture was greatly reduced, supplanted by the increased popularity of Shi'i sanctuaries in Mashhad and Qum.[18] In this dissertation we will discuss the shrine in the early Safavid period, a transitional moment, of which the shrine of Shaykh Safi was a prime example. Timurid influences were still visible alongside the emerging artistic vocabulary that would characterize later Safavid projects. Older artistic paradigms were reinterpreted and novel architectural solutions found in order to represent most fully the young dynasty's imperial aspirations.

The first chapter studies the urban and mythic context of the shrine, that is, how the shrine was situated in the city of Ardabil and also its place, as legend, in sixteenth-

---

[18] Likewise, Safavid Sufism was supplanted by Imamism in the religious arena; the Qizilbash authority gave way to ghulām conscription in the military; and in the ḥarem, the Queen mother's influence superceded that of the lala.

century society. The Safwat al-safa and later chronicles pay much attention to Ardabil,

subsequently called the Dār al-irshād (abode of guidance), in recognition of its close

association with the Safavid cult. The miraculous stories about the shrine in the city give

a qualitative significance to the site, such as its associations with the Prophet Muhammad

and Imam 'Ali - clearly showing the Shi'i leanings of Safavid writers, and hinting at the

types of renovation undertaken by the Shahs. The story of the shrine's foundation and its

ensuing development is explored here, and reveals how the shrine, once located in the

perimeter of the city, soon became its center. The shrine could be considered as a

miniature city itself, with baths, inns, and caravansaries in the Ardabil bazaar.

Nonetheless, the shrine of Shaykh Safi was but one point in an expansive net of regional

religious centers, and its similarity to other Sufi institutions is also considered.

The second chapter begins by describing the zawiya of Shaykh Safi, and its

growth from a modest room in the Shaykh's home, to a vast monumental aggregate.

There is an important difference in scale and meaning between the zawiya founded by the

Shaykh and the shrine (hazira) that evolved after his death. The pivotal part played in the

architectural development of the shrine by his son, Sadr al-din Musa, and grandson,

Shihab al-din Mahmud, is seen in the Safwat al-safa, as well as in thirteenth- and

fourteenth-century endowment deeds in the Sarīh al-milk. The surviving structures are

studied individually and chronologically, starting with the earliest extant one, the

Haramkhāna, built by Shaykh Safi in the thirteenth century. The legendary shrine may be

juxtaposed to the sixteenth-century one described in 'Abidi Beg Shirazi's eulogistic

poems in the Sarīh al-milk, which gives a description of the Safavid shrine during the reign of Shah Tahmasb (d. 1576). The shrine of Shaykh Safi is a veritable showcase of Iranian architecture. Starting with the Haramkhāna one can see here Ilkhanid, Timurid and early Safavid styles, unified in their functional interdependence.[19] The buildings are analyzed in terms of formal and stylistic parallels, and functional and geographic proximity is also considered. Anatolian Sufi shrines provide an important analogy, showing that Safavid architecture's sphere of influence went far beyond its own Western borders. The epigraphy in the shrine reveals a conscious program for disseminating the imperial message, which is further explored in later chapters.

The third chapter discusses another aspect of the shrine, namely, its economic activity. By studying the waqf endowments at the shrine, one is able to discern the shrine's diverse clientele, and their different methods of benevolence. Whether donating candlesticks or vast tracts of farmland, the patrons of the shrine displayed here their piety and deep concern with gaining Divine rewards in the afterlife. The perpetual gifts were made not only by rulers, but by local Ardabili merchants and traders. Sub-imperial patronage, that is, by government officials, revealed aspirations more complex than mere charity: the shrine's close association with the Shahs made it an ideal site for displaying political allegiances and gaining access to the royal person. The endowments often took the form of income generated by surrounding villages, as well as stores in the Ardabil

---

[19] Hillenbrand acknowledges the value of studying the shrine of Shaykh Safi when he writes, "The Ardabil material in architecture and the minor arts is also of vital importance in highlighting the continuity between late Timurid and early Safavid work; if that continuity is not recognized, the transition to the mature Safavid style under Shah 'Abbas I is lost,...Ardabil is important in that, for the most part, it is a time capsule in which the arts of early Safavid Iran are displayed side by side and medium by medium, to create an ensemble in which, for once, the decorative arts can be seen in context, enhancing each other and almost bandying themes across the space of the shrine." R. Hillenbrand, Islamic Art and Architecture, (London, 1999); p. 236.

bazaar. Women played a significant role in the shrine's affairs as donors and partners in

property transactions. The shrine's wealth is apparent in the quantity of property

transactions undertaken by its administrators, especially after the Imperial phase. The

Sarīh al-milk lists property from Ardabil's environs, as well as from as far away as Gilan

and Mazandaran.

A detailed examination of the shrine's administration in this chapter, notably the

role of the mutawalli, reveals much in terms of its social and political hierarchy. In

Ardabil, as at the shrine of Imam Reza in Mashhad, the ruling Shah was the titular

mutawalli, with a secondary position reserved for a deputy who oversaw the day-to-day

functioning of the shrine. This secondary position was a highly contested one, as seen by

Zahidi's long essay, and mainly reserved for members of the extended Safavid family -

with significant exceptions. The changing political arena of Safavid Iran was reflected in

the shrine's administration and demographics. What had earlier been the dominion of the

Ardabili elite, was soon controlled by Qizilbash loyalist of Shah Isma'il and his heirs.

The shrine's representatives (wakīl), who had previously been local officials, were also

replaced: henceforth all deeds were attested by religious authorities (qāzī), probably

appointed by the central government.

The centralization of authority is one of the themes raised in the fourth chapter,

which analyzes royal patronage at the shrine. The shrine of Shaykh Safi was part of Shah

Tahmasb's larger scheme of repairing mosques and shrines, such as those at Isfahan,

Mashhad and Qum. In Ardabil, the complex was transformed to cohere with the

emerging architectural vocabulary that would later characterize Safavid architecture.

This chapter, which focuses entirely on the early Safavid period, is the heart of the dissertation and ties together the issues of mythology, piety, and architecture raised earlier. It situates the shrine within its social, political and religious environment, such that the architectural projects undertaken by the Safavid rulers are contextualized. The essay views the shrine of Shaykh Safi as an extension of the imperial image of the Shahs, owing to its unique position as their ancestral and spiritual home. Moreover, the shrine was the locus of their economic power, as witnessed in the previous chapter; it was also the rallying ground for the fervent Qizilbash supporters, arguably the source of Shah Isma'il's early victories.

The Shahs' popular appeal, which they made good use of, was owing to their lineage: as descendants of Shaykh Safi and also of the Prophet Muhammad, the persona of the Shah was imbued with an aura of sanctity. In 1533 Shah Tahmasb had ordered the re-writing of the Safwat al-safa in which, it has been shown, Shaykh Safi's background was amended to lead back to Muhammad, through the seventh Shi'i Imam, Musa al-Kazim. I argue that as in the case of the redacted Safwat al-safa, the shrine of Shaykh Safi was altered by Shah Tahmasb in order to fit into his new vision of piety and worship - as witnessed in the farmān (imperial order) installed at the shrine. The architecture was rectified through the rebuilding of the courtyard, which included erecting a large public space, the Jannatsarā. The construction of this building complicates the issue, in that it reveals a duality in Shah Tahmasb's agenda: while trying to shift the focus of the shrine away from the more unorthodox practices that took place at the shrine, nonetheless, the Shah did adhere to older Sufi traditions that could not so easily be replaced. In addition,

the Jannatsarā, called a sanctified <u>maqsūra</u>, might also be seen as a royal enclosure, in which the Shah would preside over the royal and religious ceremonial of the shrine.

The coalescing of Sufi and '<u>Shahi</u>' authority at the shrine of Shaykh Safi is most cogently witnessed in the patronage of Shah Tahmasb's grandson, 'Abbas I. In addition to the Chīnīkhāna mentioned before the Shah also re-embellished the Dār al-huffaz and rebuilt the attached alcove which led into the tomb tower of Shaykh Safi. The renovation of this fourteenth-century building was a grand project, which transformed the shrine forever. The Chīnīkhāna and Dār al-huffaz were the dynamic culmination of the palatial, hence imperial, aesthetic hinted at by Shah Tahmasb's Jannatsarā. The epigraphy within the Dār al-huffaz praised not only the founder of the order, but his royal progeny, who clothed themselves in the cloak of piety and semi-divinity; its majestic scale was the appropriate setting for the dramatic display of authority, both temporal and spiritual. In the neighboring Chīnīkhāna Shah 'Abbas' porcelain collection, illustrated albums, histories and ancestral genealogies, were stored. This opulent interior signaled a portentous turning point in Safavid architectural history, moving from religious motivations for architectural patronage to more temporal concerns based on a reinterpretation of Safavid sovereignty.

The changes brought about in the political arena were, of course, meant to transform the fabric of Safavid society. An appropriate site for judging the effect of the imperial policies would be at a public institution, such as the shrine of Shaykh Safi. The sixteenth-century shrine was an oblique reflection of the one founded by Shaykh Safi - refracted now through historical time. However, its appeal was as strong as ever for the

populace of Ardabil and the pilgrims who came to visit the tombs and graveyard. It was this energy that the rulers' tried to trap and steer toward their ideological conception.

Its role as the dynastic mausoleum of the rulers notwithstanding, the shrine of Shaykh Safi was the site of pious worship, plebian as well as sovereign. Despite scarcity of material evidence about Safavid Sufism or devotion, in the last chapter it was deemed necessary to imagine the disparate stories once told in this now silent arena, by reconstructing the rites which the buildings and courtyards may have enclosed. The supposed polarities between common and royal ceremonial are explored in order to question the idea of a monolithic, overarching authority at the shrine. The study shows that as much as was changed by the rulers, significantly in fact, much remained the same; the customary rituals were long-lived and had a trajectory all their own.

Accounts recorded by foreign travelers shed light upon the continuing vitality of the shrine. Certainly, their vision is blurred by their own cognition, but acknowledging that point, they were nonetheless witnesses and participants, albeit as outsiders. The Venetian traveler, Michel Membre, who attended the court of Shah Tahmasb, has left us with an invaluable description of an initiation ceremony, the Chub-i tārīq. This rare account shows that many Safavid rituals continued over time. The rites described by Membre are similar not only to those recorded in the thirteenth-century Safwat al-safa, but also to later ones, as written in the eighteenth-century administrative manual, the Tazkirāt al-muluk. Once again, the Jannatsarā at the shrine of Shaykh Safi aids us in interpreting spatially the halls in which these rituals took place. The names of the buildings shifted over time - khalvatsarā, chillakhāna, tauhīdkhāna - and may be

indicative of changes also in meaning of Safavid ritual. By Shah 'Abbas' reign already,

the Sufi devotions in the tauhīdkhāna were mostly part of the imperial pageantry, a

symbolic reminder of the origins of the great Shahs. However, at the shrine of Shaikh

Safi many other voices were also heard, whether chanting in the Sufi retreats, reciting the

Qu'ran in the Dār al-ḥuffāz, or whispering in awe at the beauty of the royal library, the

famed Chīnīkhāna.

*

In this dissertation, I have attempted to initiate a discussion on Safavid architecture in the

context of its political, social and religious milieu. The multiplicity of meanings

imbedded in a project as complex as the shrine of Shaykh Safi caution us against

oversimplified answers about 'origin' and 'influence' - the usual manner in which Safavid

architecture has previously been studied. This dissertation hopes to remedy some of the

misconceptions about architectural production in this period. Safavid architecture has

been called derivative of Timurid styles, but we must question the meaning of these

revivals; it has been deemed repetitive, without wondering what the implications of this

standardization were in terms of a unifying imperial aesthetic; and it has even been stated

that there is no extant early Safavid architecture until Shah 'Abbas' buildings in Isfahan,

but we know that the shrine of Shaykh Safi (as other mosques and shrines) was

patronized from early in the Safavid period, with very concrete changes happening during

the reign of Shah Tahmasb.

The buildings at the shrine of Shaykh Safi may be seen as icons of imperial power, tempered nonetheless by the exigencies of public devotion. For example, charity was a primary component of ritual enactment, as commerce was another one which allowed for the fulfillment of pious obligations by the shrine's benevolent estate. The method of layering these strands of inquiry has, I hope, benefited the study of the shrine. As each chapter reveals another aspect of the shrine's social and architectural environment it brings us a little closer to restoring the shrine of which pilgrims and little children dreamt.

CHAPTER I.
THE SHRINE AND THE CITY

Oh excellent light of the eyes, core of the heart, Ardabil
Gabriel's wing is the sweeper of your magnificence.
To your pilgrims arrives good news from the devoted ones,
That in your gardens, "[is] a spring therein, named Salsabil [76:18]."
- Sarih al-milk, Zayn al-'Abidin ('Abidi Beg Shirazi), Shawwal 977 AH

The aim of this chapter is to arrive at an understanding of the shrine of Shaykh Safi al-din

Ishaq through an analysis of the Safavid city, Ardabil. It is believed that by studying the

affect of this dynamic cultural institution on the geography of its host city, one can begin

to comprehend the types of choices and programmatic decisions that influenced the

architecture of the shrine complex itself. Here, architecture is itself broadened to include

material which focuses on the social and economic concerns of an urban public. To this

end, the data used is mainly textual, relying on contemporary historical narratives and the

shrine's land registers. Primary documents are the Safwat al-safa of Tawakkul Ibn al-

Bazzaz, a biography written around 751/1350,[1] and two land registers of the shrine of

Shaykh Safi (Sarih al-milk): one of Zayn al-'Abidin 'Abidi, compiled in 977/1570,[2] and

second, of Muhammad Tahir Isfahani, compiled in 1038/1629.[3] The first part of this

analysis studies the shrine as an amalgam of mythic and socio-religious expectations, its

complexity evident in the disparate descriptions that informed its perception by sixteenth-

---

[1] Ibn Bazzaz, Safwat al-safa (759/1358), ed. Ahmad Karim Tabrizi, (Bombay, 1911, Reprint, 1990); henceforth SS.

[2] Sarih al-milk, Zayn al-'Abidin 'Abidi, (Shawwal 977 AH). Mss. 3598, microfilm 10; Iran Bastan Museum; henceforth SM1.

[3] Sarih al-milk, Muhammad Tahir Isfahani, (Rabi-ul Awwal 1038 AH). Mss. 3719, microfilm 9-2; Iran Bastan Museum; henceforth SM2.

century patrons. However, the power of the shrine was not in the imagination alone, but also in its affect on the topography of Ardabil. The hold that the shrine authorities had on the economy of the city necessitated the growth of subsidiary services, such as inns and bazaars. Thus, the second half of this chapter touches upon the shrine's economy and its physical repercussions on the built fabric of the city. The information gleaned from such a study is valuable in understanding the public role of the shrine of Shaykh Safi and, also, in more general terms, shedding light on the character of Sufi shrine cities of medieval Iran.

Ardabil is situated east of Tabriz and forty kilometers west of the Caspian Sea on a plateau at the base of Mount Sabalan. The region around the city is arid, and although farming with the aid of irrigation is possible, the severe and extreme climate hinders any large-scale cultivation. As such, the major source of livelihood for the people of medieval Ardabil was trade and commerce. Sited at the edge of what was considered the dār al-harb (abode of war), the city had been an important Islamic settlement from as early as the ninth century, competing for prominence with nearby Maragha and Tabriz. In the tenth century it was a central link for routes connecting the Caspian to Zanjan, Maragha and Tabriz. In the thirteenth century there were extra-murous orchards, but Ardabil did not have a green belt surrounding it, like Herat, for example. At that time it was walled with four gates, within which were the citadel and the main Congregational mosque. The area outside the city gates was divided into seven agricultural districts (khāns) on which Ardabil was economically dependant.[4]

---

[4] EIr, s.v. "Ardabil."

It was during the Ilkhanid period, with the growing popularity of its founder, Shaykh Safi al-din Ishaq (d. 735/1334), that the religious and political character of the city, as witnessed in the Safavid period, began to take shape. Ardabil was identified through its association with the Shaykh's lodge and after his death, his mausoleum and its subsidiary institutions became the primary focus of the city. The popularity of Shaykh Safi was reflected in his order, the Ṣafāvīyya, which continued as a vibrant social and political force in the region.[5] By the fifteenth century the Ṣafāvīyya could mobilize a following of such magnitude that in 907/1501 their leader, Isma'il (d. 930/1524), defeated the reigning powers in Azerbaijan (the Shirvanshahs and Aq Qoyunlus) and declared himself shah in Tabriz. The prosperity of the shrine and Ardabil was parallel to the fortunes of the Safavid family, and its prominence continued until the middle of the eighteenth century, waning with the loss of power of its imperial benefactors.[6]

The relationship between the shrine of Shaykh Safi and the city of Ardabil was a symbiotic one, the growth and change of one mirrored, and often caused by, the other. A variety of reasons have been offered by historians for the popularity of Sufi shaykhs and their zawiyas, or lodges, in the medieval Islamic world.[7] According to Lisa Golombek, the profusion of Sufi organizations in fourteenth-century Iran was a result of the devastation wrought by the Mongols in the aftermath of their victories over the Seljuks.

---

[5] 'Safaviyya' will represent the pre-imperial order. The use of the term 'Safavid' should signal the imperial dynasty.

[6] There has been an upsurge in importance of Ardabil in the past few years owing to its autonomy from the Tabriz government. For a contemporary socio-political study of the city, see H. Chehabi, "Ardabil becomes a Province: Center-Periphery Relations in Iran," IJMES 29, (1997):235-253.

[7] The term zawiya will be used for the shrine of Shaykh Safi during his lifetime; after his death it was subsequently termed 'maqbara', 'ḥazira', and 'āstāna.'

Cities dwindled and peasants were driven off the agricultural lands.[8] The fiscal reforms

of Ghazan Hasan (d. 704/1304) helped rejuvenate society, as did his patronage of

charitable Sufi institutions. Golombek uses as one of her examples the shrine of Shaykh

Safi in Ardabil, albeit without any primary historical references, to argue that the

hospices of the shaykhs provided welfare and refuge for the displaced masses. The view

of Sufism as social revival is shared by K. A. Nizami in regard to medieval India.[9]

However, although he also attributes the upsurge of khanaqas (Sufi lodges) as a response

to the Mongols, he places the emphasis on Islamic (not 'socialist') ideals of self

preservation. According to him, the fact that Muslim power was at its nadir prompted the

Sufis to take responsibility for social and political renewal of the religion. Both these

interpretations, that is, Sufism as a resistance or missionary movement, are difficult to

prove in the case of Shaykh Safi's zawiya in Ardabil. The sources mention the close

links that Shaykh Safi and his descendants had with the Ilkhans, often profiting from their

alliance.[10] The land registers show a thriving community in which property transactions

were a common source of wealth distribution among various strata of society. Also the

case of India cannot be applied to the Iranian region without caution. Although many of

the Ṣafāvīyya Sufis did proselytize, and Ardabil, too, was seen as being on the edge of the

dār al-harb, in the Safavid case conversions were not a priority until later in the fifteenth

---

[8] Lisa Golombek, "The Cult of Saints and shrine Architecture in the Fourteenth Century," in Near Eastern Numismatic, Iconography, Epigraphy and History, ed. D. K. Kouymjian, (Beirut, 1974) :419- 430.
[9] Khaliq Ahmad Nizami, "Some Aspects of Khanaqa Life in Medieval India," Studia Islamica VIII, (1957) :51-68.
[10] A parallel argument against assuming the rise of popular forms of worship as a reaction to poverty and destitution is made by Dr. Peter Brown regarding the cult of saints in Byzantium. He shows that this over simplifies the situation, giving a rather mono-dimensional interpretation. Peter Brown, "The Rise of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity," in Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity, (Berkeley, 1982).

century, and at that time for more complex religious and political means than simply renewal of Islam.[11]

Another analysis of the situation in medieval Iran, especially the Ilkhanid period, is given by Sheila Blair. She argues that Sufi shrines in the early fourteenth century were not only places of retreat for mendicants, but were social establishments providing services to a diverse clientele.[12] Analyzing sites in Iran, Egypt and Spain, she makes the case for a cultural and architectural language which was developed to be familiar to ascetics, scholars, and pilgrims. Her descriptions of the itinerant life of men such as Ibn Battuta argue for viewing Sufi shrines as public institutions. However, her portrayal of a rather homogenous environment throughout the Islamic world must be countered by studies which focus and highlight the very striking differences in these disparate regions.[13] It is through such details that the precise nature of society and the role of the Sufi shrine may be grasped. It is necessary to situate the specifics of a shrine organization within its urban, local and regional context to also better understand the role of pilgrimage and visitation in the early-modern period.

---

[11] For the non-missionary activities of the early Safaviyya order, see Michel Mazzaoui, Origins of the Safawids, (Wiesbaden, 1972). An example of a famous Safavid proselytizer was Qasim al-Anwar in Herat; see EIr, s.v. "Qasim al-Anwar."

[12] Sheila Blair, "Sufi Saints and shrine Architecture in the Early Fourteenth Century," Muqarnas 7, (1990) :35-49.

[13] Two contrasting roles played by Sufis may be seen in Julian Barnes, "The Dervish Orders in the Ottoman Empire," in ed. Raymond Lifchez, The Dervish Lodge: Architecture, Art and Sufism in Ottoman Turkey, (Berkeley, 1992) and Francisco Rodriguez-Manas, "Agriculture, Sufism and the State in Tenth/Sixteenth-Century Morocco," BSOAS (1996) :450-471.

The major biographical source for Shaykh Safi's life is the Safwat al-safa, which was written after the death of Safi, in the mid-fourteenth century. The author was Tawakkul Ibn al-Bazzaz who wrote the biography under the guidance of Shaykh Sadr al-din Musa, Safi's son and spiritual heir (khalīfa). The book is typical of Sufi biographical literature, with descriptions of Safi's childhood, his spiritual maturity, and the various miracles associated with him and his numerous disciples. The document was re-edited in 940/1533 by Abu al-Fath al-Husayni, under orders of the Safavid monarch, Shah Tahmasb I (d. 984/1576). Scholars have shown that major changes were made to the original at this time, such as the fabricated Shi'i ancestry of the Safavids.[14] The political and social reasons for this will be clearer in the following chapters, as we also witness similar 'reconstruction' at the shrine of Shaykh Safi.[15]

Shaykh Safi, whose life was typical of a religious mystic, became an archetype for the ensuing generations; his persona, as depicted by the Safavid family, casts light not only on the political and social climate of his lifetime, but that of the sixteenth century. The sixteenth-century rendition of the Safwat al-safa gives a number of dreams and visions about the life of Safi, which were often repeated in subsequent narratives and

---

[14] The familial genealogy given in the Safwat al-safa is: Shaykh Safi al-din "Abu'l Fath" Ishaq bin (b.) Amin al-din Gibrail b. al-Saleh b. Qutb al-din Abubakr b. Saleh al-din Rashid b. Muhammad al-Hafiz b. 'Awaz b. Firoz al-Kurdi al-Sinjani "Firoz Shah Zarin-kulah" b. Muhammad Saharfshah b. Muhammad b. Hasan b. Muhammad b. Ibrahim b. Ja'far b. Muhammad Isma'il b. Muhammad b. Ahmad al-'Arabi b. Muhammad al-Qasim b. Abu'l Qasim Hamza b. Imam Musa al-Kazim b. Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq b. Imam Muhammad al-Baqir b. Imam Zayn al-'Abidin Ali b. Imam Husayn b. Imam 'Ali b. Abi-Talib. SS, p. 70.
[15] The first to address this issue was Ahmad Kasrawi, as cited in Michel Mazzaoui, Origins of the Safawids. Certain scholars, like Monica Gronke, have accessed the original, a copy of which is in the Topkapi Museum in Istanbul. Monika Gronke, Derwische im Vorhof der Macht: Sozial-und Wirtschafttsgeschichte Nordwetirans im 13. und 14. Jahrhundert, (Stuttgart, 1993).

came into wide circulation. For example, one of Safi's dreams described in the *Safwat*

al-safa was popular among later historians: In the dream, Safi saw himself seated in the

dome of the Congregational mosque (jāmi') of Ardabil. Within, he saw a sun rising

which illuminated the entire world; the sun appeared to be his own face. His mother, to

whom he later retold the dream, explained it to mean that he would become a great

shaykh and his piety would be a guiding light for all.[16] Rewording the dream, a later

sixteenth-century historian saw this dream as a prophecy foretelling the rise of Shah

Isma'il and the Safavid dynasty.[17] This example shows that while many of the 'historic'

details may have been accurate, they must today be seen through sixteenth-century eyes –

the time of the book's redaction.

Shaykh Safi al-din Ishaq was born in 650/1252 in Kalkhoran, one of Ardabil's

seven districts, linked to the city via a road leading north out of the Rais Sa'ad gate. His

father, Amin al-din Gibrail, was a respected and wealthy farmer who owned land in the

village. According to the sixteenth-century redaction, the offspring of Amin al-din

Gibrail were Sayyids (direct descendants of the Prophet, Muhammad) through the

seventh Shi'i Imam, Musa al-Kazim. In his youth, Safi decided to take the mystic path

and went in search of a Sufi master with whom he could study. In Shiraz he heard of a

Shaykh Zahid (d. 700/1301) of Gilan who was reputed to have attained great heights in

mystical training, and Safi resolved to find him. After many years of searching, Safi

discovered the Shaykh and was invited to stay at his khanaqa. Safi's closeness to his

---

[16] SS, 15.

master had two significant consequences: his marriage to Shaykh Zahid's daughter,

Fatima, and his inheritance of the Shaykh's khirqa, or mantle. Through these events

Safi's spiritual genealogy was linked to that of Shaykh Zahid, such that it, too, led back to

'Ali ibn Abi Talib.[18] Now his legitimacy was two-fold: familial and spiritual.

The story of Safi's development, with its numerous miracles and cures, was a

typical one in Sufi hagiography, although it is not limited to the world of Sufism. His

search for the master, the journey to find him, and his return as a transformed and

enlightened man is a common trope, repeated in mythical tales as diverse as those of

Daedalus and Mahatma Buddha.[19] Shaykh Safi al-din Ishaq was characterized in the

Safwat al-safa as a pious and devout Sufi, who claimed that the purpose of his zawiya

was the feeding of the poor and aiding the weak.[20] During his youth, many of the cities of

north-western Iran had suffered not only on the hands of the Mongols, but had also been

destroyed by drought and black death.[21] The popular religion of the Sufis provided a

solace for the common folk. Perhaps it is within this context that Shaykh Zahid's and his

disciple Safi's teachings could be seen: as an ordering and cleansing of the religion of

fourteenth-century Azerbaijan, for they proscribed that the dervishes refrain from their

---

[17] Ghiyas al-din Muhammad Husayni Khwandamir, Habīb al-siyar fī akhbār afrad al-bashār, (Tehran, 1334/1955); p. 413-14. Sholeh Quinn has done a detailed study of many such cross-references in her Ph.D. dissertation, Historical Writing during the Reign of Shah 'Abbas I, (Ph.D. diss. Chicago, 1993).

[18] The spiritual genealogy given in the Safwat al-safa is: Shaykh Safi al-din Ishaq received his "tauba and khirqa and tarbīyat" from [f.] Sh. Ibrahim Zahid Gilani f.Sayyid Jamal al-din f. Sh. Shihab al-din Mahmud Tabrizi f. Rukn al-din al-Sajasi f. Abubakr al-Abhari f. Abu'l Najib Suhrawardi f. Qazi ...'Umar al-Bakri f. Muhammad al-Bakri f. Ahmad Aswad Dinwari f. Mamshad al-Dinwari f. Junaid b. Muhammad al-Baghdadi f. Sari b. al-Mughlis al-Saqti f. Ma'ruf al-Karkhi f. Daud Tai f. Habib al-'Ajami f. Hasan al-Basri f. 'Ali b. Abi-Talib. SS, p. 181.

[19] For an analysis of similar archetypes, see, J. Campbell, The Hero with a Thousand Faces, (Princeton, 1949).

[20] SS, p. 982.

[21] Gronke, Derwische, p. 77.

current habit of beggary and mendicancy and return to their family, finding for themselves a productive role in society.[22]

The non-hermetic nature of Safi's order resulted in its prosperity, both economic and political. Unlike other Sufi mystics, who were from the lower classes and had renounced the world by staying away from people, Shaykh Safi found his place within society. Coming from an affluent family of landowners with connections to the soil and the region, he was not an outsider to the community (although, perhaps, a 'stranger' in the esoteric sense). The shrine of Shaykh Safi was to be a place of asylum and security for all who entered it, where gifts were distributed in the form of blessed provisions (tabbaruk). The fame of the shrine was such that there were supplicants coming to it by the thousands, not all poor travelers. Stories are told where Safi prayed for the harvest, saved children from accidents, and negotiated on behalf of the villagers with government and tax officials. His role as an arbitrator and mediator was renowned, and many people came to his zawiya for advice and counsel. As such this institution played a social and religious part in the community. The relationship of the Shaykh with the ruling elite gave to him a position of authority and power.[23] The power was in part through his religious integrity which encouraged trust in him by the community; this in turn made him an ideal intermediary for the rulers of Azerbaijan. Shaykh Safi's position was rewarded through tax exemptions for his zawiya, and the wealth of his patrons and followers contributed to

---

[22] SS, p. 120.

[23] This is in contrast to other Sufi orders which shunned any relationship with temporal authority, for example, the Chistiyya in medieval India. Simon Digby, "The Sufi Shaykh and the Sultan: A Conflict of Claims to Authority in Medieval India," Iran 28, (1990) :71-81.

the zawiya's prosperity.[24] Sultan Uljaytu Khudabanda (d. 716/1316) and Prince Abu Said (d. 736/1335) came to pay homage to Shaykh Safi; also, the famous vizier, Rashid al-din (d. 718/1318) was reputed to have endowed a large soup kitchen at the zawiya.

Shaykh Safi, while being an unusually savvy politician, was not the only Sufi shaykh in fourteenth-century Azerbaijan. As evidenced in the Safwat al-safa and in later pilgrimage manuals of the region,[25] a number of Sufi khanaqas and zawiyas were located in cities like Tabriz and Maragha, and in villages like Sarav. These places were akin to the knots in an intricately woven net spread over the religious landscape. They were points of light for the believer in search of enlightenment, and havens of safety and protection for the common wayfarer searching for rest in a strange town. As in north-western India, the region was divided into spiritual territories (wilāyat) with clear boundaries for each Sufi brotherhood. In Tabriz there were a number of zawiyas, arranged according to the neighborhood, named after local shaykhs,[26] or after famous patrons, such as that in the Rab'-i Rashidi.[27] A study of the symbiotic relationships between these Sufi institutions would certainly reveal complex social dynamics. Here, we can merely point out one function, that is, being a support system for the Sufi brotherhoods. For example, in Tabriz, Shaykh Safi often stayed at the Rashidiyya khanaqa and at its adjoining hospice ('imārat); in Sultaniyya, he stayed at the zawiya of a

---

[24] See Vladimir Minorsky, "A Mongol Decree of 720/1320 to the family of Shaykh Zahid," BSOAS 16 (1954) :515-27.

[25] For example, that of Hafiz Husayn Karbala'i, Rawdat al-jinān wa jannāt al-janān, ed. Jafar Sultan al-Qurra'i, 2 vols., (Tehran, 1349/1970).

[26] Such as the zawiyas of Pir Imad al-din and Akhi Khair al-din in the neighborhood called Chahār Minār in Tabriz; RJ, pps. 162, 167 respectively.

Pira Ahmad Saqa; and, on his way to Qarabagh, he stayed at the khanaqa of an Amir

Damishq Khwaja. In Urumiya he stayed at the zawiya of a Pira Muhammad Adman,

where there convened a meeting of maulanas from Ardabil, Maragha and Sarav.[28] There

would be gatherings for sama' (recited poetry) and qawwālī (sung poetry) at these

zawiyas and khanaqas, with Shaykh Safi participating in them.[29]

Evidently, several towns and villages were distinguished by the presence of a holy

man, or Sufi shaykh. The relationship between the shaykh and the town was like that of a

patron saint and the city in early Christianity.[30] However, one not need look so far to

find parallels. In Samarqand, the complex called Shah-i Zinda was begun in 735/ 1334,

on a hill over-looking the city. The focus of the funerary ensemble was the tomb of

Qussam b. 'Abbas, a cousin of the Prophet. Similarly, Tus was honored by the presence

of the eighth Shi'i imam, Reza's mausoleum in nearby Mashhad, and the city of Qum

was blessed by the shrine of his sister, Fatima al-Ma'suma, who was buried outside this

city's gates. Later, the shrine of Khwaja Abdullah Ansari was built north of Herat in

829/1425, and was an important pilgrimage place where many from the Timurid royalty

were buried. Thus, in its evolution as a shrine city, Ardabil mirrors other medieval cities

of Eastern Islam, in which the shrine gradually became not only the center of the city, but

often its raison d'être.

---

[27] S. Blair, "Ilkhanid Architecture and Society: Endowment deed of the Rab'-i Rashidi," Iran 22, (1984) :67-90.

[28] SS, Tabriz, p. 288; Sultaniyya, p. 286; Qarabagh, p. 900; Urumiya, p. 418. These are a fraction of many such examples.

[29] SS, sama' at the zawiya of Khwaja Afzal in Sarav, p. 643; qawalli, p. 676.

It is recounted in the Safwat al-safa that when the time came for Safi to leave Gilan and

set up his own zawiya, he asked his master, Shaykh Zahid, where he should go. The

shaykh replied that there was no better place for him than Ardabil. The reason being that

the people there had purity of faith and did not believe in different 'schools of belief'

(mazāhib al-mukhtalifa). "Now Safi, go and build there a house such that the station

(maqām) of you and your children shall be here. And make the zawiya pure such that it

is a center for pilgrims [...] and for the seekers of God. Preach that men follow the true

religion and the straight path, and say to them, 'ajaibū da'ī Allah: respond to Allah's

summoner,'[31] in the four corners of the world."[32] The story of Ardabil's selection as the

revered city of Shaykh Safi, was repeated in historical narratives, in which their city was

often called dār al-irshād, (abode of guidance), no doubt in reference to it being the

location where the early Safavid ideology was formulated.

Qazi Ahmad Qummi, a historian writing in 999/1591 recounts a number of

stories, including the one above, in which Ardabil is praised and shown to be a divinely

blessed city. This elevated status is, of course, owing to the presence of Shaykh Safi's

shrine. He mentions a dream had by a prominent Ardabili Sayyid in which the man saw

the Prophet Muhammad in the vicinity of the Asfaris Gate in Ardabil, "which is now the

illumined grave and pure sanctuary and khanaqa of Shaykh Safi." In the center of that

---

[30] Peter Brown, "Town, Village and Holy Man: The case of Syria," in Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity, p.153.
[31] Al-Ahqaf, 46:31. This phrase is copied in the chronicles when they repeat this story e.g. Khwandamir and Karbalai. It is also written in a window niche of the Dār al-ḥuffāz of the shrine of Shaykh Safi.

site stood the Prophet and held up his hands in prayer. As dervishes kissed his feet, the Sayyid asked him the reason for his prayers. Muhammad replied that they were for Shaykh Safi al-din Ishaq, "who will spread and enlighten my religion." Qazi Ahmad also relates a tradition attributed to Imam 'Ali b. Abi Talib, which says, "We have in Ardabil a treasure not of gold nor of silver but of the sperm of men in the womb of the woman, whose name is the name of the Prophet of the mountain, of fear and terror. If you see him, come, and follow the man of the red headdress, even if through snow."[33] This mention of an exhalted genealogy refers not to Shaykh Safi, but to his illustrious descendant, Shah Isma'il, and to his leading those of the "red headdress," that is, the Qizilbash Turkmans. Ardabil, through such distinguished associations (with Muhammad and 'Ali), was construed in the sixteenth century as a holy Shi'i site, equal in importance to older pilgrimage shrines, like those in Mashhad and Qum.

According to Ibn Bazzaz, the zawiya of Shaykh Safi was initially built in the village of Kalkhoran, the place of his birth. He later decided to move to Ardabil as per Shaykh Zahid's suggestion, and to build a house and zawiya there. First, Safi went to the 'Door of the beermakers' (darb-i fuqīyān), which was on the outside of the city, but was unsuccessful in building there. He then tried the Bagh-i Asa'd (which was later in the possession of Sadr al-din Musa); the house here was not completed. He tried then a site outside the Naushahr Gate, but here too, the residence was not constructed. He finally was able to build his house, zawiya and gathering place on a site outside the Asfaris

---

[32] SS, p. 178.

[33] Qazi Ahmad Qummi, Khulāsat al-tawārīkh, 2 vols. ed. Ehsan Eshraqi, (Tehran, 1359-1363); p. 11.

Gate.[34] The location was the site of Safi's spiritual ecstasy (wajd) and brought great

pleasure to him, and Ibn Bazzaz writes that this was where his grave was situated.

Typical of the holy man, the part played by Shaykh Safi was a recondite one;

although able to communicate with and between different strata of society, he actually

belonged to none but the brotherhood of 'strangers.' This alienation was made evident in

the physical location of his zawiya, which was located between the Gūristān-i gharībān

(graveyard of the strangers) and the Asfaris Gate.[35] Why would a Sufi shaykh choose to

build his zawiya among the dead and disenfranchised? According to Ahmet Karamustafa,

many medieval dervishes chose solitary residence in cemeteries as a form of social

deviance.[36] However, given that renunciation and the asocial life was not one encouraged

by Shaykh Safi, and that his zawiya was a place of gathering for a diverse community,

this reason does not apply. Although the cemeteries were traditionally separated from

population, this did not diminish their importance in the ritual life of the community. As

the graves of saints became important pilgrimage sites in medieval Islamic cities, the

vitality of the cemetery as a public space increased.[37] The enhanced sacredness of such

burial sites made them even more desirable. Certainly the sanctified ethos of the

cemetery was a factor; but perhaps the answer can also be found in the adage: 'there can

not be two kings in one city.' The Sufi shaykh was equal in influence to the temporal

ruler whose territory extended till the gates of the city. As such, the shaykh and the

---

[34] SS, pps. 642, 761.
[35] M.Gronke, Derwische, p. 45. For a comparable analysis, see Sara Ethel Wolper, "The Politics of Patronage: Political Change and Construction of Dervish Lodges in Sivas," Muqarnas 12, (1995) :38-47.
[36] Ahmet Karamustafa, God's Unruly Friends: Dervish groups in the Islamic later middle period (1200-1550), (Salt Lake City, 1994), p. 21.

sultan could not coexist within each other's jurisdiction, and it was more prudent for the

Sufis to locate themselves outside the city walls.[38] The shrines and sanctified mausolea

created secondary zones of power, in the case of Shaykh Safi's it was manifested in a

complimentary religious-urban node away from the predominant Ardabil Congregational

mosque which was in the center of the town.

Growth of Shaykh Safi's zawiya complex was incremental; surrounding property,

mostly consisting of stores, was bought, demolished and new buildings erected that

would serve the shrine community. For example, at the time of the building of a new

market hall called Qaisarriya, Shaykh Sadr al-din built a large caravansary nearby.

Shaykh Safi had requested to be buried in a graveyard west of Ardabil, but after advice

from elders and the clerics, Sadr al-din Musa decided to bury him at his zawiya, in what

had originally been his retreat (khalvatkhāna).[39] His son, and successor to the taulīyat

(administration) of the shrine, Shaykh Shihab al-din Mahmud (who was seldom

mentioned in the historical documents, but was very significant in the development of the

shrine) bought a great deal of property near the shrine and built the 'Imarat Shihabiyya

there, which would have been a charitable institution as well as a commercial residence.[40]

The early part of the Sarīh al-milk of 'Abidi becomes silent regarding property

transactions after the third generation of Safaviyya shaykhs, ending with Shaykh Shihab

al-din Mahmud; only a few scattered accounts are given for the next century regarding

---

[37] For an analysis of cemetery and visitation in Mamluk Cairo, see Christopher Taylor, In the Vicinity of the Righteous: Ziyāra and the veneration of Muslim saints in late medieval Cairo, (Leiden, 1999).

[38] For a discussion of conflicts in Sufi and imperial authority, see Annemarie Schimmel, Islam in the Indian Subcontinent, (Leiden, 1980), p. 32; as well as, Wolper, "The Politics of Patronage."

[39] SS, p. 987.

holdings outside of Ardabil, like land in Toman Mishgin (now Mishgin Shahr). One

reason, put forward by Monika Gronke, is that the shaykhs became more and more

economically self sufficient and began purchasing land in their own name, not for the

estate of the shrine. At this point, they created separate registers for their private

holdings.[41] Another reason may be the volatile political climate of the time which

necessitated a more prudent approach to acquisition and display of wealth. Until a better

reason for the lacunae is found, these speculations must suffice.

URBAN CONTEXT

The popularity of the zawiya spread far. In the Safwat al-safa and in Safavid histories,

the authors often boast of the multitudes of people visiting the zawiya, such that all the

rest houses in Ardabil were overflowing. In order to accommodate the groups of pilgrims

and disciples of Shaykh Safi, a number of inns (khān) and caravansaries (sarāi) were built

by the estate (sarkār) of the zawiya.[42] A Sufi hospice (ribāt)[43] was built and endowed to

the zawiya "near the Asfaris Gate, at the entrance to the city of Ardabil," by the

Commander Shams al-din Daula Beg Mankaba (Juvaini), who was the sāhib-i dīvan of

---

[40] This would later be demolished by Shah Tahmasb in the mid. sixteenth-century for the construction of the Jannatsara.

[41] M.Gronke, Derwische.

[42] SS, p. 1062.

[43] Lenore Fernandes has defined the ribat as "Hospice for poor and old people; sufi hospice; sufi living quarters;" Leonor Fernandes, The Evolution of a Sufi Institution in Mamluk Egypt: the Khanqah, (Berlin, 1988), p. 148. In the Ottoman lands, the ribat was a "Sufi Hospice, originally designated a military emblem," Irene A. Bierman, R. Abou el-Haj, D. Preziosi, The Ottoman City and its Parts, (New York, 1991), p. 250.

Prince Abaqa (d. 680/1281).[44] Included with this endowment (and possibly adjacent to it) was a bathhouse (hammām) which was attached to the "Hazira of the Asfaris Gate." The ribāṭ and the hammām provided a service for the shrine residents and were also a source of income-generation for the estate.

The Sarīh al-milk of 'Abidi in which the details of this endowment were registered, comprised of an introduction by the author, an architectural description of the shrine in the sixteenth century, and regional divisions in which the shrine's properties were listed, whether purchased by the shrine or gifted to its estate, as seen in the previous example of Shams al-din Juvaini. The introduction states that the compilation had been ordered at the time of Shah Tahmasb. After poetic descriptions of the shrine and its dependencies, the writer turns to Ardabil and the properties owned by the estate in that town. These are divided into five sections: i. Stores (dukākīn), ii. Houses (khāneha) and Caravansaries (timche) and Hospices (ribāt), iii. Baths (hammamat), iv. Water mills (tahūnehā), v. Miscellaneous (kāghazhāt-papers). After describing the properties in Ardabil, the compiler turns to villages in the vicinity of that town, that included Kalkhoran, Alghar, Binan, and Masudabad among many others. This makes up about half of the Sarīh al-milk; the remaining half is concerned with property owned by the shrine in Tabriz, Toman Mishgin, Chakursa'd, Khalkhal, Sarab, Karamrud, Maragha,

---

[44] SM1, entry (e.) 31; SS, p. 218. The commander can be identified as Shams al-din Juvaini, the powerful sāhib-i divān of the Ilkhanid court. He was put to death in 1284 "at the gates of Ahar" (between Tabriz and Ardabil) by Prince Arghun (d. 1291), Abaqa's son; J. A. Boyle, "Dynastic and Political History of the Ilkhans," in Cambridge History of Iran, vol. 5 (1986), ed. J. A. Boyle (henceforth CHIr), p. 368.

Mughan, and Hashtrud in Azerbaijan, as well as properties as far as Gilan, Shirvan, and Iraq-i 'Ajam.

The <u>Sarīh al-milk</u> highlights the fact that Ardabil was a dynamic and prosperous city of the fourteenth century. The location of the town on trade routes from the Caspian, its proximity to major capitals like Tabriz, Sultaniyya and Maragha, and its active merchant class, made it a powerful urban center. Although located outside the city's gates, the zawiya of Shaykh Safi al-din Ishaq became increasingly pivotal to the economy of the city. The purchase of property by the estate of the zawiya was a practice undertaken from early in the history of this institution, that is, during the lifetime of Shaykh Safi. One of the earliest mentions in the <u>Sarīh al-milk</u> is in 717/1317, of the purchase by the Shaykh of two stores in the greengrocers' bazaar. While most of the stores were bought by Shaykh Safi himself, many of them were endowed by locals - for example, the waqf of two stores by Haji Amir, the cook. Commander Shams al-din Juvaini endowed two stores and many taverns located in the drapers' bazaar near the Asfaris Gate, as well as a great deal of agricultural property outside Ardabil. He also endowed to the zawiya all his water mills which were located outside the Asfaris Gate.[45] Thus, a great part of the zawiya's wealth came from holdings outside of Ardabil, such that entire villages or farm land were either purchased by Shaykh Safi, or acquired through pious gifts. One entry, dated 705/1305 , tells of villages outside Ardabil endowed to Shaykh Safi and his family by a woman, Anil Khatun, who had been given these by

---

[45] These were all pious waqfs, all in the name of the family of Muhammad. Whether this document's language connotes Shi'i leanings or not is an interesting observation, outside the scope of this work.

Sultan Ghazan Hasan.[46] Another entry dated 730/1329 relates transactions between

Shaykh Safi and the grandson of the aforementioned Shams al-din Juvaini for the

purchase of the village Kalkhoran, "the most important village of Ardabil, where [..]

Hazrat Shaykh Safi was born and also where the sublime grave (qabr) of His Lordship,

Hazrat [..] Shaykh Amin al-din Gibrail is."[47] Here, the overseeing of the shrine's property

transactions was undertaken by the Shaykh himself.

As the prominence of Shaykh Safi's zawiya grew, so too did the importance of the

neighborhoods around it. The major area of expansion in Ardabil, at least in terms of the

shrine's holdings, was the area near the Asfaris Gate, where the greengrocers' and

butchers' bazaars were located, as well as the manādīgāh. During the lifetime of Shaykh

Safi, most of the commerce of Ardabil had centered around this manādīgāh, which was

singled out in the Safwat al-safa as the most famous place in the bazaar. Generally, a

manādīgāh is a place where public announcements and proclamations are made; in

Ardabil, it seems that there was such a place near the Asfaris Gate, and the entire

neighborhood was named after it. In the fourteenth century the shops here were under

the control of the clothes traders, who had control over two rows of streets leading to the

manādīgāh. The clothes traders, with the help of the owners of the neighboring butchers'

---

[46] This could be Inli Khatun, the woman identified as the daughter of Ghazan Khan, in Fariba Zarinebaf-Shahr, "Economic Activities of Safavid Women in the Shrine-City of Ardabil," Iranian Studies 31/2 (1998); p. 253.
[47] SM1, e. 110.

bazaar, established a new covered bazaar called the Qaisarriya at an intersection near the zawiya of Shaykh Safi.[48]

At this time the zawiya of Shaykh Safi existed outside the city walls, as discussed earlier. In the Safwat al-safa mention is made of the Rais Sa'ad (also called the Binan Gate), Vaqid (near the Congregational Mosque), Naushahr, Gilan, Naule, Maqabir, and Asfaris (also called the Tavai Gate in the Safavid land registers) Gates.[49] The Rais Sa'ad Gate was an important site, as outside it was located the turba of Pira Ahmad (which is often mentioned in the Safwat al-safa), and it was in the direction of the village, Kalkhoran. In the north of Ardabil was also located the Jewish Graveyard, and outside the Naushahr Gate was the 'famous' graveyard of Ganga Bakul.[50] Similarly, the Maqabir (graves) Gate, was located near the largest cemetery, Gūristān-i gharībān where Shaykh Safi had requested to be buried.[51] By the sixteenth century, Ardabil was un-walled, but its gates did survive and were important urban markers. The gates were separators, literally and metaphorically, between the city and its cemeteries.

The bazaars of Ardabil were a vital part of the city, and were densely situated along two main thoroughfares, called the public streets (shāhra'-i 'ām), one of which extended till the Asfaris Gate. As we have already seen, the bazaars were often named after specific trades, for example, bazaar of the grocers', drapers', goldsmiths', etceteras.

---

[48] M.Gronke, Derwische, p. 48.

[49] Also a place called the "darb-i fuqīyān." In the Sarīh al-milk mention is also made of the Naushahr, Binan, Tavai, and Niyar Gates. Gronke hypothesizes that sometimes there were two names for a single gate. This can be borne out: it appears that Asfaris = Tavai, as the shrine is mentioned as being located at both.

The names meant that those trades were most dominant, or had control of the bazaar's

properties, not that their trade was exclusive here. In the Sarīh al-milk, one notices the

presence of trades in bazaars different from a specific designation; for example, the store

of an icemaker/beer maker (fuqāī), was situated in the butchers' bazaar. Moreover, near

the Asfaris Gate was the neighborhood of the writers (kuttubiyya), and the cooks',

grocers', moneychangers' and goldsmiths' bazaars. As is evident in the land registers,

the traders from these bazaars were also the zawiya's patrons and partners in business

transactions. This fact highlights the significant role played by these local elite in the

social and economic structure of the shrine. Contrary to common assumption, much of

the shrine's power base consisted of such Ardabil natives and not until much later were

they superceded by Qizilbash loyalists.

During the sixteenth century a number of bazaars gained importance, such as

those of the saddlers, matmakers and bootmakers.[52] Like the fourteenth-century

manādīgāh, a prominent public space in the Ardabil bazaar was the maydan of the

goatsellers, which may refer to the new maydan built by the mutawalli, Ma'sum Beg b.

Khan Ahmad Safavi around the 950/1540s. The prospects of this maydan were obviously

tied with the Safavi family, who owned many stores around it. Ma'sum Beg Safavi had

---

[50] According to a much later source, this was where the Anatolian prisoners freed by Timur on the request
of Khwaja 'Ali were settled. Husayn Ibn Abdal Zahidi, Silsilāt al-nasab safavīyah, (Berlin, 1924), p 46.
[51] M.Gronke, Derwische, p. 45.
[52] Architectural renditions of sixteenth-century bazaars can be found in two remarkable Safavid
manuscripts (both of fifteenth century texts): Ibn Arabshah Veramini, Ahsan al-akhbār fī ma'rafat āima' al-
athār, (837/1433) mss. (Dorn 312, Russian National Library, St. Petersburg), recopied around 932/1526
and Majālis al-'ūshhāk, Kamal al-din Husayn Gazurgahi (Or. 11837, British Library). In the latter, the
bazaar is a metaphorical topos, a site for enacting Sufi doctrine. Physically, the bazaar consisted of rows of

built an inn (khān) there (e. 32) and also owned a bathhouse (e. 43) "...of the maydan,

famous as the bathhouse of (siyādat panāh) Ma'sum Beg..." and stores in the bazaar of

the Ardabil (e. 27). The shrine authorities also purchased many stores in the Chahārsū

(cross roads, probably of the two public streets) or Sadr (chief) bazaar. The occupations

represented in the sixteenth-century Ardabil bazaar were diverse, including butchers,

soap-sellers, greengrocers, blacksmiths, goldsmiths, and moneychangers. Many of the

patrons and financial partners of the shrine were craftsmen, with the honorific ustād

(master) in front of their names; their workshops (kār khānehā) were also located in the

bazaars. Light industry was present in the form of soap-making and lime

burning/plasterwork (gach pāzi). As in earlier periods, the names of the bazaars did not

determine the actual composition of the bazaar, but were indicative of which groups had

the greatest physical representation or controlled the most property. Many stores in the

bazaars were owned by the shrine, such as a bakery (khabāzī) and a shoemaker's (kafāsh

dūz) (e.20), and were viable sources of income for its estate[53]

At the intersection of Ardabil's main public streets was the Congregational

mosque. The site for Shaykh Safi's dreams and many other miraculous events, this was

---

open storefronts, elevated on a stone plinth. The walls were bricked, whereas supporting pillars and roof
would be wooden.

[53] Although the shrine of Shaykh Safi appears to have a lot of property in the Ardabil bazaar, the major
sources of income were most probably the villages and farmland purchased by or endowed to the shrine.
For studies of rural economy in the Ottoman sixteen and seventeenth centuries, see Suraiya Faroqhi,
Peasants, Dervishes and Traders in the Ottoman Empire, (London, 1986).

an old and significant monument of the city that was built during the Seljuk era.[54] Unlike

the shrine of Shaykh Safi which was initially at the outskirts of the town, the mosque was

a central locus in Ardabil. In addition to this primary mosque, a number of smaller

mosques were located in the bazaar itself. These were named after prominent residents as

well as benefactors, for example, Kamal al-din Arabshah Ardabili, a local notable; as

mentioned earlier, the manādīgāh also had a mosque named after it. Often smaller

mosques were named after trades, for example, the mosque of the whipmakers, or

tradesmen, for example, the mosque of Haji Mahmud, the shoemaker, which was near the

Asfaris Gate.[55]

The sixteenth-century property transactions of the shrine begin in 912/1506

during the reign of Shah Isma'il. The first deed (qabāla) concerns the purchase of fifty

stores by the agent of the shrine, Rafi' al-din Muhammad b. Kadkhuda (town warden)

Siraj al-din from Zahir al-din Muhammad b. Aghajan Atabegi (amir). Thirty of these

stores were in the bazaar, attached to a famous caravansary known as Allah Varmash

Agha.[56] The rest were in the main bazaar, facing onto one of the Public Streets. There is

also mention of an empty plot of land (zamīn-i khāli) next to a store. The next year, as

attested by a deed dated 913/1507 (e. 33) between Rafi' al-din Muhammad and the heir of

---

[54] For descriptions of this building, which nowadays sits on a hill in the north-eastern part of Ardabil, see Buyuk-i Jama'i, Nigāhī bā āsār va abnīyā-yi tārīkhī-yi Ardabīl, (Tehran, 1374/1995) and Muhammad Ali Mukhlis, Fehrist-i binhā-yi tārīkhī-yi Azerbayjān-i Sharqī, (Tehran, 1371/1992).

[55] M.Gronke, Derwische, p. 40.

[56] It is difficult to ascertain who this man was. However, his caravansary and the garden adjacent to it were important landmarks in Ardabil. Hasan Rumlu describes how Shah Isma'il, while fleeing from Ardabil, hid in the dome that covered the grave of Allah Varmash Agha. He states that this was in the vicinity of the Ardabil Congregational mosque; Hasan Beg Rumlu, Ahsan al-tawārīkh, ed. 'Abd al-Husayn Nava'i, (Tehran, 1349/1970), p. 15.

Allah Varmash Agha, half a share of the caravansary, "containing twenty three rooms on the lower floor and twenty three upper rooms on the roof and ... walls and blacksmith (qālibgāh) and a stable (ikhtākhāna)" was sold to the estate of the shrine.[57] Six more stores which were attached to a caravansary called the Uvaisiyya, "near the old maydan, bounded by the Public Street on two sides and by the yard of the mosque of the judges (masjid-i qāzīyān) and on the lands of the [small] garden of Allah Varamash" were also sold. The purchase was undertaken by "the mutawalli of the pure Safavi shrine (hāzira) located in Ardabil by the Asfaris Gate in the quarter (mahalla) of the Great Shaykhs."

Another deed dated 916/1510 (e. 15), was a transaction again between Rafi' al-din Muhammad and Zahir al-din Muhammad . There were sixteen additional stores, some of which were also "located on the Tavai (Asfaris) Street, near the old maydan bounded by the public street on two sides and by the yard of the mosque of the judges and on the land of the [small] garden of Allah Varmash Agha." Here, the agent also bought half of the Allah Varmash Agha caravansary, including the blacksmith and stables that were part of the rest-houses (tay khānat). Some of the stores were attached to the Uvaisiyya caravansary. All these stores were in the new bazaar which was close to the shrine. Forty-three years later (e. 35), the second half share of the Allah Varmash Agha caravansary was bought by the agent of the shrine, Maulana Imanallah from the Sayyid, Nai'matallah Safavi. The deed states that the transaction included the blacksmith and stables of the caravansary. This was probably under the administration of Amir Ashraf

---

[57] Monika Gronke gives a detailed analysis of property divisions and legal terminology in "Das

Auhadi who was the mutawalli of the shrine, as shown in another deed of 947/1540 (e. 37). The area near the shrine and the property of Allah Varmash Agha appears to have been a popular location for the construction of rest houses and caravansaries.[58] The 947/1540 deed also narrates a transaction between this agent and a Khwaja Shaykhijan for the purchase of a famous caravansary (tamche) known as Shaykh Sabz, containing sixty rooms and a central hall (miānkhāna). This was situated next to the saddlers' bazaar.

We see here the replacement of local officials by Safavid family members as clients of the shrine. The physical structure of sixteenth-century Ardabil was affected greatly by the demographic changes brought about by the shrine of Shaykh Safi, resulting in a more varied population than in previous years. There were a great number of Anatolian and Turkman tribal leaders who had become loyal Safavid followers; Shah Isma'il's house itself was in the neighborhood of Anatolian settlers (rūmīyān).[59] The growth of the Safavid order was witnessed by the growth of hitherto unknown quarters near the shrine of Shaykh Safi, such as that of the 'great shaykhs.' Another new area near the zawiya of Shaykh Safi was the neighborhood of the judges (qāzīyān). This quarter might refer to the Sayyid clerical class which had begun gaining prominence in the city to the extent that a neighborhood mosque was named after them, the mosque of the judges (masjid-i qāzīyān), presumably constructed in this area (e. 15, 33). This demographic

---

wirschaftliche Umfeld (The Economic Environment)," M.Gronke, Derwische, pp. 211-225.

[58] In the deeds they are differentiated as 'khan' and 'timche,' which I translate as rest house and caravansary, respectively, based on their functional descriptions and occupancy.

[59] Hasan-i Rumlu, AT, p. 14.

change is most apparent in registers after Shah Isma'il, especially in terms of the shrine

administration. After 916/1510 and under the tauliyat of Amir Ashraf, all the deeds were

attested by qāzīs or maulānas, both from the clerical classes (in contrast to earlier ones

which were attested by bureaucrats).[60]

The increased number of patrons and visitors to the shrine of Shaykh Safi is seen

in the increase in number of rest houses that were built nearby. The presence of

caravansaries in bazaars or at the entrance of a town is not remarkable in itself. However,

it was a fortunate coincidence for the shrine, as these rest houses were a source of income

and provided lodging for the expanding Sufi order, visiting pilgrims and travelers, or

those coming to pay their respects at the neighboring graveyards. They were also for the

many transient merchants and bankers who resided near the markets.[61] The practice of

acquiring caravansaries by the shrine authorities had begun since the time of Shaykh Sadr

al-din Musa who had built one in the famous Qaisariyya market hall. During the

imperial Safavid era the scale of expansion was significantly augmented. The purchase

of stores (often in caravansaries) leaped up to double figures, suggesting the greater

affluence of the shrine estate. An architectural reconstruction, based on information in

the shrine registers, suggests that a caravansary had two faces, one public and one private.

The double-storied interior (often with an enclosed court or a central hall) was for the

residents, with provisions for their horses and husbandry. The exterior consisted of

storefronts 'on the lands of (bezamīn-i)' the caravansary, which also explains the

---

[60] The most notable among them were Qazi Sana'allah b. Uvais, Qazi Ruhallah, Qazi 'Inayatallah al-Lutfi, Qazi Nai'matallah, and Qazi Ahmad Kakuli, whose names appear repeatedly.

caravansary's presence in the Ardabil bazaar. One undated deed, probably from the 930/1520s, (e. 32) records a rest house, that was built during the administration of Ma'sum Beg Safavi, in the yard of Allah Varmash Agha, near the new maydan. At least two additional deeds were of caravansaries built by local traders (for example, Mir Baqal the greengrocer) and Turkman leaders (Amir Shahverdi Sultan Aguli Qajar) and afterwards owned by the shrine. Many of the caravansaries were for specific occupants, such as women or pilgrims. One of the deeds (e. 18) mentions the presence of a caravansary of readers, which was probably for the Qur'an recitors who were permanently employed at the Dar al-Huffaz of the shrine.

The estate of the shrine of Shaykh Safi owned commercial Baths located in the Ardabil bazaar, which were lucrative real estate holdings. This practice, too, had been initiated by Shaykh Safi himself, as attested by a deed dated 761/1359 (e. 41). This bathhouse, "known as the bathhouse of the shaykhs that the Pole of the Poles Shaykh Safi al-din had made waqf," was on the property of the shrine complex, and like other water-dependant functions, close to the cistern.[62] In the fourteenth century, the famous and generous Shams al-din Juvaini had also endowed a bathhouse which apparently was attached to the shrine (e.42). In the middle of the sixteenth century, the Zahiri bathhouse was a famous landmark in the city. Like the caravansaries, part of it was occupied by mixed use stores (e. 22, 25). Located near the maydan of the goatsellers, the Zahiri

---

[61] As in Isfahan during Shah 'Abbas' reign; see Masahi Haneda, "The Character of the Urbanisation of Isfahan in the Later Safavid Period," in ed. C. Melville, Safavid Persia: the History and Politics of an Islamic Society, (London and New York, 1996), :369-416.

[62] The bathhouse was "bounded from one side by the yard of the shrine and from one side by the Street of the Flourishing Kitchen (shāhra'-i matbakh-i mā'mūra) and by the bakery and from another side by the cistern." This will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter III.

bathhouse was also eventually owned by the estate of the shrine (e. 45). The next register

stipulates that an heir, 'Ali Beg Zahiri had sold the well ('ain), which was part of the

property, to the shrine in 949/1542. Another bathhouse, owned by the mutawalli Ma'sum

Beg Safavi, was purchased in part by the shrine in 954/1547. This short deed is very

interesting, in that it elucidates the manner of purchase and endowment that took place at

the shrine. Apparently, the original ownership of the bathhouse had been two-thirds

Ma'sum Beg and one-third Amir Muhammad Kalkhorani. In 954/1547 the mutawalli

purchased it for the shrine of Shaykh Safi, for the price of thirty Tabrizi tomans. The

agreement was that half of the property would then be registered as belonging to the

shrine's endowment capital and the other half would still belong to the original owners.

One-eighth of the sale income would be donated back to the shrine, a practice repeated in

many of the sixteenth-century transactions. In addition to the bathhouses, often the shrine

would purchase the water rights of a certain well or spring, for example that which was

established from the spring of the shrine (e. 45b).[63]

Outside the city walls the shrine owned water mills which provided income for

the estate. The Sarih al-milk of 'Abidi lists one "near the Holy shrine that Hazrat Qutb

al-din Shaykh Safi had endowed; ...(one) that the Commander Shams al-din Daula Beg

Mankaba b. 'Abdallah Sultani had endowed;...[one] of [Mami Yaran] located in the

vicinity of the (Ahad) Gate, outside the city; [one] of the Tavai Gate." (e. 48) He then

gives the details of the water mill "located outside the Asfaris Gate that in 948 AH the

---

[63] There are a number of farmāns from the Safavid period which are concerning water rights and disputes
between owners, or villagers, over them. See Bert fragner, "Das Ardabiler Heiligtum in den Urkunden,"
Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes 67 (1975) :169-215.

agent Amir Ashraf mutawalli and Maulana San'allah Hakim b. Maulana Muhammad

bought for two Tabrizi tomans from the heirs of 'Alijan Khalifa b. Khwaja Jan Qassab."

(e. 49) Included in this transaction were "all the dependencies and possessions... and

walls (jadrān) and roofs (saqāf) and rooms (hujrān) and (spindles-qutb) and (tauqa) and

canal feeders (nāviq) and canals (nahr)." This same mutawalli also built a water mill near

the Niyar Gate, whose rent was for the estates of the shrine. In addition to the water

mills, the shrine owned an extra-murous tannery (salākhkhāna) and many gardens near

and outside the gates of Ardabil. Some parcels of land were cultivated as orchards and

some appear to be empty plots near the Tavai gate. Apparently the Safavid family also

owned gardens near here, as there are a couple of transactions in 947/1540 regarding the

expanding of a garden belonging to Shaykh Hayder (e.53a, 55a). Perhaps some lands

were bought speculatively and converted into stores, as is suggested by their sites, for

example, the parcel of land attached to the new Inn, land located near the Zahiri Baths,

and land located near the Sayyid Qasim Safavi Baths (e. 55b, 54a, 54b, respectively).

