ISFAHAN AND ISTANBUL IN THE EARLY SEVENTEENTH CENTURY: MASJED-E SHAH AND SULTAN AHMED COMPLEXES

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2022

ISFAHAN AND ISTANBUL IN THE EARLY SEVENTEENTH CENTURY: MASJED-E SHAH AND SULTAN AHMED COMPLEXES

Thesis submitted to the

Institute for Graduate Studies in Social Sciences

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

History

by

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2022

Isfahan and Istanbul in the Early Seventeenth Century:

Masjed-e Shah and Sultan Ahmed Complexes

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- This thesis contains no material that has been submitted or accepted for a degree or diploma in any other educational institution;
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ABSTRACT

Isfahan and Istanbul in the Early Seventeenth Century:

Masjed-e Shah and Sultan Ahmed Complexes

This dissertation investigates the urban, architectural, and ceremonial formations of the Sultan Ahmed and Masjed-e Shah complexes, erected in early seventeenth-century Istanbul and Isfahan by rival monarchs, Ahmed I (r.1603–1617) and Abbas I (r.1587–1629) respectively. This study conceptualizes these Friday mosque complexes as platforms manifesting their patrons' comparable imperial agendas and analogous confessional policies through monumental architecture and theatrical rituality to different audiences, including each other's representatives. It argues that besides corresponding religio-political flows at two rival courts, shared urbanistic, architectural, and aesthetic currents of the era played a significant part in their convergence as mosque complexes characterized by architectural grandeur, extravagance, decorative splendor, confessional ethos, and theatrical rituality. Combining the methods of architectural history with those of social and cultural history, this thesis delves into various textual and archival sources besides architectural evidence. It contributes to the comparative literature on the Safavid and Ottoman architectural cultures by presenting the first comprehensive comparative and connected analysis of two contemporary Friday mosque complexes erected in the Safavid and Ottoman capitals in the early seventeenth century.

ÖZET

Erken On Yedinci Yüzyılda İsfahan ve İstanbul:
Mescid-i Şah ve Sultan Ahmed Külliyeleri

Bu tez, on yedinci yüzyılın başlarında İstanbul ve İsfahan'da, iki rakip hükümdar I.Ahmed (s.1603–1617) ve I. Abbas (s.1587–1629) tarafından yaptırılan Sultan Ahmed ve Mescid-i Şah külliyelerinin kentsel, mimari ve törensel oluşumlarını incelemektedir. Bu çalışmada, siyasi, dini ve askeri bir çekişme döneminde inşa edilen söz konusu külliyeler, patronlarının benzer emperyal ajandaları ve mezhep politikalarını anıtsal mimari ve tiyatral ritüellik aracılığıyla birbirlerinin temsilcileri de dahil olmak üzere farklı izleyicilere gösteren platformlar olarak kavramsallaştırılmaktadır. Çalışmanın temel tezine göre iki rakip sarayda hakim benzer dini-siyasi cereyanların yanı sıra dönemin ortak kentsel, mimari ve estetik akımları, mimari ihtişam, abartı, tezyînî şaşaa ve mezhep vurgusu ile anılan bu cami külliyelerinin benzeşmesinde önemli rol oynamıştır. Disiplinler arası bir yakşalımla tarih biliminin yöntemlerini mimarlık tarihi ve kültür tarihininkilerle harmanlayan bu çalışma, mimari bulguların yanı sıra pek çok metinsel kaynak ve arşiv belgesine dayanmaktadır. Erken on yedinci yüzyılda Safevi ve Osmanlı başkentlerinde inşa edilmiş iki Cuma camii külliyesini karşılaştırmalı ve bağlantılı biçimde araştıran ilk kapsamlı çalışma olarak Safevi ve Osmanlı mimari kültürleri üzerine karşılaştırmalı literatüre katkıda bulunmayı amaçlamaktadır.

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Gürkan Anar, D. (forthcoming). The furnishings of the Sultan Ahmed mosque. *16th ICTA: International Congress of Turkish Art*. Ankara: Hacettepe Üniversitesi.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I completed this dissertation with the exceptional support and help of several individuals whom I would like to thank. First and foremost, I would like to utter gratitude to my advisor Çiğdem Kafescioğlu, who has been an invaluable source of inspiration since the second year of college and offered helpful guidance while writing this dissertation and on several other academic and non-academic issues. I have always felt her support in every stage of this study and throughout my one-and-a-half decade-long adventure at the history department. I am equally thankful to Derin Terzioğlu not only for her academic guidance and support but also, and more importantly, for being a role model of a modest, devoted, and meticulous scholar. I would not have completed this dissertation without her support and encouragement. I am indebted to Lucienne Thys-Şenocak, and Markus Ritter, who read my text and offered me generous guidance at different stages of this research. Markus Ritter's advice on academic writing, patience in correcting my chapters, and guidance in the field of Iranian architectural history and historiography have made an outstanding contribution to this dissertation. I must express my gratitude to Oya Pancaroğlu for her valuable feedback on this study and for training me as an architectural and cultural history student.

This thesis owes a great deal to the support of several institutions. I want to thank TÜBİTAK (the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey) National Scholarship Program for Ph.D. study (2211–E) for my financial support in the first four years of this study. I am thankful to Tijana Krstic and Derin Terzioğlu for hiring me for the OTTOCONFESSION project –"The Fashioning of a Sunni

Orthodoxy and the Entangled Histories of Confession-Building in the Ottoman Empire, 15th–17th Centuries" – between 2017 and 2021.[1] This project funded my study throughout these four years. I am also grateful to the staff at the Prime Ministery Ottoman Archives, Turkish and Islamic Arts Museum, ISAM, the Boğaziçi University Library, the Tehran University Library, the National Library of Iran, the Library of Dekhhoda Institute in Tehran, the Library of the Ferdowsi University in Mashhad, and the Art History and Main Libraries at the University of Vienna.

Several people contributed to this study at different stages and supported me in various ways. I am indebted to all my teachers in the history department at Boğaziçi University for training as a historian. Especially the courses and seminars taught by Çiğdem Kafescioğlu, Derin Terzioğlu, Oya Pancaroğlu, Ahmet Ersoy, Arzu Öztürkmen, Lale Babaoğlu, and Yücel Terzibaşoğlu contributed to my education as a student of history. I would like to thank Ertuğrul Ökten, and Tülün Değirmenci for answering my questions and supporting me througout these years. I want to utter my gratitude to all my Persian teachers, including İsmet Verçin, Turgay Şafak, and my tutors at the Dekhhoda Institute, to Zeynep Torlak Kocaaslan and Nimet Yıldırım for helping me with some Persian texts. I would like to thank Aydın Kurt and Mehmet Yılmaz Akbulut for assisting me in my research at the Prime Ministery Ottoman Archives and for reading some Ottoman Turkish documents. I thank Günhan Börekçi for sharing me his digital copy of the waqfiya of the Sultan Ahmed complex. I have felt the support of my dear friends and collegues Özgün Deniz Yoldaşlar, Didar Akbulut, Mehmet Yılmaz Akbulut, and Zeynep Torlak Kocaaslan throughout these years, and I am thankful to them for encouraging me.

[1] The OTTOCONFESSION Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program (grant agreement No 648498).

My family, especially my mother Vildan and my husband Sedat, deserve special thanks. I have always felt blessed to have their support and encouragement in this process. My mother has attached much significance to my education since childhood and supported me in psychological and financial terms. It is impossible to pay my debt to her. Similarly, it has been priceless to have the love, support, and encouragement of my dear husband, who has offered me a warm and reliable family, and "a room of my own" simultaneously.

To the memory of Oğlan Şeyh (d. 1529)

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NOTES ON SPELLING AND TRANSLITERATION

In this dissertation, *IJMES* transliteration system is followed for the terms in Ottoman Turkish, Persian and Arabic. Terms that have entered regular English usage are given in that form (fatwa, madrasa, ulama, waqf, waqfnama, sultan, shah, sharia, jihad, madhhab, kadi, pasha, sherbet, basmalah, ghulam, khanqah, mujtahid, maqsurah) while other terms, except the names of people and places, are maintained in italicized form and transliterated with full diacritics (*takhyirī, qishlāq, chahār, ḳandīl* etc.). Throughout the thesis, I have used the Arabic forms of the Hijra dates for the sake of consistency.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In the second decade of the seventeenth century, Istanbul and Isfahan, capitals of the Ottoman and Safavid empires, witnessed the rising of the walls of two enormous Friday mosque complexes that were patronized by two rival rulers, Sultan Ahmed I (r.1603–1617) and Shah Abbas I (r.1587–1629). Constructed against the backdrop of a military, religious, and political dispute between their patrons, these monuments served, both during and after their constructions, as urban, religious, and courtly platforms manifesting their patrons' comparable imperial ambitions and kingly virtues, and distinct confessional predilections and policies to local and foreign audiences, including each other's representatives. Besides the striking concurrency of their construction, these two monumental complexes resembled each other in terms of their urban settings aligned on royal urban squares, theatrical architectural and ceremonial configurations, extravagant decorations, and distinctly sectarian textures manifested in their epigraphic and ritualistic programs. While their intriguing parallelisms reveal comparable religio-political, urban, architectural, and aesthetic sensibilities of their patrons and audiences, which substantially fit into some cultural currents of larger early modern European and Islamic lands, differences in their architectural and ritualistic configurations exhibit particularities and different trajectories of the Safavid and Ottoman architectural and religious cultures within the context of the early seventeenth century.

This dissertation seeks to elucidate parallelisms and sketch differences between the urban, architectural-spatial, and ceremonial formations of the Masjed-e Shah and Sultan Ahmed complexes within the course of the first half of the seventeenth century.

The urban settings, architectural features and configurations, decorative textures and furniture, and social-ceremonial programs of both complexes will be described, analyzed, and interpreted against the backdrop of the era's cultural, aesthetic, and religio-political dynamics. The relationship between the consolidation of religious orthodoxies and orthopraxies, political identities and agendas of the patrons, and the construction of imperial Friday mosques complexes in the early modern Ottoman and Safavid contexts constitute the main problematic of this inquiry. I will investigate the religio-political and cultural agendas of Sultan Ahmed and Shah Abbas as patrons of Friday mosque complexes, and the role of these architectural projects in manifesting their patrons' agendas and identities to different audiences, including denizens of their capital cities, and ambassadors of their rival states. Proposing an interpretation of the spatial, architectural, religious, and ideological frameworks in which these sanctuaries took shape, I will treat them as embodiments of elaborately formulated religious and political agendas, and distinctive architectural and urban idioms.[2]

This study conceptualizes the Masjed-e Shah and Sultan Ahmed complexes as architectural monuments manifesting spatial and ornamentation features which were canonized under courtly patronage and which spoke for their patrons, and also as socio-religious urban institutions which shaped and partly dictated the dynamics of urban and religious life in the capital cities. The components and configuration of each complex and the architectural, spatial, decorative features and materials of their different edifices will be examined concerning both distinct local architectural conventions, and shared cultural roots and contemporary aesthetic predilections. The formation and prominence of a particular urban scheme comprising a royal urban square and imperial Friday mosque constitutes another framework in which the

[2] Necipoğlu, Gülru, "Quranic Inscriptions".

congregational mosque complexes under consideration will be interpreted. I will contextualize the complexes as parts of royal squares, Atmeydanı and the Naqsh-e Jahan Square, which were among special urban platforms on which people from diverse backgrounds and classes of the Safavid and Ottoman societies, including the rulers and the courtly elites, came together for a variety of events and activities. Like the Friday mosques at the center of both complexes, the above-mentioned urban squares were conceived as scenes of the early modern state, where they displayed its power and wealth through various festive events, religious ceremonials and processions, shows of violence and punishment. I will investigate the effects of the above-mentioned architectural assemblies' alignment to such urban environments on the complexes' spatial configurations, social uses, and formation of their audiences.

Distinct confessional ethoses exhibited in the inscriptions, relics, and ritual programs in the Masjed-e Shah and Sultan Ahmed mosques, which at the same time manifested their patrons' confessional identities and the promotion of their states' official madhhabs, are also among the primary foci of this inquiry. The differences in the conceptualization and popularity of the Friday ritual in the Ottoman and Safavid realms, and the divergences in the Ottoman and Safavid rulers' mosque patronage are presented as a major interpretative framework for understanding the mosque projects of Ahmed I and Abbas I. While Sultan Ahmed's patronage of a Friday mosque complex is conceptualized as a part of an established sultanic custom, the exceptionality of Shah Abbas' Friday mosque project within the context of the royal Safavid patronage is underlined. The Friday ritual's conceptualization as a religious and legal obligation in the early modern Ottoman context was reflected in the sultanic custom of building Friday mosque complexes. By contrast with the Ottomans, the Safavids as a Twelver Shi'ite polity disputed regarding the legitimacy of performing

the Friday ritual, which was observed irregularly in the Safavid realms. The relative unpopularity of the Friday ritual and the fact that performing it had never been defined as a religious and legal obligation by the Safavid authorities were reflected in the mosque patronage of Safavid shahs', merely two of them constructing Friday mosques.

Despite being parts of different architectural and religious traditions, the Friday mosques of Ahmed I and Abbas I are conceived as testaments to their patrons' support of Muslim orthopraxy, embodied in their quest for providing the regular and continuous performance of the Friday ritual and the five daily prayers. Besides evincing a shared concern for religious orthopraxy, the mosques' diverse commemorative rituals and educational activities disclosed distinct confessional identities of their patrons and audiences, Twelver Shi'ite in the Safavid, and Sunni-Hanafi in the Ottoman context. The canonization of certain theatrical performances and religious texts penned in vernacular languages acted as shared vehicles for the formation of two commemorative rituals identified with the Sultan Ahmed Mosque and Masjed-e Shah, i.e. *mevlid* and *'āshūrā* ceremonies. Similarly, inscriptional programs informed by distinctly Sunni and Imami themes and references, as well as religious relics associated with each confession's holy persona or sanctuaries, also served as a means for exhibiting each monument's distinct confessional character.

1.1 Historiographical background

In his survey of Safavid architecture, Robert Hillenbrand has suggested that the relative scarcity of detailed scholarly analysis of most of the finest Safavid buildings stems from the fact that 'they lend themselves to uncritical panegyric and readily enter the unlovely category of tourist attractions.'[3] This suggestion seems to have merit if

[3] Hillenbrand, "Safavid Architecture", 759.

one considers the fact that even the most appreciated monuments of the Safavid period like Masjed-e Shah of Isfahan have not become a subject of any dissertations or in-depth scholarly studies yet. Similarly, as one of the favorite historical monuments of visitors and connoisseurs, the mosque of Ahmed I in Istanbul did not attract much scholarly attention until recently. The suggestion on the Safavid monuments for lending themselves to uncritical panegyric may not be valid for the mosque of Sultan Ahmed, yet it is popular and 'touristic' enough to be evaluated by scholars as an uninviting inquiry. "The Blue Mosque" is possibly the most frequented tourist attraction among Ottoman mosques.

Apart from the dissertation of Zeynep Nayır on the complex of Sultan Ahmed and the Ottoman architecture in the seventeenth century,[4] the mosque complex of Ahmed I did not become the subject of any dissertations or in-depth academic studies until the 2010s. Similarly, there is neither a dissertation nor a monograph on the Friday Mosque complex of Abbas I, although its architecture has been examined in several articles and book chapters. Until the last decade of the twentieth century, both monuments have mostly found a place in either surveys of Iranian/Safavid and Turkish/Ottoman architecture or in studies on the urban and architectural history of Istanbul and Isfahan. A great majority of these studies have interpreted these monuments within entrenched historiographical narratives centered on the construct of 'golden age'. Independent of their social and cultural contexts, the mosques were analyzed with mainly descriptive and formalist approaches and put into grand narratives formulated with a linear understanding of architecture, which evolved into periods regarded as golden ages. While Masjed-e Shah has been interpreted as a masterpiece of the Safavid golden age, and even Iranian architecture at large, the

[4] Nayır, "Osmanlı Mimarisinde".

mosque of Ahmed I has been treated as an example of the post-classical, or post-Sinan period of Ottoman architecture, and described as an inferior edifice compared to the great congregational mosques of Sinan's age.

Within the Ottoman context, the historiographical narrative based on the rise-recession-decline-fall model was established in the late nineteenth century, with the publication of the *Uṣūl-i Mi'mārī-yi Oṣmānī* (Fundamental Principles of Ottoman Architecture), a monograph commissioned by imperial order for the 1873 Vienna International Exhibition.[5] In this narrative, Sinan was portrayed as an intelligent codifier of an original dynastic style, which corresponds to the zenith between the rise and decline of the Ottoman dynasty.[6] In the *Uṣūl,* monographic descriptions of the mosques of Süleymaniye and Selimiye established these monuments as embodiments of the high Ottoman style,[7] and the mosque of Ahmed I, like many other monuments that were not designed by Sinan, did not find a place within this narrative, even as an architectural building of secondary importance.

In the Republican period, two generations of scholars inherited and reproduced this historiographical model. A pioneering figure was Celal Esad Arseven (1875–1971), who introduced the term 'classical period' for designating the Ottoman architecture between the mid-fifteenth and seventeenth centuries,[8] and made generalizations about 'Turkish art'[9] which were inherited and reproduced by later generations. After Arseven's writings, the mosque complex of Ahmed I entered the surveys of Turkish and Ottoman architecture in the Turkish academia, as an extension of the 'classical period'. In his book *Türk Sanatı,* first published in 1928, Arseven he

[5] For a discussion of this historiographical model, see Tanyeli, "History of Ottoman", 111–118.
[6] See Launay, *Usul-i Mimari-i Osmani*; Necipoğlu, "Creation", 142–145.
[7] Necipoğlu, "Creation", 145.
[8] Ibid, 162.
[9] Kuban, "Literature", 14.

asserted that this building was designed according to the architectural models established by Sinan but noted that it also had different characteristics. The general impression provided by Arseven's interpretation of the monument is that it is an inferior building compared to the mosques of Sinan, and its innovative features make it architecturally problematic.[10]

The disposition for concentrating on the so-called classical age of Ottoman architecture is also apparent in the studies of the generation of architectural historians who wrote in the second half of the twentieth century. Until the 1990s, discussions on the history of Ottoman architecture concentrated mainly on the classical era that was identified with the tenure of Sinan.[11] The tendency to locate the Sultan Ahmed Mosque at the end of the classical period, and portray it as a not very successful extension of the classical style and a weak imitation of the Şehzade or Süleymaniye Mosques predominated in the studies on Ottoman architecture that were written by such architectural historians as Godfey Goodwin, Oktay Aslanapa, and Doğan Kuban.[12]

Completed in 1975, Zeynep (Nayır) Ahunbay's thesis was one of the earliest comprehensive studies on the architectural complex of Ahmed I. Written with a primarily formalistic approach, this study provides a detailed description of the architectural assembly. Concordant with the general historiographical tendency of the 1970s, the centrality of 'the classical age' is apparent in her interpretations of the complex's architecture. Concordant with the prevailing manner, she pictured the mosque of Ahmed I as an imitation of the Şehzade Mosque.[13] Still, Nayır's dissertation provided one of the most detailed studies on the Sultan Ahmed complex, especially in

[10] Arseven, *Türk Sanatı*, 173.
[11] Kuban, "Literature",17.
[12] Goodwin, *History of Ottoman*, 342–350; Aslanapa, *Osmanlı Devri Mimarisi*, 335; Kuban, *Ottoman Architecture*, 361–370.
[13] Nayır, "Osmanlı Mimarlığında", 53.

terms of architectural descriptions, the process of its construction, and its institutional organization. Most importantly, she introduced the endowment deed and several other archival sources displaying the construction expenses. Her endeavor to integrate the archival sources into her study was significant, since in the period in which she wrote her dissertation most historians of Ottoman architecture did not use archival documents or offer historical and contextual interpretations based on them.

The predilection for interpreting the complex of Ahmed I within the above historiographical framework and depicting it as inferior to Sinan's works continued well until the turn of the twentieth century. At the turn of the century, this hierarchical approach began to be challenged. Lucienne Thys-Şenocak is one of the earliest scholars who criticised the "post-classical" or "post-Sinan" paradigm. She has challenged the assessment of the two seventeenth-century royal ensembles, the Sultan Ahmed and Yeni Valide complexes, as weak derivatives of Sinan's architecture within the outdated decline paradigm. In her study on the Yeni Valide complex at Eminönü, Şenocak offered a new interpretation of the mosque's quatrefoil architectural plan and spatial organization, which resembles the plan of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque. According to her, 'Yeni Valide mosque is more than the Şehzade with modifications',[14] and she interpreted its plan as a response 'to the challenges of the waterfront site of the Yeni Valide project, exploring the theatrical quality of constructing light and temperature.'[15] The plan of the mosque and the spatial configuration of the whole complex were analyzed regarding their visibility in the city, as well as the gaze of its patrons and different audiences.[16] Şenocak's interpretation of the Yeni Valide complex has provided an alternative reading not only of the Yeni

[14] Thys-Şenocak, *Ottoman Women Builders*, 209.
[15] Ibid, 209.
[16] Ibid, 232.

Valide complex but also of Sultan Ahmed, whose plan and spatial organization had been interpreted within almost the same framework as a weak successor of Sinan's architectural schemes.

Concurrently with the study of Şenocak, in the early 2000s, Emine Fetvacı published an article on the Sultan Ahmed complex in which she attempts to interpret the architecture and aesthetics of the complex within the seventeenth-century context. She drew attention to the effects of the site and urban environment on the spatial and architectural organization of the Sultan Ahmed complex. In Fetvacı's interpretation, one reason behind the loose arrangement of the mosque's dependencies was the desire to incorporate the Atmeydanı into the mosque complex, which was further related to the new uses to which the complex would be put.[17] Sultan Ahmed's endeavor to rival and overrun the mosques of Süleymaniye, Şehzade, and Hagia Sophia was presented as another factor that affected the architectural organization of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque. According to Fetvacı, the Şehzade Mosque's plan, and the use of some architectural and decorative elements of Süleymaniye and Hagia Sophia stemmed from this sultan's desire to compete with the power and glory of his great grandfather, Süleyman. Unlike earlier scholars who marked the resemblance between Şehzade and Süleymaniye mosques, Fetvacı does not refer to the architectural quotations from Sinan's works and Hagia Sophia in a deprecating tone. Based on the accounts of the traveler Evliya Çelebi, and several contemporary court chroniclers, Fetvacı has shown that the mosque of Sultan Ahmed 'embodies a new aesthetic that was fully appreciated as such at the time it was built.'[18] Besides incorporating the changes in social and urban practices of the capital city into her interpretative framework, Fetvacı introduced the

[17] Fetvacı, "Music, Light", 236.
[18] Ibid, 222.

multi-sensory aesthetical appeal of the seventeenth century Istanbulites as a decisive factor in the configuration of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque.[19]

Another context-sensitive interpretation of Sultan Ahmed's complex was offered by Tülay Artan, who provided a brief but comprehensive analysis of the Sultan Ahmed complex in her survey chapter on the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Ottoman art and architecture. One of the most significant points she has addressed is the significance of Atmeydanı as a public space that most likely played an important role in the choice of the construction site.[20] Her emphasis on the creation of continuous façades facing the streets is worth considering as an aspect of the monument that is crucial in understanding the monument's relationship with its surrounding urban environment. Another significant point addressed by Artan is the tension that arose among the dignitaries in the Ottoman court and the clerics against the construction of this architectural complex without the booty taken from a victorious military campaign. She introduced Mustafa Safi, the prayer leader of Ahmed I, as the outstanding defender of Sultan Ahmed's project within the context of the discussions regarding the legitimacy and permissibility of a royal Friday mosque's construction without the booty gained in triumphant military campaigns.[21]

Simultaneous with Artan's piece on the complex, Gülrü Necipoğlu published *The Age of Sinan*, a seminal work on the period of Sinan, which offers an in-depth analysis of the established codes of architectural patronage within the context of the construction of Friday mosque complexes. Necipoğlu contextualized the 'sultanic mosque complexes as victory memorials, legitimately built with war booties by rulers who had commanded successful military campaigns in Christian lands.'[22] An

[19] Ibid, 227–231.
[20] Artan, "Arts and Architecture", 451.
[21] Ibid, 451–452.
[22] Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 59.

interpretation of the sultanic mosque complexes as emblems of dynastic and religious legitimacy was first proposed by Howard Crane in his article 'The Sultan's Mosque: Icons of Imperial Legitimacy', where the monuments in question were collectively assessed as manifestations of dynastic policies.[23] Acting upon Crane's interpretative framework, Necipoğlu's work on Friday mosques that were constructed during Sinan's tenure represents the most far-reaching and in-depth analysis of the Ottoman dynastic Friday mosque complexes. She interpreted the Ottoman royal mosques within the framework of architectural culture and the established codes of architectural practice, which were very much related to the social and political hierarchy of the Ottoman society in the sixteenth century.

The Age of Sinan allocates a relatively short section to the Sultan Ahmed complex, which is assessed both as a part of a chain of successive royal Friday mosque complexes in Istanbul, and as a royal complex with some innovative features reflecting the age's social and political dynamics. In line with Fetvacı and Artan, Necipoğlu avoided locating the monument in the established aesthetical and historical hierarchies but attempted to redress the conventional narratives on it and replace them with a context-sensitive interpretation. Besides underlining the significance of Atmeydanı as the complex's locus, the multi-sensory aesthetics of the mosque, and the palatial character of its decoration, Necipoğlu has drawn attention to the increasing diversity of the complex's social and ceremonial usages, and the growing significance of courtly pageantry in Sultan Ahmed's agenda. She has underscored the augmented spectacles at the construction site and in the mosque, especially the courtly *mevlid* ceremonies, which had commenced to be officially celebrated in the Sultan Ahmed Mosque after its completion.[24]

[23] Crane, "Sultan's Mosque".
[24] Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 514–518.

Necipoğlu's seminal work introduced a new interpretative framework to the study of the Ottoman royal architectural complexes, with its focus on the relationship between the policies of Sunnitization and the production of religious spaces. The work showed that as nuclei of urban and religious life, Friday mosques served as vehicles for creating and dictating a codified religious tenet and social behaviors to the subjects of the sultan.[25] This book has provided an opportunity to gain a deep understanding of the relationship between religious policies and the production of religious spaces of the Ottoman political and religious elites, together with studies on Sunnitization and confessional policies in the Ottoman Empire. Scholars like Derin Terzioğlu, Tijana Krstic, Guy Burak, David Mac Baer, Colin Imber, and Vefa Erginbaş have published studies concerning different aspects of the Sunnitization process in the Ottoman Empire, concerning political, social, and legislative notions and practices in the early modern period.[26]

Ünver Rüstem's dissertation on the eighteenth-century royal mosque complexes in Istanbul, which was later published as a book, is another significant contribution to the discussion on the theme. Although the focus of the dissertation is on the eighteenth-century sultanic mosque complexes, Rüstem's study contributes to the discussion on the emergence of the sultanic pavilion attached to the mosque as a particular component of the complex of Ahmed I, which was previously discussed by A. Kuran and L. Thys-Şenocak.[27] According to Rüstem, the royal lodge's emergence was probably the result of an increasing emphasis on sultanic ceremonial and visibility in the first half of the seventeenth century, when the sultan became ever more visible and present in the life of the capital city. Rüstem considered the construction of the

[25] Ibid, 47–59.
[26] Terzioğlu, "How to conceptualize"; Krstic, *Contested Conversion*; Burak, *Second Formation*; Baer, *Honored*; Imber, *Ebu's-Suud.*
[27] Kuran, "Sultan's Pavilion"; Thys-Şenocak, *Ottoman Women Builders*, 220–237.

