

## The Transformation of Shah Ismail Safevi in the Turkish *Hikâye*

ABSTRACT: As the first Safavid monarch, Shah Ismail Safevi (d. 1524) established a dynasty that ushered Iran into the eighteenth century as a predominately Shi‘ī state. Shah Ismail remains a controversial figure of Islamic history, as evidence suggests that he promoted himself as semi-divine incarnation. This article explores the Turkish minstrel tale (*hikâye*) of Shah Ismail. The *hikâye* is a type of oral narrative that, in this case, is based on a historical figure who promoted himself as a messianic figure. By the time Shah Ismail’s *hikâye* began to circulate in the seventeenth century, however, this belief had largely dissipated. While Shah Ismail’s *hikâye* conforms to the structure of the genre, certain episodes of this cycle reveal the influence of outside sources, including European reports, Safavid chronicles, and Safavid legendary biographies. Despite the apparent basis in history, Shah Ismail’s *hikâye* demonstrates a remarkable transformative ability. Feared as a ruthless despot during his lifetime, Shah Ismail becomes a poetic maestro in the *hikâye*, with his sword replaced by his *saz*, the banjo-like stringed instrument that is the weapon of choice for Shah Ismail’s new persona of folk hero.

SHAH ISMAIL SAFEVI (1487–1524) ESTABLISHED a ruling dynasty that ushered Iran into the eighteenth century as a territorial entity. It was also during the Safavid era (1501–1722) that the population of Iran became predominately Shi‘a as it stands today.<sup>1</sup> Given these noted historical achievements, it is no surprise Safavid chronicles and modern histories alike attend to Shah Ismail.<sup>2</sup> This study goes beyond Shah Ismail’s historical persona to explore how he is presented within the Turkish narrative known as the *hikâye*. In this popular genre of Turkish oral literature, Shah Ismail reemerges as a folk hero.<sup>3</sup> At

the same time, traces of the historical Shah Ismail remain in what is otherwise a fictional tale. In this way, the hikâye accomplishes a remarkable transformation: by retaining the historicity of its main character, the narrative releases him from a historical record confined by demagoguery and defeat.

Although Turkish folklorist İlhan Başgöz translates hikâye as “minstrel tale,” there is no exact equivalent to the hikâye form in Western folklore (1998:24). Turkish folklorists generally define the hikâye as a prose narrative punctuated by frequent intervals of poetry and divide it into two categories—the romantic and the heroic (Boratav 1959:vol. 2, 32; Kononenko Moyle 1990:1–5). Following Başgöz’s lead, I will use the term hikâye for the romantic narratives discussed here.

Before we address Shah Ismail’s hikâye, it is necessary to discuss the historical and spiritual legacy of Shah Ismail as well as the sectarian community associated with him. From the time of his early childhood until the present day, Shah Ismail has been a complex and controversial figure of Islamic history. To his Sunni enemies, Shah Ismail embodied the worst sort of heretic—a successful one, steadily gaining territory from his capture of Tabriz in 1501 until his defeat at Chaldiran by the Ottomans in 1514. The Ottoman Sultan Selim (r. 1512–1520), victor at the battle of Chaldiran, referred to Shah Ismail as “that vile, impure, sinful, slanderous, reprehensible, and blood-thirsty Şūfī cub” (Browne 1902:73–74). Perhaps inspired by the intensity of Ottoman vitriol, within some Christian circles Shah Ismail represented the only serious challenge to Ottoman dominance—at once divine mercy and divine wrath. To his followers, Shah Ismail embodied a range of sacred manifestations as demonstrated by testimonies describing how his partisans entered battle with scant protection, eager to sacrifice their lives for their leader. The poetic voice of Shah Ismail reflects this suicidal loyalty:

We brought this life to the Shah as a sacrifice,  
 The word of the Shah is our faith.  
 Our path is narrow, narrower than narrow,  
 Our rite on this path is relinquishing our heads. (Gandejei 1959:no. 103;  
 Memedov 1966–1973:vol. 1, 134–35)

Shah Ismail is articulating the collective voice of his followers' intent to sacrifice their lives. These verses raise the question of Shah Ismail’s own view of his identity. In the authentic collections of this poetry, we see various proclamations of his exalted status, where he speaks with

other-worldly authority as “the essence of God” and the “eye of God” and “distinct from all that is not God.” Writing with the pen name Ḥaṭā’ī, (The Fallible), Shah Ismail presents himself as the sacrificial model for the sort of uncompromising military force that brought the Safavids to power:

I take life for the souls that praise,  
 As Ḥaṭā’ī, offering his life as a sacrifice, I have come  
 (Gandejei 1959:no. 240; Memedov 1966–1973:vol. 1, 489–90; *Shah Ismā‘īl Safevī* before 1524:no. 122)

In the poem cited above, “I have come” is the constant refrain. Here and elsewhere Shah Ismail explicitly refers to the most anticipated figure in Islamic imagination, the eschatological figure of the *mahdī*, the Islamic messiah.<sup>4</sup> Although belief in the mahdī had permeated Islam by this time, among the Shī‘a this idea of an end-time personification of justice coalesced around certain historical individuals. The major branch of Shī‘ism, as well as the lineage to which Shah Ismail belonged, identified the mahdī with the twelfth Shī‘ī *imām* (supreme spiritual authority) who took his final form of “occultation” in the year 939 AD.<sup>5</sup> Several prominent claimants arose under the mantle of the “Rightly-Guided One” (mahdī), including Shah Ismail who lived during a time of great anticipation of the mahdī’s advent (Arjomand 1984). The notion that Shah Ismail promoted himself as the awaited mahdī comes chiefly from poetic sources. The Shī‘a envisioned the mahdī as a martial figure, promising military chastisement for real injustice, especially for the massacre of ‘Alī’s son Ḥusayn and his family at the battle of Karbalā in 680. In the following stanza from another of Shah Ismail’s poems, this marriage of the martial and the messianic is unmistakable:

The beautiful warriors are unleashed  
 On their heads is the crown of the dynasty  
 This is the mahdī’s time  
 To the cyclical world the eternal light has come (Gandejei 1959:no. 252)

The Turkish language of Shah Ismail’s poetry further suggests that it served as an instrument of Safavid propaganda. The Safavid family sought their legions from several Turkic tribal organizations in order to usurp power from the Turkmen dynasties of Eastern Anatolia and Western Persia. Many individuals among these tribes were loyal to

the Safavids as Islamic mystical (Sufi) masters. Historians credit Shah Ismail's father, Hāydar (d. 1488), with outfitting his battalions with distinctive red headgear, and they became known as the Qizilbash or "Red Heads." As product and heir to this linguistic-cultural milieu, Shah Ismail composed the majority of his poetic corpus in the southern Turkish dialect, what today would be classified as Azeri. But it may be premature to attribute the audacious voice within Shah Ismail's poetry merely to Safavid propaganda or designed to aid in the recruitment of tribal soldiers. Because his mother was a princess from the Aqqyunlu house (the Turkmen "White Sheep" dynasty), Shah Ismail was likely Turkish-speaking from birth.