*

As the real estate holdings make evident, the institution of the shrine of Shaykh Safi was

a powerful economic force in Ardabil. By the seventeenth century the area surrounding

the shrine had increased in density and prosperity, but many of the land marks from a

hundred years earlier were still present, such as the Zahir al-din Baths, and the Tavai Gate

where the shrine was located. However, a new caravansary had been built near the shrine

which was attached directly to it, and new mansions (mahal) were purchased as part of

the shrine complex's expansion. By the time of Shah 'Abbas, many new purchases had

been made in the Ardabil bazaar, which included inns, baths, caravansaries and specialty

stores (including one tobacconist in 1035/1625).

Although its prosperity grew most rapidly during the imperial Safavid phase, the

shrine of Shaykh Safi, even during his lifetime, had played an important role in the

development of the city. The Safaviyya shaykhs' political savvy had delivered Ardabil

from being a casualty of Mongol expansion, and helped the city to flourish despite natural

disasters, such as earthquakes and the plague. The concept of āstāna, or sanctuary, was

extended to include a large zone around the shrine, whether its courtyard, the

neighborhood, or the entire city of Ardabil, abode of guidance. As witnessed in this

analysis, the influence of the shrine was widespread, in popular myth as well in the daily

life of the community.

CHAPTER II.
NARRATING THE SITE: ARCHITECTURAL AND EPIGRAPHIC ANALYSES.

"God made it clear by signs such an abode. Ibrahim by entering it was safe, just
as he made it like the enduring Ka'ba for mankind's protection. Its splendor [is]
from the greatness of its Lord and Builder."

- Entrance portal, Dār al-ḥuffāz.

This chapter describes the physical condition of the shrine of Shaykh Safi al-din Ishaq; it
concentrates on the buildings individually and address questions of type, chronology and
architectural significance within the wider context of Safavid architecture. The
introduction of the buildings, as individual and collective parts of the shrine complex,
sets the stage for an architectural narration of the site. This ensemble was a temporal and
physical aggregate and the Safavid interventions at the shrine cannot be understood fully
without studying the formal and typological meaning of the buildings that were
patronized. What was built, what was chosen for renovation, and what was transformed,
must be analyzed before we can begin to understand the reasons for patronage of the
shrine. As a result, the narrative will proceed by first describing the shrine during the
lifetime of Shaykh Safi (as it was understood by Safavid readers of the redacted
fourteenth-century Safwat al-safa), and then continue to examine the currently extant
buildings in their chronological order. Included in this chapter are sketch plans of the
complex which reflect my suppositions about its growth and development, as well as
appendices that document the description of the shrine in the Sarīh al-milk (Appendix A)
and the epigraphy on the buildings (Appendix B).

The shrine of Shaykh Safi was a prominent landmark from its very inception, as attested by the Safwat al-safa and the shrine's land registers. It played an important role in the physical geography not only of Ardabil, but the entire region. The mobility displayed by Shaykh Safi, such as his travels as far as Shiraz and Urumiye, is indicative also of a rather cosmopolitan aesthetic vocabulary. Craftsmen from Maragha were commissioned for the woodwork and tiling at the shrine, while Tabriz no doubt remained an important source for stylistic innovations. This rich and complex ensemble was embellished and enlarged in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries by the Safavid shahs. As the analyses will show, the architectural-semantic field was quite broad, ranging from eastern associations to western ones in terms not only of style, but also chronology, function and ritual. Thus the shrine of Shaykh Safi is, on the one hand, a veritable showcase of architectural trends in medieval Iran; on the other hand, it is significant in its intimate associations with the royal Safavid family, which caused a unique transformation of a Sufi shrine into an imperial dynastic edifice. These seeming disjunction's are unveiled in this chapter, bringing to the fore questions of motivation and perception by the Ardabili and Safavid society which patronized this shrine.

THE SUFI LODGE

Zawiya

As mentioned in Chapter One, the first zawiya of Shaykh Safi was in the village of Kalkhoran, the place of his birth and where his father was a wealthy landowner. He later decided, as per Shaykh Zahid's suggestion, to move to Ardabil and reside there. After many fruitless attempts, he finally built his house, zawiya and gathering place on a site

outside, and to the right of, the Asfaris Gate.[1] According to the Safwat al-safa and early

land registers (compiled in the Sarīh al-milk), the zawiya of Shaykh Safi consisted of his

house, with what was probably his retreat (khalvatkhāna) and residential quarters for his

family (andarūn-interior spaces). There is also mention of a foyer-threshold

(dihlīzkhāna), the women's quarters (zanānkhāna), guesthouse (mihmānkhāna, "known

as the jāma'khāna"), a kitchen (matbakh), a store (anbārkhāna), bread kilns (tanūr and

habāzkhāna), a bread shop (nānvakhāna), and a watermill with a rivulet flowing to it (jūi-

i āsyāb).[2] There was also a rivulet flowing from the house's forecourt to the cistern

(hauzkhāna). This cistern, outside Safi's khalvatkhāna, was the remotest room, "now the

Blessed Hazira," and a place where the Shaykh often came to meditate.[3]

Among the most important buildings at the zawiya were the khalvatkhāna and the

khalvatsarā (public retreat). There appear to be two such retreats at the zawiya. In one

place, Ibn Bazzaz mentions the Shaykh going from one khalvat to the next. The latter he

describes as being a roofed (four-arched) platform (takht-i chahār tāq), which was later

the holy shrine.[4] Many miracles were described here, such as, roses, fire and floating

candles appearing miraculously. The second, the khalvatsarā, appears to be not a retreat

---

[1] Safwat al-safa, pp. 642, 761; henceforth, SS.
[2] SS, pp. 601, 599, 403, 395, 903, 117, 1092, respectively.
[3] Ibid. pps. 357, 812.
[4] Ibid. p. 268.

for an individual, but mainly for gatherings of disciples (khalvatiyān), who would

meditate here, in addition to performing dhikr, sama' and Qur'anic recitation.[5]

Initially, Shaykh Safi had built a zawiya (zāwīya-i kuhun) whose width and

breadth was small, but because of its sanctity, no one ever felt the tightness. A miracle is

described about the time of construction of the older zawiya, concerning the finding of

the correct direction for the qibla wall, which Shaykh Safi had already predicted.[6] Later,

a disciple, Amira Pahliwan, a wrestler, requested to build a larger zawiya for him

(zāwīya-i buzurg).[7] Mention is often made of both the zawiyas (they are used as

chronological tools), especially the larger one, on whose roof the Shaykh used to sit and

meditate.[8] Another similar event is related regarding the sanctity of the Shaykh's zawiya

and also its possible modes of construction: Shaykh Safi had built the zawiya of unburnt

bricks. The crowds were great and the space too tight to hold them all, so a Haji Sam

Gilani, a disciple of the Shaykh's, asked to build a large zawiya in the khalvatsarā, which

would be built of baked brick (hence more solid). But Shaykh Safi would not allow it,

saying that they did not need a building of water and clay; rather, the "building of the

Sufis is the edifice of the heart ('imārat-i dil)," and that he should not waste money on it.

However, Haji Sam succeeded in persuading the Shaykh and construction was begun.

When the walls reached the height of the roof, he decided that it should be colorfully

painted (munnaqish va rangīn), which the Shaykh disapproved of. The story continues

---

[5] Ibid. p. 850. There is mention of Shaykh Safi going into ecstasy and performing the sama' after hearing a ghazal (sung poem) of Farid al-din Attar; SS, p. 642.
[6] SS, p. 872.
[7] Ibid. p. 796.
[8] Ibid. p. 673. Older zawiya, p. 823.

with the subsequent adornment of the building and its recurrent ill fate. After Shaykh Safi's death it was demolished and, according to Ibn Bazzaz, was the site upon which the Dār al-ḥuffaz was built.[9] The zawiya during the Shaykh's lifetime was a building with windows looking out, and lanterns were hung within its arched recesses.

The zawiya of Shaykh Safi can be compared to others of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, such as the khanqah in the Rabʻi Rashidi described by Sheila Blair, a place at which Shaykh Safi was a frequent guest on his visits to Tabriz. Blair describes the ensemble (and reconstructs the plan) as a place for Sufi gatherings and a residence for the Shaykh, his disciples and guests. There was a large iwan for the seances, a winter room, a summer room and a 'shāhanshāhī,' which she describes as a place where the mutawalli would place the guest to watch the séance. Blair draws a comparison between this portico and the shāhnishīn at Ardabil, calling the latter "a royal gallery/logia."[10]

Lenore Fernandes, drawing on the medieval Cairene case, has formulated distinctions between a ribāṭ, zawiya and khanqah. According to her, the ribat was probably the earliest of the three types, associated primarily with conversions and jihād (holy war). These were located on highways and served as rest-stops for travelers.[11] In contrast, the zawiya was a popularly patronized lodge, centered around a Sufi shaykh and his community of disciples, where the shaykh and his family would reside. In Ardabil, this was certainly the case, as Shaykh Safi's house and zawiya appeared to be both

---

[9] Ibid. p. 958.
[10] Sheila Blair, "Ilkhanid Architecture and Society: Endowment deed of the Rabʻ-i Rashidi," Iran 22, (1984) :67-90.

functionally and architecturally interconnected. The khanqah according to Fernandes, a term applied to Shaykh Safi's shrine primarily in the Safavid period, was generally an institution associated more strongly with official patronage. Often it was endowed by, and named after, the founder who would determine its functional details and appoint the shaykh.[12] Variations in terminology disguise the actual fluidity in function that was an inherent part of institutions such as the shrine of Shaykh Safi. It may be more fruitful, rather to look at the types of architectural features, and more importantly, the rituals and customs shared by a particular social milieu.

The paucity of architectural information on lodges of living Sufis, such as we have for the zawiya of Shaykh Safi and the khanqah in the Rab-i Rashidi, poses a problem in terms of comparative analysis. I will therefore concentrate on the commemorative burial shrine. After the death of the shaykh a Sufi lodge had two alternate developmental models: first, the order declined without the charismatic presence of the founder and the shaykh's zawiya was reduced to being a venerated (or forgotten) tomb; second, as in the case of Shaykh Safi's shrine, the successors of the shaykh continued the order, building subsequently upon the blessed aura of the shaykh's mausoleum. After his death, the tomb of Shaykh Safi added another level of sanctity to the lodge and also altered its physical focus. His son and successor, Sadr al-din Musa, buried the Shaykh in his zawiya (rather than in a distant graveyard), expanded the complex, and ordered the writing of Shaykh Safi's biography, the Safwat al-safa. All

---

[11] In one of the earliest documents registered in the Sarīh al-milk a building referred to as a ribāt was located next to the hazira of the Shaykh and endowed as waqf. Here, however, it appears to mean an inn or other charitable, yet income generating, institution.
[12] Leonor Fernandes, The Evolution of a Sufi Institution in Mamluk Egypt: the Khanqah, (Berlin, 1988), p. 10.

three moves served to augment the importance of the Safavid order, even in the absence of its founder. If earlier the zawiya itself had been the main center of Sufi ritual, it came to be overshadowed by the tomb of the Shaykh, which became a popular pilgrimage site.

Ḥazira

Shaykh Safi had requested to be buried in a graveyard to the west of Ardabil, called the 'graveyard of the strangers' (gūristān-i gharībān). However, after advice from the elders and other clerics, his son, Sadr al-din Musa decided to bury him at his zawiya. The precise location was next to the Shaykh's retreat, the garden and the cistern. It was in between the public retreat and the "Tomb of the Disciples (mazār-i murīdiyān)." This site (formerly his bedchamber) was where the Shaykh met his disciples and was also the place of his ecstasy (wajd). From this room was a window looking onto the garden of the cistern. Here, on the right-hand side, stood a willow tree, upon which Safi glanced every time he came out of his retreat. It was said that here thousands of spirits had been captured by the Shaykh, and it was here that he was buried.[13]

Shaykh Sadr al-din Musa built the holy hazira of Shaykh Safi in front of the domed grave (qubba) of Shaykh Safi's oldest son, Muhiy al-din (who had died during the Shaykh's lifetime).[14] Here were also interred the near and dear ones of the Shaykh, such as his wife and daughter. In the Safwat al-safa, Sadr al-din Musa tells of the construction of the first tomb of his father: the grave was housed under a tent-like roofed structure (zīr-i chahār tāq) and there was a small opening (darīche-hole in the ground for letting in

light) which opened onto the garden, such that the space of the mazār was in darkness. In the course of a few days, a guild-chief dreamt that Shaykh Safi was extending his hand out of this edifice and complaining that he had been abandoned in such a dark place. On hearing of this dream, Sadr al-din ordered that the middle section of the mazār and the roof of the chahār tāq be raised and the opening be widened till it let in light. The area which led into the court (sahn) where the recitors and pilgrims sat would also be widened and enlarged and all around this door (dar) the titles of Shaykh Safi and the date of construction would be written. Maulana 'Azza al-din Khatib Naqqash worked with his younger brother Muhammad in adorning the tomb.[15]

From this and other accounts the tomb of the Shaykh can be reconstructed. It was built primarily of baked bricks and gypsum in the form of a domed tomb, perhaps in the manner of Ilkhanid tomb towers which were roofed by a tented 'dome,' such as that of Imam Ja'far in Qumm. There is, however, no mention of a mihrab, a feature found in about half of the tombs of the period.[16] The building had at least one window and an entrance door. The roof had muqarnas and the entire edifice was painted and gilded (zarafshān), not unlike the contemporaneous Ardabil Jami' with its muqarnas mihrab and polychrome interior revetment.[17] Below the foundations of the tomb was the grave

---

[13] SS, p. 987.
[14] Also mentioned on SS, p. 1136.
[15] SS, p.1053.
[16] Donald Wilber, The Architecture of Ilkhanid Iran, (Princeton, 1955), p. 36.
[17] Reproduced in Donald Wilber, The Architecture of Ilkhanid Iran, cat. 40.

(hufār).[18] The area beyond the tomb, now the gravesite, was the hazira, which was an arched enclosure (perhaps this was the sahn that Sadr al-din Musa had constructed).

In the text, a distinction is made between the hazira of the Shaykh (presumably the area surrounding the tomb) and his marqad (the actual cenotaph). Quite often though, the term hazira is used to describe the entire complex, as in the 'blessed hazira' or buildings that are obviously domed, such as the "pure domed hazira" (hazira-i qubba-i tāhira) of Shaykh Safi's son, Muhiy al-din.[19] This raises again the perplexing question of terminology in the Safwat al-safa, and in general. There have often been attempts to classify terms such as 'marqad, mazār, buqa', āstāna, qubba, hufar and hazira;' clearly all refer to burial spaces, but other than 'qubba,' none yield any architectural details regarding the size, materiality or tectonics of the edifice referred to. Although Lisa Golombek has argued on the basis of her research at Gazurgah that the term hazira means specifically an uncovered burial enclosure, this is disputed by several foundation inscriptions and in texts such as the Safwat al-safa. As both Bernard O'Kane and Eva Maria Subtelny have separately argued, there was a freedom of terminology in medieval Iran which warns us against seeking for specific architectural detail.[20]

In general, nonetheless, shrine complexes shared a number of common architectural features. The Ilkhanid shrine of Shaykh Nur al-din 'Abd al-Samad (d.1300)

---

[18] SS, qubba, p. 1054; hazira, p.1050; muqarnas, p. 990..
[19] SS, p. 988.
[20] Bernard O'Kane, Timurid Architecture in Khurasan, (Costa Mesa, 1987); Eva Maria Subtelny, "The Cult of 'Abdullah Ansārī under the Timurids," eds. A. Giese and J. C. Bürgel, Gott ist Schön und Er liebt die Schönheit, (Berlin, 1992).

at Natanz had three major components, such as the Shaykh's tomb, mosque and khanqah.

In the inscriptions, the tomb is called the 'qubba' as well as a 'mazār' pointing to its

architectural (domed) and functional (pilgrimage site) attributes (similar to that of Shaykh

Safi).[21] In contrast to this ensemble was the contemporaneous shrine complex of Abu

Yazid al-Bistami (d. 874). This Seljuk/Ilkhanid shrine was made up of an entry iwan, a

mosque with minaret, a jam'ātkhāna, a tent-domed 'gunbad-i Muhammad,' another

'gunbad-i Ghazan Khan,' and dervish cells surrounding the courtyard. The grave of Abu

Yazid was in the center of the courtyard.[22] The jama'tkhāna in Bistam was no doubt akin

to the zawiya/khalvatsarā of the shrine of Shaykh Safi. Although Blair has argued that all

funerary complexes of the Ilkhanid period had congregational mosques attached, this

does not appear to have been the case in Ardabil.[23] While the main congregational

mosque was at some distance from the shrine, smaller mosques, named after trades and

local merchants, dotted the Ardabil Bazaar in which the shrine was located. It was for

this reason, perhaps, that there was no formal mosque attached to the shrine.

Like Bistam, the Timurid shrine of Khawaja 'Abdullah Ansari (d. 1089) had a

courtyard, dihlīz, mosque and jama'tkhāna. In both cases these were long rectangular

halls divided by alcoves on either side (like the Dār al-ḥuffāz). This gathering place was

also a necessary component of Chishti shrines in medieval India, there in the form of a

communal room with pillars. At the shrine of Nizam al-din Awliya in Delhi, each Sufi

---

[21] Sheila Blair, The Ilkhanid Shrine Complex at Natanz, Iran, (Cambridge, MA,1986), p. 21.
[22] June Tabaroff, Bistam, Iran: The architecture, setting and patronage of an Islamic shrine, (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1981), pp. 71-99.
[23] Sheila Blair, The Ilkhanid Shrine Complex, p. 18.

had a pillar where he kept all his worldly belongings. The jama'tkhāna was a large hall

with rooms on either side, one of which was for the shaykh to retire in the midday. In

front, was a large courtyard surrounded by a verandah, some parts of which were walled

up and made into rooms for the senior inmates. Opposite the main hall was the gate-

room, or dihlīz, adjoining the kitchen. A small room with wooden walls was built on top

of the hall, where the shaykh lived (as at the Rab-i Rashidi); a low wall ran on top of the

roof, raised on the courtyard side to provide shade, as this is where the shaykh met

students and friends.[24]

In the west, the Anatolian tekkes provide another comparison, especially the

Bektashi ones.[25] The most prominent space in these multi-functional ensembles is the

maydān or tauḥīdkhāna, which was the site of ritual devotion such as sama' and dancing.

A significant feature in most Bektashi tekkes were the galleries surrounding the maydan,

which were reserved for viewing the rituals. Sometimes, the central spaces were used as

winter mosques, alerting us to the fluidity of function in many such buildings. In

addition there would be dervish cells for meditation and a residence for the shaykh.

Kitchens and stores provided sustenance for residents and visitors to the tekke. Likewise,

at the shrine of Shaykh Safi, communal life was emphasized along with rituals of

visitation and pilgrimage, a trend which continued during the imperial Safavid period,

although quite altered in significance.

---

[24] Khaliq Ahmad Nizami, "Some Aspects of Khanaqa Life in Medieval India," Studia Islamica VIII, (1957) :51-68.
[25] For numerous examples, see ed. Raymond Lichez, The Dervish Lodge: Architecture, Art and Sufism in Ottoman Turkey, (Berkeley, 1992).

The primary source for reconstructing the shrine of Shaykh Safi during the sixteenth century is the <u>Sarīh al-milk</u> land register, which was compiled under orders of Shah Tahmasb by the court poet and chronicler, 'Abdi Beg Shirazi, in 1570. This catalogue of waqfs and property transactions must be considered not as a mere list, but an historical document which sheds light on the cultural and political environment of Ardabil under the early Safavids. In this section, I will concentrate on one part of the register, which is a poetic description of the shrine complex as 'observed' by 'Abdi Beg (Appendix A). The text is divided into prose and poetry: the first describes the buildings an their adjacencies, and the second eulogizes them. While neither forms of description are terribly clear in terms of architecture, they are useful in determining the main features of the buildings and often, the rituals that may have taken place there. The <u>Sarīh al-milk</u> is supplemented by the chronicles, and of course, analysis of extant buildings and their epigraphy.

The <u>Sarīh al-milk</u> begins with praise for the City of Guidance, Ardabil, and continues to describe the "Illuminated zawiya and the holy hazira." The two terms encompass all the buildings that comprised the shrine complex, such as the tomb of Shaykh Safi, tombs of his children and descendants, the chillakhānas, offices and other charitable institutions. Many of the buildings mentioned, such as the sharbatkhāna, kitchen and stores, were important components of the shrine, but are no longer extant. There is no mention of a mosque within the precincts of the shrine, although there is mention in the <u>Sarīh al-milk</u> of one near the Shahīdgāh cemetery. In addition, during the

Safavid period there was a 'mosque of the clerics' mentioned earlier, in a neighborhood close to the shrine, perhaps for the clerics associated with Shah Isma'il's Dār al-ḥadīth. The Dār al-ḥuffaz probably served as a winter mosque and otherwise, the courtyard of the shrine would suffice.

Ḥaramkhāna / Tomb of Muhiy al-din

The tomb of Muhiy al-din is possibly the oldest structure in the shrine complex, built originally by Shaykh Safi himself to commemorate the death of his eldest son. The building is 5m square in plan and domed, currently attached via two foyers to the Dār al-ḥuffāz. The construction material is brick and it seems that the drum base and dome have been extensively repaired, leaving a curious engaged column attached to its southern corner. In earlier photographs taken by Friedrich Sarre, a muqarnas band can be seen encircling the base of the drum, which appears to have been decorated with polychrome glazed tile mosaics. These show the same diamond shaped patterning in glazed brick and tiles on the domes of the tomb tower and Ḥaramkhāna. The 'original' dome was squat, resting on an elevated drum, and capped with a metal finial.

The transition from the square base to the dome is unique in the shrine: the zone of transition, achieved by the use of beveled squinch arches that traverse the corners, is not covered or hidden, but is revealed on the exterior. In fact, the transition zone is now the most conspicuous part of the façade, as it is adorned in turquoise blue glazed brickwork. Similar burial chambers are to be found in contemporaneous fourteenth-century Anatolian examples, which share the square plan and dome, resolved by the same

type of transition, such as the mausoleum of Hasan Beg (c. 1348) in Sivas.[26] The circular

patterns of the Ḥaramkhāna are different from any other building in this shrine complex

and confirm that this section at least is pre-Timurid. The decorative scheme is similar to

the stucco patterns in a panel on the façade of the khanqah of Shaykh Nur al-din 'Abd al-

Samad in Natanz. Other similarities have been drawn to the Mir-i Arab madrasa in

Bukhara.[27]

Between the Ḥaramkhāna and the Dār al-ḥuffāz is a small foyer and an annex

connecting the two. In the foyer are a couple of unidentified marble graves. The annex

is a small, unadorned space with a pair of windows and a small set of doors leading into

the Ḥaramkhāna. Above the doors is a stucco inscription panel on which are written

typical sayings appropriate for a funerary structure such as this. In addition there are six

medallions, three of which have been defaced. The legible ones are the names of the

Shi'i imams, 'Ali, Hasan and Husayn; could the other three have been names of the Sunni

caliphs, Abu Bakr, Umar and Usman; or of Allah, Fatima, Muhammad? The script is in

floriated kufic, suggesting that it would have been an original fourteenth century

engraving, a period before the 'Alid amendments were made to the Safavi genealogy.

The interior of the Ḥaramkhāna is itself a simple, white-washed room with windows on

three sides. The transition to the dome is achieved by shallow squinch arches that

surround the interior.

---

[26] Reproduced in Oktoy Aslanapa, <u>Turkish Art and Architecture</u>, (New York, 1971).
[27] Martin E. Weaver, "The Conservation of the Shrine of Shaykh Safi at Ardebil, Second Preliminary Study", (<u>UNESCO</u>, Paris, 1971), Part II, p. 18.

There is an inscription band running around the circumference of the dome, below the arches, which names the person buried in this space as the son of Shaykh Safi, Muhiy al-din. However, his remains are no longer apparent in the room, which is filled with 10 other caskets, some of them identified by the shrine authorities as: daughter of Shaykh Safi; Bibi Fatima, wife of Safi (d. 735 AH); Salam al-din Khalil Allah (d. 909 AH); Muhammed (d. 753 AH); Sayyid Musa bin Sayyid Hayder (d. 792 AH); Murshid Quli Agha; Shaykh Idrees; Sultan Bayezid (d. 908 AH). On the first is carved "'amal ustād 'Usman bin Ahmad al-Maraghi" and on another (unidentified) is carved "'amal Ustad 'Imran (sad?) 'Ali al-Maraghi." The writing on both appears in the Ilkhanid-Kufic style, like the casket of 'Isa al-Safi in the tomb tower.

The Haramkhāna was a commemorative burial space, built during the lifetime of Shaykh Safi. However, why did he chose to bury his son in the house, rather than in the cemetery near the zawiya? In subsequent years the room became a dynastic resting place where, along with immediate family of Shaykh Safi (his wife, daughter and son), the burials seem to be of relatives and officials who served during the reign of Shah Isma'il. The current name is not original, nor was it in use during the Safavid period; in fact, there is no mention of it in the Sarīh al-milk. One reason could be that this room was considered as part of the 'haram' that is, the sanctified precincts which included the tomb tower of Shaykh Safi and the tomb of Shah Isma'il.[28]

---

[28] Although this could be the 'dome of the princes' mentioned there. However, the Sarīh al-milk situates it to the southeast of the Dār al-huffāz, which is where the Chinikhāna is. It also describes it as an arched space, which the Haramkhāna is not.

Tomb Tower of Shaykh Safi

The tomb of Shaykh Safi is a tall cylindrical tower, capped by a spherical dome. The tomb is attached on the southwest (qibla) side to the Dār al-ḥuffāz by a small annex (on the interior, called now the Shāhnishīn). Earlier photographs show that a vast graveyard surrounded the tomb tower and Ḥaramkhāna. In fact, there were graves in an area enclosed by a high wall, directly behind the two buildings (southwest) called in the early twentieth century the 'graveyard of the ḥaram.'[29] The brick tower stands on a stone base, approximately 1.5 meters high, at a total height of 17.5 m. The circumference of the cylinder is 22 m. The body of the cylinder is reveted in plain and turquoise-blue glazed bricks which form large 'Allahs' in hazarbaf script. Each of these Allahs is about 1 m long and meant to be visible from a long distance. There are no blue bricks on the lower northwest side where the tomb is attached to the Shāhnishīn, suggesting that this was originally covered or masked by some other structure (a fact validated when we turn to the courtyard that is the dome of Shah Tahmasb's mother's tomb). There is a small medallion also attached to the drum, facing the courtyard, which identifies the builder of this structure as "the servant, the faqīr, the hopeful toward forgiveness of the Eternal Lord ('afu al-samad), 'Awz bin [inside circle] Muhammad al-Maraghi."

The tomb tower has two openings, one into the Dār al-ḥuffāz and the other opposite it, what I call the 'qibla-portal.' The building was originally free standing, as is witnessed by the discrepancy in its foundations and those of the Dār al-ḥuffāz and the

fact that the annex attaching the two was once an exterior structure, that is, served as the entrance to the tomb chamber. This is evident in the remaining tiles which were visible on the Shāhnishīn interior where the entrance is framed in a small band of tile mosaics.

The qibla-portal, while looking like a door, was not meant to be entered as it is raised above the foundations at a height of 1.5 m. This, too, is framed by a narrow band of tile mosaic in blue, white and brown, but is more elaborate than that at the other end. It has a series of hexagonal epigraphic medallions (which are hard to decipher) braided into the frame. The frame itself extends out about 10 cm from the façade and is in the form of a shallow iwan. The frame has an epigraphic band encircling it, in large white thuluth below and small blue kufic above. There is a small epigraphic panel above the arch and a very large one above the portal opening.

The cylindrical body of the tomb tower is edged on top by a wide band of epigraphy in white thuluth, with circular floral motifs in light blue mosaic on a dark blue background. This band of epigraphy acts as a transition zone between the lower body of the cylinder and the beginning of the drum of the dome. The drum itself is of a different pattern than the cylinder, closely resembling the diamond pattern of the dome of the Ḥaramkhāna, mentioned earlier. The dome of the tomb tower continues the diamond pattern and is topped by a metal finial in the shape of vertically arranged spheres. At each of the transitions, that is, between epigraphy, tile panel and dome, is a thin line of turquoise mosaic, highlighting in raised relief the change in decorative and architectural articulation.

---

[29] As seen in a plan reproduced in Isma'il Dibaj, Rāhnāmay-i āsār-i tārīkhī-yi Azerbayjān-i Sharqī, (Tabriz, 1343/1964).

The interior of the tomb tower is a small, high, octagonal space. Above the entrance are painted mirrored 'Ya Allah' on white whitewash. The base is covered (up to about 2m) in vertical wood panels which surround the interior. The rectangular panels are bolted on with larger metal pins and follow closely the plan profile of the building's interior. The interior elevations above the panels are in the form of elongated arches, richly painted and intricately designed. The floriated medallion designs are in dark hues of red, blue, brown and ochre and cover the entire surface of the drum, up until the dome. One of the most interesting features of these wall paintings is their uniqueness in the shrine, that is, they are painted on parchment which is then applied to the masonry surface. The parchment, which appears to have been precut, is also in rectangular forms which then conform to the specific surface or corner they cover. The panels on which they are mounted appear to have been attached by machine-made nails, dating this to the nineteenth century.[30]

The transition to the dome is also quite unusual: rather than squinch arches or muqarnas, the only articulation of change is given by eight hexagonal 'plates,' also painted, which come out in shallow relief from the surface of the walls. Above these is the epigraphic zone which encircles the base of the dome. Here, the entire Sūrat al-fatah (48, Victory) is written. The dome itself is painted white, with its apex crowned by a beautiful and intricate sunburst. Below the sunburst are again 'plates' of painted medallions which give the impression of being appliqued onto the white background. The flat painted decoration, rather than painted stucco, distinguish this section of the shrine complex suggesting that this was not renovated during the Safavid period, but is

---

[30] Weaver made this observation in "The Conservation of the Shrine of Shaykh Safi at Ardebil," p. 26.

the original late Ilkhanid/early Timurid revetment which was done at the time of the building's construction.

Below the dome is the cenotaph of Shaykh Safi, a wooden, carved casket. In addition, there are three other caskets in the chamber (the largest belonging to the Shaykh himself.) The Shaykh's casket is carved in the same manner as those in the Haramkhāna and the inscriptions on it attribute the building of the holy tomb to 'Musa al-Safavi,' referring to Sadr al-din Musa, Safi's son. In the far end of the room is what is now called the casket of Shaykh Hayder (d. 893 AH according to shrine authorities), but earlier belonged to an 'Isa al-Safi (d.788 AH). This may indeed be that of Shaykh Hayder, who was slain in Tabarasan, and whose remains were brought to Ardabil by orders of his son, Shah Isma'il.[31] On the other side of Shaykh Safi's casket is one inscribed to 'Munshi' Sadr al-din (d. 793 AH). At the entrance is a smaller casket, supposedly the grave of "Sultan Shaykh Ibrahim, the famous shaykh Shahpur Sultan Khwaja Siyahposh, grandson of Sayyid Sadr al-din Musa ibn Shaykh Safi al-din." There are also a pair of silver door facings under the window (opposite the entrance) which were dedicated during the reign of Shah Safi I (d. 1052/1642). The name of the calligrapher, Mir 'Imad was seen by J. Allan on the doors.[32]

Based on descriptions in the Safwat al-safa mentioned earlier, the original tomb of Shaykh Safi was covered by a tent-like canopy. In the Sarih al-milk, the poet praises the tomb's lofty dome which towered over the entire shrine complex, and raises the interior sunburst pattern to the rank of a celestial star, who's rays "weave doubt in the heart of

---

[31] HS, p. 588.

dark nights." Given the style of glazed brick patterning and the epigraphy, this building appears Timurid or early Safavid. With the Ḥaramkhāna, the tomb tower of Shaykh Safi shares a similar dome and decorative technique: turquoise blue glazed bricks patterned in diamond shapes. And on its other side, the epigraphic band encircling the tomb tower is aligned with the band running the length of the Dār al-ḥuffāz façade, suggesting their synchronous repair.

The epigraphy on the tomb reinforces the Oneness of God and urges the believers to follow the straight path. The repetitive themes of religion and scripture point to the didactic nature of Shaykh Safi's order, perhaps an attempt to bring non-believers into the fold of Islam or to educate the heterodox Qizilbash followers of Shah Ismaʿil. At the same time as proclaiming the benefits of prayer and devotion to God, the epigraphy on the qibla portal also brings up the theme of holy war and sacrifice, a topic cogent to Safavid Sufis on both esoteric and exoteric levels.

The original approach to the tomb tower would have been from the southwest side, which is the direction the main qibla portal faces. However, the cornice epigraphy and the fact that the craftsman's medallion on its body faces the courtyard, persuade us to again conclude that both the tomb tower and Dār al-ḥuffāz were contemporaneously reveted, as part of a later renovation. At this point greater emphasis was laid on the courtyard of the shrine than the primary approach from the graveyard. We shall discuss more fully the dating when we come to the section on the Dār al-ḥuffāz.

---

[32] J. W. Allan, "Silver Door Facings of the Safavid Period," Iran 33, (1995): 123-137, p. 129.

Could it be that the artisan, Awz b. Muhammad al-Maraghi, was part of a family of builders and craftsmen (as seen in the signatures on caskets in the Ḥaramkhāna) from nearby Maragha who were commissioned to do repairs and buildings at the shrine? We should also note the famous Seljuk and Ilkhan tomb towers of Maragha, which were certainly much earlier than this one in Ardabil (and different in plan and façade). Interestingly, many Anatolian Seljuk and later mausolea are built by artisans from Maragha![33] A tomb tower very similar to Shaykh Safi's is in nearby Mishginshahr (Khiav) which is called the tower of Shaykh Hayder, an attribution for which we have no historic or epigraphic evidence.[34] Both appear early Timurid in style and tilework, however, the Ardabil tomb seems to be a renovation of the original.

Gunbad-i shāhzādehā (Dome of the princes)/ Chīnīkhāna (Porcelain house)

The Chīnīkhāna is a large octagonal structure made of burned brick and mortar. The diameter is approximately 18 m and the area approximately 9.7 m x 9.7 m. The reason for approximations is that the building, one of the oldest structures of the shrine complex, was renovated in the seventeenth century by orders of Shah 'Abbas I. At this time, the interior was completely demolished and a wooden shell inserted, masking the internal dimensions of the building. Both the exterior and interior of the building are remarkable for their lack of epigraphy. Perhaps the dome had been embellished, but none of the original tile-work exists.

---

[33] See again, Aslanapa, Turkish Art and Architecture.
[34] Reproduced in Arthur Upham Pope, Persian Architecture, (New York, 1965).

Architectural and archeological evidence has shown that the original building was free-standing, with a primary entrance iwan where currently it is attached to the Dār al-huffāz.[35] It thus predates the Dār al-huffāz and was one of the earliest structures of the shrine complex. The structure is oriented on the cardinal axes (east-west) and is thus askew from the qibla-orientation of the tomb tower of Shaykh Safi. At present, the exterior brick walls rest on large stone foundations and mid-way up the elevation is a ridge, or expansion joint, which encircles the entire building. This is the only 'relief' on the façade. The plan of the Chīnīkhāna is very unusual. The octagonal shape has a bipolar symmetry; four (now three) sides have two window openings (one above the other) onto the outside, and the other four (now two and a half) sides are buttressed by large columnar semi-cylinders engaged to the walls. These were perhaps as reinforcement for stronger foundations or prevention of earthquake damage.

Each of the alcoves formed in the octagon are topped by half domes, which give an arched impression on the inside. The cylindrical towers are flat. Despite its rather wide span, the original building had a domical cover, rising as it does now over the central portion of the building. According to the sixteenth-century Ṣarīh al-milk, this building had a tiled dome. In the 1970s it was noticed that water was seeping into, and damaging, the dome and it was replaced. The new dome appears quite incongruous and ungraceful – unfortunately, not a very historical rebuilding of the original, although the purpose of conservation has been achieved. The Chīnīkhāna functions currently as the shrine's museum and contains samples of the china collection originally housed here, in

---

[35] Martin E. Weaver, "The Conservation of the Shrine of Shaykh Safi at Ardebil," Part I, p. 16.

addition to farmāns and other miscellany. A few years back a coat was brought back to the shrine from the National Museum in Teheran, and is said to be that of Shaykh Safi.

Unlike the very austere and plain exterior, the interior of the Chīnīkhāna is breathtaking. The space is divided into four primary alcoves, of which the western one now serves as the entrance from the Dār al-huffāz. In the middle of each wall is a deep, five-sided alcove with built-in cupboards. It was within these cupboards and alcoves that the many documents and artifacts of the shrine were housed.[36] The central space is square, with the corners beveled and also forming narrow arched recesses. The main dome spans this central space, while the ancillary semi-domes cover the alcoves. The zone of transition between these spaces is a narrow drum with tiny windows punched in. From the inside it appears circular, but on the outside it presents an octagonal plan.

The vertical section of the room is divided into three zones, culminating in the hemispherical dome, adorned with painted, stellate shapes. The lower zone is that of the dado, which encircles the room and is covered in glazed tile. The tile revetment is of two types: the first is an accumulation of individual tiles, each with a distinct floral motif; the second type is of larger compositions, forming panels of blossoming plants sprouting from vases, the whole framed in an ogee arch. Based on their decorative technique (paint, not mosaic), the colors (bright yellows) and the very ad hoc manner of their application (many are upside-down or do not fit the composition) these tiled dados appear to be late Safavid or Qajar repairs. One of the panels shows, above the flowering vase, a

---

[36] Martin Weaver, in his survey of the building in 1970/71, found in the cupboards accounts of the shrine, landholding deeds, waqfs, farmāns, etc. Much of the more valuable material was taken by General Paskiewitch, when the Russians conquered the region in 1828. M. Weaver, "The Conservation of the Shrine of Shaykh Safi at Ardebil."

medallion with a dragon-sphinx. Attached to this, within the branches of the plants, are smaller epigraphic cartouches, with the names of God, for example, yā quddūs (the Holy), yā murshid (the guide – not an attribute), yā manān (the Benefactor), yā mufīd (the Favorable). These tiles are similar to those on a large marble slab, now housed in the Chīnīkhāna, with six Godly attributes: "the Merciful, the Proof, the Judge, the Glorious, the Compassionate, the Benefactor" (yā rahmān, yā burhān, yā dayān, yā subhān, yā hanān, yā manān).[37]

The flat ogee arch seen on the tiled dado, is given a third dimension in the zone above. In the alcoves, the entire surface above the dado is of finely formed plaster, with multiple shallow niches in the shapes of vases and ogee arches cut into it, ascending up to the base of the circular dome. The whole is painted and gilded with floral design in red, blue and green. The technique of painting has been called 'kundal' by G. A. Pugachenkova, as observed by her at a mausoleum in Samarkand, the Timurid 'Ishratkhāna. She describes this as a "special preparation of red clay (kizil kissak) with a mixture of plaster and vegetal glue. Here the surface is covered with a thin sheet to gold used as a background on which the design was drawn with compact brushes somewhat in the manner of tempera. For paintings of flowers, stem and inscription, white lead was introduced which, together with the previously mentioned colors, gave pink, light blue,

---

[37] As not all of the names are God's attributes, such as "the Proof" and "the Majestic," the question becomes 'to whom do they refer?' The marble slab was originally mounted on the shrine entrance, the 'Ali Qāpu.

pale green, lilac, and other such hues."[38] Carved into some of the niches are small

mirrored phrases, such as, ya Safi, yā 'Alī.

In the Sarīh al-milk the poet describes a 'dome of the princes' (gunbad-

shāhzādeha) attached to the Dār al-huffāz, on the east, leaning south. This building is the

site of the current Chīnīkhāna, leading us to believe that before Shah 'Abbas' renovations

at the shrine it functioned as a burial and/or gathering space. Its name and location

abutting the main graveyard of the shrine, the Shahīdgāh, both point to this function.

Octagonal burial chambers are common, as for example those in Qum and the octagonal

pavilion of the shrine of Abd al-Samad in Natanz, which was also once a freestanding

edifice.

However, the problem of orientation remains. While it is not always the case that

a burial space be oriented toward Mecca (as in pre-eleventh-century Central Asian

cases[39]) the precedent already set by the Haramkhāna and the tomb tower of Shaykh Safi,

which are oriented to the qibla, cause us to question further the use of the Chīnīkhāna. Its

size suggests a possible public use: could it be the Khalvatsarā mentioned in the Safwat

al-safa before it was converted into a burial space in the sixteenth century? This

speculation is lent further credence by a passage in the Silsilāt al-nasab where it is stated

that Sadr al-din Musa built a khalvat at the time of building the Dār al-huffāz, also in the

---

[38] G. A. Pugachenkova, "'Isratkhaneh and Ak-Saray, two Timurid Mausoleums in Samarkand," Ars Orientalis 5, (1963) :177-189, p. 185.

[39] S. Chmelnizkij, "The Mausoleum of Muhammad Boshoro," Muqarnas 7, (1990) :23-34, p. 29.

shrine precinct. This building was part of the Shaykh's residential quarters but would have been a freestanding building where the disciples could gather. Such an interpretation is backed by an example from much later: the seventeenth-century tauḥīdkhāna, an octagonal structure built in the palace in Isfahan, which was where Safavid Sufi rituals were performed.

The poetry describing the dome of the princes is that used by the author, 'Abdi Beg Shirazi, to also describe the inlaid dome (gunbad-i manbatkārī) above the imperial iwan (iwān-i shāhī) in the palace built by Shah Tahmasb, in Qazvin.[40] The royal associations of both are self evident. The Sariḥ al-milk describes the dome of the princes as a building with a brick dome covered in blue tiles, attached to the Dār al-ḥuffāz. The interior had arches within which lighted candles could be placed. While the dome is no longer reveted, the arched niches do exist, suggesting that the renovations undertaken by Shah 'Abbas mirrored the interior shell.

In the seventeenth century, the Chīnīkhāna was reinvented as a royal depository. It was a library as well as a place to display the numerous wares that the Shah had endowed to the shrine. It must be noted that the Chīnīkhāna was not a treasury, this function was filled by the khazāna, a small room off the tomb tower, where the gold and silver candles and expensive objects were kept. Some of the smaller precious wares might have been displayed in these niches, but the rest of the objects are too large to fit in them. Also, the fact that the carving occurs at a height of almost six feet above the ground, and

that it forms a muqarnas vault in the alcoves, therefore making it difficult to balance anything in the niches, leads one to believe that the primary function of the niches was not storage, but ornamentation.[41]

The style of decoration of the Chīnīkhāna at the shrine of Shaykh Safi, similar to the adjacent Dār al-huffāz, was common during the early Safavid period, as witnessed in the contemporaneous renovation undertaken by orders of Shah 'Abbas I of the tomb of the Safavid ancestor, Amin al-din Gibrail in nearby Kalkhoran. But such decoration was already witnessed in Timurid buildings like those in Samarqand (the 'Ishratkhana). One very interesting parallel is found in the Zarnigarkhāna of the shrine of 'Abdullah Ansari in Gazurgah, which has been dated to the end of the fifteenth century. This, too, is an enigmatic freestanding building attached to a shrine complex. The interiors are richly ornamented in gilded arabesques and floral motifs, as in Ardabil. The shrine of Shaykh Safi may thus be seen as an interface between Timurid and Safavid architecture, a site of invention and tradition.[42]

Eskander Munshi, when writing about the waqf of 1016/1608 mentions a royal chīnīkhāna where the chinaware was kept before it was moved to Ardabil.[43] One need not look very far to find it. Whether this is the copy or the original is difficult to ascertain, but attention must be drawn to another chīnīkhāna, which is found in the

---

[40] 'Abdi Beg Shirazi, Dauhat al-Azhār, ed. A. M. Tabrizi and A. Rahimof, (Moscow, 1974), p. 85.

[41] Olearius mentions seeing porcelains in the niches of the Chīnīkhāna; A. Olearius, The Voyages and Travels of the Ambassadors sent by Frederic, Duke of Holstein, [henceforth, Voyages] trans. J. Davies, (London, 1669), p. 179.

[42] Robert Hillenbrand has also acknowledged this important aspect of the shrine in his survey, Islamic Art and Architecture, (London, 1999), p. 236.

[43] TAAA, p. 761.

gatehouse of the royal palace in Isfahan. On the fifth floor of the Ali Qapu is a sequence

of rooms, which are similarly embellished, but it may be that they are later renovations

from the period of 'Abbas II.[44]

Dār al-ḥuffāz (Hall of the readers)

The Dār al-ḥuffāz of the shrine of Shaykh Safi was built after the death of the Shaykh by

his son, Sadr al-din Musa and possibly rebuilt by the grandson, Shihab al-din Mahmud

sometime at the end of the fourteenth century. The hall is a rectangular two-storeyed

brick building on stone foundations, covered by a flat roof. The overall dimensions of

the Dār al-ḥuffāz are approximately 11.5 m x 6 m, where the hall itself is 8.9 m x 5.8 m

on the inside. The Dār al-ḥuffāz is attached on its northern corner to the Jannatsarā, on

its east to the Chīnīkhāna, the south to the Haramkhāna, and on the southwest, to the

tomb tower of Shaykh Safi.

The primary (and only exposed) elevation of the Dār al-ḥuffāz faces the

courtyard. The length of the building is displayed and the façade echoes the interior. The

base of the building is of stone, raised about a meter in height, while its total height is

---

[44] The so-called 'music room', a term erroneously applied by Hunarfar and retained by Galdieri. The supposed acoustic value of the niches, observed by the Italians, is an additional merit, not a programmatic architectural feature validating the misleading name. There are no contemporary eye witness accounts of this floor of the gatehouse. Most writers (Galdieri, Babbaie) have quoted Don Garcia y Silva Figueroa's description of the tower, which he seems to have observed from outside (even then he is not sure of how many floors there are!) The description of the interior never goes beyond the generic. The most striking motifs of the rooms, the carving and gilding of the vaults, are not mentioned - unless they were done after 1618, when Figueroa visited Isfahan. However, his asserting that the rooms were for the female members of the harem (which must also be contested), naturally excludes his presence in them; Don Garcia y Silva Figueroa, Le Ambassade de d. Garcia de Silva y Figueroa en Perse, trans. de Wicquefort, (Paris, 1667), p. 183. The earliest allusion to the fifth floor of the Ali Qapu is found again in Eskander Munshi, when he

about 11 m. The structure above the plinth is made of burned brick and mosaic tile revetment. The primary entrance is a tall arched iwan (portal), the height of the building, entirely decorated in turquoise blue, lapis lazuli, white and red mosaic. The entrance of the portal, also arched, is flanked on either side by two narrow, white marble attached columns. Epigraphy adorns the frames of the portal and the entrance, as well as a number of panels which are inserted into the overall composition. The hemispherical arch of the portal is a beautiful muqarnas half-dome with its apex ending in a ribbed sunburst pattern. Smaller versions of this muqarnas-iwan are repeated on the in-sides flanking the entrance, which look like niches for holding candles or lamps.

The 'body' of the building is also decorated and tiled, but in a more restrained manner, which shows to advantage the tectonic concerns of the builder by framing in mosaic the architectural elements and transitions taking place. Above the stone plinth are five tiers of iron grilled windows, with two windows in each, one above the other. The windows are rectangular, the height greater than the width, accentuating the vertical illusion already achieved by the tall and narrow entrance portal. These vertical bands are tiled in turquoise blue, lapis lazuli, white and red mosaic. The lower band of windows rise from the top of the foundation. In each, above the grill is an arched tracery of stone, covered in mosaic; above this is an epigraphic panel with white letters on a dark blue background. In some, a few words such as 'Allah said' are written in brown. The whole is surrounded by a narrow frame of floral mosaics. Each window ensemble is unique in its decorative articulation, while being identical in its form. The second storey windows are similar in size to those below, but the adornment is smaller. Here, the arched double

---

refers to the building as the five-storeyed gatehouse of the palace (dargāh-i panj tabqah-i daulatkhāna); TAAA (completed in 1615), p. 1111.

window has been omitted, whereas the epigraphic panel and mosaic frame are retained. The designs are identical, although the central window frame differs from the other four.

Above the windows is a thin band of floral mosaic, above which is a wide epigraphic band. The epigraphy is again in white over a dark blue background. The cornice of the Dār al-ḥuffāz rises above the epigraphy in the form of, first, a flat row of arch patterns with floral motifs and second, a three-dimensional representation of the arches in the form of ascending muqarnas relief. This articulation provides a beautiful terminus for the building and masks the roof behind. A curiosity of this façade is that the uppermost epigraphic band and the muqarnas cornice appear not to fit the building's width! As such, they wrap inside both ends of the structure which project outward by some centimeters. The buttressing on the right side does seem to be a repair, but this does not explain the same 'misfit' happening on the side of the entrance portal. An explanation could be that the mosaics were designed elsewhere and brought to the shrine to be assembled, at which point the measurement error was realized. Another reason could be that the frequent earthquakes that were common in this region caused the earlier structure to be damaged, thereby necessitating the added buttressing and the removal and reapplication of the mosaics. This latter explanation is not as satisfactory as the first, as it would imply an increase in the width of the edifice, not lessening as is the case, and also that somehow the footprint of the building was altered, which it is not.

Between the third and fourth windows from the entrance portal, on the first story, is an imperial order, or farmān (see Appendix B). This order is inscribed on a marble slab measuring 1.31m x 1.15 m and is now enclosed in a glass case. The placement is the same as it was in the early part of the twentieth century. Above the slab, is an epigraphic

86

frieze, "The Prophet said: The family of the Prophet is like the Ark of Noah; to ride it is to gain deliverance." The epigraphy is in white tile mosaic, over a dark blue ground. During Tahmasb's reign the practice of installing royal edicts in the courtyards of mosques was common, as witnessed in Isfahan, Kashan and Qazvin. The shrine of Shaykh Safi was thus on par with these other communal spaces as a site of public proclamation. Although now cleaned up, Sarre's photographs show a band of plaster running the entire width of the Dār al-ḥuffāz at the height of the farmān. I believe there must have been marble dados placed here which continued around the courtyard (also visible in the photographs), as in other Safavid buildings of the period. A similar decoration may have adorned the row between the windows, which also appears to have been renovated.

Much of the Dār al-ḥuffāz has been repaired since the beginning of the twentieth century, when F. Sarre was photographing the shrine of Shaykh Safi. His documentary is invaluable in helping us reconstruct the 'original' building. For example, the entrance portal: the entire upper panel and other parts of the epigraphy were destroyed at the time Sarre took the photographs. The current repairs are mostly faithful to the original, but some fragments have been added quite arbitrarily (see Appendix B). The floor in front of the entrance was previously raised a step and cordoned off by a low wooden enclosure, demarcating, thus, the sanctified precinct where shoes needed to be removed.[45] Unlike current practice, the entrance was closed, revealing the beautiful pair of doors covered with beaten silver plates.

---

[45] This site was always remarked upon by the Western visitors to the shrine. Pietro Della Valle did not enter the Dār al-ḥuffāz because of the 'inconvenience' of removing his shoes.

Another striking omission in the twentieth century repairs was pointed out by M. Weaver in his report, in which he noticed that the cornice of the Dār al-ḥuffāz was the site for animal 'masks' which jutted out from the façade. In Sarre's photographs one can clearly see, between the muqarnas zone and the flat roof profile, four feline faces gazing down onto the courtyard! These cat/lion faces appear to me made of stone, although they seem to represent the wooden roof beams of the building. Apparently, similar animals are featured in many of the objet d'art collected in the Chinīkhāna. What became of these masks is a mystery.

The Dār al-ḥuffāz is attached to the tomb tower of Shaykh Safi by a semi-octagonal annex, now called the Shāhnishīn. This is an angled niche with two window openings on either side, raised on a stone plinth similar to the Dār al-ḥuffāz. The side facing the courtyard is exposed brick, with the windows framed in mosaic tiles, not unlike the Dār al-ḥuffāz itself. The lower half of the windows are grilled and the upper is an arched tracery of stone with epigraphic panels above. The other side is squeezed between the tomb tower and the Ḥaramkhāna and thus unembellished. Only one window is exposed on this side, the other acts as the interior entrance to the tomb of Shah Isma'il. The epigraphy is a foundation inscription, in which the name of the builder has been destroyed. Nonetheless, it conveys the message that this was a building built to honor the builder's father. I would like to suggest two reasons for the assumption that this annex was the original entrance to the tomb tower, predating the Dār al-ḥuffāz. First, on the interior, parts of the Shāhnishīn are exposed showing exterior tilework which shows that

the Dār al-ḥuffāz was built after this construction. Second, the epigraphy confirms what we know through textual evidence that Sadr al-din Musa, the son of Shaykh Safi, was the most probable builder of this edifice, that is, the tomb tower and its 'dihlīz.'

At the entrance to the Dār al-ḥuffāz are a pair of silver doors, gifted in 1602 by Zulfiqar Khan Qaramanlu, the Hakim of Azerbaijan and governor of Ardabil, during the reign of Shah 'Abbas I. The Dār al-ḥuffāz is entered perpendicularly through the entrance portal, into a small foyer, and then through another pair of silver doors dated 1611, into the main hallway.[46] The interiors of the main hall were renovated at this time, simultaneous with the Chīnīkhāna, by orders of Shah 'Abbas I. The foyer is covered with flat vaults, tiled in a radial pattern, and has two additional openings: into the guard house (eshikhāna) and a narrow spiral stairway which leads up to the second (and third) floor(s) of the Dār al-ḥuffāz. The main hall is rectangular, flanked on either side by arched alcoves. On the left, through the second alcove on the first floor, is the Chīnīkhāna. The alcoves are divided into three bays, each covered by an ornately painted dome. The alcoves are 2 m deep and double-storied; the first floor alcoves are raised 30 cm above the hall and the second level is accessed by the stairway to the side of the entrance, possibly reserved for women visitors to the shrine.[47] Scholars differ over the originality of the current roof: according to Weaver this is probably the original, but Golombek

---

[46] The donor is unidentified, but they are dated 1020 (1611), signed by the craftsman, Amir Khan Ardabili. According to Adam Olearius, they were gifted by Shah 'Abbas in honor of a victory against the Uzbeks; Adam Olearius, Voyages, p. 179.

argues that it is a replacement and that the original roof must have been vaulted, not flat as it is now.[48] Golombek bases her argument on photographs by Sarre showing a collapsed roof, which have been proven by Weaver to be in fact of the Jannatsarā.

The Dār al-ḥuffāz is resplendently ornamented in floral relief painted in gold, red and blue. Encircling the hall are two horizontal epigraphic bands, the one below the roof written in large letters, and a smaller band which runs about 1.5 m above the ground and weaves in and out of the alcoves. Epigraphic panels are inserted between the upper and lower alcoves. Axially across from the entrance to the Dār al-ḥuffāz is the magnificent antechamber, which resembles an interior iwan, the Shāhnishīn. The main hallway, with its rhythmic columnar arches and long rectangular floor plan, focuses the attention of the visitor toward this ultimate destination which Shah 'Abbas had ordered to be built. The Shāhnishīn consists of an apse-like platform raised two steps and enclosed by a tall silver grill with a door. The space is a muqarnas canopy, covered in islimī patterns of lotuses and adorned in gold leaf and opulent hues of blue and red paint.

Above the Shāhnishīn (at the top southern corner) is the name of the writer, Muhammad Isfahani Afshar and the date '138' which the custodians interpret as 1308, that is, during the period of Nasir al-din Shah Qajar. It is difficult with a building of this sort, which has been repaired and renovated many times since its inception, to give precise dates. However, given the historic evidence and the content of the epigraphy, I

---

[47] The site-lines do not allow one to see the Shāhnishīn directly from the balconies, which strengthens the argument that these were private galleries for women devotees to participate in the rituals and listen to sermons without being seen.

do not believe it diverges from the original sixteenth-century renovations. The lower

band at the Shāhnishīn also has a signature: 'written by (katiba) Mir Asadullah bin Agha

Mir Qavam al-din Rawzakhwan.' In this band, within the list of Sufi ancestors the date

'137' is inserted at the name of Shihab al-din Mahmud Tabrizi (in the first alcove after

the Shāhnishīn). A. Morton has hypothesized that this date was 1037, which I am

tempted to believe, but again, cannot assert with full conviction. What is certain,

nonetheless, is that it was commissioned after Shah Isma'il's succession, for the

genealogy of Shaykh Safi is that amended in the Safwat al-safa, that is leading to Imam

'Ali b. Abi Talib.

The Dār al-ḥuffāz is similar to Timurid buildings of its type, especially in its

relationship to the tomb tower of Shaykh Safi. The entrance portal is similar to the portal

of the Dīvānkhāna of the ensemble of the Shirvanshahs in Baku. Although this latter

portal is entirely of stone and the decoration is of carved stone or stucco, its articulation is

very similar to that in Ardabil. Another example is the mausoleum of Tuman Agha, the

Timurid princess, which is part of the Shah-i zinda complex in Samarqand. This is a

domed mausoleum attached to a rectangular hall, very similar to the Dār al-ḥuffāz-Tomb

tower relationship at the shrine of Shaykh Safi. Here, too, one enters perpendicularly

through a tall entrance portal, highly decorated in mosaic faience. The hall is a two story

edifice, although in Samarqand the space is not broken by second storey loggias. In

---

[48] L. Golombek and D. Wilber, The Timurid Architecture of Iran and Turan, (Princeton, 1988), p. 362.

Samarqand, the tomb tower is not freestanding as in Ardabil, but gives the same impression of height and distinction.

The eastern connection continues with another example. The interior of the Dār al-ḥuffāz and Shāhnishīn are reminiscent of a dār al-ḥuffāz built by the Timurid amir, 'Ali Shir Navaī at the shrine of Imam Reza in Mashhad. This was described by Khwandamir as a place built for the Sufis and decorated lavishly with floral and Chinese motifs in lapis lazuli and gold. Apparently this dār al-ḥuffāz also had a magnificent iwan "wonderfully decorated and adorned."[49] The dār al-ḥuffāz at the shrine of Imam Reza has the same axial relationship to the tomb of the imam as that in Ardabil with the tomb of Shaykh Safi. Other examples of prayer halls attached to mausolea are to be found in Anatolia, but they do not resemble architecturally the Ardabil example.

According to the epigraphy on its entrance portal and cornices the Dār al-ḥuffāz was a commemorative structure, built for the recitation of the Qur'an.[50] In the Silsilāt al-nasab, Zahidi credits Sadr al-din Musa with building the tomb of Shaykh Safi, but he also mentions that the Dār al-ḥuffāz building was funded by the charitable donations of Shihab al-din Mahmud, the second son of Sadr al-din Musa and the Shaykh al-Islam of Ardabil.[51] Above the entrance is the name of Shaykh Safi, and in the margins are dedications naming his son, Sadr al-din Musa and Shihab al-din Mahmud as the founder

---

[49] It has been described and discussed in Bernard O'Kane, Timurid Architecture, p. 313.

[50] Much of the analysis for the Dār al-ḥuffāz is taken from my article, "The Imperial Setting: Shah 'Abbas at the shrine of Shaykh Safi al-din Ishaq in Ardabil," ed. S. Canby, Safavid Art and Architecture, (London, forthcoming 2001).

[51] SNS, p. 40.

and builders of the Dār al-ḥuffāz. The façade inscriptions emphasize familial duty by extolling the worshippers to "do right of their fathers and their help meets and their seed,"[52] and supplicate God to "bless our recitations from your book toward the spirits of our fathers and our mothers." The cornice epigraphy is a prayer about Qur'anic recitation as a talisman and a blessing and warns those who are led astray. The upper panels praise the virtues of following the right path and promise the believers the rewards of Paradise and its gardens. The lower bands are more didactic, urging the Sufis to "respond to this call (al-da'wa)."

The interior epigraphic program of the Dār al-ḥuffāz and Shāhnishīn distinguishes hierarchically these two spaces. In the main hall, the top band consists entirely of the Qur'anic chapter, al-fathah (Victory), which is also written within the drum of Shaykh Safi's tomb tower. The major theme of this chapter is Divine sovereignty and it summons the believers to follow the chosen apostle of God, that is, Muhammad. The epigraphy conflates the guidance of the prophet with the intercession of Shaykh Safi, or perhaps his khalifa, as pilgrimage to this shrine was a form of gaining heavenly, as well as earthly, rewards. Additional Qur'anic phrases are inserted into panels between the arched alcoves and balconies, consisting of selections from the Victory chapter that refer to the sacred mosque (al-masjid al-haram, 48:25), which further highlights the consecrated nature of the Dār al-ḥuffāz.

The lower band, perhaps renovated in 1627, begins anti-clockwise at the southern arch and gives the spiritual lineage of Shaykh Safi, starting with Shaykh Zahid Gilani and

---

[52] Al-ra'd, (13:23-24),

ending with 'Ali b. Abi Talib. This takes up one side of the Dār al-ḥuffāz, while the other (north-western) side consists of Prophetic ḥadith which focus on archetypal characteristics of kingship, such as, knowledge, justice and charity. In addition, the family of Muhammad and the Shi'i imamate are listed and eulogized, pointing to the Safavids' dual sources of authority: Sufism and Shi'ism.

Chillakhāna (Retreat) - old and new

At the southern end of the main courtyard is a large enclosure, accessed from the small forecourt between this and the shrine courtyard. The enclosure is square shaped and currently unroofed, with arched windows opening onto the courtyard of the shrine on the southeastern side. According to descriptions of its situation in the Sarih al-milk and in travelers' accounts, this was most probably the new Chillakhāna, built by Sadr al-din Musa. According to Olearius who saw it in 1637, it was "a very fair and spacious vault, arched above, paved without, with green and blue stones, and within hung with tapestry. In the midst of this vault, there were two fair brass candlesticks with lights in them."[53] Although now in ruins, there are still visible signs of hazarbaf tiling on the western exterior wall facing the main courtyard (there appears to have been a door here). These are indeed blue and green tiles, patterned similarly to the tomb tower of Shaykh Safi. According to the Sarīh al-milk, the space was surrounded by forty chambers, above and below, and covered by a tall dome, renovated and tiled by orders of Shah Tahmasb. Parts

---

[53] A. Olearius, Voyages, p. 178.

of this information were confirmed by Weaver who saw traces of large squinches, "suggesting a large dome chamber surrounded by small rooms and a second-story gallery, reached from a staircase at the end of a small passageway."[54] This staircase to the second story is still there, but in disrepair. On the side opposite to the forecourt, the Chillakhāna faced the public street, thus marking a terminus of the shrine.

There is also mention in the Sarīh al-milk of an old Chillakhāna on the opposite side of the forecourt, which was supposedly attached to the northern side of the courtyard and also lead to a passage connecting to the Jannatsarā, the kitchen, and the Shahīdgāh graveyard. Nothing remains of this building, which was the site of Shaykh Safi's spiritual ascension (jalūs), and apparently held in great regard during the Safavid period, as provision was made to provide oil for the lamps and money to pay the servants and lamplighters of the two Chillakhāna.

Were the Chillakhānas the same as the Khalvatsarā mentioned in the Safwat al-safa? Certainly in form and function they were ancestors of, if not themselves, the originals. When excavated further, they will shed much light on the architectural and cultural history of such buildings. The only similar extant edifice that I am familiar with is the seventeenth-century Chakchal monastery in Skardu (northeast Pakistan) which is a large square (wooden) building with two meter square rooms encircling the main space, which were used for chilla and meditation.

---

[54] L. Golombek and D. Wilber, The Timurid Architecture of Iran and Turan, p. 362.

Dār al-ḥadīth (Hall for Ḥadīth Study)

At the southwestern end of the courtyard is a large building, about 10.50 m deep and occupying the width of the courtyard (16.10 m), at a height of 9.5 m. Currently the building is called the Dār al-muttawalī, but in the Sarīh al-milk it is identified as the Dār al-ḥadīth of Shah Ismaʿil. The western corner of the Dār al-ḥadīth is attached to the wall of the Chillakhāna (a section of the courtyard façade) while its southern side is detached. Earlier, this was attached to a wall which continued along the side of the Dār al-ḥuffāz and enclosed the court (see under Shrine Courtyard).