Sultan Ahmed mosque complex to be a result of this development. The frequent appearance of the sultan on the site of construction during the process of the complex's building, the sultan's institutionalization of an elaborate annual service there to mark the reading of the *mevlid*, the Prophet's nativity poem, and the restoration of the *selamlık* ceremony into its full splendor are interpreted as signs of the shift towards royal ceremony and spectacle.[28]

In 2016, Rüstem published an anonymous treatise about the dome-closing ceremony of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque.[29] In his analysis of this treatise, he has claimed that during and after its construction the mosque witnessed a high incidence of ceremonial activity that was related to Sultan Ahmed's endeavors to create a pious and powerful image in the eyes of local and foreign audiences. In this article, Rüstem's interpretation of the complex's architecture is in the same line as that of Emine Fetvacı. He suggests that the Sultan Ahmed Mosque is 'an augmented combination of Süleymanic references drawn from both the Şehzade and Süleymaniye, creating a distinctive synthesis that stands as its right even as it evokes the past.'[30] Both architecturally and ceremonially, as a whole, Rüstem interprets the mosque of Sultan Ahmed in relation with Ahmed I's policies of image-making that took shape in the face of a legitimacy crisis and had direct references to Sultan Süleyman, aiming to evoke his great grandfather's prosperous and triumphant age.[31]

The most recent studies on the Sultan Ahmed complex belong to Aliye Öten, who completed her dissertation on the construction and architecture of the monument in 2017. Rendered accessible in late 2019, this dissertation has made use of many

[28] Rüstem, "Imperial Ottoman Mosques", 182–187.
[29] Rüstem, "Spectacle of Legitimacy".
[30] Ibid, 258.
[31] For another study on Sultan Ahmed's image-making policies and his attempts to emulate Sultan Süleyman, see Avcıoğlu, "Ahmed I", 218–223.

archival materials shedding light on the construction process, materials, chronology, and architecture of the Sultan Ahmed complex. Offering detailed descriptions of the complex's different edifices and the building site, this study's main contribution is the introduction of several new archival sources, especially the first of the two bulky daily account registers (*defter-i ruznamçe*) of the construction, which was partly transcribed by the author in the thesis.[32] Öten's article introducing a larger number of archival documents, including several *mühimme* orders, constitutes another significant contribution.[33] Between 2017 and 2021, she has published articles on the public fountains of the complex, as well as the wooden furnishings and inscriptions of the mosque[34], the latter being previously stylistically described and published by Gülsüm Ersoy and Murat Sülün.[35]

The relationship of the Sultan Ahmed complex with Atmeydanı remains a question to be studied.[36] Among the few studies on this urban square is Seza Sinanlar's master thesis, which investigates the Byzantine Hippodrome's transformation into Atmeydanı, and this square's social and ceremonial use in the Byzantine and the Ottoman periods.[37] The catalog of the exhibition on Atmeydanı, which was published in 2010 as part of an exhibition on the history of this space, remains the only extensive survey of Atmeydanı with its different aspects, including the development of the site, the architectural development in its environs, and the square as a stage for festivities and ceremonials.[38] The construction of the complex of Ahmed I was mentioned only

[32] Öten, "Arşiv Belgelerine Göre", 555–691.
[33] Öten, "Sources".
[34] Öten, "İbrahim Paşa Sarayı"; "Osmanlı Klasik Dönem"; Su Yapıları"; "Sultan Ahmed Camii".
[35] Ersoy (Top), "İstanbul'da Selatin Camilerinin", 85–91; Sülün, *Hatları ve Kitabeleriyle*, II, 317–333.
[36] There is a significant gap in the literature on the social and ceremonial uses of Istanbul's religious spaces. Necipoğlu's study on Friday mosques is one of the very few studies on the use of mosques as spaces for the implementation and rescript of a series of codified religious beliefs and practices. See *Age of Sinan*.
[37] Sinanlar, *Atmeydanı*.
[38] Pitarakis, *Hippodrom/ Atmeydanı*, I–II.

briefly in both studies, without considering the changes it brought to the spatial configuration and functional uses of the space. Çiğdem Kafescioğlu's contribution to a volume on the eighteenth-century traveler Cornelius Loos' paintings of Istanbul, published in 2019, is among the few studies which attempt to depict the spatial configuration, architectural elements, and different social-ceremonial usages of this imperial hub in the early modern period.[39]

Atmeydanı's use as stages of royal festivities,[40] public executions,[41] and urban rebellions[42] also became the subject of several studies in the 2000s. Yet, a comprehensive study explaining different social and ceremonial aspects of the maydan in an integrated manner is still lacking. Likewise, the architectural buildings neighboring Atmeydanı took a limited attention. The piece of Tanman and Çobanoğlu on the Ottoman monuments around Atmeydanı is the only study that offers a general architectural panorama of the site.[43] Nurhan Atasoy's monograph *İbrahim Paşa Sarayı* published in 1972 is still the only extended study on the Ibrahim Pasha Palace.[44] Based on several archival materials, Aliye Öten's article has also offered significant insights on this palatial monument, especially on its reconfiguration during the construction of the Sultan Ahmed complex.[45] Published in 2015, Tülay Artan's article on Ottoman vizieral palaces with a focus on their endowments also had sections on the İbrahim Pasha Palace and the palace of Sokollu Mehmet Pasha that was located on the place of Sultan Ahmed complex before its construction.[46] More recently, studies of Mustafa Lütfi Bilge and Aliye Öten have attempted to identify the palatial buildings which were

[39] Kafescioğlu, "New Look".
[40] Terzioğlu, "Imperial Circumcision Festival"; Yelçe, "Evaluating three imperial".
[41] Baer, "Sexual Politics".
[42] Yılmaz, "Siyaset, İsyan"; Yılmaz, "İstemezük"; Yılmaz, "Blurred Boundaries".
[43] Tanman and Çobanoğlu, "Ottoman Architecture".
[44] See Atasoy, *İbrahim Paşa Sarayı*.
[45] Öten, "İbrahim Paşa Sarayı".
[46] Artan, "politics of Ottoman".

demolished during the construction of the Sultan Ahmed complex, and replaced by the latter.[47]

In contrast to the Sultan Ahmed Mosque, Masjed-e Shah has been mostly depicted as a masterpiece that represents the zenith of Safavid and Iranian architecture. This discourse's development has parallelisms with the formation of a nationalistic discourse on Ottoman architectural history in Turkey during the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century. It was created in a conjuncture in which the arts and culture of Iran were defined and conceptualized as the embodiment of the Iranian nation's genius, concomitant with the formation of a nationalistic state ideology. It was a common trope to mobilize history as a source of nation-building, but with Iran, a quasi-racial discourse was formulated by both Iranians and scholars from Europe, England and the United States.[48] Scholars and connoisseurs in the Anglophone world played an important part in the formation of an essentialist discourse that highlighted the early medieval, especially the Sassanid, and the early modern, Safavid, periods as periods in which 'the Persian spirit' was perfectly apparent. In the literature that grew around this paradigm, Masjed-e Shah, along with the mosque of Sheikh Lutfullah in Isfahan, was conceptualized as a perfect embodiment of the architectural genius of the Safavids and Iranians.

Orientalist scholars and local scholarship that translated and appropriated it aggrandized Iranian history and culture in a series of exhibitions and surveys of Persian art, the majority of which was sponsored by the Society for National Heritage, an institution established for the preservation of the Iranian heritage. Books and catalogs written by scholars like Arthur Upham Pope accompanied a series of exhibitions in

[47] Bilge, "Sultanahmed Cami"; Öten, "Sultan Ahmed Külliyesi".
[48] Rizvi, "Art History", 46.

England and the United States.[49] The Sesquicentral International Exhibition, held in 1926 in Philadelphia, constitutes an important example displaying the significance attributed to Masjed-e Shah within the context of Persian and Safavid art. In this international exhibition, the pavilion built as a stage for displaying several objects of Persian art was a large-scale replica of Masjed-e Shah, which was designed by A. U. Pope and constructed by the Philadelphia architect C. Ziegler.[50] The Exhibition of Persian Art at Burlington House in London, which was commissioned by the Society in 1931, provides another example for observing the centrality of the Safavid period in the history of Persian art. Most of the galleries, -galleries III–VII-, were devoted to the arts of the Safavids, an entire gallery (VIII) was assigned to the masterworks of the seventeenth century, when, according to the introduction of the catalog, 'the court of Persia was lavish beyond even the extravagances of the Arabian Nights.'[51]

The predilection for highlighting the Safavid architecture under Shah Abbas, and foregrounding Masjed-e Shah as the *magnum opus* of the period, is apparent in the earliest surveys of Persian art. Along with Sassanid architecture, the architecture of the Safavid period was brought to the fore in most of these early surveys. Edited by E. Denison Ross and published in 1930 in London, *Persian Art* represents an early example of this approach. In this survey, Shah Abbas is portrayed as one of the greatest rulers and builders of Persia, and Masjed-e Shah is the only building of the period to be described under a separate heading.[52] *Survey of Persian Art,* edited by A. U. Pope and P. Ackerman and published in 1938–39, is pioneering in the establishment and dissemination of the above discourse. Written by Pope, the third volume of this six-volume survey is devoted to Safavid architecture, and more emphasis is given to the

[49] Ibid, 45, 48.
[50] Ibid, 48.
[51] *Persian Art*, xv–xvi.
[52] Ross, *Persian Art*, 57–58.

architectural works of the seventeenth century, focusing particularly on the period of Shah Abbas. Pope described Masjed-e Shah as the noblest creation of the era of Shah Abbas, whose reign witnessed the recovery of 'the imposing scale, which had been a precious heritage of Persian architecture since Achaemenid days.'[53] According to the writer, Shah Abbas had revived the tradition of building in a majestic style and reaffirmed the ideals of the planned city and royal magnificence expressed in the architecture of his new capital, Isfahan. Masjed-e Shah was depicted as the most significant structure of Abbas's new capital city.[54] The edifice was repeatedly appreciated throughout the chapter in different contexts and assumed to have marked the culmination of Persian architecture.[55] The same approach to Safavid architecture and Masjed-e Shah is apparent in the later works of Pope on Persian architecture, the majority of which was published in the 1960s and 1970s.[56]

Although the above-mentioned catalogues and the studies of Pope introduced Masjed-e Shah to a more general audience, the monument's the first detailed scholarly description belongs to the French architect Pascal Coste, who surveyed the building in the 1840s.[57] His descriptions and plan of the building has special significance for showing the monument's layout before an extended restoration conducted in the monument in the second half of the nineteenth century.[58] Throughout the twentieth century and the early 2000s, a series of scholars from Iran and the West contributed to the literature with their descriptions, findings, and interpretations of Masjed-e Shah. Most of these studies were surveys of Iranian or Safavid history of art and architecture, which investigated the monument with descriptive and/or formalistic approaches, and

[53] Pope, *Survey of Persian*, III, 1179.
[54] Ibid, 1180–1181.
[55] Ibid, 1181–1189.
[56] See Pope, *Introducing Persian Architecture*, 83–115; idem, *Persian Architecture*, 134–217.
[57] Coste, *Monuments Moderne*, 24–26.
[58] Emami, "Inviolable Thresholds", 193.

within typological or chronological order. Andre Godard's *L'Art de l'Iran* (Iranian Art), Abd al-Karim Pirnia's *Mi'mārī-ye Irānī* (Iranian Architecture), and Yosef Keyani's *Tārīkh-e Hunar-e Mi'mārī-ye Irān der Dovre-ye Islāmī* (The Iranian Art of Architecture in the Islamic Period) were some of the significant surveys examining the edifice under the category of four-iwan congregational mosques of Iran.[59] Robert Hillenbrand and Sheila R. Canby investigated the monument's architecture in chronologically ordered chapters on Safavid art and architecture.[60] Canby offers a relatively more analytical and contextual description of Masjed-e Shah and underscores the significance of the political and religious agenda of Shah Abbas as an important agent in the formation of this great sanctuary.[61] Lisa Golombek's "Anatomy of A Mosque- Masjed-e Shah in Isfahan", published in 1973, is the only monographic article that is devoted to Masjed-e Shah.[62] Seen together, most of these studies have adopted a descriptive approach and focused on the monument's architectural features.

As one of the most appreciated characters of the monument, the complex's decorative features have attracted less scholarly attention. Lutfullah Hunarfar, who published a detailed survey of the monuments in Isfahan in 1967, described the monument's inscriptions in terms of their content and location in the building.[63] In 1983, Nuha N. Khoury investigated the mosque's inscriptions in an unpublished master's thesis, which has been inaccessible to the general reader.[64] The monument's inscriptions have only partially been published in English. While M. Pickett published the inscriptions written by Muhammad Rida al-Imami,[65] Sheila Blair interpreted the

[59] Godard, *Kunst des Iran*, 251–252; Pirnia, *Mi'mārī-ye Irānī*, 289, 292, 298.
[60] Hillenbrand, "Safavid Architecture", 784–789; Keyani, *Tārīkh-e Hunar-e Mi'mārī*, 108–112.
[61] Canby, *Golden Age*, 96–103.
[62] Golombek, "Anatomy".
[63] Hunarfar, *Ganjīna-ye Āsār*, 427–467.
[64] Unfortunately, I could not access this thesis. Khoury, "Ideologies and Inscriptions".
[65] Pickett, "Inscriptions of Muhammad", 91–102.

inscriptions on the mosque's monumental portal stylistically and contextually.[66] Recently, Farshid Emami has addressed the confessional tone of the epigraphs, and the intense use of Shi'i hadiths and drawn attention to the resemblance between the mosque's inscriptions and polemical literature between Shi'is and Sunnis.[67] The whole inscriptional program of the building remains to be published in English, just as it remains to be interpreted with a context-sensitive approach.

The tiles of the complex found a place in some surveys of Iranian ceramic arts, including Yves Porter's *Islamic Tiles* and *The Art of Islamic Tile*.[68] These surveys have mainly focused on the techniques and patterns of the edifice's rich polychrome tile revetments. Holakoei's unpublished dissertation, in which the seventeenth-century Safavid *haft rang* tiles and the contemporary cuerda seca ceramics in Spanish context were compared, is also worth mentioning among the few studies on these ceramic tiles' technical facets.[69] Recently, Belkıs Doğan has published an article discussing the tile panel with figurative depictions and drawn attention to the links of this tile panel with the visual and decorative repertoire of the contemporary Armenian-Christian churches.[70]

Before the 2000s, only a few scholars attempted to integrate contemporary narrative sources into their inquiries on Isfahan and Masjed-e Shah and scrutinized other aspects of the monument. Abd al-Husein Sipanta, Robert McChesney, and Stephan Blake can be counted among these researchers. Sipanta published a summary of Masjed-e Shah's endowment deed, whose original is lost and thus inaccessible to the modern researcher.[71] McChesney elucidated the construction and chronology of

[66] Ritter, "Monumental Epigraphy", 20–38; Blair, "Inscribing the Square".
[67] Emami, "Inviolable Thresholds", 175–176.
[68] Porter, *Islamic Tiles*, 75–76; Degeorge and Porter, *Art*, 148–155.
[69] Holakooei, "Technological Study", 4–5, 185–186.
[70] Doğan, "Isfahan Mescid-i Şah'ta".
[71] Sipanta, *Tārīkhce-ye Awqāf*, 50–62.

several monuments of Isfahan, including Masjed-e Shah, based on four contemporary court chronicles, the related parts of which he translated.[72] Similarly, Blake's book on the social history of Safavid Isfahan and its monuments allocates a significant space to the Masjed-e Shah complex and discusses the monument's construction, architecture, and endowment concerning contemporary vernacular and foreign narrative sources.[73]

In the last two decades, studies of Sussan Babaie, Charles Melville, Farshid Emami, and Kathryn Babayan on Safavid Isfahan gave a new impulse to the literature on the topic. Their scholarly works contributed to the topic by integrating new contemporary sources, and an investigation of the religio-political and social-urban contexts into the studies on Isfahan and its monuments. Babaie's seminal book on Isfahan and its palatial monuments, *Isfahan and Its Palaces: Statecraft, Shi'ism, and the Architecture of Conviviality in Early Modern Iran*, offers an in-depth analysis and interpretation of the formation of Isfahan as the Safavid capital, focusing particularly on the palaces, feasting, and ceremonials in the seventeenth century. In Babaie's narrative, the formation of a religio-political agenda based on the Twelver Shi'ism and Persian notions of kingship appears as the central agent in the formation of architectural and urban culture in the Safavid period. Babaie has defined the construction of a royal Friday mosque as a prerequisite of kingship and asserted that the emergence of a royal Friday mosque resulted from the definitive conclusion of a long debate over the permissibility of performing the Friday ritual during the occultation of the Twelfth Imam.[74] Although introducing the question of Friday ritual as an interpretative framework for the discussion is very significant, Babaie's

[72] McChesney, "Four Sources".
[73] Blake, *Half the World*, 140–147.
[74] Babaie, *Isfahan*, 86.

argument about the question of the Friday ritual is in need of qualification, and will be revised here in the light of the findings of several scholars like Abisaab, Stewart, Sachedina, and Jafarian,[75] as well as different primary sources, including Safavid jurisprudential treatises on the dispute, Sheikh Bahai's *Jāme'-e 'Abbasī*, and various contemporary chronicles.[76]

In 2016, Melville published an article, "New Light on Shah Abbas and the Construction of Isfahan", where he translated parts of the seventeenth-century chronicler Khuzani Isfahani's *Afḍal al-Tawārīkh* and discussed the information on Safavid Isfahan's construction presented in this narrative in comparison with that provided by other contemporary chroniclers.[77] Together with McChesney's "Four Sources", this article has shed light on the chronology of the construction of Shah Abbas' Isfahan and Masjed-e Shah, and revealed problems/discrepancies among the contemporary narrative sources in the study of the Safavid capital's construction.

In the same year, Farshid Emami's first article on Safavid Isfahan's public spaces appeared. His "Coffeehouses, Urban Spaces, and the Formation of a Public Sphere in Safavid Isfahan" has discussed the dissemination of new public spaces and the formation of a public sphere in seventeenth-century Isfahan and attempted to integrate this Islamicate capital city into the ongoing discussions on the early modern modes and trends of socialization and publicity. Two years later, he published another article, "Discursive Images and Urban Itineraries: Literary Form and City Experience in Early Modern Isfahan", discussing the same theme based on a body of literary works, *shahrāshūb*s, or poems on cities' beauties, and with a focus on Isfahan's public

[75] Abisaab, *Converting Persia*, 20–22, 37–39, 52, 7–72, 81–88; Stewart, "Polemics and Patronage", Sachenida, *Just Ruler*, 177-204 Jafarian, *Davazdah Resāle-ye Fiqhī.*
[76] Twelve such treatises penned in Persian or Arabic were compiled and published by Jafariyan, see Jafarian, *Davazdah Resāle-ye Fiqhī.* See also Sheikh Bahai, *Jāme'-ye 'Abbāsī*, 86–87.
[77] Melville, "New Light".

gardens and promenades in the seventeenth century.[78] Based on a seventeenth-century poem, Mir Najat's *Waṣf-e Iṣfahān*, Isfahan's Characteristic, this article has conceptualized Masjed-e Shah as among Isfahan's promenades, and drawn attention to this monument's aesthetic, social, and religious appeal for the seventeenth-century denizens of Isfahan.[79] Along with this work, the same scholar's chapter on Safavid Isfahan's Friday mosques, "Inviolable Thresholds, Blessed Palaces, and the holy Friday Mosques: The Sacred Topography of Safavid Isfahan", which was published in 2021, constitutes the only study that touches on the social and ritualistic traits of Masjed-e Shah, even if partially.[80]

As the locus of the Masjed-e Shah complex, the Naqsh-e Jahan Square has received much attention from different scholars. The spatial-architectural, and functional-ceremonial traits of the maydan, and its construction process and chronology, have been explained by an extensive body of studies produced by scholars like Sussan Babaie, Ali Bakhtiar, Markus Ritter, and E. Galdieri. Babaie has conceptualized the royal square as the center of a consciously created Shi'ite capital city, accompanying palatial, religious, and commercial edifices that were articulated to the square in a way to represent the juxtaposed worldly and spiritual authority.[81] Her chapter "Launching from Isfahan"[82], and article "Sacred Sites of Kingship: the Maydan and Mapping the Spatial Vision of the Empire in Safavid Iran"[83] also discuss the Naqsh-e Jahan Square as a site of imperial architecture, festivities and conviviality, and commercial activity. Similarly, Mahvash Alemi has produced several pieces on the spatial-architectural features, and especially ceremonial-social traits of different

[78] Emami, "Discursive Images".
[79] Ibid, 177–178.
[80] Emami, "Inviolable Thresholds".
[81] Babaie, *Isfahan*, 90.
[82] Babaie et al, *Slaves*, 80–114.
[83] Babaie, "Sacred Sites".

Safavid maydans, including the Naqsh-e Jahan Square.[84] Ali Bakhtiar's article "Reminiscences of the Maidan-e Shah", published in 2011, is also worth mentioning as a study offering an interpretation of the spatial and architectural configuration and social functions of the royal square.[85] Based on the archaeological investigation, the building phases of the royal square were described by E. Galdieri in the article "Two Building Phases of the Time of Shah Abbas I in the Maidan-i Shah of Isfahan: Preliminary Note", published in 1970.[86] The articles of McChesney and Melville have shed light on the same processes based on information provided by contemporary court chroniclers.[87] Monuments marking the square's four edges, the Ali Qapu Palace, the Qaysariyya Bazaar, and the Sheikh Lutfullah Mosque became subjects of several studies.[88]

Although several studies on the history of architectural and visual cultures of the Ottomans and Safavids have been published since the twentieth century, the academic literature on comparative and connected histories of the early modern Islamicate empires is relatively weak. Comparative or connected studies on the architectural cultures of the Ottomans and Safavids are even more limited. Most of the studies with connected perspectives have examined the Ottomans, Safavids, and Mughals together. They are general surveys of visual cultures or certain building types, or discussions of groups of buildings that are linked to each other by themes such as empire-building or dynastic representation. Until now, there has been no attempt to write an in-depth a connected history of the Ottoman and Safavid architectural

[84] Alemi, "Safavid Gardens"; idem, "Urban Spaces".
[85] Bakhtiar, "Reminiscences".
[86] Galdieri, "Two Building Phases", 60–69.
[87] McChesney, "Four Sources"; Melville, "New Light".
[88] For the Ali Qapu Palace, see Babaie, *Isfahan*, 113-13; Galdieri, *Ali Qapu*; Brignoli, "Palais royaux », 260–311. For the Qaysariyya Bazaar, see Bakhtiar, "Royal Bazaar"; Gaube and Wirth, *Bazar von Isfahan*, I, 3, 69–70; Ritter, "herrlische Portal"; idem, "Monumental Epigraphy".

cultures. Neither one of the mosque complexes of Shah Abbas and Sultan Ahmed has been analyzed in connection or in comparison with each other. Even so, it is worth looking at some of the outstanding connected histories to appreciate the state and gaps of the existing literature.

Gülru Necipoğlu is one of the scholars who published several articles which attempt to analyze the Ottoman and Safavid architectural cultures together. Although only a few of her comparative studies have addressed Friday mosques, all her comparative works have presented valuable insights on the shared characteristics of Ottoman and Safavid architectural cultures and discussed the similarities or differences between the religio-political agendas of the patrons. As the earliest of these studies, her article "Framing the Gaze in Ottoman, Safavid and Mughal Palaces", published in 1993, is a comprehensive essay exploring the Topkapi Palace in Istanbul, the Ali Qapu Palace in Isfahan, and the Red Fort Palace in Delhi. She has conceptualized these three palaces as 'architectural metaphors for three patrimonial-bureaucratic empires with their hierarchical organization of state functions around public, semi-public, and private zones, culminating in gardens' that made up elaborate stages for dynastic representation.[89] In 2003, she published another article about the epigraphic programs of Friday mosques of the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal empires. In her article "Qur'anic Inscriptions on Sinan's Imperial Mosques: A Comparison with their Safavid and Mughal Counterparts", she has presented a comparative interpretation of the epigraphic programs of the Ottoman royal mosques built by Sinan. She has observed an increase in the frequency of Quranic inscriptions in Ottoman, Safavid and Mughal Friday mosques, manifesting the increasing preeminence of

[89] Necipoğlu, "Framing the Gaze", 303.

sharia-minded religious orthodoxies, along with the crystallization of imperial architectural idioms.[90]

Necipoğlu has offered an interpretation of the place of floral ornament in Ottoman and Safavid visual cultures in another article titled "Early Modern Floral: The Agency of Ornament in Ottoman and Safavid Visual Cultures", published in 2016. Exploring the development of distinctive modes of decorative designs in the Ottoman and Safavid worlds, she has observed a simultaneous canonization of distinctive ornamental vocabularies in Ottoman and Safavid courts that were formulated mostly in scriptoria, and which took shape in conversation with each other.[91] Recently, she has contributed to an edited volume on the Mughal arts and culture with a chapter scrutinizing the trans-regional connections between the Mughal, Ottoman, and Safavid architectural cultures. In this work, she has underscored the emergence of particular building types in each imperial zone, the royal Friday mosque being one of them, and attempted to link them to the dynamics of empire-building. This study has a special significance for a comparative study on the Masjed-e Shah and Sultan Ahmed complexes for it has drawn attention to some shared architectural and decorative features of these monuments and linked them to the cultural and visual trends of early modernity. The extravagance in the decorations of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque and Masjed-e Shah has been assessed as embodiments of 'theatrical baroque taste for ostentatious splendor', and as part of 'a pan-Eurasian aesthetic phenomenon, a kind of global baroque not defined as a style, but as a shared sensibility.'[92] Underlining the simultaneity of their constructions and the impact of the ongoing war between the

[90] Necipoğlu, "Qur'anic Inscriptions", 97.
[91] Necipoğlu, "Early Modern Floral", 133. See also Uluç, "Common Timurid Heritage".
[92] Necipoğlu, "Transregional Connections", 272.

Safavids and the Ottomans, she has interpreted some inscriptions of Masjed-e Shah as pointed references to the rivalry with the Ottomans.[93]

Stephen Dale is another historian who made significant contributions to the field of comparative studies on the Ottomans, Safavids, and Mughals. In his 2010 survey book titled *The Muslim Empires of the Ottomans, Safavids, and Mughals* he devoted a chapter to a brief comparative analysis of the imperial cultures of the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal empires. His chapter touches upon imperial religious architecture briefly within the context of the courts' patronage of architecture.[94] Published in the same year, Dale's article "Empires and Emporia: Palace, Mosque, Market, and Tomb in Istanbul, Isfahan, Agra, and Delhi" explores the imperial architecture in capital cities of three early modern Muslim empires as embodiments of religious affiliations, military power, dynastic prestige, and commercial prosperity.[95] In Istanbul, Isfahan, Delhi, and Agra, the imperial palatial, religious, and commercial edifices were portrayed as spatially and institutionally integrated architectural ensembles, with the imperial waqf foundations constituting their nexus at the functional and symbolic levels.[96]

In a chapter published in 2017, Çiğdem Kafescioğlu and Sussan Babaie have interpreted the architectural cultures and urban configurations of Istanbul, Isfahan, and Delhi comparatively, as imperial seats of the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal empires. This article explores the formation and development of the three early modern capital cities concerning contemporary theories of rulership and the agency of political elites in each empire. Architectural undertakings and urban projects of the members of the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal courts, and social and ceremonial life in the capital

[93] Ibid, 269.
[94] Dale, *Muslim Empires*, 135–176.
[95] Dale, "Empires and Emporia", 213.
[96] Ibid, 212–229.

cities, are expounded respectively, and around particular overarching questions including politics of capital-making, courtly ceremonials, and creation of public space. Parallelisms and differences in each spatial entity, as well as ruptures and continuities in each one, are referenced within the context of different thematic discussions.[97]

As seen in this brief survey, comparative studies on the Ottoman and Safavid architectural and urban cultures is limited. Most comparative studies investigate the Ottomans, Safavids, and Mughals together, and explore long periods of time as undifferentiated historical entities, often without referencing ruptures and changes in each empire. In this respect, the neglect of the particularities of different conjunctures is one of the main handicaps of the existing literature. In fact, it is exceedingly difficult, if not impossible to explore different aspects of three vast cultural milieus over a period of two hundred years. As Kocka has noted, "the more cases a comparative study includes, the more dependent it becomes on secondary literature, and the more difficult it becomes to get near to the sources and read them in their original language."[98]

Unlike the conventional comparative studies, this study focuses on two mosque complexes, Sultan Ahmed and Masjed-e Shah, built in a single 'historical moment,' the early seventeenth century, rather than exploring buildings of different types built in the course of a longer time span. At the same time, this study also pays attention to the *longue durée* and attempts to locate these monuments within defined architectural traditions. I believe that investigating the history of two contemporaneous architectural complexes within a limited time span makes it possible to reveal a more in-depth contextual analysis of the Ottoman and Safavid architectural, urban, and religio-political cultures, particularly within the context of the seventeenth century. Besides its framework focusing on a single episode and offering an extended contextual

[97] Kafescioğlu, and Babaie, "Istanbul, Isfahan".
[98] Kocka, "Comparison and Beyond", 40.

investigation, my study is unique in that it does not predominantly rely on the secondary literature and makes use of primary sources written in both the Ottoman and Safavid Empires, and in both Ottoman Turkish and Persian.