After his death, Shah Ismail's successors suppressed the belief in Ismail (or any Safavid Shah) as a divine incarnation or mahdī (Babayān 1994). However, spiritual loyalty to Shah Ismail persisted as Qizilbash tribal descendants developed into a sectarian community in Ottoman Anatolia during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The Qizilbash allied with the Bektashi order of dervishes as distinctive Shīʿī beliefs crystallized. In modern times, adherents replaced the term "Qizilbash" with the term "Alevi" (pertaining to ʿAlī) within the Ottoman Empire. Now literary historians in Turkey recognize a category of "Alevi-Bektashi" literature shared by these two otherwise distinct social structures. In this way, by resurrecting the glory of pre-Islamic Persia, Shah Ismail also stands as a figure of the Turkish hikāye and poetic traditions.

Since the inception of folklore studies in Turkey, scholars have emphasized the contribution of heterodox orders and communities (such as the Qizilbash-Alevi and Bektashi) in the development of folklore genres in the Turkish language. Twentieth-century Turkish literary historians, eager to dispense with the religious orientation in their national folk literature, championed the hikāye as a literary genre by which to express human love as opposed to a mystical love or devotional piety. Nevertheless, the hikāye is rooted within Alevi-Bektashi sectarian expression, a connection which was first established by Fuad Köprülü (1962:28–29).

Shah Ismail's hikāye conforms with the general hikāye structure as a literary form, but also reveals nontraditional influences—some of them mythological, some pious, and some historical. Despite these outside influences, the Shah Ismail of the hikāye embodies the traits glorified in this genre, such as romantic loyalty and intense emo-

tionism, and forges a new vision of Ismail. Stripped of his former militaristic associations, he emerges as a post-messianic hero, with his sword replaced by his *saz*, the banjo-like stringed instrument that is the weapon of choice for the hikâye hero.

### The Hikâye

As the common English translation “folk romance” indicates, the hikâye revolves around the amorous exploits of a poet-musician hero, known as an *aşık* (lover). The *aşık*'s separation from his love interest throughout the main narrative does not result from his beloved's coy or cruel volition—as in classical Islamicate poetry—but rather from external circumstances such as meddling parents and rivals. Like all hikâyes, the title of Shah Ismail's hikâye comes from the hero's *mağlaş*, or pen name, which this tradition grants its heroes during the course of the narrative. However, the historical Shah Ismail's actual poetic *mağlaş*, *Ḥatâ'î*, is not associated with his hikâye. Rather, because the hero in the hikâye grew up nameless, his historical name of “Shah Ismail” is presented as his poetic persona. That Shah Ismail's *mağlaş* conforms to his historical identity in these narratives supports the narrator's efforts to convey the hikâye as a true episode of history that took place in a historical time and place among figures who actually lived (Başgöz 1998:25). Other cycles of the genre are similarly based on historical figures: for example, the Safavid Shah 'Abbas (r. 1571–1629) and the Ottoman Sultan Murad IV (r. 1612–1640) are also the subjects of hikâyes (p. 25).

Shah Ismail's hikâye traces back to the seventeenth century, the “Golden Age” of the genre, when other well-known hikâyes also emerged. The hikâye's roots stretch still further to the pre-Islamic epic traditions of Central Asia. According to the dominant scenario of Turkish folklore development, the hikâye form directly evolved from the Turkic epic tradition (Başgöz 1998:70; Boratav 1959). Thus, the hikâye's continuity is maintained as the oral literature of a predominantly sedentary and agricultural society.

The foundation of Turkish folklore as an academic discipline must be understood within the context of Turkish nationalism and its intellectual architect, Ziya Gökalp (Başgöz 1998:41–51). He forged a place for folklore studies in Turkey that was sustained by Köprülü, Pertev Naili Boratav, and their students. The study of Turkish folklore as a part of the Republic's cultural construction during the twentieth century acceler-

ated the large-scale gathering, recording, and publishing of folklore. This activity, first undertaken by the Turkish Folklore Association, continued through “People’s Houses,” which published numerous hikâye variants (Başgöz 1998:48). The published texts employed to describe Shah Ismail’s hikâye structure below resulted from this endeavor.

In his analysis of folklore structure specific to the hikâye, Başgöz adapts the structuralist paradigm outlined in Vladimir Propp’s *Morphology of the Folktale* (1968). Unlike Propp, however, Başgöz rejects the contextual disengagement of the structuralist school and relates the hikâye to its social and cultural significance. Başgöz’s research extends the contextualization of the hikâye in Ottoman-Turkish society to its origins as well as the evolution of its formal structure through performance (1998:64). This methodological synthesis will be useful in discussing the plot of Shah Ismail’s hikâye here as well (Başgöz: 1998:64–75; Propp 1968).

Generally, the hikâye commences with the aşık’s birth and concludes with his marriage. To establish the aşık’s “initial situation,” his family is described in a given time and place. Subsequently, a crisis manifests, typically the lack of a child, which is resolved when the child is born. The aşık faces a pivotal crisis in the narrative during adolescence. When he falls in love the aşık accesses a divine gift—the ability to express his love in poetic song. In the context of performance, the saz accompanies the aşık throughout. The central crisis in the narrative arises from the aşık’s separation from his beloved. A series of obstacles and adventures comprise the remainder of the hikâye, as the aşık endeavors to re-unite with his beloved. During times of trial and exuberance, the aşık turns to poetic song to express his elation, desperation, and distress. The poetry itself takes on a distinctive folk structure and bears little resemblance to Shah Ismail’s historical poetry. The plot of the narrative unfolds in prose (Başgöz 1998:24).

The following description of Shah Ismail’s hikâye is based on Başgöz’s structural analysis altered to accommodate specific structural features of such hikâye based on several publications of Shah Ismail’s hikâye cycle. A comparison of these texts as such is not intended here. Examples of Shah Ismail’s hikâye published in Turkey between 1936–1975 contain few significant variations in form, style, or detail. Only those episodes that contain significant variations or direct quotes will be cited (see Güney 1960; Korgunal 1944; Korok 1937; Maarif Kitaphanesi 1943; Münir 1936; Tevfik 1940).