The façade is designed like a portal, with one primary arched entry and two secondary ones on either side. The beautiful tilework begins above the dark stone dado, above which is a smaller, single band of sandstone. The whole is raised about one meter from the base and echoes the base of the northwestern courtyard wall. The main iwan is extensively renovated, especially its pendentives which are of very incongruous blue and white tilework. The entire arch is enclosed by a delicate, wooden, lattice in which three doors are punched in. The epigraphy on the main cornice differs from 'Abdi Beg's description and might thus have been changed from the original, for ideological reasons or because it was unrecognizably damaged. None of the earlier photographs available to me show the entire building, so it is difficult to reconstruct.

The two side iwans are smaller than the main portal and lead, through a wooden door, into small rooms. It was not possible to get access into these rooms, but the plan of the building shows that the western one opened onto the Chillakhāna whereas the

southern one may also have had openings into the graveyard behind the Haramkhāna

(hayāt-i haramkhāna). Currently, these side entries are closed and the southern one has

windows. The arch of each iwan culminates in a muqarnas semi-dome and a quarter sun-

burst pattern. Within this upper half is an arch pattern which has now been renovated (a

copy of the original seen in Sarre's photographs), such that the arch frames a flowering

vase. In the pendentives of the arches are epigraphic diamonds with mirrored ya Allah,

ya Safi." The iwan on the left, southern side shows the bare bricks where the courtyard

enclosure wall was attached, and has not yet been repaired.

The Dār al-ḥadīth at the shrine of Shaykh Safi is described in the Sarīh al-milk as

a lofty iwan, adorned by the titles of Shah Isma'il. The iwan is here described as a

mihrab (for it is in the qibla direction) that "One can call it the qibla of the Ages; Such

that from prostration toward it, may benefit the fortunate ones."[55] The striking similarity

of the façade to that of the Jannatsāra suggests that they may have been built

contemporaneously – that Tahmasb embellished this edifice in honor of his father (hence

his titulary) at the time he ordered renovations to the entire complex. However, beyond

its name, not much is related in terms of its actual purpose. Its rather modest size

suggests that the building may have been as iconic as functional, for it could not

accommodate more than 10-15 people comfortably in the iwan. Perhaps the space was a

pulpit from which the khalifa, qazi or shaykh al-Islam would proselytize, or where the

copying and amendment of ḥadith literature was overseen. In later documents there is

---

[55] SM1, see Appendix A, verse E.

mention of a madrasa built by Tahmasb, which could refer to this structure, as no other is currently extant that would fit the purpose.

Traditionally, dār al-ḥadīth were part of a religious and charitable establishment, as in Ardabil. An earlier example, unfortunately extinct, was that built by the Timurid princess Malikat Agha (wife of Umar Shaykh and then Shahrukh Mirza) in Balkh. This dār al-ḥadīth was founded by her in addition to a hospital, madrasa and caravansary.[56] Another later example was in Istanbul, built by Sultan Suleyman as part of his Suleymaniye complex.[57] In this case, while the dār al-ḥadīth was considered a primary conceptual feature of the ensemble, it was secondary to the four larger and more elaborate madrasas that were also part of the complex.

Tomb of Shah Isma'il I

Between the Tomb Tower of Shaykh Safi and the Ḥaramkhāna a small domed turret juts out. The dome, visible from the courtyard of the shrine and the graveyard, belongs to the mausoleum of Shah Isma'il I. The mausoleum was built after the death of the Shah by his wife, Tajlu Khanum.[58] The exterior dome and circular drum are both tiled and rest on a bare, octagonal drum which carries the 'tower' down to the roof. The transition between the tower and its base seems to be more for convenience than aesthetic reasons and now appears like an unfinished part of the structure. Perhaps earlier it had been reveted in glazed tilework. The extant tiles are in later Safavid colors such as yellow and

---

[56] L. Golombek and D. Wilber, The Timurid Architecture of Iran and Turan, p. 62.
[57] Gülru Neçipoglu-Kafadar, "The Suleymaniye Complex in Istanbul: an Interpretation," Muqarnas 3 (1985) :92-117.

bright white; even the plain bricks that make up the pattern are over-glazed, lending a sheen to the entire ensemble. Based on such stylistic considerations, one may conjecture that it was renovated during the reign of Shah 'Abbas II.

There is a wide band of epigraphy at the base of the cylindrical drum, most of which is now destroyed. The fragment which remains shows a blue naqshi script on a white background. The drum has dark blue lajverdi diamond patterns in which is written "'Ali" in turquoise blue Kufic script. The wide cornice of the tower is the most elaborately patterned and colorful, while the drum continues the diamond patterns to the apex. The dome is topped by a metal finial, which, according to Weaver, is made up of three swords' hilts forming a cage. These are further topped by a metal bell-like object.

The interior of the mausoleum is a very tight space accessed through the Shāhnishīn alcove. The room is a square, with a single entrance and one window which looks out toward the Tomb Tower of Shaykh Safi. On the right hand side of the entry is a large alabaster hand print which has been embedded in the wall, and is said to be the hand of the Shi'i Imam, 'Ali b. Abi Talib. At the entrance are a pair of silver plated doors, most probably gifted at the same time as the dated window shutters next to them (see Shāhnishīn), that is, during the reign of Shah 'Abbas II. The space is primarily taken up by a large wooden cenotaph, presumably that of Shah Isma'il. The casket is intricately carved, not unlike that of Shaykh Safi's; however, here the wood is inlaid with turquoise and semi-precious stones such as lapis lazuli and mother of pearl. According to writers, such as Torabi, the casket was probably a gift from the Mughal prince, Humayun, who had sought refuge at the Iranian court and also visited the Safavid shrine, in 1544.

---

[58] And was called the Jannatsarā according to Qummi, KT, p. 292.

Judging from the fine and unusual workmanship, this hypothesis may be true, but we have no historical evidence of such a gift.

During the recent repairs, the casket was lifted off the ground and the floor covered with cement tiles. Simultaneously, dark blue tiles have been applied to the wall, at a height of about 2 ms. These tiles are unusual and quite beautiful; in many, their blue background is covered with intricate floral medallions painted in gold leaf. The top band is narrower and similarly adorned, although here the background is of turquoise blue. Above the tiles begins the stucco decoration: first, a narrow band of arches with flowers in them that encircles the room; second, a large epigraphy band which is interrupted by the door; third, another wide decorative stucco band. All three zones are not in a very good state, but what remains shows a blue background with white letters (in the case of the epigraphy). A better idea of the original opulence can be got by looking at the intricately painted ceiling zone. The domical profile is achieved by squinch arches which span the corners of the room, further divide into kite-arches, and finally, into an octagonal star-shaped canopy. The entire ceiling and arches are covered in painted stucco: a blue background, richly covered with gold floral motifs. The color scheme thus echoes that of the painted glazed tiles below, but here in an entirely different material.

The tomb of Shah Isma'il is the earliest Safavid imperial mausoleum, and until 1052/1642, the only extant one. Although mention is often made of the burial of the early Safavid shahs, very little is known about their architecture and location. For example, Shah Tahmasb's burial in Mashhad was kept secret for a long time, especially after its supposed desecration by the Uzbeks; his body was then removed but where to is a mystery. Shah Isma'il II and Shah Khudabanda's tombs are no longer extant as is the

fate of the great monarch, Shah 'Abbas's tomb (he died in Mazandaran). In fact, the mausoleum of Shah Isma'il was the sole link with the Safavid Sufi past, housed as it was in the ancestral shrine, where he had apparently had brought from Tabarasan the remains of his father, Shaykh Hayder. Subsequent khalifas' and close Qizilbash allies were buried in the shrine precincts, an honor bestowed on them by the shah. This trend, popular during the reign of Tahmasb, shifted during 'Abbas's tenure, when Mashhad became the locus of imperial benefaction toward loyal generals and servitors. After the death of Shah Safi it was Qum that was popularized as an important burial site of four subsequent imperial mausolea, including those of Shah Safi, Shah 'Abbas II, Shah Suleyman and Sultan Husayn.

Jannatsarā (Paradisal palace)

The Jannatsarā is a large brick building which sits at the northeastern side of the shrine courtyard, adjacent to the entrance portal of the Dār al-huffāz. The building consists primarily of a large tripartite façade made up of a central iwan and two secondary ones flanking it; all three are raised a meter off the ground with stairs leading up and into the main iwan. The façade design reflects the Dār al-hadīth opposite, if only in its surface articulation. Unlike the latter, which is truly an iwan-like space, the Jannatsarā's main iwan acts as an entrance into a grand hall. In addition, the secondary alcoves are more deeply recessed; the one adjacent to the Dār al-huffāz is merely a recess in which the carpets and water containers are kept, while the other recess leads into a passage

connecting the Jannatsarā to what may have once been the old Chillakhāna. The façade

was quite badly damaged when Sarre visited the shrine at the turn of the twentieth

century and has since been repaired. Most of the damage had occurred on the upper parts

of the cornices and the epigraphy on the side iwans was completely destroyed. The main

iwan portal has also been repaired and the epigraphy is new, but perhaps closer to the

original. Like the Dār al-ḥadīth the iwan is enclosed by an intricate wooden screen with a

door in it. These screens are thought by the shrine authorities to be originally from the

Safavid period, based on their octagonal patterns.

The Jannatsarā's courtyard façade is the most ornamental and was possibly the

primary ceremonial entry into the hallway; however, it was not the sole access into the

octagonal space. The plan shows at least four other entrances, two of which are now

blocked owing to the construction next-door of a girls' high school. Two major entrances

are still open and front onto the Shahīdgāh cemetery. From this exterior view, one can

see that the entire building is placed on an alabaster stone plinth, not unlike the

neighboring Chīnīkhāna. Entrances are punched into facets off of the octagonal plan and

are expressed on the exterior in the shape of large arched recesses. Each arched alcove is

divided into two zones: the lower occupied by the doorway, and the upper by a window

above the door. The upper part is plastered to form intricate kite arches that culminate at

its pinnacle. On the Shahīdgāh side, the building extends and attaches to the transition

space between the Dār al-ḥuffāz and the Chīnīkhāna. Here there are two smaller arched

recesses, one a blind relief and the other opening into an interior room. While the

exterior of the Jannatsarā seems here to be very plain and un-ornamented, this may not have always been the case. Much of it has been repaired in the past few years and it appears that the brick was not meant to have been exposed (for example, the lintel of the door is very crude).

The interior of the Jannatsarā consists primarily of a large octagonal space, about 20.5 m in diameter. The width is spanned by a large, flat dome which has been built over the past few years. During the last century, the Jannatsarā had a flat wooden roof which was supported by sixteen marble columns. At this time the room acquired the status of a mosque and has since been called the 'masjid-i Jannatsarā.' This roof balanced, in section, the flat-roofed Dār al-ḥadīth opposite, but was not the original covering of the Jannatsarā. The sixteenth-century Sarīh al-milk calls the Jannatsara a "sky-like dome" and describes it as a lofty edifice. A single span dome of the 20.5 m would have been technologically impossible during the Safavid period (the one now weighs 16 tons and is reinforced by steel girders); the original dome must have been closer to other Timurid tower domes that would have occupied the central space which would have rested on a transitional zone and been high, with a drum base to support it. A prototype may have been the Ilkhanid tomb of Uljaytu at Sultaniyya which is also a large octagonal edifice, with a diameter of 26 m. However, there the dome rests on 7 m thick walls and much of the area is taken up by galleries that encircle the main space, while, at the Jannatsarā there is no evidence of a peripheral ambulatory space.

Each side of the octagon is in the shape of a large blind arch, with doors inserted in all but one. The brick work, while looking structural, is mostly ornamental; however, it does give an impression of how this large expanse was engineered. There is one window directly above each door, and above these, a series of clerestory windows have been punched into the new dome. The arch opposite the entrance is recessed like a large mihrab and enclosed (now) behind a wooden lattice with a door. Inside a tall wooden minbar is also visible, although now no longer in use. The niche is lit by an arched window which is the only opening on this side.

In the southern side of the hall is a small polygonal room with a beautiful brick dome and stairs that lead to the roof. The room is of ornate brick work and may have been intended as a burial space or was used for some special ceremonial function. Doors on the western side lead to small rooms (inaccessible to me) one of which is a passage that would have connected the Jannatsarā to the old Chillakhāna. The passage has now collapsed and has been blocked from the outside. The custodians of the shrine had found a large circular stone which was in the center of the hall, which they interpret to have been for some Sufi rituals.

The Jannatsarā is opposite the Dār al-ḥadīth of Shah Isma'il and next to the entrance of the Dār al-ḥuffāz. According to the Sarīh al-milk the Jannatsarā was adorned with the titles of its founder, Shah Tahmasb. It was built over an earlier building, the 'Imarat Shihabiyya and on land bought by the mutawalli for its gardens and dependencies. Behind it was the graveyard called Shahīdgāh and the space between these two was taken by the houses of the shrine custodians (farrāshkhāna). The doors originally

opened on four sides, that is, into the main court, the extended Shahīdgāh graveyard, the

shrine kitchen and the gardens.[59] A walled enclosure distinguished the area of the

Jannatsarā from the rest of the shrine compounds and the neighboring houses of the

Safavid clan. The wall extended till "the mosque that [was] behind and to the west,

attached to the old baths and the flourishing kitchen." Perhaps the kitchen and

custodians' houses should be considered as part of the 'dependencies' mentioned earlier,

for they may have provided, along with the garden, for the ritual activities that centered

around the Jannatsarā.

Although this is the only such extant building, there might have been an earlier

Jannatsarā, as well. According to Qummi, this was the name given to the tomb of Shah

Isma'il built by Tajlu Khanum. It may be that he was confusing the buildings, for two

reasons: the first, that there would be no reason for Tahmasb to change the name of his

father's mausoleum, and second, the large Jannatsarā was not necessarily a burial space.

A more likely precedent would have been the Chīnīkhāna which is also an octagonal

building; it could be that the latter was originally Shaykh Safi's khalvatsarā, and later

used as a mausoleum (the gunbad-i shāhzādehā). During Shah Tahmasb's reign a newer,

larger edifice, the Jannatsarā, would have been built to replace it.

There is no exact external comparison that can be drawn with the Jannatsarā at

Ardabil. However, a number of earlier and contemporary edifices do share architectural

---

[59] The store, 'anbārkhāna,' was extant during the Qajar period, I. Dibaj, Rāhnāmay-i āsār-i tārīkhī-yi

features that may give clues to the this building's function and typology. The first would

be that of the octagonal mausoleum. In this category would fall the grand tomb of Sultan

Uljaytu Khudabanda in Sultaniyya which was built from 1310-16.[60] At a smaller scale

was the octagonal tomb at the shrine of 'Abd al-Samad in Natanz, which Blair has

identified as a mausoleum, like the 'mashhads' of the Shi'i imams. She believes that

originally this building may have been a pilgrimage site, with provision made for an

ambulatory.[61] More recently, Blair has suggested that the Jannatsarā at Ardabil was also

a funerary structure, built for the burial of Shah Tahmasb.[62] She bases her argument on

the octagonal shape of the building, that it is called a maqsūra in the Sarīh al-milk, and

the supposition that the two Ardabil carpets could be installed in the enclosure (albeit

imperfectly). The analysis is not convincing, as Blair treats as fact Mortons' speculations

about the space and none of her 'facts' offer conclusive evidence about the Jannatsarā

being a funerary structure.

An alternate function for the Jannatsarā would be suggested precisely by its

designation as a royal loggia, or maqsūra, that is, it would be a place from which the Shah

could preside. Another related function would involve Safavid ritual, in that the

Jannatsarā may be likened to a Sufi 'maydan,' where acts of initiation and devotion

would be enacted, such as that of the Bektashis of Anatolia. A number of Bektashi

---

Azerbayjān-i Sharqī, p. 42.
[60] S. Blair, "The Epigraphic program of the Tomb of Uljaytu at Sultaniyya: Meaning in Mongol architecture," Islamic Art 2,(1987) :43-996.
[61] S. Blair, "The Octagonal Pavilion at Natanz: A reexamination of early Islamic architecture in Iran," Muqarnas 1 (1983): 69-94; p. 86.
[62] Sheila Blair, "Texts, Inscriptions and the Ardabil Carpets," in Iran and Iranian Studies: Essays in honor of Iraj Afshar, ed. K. Eslami, (Princeton, 1998).

maydans are octagonal and have a 'maqṣūra-type' space where the shaykh or royal visitor would view the ceremonies.[63] In size and shape the Jannatsarā very closely resembles the octagonal tauhīdkhāna built inside Shah 'Abbas' palace enclosure in Isfahan. Here, Sufis loyal to the shah would gather morning and evening and sing prayers and praises for the perpetuity of the Safavid family. The inscription (perhaps the only original one on the iwan) above the Jannatsarā reiterates this manner of dhikr: "Remember Allah with much remembrance." The Jannatsarā replaced perhaps the original khalvatsarā (if we may assume that to have been the function of the Chillakhāna) and also the older charitable institution, the 'Imarat Shihabiyya on whose foundations it was built.[64] Thus, the new building fulfilled earlier Sufi practices, such as the Sufi ceremonial and the distribution of food, while introducing a new one: imperial supervision.

The Courtyards

Large Courtyard

The shrine of Shaykh Safi is located off a circular plaza in the center of Ardabil. Surrounding the plaza are fruit and book shops and the main road here leads to the commercial district of the town where the old covered bazaars still exist in addition to newer shops and houses. The entry to the shrine is marked by a large stone gateway

---

[63] We will speculate more fully on the relationship between the Safaviyya and Bektashi orders, as suggested by Elviya Celebi, in the subsequent chapter on ritual and architecture.

[64] In the Silsilāt al-nasab ṣafavīyah, the Jannatsarā is refered to as an 'imārat. In fact, in an extract of a traveler to the shrine in 1607, it is mentioned that the building served as a place for the distribution of food; from A Chronicle of the Carmelites in Persia and the Papal mission of the XVIIth and XVIIIth centuries, (1939), quoted in Weaver, "The Conservation of the Shrine of Shaykh Safi at Ardebil," Part II, p.6.

called the 'Ali Qapu (11.75 m x 10.5 m), whose top stories are occupied by shrine

administration and a satellite office of the Ministry for Culture which oversees

conservation at the shrine. Inside, there is a long allee of flowering plants and trees

forming a beautiful garden and pathways that lead to the main shrine precincts. This

processional entrance, 26.5 m x 92 m, was built to inaugurate the reign of Shah 'Abbas II

in 1052/1642, when the older approach, which I believe was from the south (and hence

facing the tomb tower), was closed.[65] This speculation is based on two pieces of

evidence: First, Olearius' axonometric plan of Ardabil in 1630 shows a gate with a

hanging chain near the tomb tower, which corresponds to 'Abdi Beg's description, and

no sign of the long courtyard. Second, the 'Ali Qapu of 'Abbas II was dated and stones

from an earlier one were used to board up the courtyard (the wall of words). Surrounding

the earlier courtyard were shops and in it were two cisterns which provided water for the

shrine and its sharbatkhāna.

The Shrine Courtyard

At the time that the Jannatsarā was built other renovations and transformations were also

taking place at the shrine of Shaykh Safi. These included the courtyard of the shrine, the

'empty' space connecting the Jannatsarā, Dār al-ḥadīth, Dār al-ḥuffāz and the tomb tower

of Safi. As would be expected of an additive program, the courtyard is a hybrid: a two-

iwan space centered on a lotus-shaped pool, whose original axis was not comprised of

these iwans (northeast-southwest), but rather of the off-center entrance of the Dār al-

ḥuffāz or of the tomb tower on the southern and eastern sides, respectively.

---

[65] A. Olearius, Voyages, p. 204

The entrance into the courtyard is currently through a small forecourt, 14.3 m x 5.7 m, on its northwestern side, which connected the outer court where the shops were located to the interior one of the shrine precinct. On either side of the forecourt, which is partially ornamented in blue and yellow mosaics, are entrances into what were the old and new Chillakhānas. According to the Sarīh al-milk, in this intermediary zone were also the chambers of the 'nazr (pious gift) collectors,' appropriately situated at the entrance of the blessed shrine. Above these were the forty chambers attached to the new Chillakhāna mentioned earlier. The entrance portal itself was called the Great Gateway, or dargāh-i ma'li, and its courtyard elevation is engraved with prayers attributing its construction to Shah 'Abbas, and gives the date 1036 (1626). In 1037-8 the Dār al-huffāz interiors were embellished, and could have been preceded by exterior renovations in 1036.

On one side of the façade of the Dār al-huffāz was the panja, or hand, of Imam 'Ali b. Abi Talib. This overt symbol of Shi'i devotion is a counterpoint to Shah Tahmasb's farmān and was later removed to the interior of the shrine to be installed in the rededicated tomb of Isma'il. The hand is mentioned in the Sarīh al-milk as being next to the tomb of Shah Tahmasb's mother, which was next to the haram, or tomb tower.

Earlier photographs show that there was a small domed chamber where the Shāhnishīn joint is. Currently, the dome has been dismantled, revealing a marble cenotaph. The person is not identified, but from the inscriptions is can be presumed that it was a woman from the royal Safavid clan. The chronogram is hard to read, yielding the date 969 or

767. According to Qummi, Shah Tahmasb's mother, Tajlu Khanum, had died in 946/1540 and was buried in Shiraz, making it difficult to identify the woman buried here. However, both the Sarīh al-milk and the later chronicler Jalal Munajjim identify the tomb as that of Tahmasb's mother, suggesting that perhaps this was another wife of Shah Isma'il.

Morton has speculated upon the dating and authenticity of the portal inscription, since much of the section giving the name and date was in disrepair when Sarre documented the shrine. He suggests that the courtyard renovations were undertaken at the end of shah 'Abbas' reign, in 1039/1629-30.[66] Greater evidence points to the hypothesis that the portal would have been embellished at the same time as the Jannatsarā was constructed, that is, when renovations were also made to the abutting Chillakhāna and the imperial farmān was installed in the façade of the Dār al-huffāz. There were dados at the height of the farmān which ran the length of the Dār al-huffāz and also encircled the courtyard, including the inscribed portal, giving a uniformity to the courtyard elevations.

The cornices of the Dār al-huffāz and Shaykh Safi's tomb tower are also aligned and the epigraphy is very similar, suggesting that these were simultaneously renovated. This notion is reiterated by additional clues, such as the courtyard-facing builder's medallion which hints at a primary viewing angle, and also by the lack of tiling in the tower's lower zone where the domed grave of Tahmasb's 'mother' was built. This final

---

[66] Anthony Morton, "The Ardabil shrine in the reign of Shah Tahmasp I," Iran, part I, vol. 12, (1974) :31-64 and part II, vol. 13 (1975) :39-58; II, p. 40.

piece of evidence provides us conclusively with the fact that the tomb tower and Dār al-

huffāz could not have been renovated before the dome, which was built around 969/1562,

according to the inscriptions. Regardless of this, the date of the courtyard renovations

then can be limited to the period between the 940s when the Jannatsarā was

commissioned and 977/1570, when the Sarīh al-milk was written.

Sarres' photographs show that there was a 'wall of words' which connected the

Dār al-huffāz to the Dār al-hadīth. This is a sort of screen wall which separated the

shrine courtyard from the Shahīdgāh and what may have been an earlier approach to the

shrine precincts. The wall is comprised of two bands of inscriptions and with a stalactite

frieze above, all of which are carved into large masonry blocks set upon the plinth. In the

wall a small window was inserted to view the grave of Tahmasb's mother and a modest

wooden door out to the Shahīdgāh. Next to the window is a fragment of what looks like

a masonry mihrab, but I could not decipher the text. The inscriptions consist of praises

and prayers to Shah Safi (d. 1052/1962) who is called here the great sultan of the shaykhs

in the east and the west. The wall was demolished in the 1970s, against the

recommendation of Weaver who oversaw much of the shrine conservation.[67] According

to Torabi, these stones were originally from the 'Ali Qapu main gateway to the shrine.[68]

Perhaps these predated the new gateway that was built by Shah 'Abbas II, and were re-

placed here.

---

[67] Martin E. Weaver, "The Conservation of the Shrine of Shaykh Safi at Ardebil," Part II, p. 5.
[68] Sayyid Jamal Torabi-Tabataba'i, Farāmīn-i buqa-yi Shaykh Safī al-din Ardabīlī, (Tabriz, 1372/1993),
p. 151.

*

The courtyard of the shrine points to the many layers of history and meaning that cover

the shrine like a coat of dust. This chapter has attempted to understand the parts of the

building, realizing though, that it is difficult to remove dust from dust and that all of the

pieces are intrinsically connected. However, during the early Safavid period, three

distinct and profound phases of architectural intervention can be detected. During Shah

Isma'il's reign the shrine was transformed into an imperial Safavid burial ground, with

the transfer of ancestral graves back to Ardabil and his own burial here. In addition, the

theological focus of the Safaviyya order was also shifted to incorporate a more Shi'i

ethos, as witnessed by the building and dedication of the Dār al-ḥadīth. Shah Tahmasb's

reign saw the entire complex being realigned, in order to conform with a developing

Safavid architectural aesthetic, similar to mosques and Shi'i shrines in other parts of the

country that he had ordered to be renovated. Despite the changes, the past was still very

much present in the duality and ambiguity of functions suggested by the Jannatsarā

building. The truly imperial apogee may then be reserved for the patronage of Shah

'Abbas I, when the interiors of the Dār al-ḥuffāz and Chīnīkhāna were opulently

embellished. The famous waqf of 1607 augmented the riches of the shrine and

established the Shah as the supreme Sufi pīr as well as the powerful leader of the Safavid

empire. Stopping the historical and architectural analysis at the death of Shah 'Abbas

unfortunately neglects to do justice to the changes wrought by his ancestors Safi and

'Abbas II (see Epilgoue) and even those that are taking place today. The next step is to

understand the phenomenological life of the shrine during the years under question.

CHAPTER III.
PIETY AND POWER: ENDOWMENTS AND THE SHRINE ADMINISTRATION

"To give is to show ones superiority, to show that one is something more and higher, that one is <u>magister</u>. To accept without returning or repaying more is to face subordination, to become a client, to become a <u>minister</u>."

<div align="right">The Gift, Marcel Mauss[1]</div>

This section aims to analyze and interpret the role of waqf in relation to the shrine of Shaykh Safi al-din Ishaq. The gifting of wealth, property, and commodities to the shrine were acts both political and religious. They must be viewed thus in the cultural and economic context of the givers and the receivers, that is, the shrine administration. The essay spans the period since the beginning of the shrine's endowments, with purchases made by Shaykh Safi himself, till the most famous gift, Shah 'Abbas I's endowment of his Chīnīkhāna – a period of almost 400 years. Undoubtedly, profound changes occurred between these years, not only in the clientele of the shrine, but in the manner and significance of patronage itself. However, by looking at the earlier endowments, one is able to judge those changes and innovations, and what could have been the criteria for them on the part of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century patrons of the shrine. Continuity did exist, in the form of myths and memory of the shrine, as seen in the previous chapter dealing with the foundation of the shrine; likewise, the new patrons were aware of, and working within, a framework of common traditions of endowment.

The political climate of the region affected the shrine in many ways, the most important being that the Sufis of this venerable order were, by the turn of the sixteenth century, the shahs of Iran. The shrine was lifted from being an important pilgrimage site

<div align="right">113</div>

often visited by royalty, to being the spiritual home of the ruling dynasty. As such, it was now not merely a Sufi shrine, but also an imperial edifice, as witnessed by the new burial practices and ceremonials introduced there, and by extension, into the Safavid political order. The proof to these changes is not presented in the chronicles and histories, but rather in the heterogeneous buildings that are a testimonial to them.

The main sources for this study are the 1570 and 1629 Sarīh al-milk land registers which were compiled at different stages to list the holdings of the shrine and are supplemented by Safavid farmans which relate to the shrine. The essay shall first address the history and manner of endowment to the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century (pre-Imperial) shrine by contemporary rulers, local residents and the Safavi family. It will then analyze sub-Imperial patronage, which included government officials as well as the changing urban elite, during the early Safavid period. Interestingly, lower echelon Safavid courtiers often mimicked the 'normative' forms of Imperial gifting in an attempt to gain status and recognition, while the shahs themselves capitalized on traditional endowment on a larger scale. This sets the stage for the study of Imperial endowment and built work at the shrine. The main questions are, what was the image projected by the shahs and their family at this shrine, and what did the architectural commissions by sixteenth-century patrons mean in the context of a changing political and religious milieu? How these social dynamics altered the shrine of Shaykh Safi, conceptually and architecturally, will be thus explored.

---

[1] Marcel Mauss, The Gift, trans. I. Cunnison, (New York, 1967), p. 70.

Any study of gift exchange and endowment necessitates an initial inquiry into the conceptual bases of charitable physical works, such as that of Marcel Mauss, who introduced the idea of gift exchange in the 1950s, based on his research of the Trobriand Islanders and indigenous societies of Polynesia and Melanesia. According to him, the ritualized gift exchange amongst these people was part of an image-enhancing drama, in order to mark social hierarchy. The gift was seen as a form of self aggrandizement, meant to create a hold over the one who received the gift. "The underlying motives are competition, rivalry, show, and a desire for greatness and wealth."[2] This system also carried over to 'exchanges' between people and the Gods. Here, a clear inequality is evident, between the Divine and their human 'benefactors.' So the gift could be seen, in fact, as a petition or tribute.

This theory can be expanded to include a variety of exchange systems, such as the ones we are concerned with. In the Islamic context, waqf is a gift made to God, the fruits of which are to benefit the poor and needy, and whose esoteric reward is reaped by the donor in the afterlife. Made for perpetuity, this gesture is meant to continue the generous intentions of the giver beyond his or her lifetime, ensuring also the continuity of the charitable institution which is the vehicle through which the gift was made. Modern scholars have looked at waqf, or pious endowment, in relation to various cultural institutions, such as shrines and cities, especially in recent socio-economic Ottoman studies.[3] In this essay, I shall use the term gift to refer to both impermanent as well as

---

[2] Ibid, p. 26,
[3] Such as the work of Suraiya Faroqhi, Peasants, Dervishes and Traders in the Ottoman Empire, (London, 1986). In the case of Ardabil, see the work of Monika Gronke, Derwische im Vorhof der Macht: Sozial- und Wirtschafttsgeschichte Nordwetirans im 13. und 14. Jahrhundert, (Stuttgart, 1993).

perpetual types of endowments. When referring specifically to a pious gift made mortmain, I shall use the term waqf.

The types of waqfs that we will deal with are often stereotypical, although the motives for them may not be. In fact, the endowment is necessarily individual and personal, while being the most public gesture: it is one in which the person's idealized character is displayed.[4] Nonetheless, the relationship between the giver and his gift is an intimate one, interceded most often by a saint or holy person. Even in contemporary Iran or India, rituals of piety enacted at imamzādeh or shrines of Sufis are begot through personal choice, especially in comparison to other prescribed duties in Islam.[5] The altruism is not often without selfish reasons, such that the gift is given in obligation, or in economic or social self interest. It is, thus, part of a cycle of giving, receiving and repaying. The giving, receiving or repayment of gifts falls into overlapping categories: on the one hand, it is not entirely free and gratuitous; nor is the impetus purely economic. As we will see in greater detail, the waqf has a symbolic as well as utilitarian purpose.

There are two kinds of waqf: waqf khayrī, which are clearly religious in intent and made to public institutions like mosques or hospitals; waqf ahlī, which are family endowments bequeathed to one's descendants.[6] The vehicles for such benefaction varied; people could bequeath money to a range of public institutions ranging from small madrasas to hospitals (māristān), from local Sufi zawiya to large imperial foundations

---

[4] On a fuller discussion of formal and personal gifts, see Anne H. Betteridge, "Gift Exchange in Iran," Anthropology Quarterly 58/4 (1985): 190-202.
[5] Although in many rural areas, of Pakistan (Sindh,for example), the local mutawallis and khalifas wield a great deal of power, and paying tribute to them is seen as a duty – cloaked in pious intent! Perhaps this is not so different from what may have been the case in Safavid Ardabil.

like the Ottoman kulliye, which consisted of a mosque, madrasa, resthouse, commercial

baths, and a funerary tomb of the founder. Since the fourteenth-century a popular form

of charitable institution in Anatolia and western Iran was the 'imārat (prosperity,

flourishing). At its simplest, this was a modest building where food and lodging was

provided for poor students or indigents. More elaborate 'imārats would include a

mosque, dwelling place (for the qazi or administrator), resthouses and a large soup

kitchen around which they were centered.[7] Such 'imārats may be seen as prototypical of

charitable institutions, such as the shrine of Shaykh Safi in Ardabil.

The pious gift (nazr) may be made in obligation for a Divine favor received, for

example, birth of a child or success in business. Here the offering is made in repayment,

as a sign of gratitude, for God's generosity. It acts as a charm furthering the benefactor's

good fortune and a talisman to protect him against calamity. The donor declares first her

intention (niyyah) which thus defines the donors' parameters for giving.[8] Charitable

institutions such as orphanages and shrines are often conduits for the nazr. Mostly, it is

women who undertake this nazr, through shrine visitation or private women's majālis

(meetings for prayer, recitation, sermons) after which food is distributed among the

---

[6] See Fariba Zarinebaf-Shahr, "Economic Activities of Safavid Women in the Shrine-City of Ardabil," Iranian Studies 31/2 (1998); p. 251, for a discussion of the waqfs in Ardabil.

[7] For a discussion of an Ottoman 'imaret, see Oded Peri, "Waqf and Ottoman Welfare Policy: The soup kitchen of Hasseki Sultan in 18th c. Jerusalem," JESHO 35 (1992) :167-186. Also, see articles by Krieser, Goodwin and Lifchez in ed.Raymond Lifchez, The Dervish Lodge: Architecture, Art and Sufism in Ottoman Turkey, (Berkeley, 1992).

[8] Niyyah is also necessary when giving zakāt. See Norman Calder, "Zakāt in Imāmi Shī'ī Jurisprudence, from the Tenth to Sixteenth Century," BSOAS 45, (1981) :468-480.

guests and to the needy.[9] The greatest sign of piety is certainly when the gift is perpetual, hence a waqf.

Most often, both <u>khayrī</u> and <u>ahlī</u> types of waqf are merged and their boundaries made indistinct. The benefactor may stipulate that he or his family members are the administrators of the waqf and should therefore receive compensation for the work – i.e. ensuring a steady income which would be generated by the endowment (most of which is supposedly for charity). In general, waqfs can be inherited, bequeathed or even sold, that is, transferred to another. For example, the administrators of the waqfs of Shaykh Safi's shrine were mostly members of the extended Safavi family. The mutawalli was a direct descendant of the shaykh and in charge of purchasing commercial property with money from the shrine's estates and 'endowing' it back to the shrine. The profits earned went toward running the vast charitable institution that the shrine was, as well as paying salaries to the employees, who were often Safavi family members.

Outside the clearly economic advantage of the perpetual endowment is the social issue – the giving of gifts is seen as a sign of prosperity and wealth, and enhances the social standing of the benefactor. An example of this were the urban elite of eighteenth-century Aleppo. It has been shown that in addition to the imperial family and Ottoman officials and governors, there was another class that made charitable endowments, here as a form of social mobility: the 'ayān, or 'quarter nobles,' hailing from local Aleppene families. These families employed the institution of waqf to consolidate family power and raise their social standing "through direct material benefits or by vesting the

---

[9] On women's roles see, Anne H. Betteridge, "Gift Exchange in Iran."

administration of the endowments on the founders' descendants."[10] As we shall see, the institution of waqf was used in a similar way at the shrine of Shaykh Safi during the early years of the Safavid empire, where waqf and gifting was a device used by the incoming Qizilbash to assimilate with local Ardabili society.

Primarily, the shrine of Shaykh Safi was a site for the enactment of rituals of piety, such as prayer, offering charity and making endowments. These gifts were made in the name of God and through the intercession of Shaykh Safi. Most gifts and endowments were also made in the name of Shaykh Safi himself and to benefit his zawiya, a popular pilgrimage site.   Since its very inception, the shrine in Ardabil was the focus of many philanthropic benefactions. As its prominence grew in the fourteenth century other types of public institutions were amended to the original zawiya (which consisted of the shaykh's house and khalvat, and a public khalvatsarā for his disciples), including an 'imārat, soup kitchen, and many resthouses for Sufis, pilgrims and the destitute. The shrine also had a madrasa attached to it which provided a more formal education to students and disciples. Contrary to this evidence, a contemporary of Shaykh Safi, 'Ala' al-Daula Simnani (d. 736/1326) wrote that the zawiya of Shaykh Safi was merely a place where the shaykh taught the locals what food to eat (that is, harām or not) and how to recite the name of God (that is, the Qur'an), highlighting the two approaches to Sufism: one formal and the other more colloquial.[11] After the Shaykh's death, the

---

[10] "The Waqf and the Social Elite of Aleppo in the 18th and 19th centuries," Ruth Roded, Turcica, 20, (1988), p. 87.
[11] "Risala-i Iqbaliyya: Fawayid-i Shaykh 'Ala'uddawla Simnani," 'Alla'uddawla Simnani: Opera Minora, ed. Wheeler Thackston, Jr. (Cambridge, MA, 1988), p. 176.

endowments were made through the intercession of his spiritual descent, the khalifa or mutawalli.

Thus, the fundamental goal of Shaykh Safi's Sufi brotherhood was to provide salvation to its Muslim patrons, for Shaykh Safi had willed that the mission of his zawiya be charitable. The shrine provided food and accommodation alongside spiritual nourishment to its supplicants, whether they were rich or poor. This pious endeavor was what motivated people to make large gifts to the shrine, both during and after the death of the Shaykh himself. Following his example patrons of the shrine gave for the welfare of the shrine in order to gain deliverance in this and the afterworld.

Funds for educational and charitable services were attained through waqf and shrewd investment of this income. The estate of the shrine owned many commercial properties within the Ardabil bazaar, as well as tanneries, water mills, and small villages outside the city. Whereas the shrine authorities collected rent from the stores, from the villages they received money from the sale of grains and berries. The 1577 and 1629 Sarīh al-milk were inventoried by the mutawalli of the shrine and list the properties for which endowment deeds existed; sometimes they quote directly from the official waqf document, but most often relate the main points. These lists are in Persian and excerpts of the original waqf are in Arabic. Owing to the wide chronological spread of the documents we have, it is possible to chart the social dynamics which informed the manner and type of patronage given to this important religious institution. It should be noted, however, that these documents are sixteenth-century re-evaluations, and therefore subject to slight transformations, if not in content, then in style, for example, motivations

for many waqfs are cast in Shi'i rhetoric, a fact that cannot be validated for the fourteenth-century, despite known 'Alid sympathies in Sunni and Sufi circles of the time.

The expansion of the zawiya's holdings had begun already during Shaykh Safi's own lifetime. The 1577 Sariḥ al-milk lists a deed dated 717/1317 in which Shaykh Safi purchased two stores near the Green Grocers' bazaar. Similarly, he bought a water mill near his zawiya, as well as a bathhouse called the 'bathhouse of the shaykhs,' which were made into waqf for the zawiya. Outside the city, Shaykh Safi had many properties which were either gifted to him, or he had himself bought and made into perpetual endowments for the shrine. There are numerous villages listed, including Jughaz (e. 56), Alghar (e. 67), Jajin (e. 76), Hamidabad (e. 82), Khura Shiran (e. 84), Sadiqa (e. 96) which were bought by Shaykh Safi and made into waqf.[12]

According to these deeds all Shaykh Safi's property was designated for the welfare and administration of the shrine. This is witnessed in the waqf for the village Alghar, which was first purchased by Shaykh Safi in 710/1310 : "and Hazrat [..] endowed all of the possessions and land of His Lordship [that is moveable] personal property and [immovable] estates for the Muslim comers and goers and residents of and travelers to the Holy Safavi shrine that is in the abode of guidance, Ardabil. And the endowments [are for] the common Muslims, from the rich and the poor, and the dwellers and residents of the aforementioned city, and the travelers that [must] reside by night there. This shrine is known and famous [for it]."[13]

---

[12] Interestingly, many were bought in the early 710s and endowed but a year before the death of Shaykh Safi (most probably an accounting done by Sadr al-din).

[13] Date of the waqf is 733.

Sometimes the waqf mentions specific purposes for which it was established, as in the following case regarding income from the village Khura Shiran "...that was endowed for the mausoleum (turbat) of the Hazrat [..] Shaykh Safi al-din Ishaq. For the carpets and mats and for the candles and lamp oil that is used in the lamps ... In this shrine [the provision was] for vases and drinking vessels for the resident mendicants and Sufis and 'ulema and for the meals of the residents there and for the travelers and wayfarers and the poor. And this custom is a constantly observed rule here. After that [Sadr al-din Musa] recorded that the conditions of the lofty court (sharth-i dīvān-i 'ala) in the time of the waqfiyya on the aforementioned shrine was [written] in the days of [my father], that the receipt of those grains and revenues and the taxes were consumed [in such a manner]. The candles and lamps and oils there and the meals for the residents and for the travelers and wayfarers and the relations and passersby were in the customary manner, as established by my father." Both these deeds were recopied in 733/1332 and prove that they were recorded by Sadr al-din Musa just before or after his father's death in 735/1334 (see his remark 'in the days of my father').

The majority of fourteenth-century deeds were attested by Shaykh Sadr al-din Musa, who appears to have had an ambitious vision for augmenting the shrine's influence through real estate holding and built expansion. During the period after Shaykh Safi's death, more than 18 stores were bought in the Ardabil bazaar by Sadr al-din Musa as the agent of the shrine, in addition to over 50 surrounding villages (these were villages closest to Ardabil, and do not even include property in Tabriz, Gilan, Mazandaran, etc, for which there were separate deed listed in the register!). The eighteenth-century author of the Silsilat al-nasab-i safaviyya, Husayn Ibn Abdal Zahidi credits Sadr al-din Musa as

the builder of the tomb of Shaykh Safi (which apparently took over ten years to complete, owing perhaps to cash flow?). He also made arrangements for candles and lanterns to be provided, rebuilt the khalvatkhāna and dependencies, and employed Qur'an recitors (huffāz) and servants (khuddām) for the shrine.[14] It is similarly mentioned in the Safwat al-safa of Ibn Bazzaz Ardabili (which Sadr al-din had commissioned), that during the building of the tomb of Shaykh Safi, Sadr al-din Musa had widened and enlarged the area which led into the court (sahn) where the recitors and pilgrims sat, and ordered that all around this place (dar) the titles of Safi and the date of construction be written. This may be a precursor to the Dār al-huffāz of the shrine, above the entrance of which is the name of Shaykh Safi, and in the margins are dedications naming his son, Sadr al-din Musa as the founder of the Dār al-huffāz.

While Zahidi credits Sadr al-din Musa with building the tomb of Shaykh Safi (and perhaps formalizing recitation) he also mentions that the Dār al-huffāz building was funded by the charitable donations of Shihab al-din Mahmud, the second son of Sadr al-din Musa and the Shaykh al-Islam of Ardabil. Not being the mutawalli of the shrine, he has been mostly forgotten by historians, although he had arguably the greatest architectural (and economic) impact on the development of the shrine in the late fourteenth century. As Zahidi writes, and the numerous deeds in the Sarīh al-milk affirm, Shaykh Shihab al-din Mahmud remained childless and upon his deathbed bequeathed that his brothers use his inheritance for charitable works and endow it for the huffāz of the

---

[14] SNS, p. 39.

shrine of his honorable grandfather, such that "he may be remembered in this āstāna

(where angels travel) with good prayers."[15]   The epigraphy above the entrance to the Dār

al-ḥuffāz may be read as an acknowledgment of this generous donor who undertook this

piety in the name of his ancestors.[16]

Thus it must have been around the time of Shaykh Sadr al-din Musa's death in

794/1391 that Shaykh Shihab al-din Mahmud commissioned the Dār al-ḥuffaz. In the

Sarīh al-milk the deeds attest to the fact that in 794/1391 he transferred many of his own

considerable holdings to the estate of the shrine.   For example, the village Aruk (e. 70),

which "…his Lordship Shaykh al-Islam Shihab al-din Mahmud b. Khwaja Shaykh Sadr

al-din Musa endowed in 794 for the welfare of the lodge and shrine (khanqah va hazira)

of his grandfather the […] Supreme Safavi shrine, for its expenses; the benefactor

established for the enclosed buildings ('imarāt-i raqabāthā) … and the expenses for the

mendicants and residents and the 'ulema and sayyids and the Sufi shaykhs …[in Arabic:

for the piety and the duty for taking care of that which is given in trust by his father-

amānat vālidyāna] and … in the way of perseverance in the commands of the law in

reciting (dhikr) and reading (tilāvat) and praying (salāvat) in the manner of the believers

and residents of [the people of paradise]…"

---

[15] Ibid, p. 40.
[16] "The beautiful witness of the testimony, acceptance of his Lord without idleness, for God's satisfaction.
[What] he invested the shrine with clothes of affection/devotion and [what] delivered Musa from the 'stated
time'(?) … the successor, the crown prince and the khalifa after him, the essence of saints of God, the
righteous commander of justice (sadr al-haq) and the people and the religion, Musa, may he not cease to be
a center over the heights of sainthood and a sun over the sky of guidance. As Mahmud stood in his

The waqf deed enumerating the generosity of Shaykh Shihab al-din Mahmud points to some of the basic criteria for endowment at the shrine of Shaykh Safi. First, attention is drawn to the pious intention of the donor and his concern not as much with his public gesture, but its repayment in the afterlife. That is, the primary motivation is to gain salvation, and making gifts at a pious site, such as the shrine, would be construed as an act ensuring that the memory of the donor would be preserved. The charitable gift here also perpetuated the life and tradition of the shrine itself, through support of rituals such as recitation and communal prayer. And lastly, the shrine endowment sustained the Safavi Sufi cult, as an ideological and popular cultural institution.

The administrators of Shaykh Safi's shrine did not depend solely on the charity of others, but proactively began expanding its economic influence in Ardabil. The income was re-invested in the administrative estate (sarkār) of the shrine or made into perpetual waqf. Local tradesmen from the neighboring bazaar formed the majority of clients to the shrine, with whom the mutawalli or his agent (wakīl) entered into business transactions. These transactions consisted of the shrine purchasing stores within the bazaar for a market value, out of which one-eighth of the sum paid was returned as a 'gift' to the estate of Shaykh Safi's shrine.[17] Many questions must be answered regarding the economic motivations for selling to the shrine of Shaykh Safi – for example, what were the benefits of such a sale in which twelve and a half percentage was 'charged'? Perhaps it was the unstable political situation which motivated this relationship in which the shrine provided

---

(Musa's) place, he founded it [the shrine] for the various groups in Islam, for those who perform pilgrimage [to it] and for those who dwell [in it] and those who kneel and prostrate themselves."

a solid (nontaxable) income to the vendors. Often the sellers would retain a percentage of the store sold, and were thereby allowed to continue their businesses with the shrine as a silent partner. Certainly, the shrine was an intermediary between the residents of Ardabil and local governors, and often spoke on their behalf (that is, against taxation, tribute, invasion). It was also the middleman when it came to sale of produce from villages.

The prestige and authority exercised by the Sufi brotherhood gave selling to the shrine viability in addition to economic and political advantages. For example, women were clients and sold the property (e. 13a, 13b, 21, 26, 48, 75b, 78, 85, 101b, 104b, 107b, 111b) inherited through fathers or husbands to the shrine, perhaps as a way of gaining direct access to their wealth, as opposed to through an intermediary who collected rent from shops, for example. Sometimes, the women would also bequeath the income to their daughters, creating a female equivalence of waqf ahlī!

The Safavi family were not only patrons of the shrine of Shaykh Safi, but were often themselves the recipients of imperial generosity. Shaykh Safi's reputation had earned him the respect of many of the rulers of Azerbaijan, who visited his zawiya and made endowments. In fact, the earliest dated deed in the Sarīh al-milk is one such imperial waqf and concerns the village Kalkhoran. It is dated 705/1305 (111a) and relates to property in that village, one-third of whose income was given to support the woman called Anil Khatun by the Ilkhanid ruler, Ghazan Hasan (d. 704/1304).[18] This

---

[17] Would this be considered a tax or zakāt?

[18] One of the most important orders for the Ilkhans was the Safaviyya, as headed by Shakyh Safi. Hamd Allah Mastawfi writes that the Mongols held him in much respect and he restrained them from molesting the local people. During the reign of Uljaytu, Kalkoran was made into waqf for him and his descendants; in 1305 Hal khatun who was given land as waqf by Ghazan Khan had to give some, in 1315 Uljaytu had the remainder made waqf. Rashid al-din had contacts with the Shaykh, and sent money for the 'sama there. A. K. Lambton Continuity and Change in Medieval Persia, (London, 1988).

woman then endowed it to the shrine. The remaining two-thirds were not imperial lands

(dīvānī), but nonetheless, Sultan Muhammad Khudabanda (d. 716/1316) "known to the

Turks as Uljaytu" went on to endow them on the shrine in 714/1314 for its provisions

(sufra). Apparently 'Shah Uljaytu' also made another village called Hasan Baru (e. 81)

waqf for the Safavi family which was re-sealed with the name of his son and heir Prince

Abu Sa'id Bahadur Khan (d. 736/1335) in 728/1327. A similar waqf (e. 81) was sealed

by Prince Abu Sa'id regarding the village Alghar such that "the revenues consumed from

grain and berries were received [and used for] the comers and goers and the mendicants

and the residents and rich and poor who are in need."

Continuity of regional traditions, which cut across time, is made clear when we

look at similar imperial waqfs which are recorded in the Sarīh al-milk during the

Chupanid and Jalayir periods. The relationship of royalty to the Safavi cause was a

recondite one, which we shall study in greater detail when we turn to the imperial Safavid

period. Suffice it to note here that the Safavi shaykhs were a reputable and powerful

presence on the political landscape of northwestern Iran from the very inception of the

order. Or, as Sadr al-din Musa was called in a noted farman of Sultan Ahmad Jalayir (d.

813/1410) dated 773/1372, they were "loyal counselor[s] to the kings" (nāsah al-muluk

wa al-salātin).[19] During his administration, Amir Ashraf Chubani (d. 757/1356) endowed

two villages (e. 75, 97) to the shrine of Shaykh Safi. Similarly, Prince 'Ali b. Sultan

Uvais Jalayir (d. 784/1382) endowed three villages (e. 70, 87b, 122c) for the provisions

---

[19] This farman was a government exemption granted to him and the shrine by Sultan Ahmad Jalayir (d. 813/1410); Henri Massé, "Ordonnance rendue par le Prince Ilkhanien Ahmad Jalayir en faveur du Chiekh Sadr-od-din (1305-1392)," Journale Asiatique, (1938) :465-468, p. 465.

(sufra) of the Holy Safavid shrine in the name of the Shaykh al-Islam, Shihab al-din

Mahmud. Hence we see that the shrine of Shaykh Safi was an ideal site for the

enactment of imperial virtues such as piety and generosity, as well as a strategic one. The

rulers gained allegiances here, enabling them control over the entire region, through the

negotiation of the Safavi Sufis and their local supporters.

Royal exemptions continued during the Qaraqoyunlu and Timurid periods as well.

For example, in 816/1413 a farman was ordered by Qara Yusuf (d. 1433) granting

exemptions in taxes and royal rights on villages owned by the Safavi shrine. It was

addressed to the governors, officials and tax collectors of Ardabil ordering them not to

tax the endowed properties of the zawiya of Shaykh Safi, the income from which went in

"the construction of fine buildings and bright mosques and khanqahs and zawiya."[20]

Likewise, his opponent Shah Rukh Mirza (d. 1447), in a royal decree dated 838/1435,

promised his protection to the Safavid order of "the Shaykh al-Islam and the guide of

mankind...Leader of the men and of religion, Ibrahim."[21] Apparently dervishes from this

shrine had gone to the royal court and promised their loyalty to him (note, he had just

defeated the Qaraqoyunlus), which "increase(d) [the sultan's] confidence in them." The

shaykhs of Ardabil were used as intermediaries between the sultan and the people of

Ardabil who they were to "make hopeful of [the sultan's] favor." In return, Shah Rukh

ordered his nobles and officials not to interfere with the shrine's administration and not

harass the Ardabilis. Such symbiotic relations were cultivated by the Safavi shaykhs,

---

[20] And an affirmation of this one a year later. The full farman is given (Persian with German translation) in Gottfried Hermann, "Ein Erlass von Qara Yusof des Ordens von Ardabil," Archaeologische Mitteilungen aus Iran II, Neue Folge 9 (1976) :225-242.

[21] Gottfried Hermann, "Urkunden-funde in Azarbaygan," Archaeologische Mitteilungen aus Iran II, Neue Folge 4 (1971) :249-262.

whose allegiances seemed to shift rather easily with the changing political geography of Tabriz and Azerbaijan.

Aside from royalty, a wide range of Ardabili society patronized the shrine and made gifts to its charitable estate. During Shaykh Safi's lifetime, a disciple, Amira Pahliwan (wrestler) of Gilan built a larger zawiya for the shaykh as the older one was too small to accommodate the growing number of visitors here.[22] Similarly, another disciple Maulana Gibrail Ardaqani also offered to build a zawiya where Safi had had gone into meditation.[23] These were gifts of devotion offered by local Ardabili residents to honor their illustrious guide and a way to enhance their own status within the community.

Other significant benefactors to the shrine were petty officials and local governors. One of the earliest endowment deeds cited in the 1577 Sarīh al-milk is from the time of the Ilkhanid commander, Shams al-din Daula Beg Juvaini (introduced in previous chapter). This influential commander had acquired great wealth and bought a lot of land worth, some of which was in Ardabil.[24] He also owned a part of the neighboring village of Kalkhoran which he bequeathed to his son in 682/1283 and was later bought from his heirs by the shrine estate. To the shrine of Shaykh Safi he endowed many stores (e. 3) in the Ardabil bazaar located on the Asfaris street (where the shrine was), as well as an important ribāṭ (e. 31), a famous bathhouse (e. 42), a water-mill (e. 48) and a village called Rudjan (e. 90). According to the entries listed in the Sarīh al-milk, these waqfs were made to Shaykh Safi's shrine for blessings from the 'leader of women' Fatima, and the ahl al-bayt. Furthermore, they were to fund the repair of the

---

[22] SS, p. 796.
[23] Ibid, p. 679.

ribāt (which would henceforth generate income for the shrine) and the construction of a

domed building where the copying and recitation of the Qu'ran would take place (a

precursor to the Dār al-huffāz?). The waqf for the ribat reads: "Eternal waqf and

religious bequest and charity [a] pure structure (binīa) and sincere intention (tuya) for the

welfare of the aforementioned ribāt and the domed tomb ('imārat al-qubba) [built for]...

the copying of Qur'ans and the reading of the Qur'an at the set times..."

In this deed are also mentioned a number of bath houses (with several rooms) and

all of the water-mills that were outside the Tavai Gate in Ardabil, and a number of

taverns in the Ardabil bazaar. By and large this generosity was to gain happiness and

good fortune (sa'dat) in the name of the family of Fatima. What would be the

motivations for a local governor to patronize the shrine?[25] While this is not the place to

discus the political and religious motivations for this Ilkhanid commander, such questions

shall serve us well as we turn to the early Safavid period of our study.

SUB-IMPERIAL ENDOWMENT AT THE SAFAVID SHRINE OF SHAYKH SAFI

Qizilbash intimates made generous waqfs to the shrine of Shaykh Safi, whom they

venerated and whose descendants were their overlords. In addition, many of them were

part of the patrimonial Safavid clan and traced their descent back to either Shaykh Safi or

his pīr, Shaykh Zahid. For example, the lālā of Shah Isma'il I, Husayn Beg Lala

---

[24] "The Socio-Economic Condition of Iran under the Ilkhans," I. P. Petrushevsky, in CHI: V, p. 521.
[25] Shams al-din Juvaini was a powerful and wealthy Ilkhanid courtier, whose sphere of influence was widespread and involved in the struggle for power not only in the political arena, but the spiritual one, for example involving shaykhs such as Simnani; see Elias, The Throne Carrier of God: The life and thought of 'Alā' ad-Dawla as-Simnānī, (Albany, 1995).

(Shamlu) known as 'Lala Beg,' had endowed an entire village to the Safavid shrine (e.

99).[26] After purchasing the village 'Amuqin in 909/1503, he later "endowed... the

aforementioned village with its farms and dependencies with all the divisions from the

gardens and sown fields, …[and their] total rights, on the holy, illuminated, blessed

Safavi cloister and shrine surrounded by the light of God, surrounded by the light of

greatness and on the welfare there that were expended … After the necessary

construction of the environs (raqba) [that was delayed] and after the collection of the

[daily] provisions for the needy (muhtāj) among them, for food (ta'm) of the comers and

goers and the [Muslims] and the residents that persevere to devotion/obedience

(muazziba'at) and recitation and are engaged in the service of that shrine with veneration

('ibādat) and holy war (struggle – mujāhidāt)." The emphasis on jihād and 'ibādat is not

idle, as Lala Beg Shamlu had been one of the select group of amirs called the ahl-i

ikhtisās that were the guardians of the Safavid tariqa in Ardabil between the death of

Shaykh Hayder and the return of Isma'il from Lahijan. Lala Beg was the wakīl to the

shah from 907-913/1501-8, an honored and coveted post symbolizing his elevated

position at the court. He was also the khalifat al-khulafa of the state until 913/1508,

when, in an attempt to incorporate more fully the Persian element of society, Shah Isma'il

replaced him. Lala Beg Shamlu was killed in 920/1514 at the battle of Chaldiran.[27]

---

[26] In a deed dated 945 (e. 113), his daughter Beg Malik Khanum sold another village that belonged to their family to the Safavid shrine. For his involvement with Sam Mirza's revolt, Husayn Khan Shamlu was executed by order of Tahmasb (around 941?). Martin Dickson, "Shah Tahmasb and the Uzbeks," Ph.D. diss. (Princeton University, 1958), p. 282.

[27] R. M. Savory, "The Principal offices of the Safawid State during the reign of Isma'il I (907-30/1501-24)," BSOAS 23, (1960): 91-105, p. 100 and "The Office of the Khalīfat al-Khulafā under the Safawids," JAOS 85, (1965) :497-502.

Another such person, who played an important role in the early years of the dynasty and at the Safavid shrine, was Ma'sum Beg Safavi, the future lālā of Tahmasb's eldest son, Hayder Mirza. The deeds point to the fact that he was also a rather prosperous land owner in that city. In 954/1547 he gifted to the shrine a famous bathhouse named after himself which was located in the Ardabil maydan (e. 43). Half of the bathhouse was endowed to the shrine (that is, half ownership, and hence half the profits) and the other half remained in the possession of himself.[28]

The involvement of the two lālā, guardians and tutors, points to the close relationship between the shrine of Shaykh Safi and the extended Safavid household (for example, Ma'sum Beg Safavi was a cousin of Tahmasb). It also situates the shrine as an arena for the enactment of social and political allegiances. Lala Beg Shamlu, for example, was considered the alter ego of the shah and as such a representative of the Safavid dūdmān. Loyalty to the imperial Safavid family was displayed through publicly visible gifts and endowments made to their ancestral shrine. Different tribal cabals, through representative individuals, also marked their closeness to the reigning elite in such a manner. For example, in 951/1544 Shahvardi Beg, a respected elder of the Ustajlu tribe, endowed for the upkeep of the tomb (mazār) of Shah Isma'il an orchard located in a village outside of Ardabil (add. 5).[29] Likewise, the governor of Kerman and Safavid supporter (post-sedition), Shah Quli Sultan Afshar, vowed as nazr his share of a village

---

[28] Before the waqf, 1/3 of the bathhouse was also owned by a Khwaja Amir Muhammad b. Haji Muhammad Kalkhorani, evidently a local notable. The subsequent waqf was divided between them according to this percentage.

[29] This transaction was listed in the section regarding the ash-i halāl instituted by Shah Isma'il. Shahvardi Beg Ustajlu had been a faithful henchman of Shah Tahmasb's; however, he was the paternal uncle of the

bought "for the estates (māl) of the lofty shrine" during the administration of Amir

Ashraf Auhadi (940-50s). He was an ambassador sent by Shah Tahmasb to the Ottoman

court, and had earlier been dispatched during Sultan Suleyman's invasions to raid tribes

in the Akhlat region. In 979/1572 he was sent, with Ma'sum Beg Safavi, to quell the

revolt of Qazak Khan Takkalu.[30] This loyal Qizilbash paid respects to the Shah through

his gifts at the imperial shrine.

Another prominent Afshar official, also very generous with endowing property to

the shrine, was the qurchībāshī (chief of the army), Sevunduk Beg Afshar, who in

976/1568 "endowed [for the closeness to God] on the welfare [affairs] of the Safavi

shrine such that [of] the land possessed two parts was his from twenty and four parts from

the total village al-Aruk aforementioned of all the dependencies of the sown fields and

deserts and fountains and canals etceteras of that [for] the important buildings and carpets

and lamps and the necessary taxes of that elevated shrine and the administration of it

would be blessed by the administrator of all endowments..." (e. 58). Sevunduk Beg

Afshar played a prominent role in early Safavid history as a loyal aide to Shah Tahmasb.

Like Ma'sum Beg Safavi, whom he often accompanied on missions such as the welcome

of Padshah Humayun in 951/1544, he was closely associated with the royal person and

his family. In 945/1538 he had been sent by Shah Tahmasb to extract an oath of

---

rebellious Murshid Quli Khan and was put to death by royal orders in 990/1582 for his close associations
with the latter.

[30] In 988/1580-1 he was the governor of Jam and fought (in alliance with Murteza Khan Rumlu) against the
Ustajlu and Shamlu cabal in Khurasan. The Ustajlu- Shamlu cabal won. TAAA, p.379 (Savory); TAAA, p.
280-3; AT, p. 701-3. It should be remembered here that the Ustajlu faction had rebelled in 933/1527,
invaded Azerbaijan and captured Ardabil, killing the governor, Badinjan Sultan Rumlu. However, by
934/1528 Tahmasb had forgiven the Ustajlu and allowed them back into his favor, although since 933/1527
the court was under the 3-year hegemony of the Takkalu faction.

allegiance from his rebellious brother Alqas Mirza and later in 962/1554 he was sent to

Herat to accompany Prince Isma'il back to Sava and to the fortress-prison of Qahqaha.[31]

It is important to note, as Martin Dickson did, that much of the early Safavid

bureaucracy was recruited from the Aqqoyunlu/Timurid regimes and did not consist of

Qizilbash tribesmen.[32] These latter, instead, were restricted mostly to the role of military

leaders, statesmen and imperial guardians, as the previous examples show. It may thus

be suggested that patronage of the shrine in Ardabil, the administration of which had

been almost entirely made up of local 'ulema and civilians, was a way of gaining access

and acceptability within that society (as in the case of the Allepene notables mentioned

earlier). After the imperial Safavid phase one can begin to see a shift in the shrine's

clientele, from local tradesmen and petty officials to Qizilbash governors and newly

settled elite who had been the loyal followers of Shah Isma'il.

This fact is clearly evident by the time of Shah 'Abbas I's rulership. During this

period influential Qizilbash officials made pious endowments to the shrine of Shaykh

Safi. The most notable of these are a pair of silver doors, gifted in 1011/1602 by Zulfiqar

Khan Qaramanlu. The doors, situated at the entrance to the Dār al-ḥuffāz, were dedicated

in the name of his patron, Shah 'Abbas who is described as a just administrator and pious

shah.[33] The years 1011-2/1602-3 were important ones, for it was then that Shah 'Abbas

was able to retrieve Azerbaijan from a twenty-year occupation by the Ottomans. At this

time, Zulfiqar Khan was the governor of Ardabil and was called upon by the shah to lead

---

[31] TAAA, p. 116, 214 (Savory).

[32] M. B. Dickson, "Shah Tahmasb and the Uzbeks," p. 14.