Some studies mentioned in this literature review appeared during the research and writing of this thesis between 2013 and 2022. The dissertation and several articles of Aliye Öten on the Sultan Ahmed complex,[99] Ünver Rüstem's article on the dome closing ceremony of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque[100], Çiğdem Kafescioğlu's piece on Atmeydanı,[101] studies of Melville, Babaie, and Emami on the Naqsh-e Jahan Square,[102] and the latter's article on the Safavid Friday mosques,[103] and Leyla Yıldız's book on Safavid Tabriz can be counted among these studies. Some of the primary sources used in and interpretations offered by these studies overlap with those of my thesis. Still my dissertation contributes to the literature with new findings, sources, and especially with its comparative framework, which will be discussed further below.

1.2 Methodology, sources, and organization of the dissertation

1.2.1 Methodology

As stated above, this is the first comprehensive contextual, comparative and connected analysis of the Friday mosque complexes of Shah Abbas and Sultan Ahmed. It is also a study that eschews the stylistic and descriptive art historical analyses that have dominated the field. Distancing my study from art historiographical narratives centered on the golden ages, I prefer to examine my subject through the lenses of a historian, not of an art critic. Rather than appreciating structural and artistic features

[99] Öten, "Arşiv Belgelerine Göre"; idem, İbrahim Paşa Sarayı"; idem, "Osmanlı Klasik Dönem"; idem, Su Yapıları"; idem, "Sultan Ahmed Camii"; idem, "Sources".
[100] Rüstem, "Spectacle of Legitimacy".
[101] Kafescioğlu, "New Look".
[102] Babaie, "Sacred Kingship"; Melville, "New Light"; Emami, "Coffeehouses, Urban Spaces".
[103] Emami, "Inviolable Thressholds".

of the monuments, and placing them in the established aesthetical hierarchies, I endeavor to understand these architectural and urban entities within their historical contexts, and in relation to the cultural, religio-political, social, and urban dynamics of the era. Proposing an interdisciplinary approach and combining the methods of social history of religion and architectural history, this study takes up a broad question: how do we interpret the construction and configuration of these mosque complexes within the underlying religio-political framework of early modernity and the seventeenth century?

Deeply indebted to recent scholarly developments, this dissertation builds on the theoretical and methodological contributions to the study of the religious and architectural culture of the Ottoman and Safavid empires by a series of scholars who interpreted architectural and urban cultures of the Ottoman and Safavid empires with reference to the religious policies of the Ottoman and Safavid political elites. With the interpretative framework it proposed, Gülru Necipoğlu's seminal work, *The Age of Sinan*, is one of the main sources of inspiration for this study. As Necipoğlu has displayed, the formation of an architectural canon for imperial Friday mosques was very much related to the religious policies of the religious and political elites of the Ottoman Empire, who attempted to establish a sharia-based social and religious order within the imperial realm. As physical embodiments of the regime, Friday mosques helped to achieve this aim, as venues for the conduction and dissemination of these policies. Studies of Sussan Babaie on Isfahan, Kishwar Rizvi on the Ardabil Shrine complex, and May Farhat on the Shrine complex of Imam Reza in Mashhad were equally inspirational and influential in the formation of my questions concerning the architectural patronage, religious policies, and politics of representation of the Safavid dynasty. These studies have displayed the intense connection between religious

policies and the production of space of the Safavid political and religious elites. Making use of several sources, including endowment deeds, chronicles, treaties of contemporary clerics and court intellectuals, and travel accounts of local and foreign travelers, these studies on the Ottoman and Safavid elites' patronage of religious monuments shed light on the question, as they propose historiographical models for future studies.

Taking my inspiration from the afore-mentioned studies, I propose the existence of a tight connection between religious and political agendas, and architectural patronage of the two Ottoman and Safavid monarchs who patronized two gigantic mosque complexes in Istanbul and Isfahan in the first half of the seventeenth century. I argue that these architectural complexes emerged and took shape under the impact of the Ottoman and Safavid policies of Sunnitization and Shi'itization, as well as consolidation and representation of imperial identities of their patrons. Besides the parallelisms of political and religious agendas of two patrons, who were trying to fashion a self-image as pious and powerful rulers, the tug of war between Ottoman and Safavid states in military, political and religious fields is worth considering. The political, military, and religious rivalry played a considerable role in the evolution of the cultural, religious, and political agendas of the Safavid and Ottoman dynasties, which were manifested in diverse areas including the making of imperial images of the rulers, military undertakings, social and religious policies, and patronage of urban and cultural projects. The endeavors for marking sectarian differences and creating emblems of Sunnite and Shi'ite creeds were apparent in the policies of the Ottoman and Safavid religio-political elites. Interference with the religious tenets, behaviors, and customs of their subjects, and formation of urban and architectural spaces embodying and even dictating the projected codes of beliefs and behaviors, can be

counted among these policies. One aim of this study is to investigate the effect of the religious, political, and cultural rivalry between the Ottoman and Safavid empires on their making of religious monuments and urban spaces. I believe the mosque complexes of Shah Abbas and Sultan Ahmed are a suitable case for exploring the effects of the rivalry and interaction between the two empires, if the concurrency of their erection, the resemblance of religious and political agendas of their patrons, and the striking similarity of their urban settings are taken into consideration.

Besides its attention to the religious and political motives of the two patrons, this dissertation scrutinizes three major aspects of the Masjed-e Shah and Sultan Ahmed complexes: the urban contexts, the spatial-architectural and decorative configurations, and the functional-ceremonial formations. As the locus of these two complexes, the spatial-architectural and social-functional formations of the Naqsh-e Jahan Square and Atmeydanı will be examined and interpreted. Along with the chronologies, building materials, and staff, the components, and layouts of the two complexes will be elucidated, with a greater focus on the Friday mosques forming the centers of these assemblies. In my investigation on the complexes' architecture, I will refer to distinct local architectural and material cultures, as well as shared cultural and aesthetic sensibilities. In this inquiry, I combine the evidence provided in contemporary narrative sources and the buildings (or their remnants) in the light of the conventional methods of architectural history depicting their plans, configurations, and materialities. Further, I scrutinize the different ceremonial and social uses of both complexes, addressing confessional endeavors and distinctions. The connections and relationship between the architectural-spatial aspects and social-ritualistic dimensions of the mentioned assemblies will be addressed. Along with the obvious parallels between the two sides, I will trace the differences between the Ottoman and Safavid

architectural, urban, and political cultures that informed the formation of Sultan Ahmed and Masjed-e Shah complexes. These differences arose from differences in religious tenets and practices between Ottoman Sunnism and Safavid Shi'ism, different relationships of the patrons with the memory of each capital city, and the distinctness of each architectural culture regarding their materials and architectural designs and vocabularies.

This dissertation's interpretative framework is informed by the paradigm of confessionalization, which was formulated by historians of the early modern German-speaking world,[104] and subsequently used by the scholars of Ottoman history as an interpretative framework for analysing the Sunnitization of the Ottoman empire. In a general formulation, scholars arguing for the confessionalization paradigm have suggested that between the 1550s and 1650s, territorial rulers of the German-speaking world identified themselves closely with a specific confessional church and fostered these confessions in their territories. This policy was intertwined with centralization and state-building, and it involved an alliance of secular and ecclesiastical authorities to promote stricter forms of religious and social discipline.[105] In this process, the Protestant and Catholic churches undertook to define their religious tenets through formulations of confessions, which were elaborate statements of religious doctrines binding all believers.[106] The initiatives of rulers and ecclesiastical bodies to frame the beliefs and religio-social practices of different churches and communities resulted in a shift that transformed several churches and religious communities into mutually exclusive, even hostile, bodies.

[104] The concept has its origins in the scholarship of E. Walter Zeeden in the late 1950s. During the 1970s, two German historians, W. Reinhard and H. Schilling, widened the concept of confession-building into that of "confessionalism", a theory of social and political history. Brady, "Confessionalization", 1; Lotz-Heumann, "Concept of "Confessionalization"", 95–96.
[105] Marshall, "Confessionalization, Confessionalism", 1.
[106] Brady, "Confessionalization", 7.

Parallel versions of the same program of religious renewal and social disciplining played roughly comparable roles in the modernization of state and societies in Europe in the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries.

Since its introduction to the literature, the applicability of the paradigm of confessionalization to the history of other European and Christian states outside the Habsburg Empire,[107] and some contemporary Islamic empires has been tested by different scholars. The paradigm's applicability to the Ottoman and Safavid contexts was suggested by Tijana Kristic and Derin Terzioğlu. They argued for the validity of the paradigm for the Ottoman and the Safavid contexts along with the possibility of speaking of an 'age of confessionalization' in the early modern Islamic world in which Ottomans and Safavids ventured to formulate their religious policies and sought to achieve a tighter religio-political integration as a basis for community and state-building.[108] Krstic and Terzioğlu published two edited volumes together, *Historicizing Sunni Islam in the Ottoman Empire, c. 145–c.1750* and *Entagled Confessionalization?*, which came as the result of the project " The Fashioning of a Sunni Orthodoxy and the Entangled Histories of Confession-Building in the Ottoman Empire, 15th–17th Centuries" led by these two scholars. Different articles in this compilation have offered different perspectives on the Ottoman empire's confessionalization process.[109]

In the following parts of this study, I will use the term 'confessionalization' to indicate the intertwined processes of the establishment of clearly defined

[107] Different studies suggested that parallel transformations occurred in other parts of Europe, but all countries experienced the confessionalization process depending on their political, social, and territorial particularities. For discussing the paradigm within the contexts of the early modern French and English states, see, respectively, Holt, "Confessionalization Beyond"; Marshall, "Confessionalization, Confessionalism".
[108] Krstic, *Contested Conversion*, 8–13; Terzioğlu, "How to Conceptualize", 6, 9.
[109] Krstic and Terzioğlu, *Historicizing Sunni Islam*; idem, *Entangled Confessionalizations*.

confessional identities, the formation of imperial identities, and empire-building within the Safavid and Ottoman contexts. In line with Krstic and Terzioğlu, I argue for the validity of the concept of "confessionalization" for the Safavid and Ottoman contexts, because the Ottoman and Safavid political and religious elites attempted to plan their religious policies and endeavored to achieve a tighter religio-political integration as a basis for community and state-building. I use the term 'confessionalization' to denote the transformation under consideration as an early modern phenomenon that was not peculiar to a Christian-European context, even though it was introduced to describe such a particular context. My usage of the term confessionalization for a non-European context does not imply a claim for the centrality of precedence of Europe in defining the social and historical phenomena. Rather, I use the concept to denote a shared phenomenon with different sources and roots in each society, which took different forms in different religious and political milieus. I contend that certain architectural, decorative, and ritualistic aspects of the Masjed-e Shah and Sultan Ahmed complexes were shaped under the influence of their patrons' diverse confessional predilections and shared confessional policies and reflected the sectarian ethoses of their creators and vernacular audiences.

1.2.2 Sources

This dissertation makes use of a range of sources about different aspects of the monuments, as well as the context in which they were erected. One of its key sources is the architecture and decorative skin of the remaining parts of the complexes. The monuments as architectural entities serve as major sources for examining their architectural configurations, decoration, and for experiencing the spaces visually,

spatially, and sensorially. Besides architectural evidence, there are several archival and narrative sources that shed light on different aspects of the complexes.

There are a great number of relevant Ottoman documents about the mosque complex of Ahmed I, touching upon different aspects, including technical and economic matters of construction, acquisition of necessary space and materials, role and agency of the patrons and architects, social life in the mosque and its dependencies. The endowment deed (*vakfname*), daily and monthly payrolls (*ruznamçe*s and *defter*s), registers (*defter*s) of employees and construction apparatus are among the main archival documents, which have been available in the archives of the Topkapı Palace Museum.[110] A document on the acquisition of land for the construction, a *hüccet*, is also among the significant sources preserved in this archive of the complex,[111] which has been partly translated by Mustafa Bilge and used as the source of an article by Aliye Öten.[112] A series of royal orders in *mühimme* registers in state archives (Başbakanlık Arşivi), some of which were briefly introduced by Aliye Öten in an article,[113] provide significant insight concerning varying issues the like acquisition of necessary building materials or conditions of the towns whose tax yields were endowed to the mosque.[114] Besides archival documents, seventeenth-century court chronicles and travel accounts provide significant information concerning different aspects of the subject from the social life in the mosque and royal square, to discussions on the image and intentions of the patron. Contemporary fatwa collections were also among the contemporary sources that shed light on different aspects of Ottoman mosques' ritual uses, including the performance of the Friday ritual and the five daily

[110] TSM A. d. 35–42, 205, 211, 212, 481, 796, 797, 1233, 1551, 1719, 3572, 7004, 7573.
[111] TSM A. d. 10748.
[112] Bilge, "Sultanahmed Camii", 529-541; Öten, "Sultan Ahmed Külliyesi".
[113] Öten, "Sources".
[114] BOA, A.DVNSMHM. D 79: 10, 26, 28, 378, 649, 677; D. 80: 306, 700, 1059; D. 81: 31; *82 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri*, 208.

canonical prayers, supererogatory prayers, and women's presence in the sanctuaries. As one of the rare Ottoman treaties on architects and architecture, *Risāle-yi Mi'māriye* should also be mentioned among the sources of the mosque of Ahmed I, and its architect Sedefkar Mehmed Agha.[115]

In contrast to the abundance of the Ottoman archival documents, Safavid sources on the Masjed-e Shah complex are limited in number and content. This has created an imbalance between the length and comprehensiveness of the chapters on the Sultan Ahmed and Masjed-e Shah complexes. Unlike the rich archival sources about the mosque complex of Ahmed I, there is no archival documentation about Masjed-e Shah in the Safavid period. Even its endowment deed in its original form has not reached us; a summary written by Sheikh Baha al-Din Amili is the only source about the endowment of Shah Abbas and Lala Beg for Masjed-e Shah.[116] Safavid court chronicles and accounts of European travelers and residents in Iran are the main sources of information on the culture, architecture, and religious life in Safavid realms, and offer considerable information on the chronology, ritual-functional uses, and perception of the Masjed-e Shah complex. Sheikh Bahai's Persian catechism, *Jāme'-ye 'Abbāsī*, should also be mentioned among contemporary narrative sources offering insights on the use and perception of Friday mosques in the Safavid world. Local histories of Isfahan and verses on Isfahan composed by seventeenth-century Safavid poets also provide valuable information for our inquiry.

Since I investigate the history of the complex of Ahmed I in the first half of the seventeenth century, I have made use of chronicles that were written in the reigns of Ahmed I (r. 1603–1617), Mustafa I (r. 1617–1618, 1622–1623), Osman II (r. 1618–1622), and Murad IV (r. 1623–1640), which corresponded with the reigns of Abbas I

[115] Cafer Efendi, *Risale-i Mimariye*.
[116] McChesney, "Waqf and Public", 178.

(r. 1588–1629), and Safi I (r. 1629–1642). *Zübdetü't-Tevāriḫ* of Mustafa Safi, who was the personal prayer leader of Ahmed I, constitutes one of the richest narratives touching upon different issues of the monument's construction and the period. Along with the chronicle of Topçular Katibi Abdülkadir Efendi, Katip Çelebi's *Feẓleke*, Peçevi İbrahim's *Tāriḫ -i Peçevi*, Naima Mustafa's *Tāriḫ -i Nāima*, Hasanbeyzade's *Tāriḫ ,* and Hüseyin Tuği's *Muṣībetnāme* are the main Ottoman narratives that I have used for my research. For my investigation on the Atmeydanı and the Naqsh-e Jahan Square and my inquiries on the Ottoman and Safavid monarchs' patronage of religious architecture before the seventeenth century, I have selectively used sixteenth-century Ottoman and Safavid chronicles with accompanying miniature paintings, and travels accounts from the same century. Safavid chronicles from the reigns of Abbas I and Safi I include Iskandar Munshi's *Tārikh-e Ālamāra-ye 'Abbāsī*, Hidayatullah Afushtah-e Natanz's (Natanzi) *Nuqāvat al-Āsār fi zikr al-akhyār*, Jalal al-Din Yazdi's *Tārikh-e 'Abbāsī* (*Ruznāma-ye Molla Jalāl*), Astarabadi's *Tārikh-e Sultāni: Ez Sheikh Ṣāfi ta Shāh Ṣāfi*, Isfahani's *Khulāsat al-Siyar: Tārikh-e Ruzgār-e Shāh Ṣāfi*. Among the travel accounts that I have used are travelogues of Evliya Çelebi, John Baptista Tavernier, Josephus Grelot, and Claes Ralamb, who visited Istanbul in the seventeenth century. The travel accounts of Pietro Della Valle, Raphael Du Mans, Jean Chardin, Thomas Herbert, Katib Çelebi, Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, who all visited Isfahan in the seventeenth century, contain significant clues for my investigation. Accounts and correspondences of several Carmelite fathers, who resided in Isfahan during the seventeenth century, have also been consulted. Treatises on the question of the Friday ritual composed by Imami clerics, published by Rasul Jafarian,[117] are among the sources that I draw on in the context of the question of the Friday ritual.

[117] Jafarian, *Davazdah Resāla-ye Fiqhī.*

1.2.3 Chapters

This thesis is comprised of five main chapters, plus the introduction and conclusion. The second chapter aims to define the religio-political contexts in which the Sultan Ahmed and Masjed-e Shah complexes were erected. It scrutinizes the religious and political climate in the early seventeenth century, concentrating on the reigns of Sultan Ahmed and Shah Abbas. It explores the rise of Shah Abbas and Sultan Ahmed as powerful sovereigns with confessional agendas and centralizing policies, and how their agendas were manifested in these patrons' religious and architectural projects.

The third chapter explores the Friday ritual and patronage of mosques under the Ottoman and Safavid dynasties. Its purpose is to define the architectural and ritualistic customs that were inherited by the patrons of the Sultan Ahmed and Masjed-e Shah complexes and which influenced these monuments' ritualistic and architectural configurations. It investigates the political and legal implementations and frameworks of the Friday ritual in the Safavid and Ottoman worlds, and explores the Safavid and Ottoman monarchs' patronage of mosques. It depicts the architectural and ritualistic formations of the Safavid and Ottoman royal mosques that were erected before and simultaneously with the Masjed-e Shah and Sultan Ahmed complexes.

The purpose of the fourth chapter is to describe and interpret the Masjed-e Shah and Sultan Ahmed complexes' urban context, the Naqsh-e Jahan Square in Isfahan and Atmeydanı in Istanbul. It examines the architectural-spatial configurations, chronologies, the functional, ceremonial, and social uses the of the Naqsh-e Jahan Square and Atmeydanı. The centrality of these royal squares as sites of courtly architectural patronage and the different trajectories of their formations are addressed.

The fifth and sixth chapters elucidate the constructions, chronologies, architecture, endowments, and social-ritualistic uses of the complexes of Sultan Ahmed and Shah Abbas respectively. These inquiries are conducted in an integrated manner, and in relation to the underlying religiopolitical, cultural, and social dynamics of the period.

The sixth chapter and the conclusion of this thesis, presents a comparative interpretation of the construction, spatial-architectural-decorative configuration, and the social-ritualistic formation of the Masjed-e Shah and the Sultan Ahmed complexes. It focuses on the differences that stemmed from discrepancies in the patrons' religio-political agendas, local architectural conventions, and social-religious-confessional landscapes, and sketches the architectural and ritualistic parallelisms arising from the patrons' shared agendas and policies. The ongoing political and religious rivalry between these complexes' patrons and its role in the constructions and configuration of the monuments constitutes another theme referred in this chapter.

CHAPTER 2

SETTING THE STAGE:

RELIGION AND POLITICS IN THE EARLY SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY OTTOMAN AND SAFAVID WORLDS

The question of patronage constitutes one of the main issues of this dissertation, and investigating the contexts of royal architectural patronage necessitates a comprehensive assessment of the patrons' religio-political identities and agendas. This chapter's purpose is to define the political and religious agendas and identities of the patrons of the Masjed-e Shah and Sultan Ahmed complexes. It explores the political and religious climate in the early seventeenth century, focusing on the reigns of Shah Abbas and Sultan Ahmed. Relying on several contemporary narratives and secondary studies, it investigates the rise of these rulers as powerful monarchs with agendas towards confessionalization, and the Ottoman-Safavid relations during their reigns. The main argument of this inquiry is that both Shah Abbas and Sultan Ahmed attempted to establish themselves as powerful monarchs after periods of political and military turmoil, and instrumentalised displays of piety, patronage of religious architecture and institutions, and confessional policies while they at the same time competed at different fronts.

2.1 Political and religious climate in the early seventeenth century Ottoman and Safavid worlds

In the early seventeenth century, the Ottoman and Safavid worlds witnessed the emergence of two monarchs, Sultan Ahmed and Shah Abbas, who elaborated on the defined imperial identities and confessional policies of their predecessors. These two

rulers were descended from dynasties that ruled over political entities that had evolved from late medieval regional chiefdoms[118] into relatively centralized early modern empires in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.[119] In the sixteenth century, the Ottoman and Safavid rulers embraced religio-political ideologies that were centered on claims for temporal and spiritual leadership of the Islamic world, and which were nourished by Islamic, Turco-Mongol, Iranian and in the Ottoman context, Byzantine political traditions. The Safavid and Ottoman monarchs were regarded as the kings of their realms, who were believed to be selected, appointed, and supported by God, and to be the protectors of the religion (Islam) and justice.[120]

Besides the formulation of imperial identities, the adoption of official madhhabs impacted the religio-political agendas of the sixteenth-century Safavid and Ottoman rulers. While the Ottomans adopted the Hanafi branch of Sunnism, the Safavids embraced the Imami interpretation of Shi'ism. These dynasties patronized the clerics of the schools of law they embraced. Accompanied by cleric-bureaucrats, the Ottoman and Safavid rulers endeavored to establish socio-religious orders, to

[118] For the early Ottomans, see Gibbons, *Foundations*; Wittek, *Rise*; Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*; Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, I. For the transformation of the Safavids from a Sufi group into an imperial state and the early Safavids, see Mazzaoui, *Origins*, 73–77; Savory, *Iran*, 1–50; Newman, *Safavid Iran*, 13–25; Baltacıoğlu-Brammer, "Emergence"; Yıldırım, "Rise".

[119] In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the feudal structures were transformed into centralized empires ruled by powerful dynasties, which were supported by extensive administrative apparatus, bureaucratic and religious governing bodies, military forces. The Mughals based in India, the Uzbeks in Transoxiana, and the Habsburg, French, English, and Spanish empires in Europe were other early modern empires. See Dale, *Muslim Empires*; Streusand, *Islamic Gunpowder Empires*; Subrahmanyam, "Mughals, Ottomans"; Kunt, "Later Muslim Empires"; Moin, *Millenial Sovereign*; Birdal, *Holy Roman Empire*; Barkey, *Empire of Difference*; Macit, *Şeybani Özbek Hanlığı;* Wiesner-Hanks, *Eary Modern Europe*; Cameron, *Early Modern Europe*.

[120] On the Ottoman and Safavid concepts of kingship, and the early modern Ottoman and Safavid rulers' bases of religious and secular legitimacy, see İnalcık, "Comments on 'Sultanism"; Yılmaz, *Caliphate Redefined*; Murphey, *Exploring Ottoman Sovereignty*; Turan, *Hilafet*, 181–325; Emecen, *Hilafet ve Saltanat*, 13–89; Sariyannis, "Rulers and State"; Babayan, *Mystics, Monarchs*; Aqajari, *Muqaddamai bar Munasabat*; Savory, "Safavid State"; Mitchel, *Practice of Politics*, 4–6.

popularize the tenets and practices of their official madhhabs in their realms, and to create religious orthodoxies at doctrinal and practical levels.[121]

Similar to their predecessors, Sultan Ahmed and Shah Abbas invested in their imperial identities as political and spiritual leaders, and pursued the confessional policies of their predecessors. These two monarchs rose to power at a young age and consolidated their rule after subduing various internal challenges in their realms and courts. Reforms made in military-administrative practices and dynastic precepts, and the establishment of court-centered retinues and alliances helped these two rulers find their powerful regimes. Creating the image of a pious ruler, which was advertised through public displays of devotion, as well as patronizing religious sanctuaries, rituals, and clerical bodies, also served the same purpose. Accompanied by confessional policies and attempts at social disciplining, their quest for manifesting the image of a devout and mighty ruler aggrandized the religio-political rivalry, as well as the confessional differences and disputes between the Ottomans and Safavids in the early seventeenth century.

2.1.1 From young rulers to world emperors: The rise of Shah Abbas and Sultan Ahmed

2.1.1.1 Abbas I

On 1 October 1588, at a ceremony in the Safavid royal palace in Qazvin, Shah Muhammad Khudabanda placed the crown on the head of his seventeen-year-old son, Abbas Mirza, who had dethroned him and ascended the throne as Shah Abbas I, the fifth

[121] Burak, *Second Formation*; Abisaab, *Converting Persia*; Aqajari, *Muqaddamai bar Munasabat*; Terzioğlu, "How to Conceptualize"; Krstic, *Contested Conversion*, 8–13. For different aspects of the confessionalization process in the Ottoman empire, see Krstic and Terzioğlu, *Historicizing Sunni Islam*; idem, *Entangled Confessionalizations*. For Ottoman and Safavid rulers' patronage of clerics, see Abisaab, *Converting Persia*; Atçıl, *Sultans and Scholars*.