*Initial Situation and Plot Action One (Crisis)*

The opening segment of Shah Ismail's hikâye describes his parents, who are living in the Iranian city of Kandîhar. Shah Ismail's father is referred to as the sovereign (*padîşah, hükümdar*) of Kandîhar rather than by his proper name. The family crisis of childlessness is compounded by the couple's obligation to provide a successor to the throne of Kandîhar. In line with Başgöz's description, this initial crisis is resolved rapidly and is not the central crisis of the narrative.

When the sovereign articulates the crisis of childlessness to his wife, she advises him to go on a journey to seek a solution. The sovereign encounters a mysterious stranger while resting at a natural spring described as the "fountain of Hızır."<sup>6</sup> The mysterious stranger identifies himself variously as a dervish, a world traveler, or as one of the *Horasan erenleri*, (Enlightened of Khorasan) (Maarif Kitaphanesi 1943:4).<sup>7</sup> Easily identifiable as the "Holy Protector" in Başgöz's terms, the mysterious dervish acts as the broker of divine gifts. Miraculously aware of the sovereign's crisis, he procures an apple and instructs the sovereign to eat half of it, have his wife eat the other half, and to give the peels to his horse. After proper gestation he promises the sovereign will receive both a child and a new horse. The miraculous births transpire just as the Holy Protector had promised. The mysterious stranger requests, however, that the sovereign not name the offspring until they meet again.

*Plot Action One, Part Two: A Childhood in Hiding*

In Başgöz's hikâye structure the initial crisis is resolved by the mysterious stranger and the proffered apple. It is followed by the aşık's coming of age, in which this central transformation to maturity is achieved through his first encounter with his beloved and the manifestation of his artistic gifts. The protagonists' subsequent separation sets the narrative on its main course.

In Shah Ismail's hikâye, the aşık's transformation is preceded by an additional episode, which involves a crisis that has both historical and narrative parallels (Başgöz 2008). At the age of seven, the palace astrologers read the fortune of the nameless prince of Kandîhar. According to some versions, the astrologers advise the sovereign to keep the child hidden from sunlight (Güney 1960; Maarif Kitaphanesi 1943).

In other versions, the child's tutor recommends isolating the boy so that he will not be distracted from his studies (Korgunal 1944; Korok 1937; Münir 1936; Tefvik 1940). In all of these versions, a subterranean structure is built in which the boy spends the remainder of his childhood. He is isolated from the outside world and all human contact with the exception of his tutor.

### *Plot Action Two: Emergence and Transformation*

The hero's destiny emerges in the episode that Başgöz refers to as the "Transformation." In this genre the hero invariably transforms into an "adult-lover-artist" at fifteen (Başgöz 1998:66). The hero also achieves the ideal musical-poetic talents associated with the genre. These qualities, like his *mağlaş*, are not self-generated but are presented as divine gifts. The aşık's "Emergence" from the underground is appended to this transformative sequence because in Shah Ismail's hikâye, this action precedes his transformation proper.

After years of study the nameless prince discovers a bone in his meat (hitherto all bones had been removed from his food). With the bone the prince then smashes a window located at the top of his underground structure and faces sunlight for the first time in years. Accompanied by his tutor, the prince emerges. At this point his father concedes that it is time to give his son a proper name. At this precise moment, the mysterious stranger re-appears, proclaims the prince's name to be Shah Ismail and the name of his horse to be Kamer (moon). The following day, Shah Ismail sets off with Kamer on his first hunting expedition.

According to Başgöz, the aşık's transformation takes place during a dream sequence that resembles an initiation ceremony, most notably drinking from a cup administered by a master, the Holy Protector (1998:66). In Shah Ismail's hikâye, however, Shah Ismail never directly communicates with the mysterious stranger. The poetic gifts bestowed upon him, his *mağlaş*, and indeed his very existence are nevertheless connected to the Holy Protector. Shah Ismail's father, the sovereign of Kandıhar, plays a mediating role in the granting of these gifts.

When the hunting party comes to a natural spring to rest, Shah Ismail suggests they disperse so he may continue the hunt alone. In pursuit of gazelle, Shah Ismail ascends a mountain where he stumbles upon a tent settlement of a Yürük tribe. Struck by the sight of a girl emerging from a tent, he faints and falls from his horse. The hero's



transformation into a poet-musician transpires as he revives from his fainting spell.

This episode completes the transformation of the child into the aşık, with a maḥlas, a gift for composition, and a muse. For the first time, Shah Ismail and his beloved, Gülizar, exchange a series of *mānīs*. One of the principle poetic forms of the hikāye, the *mānī* is an independent quatrain in the syllabic meter (*hece vezni*) (Başgöz 1998:62). The exchange of *mānīs* between the aşık and his beloved is a structure repeated during each of their encounters throughout the narrative. In this, the first poetic exchange, the aşık asks the name of his beloved:

Shah Ismail:

Shah Ismail has come to you,  
Reveal to me your beautiful name,  
Do not let me leave burning with desire,  
Separation is impossible for me!

Gülizar:

Gülizar is your lover,  
I saw your face in my dream,  
By God, this is my confirmation,  
Go now hero, but I am still yours! (Maarif Kitaphanesi 1943:8–10)<sup>8</sup>

During the “duet” above, the protagonists declare their mutual affection and vow unification. And with that promise, Shah Ismail leaves Gülizar to return to his hunting party. He demonstrates his newfound poetic talents to his companions by singing about his new romantic obsession:

Oh brothers! Defenders of the faith!  
I have kissed her, we have absolved ourselves,  
See from what I have departed,  
I have departed from sweet lips!

One day may I be joyful, may I laugh,  
May I attain my desire from the heavens,  
One night may I be her guest,  
I have departed from the rose-faced beloved.