[33] "In the reign of the just ruler, the pious shah, 'Abbas, Whose like there never appeared in the universe." A few steps inside, in a small foyer leading inside are another pair of silver doors dated anonymously 1020/1611, the date of the interior renovation of the Dār al-ḥuffāz. Signed by the craftsman, Amir Khan Ardabili.

the vanguard against the Ottoman army.[34] With his aid, the Iranians captured the old

capital Tabriz and regained the Safavid ancestral lands. In honor of his participation,

Zulfiqar Khan Qaramanlu was also made the Hakim of Azerbaijan, and led successful

campaigns into Erivan and Nachevan.[35]

Local officials made endowments to the holy Safavi shrine, such as a silver door

gifted by a Khwaja Chubani during the tauliyat of Shaykh Abdal, in 1019/1611; the

Mustawfi Hamza Beg who transferred the famous Bathhouse of the Maydan to the shrine

in 1024/1614; and the store that Baha al-din Mohammed Sharif Beg, the Kalantar of

Shirvan had bought and endowed to the Holy Shrine in 1028/1619.[36] The mutawalli at

that time, Shaykh Sharif Zahidi bought many resthouses, baths, caravansaries, stores, inns

and whole villages from the estates of the shrine to add to the shrine's waqf holdings,

highlighting once again the extreme wealth and prosperity of the order even without

outside donations.

Some of the most important patrons of the shrine were Safavid family members

themselves. The extended Safavi family owned stores in the Ardabil bazaar (e.20, 50,

59) and in the environs of the shrine. For example, the Sayyid Qasim Safavi Baths which

were located next to a resthouse belonging to the shrine, and were owned by the heirs

---

[34] Ardabil, owing to its role as the dār al-irshād and home of the Safavid holy shrine, was never occupied by the Ottomans, through a tacit agreement between the Safavid and Ottoman rulers. There were always Ottoman propaganda and threats to occupy it but they are fictitious.

[35] TAAA, p. 832 (Savory). Zulfiqar Khan's brother Farhad Khan had also been in Ardabil, but in 1007 Allahverdi Khan was ordered to execute him on suspicion of treachery, a fact which was a source of great concern for Zulfiqar Khan; TAAA, p. 761 (Savory).

[36] Other gifts at this time included a pair of floriated silver doors at the entrance to Dār al-ḥuffāz; in one flower is written 'amal Amir Asad Allah Ardabili' and on a vertical shaft, 'amal Muhammed Hasan Zargafi, 1027'; a set of wooden doors, on one leaf of which is written, 'amal Amir Khan' and on other leaf, the date 1020 (they were affixed in 1307 at the time of Nasir al-Din Qajar).

(mostly female) of Sayyid Husayn Safavi (e. 35, 54b).[37] A great concentration of Safavis

lived around the shrine it self, as attested to by the description of the shrine and its

neighborhood in 'Abdi's Sarīh al-milk. In fact, Shah Tahmasb had to purchase (and then

demolish) many plots belonging to Safavis in order to accommodate his expansion plans

at the shrine of Shaykh Safi. It appears that their houses almost encircled the shrine

precincts, for there is also evidence of Safavi houses around the Shahīdgāh graveyard (in

the east) and along the street attached to the new Chillakhāna (southwest). This was true

even 100 years later when Sharif Zahidi purchased a number of houses in 1038/1629

from Safavis that were actually on the property of the shrine, that is, within its courtyard

(dar sahn-i astāna).

Women, such as Shah Parur Khanum and her daughter, both relatives of Sayyid

Husayn Safavi, and Shahzada bint Sayyid Murtaza Safavi, whose residences were near

the precincts of the shrine were also partners in sale transactions. These women were

vendors whose property Maʿsum Beg Safavi bought from the estates of the shrine in

951/1544 and 953/1546, respectively. Other women from the local Safavi family also

patronized the shrine, such as Shah Begi Khanum and her sister Shahzada bint Sayyid

Murtaza Safavi (e. 54a).[38] Likewise other daughters of Husayn Safavi and of Ibrahim

Safavi were clients of the shrine (e. 84, 114). In is interesting to note that these women

---

[37] (e. 54b) "Deed dated 953. One part and two share .. from one parcel of land located in the vicinity of the Sayyid Qasim Safavi Baths, attached to the new Inn (khān) of the Shrine that is now enclosed and the mutawalli bought from the agent of Shah Parur Khanum and her daughter, the heirs of Sayyid Husayn Safavi."

[38] Included in the āsh-i halāl list is a woman called Shah Pasha who Morton has identified as the sister of Haider and aunt of Shah Ismaʿil; see Anthony H. Morton, "The Early years of Shah Ismaʿil in the *Afzal al-tavarikh* and elsewhere," in ed. C. Melville, Safavid Persia: the History and Politics of an Islamic Society, (London and New York, 1996), :27-52, p. 37.

appear as 'independent' owners of their land and are identified by their paternal (not

marital) allegiances. The Qizilbash Turkmen and Safavids acquired status through

cognate relationships, especially in terms of family recognition and allegiance, and

wealth was similarly procured.[39]

Safavid imperial women were important patrons and clients of the shrine of

Shaykh Safi. The wife of Shah Isma'il, Shah Begi bint Mihmad Beg b. Hamza Beg

Bektash Mausillu (popularly known as Tajlu Khanum), commissioned for his burial in

930/1524 a great lofty dome (gunbad) "known as the Jannatsarā, which is next to the

dome (qubba) of Shaykh Safi, in the City of Guidance, Ardabil... she also ordered

windows for the grill (zarīh) of his tomb, the likes of which have not been seen."[40] In the

Sarīh al-milk a woman, "Begi Sultan, known by (Qalaj-lu Qari?) bint Hamza Agha b.

Murad Agha Rumlu, endowed on the tomb (mazār) of His Lordship (Isma'il) [the village

Yasghlu, in Chaqursa'd] and made the terms of administration (sharth-i taulīyat) that the

mutawalli... of the total of that estate, and stipulated that it should be spent for the

necessary building ('imārat-i zarūrīa) and the rest should be spent on the food that is

cooked each day for the mendicants and residents and pilgrims and travelers. Dated

---

[39] Adherence to Shi'i laws and tribal customs allowed women greater equality in terms of inheritance. Whereas in Sunni law only male members inherit (that is, agnate relationships) Shi'i law as formulated in the eighth-century, does not exclude the females from sharing the family assets in company of male heirs. The closest relatives, irrespective of gender and from either the male or female side, inherit according to the Qur'anic divisions. Kishwar Rizvi, "Gendered Patronage: Women and benevolence in Safavid architecture," Women and Self-representation in Islamic Art and Society, ed. D. F. Ruggles, (New York, 2000).

[40] KT, p. 290. Qummi states that she was herself buried in Shiraz, but according to the Sarīh al-milk and Jalal al-din Yazdi her grave is in Ardabil. In the Sarīh al-milk it is reported that the grave of the mother of the Shah (Tahmasb?) is in the courtyard of the shrine where there still exists a grave, and Munnajim writes of how 'Abbas II went on pilgrimage to the gravesite of Tahmasb's mother in the courtyard.

Shaban, 957 (add. 1)."[41] Imperial women, like their male counterparts, were granted the honor of burial at the ancestral shrine such as Fatima Sultan Begum, the daughter of Shah Tahmasb who died in Tabriz, who was buried at the holy shrine of her great forefathers (rawza-yi mathra-yi aba' o ajdad-i 'ala) in Ardabil.[42] One of Shah Isma'il's wives was buried within the courtyard of the shrine in a small dome next to the tomb of Shaykh Safi and the panja of 'Ali.[43]

The descendants of Shaykh Safi, whether Shaykhavand or Pīrzadeh (kin of Zahid Gilani) consisted of the Safavi and Zahidi clans, respectively, both of which were powerful and wealthy landowners in Ardabil and its environs, as our documents show. From as early as Shaykh Safi's lifetime, in fact, Ardabil and especially its adjoining village, Kalkhoran, were viewed as the patrimony of the Safavi shaykhs. Much property in the region belonged to members of either of the two familial branches. Their involvement extended further, as the shaykh of the order was necessarily a male descendant of Shaykh Safi, and much of the shrine administration was run by the Safavi or Zahidi family. That this tradition continued even till the seventeenth century (and was a source of competition and rivalry among them) is attested to in the Silsilāt al-nasab of Zahidi, which is an oblique validation of the Zahidi family's claims to authority at the shrine.

---

[41] Was Qazi Ahmad conflating the two women? The Mausillu was a wealthy wife of Isma'il who held properties in Qum and rebuilt the dome and courtyard of Fatima...was this Tajlu another person who Qummi is confusing with the Queen owing to a similar appellate?
[42] TAAA, p. 293.

The Safaviyya order's leadership, spiritual and administrative, was always bestowed upon the progeny of Shaykh Safi. These shaykhs had financial, as well as religious, control over the locals of the town. They did not shirk from political alliances - in fact, the patronage of rulers and government officials was to a large extent the source of their authority in the region. The flourishing Safaviyya order distinguished between senior and junior representatives, called khalīfa-i buzurg and khalīfa-i kuhna, respectively.

During Safi's lifetime, there were roughly two thousand khalīfas (pl. khulafa) and each had his own disciples, perhaps drawing upon tribal kinship.[44] The land registers mention an agent who initiated the property transaction. This person was a representative of the shrine and mediated on its behalf with the seller of the property. Most often, this was the shaykh and the chief mutawalli of the shrine, Sadr al-din Musa or later his son, Shihab al-din Mahmud.

The middle of the fifteenth century witnessed an increased politicization of the Safaviyya, with the leaders Shaykh Junaid and his son Hayder actively campaigning in Azerbaijan. Perhaps as a result of their military operations which forced them to be away from the shrine for extended periods, the role of chief mutawalli of the shrine, which they held, became mostly ceremonial, and actual transactions were undertaken by those on lower, secondary tiers of power.[45] This was certainly the case during the imperial Safavids. The first two shahs, Isma'il and Tahmasb, were the titular heads, but another

---

[43] Was this Khan Begi Begum b. Sufi Khalil Mawsillu, mother of Alqas Mirza?

[44] M.Gronke, Derwische, pp. 61-79.

[45] This phenomena also occurred in the earlier period, when a second mutawalli, Amir Zaheer al-din Ibrahim Safavi, is named as the mutawalli and agent of the shrine (e. 102). At this time, Shaykh Sadr al-din Musa was clearly the chief mutawalli of the shrine.

mutawalli was appointed to oversee transactions as the agent of the shrine (e.14b). The seventeenth-century Silsilāt al-nasab al-Safāvīyya is a useful text, for it clearly describes the role of the mutawalli at the shrine of Shaykh Safi: "As chief administrator, the mutawalli had the final word in all transactions made by the zawiya. All of its personnel (with the exception of the nazir?) - mustawfis, mushrifs, mudarrises, sayyids, and the various ranks of khadim[46] were under his control, and were to recognize him as "independent mutawalli." All financial paper issued by the zawiya was to be authenticated by his seal; all wages, stipends, and salaries were to be paid out under his supervision. The entries in ledgers (ruznāmejāt) could only be entered in the registers (dafātir) when they had been read and sealed by him. The mutawalli was to settle disputes arising among the peasants of the zawiya's lands ... , but only after an inquiry according to the shari'a in the presence of the 'ulema. (The estates of the shrine are known to be exempt and free of dismissals and transfers. Daily entries are to be brought every day to the aforementioned and to the mutawalli and sealed by the mustawfiyan of the shrine.) The governor (hākim) of Ardabil was not to interfere in the affairs of the zawiya, nor was it or its properties to be subject to taxation or duties. The mutawalli was to exercise general supervision over the catering at the shrine, and to inspect it from time to time. In matters of the tax roll (tumār), the mutawalli was to follow instructions from the divan. He was not to deviate in any way from the regulations and the instructions of

---

[46] Definitions from A. K. S. Lambton, Landlord and Peasant in Iran: A study of Land Tenure and Land Revenue Administration, reprint (Oxford, 1991): mustawfī: chief revenue officer of a district, mushrif: overseer, Khadim: orderly.

the founders (wāqifīn). In important matters, he was to consult with the nazir, and in general, show constant evidence of his administrative efficiency."[47]

During the lifetime of Shah Isma'il, the mutawalli of the shrine of Shaykh Safi was Khan Ahmad Beg Safavi, a relative from the Shaykhavand cabal.[48] According to Zahidi, this family claimed descent from Shaykh Ibrahim, grandfather of Hayder, and were step-brothers to the imperial Safavid family (although their mother was a Circassian slave).[49] Khan Ahmad Beg Safavi was succeeded in 946/1539 as mutawalli by Amir Ashraf Auhadi, a fact authenticated by the 946/1539 entries in the Sarīh al-milk of 'Abdi (e. 16).[50] In the register, the titles of Shah Tahmasb appear first, and in a second paragraph it is stated that Amir Ashraf Auhadi had lawfully written the following deeds, as the deputy of the Shah. In the introduction of the Sarīh al-milk, the author states that

Shah Tahmasb appointed Zahir al-din Ibrahim Safavi as the new mutawalli in 975/1567, in order to enhance the prestige of the shrine and to compile its land register (folio 8). In his biography, also, Shah Tahmasb names Mir Ibrahim Isfahani [Safavi?] as the mutawalli of Ardabil, but around the 940/1530s.[51] However, in a register dated 949/1542 'Ali Beg b. Hasan Beg Takkalu is identified as the mutawalli (e.20).

It is important to note the changes in personnel at the shrine for they point to the emergent power of the Qizilbash at the shrine – until this time, most of the top administrative functions were undertaken by the Shaykhavand family members, that is, the extended Safavid family. The competition for this important rank continued well

---

[47] I use Martin's translation, B. G. Martin, "Seven Safawid Documents from Azarbayjan," R. M. Stern, Documents from Islamic Chanceries, Oriental Studies 3 (1970) :171-206, p. 187; SNS, p. 108-110.
[48] B. G. Martin, "Seven Safawid Documents from Azarbayjan," p. 176.
[49] SNS, p. 65.

into the next centuries, as seen in the Silsilāt al-nasab of Zahidi. By the late sixteenth

century, the role was in fact filled by an Isfahani notable, Abul Vali Inju Shirazi.[52]

According to Iskander Beg Munshi, "Mir Abul Vali came to court, and he and his brother

were jointly placed in charge of the Ghazani endowments. Toward the end of the reign

of Shah Tahmasb, Mir Abul Vali was entrusted with administration of the Safavid shrine

at Ardabil, and his brother was left in sole charge of the Ghazani endowments. During

the reign of Sultan Muhammad Shah, Mir Abul Vali was appointed military chaplain

(qāzī-i askār). Finally on the accession of Shah 'Abbas I, he was appointed sadr."[53] The

'Ghazani endowments' are also mentioned in the Sarīh al-milk and refer to the supposed

farmans of Ghazan Hasan giving property, much of which was in Tabriz, to the Safavid

shrine.

The position of the mutawalli was split between an administrative function, held

by a non-Imperial (like Abul Vali Inju Isfahani) or Safavid (like Khan Ahmad Beg

Safavi) family member, and a ceremonial one, which was reserved for the reigning

shah.[54] In Mashhad the title given to the administrator was nā'ib, or deputy, and he

oversaw the day to day running of the shrine.[55] Likewise, in Ardabil his job included

managing all the shrine properties and financial assets. He was the representative of the

shrine estate when entering into business transactions with vendors, and therefore had

---

[50] KT, p. 288.
[51] TazT, p. 44.
[52] KT, p. 61.
[53] TAAA, p.237 (Savory).
[54] This is discussed more fully in K. Babayan's The Waning of the Qizilbash: The spiritual and the temporal in 17th c. Iran, Ph.D. diss., (Princeton University, 1993).
[55] A. H. Morton, "The Ardabil shrine in the reign of Shah Tahmasp I," Iran, part I vol. 12, (1974):31-64 and part II vol. 13, (1975):39-58; I, p. 34, n. 21.

access to a great deal of influence regarding the financial aspect of the shrine and Ardabil. His position of authority was often used also to accumulate wealth and renown for himself and his family.

In general, the appointment of mutawalli to the shrine of Shaykh Safi was a prestigious one, as can be gleaned by the very distinguished careers of Ma'sum Beg Safavi and Abul Vali Inju. In a farman dated 950/1543 Ma'sum Beg Safavi was identified as the mutawalli, settling a dispute between villagers of Kharanaq and Sultanabad, who paid income to the shrine. In accounts of the year 952/1543, Qazi Ahmad Qummi also named him as the mutawalli of the shrine, a task undertaken while acting as a royal emissary to Shirvan. According to Qummi, Ma'sum Beg Safavi had earlier been the qurchī (royal guard) in the court, then a divānbegī (government official), with a tuyūl (land grant) in Kashan. In 959/1551, after his successful tenure as mutawalli, Shah Tahmasb made him amir-i divān as well as the guardian to his eldest son, Hayder Mirza.[56] By 961/1553 he was given the vizirate and in 976/1578 he held the title, wakīl al-sultanat.[57]

Ma'sum Beg Safavi was also the mutawalli of the shrine during the time that Humayun Padshah was exiled and came to the Safavid shrine (951/1544). At this time he was in charge of bringing the royal visitor to Tahmasb's court in Tabriz, and escorted them both to visit the Safavid ancestral shrine in Ardabil. His Shaykhavand family provided much of the administrative cadre of the shrine and owned land in and around

---

[56] KT, p. 441.
[57] AT, pp. 459, 483; TAAA, p. 193 (Savory).

Ardabil, especially to the east of the town.[58] Ma'sum Beg's father, Khan Ahmad Beg Safavi had also been the mutawalli at the shrine of Shaykh Safi, as mentioned earlier, and was made the khādimbāshī (head servitor) by Shah Tahmasb in 957/1550. In 987/1579 a royal farmān was established gifting a soyurghal to "the children of the Sayyid, the deceased Khan Ahmad Beg Safavi" by Shah Muhammad Khudabanda.

In 956/1549, Sam Mirza (d. 976/1578), the brother of Shah Tahmasb, was made mutawalli of the shrine of Shaykh Safi and given the government (hakumat) of Ardabil. Sam Mirza remained in Ardabil for twelve years, and was married to a woman from the Shaykhavand branch of the family. It was here that he complied his compilation of poets and poetry, the Tazkira-yi Tuhfā-yi Sāmī.[59] In 969/1561, Sam Mirza staged a coup against his brother, the Shah, and was imprisoned.[60] Perhaps it was in response to the treachery of Sam Mirza that the shrine administration was taken out of the hands of the Shaykhavand, and instead a virtual outsider, such as Mir Abul Vali inju, was appointed the mutawalli. For this reason also, the recopied registers barely mention him and a later farmān calls for 'correction and checking' of all his transactions.[61] In an attempt at accountability, the writing of the Sarīh al-milk was ordered in 977/1570 by Shah Tahmasb, upon his appointment of Zahir al-din Ibrahim Safavi as his deputy mutawalli. In the introduction to the Sarīh al-milk, the author 'Abdi writes that the position of mutawalli should belong to an heir of the Safavid family, in this case, Shah Tahmasb and

[58] B. G. Martin, "Seven Safavid documents from Azerbaijan," p. 176.
[59] Sam Mirza Safavi, Tazkira-yi Tuhfā-yi Samī, ed. Rukn al-Din Humayun Farruk, (Tehran: Ilmi, n.d).
[60] KT, p. 550.

Ibrahim Safavi. This document confirms the dichotomous role of the mutawalli, one ceremonial and one functional, as mentioned earlier. Here, the official designation was reserved for the shah, whereas a member of his clan carried out the actual administration of the institution.

In 970/1562 the office of mutawalli (with the prestigious governor-ship of Ardabil) was bestowed on Shah Tahmasb's nephew Ibrahim Mirza, only to be reneged the next year.[62] There is little evidence of what transpired during the turbulent period between the reigns of Shah Tahmasb and his grandson, Shah 'Abbas I, other than the appointment of Abul Vali Inju earlier on. Prince Hamza Mirza, brother of Shah 'Abbas was sent on campaigns in Azerbaijan which were often interrupted by his pious visits to the Safavid shrine in Ardabil. The pretext was invoking aid from the ancestral spirits in conjunction with the gathering of troops from the region. After his assassination in 995/1586 this prince's body was transferred to the Holy Shrine in this paradisiacal rauza, and buried in the proximity of his exalted relatives.[63] In one farmān dated 992/1583, Mir Ashraf (Auhadi?) is identified as the khādimbāshī of the shrine, which may lead to the assumption that he retained his post there, if not in the same capacity as before. In a farman of 1009/1601 recorded in the Silsilāt al-nasab, the tauliyat of the shrine had been endowed on Shaykh Abdal Beg, a descendant (like the author) of Shaykh Zahid Gilani. Apparently after Shah 'Abbas' reign, the Zahidi family gained much prominence as the

---

[61] Reproduced in Bert Fragner, "Das Ardabiler Heiligtum in den Urkunden," Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes 67 (1975), :169-215, p. 206.

[62] KT, p. 288. Shreve Simpson write, "While en route from Mashhad, the Prince condoned a joke about his new appointment, thereby angering the shah. The Ardabil appointment was withdrawn and, instead, Tahmasb gave Ibrahim Mirza the governor-ship of Qa'in;" in Simpson, Sultan Ibrahim Mirza's Haft Aurang, (Washington, 1997), p. 231.

[63] KT, pp. 814, 845.

administrators of the shrine. The second Sarīh al-milk, of Muhammad Tahir Isfahani,

was compiled 61 years after the first, in 1038/1629. This register was meant as an

amendment to the earlier one of 977/1570 and included transactions during the

administration of Shaykh Sharif Beg Zahidi, a relative of Shaykh Abdal Beg. It is

difficult at present to speculate why this register was compiled. The reasons appear more

political than practical, in that the motivation appears more to affirm the new mutawalli's

authority, than any particular need to list the property transactions (which is not to say

that this was not an important or necessary endeavor). In that manner, the Sarīh al-milk

of Muhammad Tahir Isfahani is not unlike the Sarīh al-milk, which is also propagandist

in favor of the Zahidi family. Branches of the extended Safavid clan had begun gaining

possession over much land and neighborhoods close to the shrine were occupied by

Safavid or Zahidi families.[64]

*

Whether in terms of property owned or in terms of its administration, the shrine of

Shaykh Safi was seen as the patrimonial heritage of the Safavid clan. This factor was to

be the basis of Shah Isma'il ambitions, for it was in Ardabil that he initiated and

developed his spiritual and military power. His son, Tahmasb continued the trend of

patronizing the ancestral shrine, but in a manner to now control the rampant domination

---

[64] Monika Gronke has done a very thorough study of Ardabili society in the fourteenth-century, but
unfortunately there is no equivalent work for later periods, despite plenty of material in the Sarīh al-milks.
See her chapter "Zur sozialen Gliederung (The Social Structure)" for analysis of notable families;

by his father's Qizilbash supporters. By the time of Shah 'Abbas' reign, significant shifts in the Safavid political environment had been implemented, such that the shrine was now unabashedly associated with the ruling house, as a dynastic abode. Throughout the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the shrine of Shaykh Safi was a vital barometer to gauge the political and social transitions of the early Safavid state. As the next section shows, these changes were undertaken in many ways – from charitable foundations to entire building programs that transformed entirely the shrine complex.

M.Gronke, Derwische, pp. 145-210. Martin discuses the conflicts between the Zahidi and Safavi families in B. G. Martin, "Seven Safawid Documents from Azarbayjan."

CHAPTER IV.
THE IMPERIAL SHRINE: TRANSFORMING THE SUFI IDIOM

"Representation as power and power as representation are a sacrament in image and a "monument" in language where, exchanging their effects, the dazzled gaze and the admiring reading consume the radiant body of the monarch, the former by narrating his history in his portrait and the latter by contemplating one of his perfections in a narrative that eternalizes his manifestation."

Portrait of the King, Louis Marin[1]

The motivations for the shahs to patronize the ancestral shrine of Shaykh Safi were manifold. First of all, Ardabil was the locus of their power, both economic and esoteric. Two and a half centuries of accumulated history, as well as wealth, provided a set of customs and expectations which the new rulers were able to use and manipulate. They themselves were seen as part of the Safaviyya's evolution, in that the advent of Shah Isma'il had been predicted by Shaykh Safi himself (see chapter I). They were also the supreme leaders whose new power allowed them to diverge from, and reinvent, the order and its past. The changes envisioned by Shah Isma'il, and later by his son, Tahmasb, were thus couched in rhetoric both old and new. On the one hand, they took advantage of their roles as pīr and heir to the Safaviyya lineage, and on the other, they promulgated their new vision of a pious Shi'i polity which was at times in conflict with the former. The goal was to transform the more difficult and heterodox beliefs of the Qizilbash and merge them with a more normative type of religious praxis. Certainly the reasons for this were more political than theological.[2] By the time of Shah 'Abbas I the changeover had

---

[1] Louis Marin, Portrait of the King, trans. M. Houle, (Minneapolis, 1988).
[2] See K. Babayan, The Waning of the Qizilbash: The spiritual and the temporal in 17th c. Iran, Ph.D. diss., (Princeton, 1993).

148

been so complete that another facet of kingship, based on the older princely Timurid past, was introduced wholeheartedly (not that it had ever disappeared even with the earlier shahs) and displayed at the ancestral shrine.[3]

The shrine of Shaykh Safi was the site of imperial patronage from the earliest days of the Safaviyya order. Despite the covert and subtle changes toward greater political authority, the most visible aspect of control wielded by the shahs at this and other shrines was in the guise of humility and piety. Association with Sufis was not unique to the Safavids, for their predecessors were often acclaimed for their devotion to holy persons and sites, such as Sultan Husayn Bayqara, who patronized the shrine of Abdullah Ansari, in Gazurgah. The charity undertaken by the royal Safavids was thus within a familiar and widely recognized code of behavior. The Safavid historian Khwandamir lists a number of benevolent acts undertaken by the predecessors of the shah, such as the Ilkhan, Ghazan Hasan, who was known to visit the shrines of holy men and imams and to give generously to sayyids, the 'ulema and the poor. In addition, he constructed charitable institutions, such as the Shafiyya madrasa, a congressional mosque, khanqah, and a dār al-siyyāda. Every year, at his death anniversary an elaborate āsh (soup) was prepared and distributed among the poor, and all were to gather for Qur'anic recitations at his tomb.[4] A similar portrait is painted of the Timurid king, Shahrukh Mirza, who was always "in attendance of dervishes and hermits and wherever he went he first visited the shrines of saints. Due to his lofty spirit charitable institutions like mosques, khanqqahs, madrasas, and caravansaries were constructed throughout his

---

[3] For a discussion of Timurid legitimacy at the time of Shah 'Abbas I, see Shohleh Quinn, "Notes on Timurid Legitimacy in Three Safavid Chronicles," Iranian Studies 31/2, (1998) :149-158.
[4] HS, p. 187.

dominion and choice villages and real estate were endowed for their upkeep."[5] He was

especially fond of patronizing the Shi'i sanctuary of Imam Reza at Mashhad, where he

donated lamps of gold and rewarded the caretakers and inhabitants with generous alms.[6]

Evidently, charity and patronage of religious edifices was deemed a royal prerogative,

one in which the Safavids participated whole-heartedly, men and women. Likewise, their

neighbors and contemporaries, the Mughals, highly regarded the shrine and order

associated with Shaykh Muinuddin Chisti of Ajmer.

In keeping with this tradition of imperial giving, Shah Isma'il and his family

visited the gravesites of holy persons and patronized shrines, especially that of their

ancestor, Shaykh Safi, in Ardabil.[7] Safavid historians chronicled the many charitable

deeds enacted by the shahs in the name of their belief and elevated sense of piety. The

great devotion to the shrine of Shaykh Safi in particular was evident in the fact that every

young shah, at the time of his coronation would make a ceremonial visit to the shrine to

gain blessing from the spirits of the exalted shaykhs of Ardabil.[8] It was to this shrine that

Shah Tahmasb came in supplication before evicting the Ottomans from Tabriz, and it was

here that Shah 'Abbas rushed when faced with a similar dilemma. The shrine of Shaykh

Safi was thus seen as a talisman where the success of the king depended not only on his

armies, but on the good wishes of his dead ancestors.

---

[5] HS, p. 554.

[6] HS, p. 603.

[7] Isma'il repaired the shrine of the mystic, Sahl b. 'Ali, in Hamadan; HS, p. 483. His wife, Tajlu Khanum was famous for her charitable works in Qum, Shiraz, as was his daughter, Mahin Banu whose china collection was made into a pious waqf.; K. Rizvi, "Gendered Patronage: Women and benevolence in Safavid architecture," Women and Self-representation in Islamic Art and Society, ed. D. F. Ruggles, (New York, 2000).

[8] For example, Shah Isma'il as told in HS, p. 570; and his grandson and namesake Isma'il II, as told by Hasan Rumlu, AT, p. 615.

The difference between the Safavids and other rulers was that not only were they the devotees of holy persons (in particular, the Shi'i imams), but owing to their noble descent, were themselves treated as saints. Their charisma was part of their imperial image, and the person of the shah was considered sacrosanct. Shah Isma'il's devout Qizilbash were famed for going into battle with chests bared, believing in the Divine grace of their leader, and willing to attain martyrdom and Paradise on his behalf. Shah Tahmasb was regarded so holy that the water from his toilette was seen as being imbued by beneficial effect, or tabarruk. The Venetian traveler, Membre, writes of followers coming from Anatolia to request a piece of Tahmasb's turban or handkerchief, which would then be circulated in the countryside, such that the poor vendor may earn an income through displaying it and asking for alms. But the greatest sign of honor and the most valuable gift offered by the Shah was permission to be buried at the shrine of Shaykh Safi.[9] Thus the shrine and its city were part of the wider aura of sanctity personified by the Shah.

The province of Azerbaijan was considered the hereditary property (vilāyat-i maurūsī) of the Safavid shahs, primarily owing to the shrine of Shaykh Safi in Ardabil, and those of his ancestors in Kalkhoran and Ahar. Shaykh Safi's family had already been affluent, and the land registers attest to the fact that they owned much land in Kalkhoran and other areas in and around Ardabil. As such, the shrine and cult of Shaykh Safi were not only a source of the Safavid shahs' spiritual charisma, but also their wealth. This familial tie was made visible through the administrative function of the mutawalli of the

---

[9] Michel Membre, Mission to the Lord Sophy of Persia (1539-42), trans. A. H. Morton, (London, 1993),

shrine of Shaykh Safi. In the period after Shah Tahmasb gained control of the empire,

this office was bestowed solely on direct relatives of the Shah. As mentioned earlier,

Tahmasb himself was the titular khalifa and head of the shrine and therefore, according to

Safavid tradition, the mutawalli. However, his was a symbolic appointment and the

administrative function of this office was fulfilled by a deputy mutawalli (na'ib). Shaykh

Safi's shrine held a pivotal position in the economic and social life of Ardabil, owing to

the high degree of respect and loyalty elicited by the cult of Shaykh Safi. The trust

garnered by the Sufi shaykhs made them ideal business partners for bazaar traders and

local merchants, and allowed the mutawalli to accrue assets for the shrine estate.

Beyond Iran's borders, in Ottoman Turkey, the shrine of Shaykh Safi stood for

the Safavid shahs and their 'heterodox' version of Shi'i Islam. Many of Shah Isma'il's

followers had been Qizilbash Turkmen from Anatolia and Syria, and continued to support

the regime even after his death. If Ottoman polemics are to be considered, the Safavid

loyalists were in constant communication with Iran, in particular, Ardabil. Most of the

contact was in the form of sending pious offerings such as money, jewelry, and carpets,

to the shrine of Shaykh Safi. The biggest support appeared to have come from the south-

eastern parts of Anatolia, where other Sufi sects also flourished and associated

themselves with the Safavid cause.[10] The reproach and paranoia on the part of the

Ottomans was most vividly displayed in the middle of the sixteenth century, when noted

clerics were claiming that the Safavids had, heretically, changed the qibla from the

---

pp. 20-42.
[10] C. H. Imber, "The persecution of the Ottoman Shi'ites according to the mühimme defterleri, 1565-1585," Der Islam 56, (1979) :245-273.

direction of Mecca, toward Ardabil![11] Perhaps it was to this that 'Abdi Beg referred

when he wrote of the shrine's entrance, "There is to its portal the shape of a mihrab,

People turn their faces to it from each direction." Thus, the shrine of Shaykh Safi was

mythologized not only on its own terms, but also by its critics. The controversy elevated

the shrine to an even higher plane of signification for the Safavid rulers. The three

factors, religious, economic, and political, contributed to the continued support and

patronage of the shrine by the Safavid elite and their rulers, even as the shrine itself was

being recreated and transfigured.

The Safavid rulers, born into the _mythos_ of the shrine and cult of their forefathers,

were able to form and be transformed by, this powerful establishment. The reasons for

the attention given to this rather than any other social and charitable institution, such as

the Friday mosque or local madrasa, are many. The shrine, by its very nature was a

popularly revered site, patronized by all strata of society. As such, it may be seen as the

central public space in the city, as well as the nodal point for the region, since the

Safaviyya sphere of influence extended as far as Mazandaran and Urumiye. Perhaps

most important of all was the recognition of this place as a sanctified, religious edifice. A

place that, through association with the pīr, was seen as a way-station, a route to paradise

and its rewards. The shrine was a simile for the afterlife, and hence the ideal place for the

display of piety, wrought through multiple levels of devotional experience.

---

[11] Such as Mirza Makhdum (d. 1587), who had fled Iran; for more details on these war of words, see Elke

Before Shah Isma'il's ascension to the throne in 907/1501, the mutawalli of the shrine

was his brother Sultan 'Ali Padshah, after whose death in 898/1492, Isma'il was sent

away to Lahijan for safe-keeping. [12] At this time the shrine was taken care of by the

group of elders who were known as the ahl-i ikhtisās, such as Husayn Beg Lala Shamlu,

whom we have encountered earlier as a generous patron of the shrine. Khwandamir

writes that when Isma'il returned to Ardabil from Lahijan to regain his rightful place as

head of the militant order, "his threshold (dargāh) became a resort (ārāmgāh) for the great

of Iraq, Fars and Azerbaijan. In this manner, Ardabil became the rallying ground for

Isma'il's Qizilbash followers. [13] In the accounts of 902/1496, Hasan Rumlu writes how

Isma'il returned to Ardabil, "to remove heresy from the lands and to supplicate to the

spirits of his ancestors and ask for forgiveness for the heresy." A lot of military support

was rallied for him here, as he moved from village to village gathering troops, and then

returned to Ardabil, to circumambulate the "holy shrine of the Great Shaykhs," the shrine

of his ancestors. Sufis from Anatolia and Syria came to his threshold for pilgrimage, and

others arrived to join his faction. [14] Before the victory over the Shirvanshah, Isma'il came

to the grave of Shaykh Safi and prayed for aid against the 'infidels.' [15] After his

ascension in Tabriz, Isma'il ordered that the body of his father, Shaykh Hayder, which

---

Eberhard, Osmanische Polemik gegen die safawiden im 16. Jahrhundert nach Arabischen Handschriften, (Freiburg, 1970).

[12] An inscription found on the Friday mosque of Ardabil is a tax grant issued by Sultan 'Ali Safavi pointing to the independence of the Safavid order even before the imperial phase. In A. H. Morton, "Three Mediaeval Inscriptions from Ardabil," Akten des VII. Internationalen Kongresses für iranische Kunst und Archäologie, München, (1979) :560.

[13] HS, 584.

[14] AT, pp. 42-45.

[15] Amir Mahmud bin Khwandamir, Iran dar ruzgar-i Shah Isma'il va Shah Tahmasp Safavi (Zayl-i habib al-siyar) ed. Iraj Afshar, (Tehran, 1370/1991), p. 953.

had laid till then in Tabarsaran, be brought back to Ardabil and interred at the holy Safavi

shrine, in an area that would come to be known as the Shahīdgāh (place of martyrs)

cemetery.[16]

The shrine of Shaykh Safi flourished, as the spiritual omphalos of the new Safavid

empire. The shrine was praised in sixteenth-century court poems and histories, it was

patronized and generously endowed by the wealthy, and it was visited by a multitude of

believers from near and far. Provisions such as food and shelter were made for travelers

and pilgrims to the shrine through the construction of inns, resthouses and public baths.

The kitchen and its dependencies (such as kilns, bakeries, stores) were proudly eulogized

as flourishing and abundant components of the shrine complex, for it was here that the

most basic aspect of charity was displayed, that is, feeding the poor.

It was in keeping with this primary function that Shah Isma'il instituted the āsh-i

halāl (lit. lawful soup) waqf endowment, which was a pious foundation for the

distribution of food that functioned as a soup kitchen.[17] As the intention and

administration of this endowment was distinct from the shrine's holdings, the author of

the 1570 Sarīh al-milk recorded its holdings in a separate section added later to the land

register. The āsh-i halāl consisted of income collected from villages and properties that

Shah Isma'il had selected for the estates of the holy zawiya and āstāna of Shaykh Safi. It

begins with the procurement in 903/1497 of the village Samasbi and all its dependencies

by Sultan 'Ali, the brother of Isma'il and the mutawalli of the shrine at the time. These

---

[16] HS, p. 588.

apparently had already belonged to Shaykh Sadr al-din Musa and had lawfully been transferred to his sons and heirs. In 875/1470 the owners were assembled and Sultan 'Ali had decided to transfer all the orchards, water mills, fields and dependencies to himself. Shah Isma'il established this property, along with land around Sabalan and villages such as Sultanabad and Sarakjan, exclusively as a fund for the āsh-i ḥalāl.

Subsequently, Safavid notables endowed the income of villages and orchards to this institution, such as Shahvardi Beg Ustajlu who endowed an orchard in 951/1544 in the name of the shah, Tahmasb. Most of the donors stipulated that the income was for the tomb (mazār) of "His Lordship" (Shaykh Safi), like the aforementioned Shahvardi Beg and a woman Begi Sultan Rumlu. Another woman, Sultan Agha bint Maulana Sharf al-din 'Ali, the mother of Khalifa Burhan al-din endowed the income from an orchard on the rauza of His Lordship in 948/1541 (add. 2b). Local notables like Mirza Beg Chupani Mughani "endowed [the income from the village Bajirvan] on the estates of His Lordship, for the purchase of candles and oil that lights every evening the twelve lanterns (shama') at the head of the cenotaph (marqad) of His Lordship" in 977/1570 (add. 4a).

The second significant intervention at the shrine, in the name of Shah Isma'il was the construction of the Dār al-ḥadīth, or hall for ḥadīth study.[18] This building was a rectangular hall, like the iwan of a mosque, situated perpendicular to the Dār al-ḥuffāz and tomb of Shaykh Safi. At the writing of the 1570 Sarīh al-milk, the iwan was adorned

---

[17] Like the āsh-i khairi, āsh-i ḥalāl literally refers to legally sanctioned victuals, it is food distributed through some charitable foundation.
[18] A parallel architectural and social coincidence was in the Ottoman capital of Istanbul, when Sultan Suleyman built a Dar al-ḥadīth as part of his Suleymaniye complex; see Gülru Neçipoglu-Kafadar, "The Suleymaniye Complex in Istanbul: an Interpretation," Muqarnas 3 (1985) :92-117.

with honorific titles of Shah Isma'il. The iwan is here described as a mihrab (for it is in the qibla direction) that "One can call it the qibla of the ages; Such that from prostration toward it, may benefit the fortunate ones."[19] This new building added an additional architectural and functional dimension to the shrine complex. It was complementary to the Chillakhāna where Sufi rituals, such as meditation, would take place, and the Dār al-huffāz where recitors gathered to read the Qur'an day and night at the tomb of the founder.[20] At the Dār al-hadīth, by contrast, learned scholars could study and transcribe hadith and laws for the purpose of disseminating the new religious doctrine.[21] Thus, the Dār al-hadīth represented the madrasa institution at the shrine.[22] Unlike the traditional four-iwan types which accommodated the four schools (mazāhib), here the whole is represented by a fragment – one iwan symbolizing the evolving religious policies of Safavid Iran.

In an attempt to assimilate with the local hosts, and perhaps as a way to distinguish this new imperium from the Sunni Ottoman and Uzbek neighbors, Shah Isma'il introduced Shi'ism as the official creed. At his ascension Shah Isma'il ordered that the Friday sermon be in the name of the twelve Imams, as a sign of his religious persuasion and intent to convert Iran to this 'chosen path,' and away from the ghulāt-

---

[19] SM1, Appendix A, verse E.

[20] The tradition had carried on since the time of Sadr al-din Musa, and is described in detail by Ibn Bazzaz, in SS, p. 989. We shall discus these rituals in greater detail in the next chapter.

[21] The Sarih al-milk gives testimony to the changing elite at the shrine, as now maulanas and qazis officiated over the registers and waqf documents (as opposed to local officials).

[22] The 1570 Sarih al-milk does mention another madrasa, in the context of its courtyard facing outside the shrine precincts. However, this could refer to the Dār al-hadīth, which was near the edge of the complex, and would fit the location according to Olearius' map of Ardabil.

inspired movement which brought him to power. Modern historians have pointed to

Shah Isma'il's attempt to achieve this goal by attracting Shi'i scholars, such as al-Karaki,

from regions like Jabal 'Amil, to his court.[23] As Rula Abisaab has written, "..the Safavids

sought a conferred sense of religious leadership derived from the adoption of a coherent

Shi'ite belief system by their subjects...The making of a shari'a-based society meant a

standardized religious praxis, which neither the Qizilbash nor the erudite Iranian notables

were equipped to instill in the new dynasty."[24] This could only be accomplished by

imported scholars and by the establishment of institutions where the study and

propagation of Shi'i sources of authority could be undertaken. This was initiated by Shah

Isma'il, but really actualized later by his son, Tahmasb.

As we know, the "Qur'an, tradition (sunna), the consensus of the Shi'i jurists

(ijma') and reason ('aql) form the sources of Shi'i law."[25] The novel situation of a Shi'i

state required modifications in Shi'i law to accommodate legitimate rule, bringing up

issues such as land taxation, the limits of the jurist (faqih), and the validity of Friday

prayer in the absence of the Imam.[26] As such, the necessity for formulating a cogent body

of acceptable laws and opinions was deemed crucial through a reassessment of the hadith.

As the secondary source, after the Qur'an, a great deal of emphasis was given to the

---

[23] For example, Albert Hourani, "From Jabal 'Amil to Persia," BSOAS 49, (1986) and more recently, Rula Abisaab, "Ulama of Jabal 'Amil," Iranian Studies 27 (1994). There is disagreement among the scholars about the degree and extent of Shi'i migration into Safavid Iran. For a different point of view, see Andrew Newman, "The Myth of Clerical Migration to Safawid Iran," Die Welt des Islams 33, (1993) :66-112.
[24] Abisaab, "Ulama of Jabal 'Amil," p. 116.
[25] Hossein Modarressi Tabataba'i, An Introduction to Shi'i Law: a bibliographical study, (London, 1984), p. 3.
[26] Modarressi Tabataba'i, An Introduction to Shi'i Law, p. 50.

rationalist interpretation of hadith. No doubt it was such a climate that the building of the

Dar al-hadith at Shaykh Safi's shrine must be viewed.

The Dār al-hadīth is therefore a reminder of the policy introduced by Shah Isma'il

of bringing in 'ulema from Arab lands to propagate the Shi'i doctrine. That this

continued is proven by the biography of a leading Safavid jurist from Shah Tahmasb's

court, Mir Sayyid Husayn Mujtahid Jabal 'Amili, who held the office of muddaris and

shaykh al-Islam in Ardabil where he partook in "establishing the shari'a."[27] However, as

the only original remaining epigraphy on the Dār al-hadīth shows, the changes were not

at the expense of traditional Sufi ways of the Safaviyyah order. The main text, "With

knowledge revive the hearts of the wise ones and in it, cleanse the bosoms of the

worshippers," refers to the Sufi quest for ma'rifat, or mystical knowledge. The didactic

goals are reiterated by the exhortation to cleanse the hearts of the believers in order to

receive that knowledge through instruction and prayer. The secondary, smaller text thus

reads, "The Prophet said: The best prayers [are] the perfect supplication." The change

was, rather, to amend a more doctrinal approach to the existent Sufi rituals.

It is unclear whether the Dār al-hadīth was commissioned by Shah Isma'il

himself, or was built during the reign of his son, Tahmasb. Architecturally, it is similar to

the Jannatsarā that shah Tahmasb built and appears to be synchronous with the rest of the

courtyard embellishments of the mid-sixteenth century. This 'qibla' may be seen as a

monument in honor of Shah Tahmasb's father, who was the charismatic pole toward

which the devout Qizilbash had directed their loyalty. The āsh-i halāl foundation and the

Dār al-ḥadīth at the shrine of Shaykh Safi signaled the types of changes and continuities that would characterize the young Safavid imperium. Shah Ismaʿil was perpetuating a known and familiar form of piety through his charitable waqfs for the soup kitchen (which in later years became the locus for worship of the Safavid _imperial_ cult!) Now, in contrast to that centuries-old Sufi practice, a new religious institution, for the propagation of his chosen religious inclination, Shiʿism, was founded at the ancestral shrine.

The coexistence of Shiʿism and Sufism at the shrine of Shaykh Safi does not necessarily point to an antagonistic relationship. In the early years of the dynasty both these trends were in the process of reinterpretation and transformation in accordance with the changing social and political environment of Iran. It was most poignantly seen in the maturation of Shaykh Safi's shrine, a mirror reflecting the cultural milieu of early sixteenth-century Iran. These observations are doubtless refracted through the particularities of customary social practice and cultural parameters which we can only guess at.

The symbiosis of Shiʿism and Sufism was brought to the fore during the reign of Ismaʿil's son and heir, Tahmasb.[28] In order to understand the rather abstruse character of this Safavid monarch, it is important to mention his involvement with the most significant textual source about the origins of the Safavid Sufi order, the Safwat al-safa of Ibn Bazzaz Ardabili, written originally in the early fourteenth century. In 940/1533 Shah

---

[27] TAAA, p. 145.

[28] For a discussion of Shiʿi polemics for and against Sufism, see Nasrollah Pourjavady, "Opposition to Sufism in Twelver Shiʿism," in eds. F. de Jong and B. Radtke, Islamic Mysticism Contested, (Leiden, 1999). Pourjavady gives the example of the fourteenth-century thinker, Hayder 'Amuli, who did incorporate Sufi ideas into his work, and shows respecet for a number of Sufis, such as al-Junayd, Sari al-Saqati, Maʿruf al-Karkhi - who we notice are also mentioned in the Sarīh al-milk as Shaykh Safi's spiritual 'ancestors.'

Tahmasb ordered that this text be edited, a move which would provide the ideological foundation for the Safavid imperium. Henceforth, the Safavid progeny of Shaykh Safi was portrayed as direct descendant of the Prophet Muhammad through the seventh Shiʻi Imam, Musa al-Kazim. All sixteenth-century and later Safavid chroniclers refer to the genealogy fabricated here.[29] The revising of the Safwat al-safa highlights the dependence of the Safavid monarchy on Shiʻism as a form of legitimacy, as mentioned by Abisaab. The ʻAlid-ghulāt climate and deep reverence for the ahl al-bayt made Shiʻism the obvious religious choice, and the sayyid designation of the shahs the correct class designation.[30] In a similar vein the ancestral shrine of Shaykh Safi was also reconfigured to adhere to a more normative Islam, for it was viewed as the perfect setting for the dissemination of the new dogma.[31]

During his reign Shah Tahmasb was the supreme upholder of the Shiʻi creed; in his autobiography he writes of how in 939/1532 he experienced a reawakening in his belief and repented against all things unlawful, that is, acts deemed un-Islamic, such as drinking alcohol and gambling.[32] It was reported that when he went out people beating drums and carrying banners would walk on ahead cursing the Sunni caliphs, Abu Bakr, ʻUmar, and Uthman. According to a farmān installed in the Safavid shrine, Shah Tahmasb was considered "... the asylum of divine grace, the king, the lawful friend of

---

[29] For a discussion of this fabrication see Michel Mazzaoui, The Origins of the Safavids: Shiʻism, Sufism and the Ghulat, (Wiesbaden, 1972) who cites Ahmad Kasrawi as the first to realize this fact.

[30] On the ghulāt tendencies, see Kathryn Babayan's "The Safavid Synthesis: From Qizilbash Islam to Imamate Shiʻism," Iranian Studies, v. 27:1-4, (1994) :135-162. After Ismaʻil's defeat at Chaldiran which called in question his role as infallible and sublime religious leader, there was need to seek political and religious authority elsewhere.

[31] Kathryn Babayan, Mystics, Monarchs and Messiahs: The spiritual landscapes of early modern Iran, (forthcoming).

[32] TazT, p.37.

god, blessings of good assistance, his majesty, the defender of God's purity (defender of the Pure), the light of the new moon and the sunlight of guidance, the sign of union [sanctity], the highest of the high, the lord, sultan of the sultans, by inheritance and right, the shadow of God in the universe, Sultan b. Sultan Abu al-Muzzafar Sultan Shah Tahmasb al-Safavi al-Husayni Bahadur Khan, may God make everlasting his kingdom and his rule (sultanat) and extend his generosity and beneficence forever. He is clear and bright and the [dignified] Divine grace, the sign of great sublimity, the purest of the pure, the overseer of holy shrines (mashāhid-i muqqadasa) and lofty edifices like the Sidra Tree ('atabāt-i sidra martaba) ... the royal caliph - the lord, defender of the law (shari'a) and the religion (dīn), the one lord [on who] is revealed [the truth]."

In the redacted Safwat al-safa, repeated mention is made of Shaykh Safi's upright faith and how he would not deviate a hair's breadth from the correct path. The Safavid concern with upholding the shari'a has already been discussed in the context of Tahmasb's father, Shah Isma'il. Shah Tahmasb continued this trend but in a more traditional fashion than his father, who wrote heretically that "My name is Isma'il... my mother is Fatima, my father Ali." Fanatic praise for Ali (edited in later Safavid documents) was evident in one of Isma'il's verses "Know Him to be God, do not call him human," a reflexive self-identification.[33] In stark contrast to this Mahdism of Isma'il, Shah Tahmasb modeled himself not after 'Ali b. Abi Talib, but rather his son, Hasan.[34]

---

[33] In Wheeler Thackston, "The Diwan of Khata'i: Pictures for the Poetry of the Shah Isma'il I," Asian Art 1/4, (1988) :37-63.

[34] In his memoir, Tahmasb refers to himself as the ghulām (slave) and aulād (offspring) of 'Ali; TazT, p. 2.

Hasan b. 'Ali is presented as the role model for the young shah in a painting titled, "The sermon of Maulana Hasan in Madina," from the manuscript, Tārīkh-i 'aima-i ma'sumīn of 932/1526.[35] It is difficult to surmise who may have commissioned this deluxe manuscript, perhaps Shah Isma'il himself for his young son (like the luxurious Shāhnāma-i shāhī of Ferdowsi[36]) as a Shi'i equivalent of the Sufi genre known as menāqibnāma, or the stories of the prophets, the qissas al-anbīya. The (literally) elevated position of the imam in the center of the painting and sitting upon a minbar places him in a position of authority and honor. His persona is conflated with that of the young shah, Tahmasb, who is named in the architectural inscription above. Here, Maulana Hasan and Shah Tahmasb are rendered as complimentary aspects of both religious and secular authority, such that Shah Tahmasb is named the "Shadow of God over the two Terrains."[37] Unlike later titulary, Tahmasb's lineage here does NOT go back to Musavi roots, corroborating our knowledge about the late dating for the Safwat al-safa redaction (i.e. post-940). Rather, the shah is given standard characteristics of royalty: greatness and justice. Moreover, Hasan is called simply 'maulana' and not given a fiery halo as in the case of other Imams in this manuscript, like 'Ali and Husayn, that is, the human qualities of the imam/king are described, not divine ones.

---

[35] Ibn Arabshah Veramini, Ahsan al-akhbār fī mā'rifat aima' al-athār, (837/1433) Dorn 312, Russian National Library, St. Petersburg, Russia, recopied around 932/1526.

[36] Hillenbrand speculates that this manuscript was commissioned as a gift for Tahmasb by Isma'il for the only date given in it is 934/1527, folio 516, "Ardeshir and the slave-girl Gulnar," signed Mir Mussavir; see Robert Hillenbrand, "The Iconography of the Shah-nama-yi Shahi," in ed. C. Melville, Safavid Persia: the History and Politics of an Islamic Society, (London and New York, 1996), pp. 53-78.

[37] "[during \ the great sultan and the just khaqan the most generous shadow of God over the two terrain, the steward and... the Sultan [above Hasan: b. Sultan b. Sultan (in yellow: Abi Muzzafar Tahmasb Bahadur Khan may God make everlasting) his kingdom and confer over the universe his justice; in the month of Dhilhaj of 932 hijra by the humble, Qasim 'Ali."

It is significant to note Shah Tahmasb's association with Hasan, not 'Ali or

Husayn. These latter characters representing martyrdom and divinity were absorbed by

his father, Isma'il, as witnessed in his militant propagandist poetry. Unlike the heroic

warriors 'Ali and Husayn, Hasan was a quietist, who relinquished his claim to the

caliphate in the interest of peace and against the factionalism of the Muslims. This

pacifism was reflected in the social situation of sixteenth-century Iran: Tahmasb's

supporters were fighting each other (in 932/1526 a civil war was underway between the

Qizilbash tribal cabals) and the Shah was caught in the middle of the factional strife

which threatened to undo the consolidation begun by Isma'il. Perhaps it was in this

context that the painting was completed, the message for the young prince being to chose

religion, humility and discretion over extremism, war and partisanship.

The inter-Qizilbash civil war continued until the 940s and put a freeze on any

state activities that could be patronized by Shah Tahmasb. It has been mentioned earlier

that there is a lacunae in the 1570 Sarīh al-milk registers between 916/1510 and

940/1533. If taken solely within the parameters of imperial benefactions these dates

should not surprise us: Shah Tahmasb grew up in Herat, and until the 940s had little

involvement with the shrine of Shaykh Safi, although he was naturally the head of the

Safaviyya order. In 941/1534 Ibrahim Pasha, the Ottoman grand vizier, occupied Tabriz.

According to his autobiography, Tahmasb visited Ardabil in answer to a prophetic dream

that he had had in Mashhad in which 'Ali commanded him to make a pilgrimage to the

shrine of Shaykh Safi and donate twelve lanterns - after that, victory would be his. The

Shah, avoiding Tabriz, visited the tomb of his father Isma'il and the shrine of Shaykh

Safi, where he gifted twelve lanterns to the shrine. He then made a pilgrimage to the

'Tomb of the Shaykhs,' and said his prayers in the vicinity of the shrine and slept at the house of Sultan Hayder.[38] Shah Tahmasb saw another dream in which Shaykh Safi now appeared, and foretold his impending victory. After that auspicious visit to the shrine, Shah Tahmasb indeed managed to oust the Ottoman forces from Tabriz, which occasioned another visit to the shrine of Shaykh Safi – this time to give thanks.[39]

It was most probably at this visit that Shah Tahmasb ordered the installation of the large marble farmān in the courtyard of the shrine, specifically on the façade of the Dār al-huffāz.[40] The farmān urges the populace of Ardabil to refrain from unlawful activities, "such that in those illuminated sanctuaries acts of heresy are forbidden." The order is addressed to the Sufis and pilgrims who resided at the shrine, urging them to follow the correct Islamic path. Perhaps this show of reigning in of heterodox Sufi behavior at the shrine was in response to the Ottoman polemics and accusations which were propagated in Turkey and abroad, accusing the Safavids of heresy.[41] As in his apologia, the autobiographical Tazkira-i Shāh Tahmāsb, the Shah may here have been making an outward gesture of upholding orthodoxy and the correct practice of faith.

The farmān is also addressed to bazaar merchants and traders, as well as to sundry 'businessmen' who ran houses of pleasure, forbidding illicit practices and ordering that the taxes from such activities be erased from the official registers. Such a farmān, installed on the Dār al-huffāz, acknowledges the close relationship of this shrine to the urban life of Ardabil. The courtyard of the shrine was a public space where official

---

[38] TazT, p. 38.
[39] Ibid.

orders were proclaimed. The farmān in the courtyard functioned as a permanent imperial

marker, situated appropriately within the Safavid shrine. One must question to what

extent Shah Tahmasb's public prohibition was indeed meant to change significantly the

society, and to what extent it was merely propagandist. The aspect which concerns us the

greatest is the curbing of Sufi activities, which is often assumed to have been part of Shah

Tahmasb's policy. However, other than the persecution of the Nuqtavis, there is little

other evidence of this.[42] In fact, he showed a great deal of respect for Sufi traditions, as

indicated in a decree of Shah Tahmasb addressed to the 'functionaries of the court,' in

which he writes, "When they are not preoccupied with the affairs of the people, let them

read the books of the masters of Sufism and sincerity, like the books on ethics which are

spiritual medicine."[43] Even in the marble farmān in Ardabil, concession is made to the

traditions of Sufi practice, while seeming to curb its more 'heterodox' expression, such

that qawwālī is banned, but not dhikr; the playing of musical instruments is banned, but

not samaʿ.

The farmān on the Dār al-ḥuffāz of Shaykh Safi's shrine is an important

component in the making of Shah Tahmasb's imperial image. The shrine of Shaykh Safi

was the ideal site for the display of Shah Tahmasb's religiosity and commitment to his

role as "overseer of holy shrines and lofty edifices ... the defender of the law and the

religion." As the pīr of the Safavid tariqa, he was automatically also the official

---

[40] See Appendix B.
[41] See Eberhard, <u>Osmanische Polemik gegen die safawiden</u>.
[42] NA, p. 515.

166

mutawalli of the shrine of Shaykh Safi, and responsible for its administration: religious and economic. Tahmasb was also, as the ruling shah, in charge of other holy sites such as those in Mashhad and Qum. In the Safavid chronicles, Shah Tahmasb was noted for his generosity to "shrines in Mashhad, in Qum, the Imamzada Abdul Azim, and the Holy Safavid shrine" as well as donating "whatever was needed for food and clothing (etc.)... for the dinner and table, curtains, floorings, such as silken carpets, woolen carpets of fine craftsmanship, and golden candlesticks."[44] In Mashhad, Shah Tahmasb built the fortifications of the city in 932/1526, at the same time as he had built the minaret at the northern entrance of the shrine of Imam Reza. At this time he also had the tiles of the dome replaced with plates of solid gold.[45] It was recorded that sixty three mans of gold were utilized for the dome and eighty mans for the drum. At this time a waqf was established in the name of the Fourteen Innocent Ones.[46] In Qum, Shah Tahmasb instituted a waqf at the shrine of Fatima al-Mas'uma which included money for six huffāz to recite the Qu'ran in the name of his sister, Mahin Banu.[47] In 950/1543 the vizier, Qazi Jahan Husayni constructed a beautifully tiled wall surrounding the tomb of Fatima al-Ma'suma in the name of his patron, Tahmasb al-Safavi who had visited Qum the previous year.[48] In addition to the Shi' edifices, Tahmasb also made generous donations

---

[43] "Two Decrees of Shah Tahmasp Concerning Statecraft and the Authority of Shaykh 'Ali al-Karaki," trans. and ed. by S. A. Arjomand, in Authority and Political Culture in Shi'ism, ed. S. A. Arjomand, (New York, 1988), p. 256.
[44] KT, p. 597.
[45] TAAA (savory), p. 205. These gold plates were looted by the Uzbek Abd al-Mo'men Khan when he attacked and sacked Mashad in 998/1589. They were replaced by Shah 'Abbas I when he re-conquered Mashad in 1006/1598, almost ten years later.
[46] NA; p. 15.
[47] Morton's notes in Membre, Mission to the Lord Sophy of Persia, p. 80.
[48] The tiles are in lapis and beautifully decorated. Inscriptions consist of prayers to the 14 innocent ones and is dedicated to Fatima al-Ma'suma, daughter of "maulana va sayyidna abi Ibrahim Musa." It was built during the reign of the merciful [rahman] caliph, spreader of peace and religion [aman va iman], without

to the holy sites in Mecca and Madina, no doubt in order to display a more general

Muslim piety.

The marble farmān which Shah Tahmasb had ordered installed was part of a

larger scheme for the shrine complex.[49] The Shah also attended to the new Chillakhāna

that "the Lord [...] Shaykh Sadr al-din Musa had built. During the reign of Shah

Tahmasb, its lofty dome was tiled such that it was second only to the cupola of the

sky."[50] In addition, he also built a madrasa in Ardabil (presumably in the proximity of

the shrine) which was later renovated by his grandson, 'Abbas.[51] Opposite the

Chillakhāna was the tomb of Shah Tahmasb's mother. Near this small tomb, on one side

of the Dār al-huffāz's façade, was the panjā (hand print) of Imam 'Ali b. Abi Talib and

on the further side, above the farmān, the famous hadīth "the family of the Prophet is like

the ark of Noah; to ride it is to gain deliverance, to oppose it is to drown in destruction."[52]

The panjā and hadīth point to the importance of the ahl-al bayt, to which the exalted

Safavid family also belonged. Such dynastic references, already there on the cornice and

entrance inscriptions of the Dār al-huffāz, are here emphasized, in addition to

---

unlawful heresy and oppression [kufr va taghian]; he is the just and admirable guide of all creation toward the righteous Belief [ashraf al-adyan], the Sultan b. Sultan Abu Muzzafar Tahmasb Bahadur Khan, may God Almighty make eternal his kingdom and his sultanat and confer upon over the universe his beneficence and excellence and make everlasting his just patronage [zallal ma'adalat] upon the different Muslims till the Day of Judgement. Written by 'Ali al-Husayni in 950." Reproduced in Hossein Modaressi Tabataba'i, Turbat-i pākān: Asār va binhā-yi qadīm-i mahdūdā-yi kunūnī-yi dār al-Mominīn Qum, (Qum, 1976), p. 50.

[49] It may be assumed that the courtyard of the shrine was renovated at the time of Tahmasb, although twentieth-century renovations have dated it during the reign of 'Abbas.

[50] "The site of this ascension/seat is marked. And that dome is surrounded by forty chambers above and below." In the poetic description of the shrine in the 1570 Sarīh al-milk, see Appendix A.

[51] TA, p. 426.

complementary forms of Safavid legitimacy, such as Sufism and Divinely sanctioned kingship.

Perhaps the most important and long-lasting influence of Shah Tahmasb's building at the shrine of Shaykh Safi was the construction of a large assembly hall, called Jannatsarā (Paradisal palace). The density of construction around the shrine required that the mutawalli purchase extant buildings in the vicinity and demolish them in order to construct the Jannnatsarā building, its dependencies, and its garden. The most important demolition was that of the 'Imārat Shihābīyya which had been part of the shrine ensemble since the fourteenth century, most probably endowed by Shaykh Shihab al-din Mahmud who had established a generous waqf for charitable activities at the shrine. In addition, a number of houses and inns belonging to the extended Safavi family were bought and demolished. The Jannatsarā is among the very few precisely dated buildings of the complex; the shrine's land register, Sarīh al-milk, records that in 943/1537 (our approximate dating of the farmān) houses and commercial property surrounding the shrine were bought up and demolished for the purpose of a new domed edifice called the Jannatsarā. Four years later, more land was bought for the gardens and orchards of this paradisal edifice.

The Jannnatsarā is situated opposite the Dār al-ḥadīth of Shah Isma'il, on the north-eastern side of the courtyard. Like the Dār al-ḥadīth, it has a major iwan portal and

---

[52] Also in the shrine of Fatima al-Ma'suma, Qum, this ḥadīth is ubiquitous in early Safavid art and literature.

two smaller iwans on either side. The interior consists primarily of an octagonal, domed

room with blind arcades. There are door openings on four sides (into the main court, the

extended Shahīdgāh and kitchens, and two other sides that are now built up). The arch

opposite the entrance (north-eastern one) is recessed like a large mihrab and enclosed

(now) behind a wooden lattice with a door. Within the enclosure a similarly latticed

minbar (pulpit) could be seen. In the southern side is a small polygonal room with a

beautiful brick dome and small stairs that lead to the roof (maybe for calling to prayer).

On the western side of the main hall is a passage leading to the old Chillakhāna.