Safavid king.[122] Although this ceremony was conducted by the dethroned shah, Murshidqulu Khan Ustajlu, an influential Qizilbash amir tasked with the governorship of Mashhad, was the real actor behind this coup. The latter had been the tutor of Abbas Mirza for approximately eight years and acted as his deputy during the prince's titular governorship of Herat. Murshidqulu Khan was an influential tutor with political ambitions, and it was the second enthronement of Abbas Mirza by a group of Qizilbash leaders headed by Murshidqulu Khan. Earlier, this Qizilbash kingmaker had put the eleven-year-old prince on the throne in Khurasan near the Castle of Nishabur.[123] Although Abbas Mirza had not been recognized as a king in all parts of the Safavid realms, it was still a genuine coronation since the Qizilbash amirs had read the Friday sermon and struck coins in the name of Abbas.[124] However, the first enthronement of Prince Abbas ended with Murshidqulu Khan's renewal of allegiance to Shah Khudabanda following the Ottoman occupation of Tabriz and other important cities in Azarbaijan.[125] This ambitious governor and his Qizilbash supporters realized their plan for enthroning and controlling the tender Safavid shah and ruling the Safavid realms indirectly in their second trial. To paraphrase the words of Munajjim Yazdi, it was the Qizilbash amirs who always decided who the next shah would be, and they put Abbas Mirza on the Safavid throne.[126]

As a concrete indicator of the limits of the Qizilbash amirs' political power, this coronation played a significant part in the configuration of the political agenda and career of Shah Abbas. Re-conquering Iran from other powerholders, the Qizilbash confederations being the most influential, was his initial task, upon which the rest of his career as a ruler rested.[127] The elimination of centrifugal powers, the establishment of a

[122] Falsafi, *Zandaganī-ye Shāh 'Abbās*, I, 139; Blow, *Shah Abbas*, 30; Quinn, *Shah Abbas*, 21.
[123] Falsafi, *Zandaganī-ye Shāh 'Abbās*, I, 85–86, 139; Blow, *Shah Abbas*, 30; Quinn, *Shah Abbas*, 21.
[124] Quinn, *Shah Abbas*, 20.
[125] Falsafi, *Zandaganī-ye Shāh 'Abbās*, I, 93.
[126] Yazdi, *Tārīkh-e 'Abbāsī*, 23, 56.
[127] Quinn, *Shah Abbas*, 22.

central government, and the reinforcement of the Safavid dynasty's absolute sovereignty occupied a central place in his political agenda throughout his forty-two year-long reign. He spent his childhood watching the disorders caused by the quarrelsome Qizilbash leaders, who backed different Safavid princes as heir to the throne and joined a battle of succession two years before Shah Tahmasb's death.[128] Known as the second civil war, this conflict had continued for over two decades, spanning the reigns of Ismail II and Muhammad Khudabanda, as well as the first years of the reign of Shah Abbas. The first civil war had occurred during the initial decade of Shah Tahmasb's reign, and this was the second time since the beginning of the Safavid rule in Iran that the Qizilbash had experienced a conflict of such intensity among themselves.[129] It was in this period that a Qizilbash faction killed a Safavid shah, Haydar Mirza, who had been enthroned in Qazvin after Tahmasb's death and who was assassinated by the above-mentioned faction right after his coronation.[130]

The first years of Shah Abbas were devoted to the elimination of several Qizilbash amirs, who had played a role in the murder of his uncle Haydar Mirza, and in his father's dethronement. One of his first actions was to execute the killers of Haydar Mirza.[131] Certain members of the Qizilbash confederation, including Dhulqadir and Takalu, were eliminated because of suspicions about their loyalty.[132] The Qizilbash amirs who overthrew his father and carried him to the throne were given significant positions in this initial phase, and their leader, Murshidqulu Khan, acted as the de facto ruler of the state. For one and a half years, Abbas lived in the shadow of this Qizilbash kingmaker until he

[128] Falsafi, *Zandaganī-ye Shāh 'Abbās*, I, 40–42.
[129] Quinn, *Shah Abbas*, 22. For the first civil war that continued in the first decade of Tahmasb's rule, see Savory; *Iran Under*, 51–56; Newman, *Safavid Iran*, 26–27; Safakesh, *Savafiyan dar Gozargah* 66–67; Sadiqi, *Tārīkh-e Irān*, 37–39. For the second civil war, see Savory; *Iran Under*, 76–78; Babayan, *Mystics, Monarchs*, 359–360; Sadiqi, *Tārīkh-e Irān*, 52–53.
[130] Falsafi, *Zandaganī-ye Shāh 'Abbās*, I, 45–46; Sadiqi, *Tārīkh-e Irān*, 55.
[131] Blow, *Shah Abbas*, 30.
[132] Newman, *Safavid Iran*, 53.

had him assassinated in 1590 (998 AH),[133] and this marked the beginning of the young shah's independent rule. After the murder of this Qizilbash amir, Shah Abbas did not allow anyone to share his absolute authority, and endeavored to create an alternative focus of power that was centered at his court, and comprised loyal palace recruits, i.e. ghulams, and Tajik administrators.[134] (Figures C1–C2)

The Qizilbash problem was not the only trouble the young shah faced after his enthronement. There was a three-frontier war in the Safavid realms. The Uzbeks were constantly attacking Khurasan and conquered Herat and other significant cities in the region in 1588,[135] and several significant cities in Azerbaijan and Caucasus, including Tabriz, Shirvan, and Ganja, were occupied by the Ottomans during a long period of war that began in 1578.[136] Further, a series of provincial rebellions devastated the military, administrative, and social order of the Safavid realms, as they damaged trade and economy. Between 1590 and 1602 (998 AH–1010 AH), several political uprisings occurred in different provinces, including Fars, Kerman, Khurasan, Gilan, Kharazm, and Lor. These rebellions were conducted by different groups, including Qizilbash amirs, Turkish and Tajik local governors, ghulams who had joined the Safavid military during the reign of Shah Tahmasb, and an influential Sufi group, the Nuqtavis.[137]

Abbas could not fight his internal enemies, the Uzbeks, and the Ottomans at the same time and made temporary peace with the Ottomans.[138] Fighting the Ottomans necessitated a more advanced military capacity, and to concentrate entirely on the Ottoman frontier. At the time, Abbas did not have an army that could compete with the

[133] Blow, *Shah Abbas*, 30, 35; Sadiqi, *Tārīkh-e Irān*, 52.
[134] Sadiqi, *Tārīkh-e Irān*, 53; Falsafi, *Zandaganī-ye Shāh 'Abbās*, I, 151; Newman, *Safavid Iran*, 52.
[135] For the Uzbek attacks on Khurasan in this era, see McChesney, "Conquest of Herat"; Savory, *Iran Under*, 83–85; Blow, *Shah Abbas*, 47–51; Macit, *Şeybani Özbek Hanlığı*, 113–114.
[136] For the Ottoman attacks on the Safavid lands in this decade, see Küpeli, *Osmanlı-Safevi Münasebetleri*, 45– 46.
[137] Sadiqi, *Tārīkh-e Irān*, 55–62; Safakesh, *Ṣafavīyān dar Guzargāh*, 95–96, 202; Blow, *Shah Abbas*, 35, 47–48.
[138] Blow, *Shah Abbas*, 36.

Ottomans in terms of military technology, and a significant number of his Qizilbash governors, who constituted the backbone of the Safavid troops, were not loyal to their shah. In 1590, the shah recognized Ottoman sovereignty over Tabriz, Ganja, Karabag, Shirvan, Loristan, Georgia, and Nihavend with the Ferhat Pasha Treaty.[139] This treaty ended a twelve-year-long war between the Ottomans and the Safavids and provided the Safavid shah with an interval for eliminating his internal enemies. As Iskandar Munshi indicated, "Once the Shah had concluded peace with the Ottomans, he could turn his attention to the problems in other parts of the country- the dissatisfaction among the Qizilbash and internal enemies."[140] This episode was an opportunity for repulsing the Uzbek raiders, as well as gathering strength for revenge against the Ottomans.

During the 1590s, Shah Abbas devoted his military energy to fighting against the Uzbeks and the rebels in different provinces. He mounted several campaigns against the rebels in various provinces, and defeated all his internal enemies one by one, the last being the governor of Loristan, Ibrahim Khan.[141] In this era, the Uzbeks took advantage of the shah's concentration on internal troubles to intensify their siege of several cities in Khurasan, including Nishabur, Sabzavar, Isfarayn, and the holy city of Mashhad. The Uzbeks remained in control of most of Khurasan for approximately eight years until 1598, when their leader Abdullah Khan suddenly passed away, and the Uzbek troops withdrew their Safavid campaign.[142] At the end of the first decade of his rule, Shah Abbas had overcome two of the biggest troubles of his reign, namely the internal upheavals, and the Uzbek attacks on Khurasan.

[139] Küpeli, *Osmanlı-Safevi Münasebetleri*, 46; Falsafi, *Zandaganī-ye Shāh 'Abbās*, II, 981; Blow, *Shah Abbas*, 36.
[140] Munshi, *History of Shah*, II, 588.
[141] Sadiqi, *Tārīkh-e Irān*, 55–60; Blow, *Shah Abbas*, 47–48.
[142] Blow *Shah Abbas*, 49– 50; Macit, *Şeybani Özbek Hanlığı*, 116.

The troublesome experiences of his childhood and early years of his reign taught Abbas significant lessons concerning the importance of creating a centralized government, absolute sovereignty, and a strong military. The disloyalty of Qizilbash leaders, the provincial rebellions, and the disruptive military attacks of two rival monarchs displayed to him the fragility of the Safavid political and military organization. Besides, these repetitive challenges were creating a crisis of legitimacy for the Safavid dynasty as well as hurting the Safavid lands socially and economically. To cope with the political and military challenges, Abbas I embarked on an extensive and radical reform program, which would provide him with political, military, and economic tools for creating a central government, and allow him to compete with his major rival, the Ottomans.

The military and administrative reforms of Abbas I took several years to complete and changed the nature of the Safavid state.[143] It can be claimed that the shah's reform program comprised two phases, the first being conducted in the 1590s, and the second in the Isfahani era of his rule, namely the first decades of the seventeenth century. His initial reforms included changes in the military and administrative organization of the state. One of his very first steps was to create a deputy for himself and to make him responsible for the execution of his reform program. The shah placed his program of standardizing and centralizing his empire's military and administrative system in the hands of Hatim Beg Urdubadi, his *nāẓir-e dīvān-e 'alā* or *i'timād al-dowlat*, who initiated to institute wide-ranging bureaucratic reforms.[144] Comparable with the office of the Ottoman grand vizier, the position of *i'timād al-dowlat* gained further significance as the shah's chief executive and became the highest office in the Safavid court in this period.[145] Beginning with Abbas I, Safavid *i'timād al-dowlat*s were commissioned as the shah's deputies in various

[143] Blow, *Shah Abbas*, 37.
[144] Mitchel, *Practice of Politics*, 180; Blow, *Shah Abbas*, 42.
[145] Floor, "Note", 441.

military-administrative affairs.[146] As I will discuss in below, the appointment of the *i'timād al-dowlat* as the individual responsible for conducting and overseeing the military-administrative reforms is significant for displaying the connection of Shah Abbas' reform program with the Ottoman administrative tradition. Like his other administrative reforms, the reconfiguration of *i'timād al-dowlat* as the shah's deputy and most authorised bureaucrat was probably inspired by the Ottoman system of grand vizierate, and this innovation in the Safavid system reflects Shah Abbas' tendency to emulate Ottoman policies in diverse areas.

In the initial period of his reign, Shah Abbas tried to curb Qizilbash power by relying on his ghulam or *quls*.[147] As Floor and Babayan have suggested, in this policy he was following in the footsteps of his great grandfather, Tahmasb.[148] Similar to Abbas I, Shah Tahmasb had been a victim and object of internal conflicts and struggled against the centrifugal tendencies of Qizilbash amirs. The foundation of an independent corps of slaves, the ghulam or *qullār* corps, which was composed mainly of Circassian, Georgian and Armenian captives of war, and non-Qizilbash Persian and Arab tribal volunteers, was among the primary means used by Shah Tahmasb in his struggle against the Qizilbash. Abbas gave it official status as the army of 'royal household slaves' (*ghulāmān-e khassa-ye sharīfa*) and used this regular and standing army as his military power-base.[149] He rendered this corpse into an extended and full-equipped army[150] and created a new

[146] Floor, *Safavid Government Institutions*, 23, 26.
[147] Quinn, *Shah Abbas*, 22.
[148] Floor, *Safavid Government Institutions*, 137; Babayan, *Mystics, Messiahs*, 358.
[149] For Shah Abbas' ghulam army and his reconfiguration of ghulams, see Babaie et al, *Slaves*, 1–19; Floor, *Safavid Government Institutions*, 133–134; Savory, *Iran Under*, 78–82; Newman, *Safavid Iran*, 52; Mitchel, *Practice of Politics*, 180; Erdoğan, *Safevi Devleti'nin Askeri*, 66; Blow, *Shah Abbas*, 37–38.
[150] The use of firearms began as early as the first Safavid decades in Iran. Especially after the Çaldıran War, the Safavid elites recognized the significance of artillery and muskeeters for being able to compete with the Ottomans. Beginning with Ismail I, the Safavid shahs appealed the assistance of European powers for advancing their military technology. Under Shah Tahmasb, the use of firearms became more widespread in the Safavid army, and 'Abbas I furthered Tahmasb's initiatives by giving them an official status; increasing the number of muskeeters, and providing the use of artillery in a more effective manner. Similar to his ancestors, 'Abbas I took assistance of Europeans. Some of his

position for leading it. Defining it as a divinely inspired formation, Iskandar Munshi described the new ghulam army as follows:

> He enrolled in the armed forces large numbers of Georgian, Circassian, and other *golam*s, and created the office of *qollar-aqasi* (commander-in-chief of the *golam* regiments), which had not previously existed under the Safavid regime. Several thousand men were drafted into regiments of musketeers from the Cagatay tribe, and various Arab and Persian tribes in Khorasan, Azerbaijan, and Tabaristan.[151]

For paying his regular army, Abbas introduced changes in the administrative system and took back 'state provinces'(*mamālīk*), much of them hitherto granted to Qizilbash leaders as administrative fiefs, and he turned them into 'crown lands'(*khassa*), under the central government's direct control.[152] Like the formation of the ghulam army, the state lands' transfer into the crown branch of the administration was begun in the reign of Shah Tahmasb,[153] and continued by his great-grandson. Almost all crown provinces began to be administered by centrally appointed viziers, and their tax revenues began to be sent to the royal treasury.[154] In this process, an increasing number of ghulams began to be appointed as administrators of the crown provinces, whose revenues began to be collected by intendants appointed directly by the shah.[155] The increasing transfer of the revenues from state lands into the royal treasury, and the enlargement of the standing army altered the quasi-feudal structure of the Safavid state. The increasing number of ghulams in the provincial administration, and the state lands' transfer diminished the influence of the Qizilbash amirs as semi-dependent provincial governors.

The pre-Isfahani episode of Shah Abbas' rule witnessed another major change in the Safavid administrative practice. Before Shah Abbas' reign, Safavid princes

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reforms in the use of firearms have been attributed to the English envoy Robert Sherley, who will be introduced in the following pages. Floor, *Safavid Government Institutions*, 176–182, 188–194; Erdoğan, *Safevi Devleti'nin Askeri*, 96–106; Sadiqi, *Tārīkh-e Irān*, 100; Blow, *Shah Abbas*, 53–64.

[151] Munshi, *History of Shah*, I, 527.

[152] Babaie et al, *Slaves*, 9; Savory, *Iran Under*, 80–81; Blow, *Shah Abbas*, 38.

[153] Savory, "Safavid State", 194.

[154] Blow, *Shah Abbas*, 38.

[155] Savory, "Safavid State", 196.

(shahzadas), had been entrusted to provincial Qizilbash amirs, while during his reign, the princes began to be kept in the court under the close supervision of eunuchs, another group of slaves and loyal servants of the royal household who gained political prominence under Shah Abbas.[156] Shah Abbas, who fathered five sons, abandoned the practice of appointing his shahzadas as provincial governors in Herat, Mashhad, Tabriz, or other significant cities.[157] His purpose was to eliminate the risk of his princes being used as pawns by powerful governors to cultivate their political ambitions, as his brothers and he himself had been.[158] All Safavid princes were eligible for enthronement as the Safavid king, and thus had the potential to declare their rule. According to Khuzani Isfahani, the fact that Abbas I murdered his son and heir apparent, Safi Mirza, and blinded his other two surviving sons because they constituted a political threat for the shah's authority,[159] displays his fear of the princes' potential of rebellion. While two of his sons died of natural causes, the shah eliminated the possibility of his surviving sons' uprising even though they were kept at court in Isfahan.[160]

This reform altered the rule of succession in Safavid Iran. As Babayan has observed, this change meant the replacement of Turco-Mongol notions of an eponymous clan and Indo-Iranian conceptions of a sacrosanct dynasty with the notion of 'a fixed patrilineage in which succession passed to the next generation through primogeniture.'[161] It is worth mentioning that at about the same time, the Ottoman sultan Ahmed I, who was enthroned at a young age without having first served as a provincial governor, abandoned the practice of appointing his princes as sanjak rulers, and beginning with his reign, seniority in the patrilineal line, *ekber ve erşed*, became the rule of succession. As Blow has argued,

[156] Babaie et al, *Slaves of the Shah*, 8.
[157] Falsafi, *Zandagāni-ye Shāh 'Abbās*, I, 287.
[158] Blow, *Shah Abbas*, 38.
[159] Khuzani Isfahani, *Chronicle*, II, 792.
[160] Falsafi, *Zandagānī-ye Shāh 'Abbās*, I, 287–310.
[161] Babayan, *Mystics, Monarchs*, 376.

the shah probably followed the Ottoman example in this administrative reform.[162] The simultaneity of this change in the Ottoman and Safavid practices of succession constitutes an explicit example of common conception of authority in the early seventeenth century. This suggests their mutual awareness of each other's policies.

Different historians have taken different views about the source(s) of inspiration for Shah Abbas's military and administrative reforms. Some have claimed that Shah Tahmasb constituted a role model for Abbas I, who followed his grandfather's footsteps to curtail Qizilbash autonomy in the Safavid lands. This seems like a sound argument considering the similarity between the policies of Tahmasb I and Shah Abbas. An equally valid argument that has been advocated is that the military and administrative organization of the Ottoman state formed a source of inspiration for the reforms of Abbas I.[163] The Ottoman sultans relied on slaves in the military and administrative organization of the state and hired recruited soldiers, governors, and bureaucrats both in central and provincial administration. Janissary army, which comprised slave soldiers of Christian origin, was the backbone of the Ottoman military organization, and to a greater extent, the Ottoman sultans owed the fame of their military power to this military foundation. Besides the military system, the Ottoman sultans' use of slaves in central and provincial administration seems to have set an example for the Safavids, who had to deal with governors with centrifugal tendencies. The widespread use of slaves as bureaucrats and governors by the Ottomans, which began during the reign of Mehmed II and sped up by Sultan Süleyman, emanated from a similar concern for eliminating potential alternative powers like families of ghazi-warriors, and local dynasties in the provinces.[164]

[162] Blow, *Shah Abbas*, 38.
[163] Sadiqi, *Tārīkh-e Irān*, 100; Blow, *Shah Abbas*, 37; Erdoğan, *Safevi Devleti'nin Askeri*, 91.
[164] İnalcık, *Ottoman Empire*, 77–88; Barkey, *Empire of Difference*, 76–82.

Some sources from the seventeenth century offer evidence supporting the argument that the Ottomans constituted a source of inspiration for Abbas's practice of using slaves as soldiers and administrators. The seventeenth-century traveler Chardin showed that for displaying his affection for his ghulam corps, he called them "my mounted Janissaries".[165] This shows that the shah likened his ghulam army to the Ottoman Janissaries. The shah's reforms were assessed as initiatives to emulate the system of the Ottoman sultans by a contemporary Ottoman author too. In his treatise of advice written for Murad IV in 1631, Koçi Bey (d. 1650) reported an anecdote, which provides clues concerning Shah Abbas' source of inspiration for his reforms, and their perception by the contemporary Ottomans. According to Koçi Bey, at the inception of his rule, Shah Abbas summoned his viziers, grandees, clerics, and sages, and asked them about the secret behind the Ottoman sultans' power, supremacy, and their ability to own such extended realms under their suzerainty. After a few days of consultation, the grandees of Abbas I stated their opinion regarding the mystery of the Ottoman success and the Safavid shahs' weakness in front of the Ottoman sultans. The shah's advisors informed the shah about the centrality of the grand vizierate, the ethical virtues of the Ottoman sultans, the justice of his governors, the wealth of the crown, and state treasuries, and the strength of their armies. Koçi Bey indicated that after this incident, Shah Abbas made several changes in the administrative system, including the assignment of significant provinces to khans, or ghulam governors, as lifetime tenures, and the creation of a large army composed of salaried slave soldiers. Koçi Bey concluded that imitating the Ottoman policies brought success and power to the Iranian Shah, even though he was an irreligious and ungenerous person.[166]

[165] Chardin, *Voyages*, VI, 72.
[166] Koçi Bey, *Koçi Bey Risaleleri*, 74–75.

Shah Abbas' innovations in the military and administrative system of the Safavid state helped him overcome the struggles he inherited from Tahmasb's reign, and repulse the military attacks of the Uzbeks. Defeating his internal enemies and the Uzbeks, and establishing a loyal military-administrative staff, Abbas I opened up a new phase in his rule, and the whole Safavid history. At the end of the sixteenth century, he transferred the Safavid capital from Qazvin to Isfahan, where he furthered his reforms for creating a central government, and an absolute dominion centered on the Safavid court. The Isfahani period of Shah Abbas' rule saw the emergence or maturation of distinct religio-political, social, and economic strategies, which played a significant part in the consolidation of the centralized government, the legitimacy and power of the Safavid shahs, and a strong anti-Ottoman politics on diverse frontiers. The embrace of a sharia-based and legalist understanding of Imami Shi'ism was the most important one among these policies, which will be discussed in the following section in a detailed manner.

Measures taken for prospecting the economy and trade in the Safavid lands constituted another significant component of Shah Abbas' wide-ranging reforms in this era. Through mercantile initiatives and economic refinements, Abbas I aimed to finance his military-administrative reforms within Iran and to provide financial sources for his struggle against the Ottomans.[167] For facilitating the long-distance trade through Iran, he created a vast infrastructure and provided the security of trade routes in his realms. The construction of caravanserais in Isfahan and on major trade routes the building of new roads and the refinement of the existing ones, and restoring the roads' security with the appointment of *rahdār*s, the royal guards, were among the main measures taken by Shah Abbas.[168] Further, he invested effort in augmenting the production and importation of

[167] Babaie et al, *Slaves*, 49.
[168] Blow, *Shah Abbas*, 59; Sadiqi, *Tārīkh-e Irān*, 154; Babaie et al, *Slaves*, 49; Emerson, "Rahdars", 318.

Safavid Iran's most important export, raw silk.[169] He settled several silk-merchant communities from Tabriz and the Armenian city of Julfa in Isfahan, and monopolized the silk trade, which enabled him to control this commodity's production and prizes.[170] The silk trade brought in silver, which became revenue for financing the shah's new army and administrators, military campaigns against the Ottomans,[171] and probably for his wide-ranging building projects. His initiatives for directing the silk road from the Ottoman were also indicative of his effort in rivaling the Ottomans through silk trade and sabotaging their economic profit from it.[172] The most vital route of the Safavid-European silk trade, the Levant route, passed through the Ottoman lands, and Abbas I attempted to decrease this route's centrality by directing the silk trade to the routes passing through Russia and the Persian Gulf.[173]

2.1.1.2 Sultan Ahmed

Sultan Ahmed I ascended to the Ottoman throne on December 22, 1603 (22 Rajab 1012 AH) as the fourteenth Sultan of the House of Osman.[174] The seventeenth-century court chronicler Hasan Beyzade narrated Ahmed I's enthronement ceremony as follows: "A son sealed with felicity, who is approximately fourteen years old, with a black turban made of haircloth on his head, went out from the Gate of Felicity, saluting every corner, and sat on the throne."[175] Hasan Beyzade's depiction of the enthronement of the young sultan, who is described as a son (*maḫdūm*) with a

[169] Throughout the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries, Iran had been one of the world's main producers of raw silk, and exported it to Europe, the Ottoman lands and India. Herzig, "Volume of Iranian", 61.
[170] Babaie et al, *Slaves of the Shah*, 49–62; Ferrier, "Armenians", 38; Savory, "Relations between", 446.
[171] Babaie et al, *Slaves of the Shah*, 52.
[172] Ferrier, "Armenians", 39
[173] Blow, *Shah Abbas*, 92; Ferrier, "Armenians", 39; Herzig, "Volume of Raw", 63–71.
[174] Mustafa Safi, *Mustafa Safi'nin*, I, 7.
[175] Ahmed Paşa, *Hasan Beyzade Tarihi*, III, 803.

childlike and callow manner, instead of a dignified posture that was expected from an Ottoman sultan, is telling about the perception of Ahmed I by his contemporaries in the early years of his reign.

Sultan Ahmed's enthronement was marked by several innovations in dynastic practice, which made him a questionable figure in the eyes of his contemporaries, especially in the early years of his sovereignty.[176] He was the first Ottoman sultan who was enthroned at such an early age, without being circumcised and without offspring, except for the very short first reign of Mehmed II.[177] Since he had no son to ensure the dynasty's continuity, Ahmed I did not order the execution of his younger brother Şehzade Mustafa (d. 1639) according to the custom of royal fratricide, for Mustafa was the sole male member of the Ottoman dynasty along with Ahmed I. Throughout his reign, Ahmed avoided royal fratricide since dynastic continuity was at risk because of his recurrent illnesses in his reign's early years. The abandonment of the practice of royal fratricide constituted the first step of the establishment of a rule of succession based on seniority, which defines the oldest and maturest male member of the dynasty as the legitimate heir to the throne.[178] Along with his young age and abandonment of royal fratricide, Ahmed's lack of experience in provincial governorship (*sancāḳ*) established another dynastic precedent because he was the first Ottoman sultan who was raised within the walls of the Ottoman palace and enthroned without serving as provincial governor.[179] Throughout the fourteen years of his reign, he struggled to replace this public image of a weak and insufficient ruler, which, to a great extent, resulted from the mentioned dynastic

[176] Börekçi, "Factions and Favorites", 92.
[177] Ibid, 12. For the case of Mehmed II, see İnalcık, *Fatih Devri*, 61–64; Emecen, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun*, 120–121.
[178] Pierce, *Imperial Harem*, 21–22; Börekçi, "İnkırazın Eşiğinde".
[179] This was indeed the result of a decision taken earlier. The Ottomans stopped sending princes to Anatolia given the turbulent context of the Celali rebellions.

innovations, with that of a strong and talented sultan, powerful enough to rule the affairs of his empire. (Figure C3)

Indeed, deterioration in the Ottoman sultans' public image had begun a few decades before Sultan Ahmed's enthronement, during the reigns of his immediate predecessors, and was augmented by the personal and contextual disadvantages of Ahmed's early reign. When he became sultan, Ahmed I inherited a heavy burden of internal and external problems, as well as a bruised public image of his dynasty. In the last two decades of the sixteenth century, the Ottomans engaged in a series of costly wars in eastern Anatolia and Azerbaijan with the Safavids (1578–90) and in Hungary with the Habsburgs (1593–1606). While rapid and victorious military expansions marked the previous three centuries of Ottoman warfare, the Ottomans began to have difficulty in gaining military victories and defending their frontiers, especially in Hungary against the Habsburgs.[180]

Besides the long wars with the Habsburgs and the Safavids, a third military front appeared in the last decade of the sixteenth century. Known as the Celali rebellions, a series of military uprisings occurred in Anatolia and Syria between 1591–1611. These rebellions were led by large armies under the leadership of provincial officeholders and some small bands. Declining opportunities for employment (especially of madrasa students); decreasing income (especially of small timariots), landlessness (especially of peasant mercenaries) were among the main causes of these rebellions. Other factors such as the extreme weather conditions, population pressure, and fiscal deficit also fed into the crisis. These rebels plundered many villages and agricultural lands and caused thousands of people to leave their

[180] Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, III, 55–98; İnalcık, *Ottoman Empire*, 41–52; Imber, *Ottoman Empire*, 58–74; Emecen, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun*, 325–389.

farms and villages to take refuge in walled towns and cities.[181] While Celali rebellions devastated Anatolia, a series of kul revolts afflicted Istanbul at the same time. The last decades of the sixteenth century witnessed various urban rebellions that were led either by cavalrymen or Janissary soldiers, who were supported by merchants and other civilians.[182] These acts of dissent began to appear in the last decades of the sixteenth century, and six different uprisings occurred in the capital city between 1589 and 1603, before Sultan Ahmed's enthronement.[183]

While difficulties in the wars with the Habsburgs disclosed the Ottoman weakness in military affairs, continuous rebellions in the capital city and Anatolia betokened the existence of a series of social and economic problems within the Ottoman realms. The incessant military rebellions can be assessed as a manifestation of serious socio-economic troubles and changes. Debasement of the coinage, which resulted in high inflation, the devastation of towns and agricultural lands by Celali plunders, extremely cold winters hindering harvests were among the primary problems of this era.[184] Along with these troubles, changes in the military-administrative, economic and political systems of the empire marked this period. The gradual replacement of the fief system by tax farming, the rise of jurists' law, the increasing prominence of some political actors like favorites of the sultans, clerics, and Janissary merchant-soldiers, and changes in the sultans' roles and attitudes were among these significant developments.[185] Especially, the sultans' absence from military campaigns and the growing impact of political actors like mother sultans and

[181] Akdağ, *Türk Halkının Dirlik*; Griswold, *Great Anatolian*; Barkey, *Bandits and Bureaucrats*; Özel, "Reign of Violence"; idem, *Collapse of Rural*; White, *Climate of Rebellion*.
[182] See Chapter IV, 223–225.
[183] Börekçi, "Factions and Favorites", 16; Yılmaz, "Siyaset, İsyan".
[184] The abnormal climatic patterns were global in this period, which is known as "Little Ice Age". See Griswold, "Climatic Change"; Kuniholm, "Archaeological Evidence".
[185] Tezcan, *Second Ottoman Empire*, 17–40; İnalcık, "Military and Fiscal"; White, *Climate of Rebellion*. On debasement and inflation in this era, see Pamuk, "Prices", 455–456, 459; idem, *Monetary History*, 131–142.

royal favorites from the inner household in the state's running drew the reaction of different groups in Ottoman society. Besides the prolonged wars and socio-economic problems, these military-administrative and socio-economic transformations were deemed as emblems of decline and deterioration by some contemporary Ottomans, who mostly uttered their reactions and critics in the chronicles and advice literature (*nasiḥatnāme*).[186] Even though the mentioned crises and changes helped the empire survive and adapt to new historical realities in the long run, they were experienced as crises and difficulties by contemporary Ottomans.