Shah Ismail desires

That the heavens not permit this longing,  
Houri angel, tall as a cypress,  
I have parted from Gülizar! (Maarif Kitaphanesi 1943:10–11)

*Plot Action Three: The Search*

During this episode, the principle crisis of the narrative unfolds. Following a typical plot line, Shah Ismail's father and the father of Gülizar agree to the marriage. The crisis occurs when Gülizar's mother learns of the betrothal. Furious at her husband's arrangement, she demands that their tribe immediately migrate to India (Hindistan). One version gives the following explanation for her brash decision:

How could this [marriage] be? A girl who is born on the back of a horse will die on the back of a horse—a horse is her cradle as well as her grave—do nomadic girls like her enter a gold cage? Her father knows this better than I, he knows, but he cannot oppose the padişah to his face. . . . Let us take a road on a high plateau, one which neither the hands nor the feet of the padişah can reach. (Güney 1960:18)

Upon learning of Gülizar's disappearance, Shah Ismail informs his parents he intends to find her. In most versions, his parents react quite violently. His father tells him, "Go to hell if you want. I have no use for a son like you" (Münir 1936:24). From assembling all the prospective substitute brides in Kandıhar to locking the palace gates, Shah Ismail's parents unsuccessfully try to prevent his departure. Başgöz analyzes the hikâye narrative as representing the adolescent hero's sexual awakening accompanied by rebellion against his father (1998:71). Observing the Freudian family drama played out in the hikâye form, Başgöz states that the aşık's intention to leave and to establish his own family results in his parents' alienation and "the final blow to the little family unity that remains" (p. 71).

*Plot Action Four: Obstacles and Assembling the Harem*

This sequence inaugurates a series of obstacles encountered during the hero's search. According to Başgöz, in hikâye performance the narrator may repeat this episode by varying the obstacles to extend the plot to span several sessions (p. 67). "Assembling the Harem" applies to this segment of Shah Ismail's hikâye, for the two major obstacles that the hero encounters during his search for Gülizar not only result in their successful resolution but also in the aşık's betrothal (or marriage) to additional beloveds (for similar structures, see Boratav 1946:86). The two subsequent love interests, however, do not prevent Shah Ismail from pursuing his first love, Gülizar.

Shah Ismail encounters his first obstacle on the road to Hindistan when he assists five brothers battling giants or dragons. Shah Ismail succeeds in rescuing the brothers. To show their gratitude, the brothers decide to offer their sister, Gülperi, to Shah Ismail in marriage. Shah Ismail agrees to this union, but informs them he must also honor his betrothal to Gülizar. He sets off with their blessing, promising to return for Gülperi.

The obstacle surrounding Shah Ismail's next love interest, however, is less typical. Further on the road to Hindistan, he encounters a terrifying African warrior, called Arab Üzengi (*arab-u zenc* literally, "Black Arab"). In Turkish folklore, "Arab" is also the term employed for Africans who represent several common character types and are distinct from "white" or ethnic Arabs. The African Arab is often portrayed as a super-human giant (Boratav 1951:83). In Shah Ismail's hikâye, Arab Üzengi is similarly presented as a ferocious warrior who is intent on slaughtering all the young men who cross his path. Drawn into a protracted battle with this dreadful African warrior, Shah Ismail reaches the point of certain victory when he makes a shocking discovery: behind the warrior's veil is a beautiful girl.

Shah Ismail's betrothal to Arab Üzengi is established when she explains to him her vow to marry the first man defeating her in battle (Boratav 1951:84). Arab Üzengi furthermore offers to help search for Gülizar. Arab Üzengi's character combines several traits distinct to Africans (Arabs) and women in Turkish folklore. Before her identity is discovered Arab Üzengi is a grotesquely violent African warrior. As a proud cannibal—another practice associated with Africans in Turkish folklore—she prepares a rice dish made with her victims' blood (Boratav 1951:14). Echoing earlier social customs of tribal society, the ideal woman is commonly portrayed in the earlier epic tradition as a warrior (Başgöz 1998:57). Arab Üzengi's violent tendencies subsequently serve to illustrate her fidelity to the aşık when she uses her martial ability to eliminate the hero's most dangerous obstacles (Başgöz 1998:57; Glazer 1978:98–109). In Hindistan, Shah Ismail and Arab Üzengi learn that Gülizar is to marry a prince. During a meeting between Gülizar and Shah Ismail they proclaim their enduring love for one another and decide to set off for Kandihar at once. Protagonists of the hikâye often sleep together before a formal marriage ceremony and Shah Ismail and Gülizar consummate their love at this point (Başgöz 1998:67).<sup>9</sup> After

Arab Üzengi single-handedly kills soldiers pursuing the threesome, they eventually unite with Gülperi and make their way back to Kandıhar.

### *Plot Action Five: Resolution*

Before the successful resolution of the Shah Ismail hikâye, the aşık encounters a final obstacle after his return to Kandıhar. Among the variants, this obstacle differs the most and in one version it is omitted altogether (Korok 1937). In some versions Shah Ismail's mother, jealous of her son's happiness and bounty, convinces her husband to eliminate Shah Ismail and take his women out of spite (Korgunal 1944; Korok 1937; Münir 1936; Tevfik 1940). In other versions, Shah Ismail's mother dies shortly after Shah Ismail's departure in search of Gülizar and the sovereign of Kandıhar remarries. The new wife, Shah Ismail's stepmother, is also the daughter of the sovereign's treacherous vizier. The vizier and his daughter convince Shah Ismail's father that his son plans to kill him and assume the throne (Güney 1960).

Whatever the motivations or agents, the sovereign lures Shah Ismail to the palace attempting to poison him. Due to the foresight of Arab Üzengi, the plot fails. The sovereign orders Shah Ismail's eyes gouged out and then banishes him. Avenging the aşık, Arab Üzengi requests that one hundred ladies-in-waiting be sent to their residence and proceeds to slaughter them one by one. Arab Üzengi then battles the sovereign's army until Shah Ismail returns (after miraculously regaining his sight). They stage a battle wherein Shah Ismail is disguised as a king's soldier. When they challenge the sovereign to deliver the final deathblow to Arab Üzengi, she cuts the sovereign in two with a single stroke.<sup>10</sup>

### *Plot Action Six: Union*

Some versions of Shah Ismail's hikâye use the denouement episode to emphasize the lack of rivalry among the brides of the aşık. After the brides recite their selfless concern for one another in the narrative's final poetic episode, Shah Ismail declares:

I have three beautiful lovers,  
 Their natures are all beautiful!  
 Communing like roses, they do not envy,  
 Their natures are all beautiful!

I see the perfection of Gölizar,  
 That I reach the presence of Gölperi,  
 That I attain happiness from Arab Üzengi,  
 Their statures are all beautiful!

Fortunate men must be like me,  
 They receive their reward from God,  
 They must be full of joy inside,  
 Their natures are all beautiful! (Maarif Kitaphanesi 1943:47–50)

Like most examples of the genre that have come down to us, Shah Ismail's hikâye ends happily.<sup>11</sup> The aşık marries all of his betrothed. Particularly in its conclusion, Shah Ismail's hikâye may seem to depict an idealized hero; however Shah Ismail still emerges as a historical figure.