The initial motivation for building the Jannatsarā may be found by turning again

to Shah Tahmasb's memoir. Writing about the year 938 (1531) he records a dream in

which 'Ali b. Abi Talib appeared and told Tahmasb that in order to be victorious against

the Uzbeks, he must perform three tasks one of which was that "after the victory in

Samarqand, you or your children, should erect a lofty dome (gunbad) for me, like that of

the eighth Imam, 'Ali al-Reza [in Mashhad]."[53] Two years later Shah Tahmasb entered

Herat victorious and Khorasan was once again annexed to the Safavid domains (although

not Samarqand nor Mazar-i Sharif).[54]

It was in 1533 that Shah Tahmasb visited the ancestral shrine for the first time. It

was after his second visit in 1536, in thanks for the victory over the Ottomans, that the

renovation of the ancestral shrine was undertaken. The royal commissions in Ardabil

may be viewed as monuments to the Shah's advent, not unlike the neighboring Ottoman

---

[53] Third, was a recommendation to install a new mutawalli at the shrine of Imam Reza. Shah Tahmasb, *Tazkira*, p. 23. Kathryn Babayan interprets this as referring to the hoped-for conquests of Balkh and Mazar-i Sharif, in her book <u>Mystics, Monarchs and Messiahs: The spiritual landscapes of early modern Iran</u>,.

[54] Martin B. Dickson, "Shah Tahmasb and the Uzbeks," Ph.D. diss. (Princeton, 1958), p. 228.

mosques whose construction was often financed by the spoils of war. The Jannatsarā's

axial opposition to the Dār al-ḥadīth of his father reiterates Tahmasb's advent at the stage

of Safavid politics. Outside the entrance to the Jannatsara, the titles of Tahmasb, like

those of Ismaʿil's above the Dār al-ḥadīth, were written.[55] Here he is described as

"Sultan ibn Sultan ibn Sultan; the turquoise throne, the benevolent capital; the center of

peace and religion, Shah Tahmasb; the site of justice and benevolence, Shah Tahmasb."

According to Shah Tahmasb, kingship was a Divine responsibility, an honorable and

infinite gift of God.[56] His seat was thus marked within the magnificent hall from which

the Shah would dispense his justice and expound upon his vision of an Islamic society.

Recent scholars have conjectured that the Jannatsara was meant to be Shah

Tahmasb's tomb; however, this point is not supported by any textual evidence, nor was

there a precedent for such commemoration at the shrine.[57] The authors do not question

why a young shah, at the height of his power, would build his mausoleum. Nor do they

consider that the vast scale of the building and the openness of its architecture, which

gave access to the the courtyard, orchards and kitchens, suggest a more communal

function. There is, however, a small room to the side, which could have served as a

burial chamber but has to this day remained empty.

Around the time when the Jannatsara at the shrine of Shaykh Safi was

commissioned, Shah Tahmasb had ordered other buildings and renovations throughout

---

[55] No longer extant, these are quoted in the SM.
[56] TazT, p. 1.
[57] Such as Robert Hillenbrand in "Safavid Architecture," in CIr, vol. 6, (Cambridge, 1986). Also Sheila Blair, "Texts, Inscriptions and the Ardabil Carpets," in Iran and Iranian Studies: Essays in honor of Iraj Afshar, ed. K. Eslami, (Princeton, 1998).

his realm. In 1528 he repaired the minaret and tiled in gold the dome of Imam Reza's

mausoleum in Mashhad. In 1531 an order was given in the name of the Shah to repair

the octagonal south dome of the great Seljuk Masjid-i Jāmi' in Isfahan, whose north

dome is often thought to have been a royal loggia.[58] This building is exemplary in the

history of Persianate architecture, with its courtyard, four-iwan plan, and the qibla dome

– all replicated in Mashhad and Qum – and now, Ardabil. In an environment where

mosque building was also deemed an act of piety, would it be inconceivable to

hypothesize that the Shah would build a place for prayer within the shrine complex, one

suited to his majestic presence?[59]

In the Sarīh al-milk, the Jannatsarā is referred to as a sanctified maqsura' (private

area, usually for the monarch), allowing the interpretation that this was a royal enclosure

within which the shah, or khalifa would be seated. This interpretation is given credence

by a parallel architectural association: The author of the Sarīh al-milk, 'Abdi Beg Shirazi,

who was the renowned chronicler and court poet, also wrote the famous poetic

compilation, Jannāt al-'adan, in praise of Shah Tahmasb's new palace in Qazvin,

Ja'farabad. He equates the palace with the highly venerated shrine of Shaykh Safi, albeit

elliptically. Interestingly, the poet repeats many of his verses in describing the Safavid

shrine, especially the Jannatsarā which he refers to in the Sarīh al-milk as the "Iwān-i

---

[58] The dome was built originally by the Seljuk vizier Nizam al-mulk in 1072. Shah Tahmasb's repairs are recorded in an inscription around the mihrab in this room.
[59] Certainly Shah Tahmasb saw himself as a pious and devoted Shi'i ruler, as is written in the Isfahan Jami, where he is described as "the leader of the armies of the Mahdi, the Lord of the Ages, the Sultan b. Sultan Abu Muzaffar Shah Tahmasb al-Safavi al-Husayni Bahadur Khan...[who] opposed (those who perpetuate tyranny) by repairing and building this mosque ... that is the envy of Paradise." Several other mosques were built and repaired during his reign, in cities such as Kashan, Qazvin and Tabriz.

shāhi....adorned by Jupiter and Saturn," verses he uses to describe verbatim the Iwān-i

Zarīn and the Iwān-i Bālā in Qazvin; likewise, the Gunbad-i shāhzādehā (later

Chīnīkhāna) was equated with the inlaid dome (gunbad-i munbatkārī) of the Iwān-i shahi

in Qazvin, and praised, ironically, for its 'uniqueness' as "In the universe that dome has

no equal, [Such] that each brick is connected to the soul."[60] The close association of the

shrine and the palace may merely be a poet's deceit, but it is tempting to think that the

shah's two grandest, and possibly most talked-about, building commissions were equated

in importance and, perhaps, significance.

Imperial and religious authority were unabashedly conflated, such that at times

the two were inseparable. This was true in the language of the court, both verbal and

architectural. The shah was revered as a saint, and the saints were given royal attributes.

For example, 'Ali b. Abi Talib was called the 'Shāh-i Najaf' in reference to his burial in

that Iraqi city.[61] It was this very imam that Shah Tahmasb identified with in his memoirs,

and on the 'streets' it was rumored that the Shah was, in fact, the son of 'Ali.[62] The same

crossing over of boundaries between royalty and divinity occurred in the spaces inhabited

by the Shah. One example was of the painting we have analyzed earlier, "The sermon of

Maulana Hasan in Madina," from the manuscript, Tārīkh-i aima-i ma'sūmīn of 932/1526,

where Shah Tahmasb is situated on the pulpit of Imam Hasan. Another was the

conflation of the palace and shrine in 'Abdi Beg's poetic descriptions. The persona of the

Shah itself was a dual one; on the one hand, he was a model of dutiful subservience, and

---

[60] 'Abdi Beg Shirazi, Dauhat al-azhār, ed. A. M. Tabrizi and A. Rahimof, (Moscow, 1974), pp. 42-44.
[61] TA, p. 127.
[62] Michel Membre, Mission to the Lord Sophy of Persia, p. 42.

on the other, he represented the spiritual charisma associated with the Safavid family. This influence was manifested not at the ancestral shrine alone, but in all spheres of royal public life.

The roles of the shah as leader and pīr of the Qizilbash required a ceremonial space where the rites of initiation into the Safavid tariqa would be enacted. In the absence of the shah, this would be the place where the khalifat al-khulafa, or mutawalli, would meet the Sufis. It would be here that performances of dhikr would take place, and later food from the neighboring kitchens would be served.[63] It is in this capacity that the Jannatsarā at the shrine of Shaykh Safi may be viewed, that is, an imperial edifice wherein the 'Shāhi' and the Sufi aspects of Safavid polity were merged. The Jannatsarā of Shah Tahmasb, could be imagined as the setting for ceremonies associated with the Safavid Sufis. The verses on its exterior are testimony to the primary function of dhikr as they read, "Remember Allah with much remembrance (33:40)." The initiation ceremony called chūb-i tarīq may also be situated in such a space. Membre, the Venetian visitor to Tahmasb's court, describes the gathering such:

> "The first thing that they do when they gather, they all sit in rows in a room, from one end to the other, seated on fine carpets, and they begin to praise God and then Shah Tahmasb. The khalīfa begins first; so all are singing 'Lā ilāh illā Allāh,' and they go on with that phrase alone for a whole hour; then they begin to sing certain songs in praise of the Shah, composed by Shah Isma'il and the said Tahmasb,

---

[63] Speculation on ritual practices of the Safavid tariqa during Tahmasb's reign are discussed in A. Morton, "The Chub-i tārīq and Qizilbash Ritual," in Etudes Safavides, (1993) :225-246. The 'halqa-i dhikr' is mentioned in the fourteenth-century Safwat al-safa, as well as the seventeenth-century Silsilāt al-nasab!

called ..., that is, khatā'ī; and after that is done, there sits one with a tambour, and he begins to call very loudly the names of all those that are there, one by one; then each of one whose name he calls says 'Shāh bāsh,' that is, 'the Shah's head,' and all of them give to one who calls the name, money, depending on how much courtesy each one wishes to show. And after that is done, the khalīfa has a substantial wooden stick, and begins from the first to the last; one by one they all come for the love of the Shah to the middle of the room and stretch themselves on the ground; and the said khalīfa with the stick gives them a most mighty blow on the behind; and then the khalīfa kisses the head and feet of the one he has given the blow; then he himself gets up and kisses the stick; and thus they all do, one by one."[64]

The chūb is represented in Tahmasb-period miniatures as a bejewelled stick carried by the khalīfat al-khulafa who always stood behind the enthroned or mounted shah (later the eshik aqāshī bāshī had this role).[65] Certainly, the Jannatsarā could be a place for Shah Tahmasb to give audience to his devotees, be they dervishes or state officials. As Membre noted, would arrive in Ardabil to pay homage to their revered leader, bringing gifts and nazr in the form of sacrificial animals and money. They would show their allegiance thus and by kissing his feet, for even the ground he walked on was considered sacred. They would, in turn, be given the Safavid tāj, the twelve-sided headgear characteristic of the Qizilbash, to mark them as his followers.[66]

---

[64] Michel Membre, Mission to the Lord Sophy of Persia, p. 42.

[65] Firdausi, Shāhnāma, (Houghton c. 1530), "Kay Khusrau accepts war prizes," f. 225v.

[66] Michel Membre, Mission to the Lord Sophy of Persia, p. 18.

As the head of the Safavid order, the Shah would also have attended these ceremonies, especially at the ancestral shrine in Ardabil. At one end of the Jannatsarā is a large niche, where the Shah would be seated and from there preside over the ceremony, a fact confirmed by its designation as the sanctified maqsūra'. Earlier, such imperial-Sufi rites could have taken place in the similarly octagonal, but smaller and less imposing (until Shah 'Abbas' renovations seventy-five years later as the Chīnīkhāna), Gunbad-i shāhzādehā, located off of the Dār al-ḥuffāz.

In his capital, Qazvin, Shah Tahmasb had ordered the building not only of mosques and madrasas, but also of tauḥīdkhānas, or 'halls of union.'[67] To get an idea of what these buildings were, we may look to a later account of activities that took place in a Safavid tauḥīdkhāna: Sufis from the Safavid order were quartered inside the Isfahan palace compound where stood a large octagonal structure, called tauḥīdkhāna, a building not unlike the Ardabil Jannatsarā. Here they would gather every evening and recite verses from the Qur'an and sing praises of the Shah. It was "the duty of the khalīfat al-khulafā...to follow the rule (dastūr) established in the time of Shaykh Safi al-din Ishaq, namely, to gather in the tauḥīdkhāna, every Thursday evening, darvishes and sufis and to keep them repeating, by way of loud dhikr (dhikr-i jālī), the pious formula: lā ilāh

---

[67] Ehsan Echraqi, "Le Dar al-Sultana de Qazvin, deuxieme capitale des Safavides," in ed. C. Melville, Safavid Persia: the History and Politics of an Islamic Society, (London and New York, 1996), p. 108. As mentioned elsewhere, Tahmasb writes in his memoir of being seated in a tauhīdkhāna, which was also a place to hold court; TazT, p. 63..

illā'llāh; on Thursday evenings, he distributes to the darvishes bread, food and sweetmeats, and on other occasions, bread and the customary food."[68] It is possible to project backwards this custom, "established in the time of Shaykh Safi" to the period during, and possibly preceding that of Shah 'Abbas, when the Isfahan tauḥīdkhāna was built.[69] A visitor to Shah 'Abbas' court witnessed a similar event there in which Sufis were gathered for an initiation ceremony led by the khalīfat al-khulafā. In his characterization, the tauḥīdkhāna was not only a building, but an institution that was part of the Shah's entourage and set up wherever the court may be. The Jannatsarā at the shrine of Shaykh Safi may thus be the one extant prototype remaining of this enigmatic architectural genre, providing a rare glimpse into Safavid ritual and architectural practice. The Safavid ceremonial evolved in a manner to have regal and Sufi overtones, and was a rite showing loyalty not only to the Safavid tariqa, but to the sovereign. Until Shah Tahmasb's royal commission, there was no other building like the Jannatsarā at the shrine, with its vast scale and imposing façade, indicating the changing nature of Safavid ritual and politics with its complex mixture of piety and sovereignty.

The imperial and dynastic associations of the shrine are most cogently described in an important event which took place during the reign of Shah Tahmasb. In 951/1544, the Mughal padshah, Humayun, was exiled from India and sought refuge at the Safavid court. On arrival from Lahore, Humayun was first escorted to Herat and then to the shrine of Imam Reza in Mashhad by Ma'sum Beg Safavi and Sevunduk Beg Afshar.

---

[68] Vladimir Minorsky (trans.), Tadhkirat al-Mulūk, a Manual of Safavid Administration (ca. 1137/1725), (Cambridge, 1943), pp. 33, 55.

From here Humayun was brought to Shah Tahmasb in Tabriz, to be escorted by him to Ardabil. All the sixteenth-century chronicles comment on this significant moment in Safavid history, in which a majestic visitor was taken by the king to the Safavid ancestral shrine. The royal entourage made its way from Tabriz with drums and banners announcing its arrival. When they arrived in Ardabil, they turned to the lofty grave of Shaykh Safi, kissed the ground and asked for help from the saint.[70] They then performed pilgrimage at the shrine and remained in Ardabil a few days before moving on.

Without doubt, the shrine of Shaykh Safi was an important monument to Safavid political influence, this was after all their power base. It was also the primary source of their wealth. Shah Tahmasb's showing the Indian prince the spiritual home of the Safavids was predicated on a great deal of pride in this holy edifice, not only in terms of power and prestige but also in terms of aesthetics. The Safavid shrine described in 'Abdi Beg's Sarīh al-milk was a magnificent architectural ensemble and one of the few complexes actualized largely by the early Safavid shahs. The new construction undertaken by Shah Tahmasb at the shrine was unique in its imperial architectural patronage, although, on par with his grand palatial commissions.[71] The shrine of Shaykh Safi was a template for the future, as well as of the past, in terms not only of religious praxis, but architectural invention.

During Tahmasb's reign important monuments in west and central Iran included the tomb of Sultan Uljaytu Khudabanda in Sultaniyya, the Muzafariyya (Blue) Mosque

---

[69] Shah Tahmasb mentions being in a tauhīdkhāna, where he met someone in private; TazT, p. 63.

[70] Mahmud bin Khwandamir, Iran dar ruzgar-i Shah Isma'il va Shah Tahmasp Safavi, p. 392.

[71] Although it must be noted that Tahmasb was credited with the construction as the Sahibabad palace in Tabriz and the Sa'databad palace in Qazvin, it is difficult to surmise the extent of these being renovations or entirely new complexes. Generally, in this period we see a royal building agenda that can be called

and the famous Aqqoyunlu palace called Hasht Behist in Tabriz,[72] and other palaces in

Qazvin and Qum built for Uzun Hasan and his son, Yaqub.[73] In the east was, of course,

the magnificent shrine complex of Imam Reza embellished and expanded by the Timurid

rulers of Khorasan. In Samarqand, was the renowned tomb of Timur called the Gur-i

Amir and the Timurid architectural assemble of the Shah-i Zinda. In the city of

Tahmasb's youth, Herat, were the famous madrasa and mosque complex of the Timurid

queen Gauhar Shad and the madrasa of Shah Husayn Bayqara. In addition to these

distinguished monuments of the Muslim rulers, Safavid historians were also aware of

their non-Muslim neighbors. Hence, included in this architectural landscape are edifices

such as the palace of the Shirvanshah in Baku as well as famed Christian churches in

Georgia.[74]

It is within such a competitive environment that the shrine of Shaykh Safi and its

significance to the new rulers of Iran must be understood. Unlike other shrines and

institutions that were associated with their predecessors, the shrine of Shaykh Safi was

exclusively a Safavid shrine (despite patronage by previous rulers – that, in fact,

increased its prestige), to be molded according to the evolving image of the imperium.

The buildings commissioned during Shah Tahmasb's reign were symbols of the changes

affected in the kingdom and on the imperial dynasty. His presence at the Safavid shrine

---

adaptive reuse, as witnessed in renovations of popular shrines such as Mashhad, and re-inhabitation of
imperial palaces such as those of the Aqqoyunlu predecessors.

[72] "The Travels of a Merchant in Persia," *Travels to Tana and Persia*, trans. W. Thomas, ed. S. Aderley,
London, 1873, p. 173.

[73] KT, p. 79.

[74] An interesting description of a Georgian churchdescibes it such: it consisted of four large rooms and
chambers of gold and walls of gold and lapis lazuli inside and outside. The second room had a platform on
the center with a golden statue covered with jewels; AT, p. 455. Shah Tahmasb's own built projects
included the interior and exterior renovations of Imam Reza's shrine, mosques located in Sahibabad and the
Masjid Panja 'Ali in Qazvin, Bagh-i Sa'databad and its buildings, Imamzada Abdul Azim in Ray, Shahzada
Husayn in Qazvin and other madrasas, ribāts, and baths.

was marked not only through the Shah's visits and charity to the shrine's waqfs, but through his entire reconfiguration of the buildings' spatial and functional dynamics. This already vibrant ensemble was further animated by permanent reminders of the new monarch's religious policies, such as the marble farmān he had installed in the courtyard.

The three strains of influence, Sufism, shari'a-consciousness and royalty, were all displayed at three buildings that Shah Tahmasb renovated and built: the Chillakhāna, the Dār al-ḥadīth and madrasa, and the Jannatsarā, respectively. The re-tiling of the Chillakhāna highlights the respect given to the Sufi past and the Shah's commitment to its perpetuity, that is, the emphasis on sharia' was balanced by the respect for and propagation of the older traditions of Safavid Sufism, such as meditation and dhikr. The prohibition on qawalli should not be understood as anti-Sufi orders, but rather a curtailment and readjustment of mores that would render them acceptable to a wider Shi'i society. In fact, it appears that many of the traditional heterodox Sufi practices did still continue under Shah Tahmasb, albeit perhaps secretively, as the building of the Jannatsarā suggests. However, the Jannatsarā and the additional renovations point most of all to the shah's kingly presence, such that the shrine of Shaykh Safi was now truly worthy of the monarchial ceremonial.

Imperial piety and authority was most potently displayed during the reign of Shah Tahmasb's grandson, 'Abbas.[75] During this period, kingship would be characterized in a

---

[75] There is not much presence of Shah Isma'il II at the shrine, other than the ceremonial visit before his coronation. His brother, Muhammad Khudabanda did visit Ardabil en route to Qarabagh in about 989 where he was met by the muttawali, Amir Abul Vali Inju, who hosted the entourage. The ḥuffāz, khuddām and other workers were 'honored' by the Shah. They were given one thousand toman from the imperial

way that the Shah was perceived as a royal monarch first, a Shi'i proselytizer second, and last, though no less important, a Sufi pīr. Shah 'Abbas' reign saw an increase in the more ceremonial and extravagant trappings of kingship, such as grand New Year (nauruz) and Muharram festivities in which the cities where he celebrated would be decked out and lavish gifts and honors would be received from and distributed among loyal subjects.[76] Shah 'Abbas was known to love chirāghān or illumination, which he would admire from his royal residences, whether in Kashan or Isfahan. His court was filled with artists, poets and artisans of merit. Architects and engineers (like their Italian contemporaries) would often be involved with the building of fantastic machines and firework displays for the entertainment of the Shah and his subjects. An increased emphasis on pageantry could be seen in the intricate pīshkash (gifting) ceremonies in the Divānkhāna (audience hall) of the court.[77]

At the same time as indulging in courtly pursuits, Shah 'Abbas showed himself to his subjects as a humble and religious man. His court historians represent him as being extremely submissive to his Shi'i creed and devoted to patronizing holy places, especially the shrine of Imam Reza in Mashhad and that of Shaykh Safi in Ardabil. His historians expressed the link to the Prophet Muhammad on either side of his family tree: back to Imam Zayn al-Abidin, twenty one generations, from his mother's side, which consisted

---

treasury for salaries. Later, Abul Vali Inju went to Tabriz to receive the Ghazani waqfs from the shah for the shrine. Apparently these were the waqfs established by Ghazan Hasan; KT, p. 705.

[76] The 'public' nature of Shah 'Abbas' character has been shown in Gülru Neçipoglu, "Framing the Gaze in Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal Palaces," Ars Orientalis 23, (1993) :303-42.

[77] The contemporary chronicles are filled with such descriptions, most notably Muhammad Afushtah Natanzi's Naqāwat al-athār. A good impression of the divānkhāna can be gained by looking at the drawings of Pietro Della Valle and Adam Olearius. In Della Valle's re-construction of Shah 'Abbas's court at Isfahan, can be seen a long vaulted structure (possible wooden), with a niche at one end where the Shah

of notable Ma'rashi Sayyids of Mazandaran. On his father's side were seventeen 'kings and dervishes,' and their lineage went back till Imam Musa al-Kazim, through Shaykh Safi.[78] Shah 'Abbas was himself equated with the religious persona to whose shrine his generosity extended: "Today, the city of Mashhad, by virtue of the twin blessings of the grace of the Imam and the benefactions of Shah Abbas, is the most prosperous city in Khurasan".[79] The extent of Shah 'Abbas's involvement with the shrine can be seen in this account of the year 1007/1598 from Munshi:

"... Shah ['Abbas I] left for Mashhad, where he spent a month dealing with that region and particularly with the shrine of the Imam Reza. He saw to it that the establishment of shrine attendants, teachers of theology, Koran recitors, and other employees of the shrine was brought up to strength on the basis laid down by Shah Tahmas[b]. He also saw to it that food was provided for the poor and stipends for the pensioners, on the proper basis. The Shah supplied the shrine with jeweled chandeliers of gold and silver, candlesticks, magnificent Kerman and Jowsqan carpets, and essential pots and utensils. During his stay, the Shah visited the shrine every morning and evening; usually he performed in person the various duties of the shrine, such as sweeping the carpets in the holy sanctuary, and acquired merit by doing so."[80]

The contemporary historians chronicle the famous barefoot pilgrimages that Shah 'Abbas undertook to Mashhad, and the days he would spend there in worship and servitude. Here he would distribute alms and sweep the floors of the shrine in an act of deep humility while also overseeing the shrine's administration. In addition, the Shah ordered

repairs to the dome of the shrine, as it was built by Shah Tahmasb, and gifted doors and candlesticks. His waqfs for the pilgrims at the shrine of Imam Reza were in the name of the same grandfather, Tahmasb. Shah 'Abbas' veneration of the ahl al-bayt was evident in the elaborate mourning ceremonies in honor of Imam Husayn that took place in Qazvin. He rebuilt the shrine of a Sitti Maryam, daughter of Imam Musa al-Kazim, where he was later reputed to have doled out food from a silver cauldron he had donated, and distributed it among the poor and needy at the shrine.

His piety was not, however, restricted to his Imami ancestors, but extended most vividly to the Safavid founder, Shaykh Safi's shrine as well. Even years after his death, visitors to the shrine of Shaykh Safi were told of the Shah's pilgrimages there, such that he would dismount and walk barefoot as soon as the holy shrine came into view. [81] This worship was depicted as the Shah's way of "rubbing his sins in the dust of the [sacred] land [of Ardabil]."[82] Here, Shah 'Abbas would undertake supervision of the shrine's administration and be given an account of its prosperity. In 1014/1605 the Shah rebuilt the kitchen and donated money to the Dār al-marz (hospital) and in 1020/1611 he built the royal Sharbatkhāna, repaired the madrasa and renovated the interiors of the Chīnīkhāna and Dār al-huffāz – all in the name of gaining Divine benevolence, the rewards of which were 'donated' to his grandfather, Tahmasb.[83] In the same charitable vein, he re-instituted the evening naqqāra, or beating of royal kettle drums, which marked the distribution of food. As a chronicler tells it, "it had been two years since the drums

---

[81] TA, p. 201, 217, 344, 421.
[82] KT, p. 923.
[83] The Shah's gift to the Chīnīkhāna may also be seen as an ascetic act whereby he forsook of his material wealth.

had not been beaten at this shrine, but for the a̲s̲h̲ drum (for food) [owing to laxity and severity]...it was ordered that in the custom of the past, the drum, clarion, and trumpet be played, for this was a source of joy and happiness for the men and women of Ardabil."[84] Thus, the morning meals were paid for by the shrine estate, and the evening ones were famously gifted by the Shah, an act which "will make Shah 'Abbas immortal in Persia [such that] they think he is a saint."[85]

When, in 1611, Shah 'Abbas altered the interiors of the Chīnīkhāna and the Dār al-ḥuffāz of the shrine of Shaykh Safi, he changed not only the architectural space, but the use and perception of the entire shrine complex. By these constructions Shah 'Abbas was augmenting changes which had already begun taking place in the early sixteenth century during the reign of Tahmasb, in terms of revitalizing this ancestral edifice to meet the exigencies of the changing polity. At the shrine of Shaykh Safi in Ardabil an important aspect of court life and the particular nature of Safavid rulership in the late sixteenth century was brought to light. Not only was the shrine embellished and much waqf donated to it, but it was transformed by Shah 'Abbas into an imperial edifice where he held court several times during his campaigns in Azerbaijan.[86]

Shah 'Abbas ordered the interior renovations of the Dār al-ḥuffāz, most likely in 1020/1611, and reflect the general character of the building, although now transformed in a unique manner. On the exterior façade were older inscriptions naming Safi, his son Sadr al-din Musa and grandson, Shihab al-din Mahmud. Familial duty was demanded in

---

[84] TA, p. 424.
[85] Pietro Della Valle, De viaggi di Pietro della Valle il pelligrino: la persia, p. 486.
[86] Such as the time when Tahmuras Khan, a governor of Georgia, came to court having heard reports of the approach of Murad Pasha ; TAAA (Savory), p. 1033.

verses such as the inscription above the entrance (al-R'ad, 13:23-24): "Gardens of Eden which they enter, along with all who do right of their fathers and their help meets and their seed." Loyalty was also expected for the Safavid dudmān, exhorting the Sufis to "Respond to this call (al-da'wa)." At the entrance to the Dār al-ḥuffāz are a pair of silver doors, gifted in /1602 by Zulfiqar Khan Qaramanlu the Hakim of Azerbaijan. The building is entered perpendicularly, through the entrance portal into a small foyer, and then through another pair of silver doors dated 1020/1611.[87]

The hall of the Dār al-ḥuffāz is rectangular, and on each side are two-meter deep arched alcoves. These are double-storied, the second level accessed by a small stairway to the side of the entrance, possibly reserved for women visitors to the shrine. On the left, through the second alcove, is the Chīnīkhāna. In the large hall, recitors would sit in rows along the alcoves, reading aloud from the Qur'an and religious epics. The pious act of reading the Qur'an sanctified the space, as did the baraka from the tomb of Shaykh Safi and his honored descendants.

Encircling the hall of the Dār al-ḥuffāz, are two horizontal epigraphic bands. The top band, beginning counter-clockwise from above the entrance, is the Qur'anic verse, al-Fathah (Victory), which is also written within the drum of Shaykh Safi's tomb tower. The verse summons the believers to follow the 'apostle,' the chosen one of God (Muhammad) "sent as a bearer of news and warning so that you may have faith in Allah and his apostle and that you may assist him, honor him and praise Him morning and evening (48:8)." The guidance of the Prophet is here conflated with the intercession of

---

[87] The donor is unidentified, but they are dated 1020/ 1611, signed by the craftsman, Amir Khan Ardabili.

Shaykh Safi, or perhaps his khalifa, as pilgrimage to his shrine was a form of gaining heavenly, as well as earthly, rewards.

Additional Qur'anic phrases are inserted into panels between the arched alcoves and balconies, also from the Victory verse. The first arch reads: (48:25) "These it was who disbelieved and debarred you from the sacred mosque (al-masjid al-haram), and debarred the offering from reaching its goal." The verse referring to the masjid al-haram emphasizes the consecrated nature of the Dār al-huffāz, also an 'inviolable place of worship.' Allusion to the offering (ihāda) reminds one that this, too, is a place where devotees brought nazr, gifts, and donations for the shrine.

The lower band, probably renovated in 1038/1628, begins at the arch on the north-eastern wall and gives the spiritual lineage of Shaykh Safi, that is, from Shaykh Zahid Gilani onward, till Shaykh Hayder b. Junayd.[88] In addition, beginning with the name of 'Ali b. Abi Talib above the entrance, there are Prophetic hadith which focus on archetypal characteristics of kingship, such as, knowledge, justice and charity. Here the family of Muhammad and the Shi'i imamate are listed and eulogised. The naming of Sufi and Shi'i ancestors within the Dār al-huffāz represents the two forms of legitimization sought by the Safavid leaders, and marks this edifice as emblematic of that power.

---

[88] "Shaykh Safi al-din, Shaykh Ibrahim [Zahid Gilani], Sayyid Jamal al-din, Shihab al-din Mahmud Tabrizi [Ahari], Abu al-Ghanaim Rukn al-din al-Sajasi, Abu Al-Najib al-Suharwardi, Abubakr al-Abarhi, Qazi 'Umar Bakri, 'Uman al-Ma'ni, Muhammad al-Bakri, Ahmad Aswad Dinwari, Shaykh Junayd b. Muhammad al-Baghdadi, Ma'ruf al-Karkhi, Habib Allah al-Ajami, Shaykh Hayder bin Junayd."

Axially across from the entrance is an antechamber, resembling an interior iwan. The threshold connecting the Ḥaram or mausoleum of Shaykh Safi, the Ḥaramkhāna and the tomb chamber of Shah Isma'il, is an apse-like platform raised two steps. This highly ornamented space is adorned in gold leaf, and painted in opulent hues of blue and red. Often referred to as the Shāhnishīn, this antechamber was built in 1611 by order of Shah 'Abbas. The event took place on the last day of Jumada II, 1020, when the shah visited the shrine of Shaykh Safi, on his way from Sultaniyya. This was the third subsequent autumn that the Shah had come on pilgrimage to the shrine, and his sixth visit in as many years.

After making a pilgrimage to the holy shrine and visiting the royal kitchen, where he endowed twelve toman and four silver mortars, the Shah's attentions turned to renovations at the shrine. I shall paraphrase the account of the court astrologer and historian, Jalal al-din Yazdi, who accompanied the Shah on his travels. Writing of the year 1020/1611, when the Shah made his famous waqfs, he records:

> Shah 'Abbas stayed 15 days in Ardabil, making careful inquires into the condition of the poor and infirm. A waqf was established for enlarging the door of the Ḥaram and making this of gold and the window in back of the Ḥaram of silver.
>
> The platform (suffa) in front of the Ḥaram was thus enlarged by leveling the grave of Rustam Mirza (son of Shah Isma'il) and a silver grill with a door in the middle was installed to enclose it... On the first of Rajab, four thousand toman were given for the gold and silver doors and windows of the āstāna and kitchen.

It is important to note that although what remains of this period are the Dār al-Huffāz and

Chīnīkhāna, they were by no means the only important buildings at the shrine of Shaykh

Safi. The kitchen and shartbatkhāna, which the Shah also visited and to which his China

collection was endowed, were highly charged architectural symbols, and played an

important role in conveying the pious and philanthropic nature of the Shah.[89]

The worship at the shrine of Shaykh Safi was not limited to Shaykh Safi, but also

to his royal descent, who were seen as intercessors between the divine power of Shaykh

Safi and the world. The sanctity of the shrine was augmented by the presence of the

shah, through his royal and religious prestige. While the political status of the shah was

explicit, his spiritual authority was also publicized in abundance, by the aid of miraculous

events and the attribution of supernatural powers. Jalal al-din Yazdi takes particular note

of the Shah's peregrinations to the holy shrine of Shaykh Safi when he notes the

remarkable events which took place there. The first he describes thus:

> "And toward the end of Jumada II (1020) he entered the blessed illumined shrine
>
> of the 'pole of the learned' (qutb al-'ārifīn) Shah Safi, and after pilgrimage there,
>
> he turned to the kitchen. When he arrived near an 'Arab cauldron,' the lid of a
>
> nearby pot lifted itself suddenly and crashed down on the pot with such a noise
>
> that those who were in the kitchen heard them [loudly]. The 'navāb, dog of the
>
> threshold of 'Ali' [Shah 'Abbas] placed his forehead upon the ground in a bow of
>
> thanks. When he lifted his head, the lid as before separated from the pot, and
>
> returned itself. This was a source of great wonder. The navāb... [Shah] gave

---

[89] This fact is confirmed also by visitors to the shrine such as Pietro Della Valle and Adam Oleariuos, who were shown the kitchen as part of their tour and commented on its orderliness and magnitude. Shah 'Abbas had re-instituted the evening meals (as well as the naqqara), and as Della Valle said in 1618, "This act alone will make Shah 'Abbas immortal in Persia and they think he is a saint."

188

twelve tomans to the cooks and workers, and in the kitchen four silver mortars were built."[90]

The miracles related were symbolic of the Shah's power to unlock the mysteries of the world. The earthly equivalents to this were actual locks, such as that which barred the tomb of Shah Tahmasb's mother, which miraculously opened when the 'blessed hand' of the Shah touched it. The same happened when Shah 'Abbas reached the door of Shaykh Safi's Sharbatkhāna, and again when he touched the Royal Sharbatkhāna, which the Shah had endowed in the name of his beloved mother. Crowds gathered to view these phenomena, which "served to augment the faith of those present."[91] Generosity and charity were not the primary motives behind the renovation of the Dār al-ḥuffāz and Chīnīkhāna. The commissioning of the luxurious interiors of these buildings diverges from the humility Shah 'Abbas had often portrayed by his barefoot pilgrimages to the shrine; the large scale reconstruction is in contrast to the simpler, though extravagant, devotional gesture of endowing gold or silver doors as also undertaken by local officials or devotees. In order to better understand the motivations for patronage, it is important to include the political dimension of Safavid authority and the manner in which the language of the court was merged with that of the shrine.

The attribution of sanctity to royalty was visible in all aspects of Shah 'Abbas reign; for example, his residence in Tabriz was described in detail by the chronicler, Qazi Ahmad Qummi, who writes that it was "built near the neighborhood of Sahibabad. The

---

[90] TA, p. 424.
[91] Ibid., p. 424. Although our example is that of Shah 'Abbas, no doubt his predecessors Shah Isma'il and Shah Tahmasb also participated in the propagation of their multifaceted image – most probably to an even greater extent, when the legitimacy to rule was even more fragile.

walls were in the manner of a fortress and moats and all [apparatus] of royalty. Such that in the center was a pool that was built within the residence; elevated talār were built of wooden posts and on the top of this palace a dome of gold was constructed with the likeness of Imam Reza's in Mashhad."[92] No doubt the royal residence was seen as a venerated site, not unlike its equal in Isfahan. The 'Ali Qapu gatehouse at the entrance of the Isfahan palace was a sacred threshold where passersby fell to the ground and kissed it. In addition, like the entrances to the shrines, this was a place of sanctuary and asylum, where people sought refuge as well as beneficence from the Shah's holy aura.[93]

Owing to its strategic position near the Ottoman border and its proximity to Tabriz, which was often under siege, Ardabil may be seen as the alternative, spiritual, capital of Azerbaijan. It was here that in 1000/1591 an ambassador from Ja'far Pasha, the Ottoman governor of Tabriz, came to Shah 'Abbas' court, bearing gifts and niyāz (offering); the same year, Amira Siyavosh, Hakim of Kashkar, came to Ardabil to pay homage to the Shah.[94] The next year, another important official, Qara Hasan came to this 'land of angels,' for the benevolence of paying allegiance [to the Shah], as well as the governor of Ardabil, Farhad Khan Qaramanlu (who was later executed by orders of the Shah.)[95] Qummi describes another event during the reign of Shah 'Abbas when the imperial army had camped near Zanjan. They met at the temporary court of the Shah, which was housed in the residence of one of the officials, and the Shah addressed them regarding an impending confrontation. But before that, "the elders and the Sufis of the

---

[92] KT, p. 767.
[93] Engelbert Kaempfer, Am Hofe des persischen Grosskonigs, 1684-1685, reprint (Tubingen, 1977), p. 212; see also, Necipoglu, "Framing the Gaze in Ottoman, Safavid and Mughal Palaces," p. 309.
[94] TA, p. 114.
[95] NA, pp. 397, 398.

different factions and tribes gathered at the paradisal majlis of the great Shah, [which] they began with 'dhikr and dhākirī' (recitation and remembrance), which is the norm and custom among the Safaviyya [Sufis]."[96] On his many visits to Ardabil, where he met with governors and ambassadors, Shah 'Abbas would have presided over exactly the same type of gathering, with its eulogistic praise and worship of the Safavid order and imperium.

Architectural ambiguity was ultimately practiced to convey an image of power – be it temporal or spiritual. Imperial grandeur and opulence were displayed, whether in the context of the princely palace in Qazvin, or religious edifices, such as Imam Reza's golden dome in Mashhad. In such a manner, the program of both types of architecture, liturgical and palatial, was merged. This was clearly the case at the shrine of Shaykh Safi in Ardabil, as evidenced by its buildings and their descriptions by contemporary visitors. For example, Yazdi describes the building of the hauzkhāna in the Isfahan palace as consisting of four rooms, one for cooking meals and one for cooking sharbat, and in the center of which was a lily-shaped pool. Here, the Shah received his guests and distinguished ambassadors, with entertainment and much festivity.[97] Similarly, the Sharbatkhāna in Ardabil was "near the delightful spring, the opening of which is enclosed. It consists of a pool (hauz) and a building (mahal) for cooking sweets and a portal facing west."[98] The 'Royal Sharbatkhāna' of the shrine, as mentioned previously,

---

[96] KT, p. 802.
[97] Jalal al-TA, pp. 163, 261.
[98] Appendix A. Current excavations have unearthed a large octagonal building near a water channel, with its "portal facing west" as described in the Sarīh al-milk. It may be conjectured that this is the original sharbatkhāna of the shrine.

was especially patronized by Shah 'Abbas, who gave much money to it and supervised its administration. Similar crossing over of boundaries is most cogently witnessed in the Chīnīkhāna of the shrine of Shaykh Safi. A comparable twin of the Ardabil Chīnīkhāna was seen on the fifth-floor reception room of the 'Ali Qapu gatehouse, which was a place of royal entertainment.[99] The buildings, at the palace and the shrine, were adaptable enough to house rituals of both pomp and piety, a divergence from what had been their initial function.

In such a manner, the shrine of Shaykh Safi also played the dual role of spiritual home and dynastic edifice of the Safavid shahs. The Shahnishīn between the Dār al-huffāz and tomb of Shaykh Safi is reminiscent of the popular rites of allegiance enacted for Shah 'Abbas' called pāi-būsī (kissing the feet). In these, visitors and devotees would fall to the ground and kiss the foot of the Shah's throne, for it was believed that this threshold was a blessed one. Similar kissing and genuflection took place at the steps of the Shāhnishīn in Ardabil, which were covered in silver and enclosed by a silver grill, both by orders of Shah 'Abbas.[100] This observation is reinforced by the epigraphy encircling the apse which begins (48:27): "Allah Hath fulfilled the vision for His messenger in very truth. Ye shall indeed enter the Inviolable Place of Worship (al-masjid al-haram), if Allah will, secure (having your hair) shaven and cut, not fearing. But He knoweth that which ye know not, and hath given you a near victory before hand...(till the

---

[99] KT, p. 872.

[100] The shrine of Shaykh Safi symbolized the sovereignty of the shah and Ardabil was an important base from which he rallied support against the Ottomans who had only recently vacated Tabriz. Many a local

end of al-Fathah) Allah has promised, unto such of them as believe and do good works, forgiveness and immense reward." It continues (3:26-27): "Say: O Allah! Owner of Sovereignty (mālik al-mulk)! Thou givest sovereignty unto whom Thou wilt. Thou exaltest whom Thou wilt, and Thou abasest whom Thou wilt. In Thy hand is the good. Lo! Thou art Able to do all things. Thou causest the night to pass into day and the day to pass into the night. And Thou bringest forth the living from the dead and Thou bringest forth the dead from the living. And Thou givest sustenance to whom Thou choosest, without stint."

The allusions to sovereignty, clearly selected in this epigraphic program, reiterate the imperial presence of the Divinely chosen Sufi and Shah. Although himself not always physically there, Shah 'Abbas was represented through the magnificent architectural setting of the Shāhnishīn. Who, but a divinely inspired scion of this elevated Safavi silsila could install himself in this highly charged and polyvalent space, but the shah himself? As the custodian of the shrine, as well as the ruler in the name of Shi'ism, the Shah had an aura of religious as well as royal authority which gave legitimacy to his political aspirations. What better place to display such prestige? Shah 'Abbas situated his architectural insertion in a place where the titles of his ancestors were wreathed, like laurels on a crown. By building the splendid Shāhnishīn and silver grill which restricted access to the Ḥaram and Safavid graves, the Shah was marking his rightful presence as heir to the piety and power of the Safavid dynasty.

---

governor would come here to the court of the shah, 'bi sa'dat-i āstan būsī' for the honor of kissing the sublime threshold.

The significance of the shrine is evident in the accounts of an event of 1027/1618, when Tabriz was occupied by the Ottoman Khalil Pasha. Shah 'Abbas met his ambassador, Osman Agha, and Qasim Beg, the commander in chief of Mazandaran, in Ardabil to work out the details of a treaty. His historian, Eskander Beg Munshi writes, "although the Shah was fully confident that he would be the recipient of God's favor and of the support of all pure souls in holy places, and although he had great faith in the ability of the holy spirits of the Safavid shaykhs to protect the region, nevertheless, just to be on the safe side, he ordered all civilians to be evacuated from Ardabil and dispersed in the surrounding countryside, where they may be safe from harm."[101]

It was at this time that the Italian, Pietro Della Valle was with the Shah's entourage in Ardabil. His description of the events is complimentary to Munshi's, for he portrays the emotions and perceptions of the Ardabili populace at the time of the Ottoman occupation of Tabriz. He reports that there were many worshipers inside the Dār al-ḥuffāz, men and women, everyone petitioning for success in the imminent war, loudly chanting prayers for the destruction of the Turkish army. He also describes Shah 'Abbas' arrival in Ardabil, writing that, "the day after, Qasim Beg came from the Turkish camp, reporting that the Turks were in Tabriz. The Shah was so disturbed by the news that he went to the shrine alone. Once he was there, after closing all the doors he remained inside with the muttawali. After a along devotional prayer to his saint, he hugged the grave and started crying and was there for a long time."[102]

---

[101] TAAA, p. 1152. There are later farmāns urging the inhabitants of villages near Ardabil to return and repopulate the countryside.
[102] Della Valle, De viaggi, p. 489.

This account relates what was probably the ethos within and outside of the Shah's court, and among the people of the city; it paints a humble, yet influential, image of the Shah, who may also be seen as the chosen heir to the Safavid power, able to communicate exclusively with his Divine ancestors. The Shah was the rightful guardian of the Safavid shrine and his architectural program installed him exclusively into this majestic space: remembered not only for his piety and charity, but for his power: political and spiritual.[103]

It is precisely this concern for the Safavid heritage that motivated the contemporaneous construction of the Chīnīkhāna. This is a large octagonal building attached in a rather peculiar manner to the Dār al-huffāz. It is clearly a very old building, from the early years of the shrine, whose interior was completely changed by orders of Shah 'Abbas. Just as the Dār al-huffāz was a reservoir of abstract religious and imperial associations, the Chīnīkhāna, was the actual repository of the family treasures. In 1608, three years before the re-constructions at the shrine of Shaykh Safi, Shah 'Abbas had endowed all his private properties and holdings in the name of the Fourteen Innocents Ones.[104] To the library (kitābkhāna) of the shrine of Imam Reza in Mashhad, he endowed his Qur'ans and Arabic books on hadīth, jurisprudence and interpretation; and to the shrine of Shaykh Safi in Ardabil his Persian books which included illustrated histories like the Shahnama and books of poetry like those of Khata'i (Shah Ismai'l's nom de

---

[103] Later, the public also met in the Dār al-huffāz, in large gatherings of dhikr and hifz, men and women, to pray for Safavid victory.
[104] By the withdrawal of the last Ottoman in Azerbaijan took place. Finally, after almost twenty five years, the hereditary properties of Azerbaijan and Shirvan were returned to the Safavids; TAAA, p. 754.

plume). In addition, all the chinaware and fine porcelains that were kept in the porcelain

house (chīnīkhāna) were endowed to the shrine of Shaykh Safi.[105] This division reveals

the different meanings that the two shrines had for Shah 'Abbas.[106] Whereas Mashhad,

with its history and identification with Shi'ism, was the obvious choice for the books of

orthodoxy and learning, the shrine of Shaykh Safi at Ardabil was perceived as the

dynastic shrine of the Safavid shahs.

The objects stored in the Chīnīkhāna were inscribed with religious epithets as well

as the seal of Shah 'Abbas: (Bandā-yi shāh-i velāyat 'Abbās bar āstāna-yi Shāh Safī

namūd). Attentive of their legal, historical and cultural value, as well as artist merit, it is

not surprising that the books were not allowed to leave the shrine precincts.[107] Its lavish

decoration, and pious evocations were perfectly suited in a room where the reading (and

writing?) of books could take place. However, the intellectual and visual pleasure that

they (as well as the ceramic and metal objects) naturally evoked was complemented by

their participation in the religious and ceremonial life of the shrine. The existence of the

Chīnīkhāna in the shrine, obliquely attached to the Dār al-ḥuffāz, which is itself

connected to the tomb chamber, bestow on the room a sanctified ambience.[108] There is a

---

[105] TAAA, p. 761. For the dating debate, see R. D. McChesney, "Waqf and Public Policy: The Waqfs of Shah 'Abbas, 1011-1023/1602-1614," Asian and African Studies, 15, (1991) :165-90; p. 170.
[106] Shah 'Abbas remained, after all, the overseer of all the waqfs. The collection was supplemented later by Shah 'Abbas' great grandson and namesake, Shah 'Abbas II.
[107] Olearius visited the shrine of Shaykh Safi in 1637 and saw the Chīnīkhāna: "This hall is called Tzenetsera [Chinni-sera/khane], and serves for a library. The books were lay'd in drawers, ... They were all manuscripts,.. all excellently painted, richly bound, and covered with plates of gold and silver, carved and branched. The books of history were enriched with several representations in colours." Olearius, The Voyages and Travels of the Ambassadors sent by Frederick, Duke of Holstein, trans. J. Davies, (London, 1669), p. 179.
[108] For a discussion of the funerary associations of the 'ogee arch and vase' motif in the Timurid period, see L. Golombek, "The Paysage as Funerary Imagery in the Timurid Period," Muqarnas 10, (1993) :241-52

spatial as well as conceptual connection between the tomb chamber and the Chīnīkhāna, both sheltering the recollection and collection of the Safavids, their ancestor and their artifacts, respectively.

The luxury wares and manuscripts deposited in the newly constructed Chīnīkhāna were expensive collections associated with royalty. By commissioning the Chīnīkhāna and gifting his collection to it, Shah 'Abbas was focussing on another facet of imperial benevolence: the collecting of art and the patronage of artistic ateliers. Clearly, Ardabil and the shrine had workshops that produced luxury manuscripts, a tradition overshadowed (though not diminished) by the more restrictive policies of Shah Tahmasb.[109] When Sam Mirza was the mutawalli, again these workshops had flourished and it was here that the prince completed his extensive biography of poets (and artists) called Tuhfa-yi Sāmī which included much of the local talent.

What were the precedents for such an elaborate and princely insertion into the centuries-old shrine? One of the earliest textual mentions of a chīnīkhāna is found in the Bāburnāma, a biography written by the first mughal, Babur Mirza. Describing his visit of 903/1497 to Samarqand and the buildings and gardens built by Ulugh Beg, Babur describes a garden on the Kohak Hill where he finds a four-door portico (chahārdarā), called 'chīnīkhāna'. This open, roofed pavilion was called such because the entire dado was tiled with porcelain, which had been brought from China. He gives no mention of

---

[109] See the mss. 'Chain d'or' (Dorn 434, Dorn's translation!) done for the Ardabil atelier by Shah Mahmud Nishapuri in 956/1549. It was also repaired there as the cover has a later date of 983. See also Baqir Haravi, Mahr o vafā, (Dorn 465).

any vessels or objects kept in this pavilion.[110] Similarly, the Timurid vizier, Mir ʻAli Shir

Navaʻi had had a chīnīkhāna built in his gardens in Gazurgah, to house his porcelain

collection.[111] The space described, richly ornamented arched niches for the display of

precious wares, has a striking resemblance to that in Ardabil and reminds us that this

genre evolved in a courtly environment.

Two Timurid illustrations done at the court of Sultan Husayn Bayqara show what

may be seen as wall niches in which vessels are displayed. For example, "The Beggar

before the King", (Mantiq al-tayr of Attar, Herat, 888/1483) and "A Party at the Court of

Sultan Husayn Mirza" (Būstān of Saʻdi, Herat, 893/1488).[112] Both paintings show a two-

storey palace on the left side of the page, with a projecting balcony on the second floor.

The central 'window' is an arch, the interior of which is ornamented by three vertical

rows of niches, containing blue and white vases, bowls and ewers. In the former

painting, directly below the balcony, sits the king, on a regal dais. The ensemble, that is,

the niched balcony and the seat, frame the royal figure, both visual cues signifying

sovereignty.

In replicating such imperial associations Shah ʻAbbas irrevocably changed the

shrine of Shaykh Safi. His merging of the royal and religious ceremonial, like his

juxtaposition of the Sharbatkhāna to the Chīnīkhāna, resulted in an entirely novel

architectural idiom, which expanded out from the shrine of Shaykh Safi to those

neighboring ones like Amin al-din Gibrail's in Kalkhoran, to eastern ones like the shrine

---

[110] W. M. Thackston, The Baburnama: Memoirs of Babur, Prince and Emperor, (Oxford, 1996), p. 86.
[111] Vasifi, Badāʼiʻ al-vaqāʼiʻ, quoted in Bernard O'Kane, Timurid Architecture in Khurasan, (Costa Mesa, 1987), p. 12.
[112] Reproduced in T. Lentz and G. Lowry, Timur and the Princely Vision, (Los Angeles, 1989).

of Khwaja Rabi' in Mashhad, and eventually to his palace in Isfahan.[113] (To be further implemented by his grandson, 'Abbas II, who renovated the tomb of Shah Isma'il and also shifted the entrance to incorporate a new, majestic 'Ali Qapu gatehouse.) The image was no longer only that of a just and pious Shi'i ruler, nor that of a charismatic Sufi pīr, but rather an older expression of Persian kingship harking back to the splendid Timurid architectural past. This was not a backward glance, but an oblique one, such that it resulted in a newer definition of imperial piety, and its place of worship.

The charisma of Shah 'Abbas continued even after his death, such that his exalted visits to the shrine of Shaykh Safi were immortalized architecturally. The holiness of the Shah was most visible in his ancestral city, in the same manner that the city itself was elevated to royal standards. Ardabil was known not only as the 'abode of guidance' (dār al-irshād), but also as the 'city of Heavenly palaces' (jannat qasūr), no doubt in reference to its spiritual and imperial associations.[114] According to Della Valle, when the Shah came to Ardabil he would stay at the house of the previous governor of Ardabil, Zulfiqar Khan Qaramanlu, who was a Shaykhavand. (This was the same man who had gifted the silver doors in the Shah's honor seven years earlier, and was the brother of Farhad Khan Qaramanlu).[115] In 1618, his house was used as a palace for the king; it had a big square in front, public gardens, a ḥaram and everything else a king would need. When Adam Olearius visited Ardabil a few years after the death of Shah 'Abbas, he was entertained at this official residence. He writes,

---

[113] Shah 'Abbas built or renovated all three and they are in the same 'imperial' expression.

[114] NA, p. 27.

[115] Supposedly the Shah did not want another like him with as much authority, and that was the reason for his deposition.

"[Zulfiqar Khan], the predecessor of [Kalb-i Ali Khan], in the government of
Ardabil, a person of infinite wealth, had built it, according to a model he had
brought out of Turkey. The figure of it was octagonal, and it was three stories, so
raised that Art had not left anything to be desired. Every story had its fountains,
which cast their water higher than any part of the house. The walls were built of a
sort of glittering stones, of all colors, blue, green, red, and all sorts of figures, and
all the floors were covered with the richest tapestry the country could afford. All
about the house was a spacious gallery, all built with marble, and adorned with
painting, representing flowers and leaves. At one of the corners of that gallery,
there was a little couch or chair of state, four foot square, covered with
embroidered tapestry, having in the midst a quilt wrought with gold and silk, to
signify that the king, passing one day through Ardabil, had rested himself there;
which made the place so venerable, that, to the end none should come near it, it
was encompassed with an iron rail."[116]

Thus, the place marked by Shah 'Abbas' presence was not unlike the Shāhnishīn of

Shaykh Safi's tomb, which was enclosed, by royal decree, behind a silver rail. The seat

upon which the Shah had rested was considered too sanctified to be touched by anyone,

not unlike the threshold of his exalted ancestor. At the time of Shah 'Abbas' death, the

conflation of Safavid royalty with the Sufi past was complete, at least on the surface.

Shah 'Abbas' magnificent renovations at the shrine of Shaykh Safi must be considered in

relation to his generosity at the shrine of Imam Reza as well as his grandiose architectural

feats in the capital of Isfahan. By this time, however, the representations of imperial

power leaned more heavily toward the earthly show of pomp and ceremony, than on the

images of piety extolled by his historians. Perhaps it was in competition with his

---

[116] Olearius, The Voyages, p. 171.

neighbors, the great Mughals, whose elaborate rituals of presentation and enthronement were such that they were likened to Sun-gods. Or perhaps it was in opposition to the strict, yet highly orchestrated court culture of his Ottoman rivals, that induced Shah 'Abbas to express his reign in great public displays of architectural might, whose meaning was often as ephemeral, yet awesome, as the illuminations he so enjoyed.

<div align="center">*</div>

The commissioning of splendid architecture and the granting of generous endowments to the shrine of Shaykh Safi was a common practice throughout the life of this institution. These acts would publicly highlight aspects of the donors' religious commitment, as well as his or her financial and political power.[117] In addition, this charity described the donors' own familial, political and religious alliances within society, even through the charity of women. At the shrine the Safavid shahs made gifts in the manner of their predecessors (kings and Sufis) which gave them, in turn, an aura of sanctity and devotion. The buildings were embellished, money and food donated, and much property endowed for the prosperity of the ancestral shrine – the site for the ongoing evolution of the imperial image.

---

[117] This is, of course not novel or specific to the Safavid case. Earlier and similar examples can also be found in India, Iran, Turkey and Egypt. See also Richard M. Eaton, "Political and Religious Authority of the Shrine of Baba Farid," Moral Conduct and Authority: The place of Adab in South Asian Islam, ed. B. D. Metcalf, (Berkeley, 1984):333-56; Eva Maria Subtelny, "Socio-Economic Bases of Cultural Patronage under the late Timurids," International Journal of Middle East Studies 20:4, (1988):479-505; Raymond Lifchez, (ed.), The Dervish Lodge: Architecture, Art and Sufism in Ottoman Turkey, (Berkeley, 1992); Leonor Fernandes, The Evolution of a Sufi Institution in Mamluk Egypt: the Khanqah, (Berlin, 1988).

CHAPTER V.
RITUAL AND CEREMONIAL: PUBLIC LIFE AT THE SHRINE OF SHAYKH SAFI

"As you go out of the fine hall of this building, you turn on the right hand into a place which leads to the kitchen, the door of which is also plated with silver. In the midst of it are two great wells and in the wall, which is a good height, there are several holes filled with pots and kettles, and beneath, some large stores. Here they dress victuals for those who have the care and guard of the sepulchre and besides every night they distribute peloe to hundreds of poor people."

- Cornelias le Bruyn, 1703.

The shrine of Shaykh Safi may be seen as the physical manifestation of Safavid society's attitudes toward life, death, and eternity. Here were displayed a family's wealth, a man's personal relationship to his saint, a woman's social and economic position. Here also were enacted religious policies, and it was here that rituals of devotion were performed. As an institution representative of its historic and cultural context, the shrine was the site of ceremonial, be it imperial or plebian. Although there is not much information by way of Safavid Sufism (in fact, some contemporary theologians would have denied its very existence) or the rites associated with enthronement and initiation of the Sufi-Shah in the early years of the dynasty, the ancestral shrine provides us with a rare opportunity to speculate upon these very elusive topics. The primary data is culled from a variety of sources, not the least of which are the buildings and spaces that enclosed the ritual action. Their provocative silence is, nonetheless, offset by their very presence.

The attention given to the shrine in terms of endowment and patronage has been dealt with previously, as has the architecture and the mythologies associated with it. What remains to be explored is the manner in which the theoretical premises of piety and charity were actually brought into practice, that is, what was the tension between the conventions officially sanctioned by the rulers and administrators and what actually took

place? In addition, how much was the everyday life of the shrine affected owing to its unique association with the ruling dynasty, if at all? That is, to what degree was the shrine of Shaykh Safi a 'typical' Sufi shrine, representative of its type, and to what extent did its particular historical situation distinguish it? Comparison and contrast are provided by studying contemporary Sufi shrines, such as those of the Bektashis in Anatolia with whom the Safavids had much in common.[1] The issues are not always in opposition; rather than exclusion and separation, the trends we see argue for negotiation: between innovation and tradition, between local agendas and newly formulated allegiances (such as those introduced by the rulers and their Qizilbash followers), and between the very nature of Safavid rulership, that is, the overlapping roles of the Sufi and the Shah. The imperial interventions that later transformed the shrine must be seen in the context of Sufi customary ritual as well as the emerging Safavid courtly culture of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. How does a building or ensemble articulate this multiplicity of meaning and function?

Architectural space is dynamic by nature and may adapt itself to the ceremonial it encloses. It changes and is transformed not only in time, but according to a particular, synchronic, point of view. The perception and use of the shrine of Shaykh Safi by a varied clientele is itself testimony to the flexibility and elasticity inherent in such a polyvalent monument. Although the architecture is often a backdrop to the ritual action, it does dictate the qualitative nature of that experience. Such criteria as light, color, height and area clearly play into the experience of the space used and are an important factor in the analysis, the same as narrative descriptions of the shrine at various times by chroniclers and travelers who visited there. The juxtaposition of ritual and architecture in

---

[1] The issue has been discussed by Irène Melikoff in "Le Problème Kizilbaş," Turcica 6, (1975) :49-67.

this chapter highlights their symbiotic and interdependent relationship. Both display the expressive intentions of a people at a given historic moment; both straddle the realm of the imaginary and the physical; both are, ultimately, transformative – allowing the actor/ observer to transcend and participate in ideas and thoughts beyond the expected. These interfaces are themselves documentary, giving us a glimpse, perhaps, into the lived experience of the shrine of Shaykh Safi.

MEMORIES AND EXPECTATIONS

The primary source for reconstructing the shrine of Shaykh Safi is once again the biographical corpus, Safwat al-safa, of Ibn Bazzaz Ardabili, of 759/1358. The book is significant not only as a historical document of its own time, but also as an important text redacted during the reign of Shah Tahmasb and used as a 'guide' by the sixteenth-century patrons to reconstruct the shrine of their ancestors. Thus, we may be given a particularly circumscribed understanding of the shrine, that is, as lived by Shaykh Safi and as perceived by his descendants three hundred years later. In many respects, the picture we get of the shrine is not unusual or unexpected – it appears to be similar in function and architecture to its contemporaries in Iran and Anatolia. It thus highlights to what extent the changes wrought by the Safavid rulers affected, or did not, the older "original" institution. The most profound changes would appear to have occurred in the context of the order's ritual life and its identification as 'Sufi,' a very delicate topic in the later years. The changes also affected the institution of the Sufi shrine, architecturally and functionally – now unselfconsciously celebrated as an imperial and religious edifice.

The founder, Shaykh Safi, was the locus of his shrine (alive and dead), and his charisma was the source of its prosperity, attracting a varied group of supporters. In the

Safwat al-safa, much is made of Shaykh Safi's devotees and the local clientele who frequented the shrine; for example, Ibn Bazzaz names the many notables and royalty that patronized the shrine. He also describes, in accounting events after the Shaykh's death, the construction of his tomb tower and Dār al-ḥuffāz, in which context the names of numerous craftsmen and builders are mentioned. However, the major focus is on the person of the Shaykh himself, his upright character, and the miracles associated with his role as 'saint.' He is presented as a model type, in behavior and religiosity. As such, Shaykh Safi symbolized the ideals of the Safavid order and his actions were seen as roles for his Sufi followers to emulate.

Much of the activity related to Shaykh Safi takes place in communal settings, whether in the bazaars of Ardabil or the zawiyas of other Sufi shaykhs. A great deal also takes place within the shrine itself. Places marked for attention by Ibn Bazzaz include the Shaykh's private khalvatkhāna and the more public khalvatsarā. The importance of these two spaces highlights the two Sufi practices that were pivotal to the Safaviyya order: private meditation (chilla) and recitation (dhikr). The Shaykh would sit in his khalvat and recite the 'kalima' tayyiba' and perform a dhikr, sometimes for as long as six consecutive days. At one place his khalvat is described as an arched podium (takht-i chahār tāq), which would later become his 'blessed hazira.'[2] The function of the shrine as a site for recitation and prayer was on display on the cornice of the Dār al-ḥuffāz. This building, which was reputed to have been built by Sadr al-din Musa to commemorate his father's death, was extant during the sixteenth century with its original epigraphy. The

---

[2] SS, p. 268.

inscriptions framing the portal explain the purpose of the building: "It was set up as a meeting place (majlis) for his exaltation, the saint, and planted as a tree of goodness whose roots are firm and its branches [reach] in the sky. It is for the recitation of the Qur'an and is surrounded by God's angels." On the cornice the text reads, "Oh Lord! Revive us by the Qur'an and perish us by the Qur'an, and resurrect us by the Qur'an and permit us [on] the path by the Qur'an and [allow] our entrance into Paradise by the Qur'an and [let there be] no separation between us and between the Qur'an. Oh Lord! Bless our recitations from your book toward the spirits of our fathers and our mothers and toward the spirits of the inhabitants of the graves, [by the] intervention of the Prophet of God."