When Ahmed I became the sultan, he confronted wars on three fronts and serious socio-economic crises, and these troubles continued throughout the first ten years of his reign. Books and treatises patronized by Sultan Ahmed indicate that the sultan was extremely concerned about these problems. The sultan's personal prayer leader and chronicler Mustafa Safi depicted the time of the sultan's enthronement as an era in which the Ottoman realms was full of evil, corruption (*fitne vü fesād*), and people of mischief (*ehl-i fesād*), and the sultan's subjects were suffering from plunder and foray (*nehb ü garet*).[187] The treatise *Ḫāb-nāme* (the Dream Book) penned by Veysi (d. 1628), a high-ranking Ottoman bureaucrat of the era, testifies to the severity of the crisis and crisis-consciousness among the Ottoman elites. Written upon the order of Sultan Ahmed, this treatise narrates the challenges confronted by the sultan within a dream narrative in which Sultan Ahmed and Alexander the Great come together and communicate on the difficulties of Sultan Ahmed's era. At the beginning of the dialogue, Ahmed I defines his condition as follows:

[186] For an analysis of the political literature of the period, see Howard, "Ottoman Historiography"; Abou-El-Hajj, "Fitnah, Huruc"; Fodor, "State and Society"; Keskintaş, *Adalet, Ahlak*, 180–184; Sariyannis, *History of Ottoman*, 144–187; idem, "Princely Virtues"; Tezcan, "From Veysî"; Şen, "Mirror for Princes".
[187] Mustafa Safi, *Mustafa Safi'nin*, I, 7.

> The main difficulty is to sit on the throne in a time when the world in which we survive with the help of God has been entirely ruined, and people's lungs were burned out of the bandits' disturbances. For approximately forty years, beginning in the reign of my deceased grandfather Sultan Murad Han, who sent exalted soldiers carrying the banner of the sultanate against the realms of the evil-doing Qizilbash to dry the roots of the heretics' trees, commanders were sent to the east and the west for overpowering the enemies of the faith. By not abandoning war even for one year, various disgraces were cleaned, for example, several high positions had been given to inefficient and extravagant persons, and in different parts [of the realm] hell broke loose. Heavy taxations necessary for transportation of armies caused a big enmity between the subjects and soldiers to arise.[188]

Sultan Ahmed dealt with these difficulties with considerable success. Mustafa Safi related that three years after his enthronement, Sultan Ahmed had succeeded in vanquishing the infidels in the west, who agreed to pay tribute to the Ottomans; within five years, the rebellious Celalis had been defeated, and in 1612 (1021 AH), peace was established with the Safavids,[189] after the latter had attacked various Ottoman castles in the Ottoman-Safavid border, and attempted to establish military and political alliances with the European powers.[190] The wars with the Habsburgs for Hungarian lands continued from 1604 until 1606, when the Ottomans and the Habsburgs agreed on a peace treaty known as the Peace of Zsitvatorok. Although Mustafa Safi narrated this event as a defeat of the infidels, it meant more a loss than a triumph for the Ottomans, who lost Wallachia to the Habsburgs, and accepted the equality of the Ottoman sultan with the Habsburg king. Losing Wallachia was significant since the capital city's need for meat was answered, to a great extent, with taxes in kind that were taken from these lands. More important was the Ottoman sultan's loss of supremacy over the Habsburg king, who had been regarded as an equal of the Ottoman grand vizier since the reign of Sultan Süleyman.[191] For eliminating the Celali rebels, Sultan Ahmed and his grand viziers tried different ways, including

[188] My translation. Veysi, *Hab-name-i Veysi*, 46. For an interpretation of this text, see Şen, "Mirror for Princes".
[189] Mustafa Safi, *Mustafa Safi'nin*, I, 259.
[190] Küpeli, *Osmanlı-Safevi Münasebetleri*, 89–91; Mustafa Safi, *Mustafa Safi'nin*, II, 120.
[191] Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, III, 92–98; İnalcık, *Devlet-i Aliyye*, II, 36–37.

slaughter, rewarding leaders with high positions, and deportations of various rebellious groups. The struggle for overwhelming the Celalis continued until 1610, when the powerful grand vizier Kuyucu Murad Pasha (d. 1611) defeated various Celali groups in Anatolia and Syria.[192] Between 1604 and 1612, three different commanders-in-chief were tasked with leading military campaigns against the Safavids for taking control of Eastern Anatolia and Azerbaijan. Although both sides agreed on peace in 1612 with a treaty known as the Nasuh Pasha Treaty, the Ottomans broke the agreement and assaulted the Safavid lands three years after the deal.[193]

Sultan Ahmed owed his relative success in overcoming these hardships partly to the aid of his closer retinue which comprised his mother, Valide Handan Sultan (d. 1605), and his royal tutor Mustafa Efendi (d. 1608). Although he was not among members of this entourage, the role and experience of Kuyucu Murad Pasha was undeniable in Sultan Ahmed's struggle for defeating the Celalis. In the earliest years of the sultan's reign, his closer retinue was more influential in the running of the empire and over the sultan's decisions.[194] After the death of his mentors one after another within a few years, Ahmed sought to establish his personal and independent rule. Especially after 1607, when many of Sultan Ahmed's private servants graduated from the inner court services, he appointed a series of new graduates to salaried positions in the state administration. This gave the sultan the opportunity of creating a new administrative staff and royal cortege.[195] Following his immediate predecessors Murad III and Mehmed III, he created a series of royal favorites such as

[192] Griswold, *Political Unrest*, 127–168; Akdağ, *Türk Halkının Dirlik*, 436–465.
[193] Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlı-İran Siyasi*, 269–279; Küpeli, *Osmanlı-Safevi Münasebetleri*, 89–91; İnalcık, *Ottoman Empire*, 50–51.
[194] Börekçi, "Factions and Favorites", 14, 20.
[195] Ibid, 234–240.

the chief black eunuch el-Hac Mustafa Agha and the chief gardener Derviş Pasha (d. 1606), who was raised to grand vizierate in a very short time.[196]

Within the context of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the Ottoman court was dominated by alternative networks of political patronage and loci of power, and this created some practical limitations to the sultan's authority. Specifically, grand viziers began to act as de facto rulers in the reign of Selim II and the early years of Murad III and dominated the court and the empire with their extended households. Creating royal favorites from the inner court and authorization of them with significant administrative tasks was a 'conscious effort to increase the political authority of the court in response to other independent loci of political power, such as the households of the viziers, pashas, and the *mevālī*.'[197] The abandonment of the institution of the princely household rendered the creation of royal favorites an unexpectedly significant ruling strategy for Ahmed I, who did not have the chance to establish his royal administrative staff during a provincial governorship.[198] With a closer political entourage completely dependent on him, he attempted to establish an independent rule that was centered on himself and his court.

Sultan Ahmed's endeavors for defending his state on three fronts, and creating a power base centered on his court, were accompanied by different strategies for creating the image of a powerful, independent, and competent sultan. He attempted to replace the damaged public image of his father and grandfather with a more prestigious and desirable one. His great grandfather Sultan Süleyman appeared as a role model for Ahmed I. Even though early modern Ottomans did not have a concept of "golden age" in the modern sense, the evidence suggests that Süleyman's

[196] Ibid, 198–254; Tezcan, *Second Ottoman Empire*, 100–114.
[197] Tezcan, *Second Ottoman Empire*, 107; Börekçi, "Factions and Favorites", 255.
[198] Börekçi, "Factions and Favorites", 255.

reign was considered as the age of order and glory by Ahmed I and some of his contemporaries. As demonstrated by Murphey, Sultan Süleyman and his time were often idealized in Mustafa Safi's chronicle narrating Sultan Ahmed's reign.[199] Seemingly, Sultan Ahmed and his closer retinue shared the idea that the reason for the empire-wide political disarray was a divergence from the principles of the dynastic and imperial establishment, whose pillar was defined as a warlike, just, and powerful sultan.[200]

In this context, imitating Süleyman helped Sultan Ahmed create a language of political authority, which was necessary for the control of the state and ensuring the legitimacy of his rulership.[201] Following the footsteps of his great grandfather, he undertook large scale architectural projects in the capital city, restored the Kaba and made donations to the holy lands, composed his law code (*ḳānunnāme*) for regulating the affairs of his state, organized several hunting parties, commissioned the literary corpus that was previously commissioned by Sultan Süleyman, redesigned his imperial seal according to the standards established by Süleyman, and even built gardens in places of his grandfather's favorite promenades.[202] Sultan Ahmed's desire to be associated with his great grandfather is visible in the chronicle commissioned to his prayer leader Mustafa Safi, who repeatedly defined Sultan Ahmed and his reign as exceptional in many aspects. Mustafa Safi depicted the exceptional attributes and qualities of the sultan, which had, according to the author's repeated and favorite

[199] See Murphey, "Historian Mustafa Safi's".
[200] Börekçi, "Factions and Favorites", 110.
[201] Avcıoğlu, "Ahmed I", 223.
[202] Ibid, 218–223. Although Sultan Ahmed's attempts for imitating and surpassing Süleyman were first argued by Avcıoğlu, several other scholars confirmed her argument in their studies. Günhan Börekçi's study on the period of Ahmed I and the political dynamics of his court, Semra Çörekçi's unpublished MA thesis on Sultan Ahmed's patronage of books and literature on ethics, and studies of Emine Fetvacı and Ünver Rüstem addressed the visual and spatial references of Sultan Ahmed's mosque to the major sultanic mosques patronized by Sultan Süleyman. See Börekçi, "Factions and Favorites", 101–109; Çörekçi, "Tribute"; Fetvacı, "Music, Light", 225; Rüstem, "Spectacle of Legitimacy", 254–255.

assertion, 'never been seen or heard of in a sovereign occupying the Ottoman throne, except Sultan Süleyman.'[203] When he eulogized Sultan Ahmed's modesty, for instance, the chronicler expressed this with the following formulation: "Since the time of Four Rightly-Guided Caliphs, Sultan Ahmed's modesty has never been seen before in a sovereign, except Sultan Süleyman."[204]

Sultan Süleyman had one particular kingly virtue that was unreachable for Ahmed I. Unlike his predecessor, Sultan Ahmed did not lead any military campaigns and crown his name with triumphs in warfare. In 1605, he initiated a campaign against the rebellious Celalis and went to Bursa to lead his armies into Anatolia.[205] However, he became ill, withdrew from leading the campaign and returned to Istanbul after a short while. Although he never renounced his desire to lead a military campaign in person as long as the state was at war, the Bursa episode remained as his sole official military enterprise.[206] For overcoming this significant deficiency, he embarked on other strategies and endeavored to cultivate the image of a warlike, high-powered, and vigorous sultan. Hunting parties he organized in Edirne and the extramural gardens of Istanbul, which involved rich banquets and gifting, appeared as the most convenient vehicle.[207] (Figure C4) As Tülay Artan aptly put it, in the pre-modern times, it was a necessity for a warrior ruler 'to maintain his martial and chivalric identity in peacetime, too, through activities that resembled or approximated war.'[208] Mustafa Safi's accounts of Sultan Ahmed's hunting parties suggest that these events served as opportunities for the sultan to come together with

[203] Murphey, "Historian Mustafa Safi's", 69–79.
[204] Mustafa Safi, *Mustafa Safi'nin*, I, 84.
[205] Yılmazer, *Topçular Katibi Abdülkadir*, I, 425.
[206] Börekçi, "Factions and Favorites", 124.
[207] For Sultan Ahmed's hunting parties, see Mustafa Safi *Mustafa Safi'nin*, II, 185; Artan, "Ahmed I's", 93–138.
[208] Artan, "Ahmed I'", 93. See also Taner, "'Power to Kill'".

his subjects, and on every occasion, he conversed with people and listened to their problems and complaints.[209] In this sense, hunting parties not only constituted martial events displaying the sultan's warlike character and physical power, but also served as an opportunity of public appearance for the sultan.

Public appearances and ceremonials that were staged at every opportunity constituted one of the defining features of Sultan Ahmed's agenda. An increase in courtly spectacle and sultanic visibility commenced in the last quarter of the sixteenth century and peaked during Ahmed I. Before the late sixteenth century, seclusion from the public was a part of the Ottoman sultans' imperial ceremonial agenda, beginning with Mehmed II's reign. Ottoman sultans appeared to the public solely in periodic ceremonial outings like Friday processions and ceremonial festivities and always had a distance from the public. This custom began to change in the last quarter of the sixteenth century, when the immediate successors of Sultan Süleyman, i.e. Selim II and Murad III, withdrew from military campaigns, and began to spend most of their time in the capital city. In this era, according to Necipoğlu, the sultan's seclusion turned royal courtly processions through Istanbul into highly charged events, and the royal ceremonial and spectacle displaying the imperial power were extended into the larger fabric of Istanbul.[210] That the most spectacular Ottoman festivity, the royal circumcision festival in 1582, was celebrated in this juncture speaks for the same phenomenon.[211] The weakened position of the sultans and their empire, who were forced to look for more conspicuous vehicles for impressing their subjects, can be regarded as among the reasons behind this increase

[209] Mustafa Safi *Mustafa Safi'nin*, II, 185.
[210] Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial*, 24–30.
[211] For this festival, see Terzioğlu, "Imperial Circumcision Festival"; Nutku, "Festivities in Atmeydanı", 80–85.

in courtly spectacle and ceremonials.[212] Although this trend was interrupted in the final years of Murad III, who never left the palace in these years, it was continued by his successor Mehmed III, who augmented courtly display and pageantry, mostly manifested in spectacular ceremonies, processions, and festivities in the capital city.[213] Kafescioğlu has argued that beside augmented courtly spectacle and ceremonial, the public visibility of the sultan increased during the reign of Mehmed III.[214] This trend continued in Ahmed I's era, and impressing effects of spectacular ceremonials were augmented with the sultan's increasing physical presence and appearance in the public.

Sultan Ahmed's public appearances occurred in a variety of ways and occasions. Mustafa Safi related that after his enthronement, the sultan often went out of his palace, come rain or shine, either in disguise, or with a cortege, for observing the condition of his subjects, promenading, or hunting.[215] As I discussed above, hunting parties were among the primary occasions where Sultan Ahmed appeared in public. Ceremonial and feasting was an essential part of the sultan's public outings, except those that were in disguise. Welcoming ceremonies, Friday processions, and significant events like the groundbreaking and dome-closing ceremonies of his royal mosque were evaluated festive occasions, where the sultan appeared in public with spectacular processions and offered banquets and rewards to his grandees and subjects.[216] The sultan's ceremonial entries into the capital city after his return from hunting parties in Edirne were among significant examples of his ceremonial public excursions. Before this, welcoming ceremonies took place for the sultan's return

[212] Rüstem, "Architecture", 183.
[213] Kafescioğlu, "Picturing the Square", 164
[214] Ibid, 165.
[215] Mustafa Safi, *Mustafa Safi'nin*, I, 29.
[216] The ceremonials occurring in the Sultan Ahmed Mosque will be investigated in the last section of this chapter separately.

from a victorious military campaign and were associated, to a greater extent, with the sultans' military character and triumphs in war. Since Ahmed I did not leave the capital for a military undertaking, hunting excursions gave him the sole opportunity for organizing a welcoming ceremony, which had, like the act of hunting itself, martial references and associations. An example of these glorious welcoming ceremonies was narrated by Mustafa Safi. The sultan's return from Edirne was celebrated with a pompous festivity and spectacular ceremonial in the capital in 1613. The ceremonial route that connects the Edirnekapı archery to extramural Davutpaşa Palace was covered with precious rugs and textiles, and various animals were sacrificed in honor of the sultan's return. Along with his subjects, the sultan's viziers, high-ranking bureaucrats, and clerics joined the welcoming ceremony and watched the sultan's spectacular entry into the city.[217] Visiting mosques constituted one of the primary pretexts of the sultan's public excursions, which will be discussed in the following part, where I investigate another significant constituent of Sultan Ahmed's religio-political agenda, piety, and its displays.

2.1.2 Devout rulers and displays of piety

The display of religious devotion, the espousal of legal orthodoxy, and the promotion of the official madhhabs of the Safavid and Ottoman states were among the strategies of dominion and sources of legitimacy sought by Shah Abbas and Sultan Ahmed. Both rulers represented themselves and were portrayed by their contemporaries as passionately devout monarchs, and the guardians of their madhhabs, Twelver Shi'ism and Hanafi Sunnism. Advertising their devotion through architectural projects and religious rituals, allying themselves with the most prominent scholars of their age, and encouraging legal

[217] Mustafa Safi, *Mustafa Safi'nin*, II, 204–206.

orthodoxies on the level of doctrine and practice were among the main components of both rulers' religious policies. Both monarchs fashioned themselves as devout Shi'a/Sunni ruler through the patronage of various religious sanctuaries, learning institutions, and ulama, and through theatrical and ritualistic displays of piety. All these strategies aimed to increase the popularity of a sharia-based understanding of their madhhabs and to create clear confessional distinctions between the Shi'a populations of Iran and the Sunni populations of the Ottoman Empire.

The main court chroniclers of the seventeenth century mentioned piety, and devotion to the madhhab as among the most significant kingly virtues of Abbas I and Ahmed I. Mustafa Safi portrayed Sultan Ahmed as a pious ruler, whose merits included commitment to the sharia (*teşerrü'*), and meticulousness in performing the five daily canonical prayers in congregation.[218] The same chronicler eulogized the House of Osman's (*Āl-i Oṣmān*) devotion to the People of the Sunnah (*Ehl-i Sünnet*), and their opposition to *Rāfiḍī*s, the Shi'i Safavids.[219] Similarly, Naima praised Sultan Ahmed as a pious (*muttaḳī*) and religious (*dīndār*) ruler.[220] Several poems in Ahmed's *Dīvān* attest to his religious devotion too, and helped portray him as a sultan whose main concern was religion, and who regarded worldly power as inferior to the spiritual one: "I do not trust the grandees (*ricāl*) or properties (*māl*)/ I do not rely on the crown and the throne (*tāc u taḫt*)/ My desire is [to obtain]your immaculate contentment/ Make me the sultan in the spiritual realm."[221] In the endowment deed of his mosque complex in Atmeydanı, the sultan was portraited as the protector of the realms of the people of faith (*ḥāmī-yi diyār-ı ehl-i imān*), the exalter of the holy versicles (*rāfi'-yi āyāt-i şerīfe*), the auxiliary of the caliphate and the world and the religion (*mugīṣu'l-ḥilāfet ve'd-dünyā ve'd-dīn*), the

[218] Mustafa Safi, *Mustafa Safi'nin*, I, 22.
[219] Ibid, 2.
[220] İpşirli, *Tarih-i Naima*, III, 434.
[221] Kayaalp, *Sultan Ahmed Divanı'nın*, 201.

shadow of God (*sāye-yi ḥaḍret-i sübḥānī*), the world-illuminating sun of the caliphate (*āfitāb-ı ʻālemtāb-ı ḫilāfet*), and the reviver of the sunnah (*muḥyī-yi sünnet*).[222]

Piety and devotion to the Twelve Imams appear as among Shah Abbas' main kingly merits in Iskandar Munshi's history. The shah showed much devotion to Imami Shi'ism, and made his devotion public through different vehicles, including his titulature. Beginning from his rule's inception, Abbas I used a carefully chosen titulature in his seals, coins, and diplomatic and official correspondences. Many of his titles, appearing on a variety of media, highlighted his devotion to and special status within Imami Shi'ism.[223] Sustaining his predecessors' custom, Shah Abbas foregrounded both his familial lineage with the Immaculate Imams and his loyalty and devotion to them as a humble adherent and servant of their path.[224] He replaced the secular titles of "khan" and "sultan" with "Abbas, the servant of the ruler of the vicegerency" (*banda-ye Shāh-e Valāyat ʻAbbās*), when he introduced a new silver coinage at the inception of his rule.[225] The same title appears in one of his decrees, which was issued in 1615 commanding a Carmelite father to accompany Robert Sherley on his mission to the rulers of Europe. Indicating his devotion to the Fourteen Immaculates, the inscription at the head of this firman runs as follows: "The slave of the king successor (i.e Imam Ali) Abbas, O Lord bless the Prophet, the successor, the Lady (i.e. Fatimah), the Grandsons (i.e. Hasan and Husain), the Devotee (i.e. Zain-u Abidin), Baqir, the Truth-teller, Kazim, Riza, Taqi, Naqi, Askari, Mahdi."[226]

The shah seems to have desired to emphasize his special loyalty to the two prominent figures he claimed descent from, the first Shi'i Imam Ali and the third Shi'i

[222] TIEM 2184, 12b–13b.
[223] Safakesh, *Ṣafavīyān dar Guzargāh*, 399; Blow, *Shah Abbas*, 186.
[224] Several scholars have argued that during Tahmasb's period, the Safavids formulated a genealogy that connected their lineage to Imam Ali via the seventh Imam Musa Kazim. See Togan, "Sur L'Origine"; Sarwar, *History of Shah*, 17; Quinn, *Historical Writing*, 76. Based on a fascimile copy of a genealogical chart from the third quarter of the fifteenth century, K. Morimoto has argued that the Safavids' Alid-Musavi geneaology predates Tahmasb's period. Morimoto, "Earliest Alid genealogy".
[225] Blow, *Shah Abbas*, 187; Astarabadi, *Tārīkh-e Sultānī*, 133.
[226] *Chronicle*, I, 218.

Imam Husein, whose martyrdoms were commemorated with theatrical ceremonies in the Safavid realms. That different chroniclers mentioned him as "Abbas al-Huseini"[227] and "the king with initiation to Ali" (*pādeshāh-e Murteḍā-intisāb*) displays Abbas' special inclination to these two figures, too. Another such title showing his devotion to Imam Ali was "the dog of the Threshold of Imam Ali" (*kalb-e Āstāne-ye 'Alī*).[228] According to Khuzani Isfahani, the shah ordered his name to be mentioned as "the dog of the Threshold of Imam Ali" during Friday sermons.[229] The reconfiguration of the Muharram and Ghadir rituals, theatrical mourning ceremonies commemorating the martydoms of Imam Husein and Imam Ali can be understood as signs of Shah Abbas' devotion to these two Imams. As will be discussed in the fourth chapter, Shah Abbas' era witnessed an augmentation in the centrality and dramatic aspects of the Muharram and Ghadir rituals, which had been performed in Safavid Iran since the sixteenth century.[230]

Shah Abbas' promotion of Shi'ite commemorative rituals was parallelled by the emergence of the *mevlid* ceremonies as courtly rituals in the Ottoman capital. While the Safavid shah displayed his loyalty to the Shi'i Imams through the patronage of the mentioned commemorative events, Sultan Ahmed established the *mevlid* ritual as a part of his courtly ceremonial, as will be examined in the fifth chapter. Sultan Ahmed's promotion of the *mevlid* ritual can be seen as a sign of his devotion to the Prophet and his sunnah, which had a central significance in the Sunni doctrine and practice. While Twelver Shi'ism regarded the Twelve Immaculate Imams and the Prophet as sources of religious knowledge and as religious leaders to be emulated, the Prophet Muhammad occupied the same position in the Sunni tradition. Thus, the *mevlid* rituals were

[227] Khuzani Isfahani, *Chronicle*, I, 114; Junabadi, *Rawḍatu's-Ṣafavīya*, 712; Yazdi, *Tārīkh-e 'Abbāsī*, 113.
[228] Yazdi, *Tārīkh-e 'Abbāsī*, 223, 232, 244, 288, 318, 342, 347.
[229] Khuzani Isfahani, *Chronicle*, II, 864.
[230] See Chapter IV, 217–220.

instrumental for reiterating the centrality of the Prophet in the Ottoman religious imagination, propagating or reminding his deeds and preachings to the Sunni public, and emphasizing the distinguished tenets and references of Sunnism from those of Twelver Shi'ism.

As Fetvacı has indicated, Sultan Ahmed 'turned to the example of the Prophet and emulated his deeds to create an aura of piety and personal devotion.'[231] On different occasions, Mustafa Safi reported that the sultan performed the sunnah (*icrā-yı emr-i sünnet*), kept away from "people of (reprehensible) innovation (*ehl-i bid'at*), and always stuck to the path of the sunnah (*ṭāriḳ-i sünneti müteḥarrī*).[232] The invention of a tradition of visiting the Prophet's cloak, a renowned relic of the Prophet Muhammad under Ottoman possession on the fifteenth day of the Ramadan, was also instrumental in displaying Ahmed I's devotion to the Prophet. For a silver box housing this relic, he built a shelf above the throne in the privy chamber.[233] He expressed his loyalty to the Prophet Muhammad and his path by a *na't*, a poem eulogizing the Prophet, and two distinct verses devoted to *mevlid*, the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad, where this holy day was defined as an eid: "Our eid is the day on which the sun of the prophethood (*şems-i risālet*) has risen."[234]

Visiting mosques was a significant part of Sultan Ahmed's ceremonial agenda. Mustafa Safi eulogized the sultan's endeavor for performing all his prayers in congregation and asserted that it was Sultan Ahmed's custom to spend Friday nights in different congregational mosques in his palace or royal gardens, where he would be accompanied by an assembly of twelve *ḥüffāẓ*.[235] The accounts of

[231] Fetvacı, *Album*, 13.
[232] Mustafa Safi, *Mustafa Safi'nin*, I, 19–20, 72.
[233] Fetvacı, *Album*, 23.
[234] Ibid, 203–204.
[235] Mustafa Safi, *Mustafa Safi'nin*, I, 22; idem, *Mustafa Safi'nin*, II, 185.

contemporary witnesses suggest visiting mosques constituted the primary pretext for the sultan's public excursions. According to Mustafa Safi, on the first Friday after his enthronement, the sultan went to the Süleymaniye Mosque in a grandiose procession, joined by his soldiers, to attend the Friday ritual and revived a Sunna by spending the entire night in the mosque.[236] In addition, Sultan Ahmed occasionally attended religious ceremonies in sultanic mosques in disguise, and prayed like an ordinary person. Mustafa Safi related that on 5 March 1610 (9 Zulhijjah 1018), the sultan joined the *ḫatim* prayers in Hagia Sophia, sat among people on an old prayer rug and listened to the chant of the Quran. The chronicler depicted this attitude as a virtue of the sultan, which had not been shown by any ruler since the Four Rightly Guided Caliphs.[237]

The formation of a 'throne and mosque alliance'[238] constituted one of the pillars of both rulers' religious agenda. Both Ahmed I and Abbas I established close relations with the highest-ranking members of the religious scholars and patronized them. The prominent religious figures of their realms accepted these rulers' donations and patronage for diverse responsibilities and religious posts. Surrounding themselves with prestigious religious figures served diverse purposes. Receiving clerics' approval would reinforce the sovereign's legitimacy in the public eye. Religious bureaucrats' alliance and consent would provide the rulers with the opportunity to garner support for their policies and decisions in secular and religious affairs. Besides, patronizing scholars would implicitly manifest the monarchs' support of religious education and embrace of orthodoxy and orthopraxy. Sultan Ahmed and Shah Abbas benefitted from all these advantages in their alliances with the prominent religious figures of their age.

[236]Mustafa Safi, *Mustafa Safi'nin*, I, 19–20.
[237] Ibid, 93–94.
[238] I borrow this term from Blow. Blow, *Shah Abbas*, 181.

The contemporary sources portrayed Sultan Ahmed as a friend of the ulama and the prominent Sufi leaders of his age. He was eulogized for rescuing and aiding the scholars, the righteous, the sheikhs, and the pious (‘*ulemā ve ṣüleḥa ve meşāyıḫ ve etkıyāya imdād ve i’ānet*).[239] His rule began with the introduction of a new ceremony, attesting to Sultan Ahmed’s concern for displaying his association with the highest members of the religious class, and this class’ increasing agency in the Ottoman polity. Beginning with Ahmed I, Ottoman sultans were girded by the sheikh al-Islams, Sufī sheikhs or *naḳību’l-eşrāf*s, the head of the Prophet Muhammad’s descendants, in the Eyüp Shrine after their enthronement.[240] Although previous sultans had also gone to Eyüp as part of their accession, sword girding was not mentioned in the chronicles until the reign of Ahmed I, who was girded by the chief religious officer of the empire, Ebulmeyamin Mustafa Efendi (d. 1612), on January 3, 1604.[241] As will be investigated in the fifth chapter, the sultan sought the consent and consecration of the sheikh al-Islam in several phases of his mosque project on Aymeydanı. Along with the sheikh al-Islam, other high-ranking members of the religious bureaucracy were present at every phase of his construction project and accompanied the sultan on numerous festive occasions staged on the construction. Similarly, the *mevlid* ceremonies celebrated in the Sultan Ahmed Mosque took place with the participation of the sheikh al-Islam and the prominent religious figures displaying these groups’ approval of the sultan’s religious initiatives. The sultan had close relationships with the prominent Sufi leaders too, including the Celveti sheikh Mahmud Hüdayi (d. 1628)[242] and the Halveti sheikh Abdülmecid Sivasi (d.

[239] TIEM 2184, 12b.
[240] Kafadar, “Eyüp’te Kılıç Kuşanma”, 54.
[241] Fetvacı, *Album of the*, 22.
[242] On the Celvetiyye and Mahmud Hüdayi’s place in this Sufi order, see Yılmaz, *Aziz Mahmud Hüdayi*, 149–154; Tezeren, *Seyyid Aziz Mahmud*, 47.