### Sources Beyond the Hikâye

As shown above, the general structure of Shah Ismail's hikâye conforms to Başgöz's analysis of the genre. Laced within this structure, however, are threads of Shah Ismail's alternative lives. Elements linking Shah Ismail's hikâye to non-folkloric sources perhaps illustrate what Boratav refers to as the genre's "clear tendency towards realism" (1955–2005:374). The reverse is also true: the parallels to Shah Ismail's hikâye reveal a tendency towards fantasy among the first narrators of Safavid history.

Ismail's portrayal as a divine monarch finds its most spectacular expression in contemporary accounts of European envoys, merchants, and spies (Amoretti 1979). As Shah Ismail rose to power on the edge of the Ottoman Empire in 1501, reports intended for the Venetian Republic hailed Ismail as a prophet and a messiah. The aura of sanctity imbued upon the Islamic monarch, it seems, rests in the Christian perspective of the reports. From Ismail's rise to power until his defeat at Chaldiran in 1514, Palmira Brummett analyzes the revival of a distinctly Christian messianic hope, revived and projected upon the young Shah.

Within a few years, these epistles developed into elaborate narratives incorporating unique versions of Ismail's early life (Brummett 1996:338). Like the hikâye, the Christian reports recount that Ismail's formative years were spent in hiding. Associating him with the guidance and protection of an Armenian priest or friar helped perpetuate rumors about Ismail's indebtedness to Christians. Caterino Zeno, a Venetian ambassador dispatched to the Aqqyunlu court to forge

an alliance against the Ottomans, recorded the following version of Ismail's childhood. After their father Ḥaydar's death, Ismail and his brothers dispersed:

one to Natolia, another to Aleppo, and the third to an island in the lake Atamar [Van], inhabited by Armenian Christians and called by the name of the Holy Mother of God, where he remained four years concealed in the house of a priest, without anything being known of it in Persia. This youth, who was called Ismail, was thirteen years old, of noble presence and a truly royal bearing, as in his eyes and brow there was something, I know not what, so great and commanding, which plainly showed that he would yet some day become a great ruler . . . . Therefore the good priest, who professed to be an astrologer and to know the course of events from the aspect of the heavens, cast his horoscope, and foresaw that he would yet become lord of all Asia. On this account he set himself with greater solicitude to serve him, and treated him to the extent of his power with every sort of indulgence and courtesy, thus laying up a debt of the greatest gratitude from him. (Grey 1873b:46–47)

Zeno goes on to mention Ismail's placement in the province of Gilan under the charge of a "very old friend of his father's," Kār Kīyā Mīrzā. According to the official Safavid version Ismail spent his formative years under the care of this independent Shī'ī chieftain before capturing the throne at Tabriz. In this detail, it seems, Zeno partially confirms the historical Safavid sources. However, he claims that Shah Ismail's true "place of concealment" was in the care of the Armenian priest.

The Armenian Christian connection persists throughout the major European accounts of the new Shah rising.<sup>12</sup> A similar version of Ismail's Christian upbringing is found in the 1508 account of an anonymous Italian merchant. The merchant further claims that the good priest tutored Ismail "in our holy faith and in the Scriptures, showing him also the vanity and emptiness of the Mohametan religion" (Grey 1873b:187).<sup>13</sup> An account by Giovan Maria Angiolello similarly relates that Armenian Christians shielded Ismail along with his mother and his brothers. The Christians surrendered the family to the Aqqyunlu after three years, albeit reluctantly. The hosts had loved Ismail especially for "his beauty and pleasing manners" (Grey 1873b:103).

According to Angiolello's account, this was not the first time Ismail had escaped death. He was nearly slaughtered at birth by the order of his own father. Ismail, Angiolello reports, "issued from his mother's womb with fists clenched with blood." In response to what apparently was a

bad omen, his father ordered him taken away and killed. This gruesome anecdote would seem to counter current Christian notions of divine favor except that Ismail's beauty is mentioned here again as the reason those who were ordered to carry out the infanticide spared him (Grey 1873a:103). Reminiscent of Joseph and Oedipus, Angiolello's account, likely gathered from Ottoman sources, is unique for its inclusion of the death orders. But it also shares with the other accounts—European and Persian—a compelling story of a hunted child who, like Jesus and Moses, was marked for death but destined to survive.<sup>14</sup>

The official Safavid version of Shah Ismail's years in concealment would not emerge in writing until the end of his life. Modern historians generally accept the events related through the court chronicles. Khwāndamīr's *Ḥabīb al-Siyar*, completed in the year of Shah Ismail's death (1524), and Ḥasan Rūmlū's *Aḥsan al-Tawārīkh*, begun during Shah Tahmasp's reign (1524–1576), stand as the major Safavid chronicle histories of Shah Ismail's life. Both recount a perilous childhood. These accounts agree that Ismail's childhood was shaped by Kār Kiyā Mīrzā 'Alī's guidance and protection from the feared Turkmen warlords marauding just beyond the province of Gilan. Tutors instructed the young prince in the Qur'ān, he received loyal followers, and he even received the bread he craved from his ancestral home. Rūmlū's chronicle gives considerable detail on the perilous circumstances leading up to Ismail's exile in Gilan. The account includes the murder of Ismail's older brother as well as a suspenseful house-to-house concealment of Ismail in Ardabil.

All these sources recounting Ismail's secretive whereabouts during his formative years constitute a striking precedent for the hikāye's account of Ismail's subaltern years. His concealment before the capture of Tabriz in 1501 might be a historical remnant in the hikāye, parallel to reports and official chronicles. All the narrators—whether Venetian agent, Safavid historian, or itinerant minstrel—recognized the drama. As Khwāndamīr laments in a lavish rhetorical question: “How can a luminary whose mind is capable of ranging the celestial spheres tolerate being in such narrow confines? How can a prince, the finial of whose banner will shed its luminance over the entire inhabited quarter of the globe, suffer eclipse?” (Thackston 1994:565).