The performance of the ritual poetry recitation, or sama', was an act that appears to have been very much part of Shaykh Safi's religious praxis. In the Safwat al-safa, repeated mention is made of the many events in which the Shaykh would be moved to a religious fervor (hāl), after listening to qawwālī and sama'. For example, Shaykh Safi went into an ecstatic state after hearing the ghazals (poetic songs) of the Sufi poet, Attar! Another story relating an example of his devotion was situated in the khalvat of Shaykh Safi: owing to the intensity of the songs and sama', the roof and walls of the khalvat cracked, and so the Shaykh moved to the hauzkhāna (cistern) to do the sama' and from there to the more public, khalvatsarā. Another time, the sama' was so fierce that the walls of the entire zawiya began to shake and vibrate. According to the Safwat al-safa, after the death of his eldest son, Muhiy al-din, Shaykh Safi had stopped participating in

the sama', until one day he heard a maulana reciting the Qur'an. The Shaykh was so moved that he went into an ecstatic state and all the creatures that witnessed this were in tears.[3]

The sama' and ecstasy of Shaykh Safi could easily take place in a faraway city, the Ardabil bazaar, the courtyard of the shrine, or even in a 'sacred' precinct, such as the mosque.[4] But most often the site for the sama' was the maydan-i sama', a term used by Ibn Bazzaz to describe a place where the shaykh and a number of his senior deputies, or khalifas were gathered.[5] The term and what little we know of the performance leads us to compare the Safavid ritual to that of the Bektashi Sufis of Anatolia. In that, too, the gathering would take place in a space called the maydan evi, a large room entered from one side. Opposite the threshold was a throne-like structure, or takht, made of wood, on whose three steps were placed twelve candles, representing the twelve imams (also called a chiraghlik).[6] A takht-like structure can be found in the Jannatsara of the shrine in Ardabil, which is also octagonal, like some of the Bektashi maydans.[7]

According to Shaykh Safi's teachings, there were three types of sama': the rapturous sama' of the body (tawajud); the ecstatic sama' of the heart (wajd); and the existential sama' of the spirit (wajud). The first was for the common, lay Sufis to perform, the second for the specially chosen ones, and the third, highest state, for the

---

[3] SS, p. 642, 645, 652, 649, respectively.
[4] Ibid., p. 381.
[5] Ibid., p. 418. This was probably the khalvatsara.
[6] Helman Ringgren, "The Initiation Ceremony of the Bektashis," Studies in the History of Religion: Initiation X, (1965) :202-208, p. 203.

most excellent among the Sufis. None were allowed for those with impure and unlawful hearts, that is, only the true believers could participate in a sama'. There were also three types of movement: pākūbī is when the Sufis would dance with sashes and holding hands; the second was called raqs and the third, 'ādat.[8] To perform these in the company of women was considered a heresy.[9]

At the shrine, groups of chanting Sufis (qawwāl) would assemble and sing ghazals, which would animate them to ecstasy.[10] The itinerant qawwāls would render songs and music which were listened and danced to by the visitors and Sufis. These musicians were accompanied by a group of drummers employed by the shrine, referred to as the 'tabalān-i zāwīya.' Sufis would gather in the large, public khalvatsarā for recitation of the Qur'an and for the sama', which was performed by the hāfizān (recitors) and accompanied by the qawwāls. The sixteenth-century 'New Chillakhāna' gives a good idea of what the khalvatsarā may have been, formally and functionally. The building has a square plan, with at least three entrances; one from the forecourt, another from the main courtyard of the shrine, and another outside onto what would have been the 'public street.' As 'Abdi Beg in the Sarīh al-milk describes it, the new Chillakhāna,

---

[7] Many examples may be found in Raymond Lichez,(ed.) The Dervish Lodge: Architecture, Art and Sufism in Ottoman Turkey, (Berkeley, 1992).

[8] SS, p. 511.

[9] Perhaps this caveat was inserted later, when there were Ottoman vilification that the Safavids were degenerates and their sama' was immoral. They were reputed to be like the chirāghkushān, who had communal dances and when the candles were blown out, men and women would engage in orgiastic rituals. See A. H. Morton, "The Chub-i tārīq and Qizilbash Ritual," in Etudes Safavides, (1993) :225-246, p. 238.

[10] SS, p. 850.

"[was] that the Lord [...] Shaykh Sadr al-din Musa built. During the reign of Shah Tahmasb, its lofty dome was tiled such that it was second only to the cupola of the Sky. The site of his ascension/seat is marked. And that dome is surrounded by forty chambers above and below. On one side is attached the Holy courtyard, aforementioned, and on one side it is attached to the forecourt ('arsa) of the shrine, which is the place of passage and religious processions of the people. It is attached on one side to the street which separates it from the houses of [...] Sayyid Shaykhshah b. Khwaja Hasan Beg Safavi and on one side to the passage opposite the Old Retreat and its dependencies." The 'forty chambers' on the ground floor may have been for private meditation or served as lodging for the Sufis.[11] Those above were offices for the collectors of nazr. The older Chillakhāna, which was opposite the new one, was the site of Shaykh Safi's spiritual ecstasy and the site of his 'ascension' was also was marked here.

The shrine of Shaykh Safi is repeatedly characterized as a populous and popular place, a destination for visitors from near and far. The many endowments registered in the Sarīh al-milk attest to the importance of the institution as a pilgrimage site, such as this waqf of 733/1332 of Shaykh Safi himself, which reads, "And Hazrat (qutb al-aqtāb wa al-autād safīa al-irshād) endowed all of that and the possessions and land of His Lordship [that is] [moveable] personal property and [immovable] estates for the Muslim comers and goers (sādirīn wa wāridīn) and residents and travelers (sākinīn wa 'ābirīn) of the Holy Safavi shrine (zāwīya) that is in the City of Guidance, Ardabil. And the

---

[11] Usually, each Sufi was given a wazīfa-i dhikr (religious duty, here involving a section from the Qur'an) to recite as part of his spiritual and mental training; SS, p. 795.

endowments [were for] the common Muslims from the rich and the poor and the dwellers

and residents of the aforementioned city, and the travelers that [must] reside by night

there and this shrine is known and famous [for it] (e. 67)." Pilgrimage to the shrine was

even more important after Shaykh Safi's death, such that the threshold (dihlīz) of his

tomb became a place where daily prayers were recited and Sufis gathered to remember

and praise their leader. At that time, people brought to the site Qur'ans and wax-lights

and candles, for it was believed that whoever prayed there had his wishes granted. Ibn

Bazzaz mentions that it was customary for disciples and pilgrims to perform dhikr here

and for huffāz to recite the Qur'an every night after 'asr (evening prayer).[12]

Provision was made for the visiting Sufis and pilgrims in the form of numerous

inns and caravansaries owned by the estates of the shrine. Many of these were in the

surrounding area and Ardabil bazaar, either endowed to the foundation by private

patrons, or purchased by the muttawali.[13] As at other shrines, hospitality was raised

almost to an ideological level, and was a facet of the Safavid order's earliest

characteristics. For example, Ibn Bazzaz relates a story in which Shaykh Safi orders the

servant to light a lamp (shama') for an expectant visitor in the guesthouse

(mihmānkhāna) of the zawiya, "famous as the jāmakhāna;" other times, the Shaykh is

even found entertaining jinns and spirits in his private quarters![14]

For the Sufis life at the shrine consisted of set rituals and a well-prescribed

schedule. As the endowment deeds stipulate, the provisions were for "the Sufi shaykhs

---

[12] SS, pp. 989, 1053.

[13] In SS, 1062 there is mention of a serai and khān of Shaykh Safi.

[14] SS, p. 403.

(al-mashāikh al-muttasufa) and the knowledgeable… who go in the way of piety…on the path of perseverance …for reciting (dhikr) and reading (tilāvat) and praying (salāvāt) and fasting (saum) and abstinence (zahādat) and mortification (kasr al-nafs) (e. 85)." They would partake of their meals in a communal setting, called the 'sufra,' where food from the kitchen would be distributed. A useful comparison would be the Mevlevi Tekke in Konya, for which we have been left with rather detailed economic accounts. There, as no doubt in Ardabil, one of the primary expenses was the kitchen; up to one third of the tekke's income was expended on the cooking and distribution of food. Basic items included meat, bread, wheat, honey and various grains.[15] Similarly, at the shrine of Shaykh Safi, foodstuff consisted of bread and pottage, and on special days, such as 'Eid, honey and sweets.

For most visitors to the shrine, the attraction would be to observe, and sometimes engage in, the Sufi rituals of the Safavid Order. Apart form the sama' and qawwālī, the Sufis would perform a loud dhikr (dhikr-i jālī) at the threshold of Shaykh Safi's tomb, in the Chillakhāna, or, in the courtyard of the shrine. The huffāz would perform prayers and recitation from night until day. Ibn Bazzaz writes of how, every evening, Shaykh Sadr al-din would come to the hazira and read passages from the Qur'an, after which he would convene a halqa-i dhikr, or 'circle of dhikr.' The courtyard of the shrine was a site for the enactment of more spectacular and antinomian performances, as well. For example, there were a group of Sufis called the 'jam'āt-i tauba-kirān,' or penitents, who would come to

---

[15] Suraiya Faroqhi, "Agricultural Crisis and the Art of Flute-playing: The Worldly Affairs of the Mevlevi

the tomb for pilgrimage. Given the many different trends of Sufi practice, one must

exercise caution in projecting one general religious experience at such heterotopic spaces

as the shrine of Shaykh Safi, for as Shah Isma'il declared in his poetry, 'Akhi, Ghazi and

Abdal' all were his children.[16]

The highlight of the worship and pilgrimage would be visiting the tomb of

Shaykh Safi. For the adept, the structure of the tomb was a reminder to concentrate on

the aura of their Shaykh, "in order to increase their spiritual strength."[17] The validation

of building a commemorative over the grave of a pious man, and pilgrimage to it, is

enforced by a saying attributed to a contemporary of Shaykh Safi, 'Ala' al-Daula Simnani

(d. 736/1336). "The Shaykh said, "It [visitation of tombs] has many uses. One is that

when one makes a pilgrimage to someone['s tomb], one's concentration increases as

often as one goes. When one reaches the tomb and beholds it by sense-perception, one's

sense-perception also becomes engaged with the tomb. He becomes totally concentrated,

and this has many uses. Another is that however much spirits lack a veil, and though the

whole world is one to them, it keeps an eye on the body with which it [the spirit] has been

connected for seventy years and on its resurrection body that it will become after the

resurrection, for ever and ever. Its [the spirit's] connection is greater here than in any

other place."[18]

The tomb tower of Shaykh Safi became, thus, part of the ritual action – itself

participating in the religious experience, and moving beyond a merely commemorative

---

Dervishes," Turcica XX, (1988) :43-70, p. 53.

[16] Irène Melikoff, "Le Problème Kizilbaş," p. 57.

[17] Anne-Marie Schimmel, Mystical Dimensions of Islam, (Chappel Hill, 1975), p. 234.

[18] Quoted in Carl. W. Ernst, "An Indo-Persian Guide to Sufi Shrine Pilgrimage," ed. C. W. Ernst, Manifestations of Sainthood in Islam, **, p. 60.

function. The circular shape encouraged circumabulation (tawāf), an act which was requisite of pilgrimage to shrines and tombs.[19] Shrines, such as that of Shaykh Safi, were equated to the Ka'ba in Mecca, and pilgrimage to them was considered a pious obligation.[20] The eulogistic poem written by 'Abdi Beg notes that the towering dome is "like an exalted head [which] views all areas and domains," standing like a proud sentinel who "rarely... bows from the heavens." Instead, it is the site of adoration and a place where "they supplicate with the praises of God." The tomb tower is compared to a beacon, whose sunburst pattern, imitating the rays of the sun, illuminates the world. The dazzling interior was not just metaphorical, but as one traveler describes, it was a brilliant and luminous space. "It is behind that rail or partition, that the sepulchre of Shaykh Safi is to be seen, built of white marble, ...It was covered with crimson velvet, and raised three feet from the ground, being nine feet in length, and four in breadth. From the roof, there hung certain lamps of gold and silver, and on both sides, two huge candlesticks of massy gold, in which were set great wax candles, lighted in the night time."[21] The gold and silver candles would not only emit light, but reflect it, adding to the marvelous vision. The architecture was thus a facet of the sacred ethos of the shrine; although meanings associated with the rituals may have been altered in time, their ineffable qualities were imbued with an aura of fascination and wonder.

---

[19] For two separate discussions of the topic of shrine visitation, see, Ernst, "An Indo-Persian Guide to Sufi Shrine Pilgrimage," and Christopher S. Taylor, In the Vicinity of the Righteous: Ziyāra and the Veneration of Muslim Saints in Late Medieval Egypt, (Leiden, 1999).

[20] For example, in a poem by Qazi Ahmad, in which the shrine of Shaykh Safi is called the Ka'ba and a site for tawāf; KT, p. 617.

[21] Olearius, The Voyages and Travels of the Ambassadors sent by Frederick, Duke of Holstein, trans. J. Davies, (London, 1669), p. 179.

The strength of Shaykh Safi's shrine lay in its versatility and changeability. Like a

mountain stream flowing down the neighboring Sabalan mountains, the Safavid order's

power grew and picked up momentum, culminating in the shaykhs' gaining sovereign

power – a situation all the more remarkable given Ardabil's secondary status in

comparison to Tabriz, the traditional capital of Azerbaijan. By the sixteenth century, the

familial shrine also began a new series of transformations and re-adaptations, associated

with the changing nature of Safavid Sufism. Although some significant changes were

wrought on the built environment as well, much remained the same; sometimes functions

and meanings were shifted slightly and subtly, such that on the surface not much could be

discerned, even though the effects were critical.

Contrary to modern conceptions, in the early Safavid state Shi'ism did not

immediately supplant the older Sufi traditions. The ahl al-bayt were revered not only for

their elevated spiritual position in Shi'i hagiography, but because of the Safavids

identification with them.[22] Many of the older cults continued, despite greater attention

being focused on Shi'i imams and imamzadehs. Sufi shrines were patronized by the

royal family, and powerful Sufi orders, such as the Naimatullahi, were favored for

marriage alliances. Sufi traditions must also have flourished, as evidenced at the shrine

of Shaykh Safi. Illustrated manuscripts of the early Safavid period are visual

documentaries of some Sufi traditions and general attitudes towards them. A British

Museum copy of the sixteenth-century hagiography, Majālis al-'ushāq of Kamal al-din

---

[22] Kishwar Rizvi, "Gendered Patronage: Women and Benevolence in the early Safavid Empire," Women and Self-representation in Islamic Art and Society, ed. D. F. Ruggles, (New York, 2000).

Gazurgahi (painted c. 1560) is a richly illustrated manuscript.[23] This manuscript, painted during the reign of Shah Tahmasb, proves the great respect bestowed on Sufi masters and their undisputed place in Safavid religious life.

The stories chosen for illustration are divided into three unequal groups, reflecting the cultural trends and preoccupations of the time: the first group illustrates Qur'anic and prophetic themes; the second which comprises the majority, illustrates the lives and practices of famous Sufi masters; the third is made up of enthronement scenes, placing the royal persona (here, Timurid princes) in the context of religious life and thought. In the major group, much of the action takes place in bazaars, as was the case with most of the stories. Some paintings show the dervishes participating in dance rituals, either at the bazaar or in some polygonal building. One such illustration (folio 152a), titled "Muhammad Tabadkani dancing with dervishes," shows a group of three Sufis dancing inside a faceted (six or eight-sided) room. According to the text, the sama' takes place in the shrine of Abdullah Ansari in Gazurgah. Could the illustration be of the Namakdan pavilion, which is similar to the Qazvin Hasht-behest built by Shah Tahmasb? The possibility of Shah Tahmasb's involvement in the Namakdan's construction is given by a surviving tiled inscription at the shrine which reads: "In order to circumambulate [that is, perform pilgrimage at the shrine] (tawāf-i ziyārat); From Shah Tahmasb, the victorious, came the order for its repair." The year was 970/1562-63.[24] The repair ordered by the Shah highlights the respect given to the shrine in Gazurgah and the concern for its

---

[23] Kamal al-din Gazurgahi, Majālis al-'ushāq, (c. 1520) British Library, OR 11837. Reprint, ed. G. Tabatabai Majd, (Tehran, 1374/1995).
[24] Published in Lisa Golombek, The Timurid Shrine at Gazur Gah, (Ontario, 1969), p. 91.

preservation. That Sufi practices continued unhampered during the Safavid period is most

probable, although they were perhaps amended to some degree.[25]

At the shrine of Shaykh Safi, in the western corner of the kingdom, the most

visible sign of the changes envisioned by the polity was installed in the primary public

space, the courtyard. The farmān of Shah Tahmasb at the shrine is an interesting

document, which sheds light on the ruler's political and religious aspirations, and the

effect they were supposed to have on one of its most important institutions, the shrine of

Shaykh Safi. The word 'supposed' is not used idly, for there was possibly a big gap

between these expectations and the reality. Similar farmāns were often placed at Friday

mosques as witnessed in a farmān dated 932 issued 'under orders' of Shah Tahmasb,

carved in marble, and installed in the Masjid-i 'Imad al-din in Kashan. There are three

more such marble farmāns installed in this mosque, dated 941/1534, 979/1572, and

981/1573.[26] The 941 one is very similar to ours in Ardabil in its prohibitions against all

manner of unlawful 'entertainment,' including qawāllikhāna (not sama'khāna...was

qawālli a more widespread activity, is contrast to sama' which was performed by Sufis?)

The naming of Shah Tahmasb and the almost exact wording of the two would suggest

---

[25] On the western borders of Safavid Iran, Alevi rituals consisted of sama', dancing and chanting verses of Shah Isma'il; Irène Melikoff, "Le Problème Kizilbaş," p. 65.

[26] All four are published in Abdul Hassan Navai, ed., Shāh Tahmāsb Safavī: Isnād va makālāt-i tārīkhī, (Tehran, 1989).

that there was a close chronological link between the 941 farmān and the one in the courtyard of Shaykh Safi's shrine, whose date has been erased.[27]

The imperial order installed in Ardabil begins with rules governing taxation and "unlawful impositions" on the pilgrims to, and residents of, Ardabil who frequented the shrine. Commodities, such as rice and meat, were to be regulated more stringently, reflecting a greater control of the Ardabil bazaar. The farmān ends with a separate concern: the imposition of the shari'a, as proclaimed by Shah Tahmasb, "Requiring that in the aforementioned Abode of Guidance and territories, by rule, that in the [authorized armies] and royal provinces, taverns, drug houses, electuary-houses, beer houses, houses of pleasure, gaming houses, singing and pigeon betting is forbidden. The controllers of wealth and taxes should remove them from the registers of the office of taxes." The order also prohibited shaving the beard, playing the tambour, backgammon and the heresy of mourning (ta'ziya) "and the young boys [are forbidden from] servicing commanders in the baths and will not be occupied in perpetuating unlawful activity [and], not even think in that direction."

The text of the farmān reflects Tahmasb's famous edict of 'sincere repentance' of 940/1534 in which the young Shah swore off alcohol and ordered the same throughout his armies and the kingdom. The repentance and its public enactment may be seen as a

---

[27] The one dated 979 identifies itself as a la'natnāma (in 972 Tahmasb was reported to have such la'natnāmas carved in stone and installed in mosques everywhere). Its curious that Tahmasb would order these, given the relatively recent peace treaty with the Ottomans, in which it was stipulated that the Safavids would no longer curse the Sunni caliphs. This is addressed to the population of Kashan, urging them to follow the right path and also concerns the granting of tuyuls and soyurgals. The 981 one deals mostly with taxation (of the soap factories) and like that of 979 does not directly identify Shah Tahmasb as the 'author.'

form of social reform, such that not only the religiosity of the populace was to be altered, but also its culture. Reading the text 'inversely,' that is as an affirmation of certain activities that took place at the shrine, gives an important clue as to the society at large. The prohibitions point to a heterogeneous mix of behavior and ethics: "taverns, drug houses, electuary houses, beer houses, houses of pleasure, gaming houses," were apparently an integral part of the city and the bazaar, to the extent that they paid taxes to the state and were, to a certain degree, controlled by them. 'Extremist' rites, such as collective mourning, while condemned by the Shah and his clergy, continued in the public realm as the descriptions of numerous travelers testify. The liminal and antinomial aspects of Safavid society were probably never 'cleaned up' as was the intention of such measures.

Dhikr, called a foundation of Sufi practice, appears to have been a mainstay also of Safavid ritual; the Sufis would gather in a circle, or halqa-i dhikr and recite verses from the Qur'an, as in the times of Shaykh Safi. The Sufi disciple was to occupy himself with "dhikr, vigils on holy nights, acts of obedience and worship, ordering the good and forbidding evil deeds and, finally, in forbidding and preventing the seeing of and association with strange women."[28] According to Zahidi who also tells of a gathering at the shrine, the Safavid majlis-i dhikr consisted primarily of reciting again and again the shahāda, or proclamation of God's unity, a common Sufi practice.[29] There is not much textual evidence of the Sufi dances, other than a few mentions of a rite called rasm-i

---

[28] From a shajara of Shah 'Abbas, quoted in Morton, "The Chub-i tārīq and Qizilbash Ritual," p. 241.
[29] SNS, p. 48.

charkhchīgarī, a form of circular dance.[30] This could refer to the swirling dance depicted

in Safavid miniatures such as the aforementioned Majālis al-'ushāq. Among the

European travelers describing the Sufi dhikr at the shrine of Shaykh Safi was Adam

Olearius, who writes of one such event:

> "[I saw] a very fair and spacious vault, arched above, paved without, with green
> and blue stones, and within hung with tapestry. In the midst of this vault, there
> were two fair brass candlesticks with lights in them. All along the walls sat
> several priests, clothed in white, who sung as loud as ever they were able,
> expressing a great humility, and an extraordinary devotion, by a continual moving
> from one side to the other; which motion was performed by them all at the same
> time, and with the same shaking, and that with so much exactness, that a man
> would have thought they had been all fastened with the same cord, and that they
> had been all drawn at the same time. This place is called the Chillakhāna, in
> regard that Shaykh Safi retired thither every year, to fast, eating only, for forty
> days together, but one almond a day..."[31]

In the official chronicles of the later period, the sentiment toward the Sufis was

ambiguous, not unlike the double entendres in Shah Tahmasb's farmān. Whereas the

Safavid traditions were often upheld, the Sufis themselves were referred to pejoratively

as 'brainless simpletons' or 'stupid.'[32] Nonetheless, the allegiance of the Ardabil Sufis to

the Shah was an important aspect of his power, a conduct referred to as sūfīgarī,

reminiscent of the Sufi past. The term is used also by Shah Tahmasb in his memoir when

---

[30] TA, p. 287.
[31] Olearius, The Voyages, p. 178.
[32] TAAA, p. 463 (Savory translation).

writing about the loyalty of his Qizilbash followers.[33] The loyalty, once vital and energized, by the seventeenth century was made into a relic; a symbol of rites previously held sacred. In the same manner, architectural spaces that once held rituals of initiation or worship were now representations of the Sufi past, as witnessed in the previous chapter.

The physical sphere of influence of the shrine went much beyond its own walled enclosures. The upkeep of the Sufis who resided at the shrine was undertaken by the shrine's estate. In addition to housing, the estate no doubt also provided for the Sufis by way of necessities, such as clothing and shoes. Shaykh Safi is said to have admonished his Sufis from beggary, therefore encouraging more economically lucrative means for their survival. The shrine owned numerous shops, inns and caravansaries in the neighboring bazaar, which generated income toward this end. Another vital expense that was covered by the shrine estate, as attested by the land registers, included maintenance of the structures and their continued upkeep. Each building that was noted in the Safwat al-safa had its own significance and history, and it befell upon the patrons of the shrine, especially the shahs, to assure its longevity.

One of the earliest buildings at the shrine of Shaykh Safi was the Dār al-ḥuffāz, whose function seems to have also endured the longest. The traveler Olearius described it such: "The vault was about four fathoms square and enlightened by a great number of gold and silver lamps; among which there were some, above three feet diameter. On both sides sat twelve hafizan, or priests, having before them, upon desks, great books of parchment, wherein were written, in capital Arabian letters, certain chapters of the

---

[33] TazT, p. 3.

Qur'an, which they sung."[34] The Dār al-ḥuffāz was also a space for preaching, and listening to, sermons. This communal aspect of worship was described in 1618 by Della Valle's wife, Señora Mani, who reported encountering a great gathering of men and women inside. There were many people and everyone within prayed for success in the impending war against the Ottomans. The people were chanting loudly, "Oh, may the Turkish army be destroyed so that it doesn't come to Ardabil," and the mullas and everyone else would respond in unison to this harangue.[35] The atmosphere is best illustrated in a painting from the Majālis al-'ushāq of Kamal al-din Gazurgahi titled, "Majd al-din Baghdadi preaching in Khwarazm (f. 74a)." The painting depicts an interior space where the great Sufi master sits upon a maqsūra preaching to a collection of men and women. On the balcony above sit two more women, listening to his sermon. The text situates the scene at the shrine (zawiya) of Shaykh Majd al-din Baghdadi. The shrine in Khwarazm, which is no longer extant, appears very similar to the interior of the Dār al-ḥuffāz in Ardabil, which is also a two-storey space with alcoves above and below.

The separate and discretely placed stairs up to the balconies suggests that these were probably for women devotees, from where they could hear the sermon, or participate in the Qur'anic recitation. The rare observations of a woman visitor highlights the significant involvement of women at the shrine of Shaykh Safi. They were not only remembered in the Shahs' endowments as recipients of Divine reward, nor were they merely silent donors who gifted their wealth to the shrine's estate: the land registers show them to be partners in sales transactions with the shrine and the description given by

---

[34] Olearius, The Voyages, p. 179.

Señora Mani presents them as worshipers who came to the threshold of their leader with as much devotion as their male counterparts. After all, many of the habitue of the shrine of Shaykh Safi were women from the extended Safavi clan; they no doubt identified with the other great woman patron, Tajlu Khanum, who built the tomb of her consort, Shah Isma'il, at the ancestral shrine. There is not much more evidence of sixteenth-century womens' worship, or to what extent they could be initiated into a Sufi order. Many critics of the Safavids accused them of orgiastic rituals, such as those of the chiraghkushan.[36] Perhaps it was to this end that there were prohibitions against mixed gatherings.

Dhikr and sama' were considered part of the Sufis' spiritual and intellectual education. Alongside these the novice was expected to have a good knowledge of the order's past, learned through biographies, such as the Safwat al-safa, and popular narratives. The primary criteria was knowing the silsila, or chain of transmission, that made one order distinct from another.[37] The mystical tradition of a particular order, in our case, the Safaviyya, was recorded not only in books and oral histories, but sometimes on the walls that enclosed the ritual and daily life of the Sufis. This was the case for Shaykh Safi, where his spiritual ancestry was heralded (and amended in the sixteenth century) in the shrine's architecture. On parts of the Dar al-huffaz interior are written the names of Shaykh Safi's spiritual lineage, ending with 'Ali b. Abi Talib. The political reasons for this identification aside, the liturgical need manifested in dhikr and remembrance required such an aide memoire. The epigraphy is legible and clearly

---

[35] Pietro Della Valle, De viaggi di Pietro della Valle il pelligrino: la persia, (n.p. 1618), p. 486.
[36] See note 12 above.
[37] Schimmel, Mystical Dimensions of Islam, p. 234.

written; the names of the exalted shaykhs are stucco-painted at eye level, in comparison with the more complex Qur'anic verses on the ceiling cornices. Such an intersection of meaning and function was common at a polyvalent institution such as the shrine.

The Chīnīkhāna of the shrine was also a place for reading or admiring the collection of manuscripts; the words were written not necessarily on the walls, but on luxury manuscripts that were stored in its cupboards. It most probably had been the Gunbad-i shāhzādehā that 'Abdi Beg mentioned in the Sarīh al-milk, a burial or ritual space for the Safavid Sufis. In the seventeenth century it was famous for its vast porcelain collection, a gift of Shah 'Abbas. This magnificent space, resplendent in blue and red and gold, was renovated by order of the Shah to house his collection of 'Chinese' vessels and books of history and poetry. The shrine had its own collection of manuscripts, dating to the Ilkhanid period, to which these new items were amended. In addition, the shrine's economic registers were housed in the Chīnīkhāna, which included endowments and land registers. These documents were certainly as valuable as the expensive books and objects belonging to the Shah, for they testified to the shrine's wealth as well as its antiquity. The building was thus a repository on many levels.

However, the role of the Chīnīkhāna went beyond the housing of precious wares; it was itself a place of pleasure. It can be imagined that the niches that housed the vessels also held the candles and oil lamps that were part of the shrine collection. The light cast from these would illuminate the space causing a wonderful aura. The beautiful interior with its ornately carved and stuccoed ceiling acted as a mirror to the poetry and painting in the manuscripts. The gold-leaf on the woodwork was akin to the burnished and

illustrated pages. The refinement of the porcelains was reflected in the skilled workmanship of the architecture that was itself reminiscent of the Chinese art of cloisonne. The octagonal space mirrored itself, repeating the patterns and the architecture on infinite axes. In such a way, each reference overlapped and expanded the many modes of experience and expression housed in the Chīnīkhāna.

It may be that the Chīnīkhāna augured changes imminent at the shrine of Shaykh Safi. As a royal appointment it marked the pomp and opulence of the Safavid house, reminiscent of princely hobbies like the patronage of ateliers and workshops. Certainly there were royal kārkhāneha that Shah 'Abbas administered when in Ardabil, and there are manuscripts that were illustrated in Ardabil.[38] It was here that Shah Tahmasb's brother, Sam Mirza, composed his Tazkira tuhfā-yi Sāmī, which was a compendium of poets from Ardabil and abroad.[39] Nonetheless, it is difficult to reconstruct these or to associate them with the Chīnīkhāna itself. The building may have been a scriptorium where the books were housed and read; however, it is difficult to surmise that they were produced here, and not in the neighboring bazaar. The Chīnīkhāna may be similar to a royal kitābkhāna such as that which existed at the royal palace in Isfahan (between the Divānkhāna and the Haram) through its role as repository; however, its closer cognates may be found at other shrines.[40] An immediate example would be the Zarnigārkhāna at

---

[38] Such as the Tārīkh-i 'aima-i mā'sūmīn; on workshops see TA, p. 301.

[39] Sam Mirza Safavi, Tazkira-yi Tuhfā-yi Samī, ed. Rukn al-Din Humayun Farruk, (Tehran, n.d).

[40] On kitābkhāna see the discussion in Marianna Shreve Simpson, Sultan Ibrahim Mirza's Haft Aurang, (Washington, 1997), p. 302.

the shrine of Abdullah Ansari in Gazurgah, which is also an opulent and enigmatic space, possibly from the early Safavid period. Additionally, one would not be remiss to speculate on the similarities in function and meaning of the Chīnīkhāna at the shrine of Shaykh Safi and the Chirāghkhāna (illumination house) at the shrine of Imam Reza in Mashhad, which was part of the Dār al-siyyāda. These buildings had a significance beyond the functional and aesthetic: they were part of the rituals of worship undertaken in such institutions. The eyes of the visitor or Sufi who gazed in wonder at the beauty of the Chīnīkhāna would also perhaps fall upon the small words carved into the niches: Yā Safī, Yā 'Alī, Yā Allah. These holy names were a reminder of the primary duty of the shrine's inhabitants, the remembrance of God, and the rewards awaiting them in the afterlife. In such a manner, the ethereal space enclosed by the eight-sided building was itself a simile of Paradise.

Grand, eloquent spaces like the interiors of the Chīnīkhāna, Dār al-ḥuffāz and tomb tower were not the only places where the education of the Sufi took place. More humble sites played their part as well, such as the shrine's kitchen where the novices were trained in kitchen duties.[41] In Alevi-Bektashi ceremonial, one of the highly venerated sites was the 'post of the cook' (Asci Postu), pointing to the elevated status of this symbolic role.[42] The kitchen provided succor not for the body alone, but for the spirit. That of the shrine of Shaykh Safi, as in the case of Anatolian tekkes, was its 'living

---

[41] Schimmel, Mystical Dimensions of Islam, p. 234.
[42] Irene Markoff, "Samā' and the Alevis of Turkey," Manifestations of Sainthood in Islam, ed. C. W. Ernst, **; p. 100.

center.'[43] What remains of the kitchen is found in textual documentary, since there is no architectural vestige. According to the Sarīh al-milk the shrine's 'flourishing' kitchen (āshkhāna) consisted of cauldron-houses (dīgkhāna) for rice and wheat and other related chambers, as well as a pantry (ayāqkhāna) to its north and a bakery (khabbāzkhāna) to its north-west. Food was collected in the store (hawījkhāna) for a year; this included rice, meat, honey, grape/date syrup, salt, wax, onions, wheat for the āsh-i harīsa, flour, fat, sugar, broth for the harīsa, and oil for day and night.[44] The kitchen seems to have been close to, and servicing, the Jannatsarā and Chinikhāna. Foreign visitors were taken there as part of their tour of the shrine; the kitchen, proudly displayed, was deemed as significant a space as the more obviously imposing ones. In the kitchen were thirty five huge cauldrons cooking morning and evening and its doors were covered with plates of silver, "and all things within it were handsomely ordered...the great cauldrons were set in a row, and sealed within the wall, along which passed a pipe which, by divers cocks, supplied all the kitchen with water."[45]

The kitchen's meaning went far beyond the function of food preparation, for it was in part the shrine's primary raison d'etre; as Shaykh Safi is said to have commented, his shrine was "for the feeding of the poor and to provide service to the old and infirm."[46] The food from here was imbued with barāka, or Divine benevolence; in the Sarīh al-milk

---

[43] Soraya Faroqhi calls the kitchen of the Mevlevi tekke as 'living center' in Faroqhi, "Agricultural Crisis and the Art of Flute-playing," Turcica XX, (1988): 43-70, p. 53.

[44] SNS, p. 111.

[45] Della Valle, De viaggi, p. 486; Olearius, The Voyages, p. 179.

[46] SS, p. 982.

a Qur'anic verse used in reference to the shrine's kitchen describes the motivation well: "And feed with food for love of Him [76:8]." During 'āshūra ceremonies, almsmen lay in the ashes brought from Shaykh Safi's kitchen in order to gain blessing.[47] The symbolic importance of the kitchen was acknowledged by the Safavid historians, such that it was chosen for the display of imperial piety and generosity. When Shah 'Abbas rebuilt the shrine's kitchen in 1014/1605, the chronogram read: "May the kitchen flourish."[48] His charisma was conflated with the sanctity of the shrine's kitchen where he performed miracles and gave generous gifts, such as silver mortars and money for the workers. The morning and afternoon meals were financed by the benevolent shrine foundation, and the evening one was gifted by the Shah.

Honored guests partook of the victuals as did the humble beggars who resided in Ardabil. Food was not only distributed by the shrine, but also gifted to it by pious supplicants, in the form of nazr. The āsh-i halāl foundation set up by Shah Isma'il at the turn of the sixteenth century was prospering even a hundred years later, and provided income for the collectors of this nazr.[49] The Sarīh al-milk lists the income and harvests from whole villages that were bequeathed to the shrine. In another manner, pilgrims from as far away as Anatolia brought with them goats and livestock, in addition to money and precious items. Qazis there, sympathetic to the Safavid cause, collected the nazr for the shrine and secreted it across the Ottoman borders, a point of extreme contention on

---

[47] Olearius, The Voyages, p. 175.
[48] TA, p. 301.
[49] Olearius, The Voyages, p. 181.

both sides.[50] The popular religion of the people, as typified in the Sufi establishment, was harnessed by the Shahs and Sultans and molded according to their political ideology.

As significant as the kitchen were the shrine's Sharbatkhānas, one situated "near the delightful spring, the opening of which is enclosed. Consisting of a pool (hauz) and a building (mahal) for cooking sweets." The chronicler, Yazdi, seems to suggest that there were two such buildings: the Sharbatkhāna of Shaykh Safi and a royal one endowed by Shah 'Abbas.[51] The Sharbatkhāna of the shrine was a site where Shah 'Abbas performed acts both miraculous and humble; he donated money to its upkeep and bequeathed the reward from it to the spirit of his mother.[52] It is conceivable that the 'royal sharbatkhāna' that Yazdi refers to was in fact the Chīnīkhāna, to which Shah 'Abbas had bequeathed his porcelain collection. The imperial associations did not stop there, for the Sharbatkhāna was a component of both shrines and palaces. In the eighteenth-century Tadhkirat al-mulūk, the belongings of the royal Sharbatkhāna in Isfahan were listed as "vessels of gold, silver, china, glazed ware and copper, as well as crystal sugar, candy, medicinal herbs, coffee, tobacco, glass; tops, tubes and other accessories of hookahs; halila, amula, and other preserves; lemon juice, rose-water, etc., spirits ('araq?), pickles, perfumes,

---

[50] C. H. Imber, "The persecution of the Ottoman Shi'ites according to the mühimme defterleri, 1565-1585," Der Islam 56, (1979) : 245-273; p. 250.

[51] There is currently an eight-sided building being excavated where the sharbatkhāna would have been, according to the description in the Sarīh al-milk; it is near a cistern and water ducts. The preparation of sweets and beverages required proximity to a water source.

[52] TA, p. 424.

etc..."[53] It was probably from the shrine's sharbatkhāna that the beautiful vessels used in

the 'āshūra ceremony, described by Olearius in 1639, were brought out and displayed

publicly:

> "There were set before them, upon a cloth, wherewith they had covered the
> ground, several vessels of porcelain, with sugared and perfumed water, and, near
> the table, brass candlesticks, four foot high, with great wax candles in them, also
> lamps, filled with rags dipped in suet and naphtha. The Governor took up his
> place at the entrance of the court, on the right side of the gate, and sat upon the
> ground. Our people had standing before them great wooden candlesticks, or
> branches, holding each of them twenty or thirty wax candles. There were
> fastened to the walls thousands of lamps, of plaster, all filled with suet and
> naphtha, which cast a great light, that the house seemed to be on fire."[54]

Illumination at shrines and mausolea had a symbolic purpose as well as a functional one.

The light shed by the beautiful and intricate lamps represented the spiritual essence

attendant at a tomb and was seen as a sign of the Divine, providing a contrast to the

materiality of the space. Lighting mosques and mauslea was given high priority in

general, as was the case for Mecca and Medina, where care and money was spent in their

upkeep.[55] At shrines, a special worker was employed for the upkeep of the lamps and

candles, for repairing broken ones and replacing used up ones. In Imam Reza's shrine in

Mashhad there was a special Chirāghkhāna, which, after the Uzbek raids, Shah 'Abbas re-

---

[53] Vladimir Minorsky, Tadhkirat al-Mulūk, p. 68.
[54] Olearius, The Voyages, p. 175.
[55] Faroqhi, "Agricultural Crisis and the Art of Flute-playing," p. 55.

supplied with jeweled chandeliers of gold and silver, candlesticks, magnificent Kerman

and Jowsqan carpets, and pots and utensils.[56]

The shrine of Shaykh Safi was similarly endowed. Porcelains and silverware

were not the only precious wares in the shrine's collection; an inventory of its estate lists

luxury objects, such as precious stones, turquoise and tourmaline, manuscripts and

farmāns, carpets and mats, and a wide variety of lighting apparatus, from gold, silver and

brass candlesticks to oil and naphtha lamps.[57] These devices were a popular item to be

endowed to the shrine, as witnessed by the gift of a village made mortmain "for the

purchase of candles and oil that lights every evening the twelve lanterns at the head of the

cenotaph of His Lordship. (add. 4a)." Similarly, when first he arrived in Ardabil, Shah

Tahmasb gifted twelve candles to the shrine. The endowment was not utilitarian alone,

but aesthetic and religious. As the poet 'Abdi Beg imagined it, the shrine of Shaykh Safi

was "the illuminated zawiya and the holy ḥazira surrounded by the lights of sanctity."

Just as the clarity of light was equated with the purity of the sacred spaces it

washed over, cleanliness was created through another sense, that of smell: as visitors,

such as the European travelers, who were deemed impure, visited the shrine, "a grave old

man, who with a perfuming pot in his hand, purified the places" through which they had

passed.[58] This preoccupation with purity and defilement was especially noted by the

foreign visitors to the Safavid courts, since as early as Shah Tahmasb. In one account,

when the Englishman Anthony Jenkins was to be given audience with the Shah (in 1561),

"there was one that came to him without the court gate, before he light from his horse on

---

[56] TAAA, p. 764 (Savory translation).

[57] Ganjīna-i Shaykh Safī, (Tabriz, 1969).

[58] Olearius, The Voyages, p. 179.

the ground, and gave him a pair of shoes sent from the 'Sophie' [Shah], as he himself was

wont to wear in the night when he rose to pray, willing him to put them on his feet, for

that it was not lawful for him, being a 'gawar' or 'caffer' (that is, a misbeliever) to tread

upon the holy ground."[59]

Architectural elements like silver plaques and grills that adorned the doors and

windows were commissioned especially for the shrine, and were inventoried in the

eighteenth-century Ganjīna-i Shaykh Safī.[60] A silver plaque covers the window shutters

of Shaykh Safi's tomb. It was donated by Shah Safi I and is a splendid specimen of metal

work. It was not the Shah alone who made large public gifts to the shrine of Shaykh

Safi.[61] Earlier, in Shah 'Abbas' reign alone, many notables donated money as well as

objects to the shrine. Among these are a pair of doors, plated with silver, situated at the

entrance of the Dār al-ḥuffāz, which were given by Zulfiqar Khan Qaramanlu, the Hakim

of Azerbaijan in 1011/1602. On the inscription, which is dedicated to his patron, Shah

'Abbas, the governor is identified as the "chosen slave of this holy threshold of the

heavenly throne," referring to both the sacred and political jurisdiction at the shrine of

Shaykh Safi. Similar to these are another pair of silver doors at the entrance to the

Ḥaramkhāna which were donated by another notable, Khwaja Chubani, in 1019/1611,

and were also dedicated to Shah 'Abbas.

Gateways held great significance as thresholds into the sanctified space of the

shrine, and were thus obvious sites for the placement of pious gifts. The main gateway of

---

[59] Peter Martyr, History of Travel in the West and East Indies, (London, 1577), p. 323.
[60] Ganjīna-i Shaykh Safī, ed. Sayyid-Yunusi, (Tabriz, 1969).

the shrine, Dargāh-i māʿlī, was considered "the place where people place and rub their foreheads." 'Abdi Beg continues his description with the verse, "There is to its portal the shape of a mihrab, people turn their faces to it from each direction." According to Olearius, the silver chains which hung at the gateway entrance to the shrine were the gift of the Khan of Maragha, as were subsequent chains: at the next gateway, the silver chains were the gift of the Khan of 'Kentzay' and at the next, they were given by 'Ali Khan, the governor of Kashan. These officials gave the silver doors and chains not only as charity, but by way of gaining access to the royal patron, Shah 'Abbas, in whose name they were given. The display of piety and the accruing of prestige were the two primary motives behind these public acts of devotion, shared by the elite patrons of the shrine, including the Shah himself. Olearius continues his description of the thresholds of the gateways that were "of white marble, and round, and notice was given us not to set our foot upon it, but to step over it, the right foot foremost, out of this reflection, that having been kissed by so many millions of persons, it were, as they said, very irrational that our feet should profane it." [62] The gateways were not the only liminal zones within the shrine; the entrance into the precincts of Shaykh Safi's mausoleum were similarly sanctified, only to a greater degree: the three steps that lead up to it were covered in silver, a gift from Shah 'Abbas.

The sanctity of the shrine threshold was similar to that of the royal 'Ali Qapu gateway in Isfahan, which was also considered a sacred threshold where passersby fell to the ground in supplication. The entrances to shrines were places of sanctuary and asylum,

---

[61] Sub-imperial gifts were not limited to the shrine in Ardabil, as witnessed by the generous gift of 2,800 Toman, candles, wares, china and jewels given by the official, Murtaza Quli Khan to the shrine of Imam Reza in Mashhad in 989; KT, p. 721.

providing housing and shelter to the needy as well as the criminal.[63] Once anyone

touched the portals or entered through their gates, he was safe. An anecdote told by

Yazdi underscores this reputation. He writes of a man, who upon release from prison

came to the shrine of Shaykh Safi, saying that "this is the Chillakhāna of [Shaykh Safi]

and is a 'house of peace' (bayt al-aman). I beg that [Shah 'Abbas] forgive me for the

regression as per the customs of this house of peace." Shah 'Abbas ordered it to be

written that, "Since the days of the great king, Amir Timur, this place was a 'house of

peace' and the custom is that no one may touch anyone other than as in the shari'a."[64]

The significance of the visitation was such that people would buy a ziyāratnāma, a

document attesting to their pilgrimage to this (or other) holy shrine, that would be a

safeguard against injustice and official inequity.[65]

Anthony Weaver's 1971 survey of the shrine includes articles of ritual

performance, such as large flags and standards ('alams), that were part of the shrine's

collection are of fretted iron, one with a dragon's head finial. The standards may have

been related to the Qizilbash wars of the early empire or to older rituals. In addition to

the standards, other symbols of war were also part of the shrine's ritual, such as the

beating of kettle drums, or naqqāra, a rite associated with battle. Ceremonial 'alam are

common elements found in Shi'i imamzadeh, representing the standards borne by Imam

Husayn's kinsman as they traveled to Karbala. At the shrine of Shaykh Safi, as at many

---

[62] Adam Olearius, The Voyages, p. 168. The latter may be 'Aliquli Khan Sharaf who was made the governor of Kashan at Shah 'Abbas' ascension; TAAA, p. 354.
[63] Engelbert Kaempfer, Am Hofe des persischen Grosskonigs, 1684-1685, reprint (Tubingen, 1977), p. 212; Necipoglu, "Framing the Gaze in Ottoman, Safavid and Mughal Palaces," p. 309.
[64] TA, p. 282.
[65] Olearius, The Voyages, p. 181.

other Sufi institutions, Shi'i rituals were observed with as much fervor as Sufi ones; the veneration of the Prophet's family was shared by both traditions. Olearius again provides a description of an āshūra ceremony which took place in the courtyard of the shrine:

> "The whole city of Ardabil was taken up in these ceremonies and extravagant devotions. In the day time, the children and young lads assembled themselves in great companies up and down the streets, carrying in their hands great banners, at the extremities of whereof were snakes of pasteboard winding to and fro, ...[On the tenth day] ceremonies were performed in the court of the shrine of Shaykh Safi, where near the chancery, they had planted a banner, which as it is reported, was made by the daughter of Fatima, the daughter of Muhammad, who caused the iron-work of it to be made of a horse-shoe, which had belonged to one of the horses of 'Abbas,...,which Sadr al-din, the son of Shaykh Safi, had brought from Medina to Ardabil. They say, that this banner shakes of itself, as often as they pronounce the name of Husayn, during the sermon that is made in honor of him, and that when the priest makes a recital of the particulars of his death, how he was wounded with seventy-two arrows, and how he fell down from his horse, it may be seen shaken by a secret agitation, but withall so violent, that, the staff breaking, it falls to the ground."[66]

The spectacles that travelers like Olearius describe were an essential part of Safavid public life. The dramatic enactment that ceremonies such as āshūra entailed could be seen as role-playing that encouraged collective expression within an officially controlled environment.[67] The meeting and merging of different strata of society in such

---

[66] Olearius, The Voyages, p. 175.

[67] Jean Calmard has done an analysis of such rituals and their significance in his article, "Shi'i rituals and Power II. The consolidation of Safavid Shi'ism: Folklore and Popular Religion," in ed.C. Melville, Safavid Persia: the History and Politics of an Islamic Society, (London and New York, 1996). For a Bakhtian

emotionally charged situations was cathartic, allowing for simultaneous moments of

inversion and equality. The ideal setting for such tension and its resolution was the

shrine of Shaykh Safi, notably its courtyard. The courtyard may be imagined as a

polyvalent space, disseminating a variety of messages: the epigraphy on the cornices of

the Dār al-ḥuffāz, Dār al-ḥadīth and Jannatsarā loudly proclaimed the Safavid da'wa; the

farmān on the wall ordered the populace to abstain from heresy and to follow the true

path; the royal kettle drums beat to announce the dinner hours as well as the generous

imperial presence; from the Chillakhānas on either side emanated sounds of chanting and

prayer; and from the tombs and graves the silence permeated the soul of the visitor with

thoughts of mortality.

The architectural ensembles were not merely didactic spaces but also settings for

pleasure and enjoyment. The shrine of Shaykh Safi was frequented by men, women, and

children. The hospitality of this institution was such that it invited use by Sufis as well as

lay people. Beyond the religious dimension was the profane one. The prohibitions

already encountered in the farmān point to the lucrative, yet unlawful, commerce that

surrounded the shrine, including prostitution and gambling. Less deviant pastimes took

place within the shrine's precinct. The sources speak of an orchard (bāghcha) of the

madrasa built by Shah Tahmasb, in which roses were planted and a room built for the

storage of flowers. This garden provided flowers for the 'charitable sharbatkhāna' where

the sweet rose-water for pious rituals was made. The perfumed libations would then be

---

analysis of a contemporary circumcision ceremony in Ottoman Turkey, see Derin Terzioᴗlu, "The Imperial Circumcision Festival of 1582: An Interpretation," Muqarnas 12 (1995) :84-100.

brought out in the beautiful vessels of china and porcelain during special celebrations, such as those associated with āshūra (quenching of thirst of travelers during Muharrum is seen as a godly act). Beside the utilitarian purpose of the garden was its aesthetic one: the shady allées of trees and the sweet-smelling flower plants provided a pleasant and sensual space for repose and relaxation. Although associated with the shrine, and by extension, a cemetery (Shahīdgāh), the orchard "became the promenade for the entire city," a vibrant space for Ardabili men and women.[68]

*

The shrine of Shaykh Safi, although a repository of the dead, was a vital part of the city of the living. The architectural spaces that were tools for propaganda were as often merely backdrops to the rituals of worship and existence. The descriptions left by the foreign travelers show a shrine not very different from other such institutions in the daily Sufi rituals. However, the shrine was distinguished for its close association with the Safavid royalty. The myths propagated about the Shah were as often used by his courtiers to manipulate the populace of Ardabil as to change the manner of religious expression. One suspects that those older, vibrant traditions retold in the Safwat al-safa continued alongside this added dimension of imperial ceremonial. For, next to the royal Chīnīkhāna was the flourishing kitchen of the shrine, sharing the porcelain wares - one depicting the virtues of charity, the other displaying the indulgence of power.

---

[68] SNS, p. 112. In Iran the practice of picnicking in cemeteries continues even now; for example one of Tehran's most popular weekend spots is the famous Beshest-i Zahra cemetery outside of the city. This 'garden of martyrs' is also attached to a famous tomb: the mausoleum of Ayatollah Khomeini.

ρ. EPILOGUE

The sky is protected in the portal,
   Garrisoned in that impregnable fort.
Lit by the populace like the pupil of the eye,
   That house was ennobled by its inhabitants.
     - <u>Sarīh al-milk</u>, Zayn al-'Abdin ('Abdi Beg Shirazi), Shawwal 977 AH

The story of the shrine of Shaykh Safi begins anew. As each pilgrim to his shrine went back home, she took with her memories of it, and the desire to return again. In a similar way, the end of this dissertation invites us to rethink the project with fresh eyes. The study raises many questions and opens up paths of inquiry, with the hope that they will encourage more work on Safavid religious architecture. The dissertation sheds light on the plurality of meanings within which the shrine of Shaykh Safi operated. The chapters each touched upon a separate, but related, aspect of its architectural development, such as the shrine's foundation myths, urban imprint, physical expansion, economic autonomy, imperial patronage, and public ceremonial. The varied clientele and its different manners of religious expression, sometimes conflicting, speak to the adaptability of the institution. Its longevity is proof of its broad appeal as an institution which provided for the poor and the privileged.

  The architectural spaces, too, were flexible and could be altered according to the needs of the time. An apt example was the Gunbad-i shāhzādehā, which originally may have been one of Shaykh Safi's retreats, since it predates the Dār al-ḥuffāz and is one of the earliest surviving structures in the complex. During the early imperial phase, it became a burial space within which the descendants of Shah Isma'il and martyrs from the

succession wars were interred. Ardabil had become a popular destination, not only for the living, but the dead, where Shah Tahmasb gifted the honor of burial. Perhaps it was to replace functionally the old Sufi retreat that Shah Tahmasb had a similar, but larger, octagonal building, the Jannatsarā, constructed. Both these freestanding, octagonal, buildings could have been mausolea or public halls. The dissertation does not assume that there could be, or need be, a definitive answer to the question of the Jannatsarā's original function. Rather, I have tried to provide a range of possible scenarios that could have taken place within it - at different times of the day, or over a period of years.[1] The transformations of the Gunbad-i shāhzādehā continued, and we see sixty years after Shah Tahmasb's commissions that Shah 'Abbas in turn converted its interior into a grand, palatial space, now called the Chīnīkhāna, referring to the expensive china wares that he endowed to the shrine. The building was now a repository no longer of the dead, but of the Safavid past, as it housed the Shah's collection of books and precious objects.

The vitality of the shrine was evident in its impact on the urban development of the city of Ardabil. It was the center of the bazaar and had substantial financial influence, since its estate owned a lot of property there. The shrine's administrators were also business partners to many of the merchants in the bazaar, as they held partial ownership of many of the stores. The economic power of the shrine was evident in the numerous deeds recorded in the Sarīh al-milk. The dissertation sheds light on the fact that the earliest supporters of the Safaviyya order were local Ardabilis, not Anatolian Qizilbash.

---

[1] It is interesting that at the present time, the building is referred to as masjid, since it was used as a mosque a hundred years ago. A parallel study would look at the newest names given to the buildings at the shrine:

It was not until late into Shah Isma'il's reign that the shift in demographics are witnessed. Until that time, the majority of followers and visitors to the shrine were residents of the city and hailed from a diverse background.

The shrine cannot be separated from its physical environment, that is, the bazaar which was its extension. In the bazaar were inns and caravansaries that the shrine owned and used for housing pilgrims; the baths were an additional service provided to the visitors, which also generated income for the shrine. It has been noted that 'Abdi Beg Shirazi does not mention a mosque in his description of the shrine complex in the <u>Sarīh al-milk</u>, but the reason was that smaller mosques already existed in the bazaar and served the community well. The shrine's patrons no doubt had to merely step outside the gates to find a mosque, although as a sanctified space, the whole shrine was considered a house of worship.

The most contested appointment at the shrine of Shaykh Safi, from early on in the imperial phase, was that of the mutawalli; prior to that the overseer and mutawalli of the shrine would be the Shaykh who inherited the mantle of spiritual and administrative authority. The dissertation shows that from the sixteenth century onward, a bitter conflict was waged between different branches of the Safavid family, who were either descendents of Shaykh Safi himself or of his father-in-law, Shaykh Zahid Gilani. The Zahidi and Safavi families each laid claim to being the rightful guardians of the shrine. Nonetheless, it was the prerogative of the Shah, who was himself the titular head of the order, to appoint the mutawalli. The person chosen thus represented the Shah, and hence,

---

the Ḥaram (tomb tower) of Shaykh Safi is called the Gunbad-i Allah Allah; the Dār al-ḥuffāz is called the Qandīlkhāna (Hall of lanterns); the Dār al-ḥadīth is called the Dār al-mutawalli (Hall of mutawalli).

his political bias; sometimes this would be a Qizilbash, but later in the dynasty, the role was filled by notables, for example, from Isfahan, who were distant Safavi relatives.

The mutawalli was in charge of the shrine's physical upkeep, as reported in the <u>Sarīh al-milk</u> and <u>Silsilāt al-nasab al-safavīyya</u>. Oftentimes, the builders at the shrine of Shaykh Safi reached backward in the renovation projects, in a sense antiquating them. Examples of this were the repairs to the tomb tower and Dār al-huffāz undertaken as part of the courtyard renovations ordered by Shah Tahmasb. The façades of both of the structures appear Timurid in style, a revivalist trend seen also in sixteenth-century poetry and painting. The dissertation thus locates architecture within the larger context of Safavid artistic production, and challenges the assumption that Safavid architecture was 'derivative' and hence inferior to its predecessors.

The Safavid constructions at the shrine of Shaykh Safi were inventive in the manner in which the Dār al-hadīth and Jannatsarā were constructed: they were situated in order to 'correct' the courtyard, such that the shrine complex would conform to a prototypical four-iwan plan, as in Mashhad, Qum, and Isfahan, that would characterize later Safavid architecture. Just as the religious practice was being shifted away from Sufism toward greater orthodoxy, the architectural center of the shrine was being realigned, away from the tomb of the Shaykh toward the new constructions of the Shah. The heterogeneity of the old buildings was rectified to cohere with the new architectural language. In this manner, the shrine forebode an important change in the imperial architecture: an aesthetic which emphasized symmetry and cohesion, and masked the uneven parts that were accrued over time. The impression given was of a unified,

synchronous building, such that the shrine's age, too, was masked and its history camouflaged.

The most significant and unambiguous architectural transformation at the shrine was undertaken by Shah 'Abbas I when he renovated the interiors of the Chīnīkhāna and Dār al-huffāz. Within the Chīnīkhāna was inserted a beautifully carved wooden shell, truly a mask, which covered the original building. It was gilded and embellished in a manner more suitable to a palace than the shrine of an ascetic dervish. Certainly, the shrine of Shaykh Safi was not unique in its patronage by royalty; however, the scale and manner in which the shrine represented the imperial dynasty, was. It was not only the site where royal edicts were announced, or holy warriors gathered, or charitable projects enacted; it was all those and more, separate parts of a complex imperial portrait. At the ancestral shrine the recondite sources of Safavid authority were displayed: the humility of a devotee, the charisma of a saint, and the power of a king. The architecture of the shrine was polyvalent and allowed the dissemination of a multitude of messages.

The architectural history and development of the shrine of Shaykh Safi did not end with Shah 'Abbas I. However, his grandson, Shah Safi's (r. 1629-1642) impact on the shrine was minimal, the only sign of his visit being a silver door plaque installed in the tomb of Shaykh Safi. In contrast, his son, Shah 'Abbas II, did patronize the ancestral shrine to a greater extent. During his reign the roof of Shah Isma'il's tomb was repaired and the grand 'Ali Qapu gateway built by the mutawalli, Nazar 'Ali Khan, on the Shah's ascension in 1642. However, it is difficult at present to judge what manner of involvement the Shah had himself with the shrine. Clearly his presence was a factor in the shrine's embellishments, for example, the 'Ali Qapu was built under the Shah's

auspices. Similarly, the doors at the entrance to Shah Isma'il's tomb were covered in silver in 1643 as a gift by a notable, Khan Qilij Mihrani, in the name of Shah 'Abbas II.[2]

What endures today, by and large, are the buildings commissioned by the Shahs. Nonetheless, during the Safavid period, the life of the shrine lay in its attraction to ordinary pilgrims and residents of Ardabil. The descriptions left us by the foreign travelers help in reconstructing an energetic and dynamic public arena, wherein different strata of society interacted. The dissertation alludes to the rituals which were enclosed within the architectural settings, revealing the continuity of old traditions and the invention of new ones. Thus, we see that the shrine's history was not erased but rather amended. The shrine, on this level, had much in common with other such sites of worship. It could be fruitfully compared to similar dervish establishments in Anatolia, or even India, drawing our attention to the important fact that there existed a common language which these shrines shared. The esoteric beliefs of the Sufis and the devotion of the pilgrims found expression in simple ways, whether in a small monastery in Baku or in a majestic edifice in Ardabil.

It is toward this broadened view that my research on the shrine of Shaykh Safi may further develop. The shrine must be placed in the larger context of shrines and shrine-worship in the early Safavid period. For example, how would it compare to Shi'i

---

[2] By the time Zahidi wrote his Silsilāt al-nasab al-safavīyya in 1648, the administration of the shrine appeared to be undergoing a period of uncertainty. According to Zahidi, his father, Abdal Beg had been the mutawalli under Shah 'Abbas I and had made many repairs to the shrine, and the son was petitioning for the family's right to continue serving in that capacity. There is another document that points to the uncertainty surrounding the shrine's administration: the 1629 Sarīh al-milk of Muhammad Tahir Isfahani, which was written by orders of the mutawalli, Shaykh Sharif Zahidi. Here, too, the reason for the text appears to be to legitimize the claims of the family. It may have been back-dated in order to show that Shah 'Abbas had sanctioned the appointment. See also Fariba Zarinebaf-Shahr who says that the order was given by shah Safi in order to "revive the revenues of the shrine;" in "Economic Activities of Safavid Women in the Shrine-City of Ardabil," *Iranian Studies* 31/2 (1998); p. 250.

sanctuaries, such as Qum and Mashhad in terms of ritual and architecture? Additionally,

what was its relation to other regional pilgrimage sites, such as the shrine of Shaykh

Shihab al-din Mahmud in Ahar or the tomb of Shaykh Safi's father, Amin al-din Gibra'il

in Kalkhoran? Shah 'Abbas I rebuilt both of these as part of his campaigns in Azerbaijan,

and one can see in the latter a close affinity to his renovations in Ardabil. To provide

another comparative framework of inquiry, the research may also analyze the architecture

and patronage of contemporaneous shrines in the Ottoman west and Mughal east, both

influential neighbors of Safavid Iran. These issues have been touched upon briefly in the

dissertation, but could be explored more fully in future research. Thus, development of

the dissertation would entail including Shi'i, as well as Sufi, shrines which were

simultaneous loci of imperial patronage. By expanding the scope of this study I intend to

generalize my initial theses regarding social and spatial hierarchies. The aim is to explore

changes in popular religious practice and the corresponding architectural transformation,

against the backdrop of state-sanctioned policies toward shrine worship.[3]

The place of Shaykh Safi's shrine was still significant in the social milieu of

seventeenth-century Iran, but not exclusive. The religious authority of the Safavids had

shifted away from the ancestral shrine in Ardabil, to Shi'i sanctuaries in Qum and

Mashhad. As the Qizilbash involvement in the political arena was minimized, the

increased power of the clergy and urban bourgeoisie resulted in a new elite for whom the

---

[3] Texts such as Husayn Va'iz Kashifi's Futūvat nāma-yi sultānī, (Teheran, 1971), which was recently brought to my attention by K. Babayan, would be helpful in understanding Safavid rituals. In addition, there are important commentaries on Qur'anic verses and ḥadīth that shed greater light on the meaning of the epigraphy at the shrine of Shaykh Safi. Similarly, Hafiz Husayn Karbala'i 's, Rawdat al-jinān wa jannat al-janān, 2 vols., (Tehran, 1349/1970) is a seventeenth-century manuscript that lists and gives the history of pilgrimage sites in the region of Azerbaijan.

shrine of Shaykh Safi was merely a symbol of the Safavid past - a situation made concrete in Shah 'Abbas' architectural projects at the shrine. His elaborate renovations of the Dār al-ḥuffāz and Chīnīkhāna interiors had the effect of freezing the shrine's glorious ancestry - the shrine itself becoming an antique, like the objects stored in the Chīnīkhāna.

These changes had already begun during the reign of Shah Tahmasb; Shah 'Abbas completed the displacement by focussing his attention on the shrine of Imam Reza in Mashhad. His barefoot pilgrimages to Mashhad (also replicated to a smaller degree in Ardabil) and other symbolic gestures at the shrine served to solidify this shift. Beside the renovations and large scale urban development undertaken by him there, the shrine in Mashhad also became closely associated with the royal persona. Just as Ardabil had been a popular burial site where Shah Tahmasb gifted the honor of burial to his most loyal commanders, Mashhad became Shah 'Abbas favorite, where his governors, Allahverdi Khan and Hatim Beg, were interred in magnificent chambers that they had built for themselves.[4]

The fortunes of the shrine of Fatima al-Ma'suma in Qum also rose in the seventeenth century, when it replaced Ardabil as the dynastic shrine of the Safavid rulers. Its prestige may have been owing to the altered harem politics witnessed in Shah 'Abbas court, in which the young princes were no longer sent away for training with Qizilbash lalas (guardians) but were brought up in the palace with the Queen mother. Fatima al-Ma'suma's shrine was a favored establishment for the Safavid women from early in the

---

[4] Moving away from Ardabil may have been Shah 'Abbas' way of gaining relative freedom from the power of the Qizilbash who still held sway over in Ardabil. To the ghulām cadre, of which Allahverdi Khan was a supreme example, perhaps the significance of Ardabil was not as great in comparison with the centuries old shrine in Mashhad.

dynasty, and perhaps it is to their influence that it owed its popularity. After Shah 'Abbas' death in 1629, four subsequent Safavid shahs were buried at the shrine of Fatima al-Ma'suma in Qum.

The sites chosen for the representation of Safavid power were diverse; the capital and palace of the shahs were as important for the display of imperial authority as were the shrines they patronized. The shrine of Shaykh Safi had been associated with the imperial household from early in the Safavid dynasty, and its architecture evolved in a way to encompass both the religious and secular authority of the shah.[5] There were profound differences in function and meaning of the palace and the shrine, nonetheless, the dissertation introduces the idea that these two institutions, in general during the Safavid period, shared a number of features, and hence, significance - for example, the shrine of Shaykh Safi had a Chīnīkhāna and naqqarākhāna, both royal symbols; similarly, the Isfahan palace of Shah 'Abbas had sharbatkhānas for the preparation of pious victuals, as well as a tauhīdkhāna, where Sufis would gather and recite the dhikr. The duality of the Sufi-Shah was thus witnessed also in the architectural projects of the early Safavids.