1639).[243] The former acted as the young sultan's guide on the Sufi path, and both sheikhs were tasked as preachers in the Sultan Ahmed Mosque.[244]

Similar to Sultan Ahmed, Abbas I established close associations with clerics. The most prominent scholars of the age, including Sheikh Bahai, Mir Damad, and Sheikh Lutfullah, whose familial and academic geneaologies were linked to Arabic-speaking Amili scholars, had close connections with the Safavid court and dynasty. Embracing the Usuli branch of Twelver Shi'ism, these mujtahids supported the Safavid government with helpful rulings, which facilitated the functioning of the government that would otherwise have been impossible during the occultation of the Twelfth Imam.[245] Usulis followed a relatively flexible jurisprudential methodology and allowed the jurists to make deductions based on rational principles along with referencing the holy book and the Shi'i *akhbār*.[246] This revived interest in employing scholars of Amili background in the most significant religious offices stemmed from Shah Abbas' thrust for a sustained Shi'itization of the Safavid society, along with renewed confrontations with the Sunni Ottomans.[247]

The leading clerics of Shah Abbas supported the Safavid efforts to bring about political integration and internal cohesion, which Abbas I desired to achieve through different measures, including Shi'itization of the society, and forced conversions and relocation of particular non-Muslim populations. Further, they supported the shah's political claims and interests in different matters, such as counteracting the Ottoman threats, or regulating the socio-economic relations between Muslim and Christian subjects of the shah.[248] Occasionally, they even supported the shah in their rulings that had

[243] On the Halvetiyye and Sheikh Abdülmecid Sivadi, see Curry, *Muslim Mystical Tought*; Aydın, *Halveti Tarikatı Şeyhlerinin*; Karataş, "Ottomanization",71–89. Gündoğdu, *Türk Mutasavvıfı*, 57–64; Şeyhi Mehmed Efendi, *Vekayi'ul-Fuzala*, I, 331.
[244] For these figures, see Chapter V, 364–365.
[245] Sachedina, *Just Ruler*, 191.
[246] For Usulis (rationalists) in the Safavid and Imami contexts, see Abisaab, *Converting Persia*, 32, 106–111; Gleave, *Scriptualist Islam*, 170–171; Newman, "Nature"; Sachedine, *Just Ruler*, 20–22
[247] Abisaab, *Converting Persia*, 56.
[248] Ibid, 87.

conventionally been regarded as the Immaculate Imams' prerogatives, the military campaign against Georgia in 1613/14 (1022 AH) being an example of such rulings.[249] In the mainstream Twelver jurisprudence, the offensive war had been deemed as a prerogative of the Immaculate Imams and their special deputies, and any claim to this right had been assessed as a usurpation of the Imam's authority.[250] According to Khuzani Isfahani's report, the highest-ranking clerics of the shah issued fatwas supporting Abbas' campaign against Georgia.[251] Another such example is his claim to the right of collecting *khums*, a special tax taken from the Muslim population, and whose collection had been regarded as the prerogative of the Immaculate Imams or their special deputies. Although a considerable number of clerics argued mujtahids had the right to collect *khums* as the Hidden Imam's general deputies, this prerogative had never been regarded as legitimate for a ruler. Shah Abbas claimed this right and had this tax collected in his name, encountering no remarkable opposition from the clerics' side.[252] Along with the most prominent mujtahids of the age, many religious scholars were recruited for a variety of clerical posts, those of judge, mufti, and prayer leader being the most significant among the others.[253] Besides the bestowment of clerical posts and donations, the establishment of familial connections with the members of the ulama was among the shah's strategies for allying himself with this class. Unlike his predecessors, who married most of their princesses to Qizilbash amirs, Shah Abbas married all but one of six daughters to Imami clerics.[254] Connected to him through familial links and patronage, a huge body of clerics supported Shah Abbas in his diverse political, religious, and economic purposes, including

[249] Khuzani Isfahani, *Chronicle*, II, 636.
[250] Sachedina, *Just Ruler*, 192; Aqajari, *Muqaddamai bar Munasabat*, 277–278; Arjomand, *Shadow of God*, 61–62.
[251] Khuzani Isfahani, *Chronicle*, II, 636.
[252] Aqajari, *Muqaddamai bar Munasabat*, 239, 277–278.
[253] Babayan, "Sufis, Dervishes", 125; Aqajari, *Muqaddamai bar Munasabat*, 269, 271.
[254] Blow, *Shah Abbas*, 186.

the consolidation of orthodox Shi'ite tenets and practices, and the process of the Safavid society's Shi'itization.

After establishing himself in Isfahan, which was being created as a distinctly Shi'ite capital, Shah Abbas endeavored to popularize a sharia-based interpretation of Imami Shi'ism and took a variety of measures for consolidating orthodox beliefs and practices among the Safavid subjects. The instruction of the Muslim population in the tenets and rites of orthodox Shi'ism, monitoring and regulating the tenets and deeds of the public, and forced conversion of particular non-Muslim groups comprised the shah's main strategies. Even though this process was initiated by the shah and his high-ranking clerics, it did not remain a mere state-clerical affair. Abbas was supported by a huge network of followers and students in mosques and madrasas as well as a considerable number of people from among the wealthy merchants, who disseminated social discipline and religious instruction.[255] Preaching in the main public spaces of cities and towns, including mosques, madrasas, coffeehouses, bazaars, and maydans, was among the most effective and common methods of social disciplining, monitoring, and religious instruction. An army of preachers of clerical origins was delivering sermons in these public spaces.[256] Along with serving as preachers and prayer leaders in religious public spaces, the clergy had close connections with the bazaar, where a considerable number of them had a business, and this facilitated maintaining their presence within the public.[257] The use of official public cursers also continued[258] as propagators of Twelver Shi'ism's distinctive tenet in the usurpation of Imam Ali's right as the Prophet's successor.

Together with public sermons and preaching, the composition and translation of simplified legal and doctrinal works, abridged jurisprudential manuals, and popular

[255] Ibid, 57.
[256] Blow, *Shah Abbas*, 163; Babayan, *Mystics, Messiahs*, 442.
[257] Blow, *Shah Abbas*, 186.
[258] Ibid, 187.

literature functioned as a primary vehicle for religious and social disciplining in the hands of the shah and his clerics.[259] Along with producing texts on Shi'ite traditions and compiling legal works in Arabic, the prominent clerics of the age engaged in translation projects, and composing simplified religious manuals and catechisms in common Persian. New translations of some canonical texts in the Twelver Shi'ite jurisprudence, such as al-Kulayni's (d. 941 AH) *Uṣūl al-Kāfī*, also appeared in this era. Sheikh Bahai, who assumed the post of sheikh al-Islam and supervised the application of religious law as counsel on permissible conduct (*vakīl-e ḥalāliyat*), produced the most popular legal compendium, *Jāme'-e 'Abbāsī*, besides other religious works composed in Persian, such as *Miftakh-e Falāḥ*.[260] Constituting the first known catechism penned in Persian in Safavid Iran, *Jāme'-e 'Abbāsī* played a pivotal role in the dissemination of orthodox beliefs and practices, as well as the creation of a literature of Shi'ite legal works that aimed to appeal to a socially diverse readership.[261] Referring to the diversity of its audiences, Khuzani Isfahani defined this text as a book on religion and worship, which was composed in the language of common people.[262] That the treatise was translated into Turkish by the sheikh al-Islam of Baghdad after the city's conquest by Shah Abbas[263] indicates a concern for extending the audiences of this catechism, and to make it understandable for Turkish-speaking Shi'a's too. As Quinn aptly put it, the creation of a Persian catechism shows the shah's concern for creating a clear distinction between Shi'i and Sunni tenets and practices and differentiates his official religion from that of the Ottomans.[264] Shah Abbas' patronage of such a manual and his support for the augmentation of religious and legal literature in Persian can also be assessed as another reference to the policies of his great grandfather,

[259] Abisaab, *Converting Persia*, 57.
[260] Abisaab, *Converting Persia*, 58; Sheikh Bahai, *Jāme'-ye 'Abbāsī.*
[261] Abisaab, *Converting Persia*, 58.
[262] Khuzani Isfahani, *Chronicle*, II, 804.
[263] Ibid, 946.
[264] Quinn, *Shah Abbas*, 67.

whose period witnessed the appearance of a stream of Persian books and translations on Shi'ism.[265]

Shah Abbas' confessional policies also had some sterner facets. The shah prohibited the consumption of tobacco in 1612/13 (1021 AH), and of wine after he repented drinking wine in 1619/20 (1029 AH), and he ordered all bottles of wine to be broken in the bazaars and streets of Isfahan and other cities.[266] According to Khuzani Isfahani's account concerning the events of the year 1620/21 (1030 AH), those who violated the tobacco ban in streets and bazaars were harshly punished, and some of them even were put to death.[267] The shah's prohibition of alcohol consumption, which followed his repentance, can be seen as another attempt to associate himself with Shah Tahmasb, who had put the same ban into effect after public repentance.[268] While the prohibition on alcohol stemmed from a concern for religious orthopraxy and enforcing the sharia, the impetus behind the bans on smoking is not completely clear.[269] Although we do not know the opinions of the clerics from Shah Abbas' era regarding smoking, it is plausible that this habit was deemed at least as suspicious to some ulama because this act was a complete innovation in both a social and legal-jurisprudential sense.[270] Seen together with his other measures for promoting religious orthopraxy, it is probable that a concern for religious probity played at least a partial role in his ban on the consumption of tobacco.

The persecution and forced conversion of various non-Muslim communities was among Shah Abbas' harsh measures to achieve religious unity within the Safavid realms.

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[265] Blow, *Shah Abbas*, 12.
[266] Khuzani Isfahani, *Chronicle*, II, 783, 794.
[267] Ibid, 819.
[268] Newman, *Safavid Iran*, 31.
[269] Matthee has argued that Shah Abbas' prohibition of smoking originated substantially from his anxiety concerning his soldiers' wasteful consumption habits, along with consideration of religious probity. It is known that a considerable number of Safavid clerics spoke against the habit of smoking, but there is no known major discussion concerning smoking's legality before the mid-seventeenth century. Floor, "Art of Smoking", 52; Matthee, "Tobacco in Iran", 66.
[270] Tobacco was introduced to the Safavid society during Shah Abbas's reign. Floor, "Art of Smoking", 50; Mathhee, "Tobacco in Iran", 58.

During the 1610s and 1620s, Abbas I forced different non-Muslim communities to convert into Twelver Shi'ism and persecuted some Jews and Christians. Christian populations in the Caucasian lands constituted the first group, who had to convert to Islam, and moved to central Safavid cities like Isfahan, Shiraz, Mazandaran, and Gilan. After the Ottoman-Safavid wars of 1603–1605, many Armenians and Georgians residing in the region were deported from their homeland either as captives of war or as new subjects of the shah. The second wave of conversion and enslavement occurred during the Safavid campaign against Georgia in 1614–15 when several churches in this land were converted into mosques.[271] While particular Armenian populations, especially those who were artisans, merchants, and silk-producers were relocated in the mentioned cities in central Iran, thousands of Georgians and Armenians were enslaved, forcibly converted to Islam and served as the shah's slaves in the military and administrative establishment.[272] These depopulations and conversions were mainly motivated by a concern for securing the borderlands from Ottoman attacks and interventions and the creation of personnel for his centralizing government.[273]

The diplomatic correspondence from the era suggests that both the military campaigns against the Christian principalities of Caucasia and the conversion of their churches into Friday mosques aimed to Islamicize these realms and display these acts to the Ottoman authorities. In this period, the Ottoman authorities accused Shah Abbas of keeping the Ottoman armies engaged in war on their eastern front, and thus keeping them from waging holy war against the European infidels. In a letter penned by the Ottoman chief mufti in the name of Ahmed I in November 1612 (Ramadan 1021 AH), the Safavids were accused of hindering the ghaza activities of the Ottoman sultan, who as the caliph of

[271] Abisaab, *Converting Persia*, 63.
[272] See Babaie et al, *Slaves*.
[273] Moreen, "Status of Religious", 128–129; Ferrier, "Armenians, 39; Abisaab, *Converting Persia*, 61–63.

Muslims was responsible for waging holy war against the infidels and for restoring the realms, and redressing the subjects' demeanor (*ta'mīr-i bilād ve ıslaḥ-ı ḥāl-i reāyā*).[274] Shah Abbas responded to these accusations in a letter addressing Nasuh Pasha, who had been dispatched for a military campaign against the Safavids upon Shah Abbas' occupation of Caucasia. In this undated letter, the shah indicated that they -the Safavids- support the sultan's holy war against the European Christians, and indeed, the Safavid armies' purpose is also to engage in ghaza against the infidels in the said region, who had destroyed the bazaars of the Muslims and murdered a muazzin during his call for prayer at the minaret. Taking pride in his actions, the shah reported that he had converted the churches in Georgia into Friday mosques, where they performed the Friday ritual, and granted the spiritual reward of his prayer to the Ottoman sultan Ahmed I.[275] Although the conversion of Christians was not mentioned in these letters, the conversion of the landscape and the region's Islamization can be regarded as a direct response to the Ottomans, who repeatedly accused the Safavids of neglecting prescribed religious rituals, and destroying the conquered realms.

The translocated Armenians were first granted religious freedom and established good relations with the Safavid court, for they served as commercial and diplomatic intermediaries between Europeans and the Safavid state, and were useful for the economic prosperity of the Safavid state.[276] After less than two decades in their new residences, however, they became the subject of persecution and forced conversion. In 1621 (1030 AH), Abbas I ordered the forcible conversion of a considerable number of Christians and Armenians in different cities, including Isfahan, Mazandaran, and Faridun.[277] The same

[274] Sarı Abdullah Efendi, *Düsturu'l-İnşa*, 163–164.
[275] Ibid, 168.
[276]Ferrier, "Armenians", 39–40; Moreen, "Status of Religious", 128–129; Savory, "Relations between" 446–447; Sadiqi, *Tārīkh-e Irān*, 157.
[277] Savory, "Relations between", 447.

year witnessed the persecution of particular Armenian groups in New Julfa in Isfahan and Mazandaran.[278] Lacking the Armenians' relatively close connections with the dynasty and the profit for the Safavid economy, Jews were exposed to forced conversion and waves of persecution before the Armenians. Within the period between 1616 and 1619, Jews living in the Safavid realms had to wear demeaning headgear upon the orders of Shah Abbas, who forced a considerable number of Jews in Isfahan and Mazandaran to embrace Islam during the same years.[279] The shah's harsh policies against the non-Muslim communities outwardly emanated from petty excuses such as the gossip of some Armenian women in New Julfa about the shah, or rumors about an Isfahani Jewish apostate's practice of magic against the sovereign.[280] However, the real motives behind these policies were probably different. As different scholars have suggested, the principal cause behind these actions was more likely religious and political. Among these motives were enforcing religious uniformity within the Safavid lands,[281] instilling a greater measure of social integration and cohesion.[282] According to an Armenian from New Julfa in Isfahan, Khavajavardi, 'the principal cause was the secret hatred which the Shah has [for the Christian faith] ... which was fomented by a great Mulla named Shaikh Baha-u-Din, who said that it was expedient that all Christians should be made Muslims'.[283]

Some of the confessional policies of Shah Abbas and his concern for social disciplining were shared by Sultan Ahmed, who took several measures for monitoring his subjects and controlling urban life. He issued an imperial decree banning coffeehouses, even though ironically his own mosque complex included a coffeehouse.[284] The

[278] Moreen, "Status of Religious", 130.
[279] Ibid, 124.
[280] Savory, "Relations between", 448; Moreen, "Status of Religious", 124.
[281] Moreen, "Problems of Conversion", 222.
[282] Abisaab, *Converting Persia*, 63.
[283] After Savory, "Relations between", 448.
[284] Naima, *Tarih-i Naima*, II, 755; Fleet and Boyar, *Social History*, 190; Fetvacı, *Album*, 126–127.

consumption of wine was also prohibited by his order, displaying his concern for orthopraxy.[285] Similar to the Safavid case, legal measures were taken for disciplining the empire's non-Muslim populations, and distinguishing them from the Muslim populations had a significant place in Sultan Ahmed's confessional agenda. He issued decrees concerning non-Muslims' clothing and banned the selling of particular garments to them.[286] As Fetvacı has argued, Sultan Ahmed's bans were legal symbols of social discipline and public order intended to counter the political, social, and economic crisis facing the empire.[287] These legislative courses also manifested the sultan's desire to enforce Islamic orthopraxy and ensure his subjects' compliance with Islamic rules.

2.1.3 Architectural projects of the pious rulers: Patronage of religious sanctuaries by Sultan Ahmed and Shah Abbas

Patronage of religious architecture and philanthropic projects were other instruments of Sultan Ahmed and Shah Abbas for manifesting their piety and confessional inclinations. Both rulers appeared as prolific patrons of architecture who erected mosques, which will be examined in the following chapter, and renovated shrines and sanctuaries. The Friday mosque complex in Atmeydanı and the donations to, and innovation projects in the Muslim sanctuaries in Mecca, Medina, and holy Lands were mentioned as the most significant and prestigious charities of Sultan Ahmed in

[285] Akgündüz, *Osmanlı Kanunnameleri*, IX, 499. The consumption of wine had been defined as an offense in the legal codes of the previous Ottoman sultans too. See Akgündüz, *Osmanlı Kanunnameleri*, I, 349; idem, *Osmanlı Kanunnameleri*, II, 42; idem, *Osmanlı Kanunnameleri*, III, 91. For a comprehensive study on the consumption of wine and taverns in the Ottoman empire, see Erdinçli, *Keyif, Günah*.

[286] Akgündüz, *Osmanlı Kanunnameleri*, IX, 533.

[287] Ibid, 127; Tezcan, *Second Ottoman Empire*, 66; Fetvacı, *Album*, 127. For legal regulations on non-Muslims' clothing in the Ottoman empire, see Quatert, "Clothing Laws"; Turan, "16. Yüzyıldan"; Ercan, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda"; Bozkurt, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda".
For studies investigating the increasing discrimination and pressure towards Istanbul's non-Muslim populations, especially Jews, see İdil, "Confessionalization of Space".

different seventeenth-century sources.[288] The sultan embarked on a renovation project in the holy Kaba in 1611 (1020 AH) when he received a report indicating that the roof and walls of the Kaba were damaged, and needed repair and renovation.[289] He ordered new belts and pillars to be prepared in Istanbul and to be sent to Egypt in accompaniment with architects and engineers.[290] His initiative to renovate the Kaba does not seem to have arisen merely from a technical or architectural need, but aimed to emulate and surpass Sultan Süleyman's extended renovation project of the same sanctuary at the same time.[291] Mustafa Safi and Naima eulogized Ahmed I as the second sultan who renovated the Kaba after Sultan Süleyman. They indicated that Sultan Ahmed ordered more ornate golden plates to be prepared to replace Sultan Süleyman's wooden panels that were painted with silver.[292] Beside the renovations in the Ka'ba, Ahmed I enlarged the pulpit in *Maḳām-ı Ḥanefī*, the Hanafi quarter, in the Masjid-i Haram, the mosque centered on the Kaba, seemingly as a sign of the Ottoman state's embrace of the Hanafi school, repaired this mosque's prayer rugs, and had the buildings surrounding the sanctuary demolished.[293]

Simultaneously with the renovations in the Kaba, the sultan made donations to other sanctuaries in the Muslim holy cities. For the mosque of the Prophet in Medina, *Rawḍa-yı Mutaḥḥara*, two golden lamps were produced. A new golden crescent was designed for replacing the stone one on top of *Maḳām-ı İbrahīm*'s dome, and for the gate of the same sanctuary, a new bolt and key were prepared.[294]

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[288] Mustafa Safi, *Mustafa Safi'nin*, I, 108–109, 111–115; idem, *Mustafa Safi'nin*, II, 96–98, 138, 216, 225; Ahmed Paşa, *Hasan Beyzade Tarihi*, III, 894–897; İpşirli, *Tarih-i Naima*, II, 380–387.
[289] Mustafa Safi, *Mustafa Safi'nin*, I, 110; İpşirli, *Tarih-i Naima*, II, 387. Cafer Çelebi indicated that the situation of the Kaba was reported by the chief mufti Sunullah Efendi (d. 1612). Cafer Efendi, *Risale-yi Mimariyye*, 56.
[290] Mustafa Safi, *Mustafa Safi'nin*, II, 100.
[291] For Sultan Süleyman's architectural patronage in Mecca and Medina, see Ahmed Paşa, *Hasan Beyzade Tarihi*, II, 164.
[292] Mustafa Safi, *Mustafa Safi'nin*, I, 115; Naima, *Tarih-i Naima*, II, 388.
[293] Mustafa Safi, *Mustafa Safi'nin*, II, 96–97.
[294] Cafer Çelebi, *Risale-yi Mimariyye*, 58; Mustafa Safi, *Mustafa Safi'nin*, I, 116–117.

When the sultan's presents and the new pillars, belts, and wooden panels prepared for the Kaba became ready at the end of summer in 1611, the sultan ordered them to be brought to the extramural Davudpaşa Garden, where a model of the Kaba was constructed, and the pillars, belts, and wooden panels were placed on this ephemeral structure that was surmounted by a dome. A colorful canopy decorated with precious rugs was established and attached to the model of the Kaba, and the sultan's throne was put underneath.[295] (Figure C5) In this ceremonial setting, the event was celebrated with two different feasts that took place with the participation of the members of the court, sheikhs, and dervishes.[296]

The sultan also paid special attention to the upkeep and services in the holy lands and the needs of Muslim pilgrims, whose security and necessities were under the Ottoman sultan's responsibility. In 1616 (1025 AH), Ahmed I established a waqf and endowed his share from the revenues of Egypt to Hijaz, and for expenditures of pilgrims,[297] and donated one thousand gold coins to the sanctuaries in Mecca and Medina.[298] He ordered the aqueducts in Mecca and public kitchens on different stages between Egypt and Hijaz to be repaired.[299] Making an innovation in the dynastic tradition, he ordered the covers of the Kaba and the canopies of the Prophet Muhammad and his daughter Fatimah to be prepared in the royal ateliers of Istanbul.[300] It was a dynastic custom to renew the silk cover (*kisve*) of the Kaba once a year, and after the enthronement of each Ottoman sultan. Before the reign of

[295] It was common for the Ottoman sultans to sit on garden thrones. Atasoy demonstrated that the thrones intended for use in garden settings were generally relatively simple. Atasoy, *Garden*, 33–43.
[296] Mustafa Safi, *Mustafa Safi'nin*, I, 116–123; Cafer Efendi, *Risale-yi Mimariye*, 57; Naima, *Tarih-i Naima*, II, 387–388.
[297] Bilge, "Sultanahmed Cami", 527. Sultan Ahmed's endowment deed in Arabic is fifteen folios, and accessible in the archives of the Topkapı Palace Museum, see TMSA 7004.
[298] Mustafa Safi, *Mustafa Safi'nin*, I, 221.
[299] Mustafa Safi, *Mustafa Safi'nin*, II, 101.
[300] Naima, *Tarih-i Naima*, II, 380; Güler, *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Haremeyn*, 73-74; Uzunçarşılı, *Mekke-i Mükerreme Emirleri*, 66.

Ahmed I, these covers were prepared in Egypt, and directly sent to Mecca from there in the name of the Ottoman sultans, and with the revenues of the waqfs established by them.[301] By ordering the covers to be produced in Istanbul's royal ateliers, Sultan Ahmed must have aimed to display his eagerness for serving the holy sanctuaries in Hijaz to the public in the center of the state.

The Eyüp shrine was another religious center that became the subject of Sultan Ahmed's architectural patronage.[302] In her study on the shrine's history, Feray Coşkun has demonstrated that after its construction by Mehmed II, the most significant contribution to the mausoleum of Eyüp occurred during the reign of Ahmed I. Along with renovations in the existing water-well and the erection of a public fountain for the pilgrims, the sultan covered the sacred sarcophagus with a silver grid, built a wall between the inner courtyard and the tomb, and opened a special viewing window for the pilgrims in 1613.[303] Sultan Ahmed's renovations at this site aimed to link his name in perpetuity to this warrior saint, who was linked to the memory of the Prophet Muhammad.[304] Ahmed's special attention to the Eyüp Shrine was also related to the increasing significance of this sacred place as a ceremonial site for the Ottoman sultans within the context of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century. Sultan Ahmed's pilgrimage on foot to the Eyüp Shrine was another interesting event, which was depicted by Mustafa Safi as an act of piety with no precedent in the history of the House of Osman. The chronicler relates that on a Friday evening in 1613, the sultan crossed the sea on a boat from the Tersane

[301] Güler, *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Haremeyn*, 73–74; Uzunçarşılı, *Mekke-i Mükerreme Emirleri*, 65.
[302] This shrine was constructed for the memory of Abu Ayyub al-Ansari, a companion of the Prophet Muhammad, who had taken part in the first Arab Muslim siege of Constantinople. Discovered behind the city walls in the Golden Horn right after the city's takeover by the Ottomans, the grave was attributed to the mentioned warrior saint by the new owners of the city, who appropriated this site as a sacred locus, and constructed a mausoleum and Friday mosque complex here. Coşkun, "Osmanlı İstanbulu'nda"; Kafescioğlu, *Constantinople/Istanbul*, 45–51.
[303] Coşkun, "Osmanlı İstanbulu'nda", 553; Tanman, "Hacet Penceresi", 437.
[304] Fetvacı, *Album*, 30.