Another episode of Shah Ismail's hikāye bearing parallels beyond folklore is Ismail's “Transformation,” during which the hero adopts his destined persona. This episode is integral to the hikāye structure, as

shown by Başgöz's analysis. A similar coming-of-age episode is found in a category of Safavid literature known as the "Anonymous Lives of Shah Ismail." These are later narratives in which elements of Safavid history are exaggerated and miracles are commonplace.<sup>15</sup> Andrew Morton traces the origins of these narratives to the repertoire of popular professional storytellers observed by Michele Membré during the time of Shah Tahmasp (r. 1524–1576) (Aubin 1984:1; Morton 1993:52). One legendary narrative in particular—known widely as the "Ross Anonymus"—has played a significant role in the modern re-construction of Safavid history because of erroneous dating. For decades, historians considered it a near contemporary of Khwāndamīr's *Ḥabīb al-Siyar*, which was completed in 1524 (Ross 1896:251). However, since Morton has recently dated this composition as late as the 1680s there is compelling reason to view the "Ross Anonymus" in the same way as the legendary "Lives of Ismail" (1990:181). The *khurūj* episode is another reason to regard the "Ross Anonymus" in this way.

In all of these legendary biographies, the narrators employ the term *khurūj*—denoting an emergence or coming out—to designate the transformative episode in question. The episode is a significant complex of events recounting Ismail's departure from Gilan under the protection of Kār Kiyā Mīrzā 'Alī. The emergence represents a pivotal turn in Safavid history—the point when the Safavids successfully challenge the Aqqyunlu and establish Safavid rule. Like the hikāye version in which Ismail emerges from his underground bunker, it is a coming-of-age for the hero. The episode also stands as a record of a mystical experience revealing both Ismail's associations with a messianic identity and the charismatic powers of his followers.

The "Ross Anonymus" weaves the *khurūj* episode between two events taking place simultaneously in time and within the vision of one of Ismail's disciples. The following account of Ismail's *khurūj* is from Ross's translation (1896:326–33). The section begins with Ismail informing Kār Kiyā Mīrzā of his intention to depart for Ardabil, the seat of his ancestral authority. Following this pronouncement, Ismail goes hunting with his Sufi companions. When they come to a forest Ismail tells them, "No one of you is to follow me across this river, but you are to await my return on the other side." Ismail then enters the forest alone. At the same time the "Ross Anonymus" extends Ismail's charisma to his disciples by introducing a visionary witness to Ismail's "emergence"—Dede Muḥammad, of the important Rūmlū tribe.<sup>16</sup> The



narrative then proceeds to the vision of Dede Muḥammad Rūmlū, which occurs after his pilgrimage to Mecca. On the return journey, Dede Muḥammad is separated from his caravan. He spends three days wandering through the desert “supported only by spiritual power.” At the point of death he encounters an “Arab youth” who leads him to a palace with golden thrones. Seated on a throne inside is a veiled figure. At one point, a group enters. Among them is a “boy of about fourteen years of age, with red (*surkh*) hair, a white face, and dark-gray eyes; on his head was a scarlet cap.” The culmination of the episode is the exchange between the boy and the veiled figure:

The veiled youth then said to him: “Oh! Isma‘il, the hour of your ‘coming’ has now arrived.” The other replied: “It is for your Holiness to command.” The prince then said: “Come forward.” He came forward, and His Holiness taking his belt three times lifted it up and placed it on the ground again. He then, with his own blessed hands, fastened on the girdle, and taking [Isma‘il’s] cap from his head, raised it and then replaced it. . . . His Holiness then told his servants to bring his own sword, which, when brought, he fastened with his own hands to the girdle of the child. Having recited the Fāṭiḥa he entrusted the child to the two or three persons who had brought him in. (Ross 1896:330–31)

After witnessing this exchange between the figure on the throne and the boy in the red hat—identified by name as Ismail—the Arab youth escorts Dede Muḥammad to his lost caravan. At this point, he asks his guide the identity of the veiled figure. The Arab youth replies that he was the “Lord of the Age.” The main storyline then returns to the group of Sufis waiting for Ismail at the river as requested. Upon seeing Ismail emerge from the forest with a sword, they prostrate themselves. Accompanied by seven Sufis, Ismail sets off for Ardabil.

Wheeler Thackston presents a khurūj narrative from the anonymous history *‘Ālamārā-yi Shāh Ismā‘īl*, which differs substantially from the Ross version only in the identities of the visionaries (1989:55–56). The veiled figure girds Ismail with a sword, telling him, “My son, you have permission to withdraw.” After the visionary dervish is led away from the scene, he asks his Arab escort the identity of both the boy and the veiled one. He is asked, “Have you still not realized that the king was the Master? The boy was His Majesty Shah Isma‘il, son of Sultan-Haydar. The Master gave him permission to emerge” (p. 55–56).

The hikâye reflects these mythic khurūj episodes by presenting the transformation of the hero preceded by a venture into the wilderness alone. In the hikâye, only one day after receiving his name from the mysterious dervish, Shah Ismail displays his poetic gifts for the first time. In these Persian legendary histories, this wilderness venture is the setting for his investiture by the Hidden Imām. In all versions, Ismail returns to his band of loyal companions to embark on his mission. Both traditions relate a fulfillment of destiny through coming-of-age—in the khurūj, from a hunted child to world conqueror; in the hikâye, from a hidden, nameless child to poetic maestro.

In these narratives the terminology for the figure on the throne is unmistakable: the “Veiled One,” the “Lord of the Age,” the “Master”—all terms commonly associated with the mahdī. Unlike Shah Ismail’s own poetry, these narratives are careful not to confound the identities of the adolescent Shah with the mahdī. Rather, the mahdī gives Ismail permission to emerge and thereby invests him as his representative. Coming decades after Ismail’s reign, these narratives proliferated during a time when the Safavid establishment discouraged any extraordinary devotion to the person of the Shah reminiscent of Safavid messianic foundations. Rather than reflecting beliefs held during his rise to power about his sacred identity, the portrayal of Ismail in the khurūj sequence conforms to a post-mortem image of Ismail.

In the hikâye, the post-messianic context of Shah Ismail’s image further reveals itself through his conformity to the ideal of the aşık. The idealized traits specific to the genre present themselves primarily through poetic expression of human love and only secondarily in his martial talents. Although Shah Ismail occasionally is forced to utilize his sword, military-heroic skills are not his true gifts. Stripped of the sectarian militancy that characterizes the poetry of the historical Shah, as the hero of the hikâye, Ismail uses verse to express a distinctly earthly devotion. Once in battle, however, his poetic expression recalls his former lives as a warrior.