*

---

[5] A further study will study more closely 'Abdi Beg Shirazi's poetic description of Shah Tahmasb's Qazvin palace in the Dauhat al-azhār in relation to his Sarīh al-milk eulogies of the shrine of Shaykh Safi in order to isolate those poems that were recycled and see where there are other such overlaps.

The shrine of Shaykh Safi has been in hibernation for the past three hundred years, raided and neglected, but surviving for the most part. The tiles have fallen off and the roofs collapsed, but despite all their misfortunes, the buildings have maintained an aura of cohesion and significance. It is to the credit of the Safavid patrons who gave the main sanctuary its unity that the shrine is still standing, and currently undergoing extensive repairs. However, much is lost that cannot be replaced, nor forgotten, such as the beautiful graveyard and orchards of the Jannatsarā where the people of Ardabil gathered, or the Sharbatkhānas in which sweet-smelling libations would be prepared. There are no royal kettle drums beating the time for morning and evening meals, and no longer Sufis chanting loudly in the retreats.

Although the main courtyard is now emptied of the stores that lined it, it houses instead a new garden, with rose bushes and apple trees. Old men sit under their branches and watch the endless visitors, offering up advice and gossip to those who catch their aging eyes. The tourists arrive with cameras and families in tow, peering intently at the plaques on the walls which describe what they are seeing. Shah Tahmasb's farmān on the Dār al-ḥuffāz has a typed translation taped on it, for those not used to deciphering calligraphy. The Chīnīkhana is the shrine bookstore and museum, where Shaykh Safi's khirqa, or mantle, is proudly displayed, next to postcards of Ardabil. The 'Ali Qapu gateway now provides asylum for the architects and engineers involved with the buildings' restoration. So many overlapping images and so many disjunctive ones, all a result of the changed times. Did the Safavid historians also review the fate of Shaykh Safi's shrine with as much joyful irony?

Sarīh al-milk of the shrine of Shaykh Safi al-din Ishaq,
Zayn al-ʿAbidin [ʿAbidi], 977/ 1570

PART ONE - Translation and Synopsis
Description of Buildings
note: Parts in (parentheses) are quoted from A. H. Morton, "The Ardabil Shrine in the reign of Shah Tahmasp I," Iran, vol. 12, (1974):31-64 and vol. 13, (1975):39-58.

Azerbaijan
Ardabil
Town

City of Guidance (may God guard it from disasters and murrains to the day of the covenant...)

Verse A:
Oh excellent light of the eyes, core of the heart, Ardabil
Gabriel's wing is the sweeper of your magnificence.
To your pilgrims arrives the good news from the devoted ones,
That in our gardens, "[is] a spring therein, named Salsabil (Qur'an, 76:18)."

The Illuminated Zawiya
and the holy hazira, surrounded with the lights of sanctity, and [they are] "Gardens of Eden, whereof the gates are opened to them [38:50]" (which [are] adorned and magnified by the sun-splendid cupola and the turquoise dome [of the lord], the pole of the poles, and the glorious children of his holiness, consisting of the revered and holy sanctum (haram), the Chillakhānas, firmament founded, and the sky-scraping offices (buyūtāt) and the buildings ('imarat)...)

Verse B:
Oh you who has cast a shadow upon this sublime sphere
Your sphere is as exalted as the sky over the earth,
It is said, from your cupola [descend] golden Heavenly candles
Oh exalted one, from your shadow, the sublime sphere is shaded.
To the supplicants of Paradise arrives to their ears [the news]
"Here are the perpetual gardens, where enter the immortals [Qur'an, 13:23- on Dār al-huffāz]."

Containing

The Revered Sanctum (haram)

and the Dār al-ḥuffāz and dependencies where the residents hear from the lips of Gabriel
this oration: Poem

Verse C:

Oh your revered sanctum, like Paradise
The multitudes are your servants, oh Creator of benediction.
Your magnificent cupola, like an exalted head
Views all areas and domains.
In all the universe he has never found any like himself,
Rarely does he bow from the heavens,
[Its own dignity does not lessen from commotion.]
Surely, from the parapet of the throne,
They supplicate with the praises of God.
His rays weave doubt in the heart of dark nights,
His sunburst makes clear the banner of the sun.
He is as exalted as the pinnacles of Heaven,
The pinnacles of Heaven are too short to lasso disasters [from the earth].

Dome

of the Princes attached to the aforementioned Dār al-ḥuffāz on the eastern side, leaning
south [i.e. SE of the Dār al-ḥuffāz].

Verse D:

In the Universe that dome has no equal
[Such] that each brick is connected to the soul.
Its airy [blue] is a gust from the wings of an angel,
Its clay [mortar] is mixed with the sweetness of life.
In its arches befalls light from the throne [light of paradise],
Within it spreads a carpet by the light of sanctity.
It passed from the sky in the entire universe,
The sky extinguished from [it], the difficult journey.

The Lofty Portal (iwān)

in the direction of qibla [SE], leaning west, known as the Dār al-hadīth that is adorned
with the great titles of the exalted noble, the imperial lord, dweller of paradise, Sultan
Shah Isma'il Bahadur Khan.

Verse E:

The marvelous portal of the seventh Heaven is a sentinel
What a portal, that which is the vault of the sky!
It is appropriate that the world lift its head,
From [To?] this prosperous, honorable portal.

247

This agreeable portal was unique in the Universe
It was honored as the mihrab of the horizons.
One can call it the qibla of the ages,
That from prostration to it, may benefit the fortunate ones.

On two sides, east and west, of this portal are covered graves of the lords, children of the Shaykhs [God have mercy on them] and behind the portal is a street that runs between this building ['imarat] and the residences of [...] Sayyid Shaykhshah b. Khwaja Hasan Beg Safavi.

The Court

between the buildings [such that] the aforementioned portal is in the qibla direction, and the revered Sanctum and the Dār al-ḥuffāz and dependencies are located on the eastern side. The Lofty Jannatsarā is in the northern direction and the Great Gateway (dargāh ma'lī) and the old and new Chillakhānas are on the western side. The subject of these verses [...] is such: Poem

Verse F:
Oh the expanse of you is akin [core of the heart/court] to sublime Paradise!
In your arches is the place of angels.
The sublime Paradise is a reflection of you,
You give testimony to the sublime Paradise.
The sky is protected in the portal,
Garrisoned in that impregnable fort.
Lit by the populace like the pupil of the eye
That house was ennobled by its inhabitants.
By you are [made] peaceful man and country,
By you are [made] agreeable the sky and the earth.
Everywhere your countenance, the majesty of the Heavens,
Everywhere your garden [rauza-precinct], the ornament of Paradise.

Among them, the elevated precinct as sublime as Paradise, the graves of the great majesty [...] the mother of the successful lord (navāb-i kamiyāb, i.e. Tahmasb) Shah [...] is on the eastern side of this court, attached to the ḥaram, situated at the place reserved for the hand (panja) of Hazrat 'Ali..

Dome

of the sanctified (maqsura') Jannatsarā is opposite the portal of the lofty Dār al-ḥadīth, on whose arch (pishtāq) are written the titles of the Shah [Tahmasb]... Poem:

Verse G:
Written [sealed] by Divine assistance,
[Presented] on the crown of the royal portal (iwān-i shāhī)

That "Sultan ibn Sultan ibn Sultan
The turquoise throne, the benevolent capital
        The center of peace and religion, Shah Tahmasb,
The site of justice and benevolence, Shah Tahmasb."
        Oh God, until the door of this prosperous portal
Is adorned by Jupiter and Saturn,
        May he be fortunate, the Shah of the world
May his existence be safe from calamities.

And on the north side of this sky-like dome is a large and spacious enclosure known as the Shahīdgāh. Most of the space between the two is taken by the wall of this building and what are currently the custodians' houses (farrāshkhāna) of the great shrine. And this enclosure is on the east side - one side near the south and one near the north- and the wall of that is near the turquoise dome and extends till the house of Sayyid 'Ali Beg b. Khwaja Shaykhjan Safavi. From there again is a wall till the house of the heirs of Sayyidi Beg b.... Safavi, that is behind the wall. The wall extends till the masjid that is there and on the west of this, attached by the old baths and the flourishing kitchen, some houses and enclosures that were bought in the days of the rule of the Shah [Tahmasb], were leveled. This building [Jannatsarā] was built on that building, which will be mentioned in detail.

Retreats (chillakhāna)
Old and New
Old

The site of the seat (jalūs) of the lord [...] Shaykh Safi al-din is marked there. It is adjoined to the aforementioned court (sahat), and on one side to the chambers (hujra) which are between it and the gateway (dargāh) and part of it is attached to the passage (rāhrū) on the northern side of the Jannatsarā and the kitchen and the Shahīdgāh.

New

That the lord [...] Shaykh Sadr al-din Musa built. During the reign of Shah Tahmasb, its lofty dome was tiled such that it was second only to the cupola of the sky. The site of this ascension/seat is marked. And that dome is surrounded by forty chambers above and below. On one side is attached the holy courtyard, aforementioned, and on one side it is attached to the forecourt ('arsa) of the Shrine, which is the place of passage and religious processions of the people. It is attached on one side to the street which separates it from the houses of [...] Sayyid Shaykhshah b. Khwaja Hasan Beg Safavi and on one side to the passage opposite the Old Retreat and its dependencies (mulhaqāt).

The Chambers

in which the collectors of nazr (offerings} are resident. It is adjoined to the Old Retreat and its dependencies, opposite the New Retreat, to which the above chambers belong. There are more than forty chambers.

The Lofty Dais (suffa)

of the graves of the amirs and close companions and the covered graves of the children of the shaykhs. The passage leads to it. And here there is a gateway (dargāh) where the porters are sitting and [people] go to it. Opposite this gateway is a gateway that opens onto the forecourt of the shrine.

The wide and spacious Forecourt

consisting of the aforementioned gateway [extending] till the main gateway (dargāh-i asal). It is surrounded by offices (buyūtāt). It has a stream like Kawsar [springing] from the qibla side [SE], and the water of that is divided between the Baths and Offices.

Verse H:
> Its water gives [brings] news of Salsabil [Paradise]
> Its waves are [caused] by wind from the wings of Gabriel.
> From its clarity the sand at the depths of the water is made apparent,
> As from the heart are pure thoughts of fidelity.
> From the depths of the heart [it] gives evidence of its purity,
> The profound secret of the sky has given a token of purity.
> Pure as purity itself
> It is like hearts that manifest the truth.
> At night, in its depths the water so clear,
> That a blind man could count the golden scales of the fish.

Since the baths are described under baths and shops under shops, it is not necessary to repeat it here.

Soup Kitchen (āshkhāna)

that [consists of] a flourishing kitchen with (cauldron-houses-digkhāna) for rice and wheat and other related chambers. The pantry (ayāqkhāna) is on the north of this. The miraculous verse tells of it: "And feed with food for love of Him (76:8)."

Bake-House (khabbāzkhāna)

is on the north side of the kitchen, leaning west (i.e. NW).

Sharbatkhāna

near the delightful ppring the opening of which is enclosed. Consisting of a pool (hauz) and a building (mahal) for cooking sweets (halva) and a portal facing west. After that (are) the Sharbatkhāna and its dependent chambers.

Office (daftarkhāna)

consisting of a threshold (dihlīz) and house and an enclosure that are on the west of the those upper chambers and lower chambers. Between the Sharbatkhāna and storehouse (havījkhāna).

Storehouse (havījkhāna)

and store with upper and lower chambers, part of which were old and some houses which were bought during the reign of the successful lord [Tahmasb], and added [to it]. The details of them will be written.

Bandstand (naqqarakhāna)

under which is the cistern (saqqakhāna). Behind this is the furnace of the bath and some houses belonging to the holy shrine which end at/with the wood-store (haimakhāna) and (the way goes to it).

Wood-store (haimakhāna)

and the land around it.

Chamber (hujra)

on the left side of the Main Gateway opposite the Shrine, with an entrance (dākhil) and a threshold (dihlīz).

Chamber (hujra)

on right side of the main gateway also opposite the shrine on the side of the storehouse where the graves of the children of shaykhs are.

The Gateway

The main gateway between the two chambers aforementioned. The place where people place and rub their foreheads.

Verse I:
> There is to its portal the shape of a mihrab,
> People turn their faces to it from each direction.
> Each one who saw this building of eternal disposition,
> Dismissed the story of the Gardens of Eden.

Earlier there was an old mill in this neighborhood by the edge of the river. It was destroyed and now no one knows where it used to be.

The Life-enhancing Space

outside the door of the shrine, opposite which is a lane and shops. It extends to the river and consists of some chambers by the river, and a bridge, and a small garden of the

madrasa. During the administration (<u>tauliyat</u>) of [...] Zahir[an] Ibrahim[an], in the width of this a dais was paved and a square pool built in it.

Verse J:
       Oh excellent dais of beauty and purity!
Gifts of Paradise that are the gift of the sky.
       In the Universe there is not such a dais,
Instead, in the Universe, it is unique [not another].
       Each one of God's angels are asking
Read to Him the verse "al-Kursi [Qur'an, 2:255]."

Madrasa
Enclosure
beside the madrasa around which is a wall plastered and made of bricks.

Bath
known as the bath of the shaykhs that the pole of the poles Shaykh Safi al-din endowed, according to the documents written by Qazi Fazlallah 'Ubaidi who wrote it during the days of Sultan Shaykh Sadr a-din Musa dated 761 [1360]. Currently, the aforementioned bath is bounded on one side by the forecourt of the shrine, one side the street of the flourishing kitchen and the bakehouse, and on another side by the pantry and bandstand.

Watermill (<u>tahuna</u>)
near the holy shrine that was endowed by Shaykh Safi.

One complete Chamber (<u>hujr biltammām</u>)
Now there is no trace of it; destroyed and there is no information.

Detailed List
Of the houses and enclosures bought during the reign of the lord [...i.e. Tahmasb] may God make eternal his kingdom and reign. The Jannatsarā and other buildings and enclosures were made in and on them. (Since the particular deeds of each one of them exist, while now there is no trace or relic of them to be seen, they will be mentioned briefly.

Houses
[Of] Khwaja Khan Vahid that were bought for the dome (<u>gunbad</u>) of the Jannatsarā and its dependencies according to a deed dated 943 (1536). All the inns (<u>sarāi</u>) existing in the town of Ardabil in the Lane of the Shaykhs behind the 'Imārat Shihābīyya, bounded by the public street (<u>shāhra'-i 'am</u>) and by the aforementioned building and the forecourt of the kitchen of the holy shrine and by the houses of the heirs of Khwaja 'Abd al-Aval Safavi... and also... all the houses adjoining the aforementioned houses, bounded by the aforementioned houses and the house of the heirs of Shah Husayn Safavi and by the

public street and the' Imārat Shihābīyya.. and also... all the Inns bounded by the properties of the aforementioned vendors and above mentioned building on the other sides.

Houses

of the same group bought for the gardens and surroundings of the Jannatsarā, by Jaqmal 'Aliya Tabrizi b. Khwaja 'Alla al-din Mansur as agent of Amir Ashraf Mutawalli. These are bounded by the public street [on two sides] and by the house of Khwaja Beg Kavi and the Inn of the heirs of Hafiz Sa'di and Shahsavar Sarabi according to the deed dated 949 [1539].

House

of Sayyid Qasim b. Sayyid Mahmud Garmudi Khatib and Pir Vali b. Shahuli b. Kiya Muhammed Qazvini and his wife, Ma'sum Pasha bint Sayyid Nizam al-din Garmudi, adjoined to and bounded on two sides by the Public Street also which Amir Ashraf Mutawalli bought for the gardens of the Jannatsara on 27 Jumma al-Sani, 946 [1539].

House

of the heirs of Shaykh Tahir who was the steward (suffrāchā) of the shrine that the aforementioned mutawalli... bought. Also for the dependencies of the Jannatsarā, dated 1 Jumma I, 947 [1540], located beside the flourishing kitchen.

House

of Qazi Sanaullah bought by the aforementioned mutawalli on 14 Rabi I 948 [1541], bounded by the house of Haji Rajab and the enclosure, the kitchen of the shrine, the house of Shaykh Tahir, and the public street.

Enclosure

and houses of the heirs of the late [Sayyid] Zayn al-'Abidin Beg Safavi, by the agent, Mir Ashraf.

Deed: Dated 946 [1540] that the [Sayyid] late Darvish Beg sold to tasuj of the house, garden, and enclosure bounded by the store (anbārkhāna) of the shrine and by the public street on three sides.

Deed: Dated 947 (1541) that the Sayyid 'Abd al-Qasim known as Sayyid Mirza sold the whole of the large enclosure near the aforementioned store, the whole of three houses with three chambers above, a kitchen, two passages/thresholds (dehlīz) and a garden attached and bounded by the Store.

Qalibgah

of the butcher store that the mutawalli of the shrine bought in 949 [1542] from the heirs of Shah Shuja' and included in the enclosure of the holy shrine.

Note: After these poetic descriptions of the shrine and its dependencies (which will be studied in Chapter III), the writer turns to Ardabil and the properties owned by the Estate in that town. These are divided into five sections: i. Stores (<u>dukākīn</u>), ii. Houses (<u>khāneha</u>) and Caravansaries (<u>timche</u>) and Hospices (<u>ribāt</u>), iii. Baths (<u>hammāmāt</u>), iv. Watermills (<u>tahūnehā</u>), v. Miscellaneous (<u>kāghazhāt</u>-papers). After describing the properties in Ardabil, the compiler turns to villages in the vicinity of that town, that included Kalkhoran, Alghar, Binan, and Masudabad among many others. This makes up about half of the <u>Sarīh al-milk</u>; the remaining half is ` concerned with property owned by the Shrine in Tabriz, Toman Mishgin, Chakursa'd, Khalkhal, Sarab, Karamrud, Maragha, Mughan, and Hashtrud in Azerbaijan, as well as properties as far as Gilan, Shirvan, and Iraq-i 'Ajam.

EPIGRAPHY
Note all Qur'anic translations are from <u>The Glorious Qur'an</u>, Marmaduke Pickthall.

Haramkhāna
Interior:
Silver door, donated by Khwaja Chubani, during the tauliyat of Shaykh Abdal.

Stucco panel: "The world is transitory, thus its reward is piety." Surrounding this is a ḥadīth which begins, "As if you were a passerby count yourself the resident of the tombs and if your soul becomes..." There are six medallions, three of which have been defaced. The other three read "'Ali, Hasan, Husayn."
Dome (from Morton): "In the name of God, the Merciful and Compassionate. [al-Rahman, 57:26-27] Everyone upon it dies but the face of they Lord remains, possessed of grandeur and magnificence... The owner of this noble, pure and holy abode is the ascetic and godly scion of the Shaykhs, The achievers of truth, the lamented and blessed Muhiyy al-Milla wa'l-Din, may God sanctify his precious spirit."

Tomb Tower of Shaykh Safi
There is a circular seal on the trunk of the tower, identifying the builder as: "[margin of circle] Built ('amal) by the servant, the faqir, the hopeful toward forgiveness of the Eternal Lord ('afu al-samad), 'Awz bin [inside circle] Muhammad al-Maraghi."

Band on top cornice of drum: "[al-Imran, 3:18-19] In the name of God the Merciful and Compassionate. Allah is Witness that there is no God save Him. And the angels and the men of learning (too are witness). Maintaining His creation in justice, there is no God save Him, the Almighty, the Wise. Religion with Allah (is) the surrender (to His will and guidance). Those who (formerly) received the Scripture differed only after knowledge came unto them, through transgression among themselves. Whoso believeth the revelations of Allah (will find that) lo! Allah is swift at reckoning. [al-Momin, 40:65] He is the Living One. There is no God save Him. So pray unto Him, making religion pure for Him (only). [al-Ana'm, 4:102-103] Such is Allah your Lord. There is no God save Him, the creator of all things, so worship him. And he taketh care of all things. Vision comprehendth him not, but he comprehenedth (all) vision. He is the Subtle, the Aware."
Qibla Portal - above door in a rectangular tablet: [Muhammad, 47:19 frag.] "So know (Oh Muhammad) that there is no God save Allah and ask forgiveness for thy sin.."
Qibla Portal - Framing: "Spoke the Lord: [al-Ana'm, 4:79, 162] Lo! I have turned my face toward Him Who created the heavens and the earth, as one by nature upright, and I am not of the idolaters. Say: Lo! my worship and my sacrifice and my living and my dying are for Allah, Lord of the Worlds. [al- Isra', 17:80] And say: My Lord! Cause me to come in with a firm incoming and to go out with a firm outgoing. And give me from Thy presence a sustaining Power."
In blue Kufic: [al-Nisa', 4:95] "Those of the believers who sit still, other than those who have a hurt, are not on an equality with those who strive in the way of Allah with their wealth and lives. Allah hath conferred on those who strive with their wealth and lives a

rank above the sedentary. Unto each Allah hath promised good, but He hath bestowed on those who strive a great reward above the sedentary."
Above door opening:

Interior:
Drum: [48:1-end]. Surat al-Fathah.
Panel on doors: mirrored 'Ya Allah.'
Casket of Shaykh Safi: "This is the illumined grave and blessed tomb of the holy shaykh and the wise lord, the revealer of the secret, the khalifa...the pole of the knowledgeable ones, the sultan of the truthful ones, the imam of the holy friends of God, 'Abi Fath' Safi 'al-haq va mulla al-din' Ishaq may God remunerate the signs of blessing on the wise ...
On northern side of the casket is a silver plate on which is written: "The builder of this lofty grave and holy sanctuary of the friend of God, the holy Safi 'al-haq va al-din' ...the servant Musa al-Safavi."
Silver doors donated by Shah Safi I: "During the reign of the king, Safi, his country, gains piety through this splendor, the key of intention."

Dār al-huffāz (Hall of the Readers)
Entrance portal inscriptions:
[destroyed and replaced] Uppermost rectangle: "The Prophet said: I am the city of knowledge and 'Ali is its gate."

Margin [beginning destroyed]: (from right corner) "In the name of God, the Merciful and Compassionate. This shrine (al-buqa') noble, most holy, lofty threshold of sanctity and the garden of Paradise, was founded by piety [for] the satisfaction of God . It was set up as a meeting place (majlis) for his exaltation the saint and planted as a tree of goodness whose roots are firm and its branches [reach] in the sky. It is for the recitation of the Qur'an and is adorned/ surrounded by God's angels. It is the resting place of the exemplar of the saints and the path of the purest of the pure, the Sultan of the nobles of the hearts and commander of the humans and demons, and the proof of the poles, [because] he is between the two Easts and the two Wests. The polisher of the hearts from doubtful deviation, [he is] the perfector of the bosoms from brilliant signs, which girdle the Ka'ba of Reunion."
(horizontal) "Mens' existence is by worship and the brightness of proximity and union [is] by the congregation/ efflugencies. May he not cease mastery in the exalted degrees of perfection and witness by eyes in the glorious and beautiful appearances/faces. For the (reclining? for the end, he endeavors (....) and the simplicity of guidance and honor."
(left side) "By the word of God and all people aiming toward Him for perfection. He realized who he is in the shadow of God and donated [a gift] to Him. The beautiful witness of the testimony, acceptance of his Lord without idleness, for God's satisfaction. [What] he invested the shrine with clothes of affection/devotion and [what] delivered Musa from the 'stated time'(?) ... the successor, the crown prince and the khalifa after him, the essence of saints of God, the righteous commander of justice (sadr al-haq) and the people and the religion, Musa, may he not cease to be a center over the heights of sainthood and a sun over the sky of guidance. As Mahmud stood in his (Musa's) place, [or, according to Morton, "as he stood in his (Safi's) praiseworthy place"] he founded it

[the shrine] for the various groups in Islam, for those who perform pilgrimage [to it] and for those who dwell [in it] and those who kneel and prostrate themselves. [destroyed] Oh Lord, grant this country and provide its people with largess and bounty. Those [of them] who believe in Allah and in [Judgement day]."

Middle horizontal band: (in small white letters) "[He is] the polisher of the mirrors of the hearts from doubtful deviation and sins. [He is] the perfector of the bosoms by signs, (large brown letters) The sultan of the shaykhs [is] his distinction and the proof of the poles [is] his glory, the shaykh, Safi."

Lowest horizontal band [authentic, repaired in 1935]: (small white letters) "God made it by clear signs such an abode. Ibrahim by entering it was safe, such as [just as] he made it like the enduring Ka'ba for mankinds and protection. Its splendor [is] from the greatness of its Lord and Builder.
(large brown letters, from Morton) The builder of the blessed precinct is the best of the pure in the two worlds, the Sadr al- Haq [the commander of justice] and people and religion. May God let the Muslims enjoy the favors of his blessings and the benefits of his retreats (khalwat) and make his endeavors a proof for him."

Above the entrance door, on a rectangle, in white kashi: [al-R'ad, 13:23-24] "Gardens of Eden which they enter, along with all who do right of their fathers and their help meets and their seed. (In small brown thuluth) The Angels enter unto them from every gate (bab), (saying): Peace be unto you because you persevered. Ah, passing sweet will be the sequel of the (Heavenly) home (dar)."

Above the entrance door, arch framing [mostly destroyed, but for a fragment –what Dibaj says was original]: "This gate of the all encompassing, the kindness of God, may it descend on the tomb of the illumined shaykh (the best of men), the exemplar of the sublime poles (leaders) the shaykh Safi al-din, sultan of the one who enjoins, the revealer, the...the external words, the famous one in the world, the shaykh, al-Ishaq, may God's blessing be on him. Whoever enters here is safe."

Cornice [some at the end destroyed]: (in white letters) "[al-Baqara, 2:128 frag.] Our Lord! ....relent toward us. Lo! Thou, only thou, art the Relenting, the Merciful...(prayer for the completion of the Qur'an) Oh Lord! Revive us by the Qur'an and perish us by the Qur'an, and resurrect us by the Qur'an and permit us [on] the path by the Qur'an and [allow] our entrance into Paradise by the Qur'an and [let there be] no separation between us and between the Qur'an. Oh Lord! Bless our recitations from your book toward the spirits of our fathers and our mothers and toward the spirits of the inhabitants of the graves, [by the] intervention of the Prophet of God."

(In gold above) "In the name of God the Merciful and Compassionate, [al-Mulk, 67:17-22] Or have ye taken security from Him Who is in the heaven that he will not let loose on you a hurricane? But ye shall know the manner of My warning. And verily those before them denied, then (see) the manner of my wrath (with them)! Have they not seen the birds above them spreading out their wings and closing them? Naught upholdeth

them save the beneficent. Lo! He is Seer of all things. Or who is he that will provide for you if He should withhold His providence? Nay, but they are set in pride and forwardness. Is he who goeth groping on his face more rightly guided, or he who walketh upright on a straight road?"

Window Grills, numbered right to left (the top ones have a brown kufic script, qāl...):
Top:
1a. [al-Rum, 30:15 frag.] "The Lord said: They will be made happy in a Garden."

2a. "The Lord said: The have the land of peace (dār al-salam) by their Lord."

3a. "Said...: May Allah be satisfied by them."

4a. [al-Tauba, 9:21 frag.] "The Lord said: Gardens where enduring pleasure will be theirs."

5a. "Said the Prophet: Such is the work of the knowledgeable."

Lower:
1b. [al-Ahqaf, 46:31] "O our people, respond to Allah's summoner..."

2b. "Respond to this call (al-da'wa)."

3b. "He loves those who work toward [in the way of] Allah."

4b. "Prayer (al-du'a') is worship."

5b. "The Prophet said: The best worship is most beautiful."

Shāhnishīn windows - the epigraphy is complex and appears to be of an earlier date:
1.   "The weak servant of Allah ... servant of.."

2.   " (frham likatibahi) ..he wrote his prayer for Allah's forgiveness of his father."

On doors at entrance to the Dār al-ḥuffāz (check exact location) are another pair of floriated silver door. In one flower is written 'amal Amir Asad Allah Ardabili' and on a vertical shaft, 'amal Muhammad Hasan Zargafi, 1027 AH.'

Farman of Shah Tahmasb
This order is inscribed on a marble slab measuring 1.31m X 1.15 m and mounted on the façade of the Dār al-ḥuffāz. The slab is located between the third and fourth windows [from right] on the first story. Above the slab, is an epigraphy frieze, "The Prophet said: The family of the Prophet is like the ark of Noah; to ride it is to gain deliverance." The epigraphy is in white tile mosaic, over a blue ground.

" [After praises of God and thanks] As the asylum of Divine grace, the king, the lawful friend of God, blessings of good assistance, his majesty, the defender of God's purity [defender of the Pure], the light of the new Moon and the sunlight of guidance, the Sign of Union [sanctity], the highest of the high, the lord, sultan of the sultans, by inheritance and right, the shadow of God in the Universe, Sultan b. Sultan Abu al-Muzzafar Sultan Shah Tahmasb al-Safavi al-Husayni Bahadur Khan, may God make everlasting his kingdom and his rule [sultanat] and extend his Generosity and Beneficence forever. He is clear and bright and the [dignified? - khatayir] Divine grace, the sign of great sublimity, the purest of the pure, the overseer of holy shrines and the lofty edifices [like

the Sidra Tree]. Such that in those illuminated sanctuaries acts of heresy are forbidden. It was ordered that all the officers, pilgrims and residents be exempt from unlawful impositions. The edifying order, Divine decree, the noble requisite that in the Abode of Guidance, Ardabil, and its territories, also, the beneficent rule [be] observed ... [those involved in supplying to the bazaar] leather/ saddle making, kindling for the bazaar, sheep for the bazaar, rice for the bazaar are exempted from the tax tribute, tax on trades/ professions and the manner of requisite accounting [market values] from the residents and foreigners [visitors]; according the sincere verse, "who enters here is safe" [3:97] caused to be witnessed by the world and accepted by the people. By propagation of the pure [Islamic] law and [the final completion of the order] by knowing and disavowing prohibition, has attained honor. Requiring that in the aforementioned Abode of Guidance and territories, by rule, [and] that in the [authorized armies] and royal provinces, taverns, drug houses, electuary-houses, beer houses, houses of pleasure, gaming houses, and singing and pigeon betting is forbidden. The controllers of wealth and taxes should remove them from the registers of the office of taxes. Henceforth the dismissals [are] not revealed. No one with orders from the shari'a authority [amur-affairs?], for example shaving the beard, playing the tambour, backgammon and the heresy of mourning ... have... and the young boys [are forbidden from] servicing of commanders in the baths and will not be occupied in perpetuating unlawful activity [and], and not even think in that direction "And whoso changeth (the will) after he hath heard it - the sin thereof is upon those who change it" [2:181] and those opposing man and religion in the place of God and the royal court will be banished [and their names registered in the tablet of God] in the manner of those [upon whom] is the curse of God and His angels and all mankind. From the clemency with regard to the inhabitants here by the good offices and the overflowing [generosity] and the advantages of the royal caliph ... the lord defender of the law and the religion, the one lord [on who] is revealed. On the date Dhil-haj, ? AH. Written by Hasan.

Interior:
At entrance is a pair of doors with beaten silver covering.
(From J. A. Allan)
"In the reign of Shah 'Abbas, the upholder of justice and religion,
　　　Whose like under this revolving firmament, has never appeared, now or ever
before
And at the guardianship of Zulfiqar Khan,
　　　The chosen slave of this holy threshold of the heavenly throne,
In pure silver in this holy threshold, he created a door
　　　Whose like is beyond the mind's eye
[When] the steed of my fancy became emboldened,
　　　I searched the world for its chronogram
When the auspicious wheel of fortune beheld this pleasing talent,
　　　From the invisible world this oracle came to him: "The silver doorway of the
Khan," in 1011."

They are gifted by Zulfiqar Khan Qaramanlu the governor of Ardabil, during the reign of Shah 'Abbas I, the date inscribed (and in the poetic chronogram) is 1011 AH. On the

right side of foyer are two wooden doors, on one leaf of which is written, 'amal Amir Khan' and on other leaf, the date 1020 AH. (they were fixed in 1307 at the time of Nasir al-Din Qajar.)

Top Band: Surat al-Fath, in large epigraphy. Above Shāhnishīn (at southern corner) is the name of the writer (katiba) Muhammad Isfahani Afshar and the date **138** (the custodians have dated it 1308, during the period of Nasir al-din Shah Qajar).

Intermediary Panels, starting clockwise from southern corner:
1st panel: (48: 14) "And Allah's is the Sovereignty of the heavens and the earth. He Forgiveth whom he will, and Punisheth whom He will. And Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."
2nd panel: (48: 15) "Those who were left behind will say, when ye set forth to capture booty: let us go with you. They fain would change the verdict of Allah..."
3rd panel: "Say (unto them, O Muhammad): Ye shall not go with us. Thus hath Allah said beforehand. Then they will say: Ye are envious of us. [left out: Nay, but they understand not, save a little]."
4th panel(48:25): "These it was who disbelieved and debarred you from the sacred mosque (al-masjid al-haram), and debarred the offering from reaching its goal. And if it had not been for believing men..."
5th panel: "and believing women, whom ye know not – lest ye should tread them underfoot and thus incur guilt for them unknowingly; that Allah might bring into His mercy whom He will..."
6th panel: "If (the believers and the disbeliever's) had been clearly separated We verily had punished those of them who disbelieved with painful punishment."

Lower Band:
On the eastern wall starting with the first niche (moving anti-clockwise) are the names of Shaykh Safi and his spiritual tree: Starting with Hazrat 'Ali b. Abi Talib, the 'shajara va isnad' of Shaykh Safi al-din, Shaykh Ibrahim [Zahid Gilani], Sayyid (**date: 137**) Jamal al-din, Shihab al-din Mahmud Tabrizi [Ahari], Abu al-Ghanaim Rukn al-din al-Sajasi, Abu Al-Najib al-Suharwardi, Abubakr al-Abarhi, Qazi 'Umar Bakri, 'Uman al-Ma'ni, Muhammad al-Bakri, Ahmad Aswad Dinwari, Shaykh Junayd b. Muhammad al-Baghdadi, Ma'ruf al-Karkhi, Habib Allah al-Ajami, Shaykh Haydar bin Junayd, ending with the name of Gibrail and that of Hazrat 'Ali b. Abi Talib which occurs above the entrance to the Dār al-huffāz.

Western Wall: Continuing from the name of 'Ali b. Abi Talib are hadīth (1st), hadīth and prayers to the Imams including al-Zahra (2nd), Ending prayers to the Imams (3rd). One of the hadīth: "The universe is made of four things; first, the knowledge of the 'ulema, second, the justice of...[the rulers?], third, the generosity of the wealthy, fourth, ...

Shāhnishīn:
Starting from northwest: (48:26-29) "Allah Hath fulfilled the vision for His messenger in very truth. Ye shall indeed enter the inviolable place of worship (al-masjid al-haram), if

Allah will, secure (having your hair) shaven and cut, not fearing. But He knoweth that which ye know not, and hath given you a near victory before hand...(till the end of al-Fathah) Allah has promised, unto such of them as believe and do good works (al-sālihāt), forgiveness and immense reward." (3:26-27): "Say: O Allah! Owner of Sovereignty (mālik al-mulk)! Thou givest sovereignty unto whom Thou wilt. Thou exaltest whom Thou wilt, and Thou abasest whom Thou wilt. In Thy hand is the good. Lo! Thou art Able to do all things. Thou causest the night to pass into day and the day to pass into the night. And Thou bringest forth the living from the dead and Thou bringest forth the dead from the living. And Thou givest sustenance to whom Thou choosest, without stint."

Lower band near grill at southern corner has the signature: 'katiba Mir Asadullah bin Aga Mir Qavam al-din Rawzakhwan.' According to Dibaj (p. 40) there was another signature, 'amal Ustad Ibrahim...tarrash Tabrizi, 1307.'
Next to tomb of Shah Isma'il are a pair of silver doors with poetry inscribed on them (from Allan):
"When the reign of the sovereign of the world, 'Abbas,
May the fame of his role last forever,
        For this holy threshold, this heavenly emblem,
        A permanent abode of the angels
Khan b. Khan Qilij Mihrani
Made a votive offering of a door of pure silver
        For (fixing) its date, a voice from heaven declared:
        May the gates of good fortune remain open forever."
(According to Baba Safari, Mihrani's grave is at the shrine; p. 233. The chronogram dates it at 1073, by my calculations, 1068 by Allan's and 1053 by Torabi!).

Dār al-ḥadīth
In each of the two pendentives of the main iwan, and secondary iwans, is a mirrored "ya Allah/ya Safi" which is a replica of original epigraphy as seen in Sarre's photographs.

Central Iwan [new repair, see Sarīh al-milk where it says that the portal was adorned originally with the titles of Shah Isma'il]: [al-Jinn, 72:18-21] "And the places of worship (al-masājid) are only for Allah, so pray not to anyone along with Allah. And when the slave of Allah (prophet) stood up in prayer to him, They crowded on him almost stifling. Say (unto them, O Muhammad): I pray unto Allah only, and ascribe him no partner. Say: Lo! I control not hurt nor benefit for you."
"The best work is Pure."
Triangle of large iwan: "The Prophet said: The last provisions [for Heaven] is piety."

Right hand small iwan [repaired, most probably new]: "The Prophet (peace be upon him and his family-pbuhhf) said: He approaches Him best, [and] has comprehension [of] Him in Religion. The Prophet (pbuhhf) said: The search for knowledge is the duty of all Muslims."
Left hand small iwan [repaired, most probably new]: "The Prophet (peace be upon him and his family-pbuhhf) said: In the search for knowledge....

Above the small door in left hand small iwan [original]: "[small brown letters] The Prophet said: The best prayers and the perfect supplication; [large white letters], With knowledge revive the hearts of the wise ones and in it, cleanse the bosoms of the worshippers."

Tomb of Shah Isma'il I
Exterior drum inscriptions:
Titles of the Fourteen Innocent Ones, mostly destroyed. The fragments visible are: "Ja'far al-Sadiq, Musa al-Kazim (visible to the courtyard from between the Tomb Tower and the Dār al-ḥuffāz)…"

Interior: "…the victor of the miracles, the purest of the strangers, the parting of the allusions and the bright flame [over] the Easts; the devotee of God, the conqueror, 'Ali b. Abi Talib, peace be upon him…(ḥadīth needs to be found)." According to Dibaj, there is the signature of Ustad Maqsud 'Ali on the casket.

Jannatsarā
Portal inscriptions:
Right hand iwan [new, original destroyed]: [al-Ahzab, 33:70-71 frag.] "O ye who believe! Guard your duty to Allah, and speak words straight to the point; He will adjust your works for you and will forgive you your sins."

Main iwan [repaired, may be original text copied from Sarre's photographs]: [al-Ahzab, 33:41-43] "O ye who believe! Remember Allah with much remembrance. And glorify him early and late. He it is who blesseth you and His angels (bless you), that he may bring you from darkness into light; and He is ever merciful to the believers."

Left hand iwan [new, original destroyed]: [al-Dhariyat, 51:15-16] "Lo those who keep from evil will dwell among gardens and wellsprings' Taking that which their Lord giveth them; for lo! aforetime they were doers of good."

Shrine Courtyard
Portal Inscriptions (The present is a twentieth century renovation of the original, which Sarre found in rather bad condition in 1924):
Banding above Door:
"[   ] his name his splendor (God) built this building (al-'imara) the Sultan, the Just, the Venerable, the Khaqan, the Courageous, the great Controller/ Overseer of the lands of Arabia and Iran to spread the religion of the Twelve Imams [ ], to restrain/ check the signs / traces of disbelief (kufr) and excess (al-taghiyān) to defend, raising justice and charity, the builder (bānī) of the rules of peace and religion, the Sultan bin Sultan Abu Muzzaffar Shah 'Abbas al-Safavi al-Husayni Bahadur Khan, may God make everlasting his kingdom and his rule, and from the universe [keep him?] on the path of charity. 1036 AH."

Framing of Door:
"In the name of God the Merciful and Compassionate, [al-'Imran, 3:95-97] Say: Allah speaketh truth. So follow the religion of Abraham, the upright. He was not of the idolaters. Lo! The first Sanctuary [*bait*-house] appointed for mankind was that in Mecca, a blessed place, a guidance to the peoples; wherein are plain memorials (of Allah's guidance); the place where Abraham stood up to pray; and whosoever entereth is safe. And pilgrimage to the House is a duty unto Allah for mankind, for him who can find a way thither. As for him who disbelieveth, (let him know that) lo! Allah is Independent of all creatures. [al-'Imran, 3:129-133] Unto Allah belongeth whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth. He forgiveth whom He will, and punisheth whom he will. Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. O ye who believe! Devour not usury, doubling and quadrupling (the sum lent). Observe your duty to Allah, that ye may be successful. And ward off (from yourselves) the Fire prepared for the disbelievers. And obey Allah and the messenger, that ye may find mercy. And vie with one another for forgiveness from your Lord, and for a paradise as wide as are the heavens and the earth, prepared for those who ward off (evil). [al-Qassas, 28:30] And when he reachedit, he was called from the right side of the valley in the blessed field (al-buqa' al-mubāraka), from the tree: O Moses! Lo! I, even I, am Allah, Lord of the Worlds."

Wall of words:
"[he is] the knower of God, the one who received from God, the companion of God, the great sultan of the shaykhs of the east and the west...the leader of religion...Safi (al-mulk wa al-din) the purest of God in the two world Ishaq. He is the purifier of the hearts of men..."

Tomb of Tahmasb's 'mother:'
"This is the tomb of the chaste, the pure, the fountain (source) of pure happiness, the excellent, the virginal sultana [of] the world and the religion, Khaqan b. Khaqan. May God cover her with mercy with His benevolence and forgiveness and rest her in the valley of Paradise. Date 767 or 969." On site, it was impossible to read the date, so I go on earlier documentation.

'Ali Qapu Portal (no longer extant)
"Built in accordance...this noble, lofty building, in the days of the great khaqan and great sultan, the owner of the lands of 'Arabia and Persia, the Sultan b. Sultan Shah 'Abbas the Second al-Safavi al-Musavi al-Husayni Bahadur Khan; may God make eternal his kingdom and sultanate. To attain in the universe his charity and his justice and his benevolence, the attempt (accomplishment) of the great Amir and officer, with the assistance of the benevolent Creator, Nazar 'Ali Khan Mutawalli."
At the end, in white script, "Written by the incapable beggar Isma'il Naqqash Ardabili 1052."

On the right hand in a corner is written, "Built by the incapable beggar for the kindness of God, Yusaf Shah b. Malik Safimani."

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES - PERSIAN

Ibn Arabshah Veramini, Ahsan al-akhbār fī ma'rafat āima' al-athār, (837/1433) mss. Dorn 312, Russian National Library, St. Petersburg, Russia, recopied around 932/1526.

Abu Bakr al-Qutubi al-Ahari, Tārīkh-i Shaykh Uvays, ed. J. van Loon, The Hague, 1954.

Mirza Babur, The Baburnama: Memoirs of Babur, Prince and Emperor, trans. W. M. Thackston., Washington, 1995.

Ibn Bazzaz Ardabili, Safwat al-safa (759/1358), ed. Ahmad Karim Tabrizi, Bombay, 1911; reprint, 1990.

Fazli Khuzani Isfahani, Afzal al-tawārīkh, British Library, OR 4678.

Muhammad Yusaf Isfahani, Khuld al-barīn, ed. Ehsan Eshraqi, Tehran, 1364 /1975.

Firdawsi, Shāhnāma-yi Shāh Tahmāsb, Tehran, 1991.

Kamal al-din Gazurgahi, Majālis al-'ushāq, (c. 1520) British Library, OR 11837.
---, ed. G. Tabatabai Majd, Tehran, 1374/1995.

Hafiz Husayn Karbala'i, Rawdat al-jinān wa jannāt al-janān, ed. Jafar Sultan al- Qurra'i, 2 vols., Tehran, 1349/1970.

Husayn Va'iz Kashifi, Futūvat nāma-yi sultānī, Teheran, 1971.
---, Rawdat al-shuhadā, Teheran, 1970.

Muhammad Masum bin Khwajagi Isfahani, Khulāsat al- siyar: Tārīkh-i rūzgār-i Shāh Safī Safavī, Tehran, 1368/1989.

Amir Mahmud bin Khwandamir, Irān dar rāzgār-i Shāh Isma'il va Shāh Tahmāsb Safavī (Zayl-i habīb al-siyar) ed. Iraj Afshar, Tehran, 1370/1991.
---, Tārīkh-i Shāh Isma'il va Shāh Tahmāsb Safavī, Tehran, 1370/1991.

Ghiyas al-din Muhammad Husayni Khwandamir, Habīb al-siyar fī akhbār afrad al-bashār, Tehran, 1334/1955. Volumes 3 and 4 translated by W. Thackston, Jr. as Habibu's Siyar, Tome Three: The reign of the Mongol and the Turk, Cambridge, MA, 1994.

Muhammad Baqir Majlisi, Jala' al-'ayūn, Tehran, 1362/1983.

Vladimir Minorsky (trans.), Tadhkirat al-Mulūk, a Manual of Safavid Administration (ca. 1137/1725), Cambridge, 1943.

Mirkwand, Rawdat al-safa, 10 vols., Tehran, 1338/1960.

Jalal al-din Yazdi Munnajim, Tārikh-i 'Abbāsi, ya rūznāma-yi Mulla Jalāl, ed. S. Vahidniya, Tehran, 1344/1963.

Iskander Munshi, <u>Tārikh-i 'alam ara-yi 'Abbāsi</u>, 2 vols. ed. Iraj Afshar, Tehran, 1314/1975. English trans., R. Savory, <u>History of Shah 'Abbas the Great</u>, Colorado, 1978.

Muhammad Afushtah Natanzi, <u>Naqāwat al-athār fī dhikr al-akhyār</u>, ed. Ehsan Eshraqi, Tehran, 1350/1971.

'Abd al-Husayn Nav'ai, <u>Asnād va mukātabātī-yi tārīkh-i Irān az Timūr tā Shāh Isma'il</u>, Tehran, 1341/1963.

Abu al-Hasan Qazvini, <u>Fawā'id al-Safawīya</u>, ed. Maryam Mir Ahmadi, Tehran, 1367/1982.

Qazi Ahmad Qummi, <u>Khulāsat al-tawārīkh</u>, 2 vols. ed. Ehsan Eshraqi, Tehran, 1359-1363.
---, <u>Calligraphers and Painters (Gulistan-i Hunar): a Treatise by Qadi Ahmad, son of Mir-Munshi (circa A.H. 1015/A.D. 1606)</u>, trans, Vladimir Minorsky, Washington, 1959.

Hasan Beg Rumlu, <u>A Chronicle of the Early Safavids being the Ahsan al- Tavarikh of Hasan-i Rumlu</u>, vol.1/2, ed. G. N. Sedon, London, 1931.
---, <u>Ahsan al-tawārīkh</u>, ed. 'Abd al-Husayn Nava'i, Tehran, 1349/1970.

Fadullah b. Ruzbihan Khunji-Isfahani, <u>Tārikh-i 'Alam Ara-yi Aminī (Persia in AD 1478-1490)</u>, trans. V. Minorsky, reprint London, 1992.

Sam Mirza Safavi, <u>Tazkira-yi Tuhfā-yi Samī</u>, ed. Rukn al-Din Humayun Farruk, Tehran, n.d.

<u>'Alla'uddawla Simnani: Opera Minora, "Risala-i Iqbaliyya: Fawayid-i Shaykh 'Ala'uddawla Simnani,"</u> ed. Wheeler Thackston, Jr. Cambridge, MA, 1988.

'Abdi Beg Shirazi, <u>Takmilāt al-akhbār</u>, ed. 'Abd al-Husayn Nava'i, Tehran, 1369/1990.
---, <u>Dauhat al-azhār</u>, ed. A. M. Tabrizi and A. Rahimof, Moscow, 1974.

Shah Tahmasb, <u>Tazkira-i Shāh Tahmāsb: Sharh-i vāqayi va ahvalāt-i zindigānī-yi Shāh Tahmāsb biqalam-i khudash</u>, ed. Abd al- Shukur, Berlin-Charlottenburg, 1343/1964.

Husayn Ibn Abdal Zahidi, <u>Silsilāt al-nasab safavīyah</u>, Berlin, 1924.

PRIMARY SOURCES - EUROPEAN
Josafa Barbaro and Ambrogio Contarini, <u>Travels to Tana and Persia</u>, trans. W. Thomas, ed. S. Aderley, London, 1873.

Cornelias Le Bruyn, <u>The Travels of Cornelias Le Bruyn (1703)</u>, London, 1737.

Sir Jean Chardin, <u>Voyages du chevalier Chardin en Perse et autres lieux de l'Orient (1673-77)</u>, reprint: Paris, 1811.

Ruy Gonzalez de Clavijo, <u>Embassy to Tamerlane</u>, trans. G. le Strange, New York, 1928.

Pietro Della Valle, <u>De viaggi di Pietro della Valle il pelligrino: la persia</u>, n.p. 1618.
---, <u>The Pilgrim</u>, trans. G. Bull, London, 1989.
---, <u>Reise-Beshreibung in Persien und Indien</u>, reprint Hamburg, 1981.

Don Garcia y Silva Figueroa, Le Ambassade de d. Garcia de Silva y Figueroa en Perse, trans. de Wicquefort, Paris, 1667.

Engelbert Kaempfer, Am Hofe des persischen Grosskonigs, 1684-1685, reprint Tubingen, 1977.

Kotov, Fedot, Travels of the Merchant Fedot Kotov into Persia (1623), [In Russian], Moscow, 1958.

Peter Martyr, History of Travel in the West and East Indies, London, 1577.

Michel Membre, Mission to the Lord Sophy of Persia (1539-42), trans. A. H. Morton, London, 1993.

Adam Olearius, Moskowitische und Persische Reise: die holsteinische Gesandtschaft beim Schah; 1633-1639, reprint Stuttgart, 1986.
---, The Voyages and Travels of the Ambassadors sent by Frederick, Duke of Holstein, trans. J. Davies, London, 1669.

LAND REGISTERS AND IMPERIAL ORDERS:
Sarīh al-milk, Zayn al-'Abdin 'Abdi, (Shawwal 977 AH). Mss. 3598, microfilm 10; Iran Bastan Museum.

Sarīh al-milk, Muhammad Tahir Isfahani, (Rabi-ul awwal 1038 AH). Mss. 3703 (and 4324), microfilm 9-2; Iran Bastan Museum.

Tārīkhcha-yi aūqāf-i Isfahān, ed. A. Sipanta, Isfahan, 1346/1967.

Sayyid Jamal Torabi-Tabataba'i, Farāmīn-i buqa-yi Shaykh Safī al-din Ardabīlī, Tabriz, 1372/1993.

Bert Fragner, "Ardabil zwischen Sultan und Schah. Zehn Urkunden Schah Tahmasp II," Turcica VI, (1975) :177-225.
---, "Das Ardabiler Heiligtum in den Urkunden," Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes 67 (1975) :169-215.

Gottfried Herrmann, "Ein Erlaß von Qara Yusof zugunsten des Ordens von Ardebil," Archaologische Mitteilungen aus Iran N. F., 9 (1979) (Festschrift für Walter Hinz) :225-42.
---, "Urkundenfunde in Azarbaygan," Archaologische Mitteilungen aus Iran N. F., 4 (1971), :249-62.

Ann K. Lambton, "Two Safavid Soyurghals," BSOAS 14 (1952).

B. G. Martin, "Seven Safawid Documents from Azarbayjan", ed. R. M. Stern, Documents from Islamic Chanceries, (New York, 1970).

Henri Masse, "Ordonnance rendue par la prince Ilkanien Ahmad Jalayir en faveur du Cheikh Sadr od-din, 1305-1392," Journal Asiatique, (1938) :465-68.

Vladimir Minorsky, "A Mongol Decree of 720/1320 to the Family of Shaykh Zahid," BSOAS 16 (1954) :515-27.

Abdul Hassan Navai, ed., Shāh 'Abbās: Majmūa-yi isnād va makālāt-i tārīkhī-yi humrāh bā yāddāshthā-yi tafsīlī, Tehran, 1987.

Abdul Hassan Navai, ed., Shāh Tahmāsb Safavī: Isnād va makālāt-i tārīkhī, Tehran, 1989.

Renate Schimkoreit, <u>Regesten publizierter safawidscher Herrscherurkunden</u>, (Berlin, 1982).

CATALOGUES

E. G. Browne, <u>Catalogue of Persian Manuscripts. in the Library of the University of Cambridge</u>, Cambridge, 1896.

Herman Ethe, <u>Catalogue of Persian Manuscripts. in the Library of the India Office</u>, 2 vols., Oxford, 1903-28.

Charles Rieu, <u>Catalogue of the Persian Manuscripts in the British Museum</u>, 3 vols., London, 1979-83.

Muhammad Reza Riyazi, <u>Fehrist-i microfilmha va nusk-i khathi-yi Musee Millī-yi Irān</u>, Tehran, 1374/1995.

Norah Titley, <u>Miniatures from Persian Manuscripts</u>, London, 1983.

Sayyid Jamal Torabi-Tabataba'i, <u>Ganjīna-i Shaykh Safī</u>, Tabriz.

SECONDARY SOURCES - ARCHITECTURE IN ARDABIL AND AZERBAIJAN
<u>EIr</u>, s.v. "Ardabil," "Ahar."

J. W. Allan, "Silver Door Facings of the Safavid Period," <u>Iran</u> 33, (1995) :123-137.

Isma'il Dibaj, <u>Rāhnāmay-i āsār-i tārīkhī-yi Azerbayjān-i Sharqī</u>, Tabriz, 1334/1955.
---, <u>Rāhnāmay-i āsār-i tārīkhī-yi Azerbayjān-i Sharqī</u>, Tabriz, 1343/1964.

Buyuk-i Jama'i, <u>Nigāhī bā āsār va abnīyā-yi tārīkhī-yi Ardabīl</u>, Tehran, 1374 /1995.

Jacques de Morgan, <u>Mission Scientifique en Perse</u>, Paris, 1894.

Anthony H. Morton, "Three Mediaeval Inscriptions from Ardabil," <u>Akten des VII. Internationalen Kongresses für iranische Kunst und Archäologie, München</u>, (1979).
---, "The Ardabil shrine in the reign of Shah Tahmasp I," <u>Iran</u>, part I, vol. 12, (1974) :31-64 and part II, vol. 13, (1975) :39-58.

Muhammad Ali Mukhlis, <u>Fehrist-i binhā-yi tārīkhī-yi Azerbayjān-i Sharqī</u>, Tehran, 1371/1992.

<u>Ganjīna-i Shaykh Safī</u>, ed. Sayyid-Yunusi, Tabriz, 1969.

Baba Saffari, <u>Ardabīl dar guzargāh-i tārīkh</u>, 3 vols. Tehran 1350/1971.

Friedrich Sarre, <u>Ardabil, Grabmoschee des Schech Safis</u>, Berlin, 1924.

S. Jamal Torabi-Tabataba'i, <u>Asār bāstānī-yi Azerbayjān: Asār o abnīya-yi tārīkhī-yi shahristānhā-yi Ardabīl, Arsbarān, Kalkhorān, Sarāb, Mishgīnshahr, Mughān</u>, 2Vols., Tabriz, 2535 Shahanshahi.

Martin E. Weaver, "Monuments of Ardabil", <u>EIr</u>.
---, "The Conservation of the Shrine of Shaykh Safi at Ardebil; Second Preliminary Study", <u>UNESCO</u> serial no. 2560/RMO.RD/CLP, Paris, 1971.

SECONDARY SOURCES - GENERAL ART AND ARCHITECTURE
Oleg Akimushkin and A. A. Ivanova, Persidskie Miniatury XIV-XVII vv., Moscow, 1968.

Oleg Akimushkin, The St. Petersburg Muraqqa: Albums of Indian and Persian miniatures to the 16-18th century, Milan, 1996.

Peter Alford Andrews, The Felt Tent in Middle Asia: The nomadic tradition and its interaction with princely tentage, Ph.D. diss., School of Oriental and African Studies, London, 1980.

Oktoy Aslanapa, Turkish Art and Architecture, New York, 1971.

Esin Atil, Suleymanname: The Illustrated History of Suleymane the Magnificent, New York, 1986.

Sussan Babaie, "Shah 'Abbas II, the conquest of Qandahar, the Chihil Sutun, and its wall Paintings," Muqarnas 11, (1994) :125-42.
---, Safavid Palaces at Isfahan: Continuity and Change (1590-1666), Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1993.

Gauvin Bailey, "In the Manner of Frankish Masters: A Safavid drawing and its Flemish Inspiration," Oriental Art XL/4, (1993) :131-139.

Wayne Begley, Taj Mahal: the Illuminated tomb, an anthology of 17th-century Mughal and European documentary sources, Cambridge, MA, 1989.

Sheila Blair, "Texts, Inscriptions and the Ardabil Carpets," in Iran and Iranian Studies: Essays in honor of Iraj Afshar, ed. K. Eslami, Princeton, 1998.
---, "The Ilkhanid Palace," Ars Orientalis 23, (1993) :239-48.
---, "Sufi Saints and Shrine Architecture in the early fourteenth century," Muqarnas 7, (1990) :35-49.
---, "The Epigraphic program of the Tomb of Uljaytu at Sultaniyya: Meaning in Mongol architecture," Islamic Art 2, (1987) :43-996.
---, The Ilkhanid Shrine Complex at Natanz, Iran, Cambridge, MA 1986.
---, "The Madrasa at Zuzan: Islamic architecture in eastern Iran on the eve of the Mongol invasions," Muqarnas 3, (1985) :75-91.
---, "Ilkhanid Architecture and Society: Endowment deed of the Rab'-i Rashidi," Iran 22, (1984) :67-90.
---, "The Octagonal Pavilion at Natanz: A reexamination of early Islamic architecture in Iran," Muqarnas 1 (1983): 69-94.

Michael Brand, "Mughal Ritual in Pre-Mughal Cities: case of Jahangir in Mandu" Environmental Design IX/11, (1991) :8-17.

S. Chmelnizkij, "The Mausoleum of Muhammad Boshoro," Muqarnas 7, (1990):23-34.

Howard Crane, "The Patronage of Zahir al-Din Babur and the Origins of Mughal Architecture," Bulletin of the Asia Institute I, (1987) :95-110.

Richard M. Eaton, "Political and Religious Authority of the Shrine of Baba Farid," Moral Conduct and Authority: the place of Adab in South Asian Islam, ed. B. D. Metcalf, Berkeley, 1984.

Holly Edwards, "The Ribat of Ali b. Karmakh, Iran 29, (1991) :85-94.

Leonor Fernandes, The Evolution of a Sufi Institution in Mamluk Egypt: the Khanqah, Berlin, 1988.

Heinz Gaube, Iranian Cities, New York, 1979.

Lisa Golombek, The Timurid Shrine at Gazur Gah, Ontario, 1969.
---, "The Cult of Saints and Shrine Architecture in the Fourteenth Century" in Near Eastern Numismatic, Iconography, Epigraphy and History, ed. D. K. Kouymjian, Beirut, 1974.
---, and Donald Wilber, The Timurid Architecture of Iran and Turan, Princeton, 1988.
---, and M. Subtelny (eds.), Timurid Art and Culture: Iran and Central Asia in the Fifteenth Century, Leiden, 1992.

Oleg Grabar, The Great Mosque of Isfahan, New York, 1990.
---, "Isfahan as a Mirror of Persian Architecture," Highlights of Persian Art, eds. R. Ettinhausen and E. Yarshater, Persian Art Series 1, (1979).

Monika Gronke, Derwische im Vorhof der Macht: Sozial-und Wirtschafttsgeschichte Nordwetirans im 13. und 14. Jahrhundert, Stuttgart, 1993.
---, "The Timurid Court between Palace and Tent: from Timur to 'Abbas I," eds. L. Golombek and M. Subtelny, Timurid Art and Culture: Iran and Central Asia in the Fifteenth Century, Leiden, 1992.

Kambiz Eslami, "Mansur Musavvir, 'the Pride of the Painters,' and his son Shah Muzaffar, 'the Rarity of the Age,'" in Iran and Iranian Studies: Essays in honor of Iraj Afshar, ed. K. Eslami, Princeton, 1998.

Masahi Haneda, "The Character of the Urbanization of Isfahan in the Later Safavid Period," in ed. C. Melville, Safavid Persia: the History and Politics of an Islamic Society, London and New York, 1996.

Robert Hillenbrand, Islamic Art and Architecture, London, 1999.
---, "The Iconography of the Shah-nama-yi Shahi," in ed. C. Melville, Safavid Persia: the History and Politics of an Islamic Society, London and New York, 1996.
---, "The Mosque of 'A'isha Bibi and the Central Asian Tradition of Funerary Architecture," Turkish Studies, (Schimmel Festschrifft 1995) :111-120.
---, "Turco-Iranian elements in the Medieval architecture of Pakistan: The case of the Rukn-i Alam at Multan," Muqarnas 9, (1992) :148-74.

Renata Holod, ed. Iranian Studies 7, (1974).

Ingeborg Luschey-Schmeisser, "Ein Neuer Raum in Nayin," Archaeologische Mitteilungen aus Iran II, N.F. (1972) :309-314.
---, "Der Wand- und Deckenschmuck eines Safavidischen Palastes in Nayin," Archaeologische Mitteilungen aus Iran II, N.F. (1969) :183-192.

Lutfallah Hunarfar, Ganjina -yi āthār-i tārīkhi-yi Isfahān, Tehran, 1977.
---, Historical Monuments of Isfahan, Tehran, 1958.

Mehdi Keyvani, Artisans and guild life in the later Safavid period, Berlin, 1982.

Wolfram Kleiss, "Safavid Palaces," Ars Orientalis 23, (1993) :269-80.
---, "Der Pavillon-Typ der iranischen Karavanseraies aus safavidischer Zeit am Perischen Golf," Architectura 20/1, (1990) :73-76.
---, "Die Schlosser des Shah Abbas am Konigsweg von Isfahan an die Kuste des Kaspischen Meeres," Architectura 16/1, (1986) :42-49.

Ebba Koch, "Diwan-i 'Amm and Chihil Sutun: The audience halls of Shah Jahan," Muqarnas 11, (1994) :143-65.
---, "Shah Jahan's Visits to Delhi prior to 1648: New evidence of ritual movement," Environmental Design, IX/11, (1991) :18-29.
---, Shah Jahan and Orpheus, Graz, 1988.

Thomas Lentz and Glenn Lowry, Timur and the Princely Vision, Los Angeles, 1989.

Raymond Lichez, ed. The Dervish Lodge: Architecture, Art and Sufism in Ottoman Turkey, Berkeley, 1992.

Azizaga Mamedov, "Le plus ancien Manuscrit du Divan de Shah Ismail Khatayi," Turcica VI, (1975) :11-23.

Louis Marin, Portrait of the King, trans. M. Houle, Minneapolis, 1988.

Robert McChesney, Waqf in Central Asia: Four hundred years in the history of a Muslim shrine, Princeton, 1991.
---,"Postscript to 'Four sources on Shah 'Abbas's Building of Isfahan'", Muqarnas 8, (1991) :137-8.
---, "Waqf and Public Policy: The Waqfs of Shah 'Abbas, 1011-1023/1602-1614," Asian and African Studies, 15, (1991) :165-90.
---, "Four sources on Shah 'Abbas's Building of Isfahan", Muqarnas 5, (1988) :103-34.
---, "Economic and Social Aspects of the Public architecture of Bukhara in the 1560's and 1570's," Islamic Art, 2, (1987) :217-242.

A. S. Melikian-Chirvani, "The Lights of Sufi Shrines," Islamic Art, 2, 1987; :117-48.
---, Islamic Metalwork from the Iranian World, 8th -18th centuries, London, 1982.

Rachel Milstein, Miniature Painting in Ottoman Baghdad, Tel Aviv, 1990.

Hossein Modaressi Tabataba'i, Turbat-i pākān: Asār va binhā-yi qadīmī-yi mahdūdāh-i kunūni-i Dār al-Muminīn Qum, Qum, 1976.