Garden, and went to Eyüp district to visit the shrine on foot. As he did on every Friday evening, he brought ten *ḥüffāz*, people who memorized and chanted the Quran, and gave alms.[305]

Unlike Sultan Ahmed, Shah Abbas could not crown his name with the title of the servant of the holiest Islamic sanctuaries in Mecca, Medina, and Jerusalem. Instead, most of his attention was directed to projects that would underscore his devotion to, and spiritual and genealogical connections with, the Twelve Imams and their progeny, as well as significant Sufi figures in his realms. Despite his name having been often associated with Isfahan in the modern world, his contemporaries gave primacy to his patronage in Shi'ite and Sufi shrines, and his waqfs established for the Fourteen Infallibles. Especially his court chroniclers paid more attention and highlighted the shah's waqfs, and renovations in the shrine complexes of Immaculate Imams in Arab Iraq,[306] Imam Reza in Mashhad, Sheikh Safi al-Din in Ardabil, and several other Sufi sheikhs in diverse locations. Munshi, for example, mentioned his endowments to the shrine complexes of the Immaculate Imams before other public and charitable works of Shah Abbas.[307] Similarly, the shah's patronage in the shrines and Sufi convents was highlighted by Astarabadi, who explained the reason behind these works' priority as Shah Abbas' aim to get spiritual favor (*himmet*).[308] As a Shi'i ruler and the head of the Safaviya Sufi order, his patronage in the shrines of significant Shi'i and Sufi figures concretized and manifested his embrace of the path of Twelver Shi'ism, his devotion to his dynastic-spiritual lineage, and his respect to the founders of different Shi'itized Sufi orders. Besides, the shah's patronage in shrines aimed to refine particular pilgrimage sites in Iran that would create alternatives to

[305] Mustafa Safi, *Mustafa Safi'nin*, II, 237–238.
[306] Arab Iraq, *Irāq-e 'Arab*, is a territory corresponding to lower Mesopotamia. See Matthee, "Safavid-Ottoman Frontier", 160–161.
[307] Munshi, *History of Shah*, I, 535.
[308] Astarabadi, *Tārīkh-e Sultānī*, 133.

the traditional sites of Mecca, Medina, and Jerusalem, which had been under the dominance of the Ottomans since the early sixteenth century.[309]

Contemporary sources represent his endowments for the Fourteen Infallible Ones as one of his most significant deeds.[310] From 1604 to 1608 (1013–1017 AH), Shah Abbas established waqfs by donating the rental incomes of various urban buildings, the tax revenues of some lands, and his valuable personal belongings to the Fourteen Immaculates. His grants included the incomes generated from the shops enveloping the Naqsh-e Jahan Square, the caravanserai, the royal public bath, and the Qaysariya Bazaar near the square, half of the properties at the shah's legal disposal or personal ownership, and his livestock and belongings, including horses, manuscript collections, inlaid jewels, and utensils.[311] According to Munshi's report, the shah was often heard to say: "Every item in my household, and every item which it is possible to tax is covered by the terms of this benefaction, even the two rings which I am wearing."[312] He divided the revenues in cash and kind into fourteen shares and bestowed their spiritual reward (*ṣawāb*) to each of the Fourteen Infallibles. The beneficiaries and destinations of the donations included sayyids living in Medina, pilgrims, students of science, pious people, and incumbents (*khadīm*) and residents (*mujāvir*) in the shrines. His manuscript collections were divided into two for the shrines of Sheikh Safi in Ardabil and Imam Reza in Mashhad while his jewels and inlaid weapons and utensils were donated to the shrine of Imam Ali in Najaf.[313]

The shrine complex of Imam Reza in Mashhad occupied the most significant place in Shah Abbas' patronage of shrines.[314] Following the example of his great grandfather

[309] Rizvi, "Sites of Pilgrimage", 99; Melville, "Shah Abbas", 215.
[310] Munshi, *History of Shah*, II, 953–955; Astarabadi, *Tārīkh-e Sultānī*, 135–139; Khuzani Isfahani, *Chronicle*, I, 467–471; Yazdi, *Tārīkh-e 'Abbāsī*, 339–341; Shamlu, *Qisās al-Khāqānī*, I, 186–195.
[311] McChesney, "Waqf and Public", 170–178.
[312] Munshi, *History of Shah*, II 954.
[313] McChesney, "Waqf and Public", 170–178.
[314] Along with other sites associated with Shi'ism, the shrine of Imam Reza assumed religious and political significance for the Safavid shahs, who reinforced their claims as to the Imamate's heirs, enhanced their kinship with the Shi'i Imams, and intensified the hold of Imami Shi'ism in their realms

Shah Tahmasb,[315] Shah Abbas focused his attention on the shrine in Mashhad and supported the shrine and the city with his large donations and architectural undertakings between 1599 and 1612. After repulsing the Uzbeks from Khurasan in 1599, the shah offered a visit to Imam Reza, and found the shrine in a bad condition, 'stripped of its gold and silver chandeliers, and 'nothing remained of the ornaments donated to the shrine during the Safavid period except the gold railing around the tomb itself.'[316] Wishing to recover the shrine, he supplied it with magnificent Kerman carpets, jeweled chandeliers of gold and silver, candlesticks, and other essential pots and utensils.[317] After approximately two years, in 1601, he walked from Isfahan to Mashhad to offer another visit to Imam Reza. Taking around forty days, the shah's pilgrimage on foot constituted a celebrated act of devotion.[318] With the establishment of a waqf in 1602/3 (1011 AH), he donated all the improved land of the shrine complex for providing more cemetery space for those wishing to be buried near the sacred tomb of Imam Reza.[319] In another endowment dated 1606, he donated his library copies of the Quran and scientific books in Arabic, including treatises on jurisprudence and commentaries on the traditions, to the same shrine.[320]

In 1612, Abbas I engaged in a series of architectural projects and renovations in the shrine and the city. His renovations included the enlargement of the shrine's courtyard, the establishment of four gateways, digging a canal carrying water to the courtyard, and laying out an avenue known as *khiyābān* connecting the eastern and

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through architectural patronage and orchestrated shows of piety at these shrines. Farhat, "Islamic Piety", 123.

[315] Imam Reza Shrine's dedication as a Safavid sacred site occurred in the 1530s, concomitant with the loss of the Iraqi shrines to the Ottomans. Shah Tahmasb's sincere repentance in the shrine gilding of its dome, six pilgrimages to the site, and administrative changes in the complex and its endowment rendered this place into a distinctly Safavid and Shi'ite shrine, which remained more or less outside the confessional rivalries and distinctions until this date. Farhat, "Islamic Piety", 122–125.

[316] Munshi, *History of Shah*, II, 752.

[317] Ibid, 764.

[318] Melville, "Shah Abbas", 191–192.

[319] McChesney, "Waqf and Public", 169; Farhat, "Islamic Piety", 188.

[320] Munshi, *History of Shah*, II, 954.

western gates of Mashhad.[321] Chroniclers' accounts display that these infrastructural renovations aimed at providing more comfortable conditions for pilgrims.[322] Besides these infrastructural renovations, Abbas ordered the inner surface of the dome over the Imam's mausoleum to be covered with gold.[323] Along with enriching the mausoleum's decorative skin, the shah's gilding of the dome's interior can be seen as another symbolic gesture to associate his name with his great grandfather Tahmasb, who covered the same dome's exterior with pure gold.[324]

Shah Abbas also supported other Shi'ite pilgrimage sites in his realms, which housed the mausolea of the progeny and companions of the Immaculate Imams. The shrines of Fatimah Masumah in Qum, Shah Abd al-Azim in Ray, and Imamzada Habib bin Musa in Kashan were among such places of pilgrimage.[325] Shah Abbas made donations to these shrines and visited them,[326] although he did not patronize them in the same manner as he did the one in Mashhad.[327] He transformed two of the courtyards of the shrine in Qum into madrasas and embellished the tomb's interior.[328] In 1596, he established a waqf for endowing the tax incomes of a village named Murdahabad near Shahriyar to the shrine of Shah Abd al-Azim.[329] Two waqfs founded in the same year, in

[321] Farhat, "Islamic Piety", 177; Allan, *Art, and Architecture*, 52.
[322] According to Yazdi, the shah's decision to enlarge the courtyard emanated from the space's insufficiency for the growing number of visitors, and he ordered several houses next to the courtyard to be demolished for enlarging it. Khuzani Isfahani reported that the shah constructed the *khiyābān* and a water canal in Mashhad for the sake of pilgrims. Munshi also mentioned the lack of water in Mashhad as a significant problem faced by the pilgrims visiting the shrine and praised Shah Abbas for solving this problem by digging a new canal that ran through the middle of the avenue he built and reached the shrine's courtyard. Yazdi, *Tārīkh-e 'Abbāsī*, 218; Khuzani Isfahani, *Chronicle*, I, 465; Munshi, *History of Shah*, II, 1064–1065.
[323] Yazdi, *Tārīkh-e 'Abbāsī*, 193.
[324] Farhat, "Islamic Piety", 123.
[325] The shrine in Qum is the burial site of a daughter of Imam Musa al-Kazem and the sister of Imam Reza, Fatimah Ma'soma. The shrine in Ray contains the mausoleum of Abd al-Azim al-Hasani, a companion of Muhammad al-Taqi, the ninth of the Twelve Shi'i Imams. The mausoleum of Imamzada Musa in Kashan houses the cenotaph of Habib bin Musa al-Kazem, a son of the seventh Shi'i Imam. Allan, *Art and Architecture*, 31–32; Darrabi, *Tārīkh-e Kāshān*, 555–556.
[326] Khuzani Isfahani, *Chronicle*, II, 616, 966.
[327] Gleave, "Ritual Life", 94.
[328] Allan, *Art and Architecture*, 32.
[329] Kondo, "Shah Abd al-Azim", 56.

1627/8 (1037 AH), for donating a series of manuscripts constituted another donation of Shah Abbas to these two shrines.[330] He bestowed 120 manuscripts to the shrine of Shah Abd al-Azim while the number of books given to the shrine in Qum was 110.[331] The shah's patronage in the shrine of Imamzada Habib, which will be the shah's burial site, involved the renovation of the mausoleum. Among many Imamzada shrines across Iran, this shrine attracted the special attention of Shah Abbas, probably because of the belief he descended from this son of Musa al-Kazem.[332]

The takeover of Arab Iraq from the Ottomans in 1623 (1032 AH) provided the shah with the opportunity to undertake architectural projects in the shrines of the Shi'i Imams in Najaf, Karbala, Baghdad, and Samarra. Just after the region's conquest, the shah offered visit to the shrine of Imam Ali in Najaf, and the next year, he visited the shrine of Imam Husein in Karbala, that of Imam Musa al-Kazem and Imam Muhammad al-Taqi in Baghdad, Kazimayn, and the mausoleum of Imam Ali al-Naqi and Imam Hasan al-Askari in Samarra. He rendered some of these pilgrimages into a public displays of piety, for example, dismounting and proceeding on foot one day's journey from the shrine of Imam Ali, spending days and nights in the shrines, sweeping the floors, and conducting 'himself with the greatest humility.'[333] He initiated a project for rebuilding the shrine of Imam Ali, which was completed after his death, during the reign of Shah Safi. With the addition of a hospital, a hospice, and a public kitchen, he ensured the site's functionality for pilgrims.[334] To the same purpose, he re-opened the canal that was dug by Shah Ismail I for bringing water from the Euphrates and extended it up to the Kufa Mosque and constructed cisterns

[330] Tabatabai, *Turbat-e Pakan*, I, 150.
[331] The manuscript collections endowed to the shrines consisted mainly of Arabic books on Quranic exegesis, Islamic doctrine, and traditions. Jafarian, *Waqfnāmahā-ye Ketāb-e Safāvī*, 149–252; Tabatabai, *Turbat-e Pakan*, I, 150.
[332] Naraqi, *Āsār-e Tārīkhī*, 108–113; Gleave, "Ritual Life", 94; Mashkati, *List*, 239–241.
[333] Munshi, *History of Shah*, II, 1226; Khuzani Isfahani, *Chronicle*, II, 844; Astarabadi, *Tārīkh-e Sultānī*, 223.
[334] Tabbaa and Mervin, *Najaf*, 79.

with access staircases.[335] He embellished the shrine with several golden and silver objects and luxury carpets.[336] As a part of the waqfs in the name of the Fourteen Immaculate Ones, he endowed all his gold and silver jewels to the shrine of Imam Ali, and these golds were used for gilding the tomb's dome.[337] In the shrines in Baghdad and Samarra, he made the repairments, and bestowed grants and alms to the holy men, residents, attendances, and other deserving people.[338] His donations to the shrines in Karbala and Kazimayn included brocade spreads for covering chests and beautiful rugs.[339] In addition, he ordered a steel *ḍarīḥ*, an ornate lattice structure enclosing the grave, to be installed around the two wooden cenotaphs of Imam Musa al-Kazem and Imam Muhammad al-Taqi in the Kazimayn shrine.[340] In the shrine complex in Samarra, the public kitchen opened by Shah Tahmasb was repaired and re-opened.[341]

Abbas' patronage in several Sufi shrines concretized the shah's genealogical and spiritual ties with the Safaviya Sufi path and his respect to other Shi'itized Sufi orders of Safavid Iran. The shrine complex of Sheikh Safi al-Din in Ardabil had the primary significance among other Sufi shrines in Shah Abbas' architectural agenda. The importance of this mausoleum was stemmed from Sheikh Safi's status as the founder of the namesake spiritual order, and the site's function as a dynastic mausoleum. Shah Abbas displayed his devotion to his ancestral shrine through several well-publicized pilgrimages, most of them performed in times of crises, especially during his wars with the Ottomans in Azarbaijan and Caucasia, for seeking spiritual help from his ancestor-sheikh .[342] As in

[335] Astarabadi, *Tārīkh-e Sultānī*, 223; Munshi, *History of Shah*, II, 1226.
[336] Khuzani Isfahani, *Chronicle*, II, 844; Allan, *Art and Architecture*, 87.
[337] Shamlu, *Qisās al-Khāqānī*, I, 194.
[338] Junabadi, *Rawḍat al-Ṣafavīya*, 887–888; Munshi, *History of Shah*, II, 1233; Khuzani Isfahani, *Chronicle*, II, 847, 869.
[339] Munshi, *History of Shah*, II, 1233.
[340] Allan, *Art and Architecture*, 102.
[341] Khuzani Isfahani, *Chronicle*, II, 869.
[342] His visits to the shrine in 1604/5 (1013 AH), 1607 (1016 AH), and 1612 (1021 AH) were such examples. Rizvi, "Sites of Pilgrimage", 101; Munshi, *History of Shah*, II, 946, 987, 1057, 1138, 1152; Astarabadi, *Tārīkh-e Sultānī*, 182, 185, 195, 228.

the shrine of Imam Reza, he displayed his devotion and humility by sweeping the tomb's floors and praying in subservience.[343] The shah's theatrical and publicized pilgrimages were accompanied by architectural projects and charitable donations in the shrine. His architectural activity in the shrine began in 1596/7 (1005 AH) when he repaired some edifices of the complex.[344] In 1605, he rebuilt the complex's public kitchen and donated money to its hospital, *dār al-marḍ*.[345] Della Valle related that this kitchen offered rice to visitors of the shrine twice a day, and before Shah Abbas' reign, the number of the daily meals was one.[346] In 1611, the shah initiated several architectural projects that rendered parts of the complex into a courtly setting. He ordered the interiors of two fourteenth-century edifices of the assembly, *dār al-ḥuffāẓ,* and *gonbad-e shāhzadahā*, to be renovated as luxurious palatial settings, and a royal *sharbatkhāna* to be built in the shrine.[347] (Figures C6–C7)

Shrines of some significant Sufi figures, who were a part of the Safavid dynasty or the spiritual lineage of the Safaviya order, captured special attention from Shah Abbas. Among them were the mausolea of Sheikh Shahab al-Din in Ahar, Sheikh Zahid in Gilan, and Sheikh Jabrail in Khalkhoran. He offered several visits to the tomb of Sheikh Shahab al-Din, a Sufi sheikh who lived in the twelfth century in eastern Azarbaijan, and was a part of the spiritual lineage of the Safaviya Sufi order, and added some new edifices to the shrine. Shah Abbas renovated and repaired the khanqah or the convent of the complex.[348] A masjid, a madrasa, a kitchen, a *dār al-ḥuffāẓ*, and a garden surrounding the mausoleum were mentioned by contemporary chronicles among the new buildings Abbas added to the

[343] Rizvi, *Safavid Dynastic Shrine*, 139.
[344] Khuzani Isfahani, *Chronicle*, I, 208.
[345] Rizvi, *Safavid Dynastic Shrine*, 129.
[346] Della Valle, *Safarnama-ye Della Valle*, 296.
[347] Rizvi, *Safavid Dynastic Shrine*, 126, 129; Hillenbrand, "Safavid Architecture", 792.
[348] Muhlisi, *Fihrist-e Binaha-ye*, 71–75.

shrine.[349] He repaired the tomb of Sheikh Jabrail, Sheikh Safi's father, in Khalkhoran,[350], and added a golden railing, *ḍarīḥ*, around the sheikh's cenotaph.[351] In Gilan, he restored the shrine of Sheikh Zahid, the sheikh of Safi's sheikh.[352]

Shrines of several Sufi figures, who did not have any concrete connections with the Safavid dynasty or the Safaviya Sufi order, also attracted the shah's attention. In 1613 (1022 AH), he repaired the ruined parts and tilework of the mausoleum of Sheikh Ahmad-e Jami (d. 1141) in Turbat-e Jam and added a new courtyard to the shrine of Sheikh Nimatullah Vali (d. 1430) in Mahan.[353] Along with renovations in the existing shrines, he ordered the construction of some new Sufi convents in Isfahan. The convent of Ali known as *bāgh-e qalandar*, or the garden of Kalandar, and the convent of Sahib al-Zaman, or Baba Bektash, were among Sufi khanqahs that were established by the shah in Isfahan.[354] Abbas' patronage of these convents and shrines speaks for his respect for particular Sufi figures and orders, whose adherents embraced a Shi'ite-Alid formulation of Sufism, and did not have claims for political authority that could have constituted a threat to the shah's sovereignty and legitimacy. It is known that Nimatullahis and Qalandaris were among such Sufi orders in Safavid Iran.[355] As Rizvi has aptly put it, 'although polemics of this time sometimes denigrate Sufism in favor of a more normative interpretation of Shi'ism, the shah's architectural patronage points to a more complex attitude towards religious identity.'[356]

[349]Khuzani Isfahani, *Chronicle*, II, 594, 745; Yazdi, *Tārīkh-e 'Abbāsī*, 383; Astarabadi, *Tārīkh-e Sultānī*, 133; Munshi, *History of Shah*, I, 536.
[350] Mashkati, *List*, 3.
[351] Astarabadi, *Tārīkh-e Sultānī*, 133; Munshi, *History of Shah*, I, 536.
[352] Astarabadi, *Tārīkh-e Sultānī*, 133; Munshi, *History of Shah*, I, 536.
[353] Mashkati, *List*, 79, 143.
[354] Astarabadi, *Tārīkh-e Sultānī*, 133; Falsafi, *Zandaganī-ye Shāh 'Abbās*, I, 168.
[355] Arjomand, "Religious Extremism", 14–24; Perry, "Toward a Theory", 51–52; Calmard, "Shi'i Rituals", 145.
[356] Rizvi, "Architecture", 378.

2.2 Ottoman-Safavid relations in the early seventeenth century

Successive military confrontations, motivated by political rivalry and confessional dispute,[357] had dominated Ottoman-Safavid relations throughout the sixteenth century. Beginning with the inception of Safavid rule in Iran, the Ottoman and Safavid armies fought against each other on multiple fronts, including Azarbaijan, eastern Anatolia, and Mesopotamia.[358] The early seventeenth century witnessed another intense military and religious dispute between the Ottoman and Safavid states. The Ottoman and Safavid military conflict continued throughout the whole reign of Sultan Ahmed, and the last three decades of Shah Abbas' rule. Since 1578, after Tahmasb's death, the Safavids were fighting against the Ottoman in two different lands, Caucasia and Iraq. The Ottomans took advantage of the internal conflicts and the civil war that appeared after Tahmasb's passing away and they occupied several significant cities in the mentioned regions during the war of 1578–1590. Shah Abbas could not fight against the Uzbeks, internal centrifugal movements, and the Ottomans at the same time, and agreed on peace with the Ottomans. In 1590, he recognized Ottoman sovereignty in Tabriz, Ganja, Karabag, Shirvan, Loristan, Georgia, and Nihavend with a peace treaty known as the Ferhat Pasha Treaty.[359] In this treaty, Sultan Murad III stipulated that the Safavids should abandon their custom of public cursing of Aisha and other companions of the Prophet.[360] As another condition of this

[357] Especially for the Ottomans, confessional dispute constituted a significant driving force, or sometimes as a pretext, of several military attacks against the Safavid realms. As will be discussed in the next chapter, the Safavids were regarded as heretics, and blamed for their ignorance of particular religious obligations and engaging in some rituals like cursing the First Sunni caliphs. See Eberhard, *Osmanische Polemik*, 84–117; Atçıl, "Safavid Threat"; Muhammednejad, *Osmanlı-İran İlişkileri*, 155–156, 209–211.

[358] Allouche, *Osmanlı-Safevi İlişkileri*; Muhammednejad, *Osmanlı-İran İlişkileri*; Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlı-İran Siyasi*.

[359] Küpeli, *Osmanlı-Safevi Münasebetleri*, 46; Falsafi, *Zandaganī-ye Shāh 'Abbās*, II, 981.

[360] Feridun Beg, *Münşeatü'l-Selatin*, II, 451. The Safavids' custom of cursing the first two or three caliphs and Aisha had been among the main subjects of the Ottoman authorities' accusations of the Safavids. This issue was uttered in the previous treaties, including the Amasya Treaty, and the Ottomans stipulated the Safavids' abandonment of this custom. See Eberhard, *Osmanische Polemik*, 104–110; Atçıl, "Safavid Threat", 299, 303, 308; Muhammednejad, *Osmanlı-İran İlişkileri*, 155–156, 209–211; Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlı-İran Siyasi*, 197.

peace treaty, Shah Abbas accepted to send a Safavid prince, his nephew Haydar Mirza, to Istanbul as a hostage.[361] This treaty brought an end to a twelve-year-long period of war between the Ottomans and the Safavids and provided the Safavid shah with an interval for eliminating his internal enemies.

Seemingly, Shah Abbas' decision to agree on peace with the Ottomans aimed to earn time for the formation of a stronger army and political alliances to fight against the Ottomans in the future. Throughout the 1590s, several European and Russian missions visited the court of Shah Abbas with a proposal of an anti-Ottoman league. As early as 1588, the Russian monarch Tsar Peter I sent an envoy to Qazvin, and several ambassadors were exchanged between Qazvin and Moscow during the last decade of the sixteenth century. The anti-Ottoman interest shared by the Russian and Safavid monarchs provided the main rationale for these diplomatic contacts.[362] In 1593, Pope Clement VIII sent his envoy to the shah to urge him to take up arms against the Ottomans.[363] However, Shah Abbas did not take any concrete steps for allying against the Ottomans until he created the convenient conditions for such a military initiative until the turn of the century when he eliminated the internal centrifugal forces and checked the Uzbek invasions.

Within the year of the capital's transfer in 1598 (1006 AH), Abbas received two English adventurers, Sir Anthony Sherley, and his brother, who came to Iran to persuade the shah to seek an anti-Ottoman alliance with the Christian powers of Europe and promote commercial relations.[364] Although they were not sponsored or commissioned by any European monarch, the Sherley brothers initiated the most intensive diplomatic relations there had ever been between Europe and Iran.[365] In 1598–99, the shah accepted

[361] Munshi, *History of Shah*, II, 612; Khuzani Isfahani, *Chronicle*, II, 226; Casale, "Peace".
[362] Matthee, "Anti-Ottoman Politics", 744–746.
[363] Matthee, "Iran's Relations", 13.
[364] Blow, *Shah Abbas*, 53.
[365] Ibid, 54.

the Sherley brothers to his presence both in Qazvin and Isfahan and negotiated the conditions of an anti-Ottoman alliance. Sir Anthony Sherley accepted to be dispatched as the shah's ambassador to European powers, and accompanied by an Iranian envoy, Husein Ali Beg, traveled to Europe through Russia with the mission of creating an alliance of Iran and European princes and monarchs against the Turks.[366] Shah Abbas gave Sherley and Husein Beg diplomatic letters for the kings of Spain, Scotland, and Poland, the Venetian Senate, the Pope, the Queen of England, and the Grand Duke of Florance.[367] (Figure C8)

The letters presented by Sherley were responded positively by the Spanish King and the Pope and upon this, Shah Abbas concentrated more on enlisting the backing of maritime forces, Spain, Portugal, and Venice.[368] During the first two decades of the seventeenth century, several envoys came back and forth between Shah Abbas and these powers.[369] Among these missions were Antonio de Gouvea (d.1628) and Garcia de Silva y Figueroa (d. 1624), who was dispatched to Iran by Philip III, the King of Spain and Portugal, respectively in 1608 and 1612.[370] In this process, Isfahan witnessed the formation of two permanent Catholic missions, the Augustinians and the Carmelites, who were sent to Iran by Pope Clement VIII (d. 1605), and acted both as ambassadors and religious missionaries.[371] Along with seeking anti-Ottoman alliances, these Catholic envoys and missions had economic concerns, namely directing the silk road from Ottoman lands to the Persian Gulf, and creating alternative trade roads between Europe and Iran for diminishing the Ottomans' economic profit from silk trade with Europe.[372] Although none of these missions resulted in concrete success and a Safavid-European

[366] Ferrier, "European Diplomacy", 75–76.
[367] Blow, *Shah Abbas*, 59.
[368] Ferrier, "European Diplomacy", 76.
[369] Ibid, 76–81; Blow, *Shah Abbas*, 92.
[370] Küpeli, *Osmanlı-Safevi Münasebetleri*, 77; Matthee, "Iran's Relations",12, 16; Ferrier, "European Diplomacy", 77, 79.
[371] Blow, *Shah Abbas*, 87; Matthee, "Iran's Relations", 13–14; Ferrier, "European Diplomacy", 77–79
[372] Ferrier, "Armenians", 39–40; Matthee, "Anti-Ottoman Politics" 740, 747; Küpeli, *Osmanlı-Safevi Münasebetleri*, 76. For different routes of silk trade in Safavid Iran, see Herzig, "Volume of Iranian".

anti-Ottoman league had never been established, the Catholic powers' continuous infusions concerning fighting the Ottomans on diverse fronts probably had a triggering effect on Abbas' aggressive policies against the Ottomans.

The Isfahani era of Abbas' rule witnessed the emergence of an aggressive military attitude towards the Ottomans. As several scholars have pointed out, the Ottomans constituted the shah's biggest external enemy,[373] and the effects of this rivalry had a big impact on the formation of the shah's military, economic, and socio-political policies, especially during the Isfahani era of his rule. Beginning with 1598/99 (1007 AH), Abbas' attitude towards the Ottoman authorities became tougher. This change is observable in Abbas' manners towards the Ottoman envoys who visited the Safavid court, the content, and quality of gifts presented to the Ottoman sultans, and in the titulature and wording he used in diplomatic correspondence. In 1598/99, Abbas ordered the Ottoman ambassador Muhammad Agha's beard to be shaved and sent to Mehmed III.[374] Gifts presented to the same sultan radically differed from previous ones. While the late-sixteenth century presents to the Ottoman court mostly included lavish manuscripts, objects of art, and textiles, Shah Abbas' envoy, Muhammadqulu Khan Arabgirlu, presented merely the keys of several central cities and fortresses the shah had just conquered in Khurasan. The keys sent to the Ottoman sultan seem to have advertised the Safavid shah's increasing military might.[375] Jafarian demonstrated that until the last years of the sixteenth century, Abbas I addressed to the Ottoman sultan as the King of Iran, *Şāh-ı 'Acem*, and abandoned this wording in his letters penned in the seventeenth century.[376] A dialogue between Abbas I and the Spanish envoy Antonio de Gouvea, which was mentioned in the latter's account of his mission to Iran, is telling about the degree of the shah's hostility and diverse plans

[373] Falsafi, *Zandagānī-ye Shāh 'Abbās*, II, 988; Quinn, *Shah Abbas*, 92.
[374] Falsafi, *Zandagānī-ye Shāh 'Abbās*, II, 987.
[375] Arcak, "Gifts in Motion", 222–224.
[376] Ibid, 981.

against the Ottomans. Gouvea related that in his reception by the shah in 1603 (1011 AH), the shah uttered his enmity towards the Turks and his desire for seeing all Ottoman mosques be converted into churches.[377]

Within the same year he received the mentioned Spanish envoy, Shah Abbas began to reconquer the cities that had been fallen to the Ottomans during his father's reign and he broke the twelve-year long peace with the Ottomans by besieging the Nihavend Castle in Caucasia.[378] This was the beginning of another long period of wars between the Ottomans and the Safavids, which continued between 1603 and 1618, with a short break in 1612. The takeover of Nihavend Castle was followed by the Safavid conquest of Tabriz, Nahjevan, and Revan, which re-entered the shah's rule within the same year, in 1603.[379] Breaking the peace with the Ottomans was justified by the unlawful behavior of the Ottoman governors on the frontier,[380] but more probably, this change in the Safavid policy emanated from Shah Abbas' will to regain the significant Caucasian cities and to improve the reputation of his dynasty that had been damaged by repetitive defeats to the Ottomans. At that time, the Ottomans were at war with the Habsburgs in Hungary and struggling with the Celali rebellions, and this constituted an opportunity for the shah to reconquer the mentioned cities without meeting strong Ottoman resistance.[381] In approximately one year, the Safavids retook all the cities that they had lost to the Ottomans with the Ferhat Pasha Treaty in 1590.[382]

Sultan Ahmed I commissioned five different grand viziers to repulse the Safavid attacks on Azarbaijan and Caucasus during his reign, and the first of these campaigns occurred in this conjuncture. Led by Sinan Pasha, the Ottoman army was

[377] After Falsafi, *Zandagānī-ye Shāh 'Abbās*, II, 987.
[378] Ibid, 998.
[379] Küpeli, *Osmanlı-Safevi Münasebetleri*, 52–53.
[380] Blow, *Shah Abbas*, 76.
[381] Sadiqi, *Tārīkh-e Irān*, 101.
[382] Küpeli, *Osmanlı-Safevi Münasebetleri*, 53.

defeated in Sufiyan near Tabriz in a battle that took place in 1605, which constituted one of the greatest military victories of Shah Abbas.[383] Similarly, two other Ottoman campaigns against the Safavids, which took place in 1610 and 1612 respectively, ended in failure for the Ottomans. In 1612, the Ottoman grand vizier Nasuh Pasha and Shah Abbas agreed on peace, which was established on the conditions of the Amasya Treaty in 1555.[384] The Ottomans broke this peace in less than two years, in 1614 on the pretext of Abbas' failure to deliver the promised 200 bales of silk to Istanbul, and besieged the former Ottoman territory in Georgia.[385] Although the Safavid Shah sent the promised tribute with a delay of two years, the sultan accepted neither the tribute nor the gifts presented by the Safavid envoy, who was imprisoned in the Yedikule fort.[386] The Ottoman sultan continued the war against the Safavids until the end of his reign since fighting against this Shi'i empire would foster his image as the caliph of the entire Muslim community and the protector of "the true religion", as well as providing the military victory and booty that was necessary for legitimizing his Friday mosque project, as will be discussed in the fifth chapter.