Shah Ismail came, he entered the battlefield,  
Advancing his horse, attacking the enemy,  
Wielding Zūlfikar, may it be painted with blood,  
Lord have mercy! God, help me! (Tevfik 1940:31)

The reference to Zūlfikar, ‘Alī’s double-edged sword, recalls the militant sectarianism of Shah Ismail’s rise to power and his early political career. The battlefield sequences notwithstanding, the Shah Ismail of

the hikâye is a lover and not a fighter. He would prefer to avoid battle were it not necessary to secure his love interest. Before the true identity of Arab Üzengi is revealed, Shah Ismail pleaded to the African warrior in an exchange of *mānīs*:

Shah Ismail:

I hail from Kandīhar in pursuit of my desire,  
Have mercy, Arab. Come on, don't hurt me!  
Allow me to go my own way,  
Have mercy, Arab. Come on, don't hurt me!

Arab:

I have taken many so many victims like this,  
You'll see this castle is built of skulls,  
Do not be shocked and let yourself tremble,  
Those who come depart by losing their heads.

Shah Ismail:

If I rise, taking my lance in my hand,  
Reciting the names of Hızır and "The Forty"<sup>17</sup> on my tongue,  
Then my Lord will come to the aid of Shah Ismail,  
For the love of God, don't hurt me. (Tevfik 1940:36–38)

This exchange between Shah Ismail and the Arab Üzengi symbolizes a literary triumph over Shah Ismail's militant persona. In the historical record, Shah Ismail displays violent excess during an excessively violent age, but the warrior raging on behalf of cosmic justice does not endure Shah Ismail's military defeats. Survival in the popular imagination required a transformation. To reiterate, the Shah Ismail hikâye likely took form during the seventeenth century, the same period that witnessed the proliferation of Safavid legendary narratives of Shah Ismail's life. Although a common source for the hikâye and the Safavid mythic narratives would be impossible to surmise at this point, both genres can be said to represent later ideals connected to Shah Ismail rather than beliefs held during his lifetime. These narratives present visions of a former messiah who has been transformed into a folk hero, endowed with talents appropriate to the genres. The hikâye presents its ideal hero, not in the ordinary sense of a warrior but as a lover and a singer of love poetry. Shah Ismail finds himself ultimately at the mercy of the hikâye, preferring to make love, not war.

## Notes

1. Shīʿism is the major sectarian division standing outside the “orthodox” Sunni majority in Islam. Derived from the word “party,” the first Shīʿa promoted the candidacy of ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭalīb, the cousin and son-in-law of the prophet Muḥammad (d. 632) as his rightful successor (caliph). After the death of ʿAlī in 661, the Shīʿa formed a religious community with the development of distinct sources of authority and law.

2. The only biography in English remains Ghulam Sarwar’s 1939 monograph, *History of Shāh Ismāʿīl Safawī*. Other seminal studies of Shah Ismail include Roemer 1986:189–350 and Aubin 1988:1–130.

3. This article was written in part based on materials from my dissertation, which explored Shah Ismail’s transformation through other genres of literature as well (Gallagher 2004).

4. The Qurʾanic term *al-masīḥ* (messiah) indicates pre-Christian usage as the “Anointed One.” Although there are eschatological associations with *al-masīḥ* in Islamic belief, the role of the mahdī (the “Rightly-Guided One”) came to dominate popular notions of an apocalyptic return of justice and has been the figure most readily activated throughout Islamic history. Thus, reference to this religiosity in the Islamic context is technically “mahdistic” rather than “messianic,” but for purposes of style, the term “messianic” is used here.

5. The term *ghayba* indicates the state of the last *imām* of this line, Muḥammad al-Mahdī, who had not died a physical death, but rather went into a supranatural “hiding” or occultation in the year 941 CE. The period of this *ghayba* will come to an end when the mahdī manifests to initiate his reign on earth before the end of time.

6. Identified with the mysterious guide of Moses in the Qurʾān (18:65), Khidr is a prominent figure in Islamic piety and he is associated with spiritual guidance, eternal vitality, and the “Waters of Life.”

7. In Sufi culture, Khorasan remains a venerable place as home to early Sufi saints and influential movements.

8. All translations from the Turkish are mine.

9. The sleeping episode during the flight from Hindistan transpires in all versions of Shah Ismail’s hikāye employed here. The following passage is a representative example: “Benefiting from this opportunity, Shah Ismail and Gülizar began to love each other [*sevişme*] and then fell into a sweet sleep” (Korok 1937:19). In what is perhaps an attempt to introduce traditional sexual mores, one version states explicitly that Shah Ismail and Gülizar sleep separately: “Şah İsmail ile Gülizar ayrı ayrı yerde yattılar” (Münir 1936:50).

10. In the versions in which Shah Ismail’s father has been deceived by the vizier and his daughter, the sovereign is spared in the end. Realizing his error, the sovereign abdicates the throne in favor of Shah Ismail.

11. On the transformation of the hikāye from tragedy, see Başgöz 1998:68, 70.

12. The Portuguese explorer Tomé Pires identifies his Christian protectors as relatives of Shah Ismail’s mother (Hakluyt Society 1944:26–27).

13. In the 1518 account of the Portuguese explorer Duarte Barbosa, however, Ismail was forced to escape from the Armenian friar, “lest he should slay him as a Moor” (Dames 1918:1, 83–84).

14. A notable exception is the account left by the physician Giovanni Rota (in a relation to the Doge of Venice, written before 1508) which conforms to Safavid sources concerning Ismail's childhood in hiding (Jodogne 1980:215–34).

15. Although further research on these legendary narratives is desirable, their existence has been noted for some time and two versions have been published: Muntazir-Şāhib 1970 and Shukrī 1971.

16. He is in turn identified as the disciple of “Ḥasan Khalifa Tikeli.” In this way, the author links the visionary of Ismail's khurūj to the family at the helm of the 1511 Şāh Kūli Tekkelū revolt against Ottoman authorities in Anatolia.

17. In Alevi-Bektashi legend, “The Forty” are identified as those family members and companions present with Alī during the Prophet's night journey and ascension to heaven (*miʿrāj*).

## References Cited

Amoretti, Biancamaria Scarcia, ed.

1979 *Şāh Ismāʿil I nei Diarii di Marin Sanudo*. Rome: Istituto per L'Oriente.

Arjomand, Said Amir

1984 *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam: Religion, Political Order and Societal Change in Shi'ite Iran from the Beginning to 1890*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Aubin, Jean

1984 “Revolution chiite et conservatisme: les soufis de Lâhejân, 1500–1514.” *Moyen Orient & Océan Indien* 1:20–29.

1988 “L'avènement des Safavides reconsidéré.” *Moyen Orient & Océan Indien* 5:1–130.

Babayan, Kathryn

1994 “The Safavid Synthesis: From Qizilbash Islam to Imamite Shi'ism.” *Iranian Studies* 1/4:135–61.