Jacques de Morgan, Mission Scientifique en Perse, Paris, 1894.

Elizabeth B. Moynihan, "The Lotus Garden Palace of Zahir al-Din Muhammad Babur," Muqarnas 5, (1988) :13-152.

Matrakci Nasuh, Beyan-i menazil-i sefer-i Irakeyn-i Sultan Suleyman Han, Ankara, 1976.

Naqshāhā-yi tārīkhī-yi Iran dar zamān-i hukūmat-i Safavīya dar qarn-i 10 va 12 hijrī =Historical map of Iran under the Safavi dynasty in the 16th and 17th centuries, Tehran, n.d.

Gülru Necipoğlu, "Dynastic Imprints on the Cityscape: The collective message of imperial funerary mosque complexes in Istanbul," İslâm Dünyasinda Mezarlikar ve Defin Gelenekleri'nden ayribasim, Ankara, 1996.
---, "Framing the Gaze in Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal Palaces," Ars Orientalis 23, (1993) :303-42.
---, Architecture, Ceremonial and Power: the Topkapi Palace in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Cambridge, MA, 1991.
---, "A Kānūn for the State, a Canon for the Arts: Conceptualizing the Classical Synthesis of Ottoman Arts and Architecture," in ed. G. Veinstein, Suleyman the Magnificent and his Time, Paris, 1992.

Gülru Necipoğlu-Kafadar, "The Suleymaniye Complex in Istanbul: an Interpretation," Muqarnas 3 (1985) :92-117.

Bernard O' Kane, "From Tents to Pavilions: Royal mobility and Persian palace design," Ars Orientalis, 23, 1993; :245-64.

---, Timurid Architecture in Khurasan, Costa Mesa, 1987.

Arthur Upham Pope, Persian Architecture, New York, 1965.
---, Chinese Porcelains from the Ardebil Shrine, New York, 1956.

Yves Porter, "Splendeurs de l'architecture Safavide: Iran," Archeologia 304, (1994) :20-27.

G. A. Pugachenkova, "'Isratkhaneh and Ak-Saray, two Timurid Mausoleums in Samarkand," Ars Orientalis 5, (1963) :177-189.

Jessica Rawson, ed., The British Museum Book of Chinese Art, London, 1992.

Kishwar Rizvi, "Gendered Patronage: Women and Benevolence in the early Safavid Empire," Women and Self-representation in Islamic Art and Society, ed. D. F. Ruggles, New York, forthcoming 2000.
---, "'Its mortar mixed with the sweetness of life': Ritual and Architecture of the shrine of Shaikh Safi in Ardabil," The Muslim World, forthcoming 2000.
---, "The Imperial Setting: Shah 'Abbas at the shrine of Shaykh Safi al-din Ishaq in Ardabil," Safavid Art and Architecture, ed. S. Canby, London, forthcoming 2001.

Bijan Saadat, The Holy Shrine of Imam Zadeh Fatima Masuma, Qum, Shiraz, 1977.
---, The Holy Shrine of Imam Reza, Mashad, Shiraz, 1977.

Marie-Rose Seguy, The Miraculous Journey of Mahomet: Miraj Nameh, New York, 1977.

Marianna Shreve Simpson, Sultan Ibrahim Mirza's Haft Aurang, Washington, 1997.
---, "The Making of Manuscripts and the Working of the Kitab-Khana in Safavid Iran," Studies in the History of Art, 38, (1993).

Eleanor Sims, "The Illustrated Manuscripts of Firdausi's Shahnama Commissioned by the Princes of the House of Timur," Ars Orientalis, 22, (1992) :43-66.

Vincenzo Strika, The Islamic Architecture of Baghdad: the results of a joint Italian-Iraqi survey, Napoli, 1987.

Priscilla Soucek, "Sultan Muhammad Tabrizi: Painter at the Safavid Court," Marg, 41/3, 1989.

Abolala Soudavar, "A Chinese Dish from the Lost Endowment of Princess Sultanum (925-69/1519-62)," in Iran and Iranian Studies: Essays in honor of Iraj Afshar, ed. K. Eslami, Princeton, 1998.
---, Art of the Persian Courts, New York, 1992.

Eva Maria Subtelny, "The Cult of 'Abdullah Ansārī under the Timurids," ed. A. Giese and J. C. Bürgel, Gott ist Schön und Er liebt die Schönheit, Berlin, 1992.
---, "A Timurid Educational Foundation: the Ikhlasiyya Complex of Ali Shir Nava'i in 15th century Herat and its endowment," Journal of the American Oriental Society III.I, (1991) :38-56.
---, "Socio-Economic Bases of Cultural Patronage under the late Timurids," International Journal of Middle East Studies 20/4, (1988) :479-505.
---, "Art and Politics in Early 16th century Central Asia," Central Asiatic Journal 27/1-2, (1983) :121-48.
---, "The Poetic Circle at the Court of the Timurid Sultan Husain Baiqara, and its Political Significance," Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1979.

June Tabaroff, Bistam, Iran: The architecture, setting and patronage of an Islamic shrine, Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1981.

271

Christopher S. Taylor, In the Vicinity of the Righteous: Ziyāra and the Veneration of Muslim Saints in Late Medieval Egypt, Leiden, 1999.
---, "Re-evaluating the Shi'i role in the Development of Monumental Islamic architecture: The case of Egypt," Muqarnas 9, (1992) :1-8.

Derin Terzioɔlu, "The Imperial Circumcision Festival of 1582: An Interpretation," Muqarnas 12 (1995) :84-100.

Wheeler Thackston Jr., A Century of Princes: Sources on Timurid history and art, Cambridge, MA, 1989.
---, "The Diwan of Khata'i: Pictures for the Poetry of the Shah Isma'il I," Asian Art 1/4, (1988) :37-63.

Anthony Welch, Shah 'Abbas and the Arts of Isfahan, New York, 1973.

Donald Wilber, "Qavam al-Din ibn Zayn al-Din Shirazi: A fifteenth century Timurid Architect," Architectural History 30, (1987) :31-45.
---, The Architecture of Ilkhanid Iran, Princeton, 1955.

Sara Ethel Wolper, "The Politics of Patronage: Political Change and Construction of Dervish Lodges in Sivas," Muqarnas 12, (1995) :38-47.

SECONDARY SOURCES – HISTORY
Rula Abisaab, "Ulama of Jabal 'Amil," Iranian Studies 27 (1994).

Jean Aubin, "Shaykh Ibrahim Zahid Gilani (1218? - 1301)," Turcica XXI-XXIII, (1991): 39-54.

S. Amir Arjomand, ed. Authority and Political Culture in Shi'ism, New York, 1988.
---, The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam, Chicago, 1984.

Kathryn Babayan, Mystics, Monarchs and Messiahs: The spiritual landscapes of early modern Iran, mss.
---, "Sufis, Dervishes and mullas: the controversy over Spiritual and Temporal Dominion in Seventeenth century Iran," in ed. C. Melville, Safavid Persia: the History and Politics of an Islamic Society, London and New York, 1996, :117-138.
---, "The Safavid Synthesis: From Qizilbash Islam to Imamate Shi'ism," Iranian Studies 27/1-4, (1994):135-162.
---, The Waning of the Qizilbash: The spiritual and the temporal in 17th c. Iran, Ph.D. diss., Princeton, 1993.

J. K. Birge, The Bektashi Order of Dervishes, London, 1937.

Anne H. Betteridge, "Gift Exchange in Iran," Anthropology Quarterly 58/4 (1985): 190-202.

C. E. Bosworth, "History of Ardabil" in Encyclopedia Iranica, (358-360).

Peter Brown, Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity, Berkeley, 1982.
---, The Cult of Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity, Chicago, 1981.

Martin van Bruinessen, "Haji Bektash, Sultan Sahak, Shah Mina Sahib and various avatars of a running wall," Turcica XXI-XXIII, (1991) :55-70.

Norman Calder, "Zakāt in Imāmi Shī'ī Jurisprudence, from the Tenth to Sixteenth Century," BSOAS 45, (1981) :468-480.

---, "Legitimacy and Accommodation in Safavid Iran: the juristic theory of Muhammad Baqir al-Sabzavari (d. 1679)" Iran 25, (1987) :91-105.

Jean Calmard, "Shi'i rituals and Power II. The consolidation of Safavid Shi'ism: Folklore and Popular Religion," in ed. C. Melville, Safavid Persia: the History and Politics of an Islamic Society, London and New York, 1996.

Houshang Chehabi, "Ardabil becomes a Province: Center-Periphery Relations in Iran," IJMES 29, (1997):235-253.

Martin B. Dickson, Shah Tahmasb and the Uzbeks, Ph.D. diss. Princeton, 1958.

Simon Digby, "The Sufi Shaykh and the Sultan: A Conflict of Claims to Authority in Medieval India," Iran 28, (1990) :71-81.

Elke Eberhard, Osmanische Polemik gegen die safawiden im 16. Jahrhundert nach Arabischen Handschriften, Freiburg, 1970.

Ehsan Echraqi, "Le Dar al-Sultana de Qazvin, deuxieme capitale des Safavides," in ed. C. Melville, Safavid Persia: the History and Politics of an Islamic Society, London and New York, 1996.

Jamal Elias, The Throne Carrier of God: The life and thought of 'Ala' ad-Dawla as-Simnānī, Albany, 1995.

Carl. W. Ernst, "An Indo-Persian Guide to Sufi Shrine Pilgrimage," ed. C. W. Ernst, Manifestations of Sainthood in Islam, Istanbul, 1993.

Suraiya Faroqhi, "Agricultural Crisis and the Art of Flute-playing. The Worldly Affairs of the Mevlevi Dervishes," Turcica XX, (1988): 43-70.
---, "Seyyid Ghazi Revisited: The Foundation as seen through Sixteenth and Seventeenth century Documents," in Peasants, Dervishes and Traders in the Ottoman Empire, London, 1986.
---, "A Map of Anatolian Friday Mosques (1520-1535), in Peasants, Dervishes and Traders in the Ottoman Empire, London, 1986.
---, "Vakif Administration in Sixteenth-century Konya, the zaviye of Sadreddin-i Konevi," JESHO XVII, (1974) :145-172.

Michael J. Fischer, Iran: From Religious Dispute to Revolution, Cambridge, MA, 1980.

Cornell H. Fleischer, "The Lawgiver as Messiah: The making of the imperial image during the reign of Suleyman,"in ed. G. Veinstein, Suleyman the Magnificent and his Time, Paris, 1992.

Tourkan Gandjei, "Turkish in the Safavid Court of Isfahan," Turcica XXI-XXIII, (1991) :311-320.

Jo-Ann Gross, "The Economic Status of a Timurid Sufi Shaykh: A matter of conflict or perception?" Iranian Studies 21, (1988) :84-104.

Valerie J. Hoffman, "Eating and Fasting for God in Sufi Tradition," JAAR LXIII/3 (1995) :465-484.

Albert Hourani, "From Jabal 'Amil to Persia," BSOAS 49, (1986) :133-140.

C. H. Imber, "The persecution of the Ottoman Shi'ites according to the mühimme defterleri, 1565-1585," Der Islam 56, (1979) :245-273.

Ahmet Karamustafa, God's Unruly Friends: Dervish groups in the Islamic later middle period (1200-1550), Salt Lake City, 1994.

Ann K. Lambton, Landlord and Peasant in Persia: A study of Land Tenure and Land Revenue Administration, reprint Oxford, 1991.
---, Continuity and Change in Medieval Persia, London, 1988.
---, The Office of Kalantar under the Safavids and Afshar," Melanges Henri Masse, Tehran, 1963.

Raymond Lichez,(ed.) The Dervish Lodge: Architecture, Art and Sufism in Ottoman Turkey, Berkeley, 1992.

Irene Markoff, "Samā' and the Alevis of Turkey," ed. C. W. Ernst, Manifestations of Sainthood in Islam, Istanbul, 1993.

Marcel Mauss, The Gift, trans. I. Cunnison, New York, 1967.

Michel Mazzaoui, "From Tabriz to Qazvin and Isfahan: Three Phases of Safavid History" ZDMG Supplement III, (1977) :514-522.
---, The Origins of the Safavids: Shi'ism, Sufism and the Ghulat, Wiesbaden, 1972.

Irène Melikoff, "Le Problème Kizilbaş," Turcica 6, (1975) :49-67.

Charles Melville, "A Lost Source for the reign of Shah 'Abbas: the Afzal al-tawārīkh of Fazli Khuzani Isfahani," Iranian Studies, 31/2 (1998) :263-266.
---, "Shah 'Abbas and the Pilgrimage to Mashad," in ed. C. Melville, Safavid Persia: the History and Politics of an Islamic Society, London and New York, 1996.
---, "From Qars to Qandahar: the Itineraries of Shah 'Abbas I (995-1038/1587-1629)", Etudes Safavides, (1993) :195-224.

Hossein Modarressi Tabataba'i, An Introduction to Shi'i Law: a bibliographical study, London, 1984.
---, Turbat-i pākān: Asār va binhā-yi qadīm-i mahdūdā-yi kunūnī-yi dār al-Mominīn Qum, Qum, 1976.

Anthony H. Morton, "The Early years of Shah Isma'il in the Afzal al-tavarikh and elsewhere," in ed. C. Melville, Safavid Persia: the History and Politics of an Islamic Society, London and New York, 1996.
---, "The chub-i tarīq and Qizilbash Ritual," in Etudes Safavides, (1993) :225-246.
---, "An introductory note on a Safavid Munshi's Manual in the Library of the SOAS," BSOAS 33, (1970) :352-58.

Andrew Newman, "The Myth of Clerical Migration to Safawid Iran," Die Welt des Islams 33, (1993) :66-112.

Khaliq Ahmad Nizami, "Some Aspects of Khanaqa Life in Medieval India," Studia Islamica VIII, (1957) :51-68.

Oded Peri, "Waqf and Ottoman Welfare Policy: The soup kitchen of Hasseki Sultan in 18th c. Jerusalem," JESHO 35 (1992) :167-186.

I. P. Petrushevski, "Vakfnye imushchestva Ardebil skogo mazara," An Azerb. SSr. Trudy Instituta Istorii I, Baku, 1947.

Lawrence Potter, "Sufis and Sultans in Post-Mongol Iran," Iranian Studies 27/1-4, (1994) :77-102.

Nasrollah Pourjavady, "Opposition to Sufism in Twelver Shi'ism," in eds. F. de Jong and B. Radtke, Islamic Mysticism Contested, (Leiden, 1999).

Sholeh Quinn, "Notes on Timurid Legitimacy in Three Safavid Chronicles," Iranian Studies 31/2, (1998) :149-158.
---, "The Historiography of Safavid Prefaces," in ed. C. Melville, Safavid Persia: the History and Politics of an Islamic Society, London and New York, 1996.
---, Historical Writing during the Reign of Shah 'Abbas I, Ph.D. diss. University of Chicago, 1993.

Helman Ringgren, "The Initiation Ceremony of the Bektashis," Studies in the History of Religion: Initiation X, (1965) :202-208.

H. R. Roemer, "The Safavid Period", The Cambridge History of Iran, vol 6, New York, 1986.

Ruth Roded, "The Waqf and the Social Elite of Aleppo in the 18th and 19th centuries," Turcica, 20, (1988).

S. M. Hussayni Sabzavari, Zayn al-'arifīn: Islamic Political and Juristic thought in Safavid Iran, trans. S. H. Amin, Tehran, 1989.

Roger M. Savory, "The Qizilbash, Education and the Arts," Turcica VI, (1975) :168-176.
---, "The Office of the Khalīfat al-Khulafā under the Safawids," JAOS 85, (1965) :497-502.
---, "The Principal offices of the Safawid State during the reign of Tahmasp I (930-98/1524-76)," BSOAS 24, (1961) :65-85.
---, "The Principal offices of the Safawid State during the reign of Isma'il I (907-30/1501-24)," BSOAS 23, (1960) :91-105.

Anne-Marie Schimmel, Deciphering the Signs of God, New York, 1994.
---, Mystical Dimensions of Islam, Chappel Hill, 1975.

Maria Szuppe, "La Participation des Femmes de la Famille Royales à l'Exercise du Pouvoir en Iran Safavide au XVIe siècle," Studia Iranica 23, (1994) :211-58 and 24, (1995) :61-122.

Richard Tapper, "Shahsevan in Safavid Persia," BSOAS 37, (1974) :321-354.

Christopher Taylor, In the Vicinity of the Righteous: Ziyāra and the veneration of Muslim saints in late medieval Cairo, Leiden, 1999.

Ali Akbar Vilayati, Tārīkh-i ravābit-i siyāsi-yi Irān dar ahd-i Shāh 'Abbās-i avval-i Safavī, Tehran, 1374/1995.

J. Walsh, "The Historiography of Ottoman-Safavid Relations," ed. B. Lewis and P. M. Holt, Historians of the Middle East, London, 1962.

John E. Woods, The Aqqoyunlu: Clan, Confederate, Empire, Minneapolis and Chicago, 1976.
---, "The Rise of Timurid Historiography," Journal of Near Eastern Studies, 46/2, (1987) :81-108.

Ahmed Ugur, The Reign of Sultan Selim I in the Light of Selim-name Literature, Berlin, 1985.

Muhammad Ibrahim ibn Zayn al-Abdin Nasiri, Dastūr-i shahryārān, Tehran, 1373/1994.

Fariba Zarinebaf-Shahr, "Economic Activities of Safavid Women in the Shrine-City of Ardabil," Iranian Studies 31/2 (1998) :247-261.

INDEX TO PLAN
Chronology of existing buildings

1. Ḥaramkhāna (c. 1324)

2. Tomb Tower of Shaykh Safi (c. 1345)

3. Dār al-ḥuffāz (orig. 14th c., renovated 16th c.)

4. Shāhnishīn alcove (orig. 14th c., renovated 1612)

5A. Old Retreat (orig. 14th c.)

5B. New Retreat (orig. 14th c., renovated before 1570)

6. Chīnīkhāna (orig. unknown, renovated in 1612)

7. Dār al-ḥadīth

8. Tomb of Shah Isma'il (between 1524-29)

9. Courtyard of Shah Tahmasb (before 1570)

10. Jannatsarā (c. 1537)

6

1

8

4

3

2

10

9

7

5A

5B
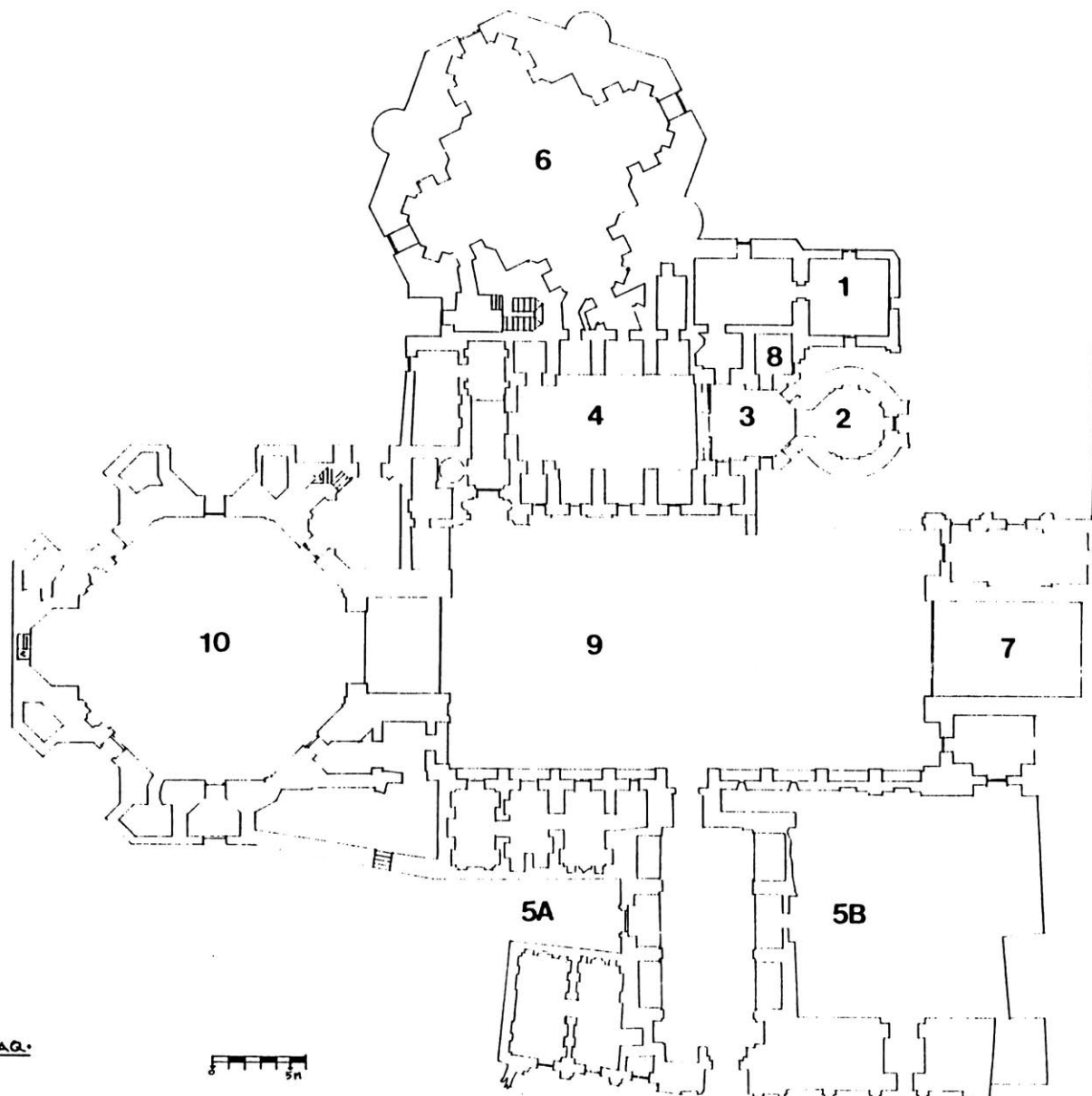
·SHRINE OF SHAIKH SAFI AL-DIN ISHAQ·
ARDABIL, IRAN

0 5m

1
Ardabil 1637 (Olearius)
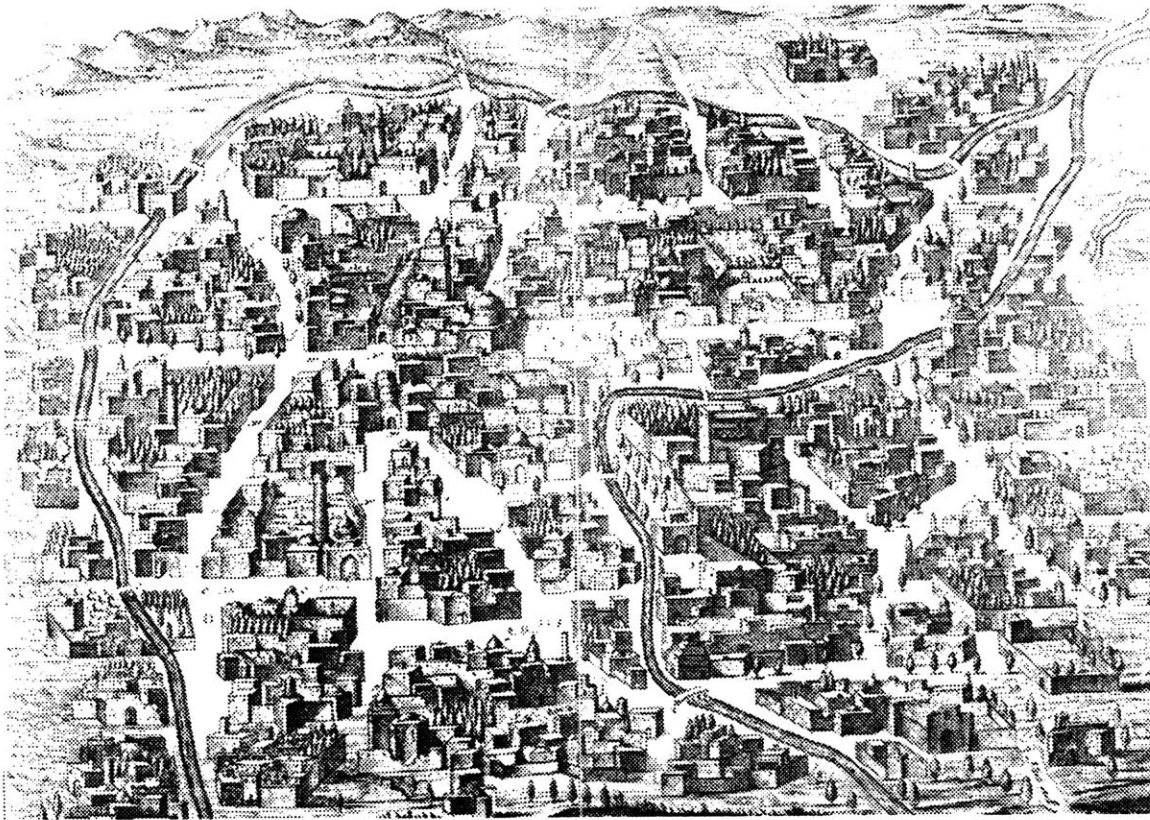
2
Shrine of Shaykh Safi
1637 (Olearius)
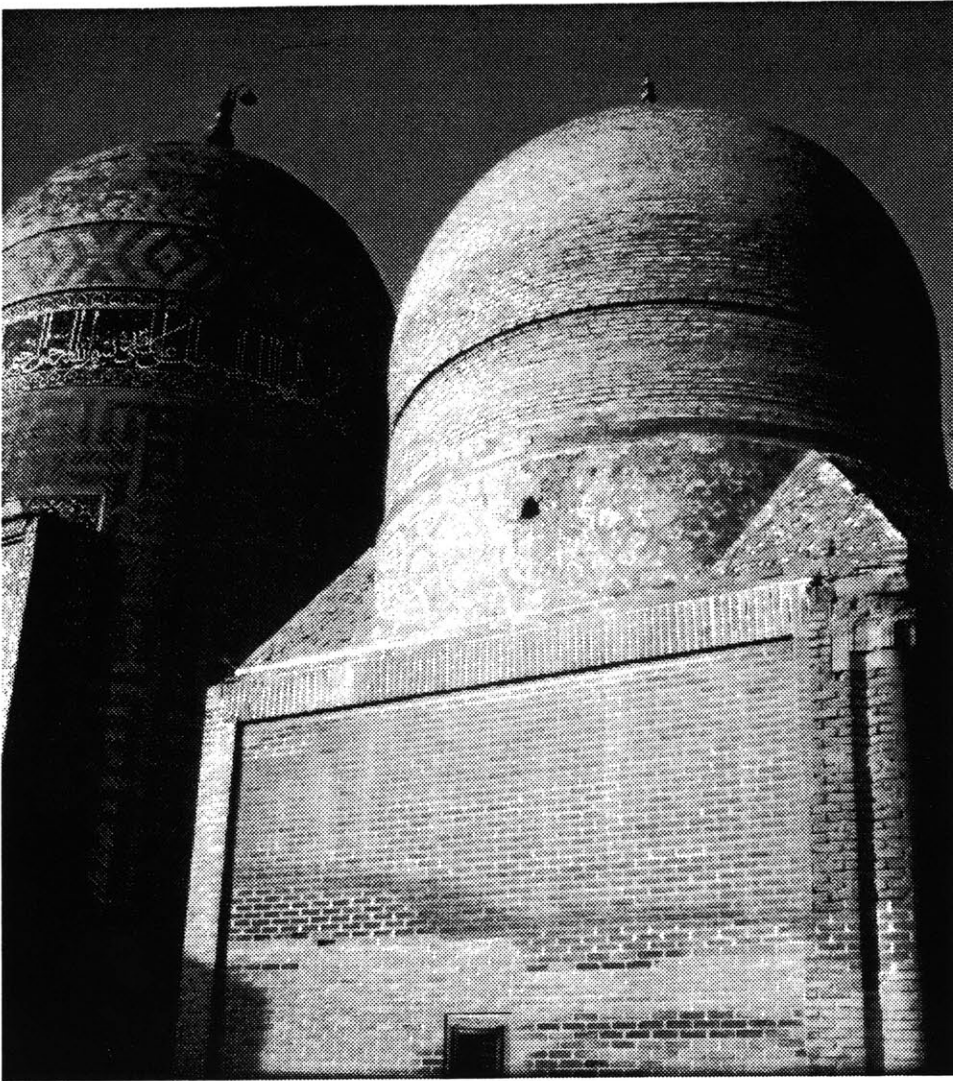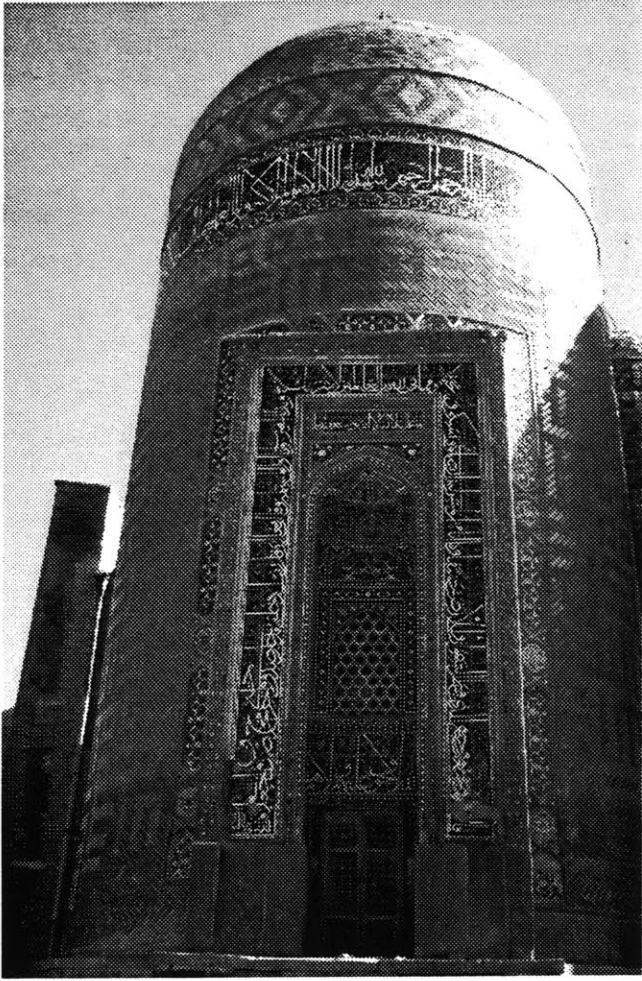
5
Tomb of Shaykh Safi—
Exterior
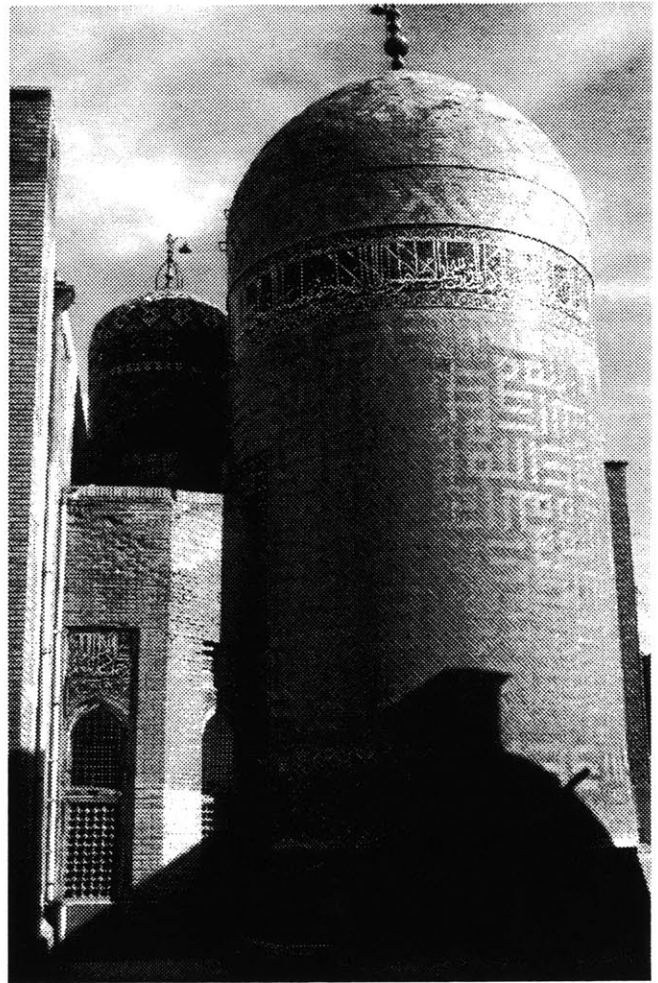
6
Tomb of Shaykh Safi—
Side view at Shahnishin

7
Casket of Shaykh Safi
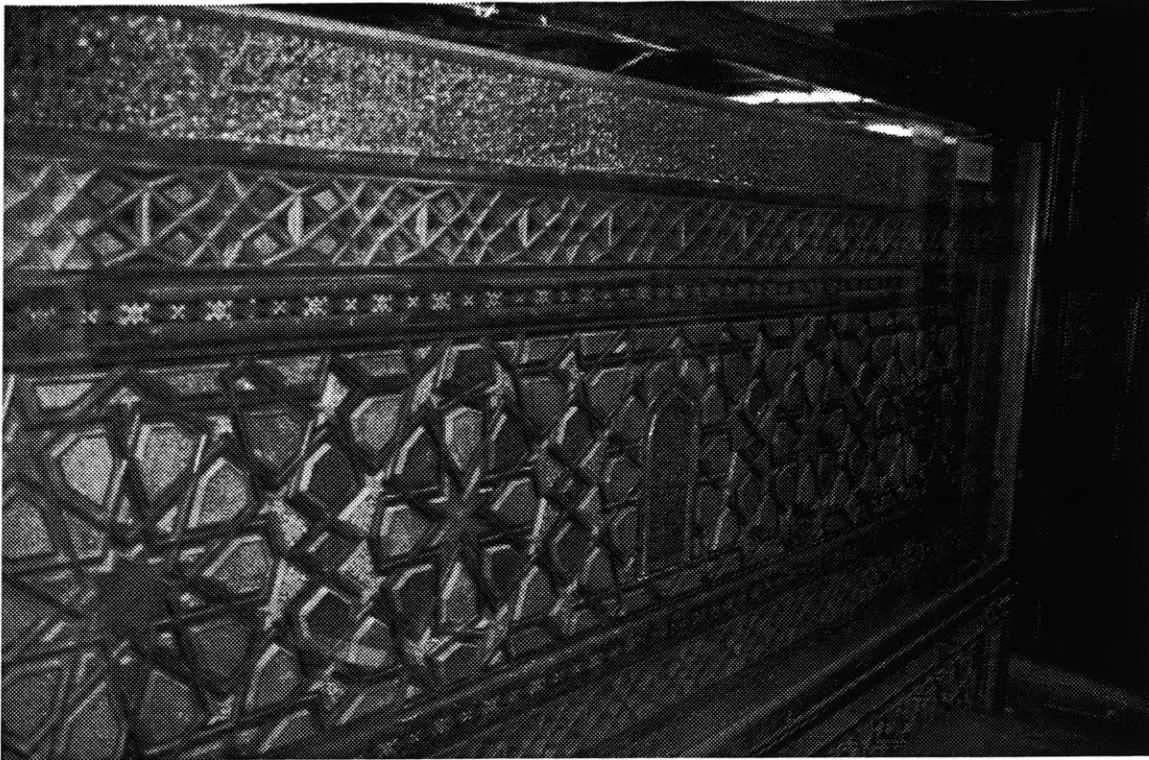
8
Tomb of Shaykh Safi—
Exterior Detail

9
Dar al-huffaz—Exterior

10
Dar al-huffaz—Window detail
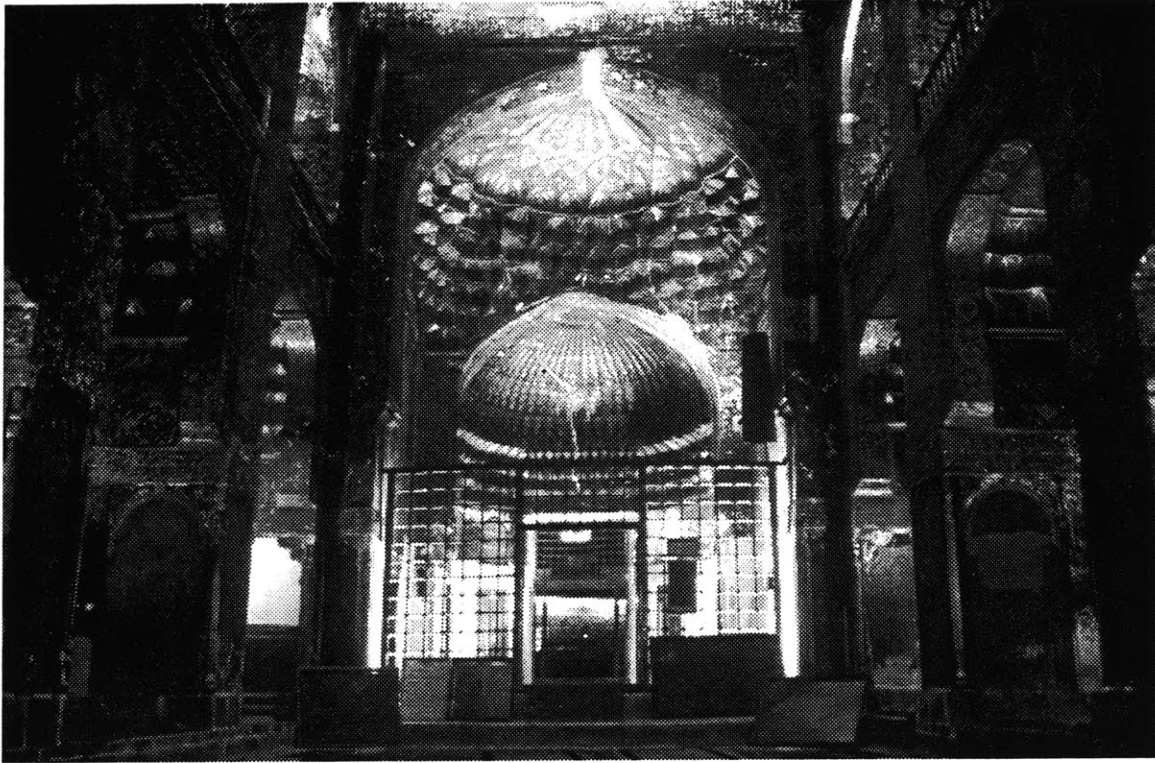
11
Dar al-huffaz—Interior
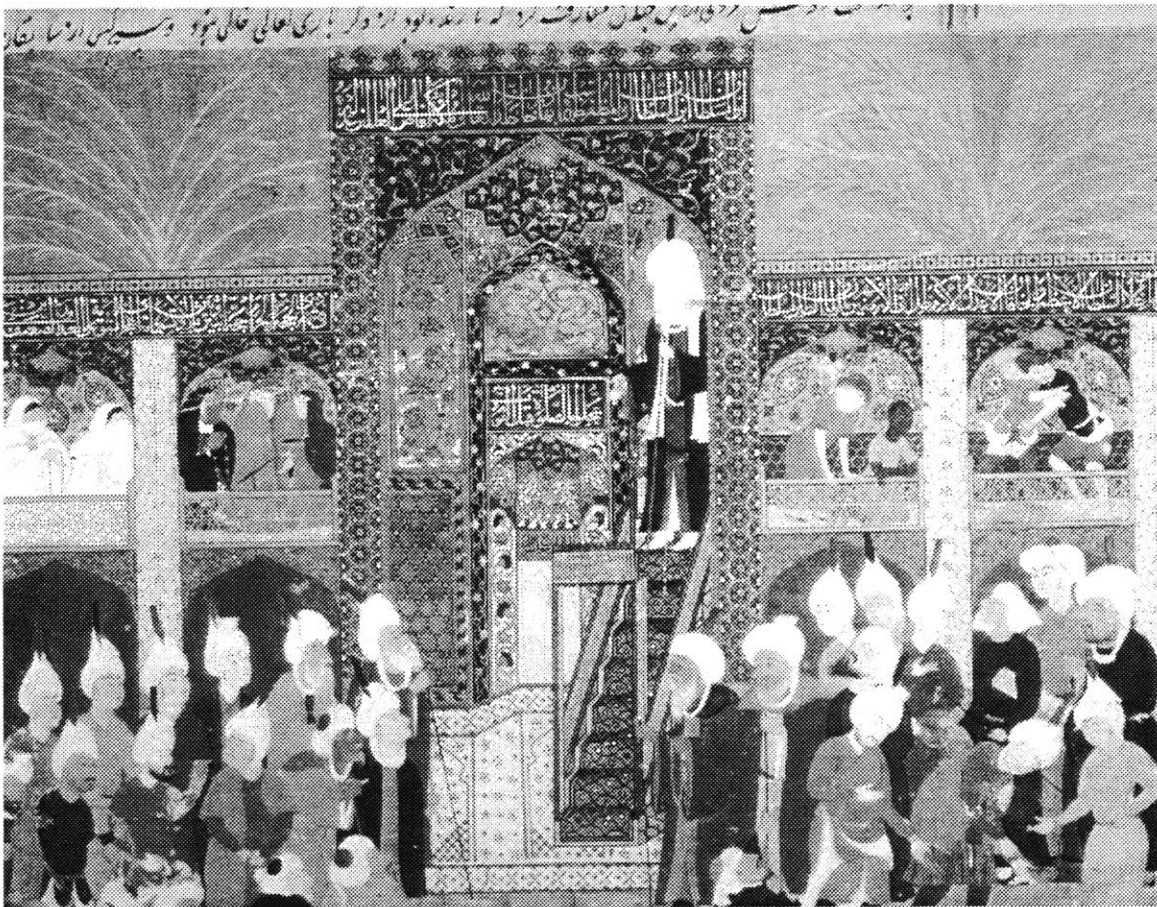
12
"Maulana Hasan giving a sermon," <u>Tarikh-i aima-i ma'sumin</u>, (c. 1526), Veramini, Dorn 312
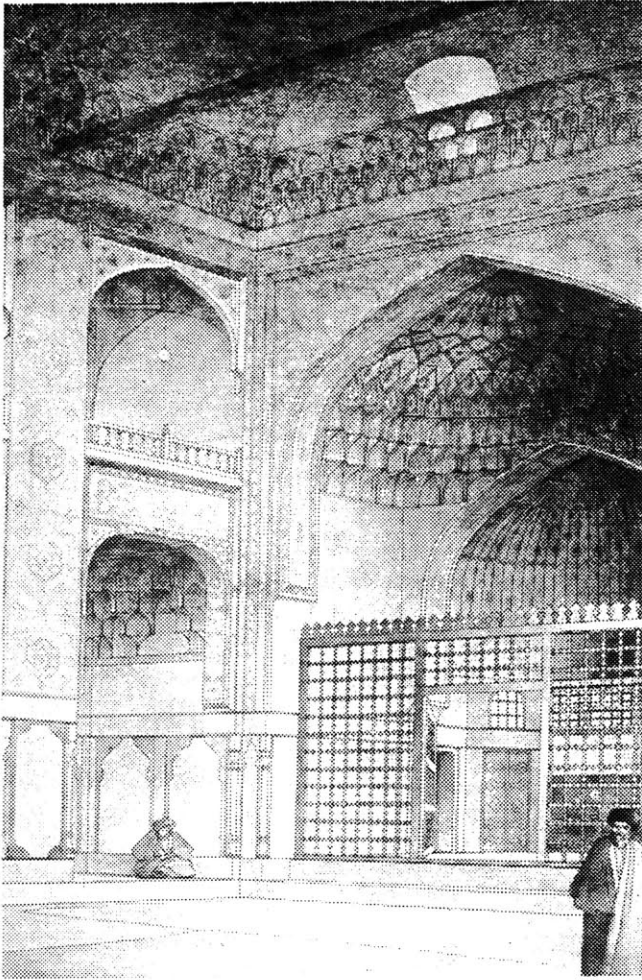
13
Dar al-huffaz—Interior
(Sarre)

14
Dar al-huffaz—Detail at
Shahnishin

16
Dar al-hadith—Exterior
detail

17
Courtyard entrance
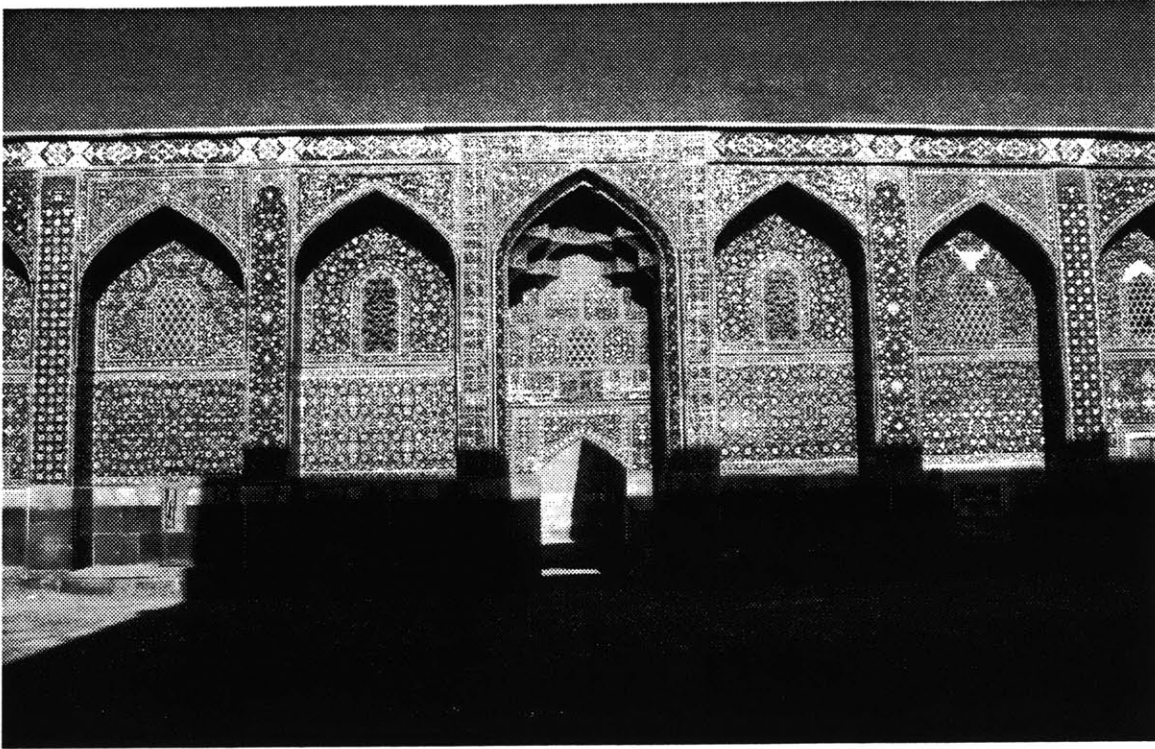
18
Courtyard—Detail of
epigraphy over entrance
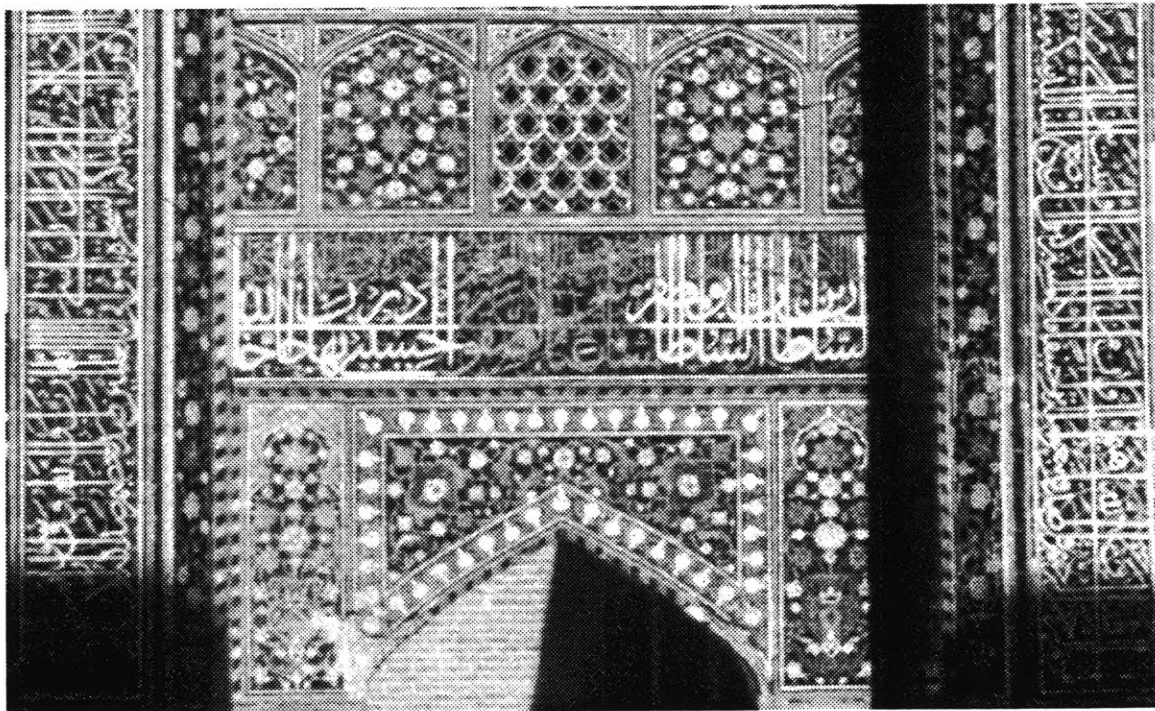
19
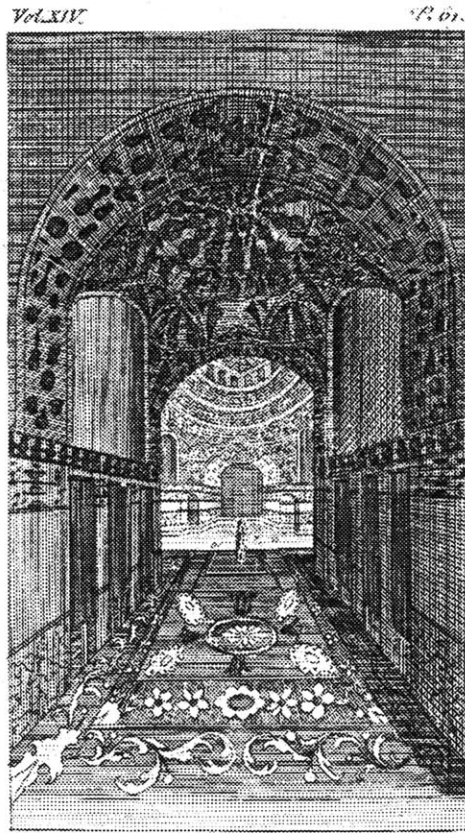Jannatsara—Exterior
facade

20
Jannatsara—Exterior
from cemetery
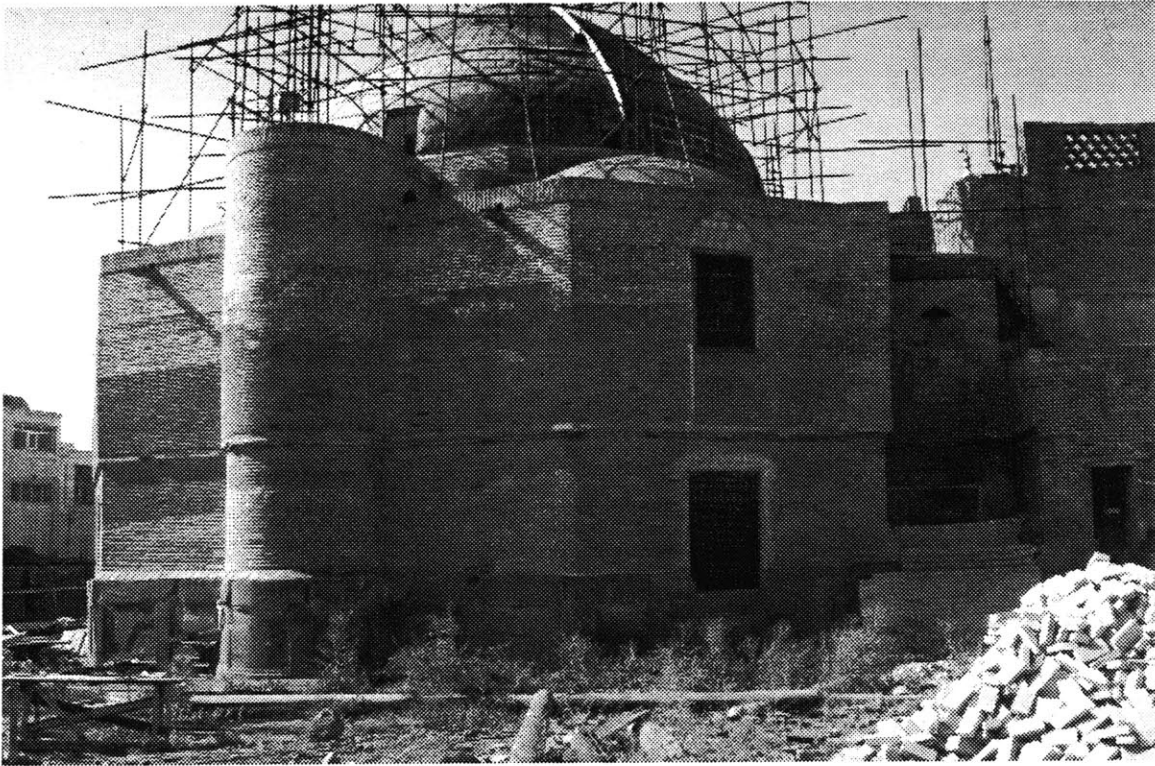
21
Chinikhana—Exterior
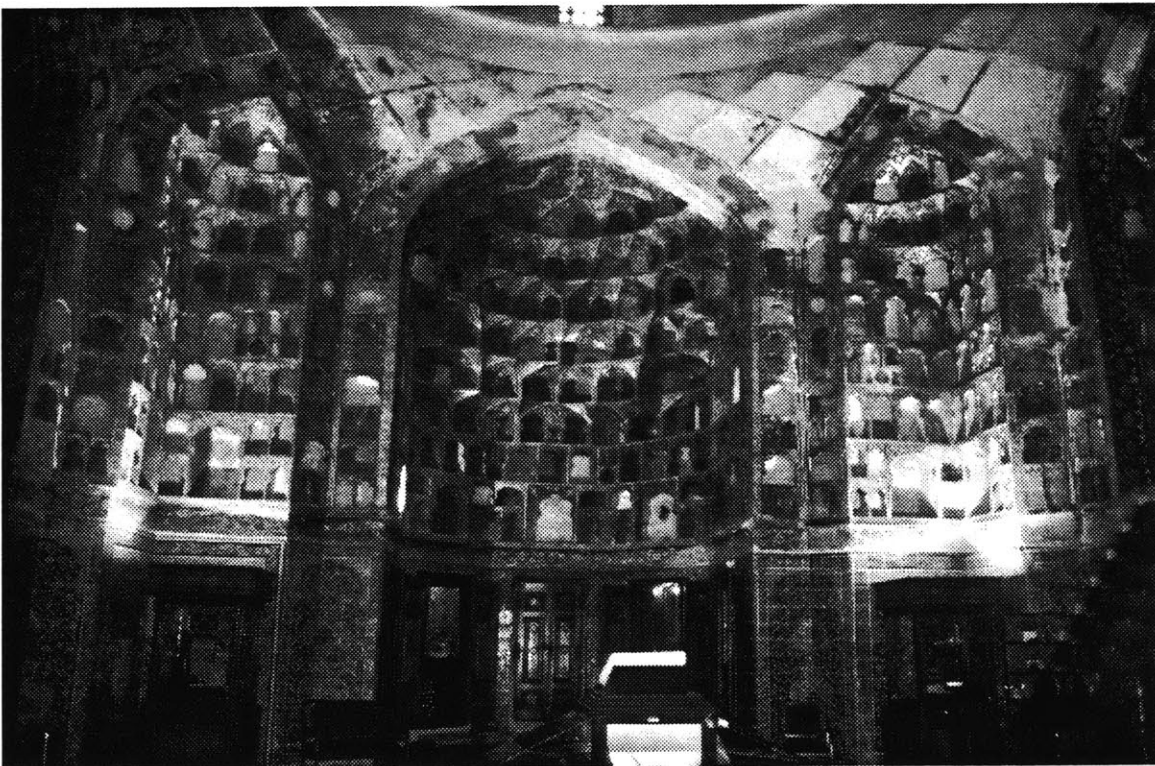
22
Chinikhana—Interior
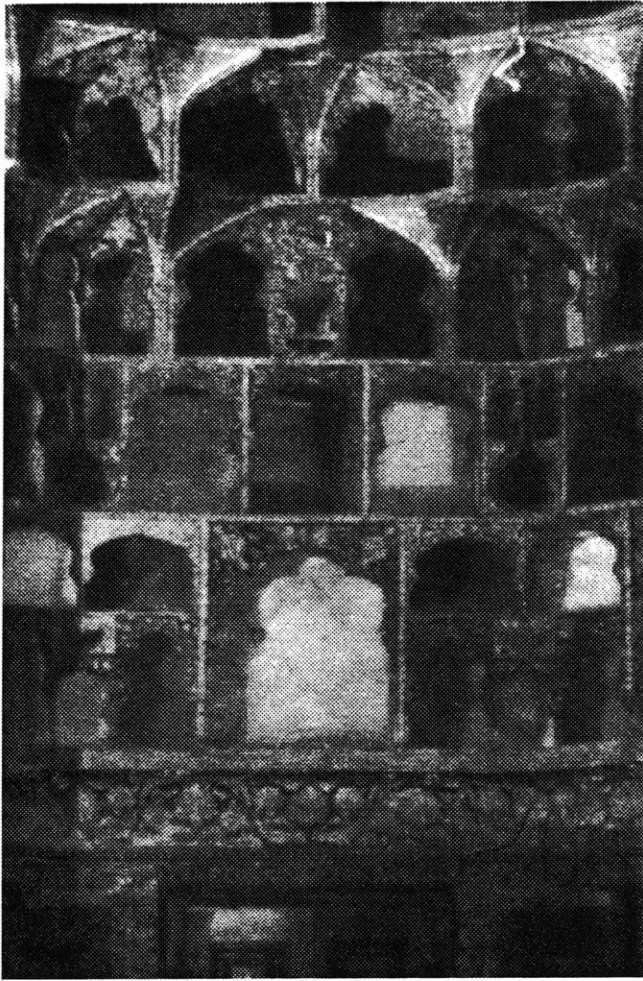
23
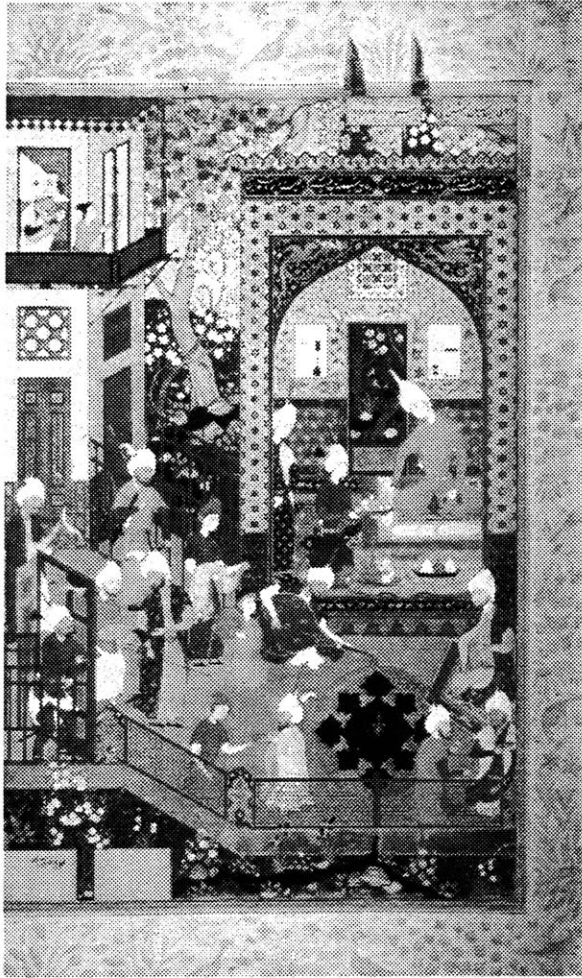Chinikhana—Interior
detail

Vol. XIV.   P. 61.

The Hall in which the Ambassadors
were entertained.

24
Isfahan palace (Olearius)

25
"Khusraw listening to
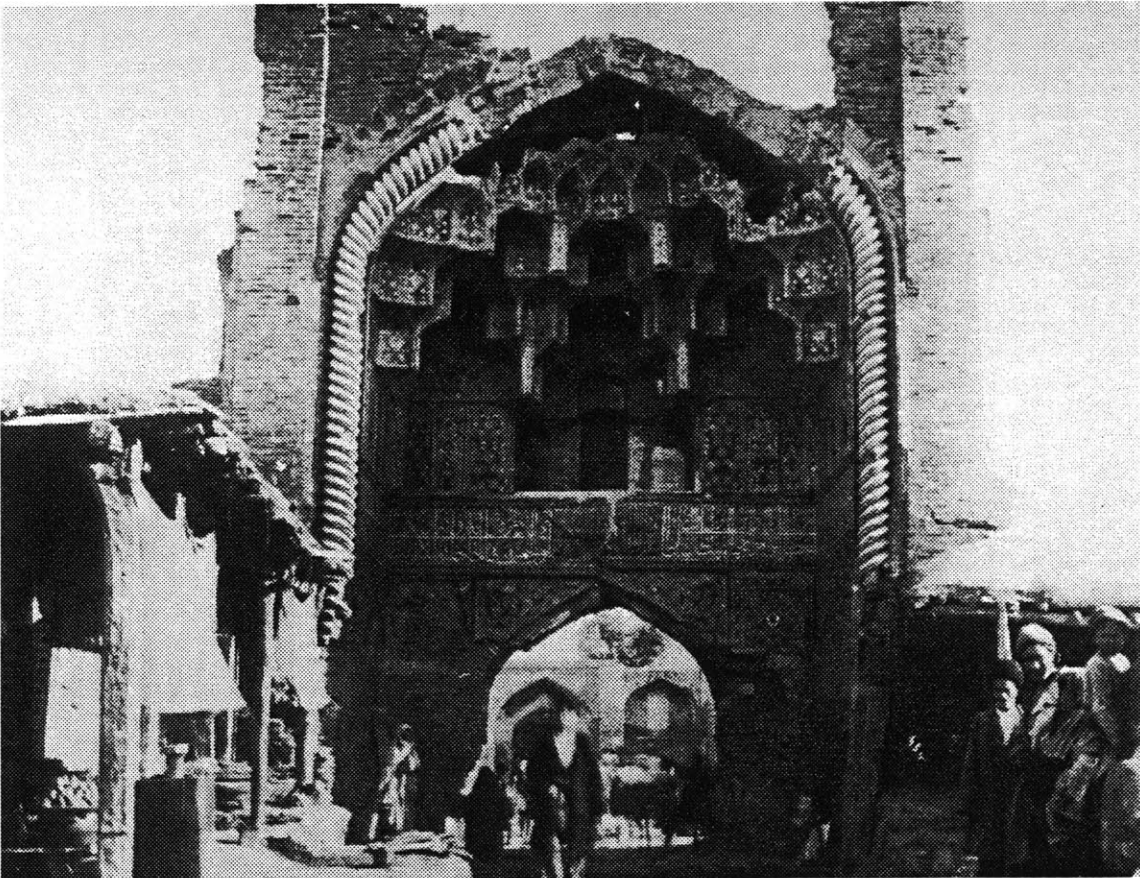Barbad," <u>Khamsa</u>, (c. 1540)
Nizami, OR 2265

26
"Muhamad Tabadkani
dancing with dervishes,"
<u>Majalis al-'ushaq</u> (c. 1520),
Gazurgahi, OR 11837

27
Forecourt

28
Ali Qapu gateway (Sarre)

29
General view—Shrine of
Shaykh Safi 1998