Başgöz, İlhan

1998 *Turkish Folklore and Oral Literature: Selected Essays of İlhan Başgöz*, ed. Kemal Silay. Bloomington: Indiana University.

2008 *Hikâye: Turkish Folk Romance as Performance Art*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Beveridge, H.

1902 “The Author of the Life of Shāh Ismāʿil Şafavī.” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 34:889–95.

Boratav, Pertev

1946 *Halk Hikâyeleri ve Halk Hikâyeciliği*. Ankara: Millî Eğitim Basımevi.

1951 “The Negro in Turkish Folklore.” *Journal of American Folklore* 64/251:83–88.

1955–2005 “Hikâya: The Narrative Genres of Turkish Literature and Folklore.” *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. 3, 374. New Edition.

1959 “L'Épopée et la Hikâye.” In *Philologiae Turcae Fundamenta*, ed. Pertev Boratav, vol. 2, 11–44. Weisbaden: Aquis Mattiacis Apud Franciscum Steiner.

Browne, Edward G.

- 1902 *Modern Times (1500–1924)*, Literary History of Persia, vol. 4. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Brummett, Palmira

- 1996 “The Myth of Shah Ismail Safavi: Political Rhetoric and ‘Divine’ Kingship.” In *Medieval Christian Perceptions of Islam: A Book of Essays*, ed. John Victor Tolan, 331–59. New York: Garland.

Dames, Mansel Longworth, ed. and trans.

- 1918 *The Book of Duarte Barbosa: An Account of the Countries Bordering on the Indian Ocean and Their Inhabitants, Written by Duarte Barbosa, and Completed about the Year 1518 A. D.* London: Hakluyt Society.

Eberhard, Wolfram

- 1955 *Minstrel Tales from Southeastern Turkey*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Gallagher, Amelia

- 2004 *The Fallible Master of Perfection: Shah Ismail Safavi in the Alevi-Bektashi Tradition*. Ph.D. diss., McGill University.

Gandjevi, Turkhan, ed.

- 1959 *Il Canzoniere di Šāh Ismā‘īl Ḥatā‘ī*. Napoli: Istituto Universitario Orientale.

Glazer, Mark

- 1978 “Women Personages as Helpers in Turkish Folklore.” In *Studies in Turkish Folklore in Honor of Pertev N. Boratav*, ed. İlhan Başgöz and Mark Glazer, 98–109. Bloomington: Turkish Studies, Indiana University.

Grey, Charles, ed. and trans.

- 1873a “A Short Narrative of the Life and Acts of the King Ussun Cassano by Giovan Maria Angiolello.” In *A Narrative of Italian Travels in Persia in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries*, 76–138. London: Hakluyt Society.

- 1873b “Travels in Persia by Caterino Zeno.” In *A Narrative of Italian Travels in Persia in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries*, 139–207. London: Hakluyt Society.

Güney, Rezzan

- 1960 *Şah İsmail*. İstanbul: Yeditepe Yayınları.

Hakluyt Society

- 1944 *The Suma Oriental of Tomé Pires: An Account of the East, From the Red Sea to Japan. Written in Malacca and India in 1512–1515*. London: Hakluyt Society.

Jodogne, Pierre, ed.

- 1980 “La ‘Vita del Sofi’ di Giovanni Rota. Edizione Critica.” In *Studi in onore di Raffaele Spongano*, 215–34. Bologne: M. Bono.

Kononenko Moyle, Natalie

- 1990 *Turkish Minstrel Tale Tradition*. New York: Garland Publishing.

Köprülü, Fuad

- 1962 *Türk Saz şâirleri: Türk Edebiyatında Aşık Tarzının Menşe ve Tekâmülü—XVI. ve XVII. Asır Saz şâirleri*. Ankara: Milli Kültür Yayınları.

Korgunal, Muharrem Zeki

- 1944 *Şah İsmail*. İstanbul: Ak-ün Basımevi.

Korok, Dâniş Remzi

- 1937 *Şah İsmail*. İstanbul: Türk Neşriyat Yurdu.

- Maarif, Kitaphanesi  
 1943 *Şah İsmail*. İstanbul: Maarif Kitaphanesi.
- Memedov, Azizaga, ed.  
 1966-1973 *Shah Ismail Khatai: Asarlari*, vol 1. Baku: Elm Nashriiaty.
- Morton, Andrew H., ed.  
 1990 "The Date and Attribution of the *Ross Anonymous*. Notes on a Persian History of Shah Ismā'īl I." In *History and Literature in Iran: Persian and Islamic Studies in Honour of P. W. Avery*, ed. Charles Melville, 179–212. Cambridge: Center for Middle Eastern Studies.
- 1993 *Mission to the Lord Sophy of Persia (1539–1542)*. London: School of Oriental and African Studies.
- Münir, Selâm  
 1936 *Şah İsmail Hikâyesi*. İstanbul: Yusuf Ziya Kitapevi.
- Muntazir-Şâhib, Aşghar, ed.  
 1971 *Ālamārâ-yi Shâh Ismâ'īl*. Tehran: BTNK.
- Propp, Vladimir  
 1968 *Morphology of the Folktale*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Roemer, Hans  
 1986 "The Safavid Period." In *The Timurid and Safavid Periods*, Cambridge History of Iran, vol. 6, 189–350. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ross, E. Denison  
 1896 "The Early Years of Shâh Ismâ'īl, Founder of the Şafavî Dynasty." *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 28:249–340.
- Sarwar, Ghulam  
 1939 *History of Shâh Ismâ'īl Şafavî*. Aligarh: Muslim University.
- Shâh Ismâ'īl Şafavî  
 [Before 1524] *Dīvân of Shah Ismâ'īl Haṭâ'î*. MS, Sackler Gallery. Transcription of original by Wheeler Thackston.
- Shukrî, Yadallâh, ed.  
 1971 *Ālamārâ-yi Şafavî*. Tehran: Bunyâdi-I Fehang-i Īrân.
- Tevfik, Süleyman  
 1940 *Şah İsmail*. İstanbul: Kültür Basımevi.
- Thackston, Wheeler  
 1989 "The *Diwan* of Khata'i: Pictures for the Poetry of Shah Ismâ'īl I." *Asian Art* 1:37–63.
- 1994 *Khuwandimîr: Habibu's-Siyar, Tome Three*. Cambridge: Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations.

---

AMELIA GALLAGHER received her Ph.D. from the Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University. She currently teaches religious studies at Niagara University. (ameliag@niagara.edu)

Copyright of Journal of Folklore Research is the property of Indiana University Press and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.