Shah Abbas, on the other hand, appears to have desired to protect the peace during this decade, for he concentrated on reinforcing his hegemony in Georgia and bringing the self-ordained Georgian princes, who had been subjected to Safavid dominion, into line.[387] In addition, during the previous decade, he succeeded in regaining control of all the major cities in Azerbaijan and Caucasus and did not want to lose his hegemony in this region. Despite the shah's endeavors for protecting the peace, the Ottoman sultan dispatched two successive grand viziers to Iran to

[383] Imber, Colin, "Battle of Sufiyan"; Blow, *Shah Abbas*, 81–82.
[384] Feridün Beg, *Münşeat*, II, 257–261.
[385] Blow, *Shah Abbas*, 104; Küpeli, *Osmanlı-Safevi Münasebetleri*, 92.
[386] Küpeli, *Osmanlı-Safevi Münasebetleri*, 106; Naima, *Tarih-i Naima*, II, 422.
[387] Küpeli, *Osmanlı-Safevi Münasebetleri*, 91.

reconquer Azerbaijan and Caucasia. Led by Mehmed Pasha, the Ottoman army besieged the Revan Castle in 1616, and once again, the Ottoman campaign against the Safavids ended in Ottoman failure. After one year, the Ottoman grand vizier Halil Pasha raided Iran to conquer Ardabil, the ancestral city of the Safavid shahs. This campaign also ended in Ottoman failure, and once again, peace was established between two sides with a treaty in 1619.[388]

The last of Shah Abbas' wars with the Ottomans began after a four-year peace. After the death of Ahmed I, the Ottoman court entered a difficult period. For a decade, the Ottoman court had to deal with internal crises, and for the shah, this provided an opportunity to attaining his goals in Irak-ı Arab.[389] In 1623, Shah Abbas mounted on a military campaign against Baghdad taking advantage of the Ottoman governor's uprising in this city. Baghdad's Ottoman governor, Bekir Subaşı, appealed to the shah for help against the Ottomans, and upon this request, the shah gravitated to the Irak-ı Arab for 'he had long had the desire to make the pilgrimage to the tombs of Ali and the other Imams.'[390] In his last campaign, he conquered the most significant cities in Iraq, including Baghdad, Najaf, Karbala, and Samarra, and paid visits to the shrines of the Immaculate Imams, his claimed ancestors.[391]

In the first quarter of the seventeenth century, Abbas I succeeded in gaining several victories against his most formidable enemy, the Ottomans. During the reign of Shah Abbas, the Ottomans could not gain any single victory in front of the Safavid armies and lost major cities in Azerbaijan, Caucasus, eastern Anatolia, and Irak-ı Arab to the Safavids. This was an exceptional period in the history of Ottoman-Safavid relations, as

[388] Ibid, 91–120.
[389] '*Irāq-e 'Arāb* was the term used to refer to the lands between the Tigris and the Euphrates all the way down to Baghdad. Blow, *Shah Abbas*, 132; Küpeli, *Osmanlı-Safevi Münasebetleri*, 121–127.
[390] Munshi, *History of Shah*, I, 1221.
[391] Blow, *Shah Abbas*, 132–133.

Shah Abbas was an exceptional Safavid king, crowning his name as the first Safavid shah who did not lose any single war in his military struggle against the Ottomans. The military contest, however, constituted only one side of this competition. The rivalry between Shah Abbas and the Ottoman sultans had many dimensions, including religious, political, economic, and cultural.

Religious dispute constituted one of the most significant aspects of the Ottoman-Safavid conflict in the early seventeenth century, just as it had in the sixteenth century. Throughout the sixteenth century, the Ottoman religious and political authorities had accused the Safavids of being heretics and enemies of Islam, who destroyed the pillars of the true religion (Sunni Islam), ruined the sanctuaries, and defamed the Prophet's companions. The Ottomans pursued this established attitude against the Safavids in the early seventeenth century, too. They continued to define the Safavids as heretics, infidels, evildoers, and enemies of the true religion, and these epithets rendered the Shi'i Safavids a legitimate target of the prescribed holy war for the Sunni Ottomans.

The significance of fighting against the Safavids was directly or indirectly emphasized in different media by the Ottoman political and religious authorities, including Ahmed I himself, his grand-mufti, and the court chroniclers he patronized. The struggle of Sultan Ahmed against the Safavids appears as a theme in his poetry, where the sultan expresses his desire for a victory against the Safavid Shah as follows: "The Muslim armies endeavored to slaughter the *Rāfiḍi*s [the Safavids]/ [Oh God] Make them victorious for the sake of the Four Rightly-Guided Caliphs (*Çār Yār*)".[392] In another pair of couplets, he repeats the same wish: "I hope that the infidels [the Habsburgs] will be defeated soon/ So that the news of this defeat will

[392] My translation. Kayaalp, *Sultan Ahmed Divanı'nın,* 211.

reach the Shah of Qizilbash/ Let the vanquisher [the Ottoman sultan] ruin the people of *Rāfiḍi*s [the Shi'is, by extension Safavids]/ So that the news of this defeat will reach the King [of the Habsburgs]."[393] Mustafa Safi recounted fighting against the heretical Safavids among the virtues of the Ottoman sultans, along with engaging in holy war against the infidels, as well as building mosques and madrasas.[394] He called the Safavids "Qizilbash the harmer of the [true] madhhab" (*ḳızılbāş-ı meẕheb-tırāş*),[395] and accused them of cursing the Prophet's companions, and destructing the pillars of the religion,[396] and addressed the Safavid shah as "the shah of the Qizilbashes and the leader of the Qalandaran and drunkards" (*şāh-ı ḳızılbāşān ve server-i ḳalenderān u 'ayyāşān*)[397], and "the shah of the rogue" (*şāh-ı evbāşān)*.[398] These derogatory expressions were stockphrases that the Ottomans had used for more than a century for the Shi'i Safavids, and served to associate them with various sinful and corrupt deeds.

A letter penned by Sultan Ahmed's grand mufti Hocazade Esad Efendi (d. 1625), which seems to have served as a fatwa legitimating war against the Safavids, also sheds light on the perception of the Safavids by the Ottoman religious authorities in the early seventeenth century. At the same time, it displays the religious motives of Sultan Ahmed and his armies for their ongoing fight against the Safavids, and the religious authorities' discursive support for this war. In his fatwa-letter, the grand mufti defined the Qizilbash as those who distinguish the Prophet's companions from each other, and merely love Ali.[399] He indicated that the shahs of

[393] My translation. Kayaalp, *Sultan Ahmed Divanı'nın*, 209.
[394] Mustafa Safi, *Mustafa Safi'nin*, I, 2–3.
[395] Ibid, 31.
[396] Ibid, 97.
[397] Ibid, 259. For the meanings and connotations of the term Qizilbash in the Ottoman context, see Arslantaş, "Depicting the Other"; Baltacıoğlu-Brammer, "One Word".
[398] Ibid, 55.
[399] I would like to thank my friend Ozan Yıldız for informing me about this letter and sharing this manuscript with me. Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Yazma Bağışlar, 5613, 1b.

Iran strayed from the true path of Islam since they abandoned their predecessors' ways, and began to follow Cafer-i Kazib (Jafar the liar), who was a bastard, and the book penned by him.[400] After defining the Safavids as infidels, the grand mufti recounted the reasons legitimizing warfare against these heretics, and declared that killing a Shi'ite Safavid is more valuable than the murder of seventy infidels, or non-Muslims.[401] The Safavid custom of cursing *sebb-i şeyḫeyn*, namely the first two caliphs Abu Bakr and Umar, after each call for prayer, their plunder and devastation of several Muslim lands, and retention of the Muslim armies from holy war against the Christians with these plunders, their killing of Muslim soldiers and enslavement of Muslim women, and issuing fatwas encouraging these evil deeds were mentioned among their evil deeds. Both the religious authorities (*ḥükemā*) and the shahs of Iran were held responsible for these harms.[402] In the end, Esad Efendi confirmed the legitimacy of military campaigns against the Safavids, declared their realms as lands of war (*darü'l-ḥarb*), and promised a high reward to those who kill Safavids and those who are martyred by these heretics.[403]

The practice of ritual cursing, the plunder and devastation of Muslim lands and castles in their borderlands, and the distraction of the Ottoman armies from the holy war in the west appear as the main causes of military warfare in the only known correspondence sent to the court of Shah Abbas by Ahmed I too. Penned in 1612 by another chief mufti of Sultan Ahmed named Muhammed Efendi, and sent to the shah with his envoy Qadihan, the treaty defined the prohibition of the ritual cursing and

[400] Ibid, 1b. It is not obvious whether the mufti referred to Imam Jafar Sadiq (d. 765), the Sixth Imam of the Imamis, or to another Shi'i person with the same name. If he refers to Imam Ja'far Sadiq, this attitude should be seen as exceptional because many Sunnis also revered Jafar Sadiq.
[401] Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Yazma Bağışlar, 5613, 1b.
[402] Ibid, 1b–2a.
[403] Ibid, 2a.

the abandonment of assaulting the border lands and castles as the stipulations of peace by the Ottomans.[404]

Conflict, however, was only one aspect of Safavid-Ottoman relations, including in the early seventeenth century. There had also been dialogue and cultural exchange between the two empires. Artists, intellectuals, scholars, merchants, spies, and ambassadors moved between the Ottoman and Safavid cities and courts and became influential in the transportation of cultural, religious, and intellectual currents.[405] The architects who were brought to Iran for the design and construction of Shah Abbas' summer capital in Farahabad can be counted among those itinerant professionals.[406] Shah Abbas' army of spies, who were eulogized by Munshi as agents of the shah's well-developed intelligence system,[407] were reported to carry information on diverse issues from the Ottoman realms and capital.[408] In his account of the year 1605, Munshi mentioned spies, who were sent to Istanbul by Shah Abbas, and informed him concerning the Ottoman grand vizier and the court of Ahmed I.[409] The shah had spies even in Sultan Ahmed's harem, one of whom was caught and punished by the sultan.[410] Gifts presented to the rival emperor, which generally included lavish manuscripts and works of art, had a special significance for the exchange of different cultural and intellectual trends between the courts.[411] Several Safavid ambassadors were reported to have carried 'suitable gifts' to the Ottoman court.[412] Shah Abbas' gifts presented to Mehmed III in 1590 involved two copies of

[404] Feridün Bey, *Münşeat*, II, 260–261.
[405] For the exchange of ambassadors, scholars and intellectuals between the Ottoman and Safavid lands, see Yıldırım, *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Elçi*, 72–83, 93–102, 120–121; Sohrweide, "Dichter und Gelehrte"; Mohammednejad, *Osmanlı-İran İlişkileri*, 529–565. See also Genç, *İdris-i Bidlisi*.
[406] Jonabadi, *Ravdat al-Safaviya*, 840.
[407] Munshi, *History of Shah*, I, 533.
[408] Munshi, *History of Shah*, II, 856, 1022, 1138
[409] Ibid, 856.
[410] Mustafa Safi, *Mustafa Safi'nin*, I, 76–77; Munshi, *History of Shah*, II, 911.
[411] For the exchange of gifts between the Ottoman and Safavid courts, see Arcak, "Gifts in Motion".
[412] Munshi, *History of Shah*, II, 587, 1027.

the Quran, seven volumes of other books including *dīvān*s of Hafiz and Sadi, luxury textiles, and precious stones.[413] Arriving at Istanbul in 1612, the presents brought by the shah's ambassadorial retinue included 'silken stuff, cloth woven with gold thread and silver thread of many kinds, and other precious articles from Iran.'[414]

Envoys seem to have played the most significant part in cultural and intellectual exchanges between the Safavid and Ottoman capitals. The early seventeenth century also witnessed intense diplomatic exchanges between Isfahan and Istanbul. Between the last decade of the sixteenth century and the fourth decade of the seventeenth, a series of envoys, accompanied by hundreds of people as well as numerous gifts and diplomatic letters, were exchanged between the Safavid and Ottoman courts. Between 1588–89 (998 AH) and 1627–28 (1036 AH), over ten envoys came and went between Istanbul and Isfahan.[415] Along with different bureaucrats or governors, envoys exchanged between the courts occasionally involved religious bureaucrats and scholars, showing each ruler's concern for advertising his religious probity and patronage of clerics. In his account of the events of the year 1611 (1020 AH), Munshi mentioned an Ottoman envoy to the Safavid court, 'in consideration of his learning and scholastic distinction', residing in the house of Kadihan al-Hasan, 'who held the high office of sadr and the leader of the possessors of the turban in Iran'.[416] The same sadr was sent to the court of Ahmed I as an envoy, accompanied by two leading scholars, Moez Isfahani and Movlana Sultan Husein, and the kadi of Isfahan, Hakim Abdi Tabib Ardabili.[417] These

[413] Arcak, "Gifts in Motion", 216–217.
[414] Munshi, *History of Shah*, II, 1058.
[415] Munshi, *History of Shah*, II, 575–576, 587, 985-987, 1021, 1076, 1094, 1156, 1169; Astarabadi, *Tārīkh-e Sultānī*, 148, 163, 195, 197, 202, 210, 212, 216-17; Mustafa Safi, *Mustafa Safi'nin*, II, 131, 144; Naima, *Tarih-i Naima*, II, 428, 449, 457, 498.
[416] Munshi, *History of Shah*, II, 1058.
[417] Ibid, 1058.

distinguished envoys must have helped to prove each side's correctness in the confessional polemics that might have been occurred during receptions or special assemblies conducted for this special purpose.

2.3 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the religio-political context in which the Masjed-e Shah and Sultan Ahmed complexes were created, and the religio-political agendas of their respective patrons. I have demonstrated that both Sultan Ahmed and Shah Abbas were contemporary monarchs with comparable imperial ambitions and religio-political agendas. I have emphasized that Shah Abbas and Sultan Ahmed, both accompanied and supported by court-centered retinues and several leading men of religion in their realms, struggled to repair the dents in their dynasties' reputation, which was ruined due to crises and turmoils in the late sixteenth-century Ottoman and Safavid courts and realms, and to project anew an image of a powerful monarch. Having been enthroned as young rulers, both checked the centrifugal forces in their realms, fought against external enemies, and created alliances and loyal retinues for establishing themselves as centers of power in their realms. Advertising their religious devotion, and the promotion of legal orthodoxy, orthopracy and official madhhabs of their empires occupied a central place in both rulers' agendas, to reinforce their claim for religious leadership and religio-political legitimacy. Patronage of different religious sanctuaries and rituals, which often manifested their distinct confessional leanings, and orchestrated displays of piety, advertised through pilgrimages or literary creations, acted as vehicles to the same purpose.

Besides, I have examined the Safavid-Ottoman relations during the reigns of Shah Abbas and Sultan Ahmed and defined the early seventeenth century as among

long periods of war in the histories of the two empires. I have argued that besides the competition over Caucasia and Arabian Iraq, religious rivalry acted as a major impetus of this quarter-long military and political dispute. Along with a shared ambition for leading the Islamic realms, confessional differences appear as triggers of a set of military campaigns against each other, as well as various religious and economic measures taken by Shah Abbas and Sultan Ahmed. The creation of Masjed-e Shah and Sultan Ahmed complexes occurred within the context of this rivalry, and these architectural assemblies acted as sites where confessional differences were reinforced and recreated, as well as imperial ambitions of these two rulers were manifested.

CHAPTER 3

THE FRIDAY RITUAL AND PATRONAGE OF MOSQUES UNDER SAFAVID AND OTTOMAN RULE

This chapter seeks to explore the discussions on the performance of the Friday ritual and the royal patronage of mosques in the Ottoman and Safavid lands during the sixteenth and early seventeenth century. It consists of two parts in which two distinct, but interrelated inquiries are conducted. Drawing on religious treatises, fatwa collections, contemporary narrative sources, and secondary studies on the topic, the first part examines the legal and political frameworks and implementations of the Friday ritual in the Ottoman and Safavid realms. The second section investigates the Ottoman and Safavid rulers' patronage of mosques. It explores the architectural and ritualistic formations of Safavid and Ottoman royal mosques through the existing buildings, contemporary narrative sources and travelogues, and secondary literature. It is argued that the differences and divergences in the conceptualization and performance of the Friday ritual in the Hanafi-Ottoman and Imami-Safavid realms were reflected in the Ottoman and Safavid rulers' patronage of mosque. As recognized in scholarship, the performance of the Friday ritual was theoretically established, and performed on a regular basis in the Ottoman context, while its legality was disputed among the Safavid clerics and the ritual was performed in a more irregular manner by the Safavids. Mirroring the divergence in the conceptualization and practice of the Friday ritual, as well as the difference in the intensity of the existing Friday mosques in the Rumi and Iranian lands, the Ottoman and Safavid rulers patronized Friday mosques with a different intensity and in a different manner. The construction of mosques was an established custom for the

Ottoman sultans between the mid-fourteenth and the early seventeenth century, while it was a rare practice for the Safavid shahs.

3.1 The Friday ritual in the Ottoman and Safavid worlds

In the age of confessionalization, particular religious rituals came into prominence within the Ottoman and Safavid realms, as a result of their different confessional policies and the religio-political rivalry between the two powers. The Friday ritual was among the most eminent of these rituals. The Friday ritual is the weekly assembly of Muslims to fulfill the religious obligation of prescribed worship (*ṣalāt*), which takes place on Friday, the day of the congregation of the Muslim community. Involving two cycles of prostration (*rak'a*), the Friday worship takes the place of the daily noon (*ẓohr* in Persian and *öğle* in Turkish) prayer that has four prostration cycles. It is supported by the Quranic injunction that says: "When you are called to pray on the day of assembly (*jum'a*), hasten to the praise of God and leave your business" (62: 9).[418] The Friday ritual requires two sermons (*khutba*) separated by a short pause, which precedes the two cycles of prayer, and constitutes an integral part of the ritual.[419] Established in the Abbasid period during the second Islamic century, the practice of mentioning the name of the caliph in the sermon became the most important constituent of this service, which rendered the Friday ritual into one of the primary insignia of Islamic rulership.[420] Besides the necessity of the sermon, Muslim jurists assumed that the Friday ritual is valid only when it is performed in congregation, although there is no consensus on the minimum number of people who

[418] Abisaab, *Converting Persia*, 20–21; Sachedina, *Just Ruler*, 177.
[419] Sachedina, *Just Ruler*, 20–21; Katz, *Prayer*, 130.
[420] Jafarian, *Seyāset va Farhang*, I, 597.

must assemble.[421] Besides, the Friday ritual, like the two Eid prayers, necessitates a prayer leader (*imām*), a particular venue, a public mosque, or an outdoor prayer ground (*muṣallā*).[422] These essential stipulations for the validity of the Friday ritual indicate this ceremony's public significance, and its social and political significations.[423] The Friday ritual functioned as a platform for Muslim rulers to display their religio-political authority, and to enhance their legitimacy because every Friday, their names were mentioned in the sermon, and they were sanctioned as legitimate sovereigns in front of the Muslim community.

Hanafi and Imami jurists established a further prerequisite for the validity of the Friday ritual, which enhanced this ceremony's religio-political significance. They regarded the leadership (*imāma*) of the Friday ritual as a prerogative of the ruler or his representative, who had to be designated directly by the ruler. In the Hanafi juristic tradition, leading the Friday ritual has been regarded as one of the exclusive responsibilities of rulers, along with the infliction of fixed penalties (*ḥudūd*), and the collection of alms and the *khums* tax.[424] In the main sources of classical Hanafi jurisprudence such as al-Quduri's (d. 1037) *Mukhtasār*[425] or al-Mavsili's (d. 1284) *al-Ikhtiyār*[426], the leadership of the ruler or his deputy is firmly established as a precondition for the validity of the Friday ritual.[427] In a similar vein, classical Imami thought defines the leadership of the Friday prayer as a prerogative of the Immaculate Imams.[428] In a frequently quoted tradition, Imam Husein is reported to

[421] For regulations of different schools, see Şeyh Bedreddin, *Fıkıh Ekolleri*, 90; Yavuz, *Başlangıcından Günümüze*, 56–61.
[422] Katz, *Prayer*, 131.
[423] Sachedina, *Just Ruler*, 180.
[424] Şeyh Bedreddin, *el-Teshil*, 189; Imber, *Ebussuud*, 67.
[425] Kuduri, *Muhtasaru'l-Kuduri*, 89.
[426] Mevsili, *el-İhtiyar*, 165.
[427] Cici, "Osmanlı Klasik Dönemi", 219–224.
[428] Arjomand, *Shadow of God*, 61-62; Sachedina, *Just Ruler*, 192; Turner, *Islam Without Allah*, 78; Kartaloğlu, "Gaybet Döneminde İmam'ın", 57–68; Demir, "İmamiyye Şi'ası'nda İmamın", 52–58.

have said: "O my God, this position (of convening and leading the Friday service) belongs to your viceregents (*khulafā*) and your chosen ones ... which they (i.e., the Umayyads) have taken away (from us)."[429]

Even though Hanafi and Imami jurists agreed on the necessity of the leadership of a legitimate ruler or his representative for the validity of the Friday ritual, they disagreed about the conditions that needed to be fulfilled to implement this religious service. While the mainstream Sunni community regarded attendance at the Friday ritual to be a strict religious duty for all adult Muslim men and tried to enforce it, a considerable number of Imami Shi'is abstained from partaking in the Friday ritual, at least in the pre-Safavid period. The diversity concerning the performance of the Friday ritual stemmed from the difference between Hanafi and Imami doctrines regarding religio-political leadership. In conventional Hanafi thought, the legitimate political authority is 'simply a person who successfully seizes and holds power.'[430] Consequently, different Sunni communities could legitimately convene for the Friday ritual in different parts of the Islamic realms, where different rulers led the ceremony or appointed prayer leaders. In Imami Shi'ism, on the other hand, religious and political leadership belongs to the Immaculate Imams alone,[431] and other authorities are regarded as usurpers (*gāṣib*), who do not have the right to implement the Immaculate Imam's prerogatives, including leading Friday prayers.

Since the earliest centuries of Islamic history, the performance of the Friday ritual had been a contested issue both between Sunni and Shi'i Muslims and within the Imami community because of its political connotations. The Twelver Shi'ite communities had often been accused by the Sunnis for neglecting and disregarding

[429] Cited by Sachedina, *Just Ruler*, 89.
[430] Imber, *Ebussuud*, 65.
[431] Sachedina, *Just Ruler*, 89.

the Friday ritual, because they abstained from partaking in this ritual. Besides, Imami scholars were split into different groups, which had different opinions regarding the legality of the Friday ritual during the Occultation of Imam Mahdi. The emergence of the Shi'i Safavids that rivaled the Sunni Ottomans rendered different Shi'ite communities into subjects of confessional enmity and exacerbated the Sunni authorities' accusations towards them for neglecting congregational prayers. At the same time, the establishment of a Twelver Shi'ite regime inflamed the dispute regarding the legality of the Friday ritual between different Imami jurists. For further insight into the dispute regarding the question of the Friday ritual within the context of Ottoman and Safavid confessional policies, it is necessary to explore the meanings and implementations of this ritual within the Ottoman and Safavid worlds.

3.1.1 The Friday ritual in the Ottoman-Hanafi tradition

Various accounts of contemporary chroniclers, jurisprudential compilations, and the existence of multiple Friday mosques in different towns in Bithynia and the Balkans attest that the Friday ritual was theoretically established, and at least partially practiced already in the fourteenth century. The early Ottoman chronicles portrayed some early Ottoman sultans as pious patrons of Friday mosques, who tasked jurists to lead the Friday ritual, ordered the sermons to be delivered in their names, or participated in the Friday ritual.[432] These accounts attest to the early Ottoman elites'

[432] Osman Beg was portrayed as the first Ottoman ruler, who tasked a jurist to lead the Friday ritual, and whose name was mentioned in the sermons of Friday and Eid prayers. Oruç Bey, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, 15; Aşıkpaşazade, *Osmanoğulları'nın Tarihi*, 339–340. Early Ottoman chroniclers indicated that in the fourteenth century, the Ottoman rulers ordered the sermons to be delivered in their names, and even if occasionally, performed the Friday ritual. Orhan Beg, for example, converted a church in Iznik into a Friday mosque and ordered that the sermon be delivered in his name. Neşri, *Kitab-ı Cihannüma*, I, 309. Murad I took part in Friday rituals in Bursa, and relieved alms after this ceremony, which seems to have become a custom in the following decades, and was maintained by his successors. Neşri, *Kitab-ı Cihannüma*, I, 309; idem, *Kitab-ı Cihannüma*, II, 681. The early Ottoman rulers' patrogane of Friday mosques will be mentioned in the second section of this chapter.

awareness of the Friday ritual's religious and political importance. On the popular level, however, the limits of this ritual's implementation are unknown, but contextual evidence suggests that the early Ottoman religious and political elites did not enforce people to partake in the Friday rituals. On the other hand, the theoretical framework of the Friday ritual was clearly defined in the earliest jurisprudential treatises that were penned in the Ottoman lands. The earliest known Ottoman jurisprudential compilations confirm that from the beginning, the ritual was regarded as a personal incumbency that is obligatory for all free, sedentary, healthy, and male Muslims.[433] The Friday ritual's definition and status did not change in the Ottoman-Hanafi jurisprudence in the following centuries.

Beginning from the early Ottoman period, Ottoman jurists and scholars were informed about the Hanafi legacy concerning the Friday ritual. They recounted some stipulations regarding this ritual's performance. The permission of the sovereign, two sermons, and living in walled towns or cities, are identified as the main conditions of the Friday ritual in various jurisprudential texts. Sheikh Bedreddin (d. 1420) highlights the presence and permission of the ruler among other prerequisites of the Friday ritual. According to him, the Friday ritual's validity foremost depends on the permission of the ruler and either his presence or the presence of his representative as the prayer leader. The Friday ritual has to be led by the sovereign, even if he seized power by force.[434] Molla Hüsrev (d. 1480) mentions the same condition.[435] The leadership of the ruler or his deputy was also regarded as a stipulation in *Multaḳa al-'Abḥur* (Junction of the Seas), which was written in the first half of the sixteenth century by İbrahim el-Halebi (d. 1549), and constituted the most widely used

[433] See Şeyh Bedreddin, *Letaif*, 187; Molla Hüsrev, *Gurer ve Durer*, I, 239–243.
[434] Şeyh Bedreddin, *Letaif*, 189.
[435] Molla Hüsrev, *Gurer ve Durer*, I, 239-243.

compilation on Hanafi jurisprudence afterward.[436] Feyzullah Efendi (d. 1703), a chief mufti who served in the late seventeenth century, repeats the significance of the same principle in a fatwa. The chief mufti was asked whether it is legitimate to perform the Friday ritual in a town whose Muslim community does not fit into the biggest masjids in that settlement, if the sultanic permission is obtained for the Friday ritual's performance. He confirms that performing the Friday ritual in a town is legitimate only with sultanic approval, even if the capacity of its mosques is not enough for its community.[437] This fatwa suggests that the ruler's permission was highlighted among other stipulations of the ritual, and other principles concerning its implementations had only secondary significance after the sultan's approval.

The precondition regarding the sovereign's permission or presence refers to the concept of legitimate rulership in Hanafi jurisprudence, which regards all Muslim rulers, who had in some way obtained power as legitimate, and equates legitimacy with power. In this jurisprudential framework, the Friday ritual, as a form of public worship, becomes a political ceremony at the same time. In this respect, the mainstream Hanafi tradition regards the dismissal of participating in the Friday ritual as a sign of political disobedience and dissension. In other words, the Friday ritual was directly connected with the Hanafi principle of "unconditional obedience to political authorities", and the neglect of attending this ritual was regarded as a violation of that principle.[438]

As another main stipulation of the service, canonical jurisprudential texts indicate that the Friday ritual can be performed only within cities and public places that are open and accessible to everyone. Sheikh Bedreddin's *Leṭā'if* is one of the

[436] Halebi, *Mülteka Tercümesi*, I, 256–258.
[437] Kaya, *Fetava-yı Feyziye*, 6.
[438] Jafarian, *Seyāset va Farhang*, I, 592–593.

earliest texts mentioning this condition.[439] According to him, a city is defined as a settlement that has a governor and a jurist, who implements the rules of Islamic law. Performing the Friday ritual was not regarded as incumbent for those who live outside the city walls, and in villages that are far from cities, except those whose taxes are collected by a city's governor.[440] Molla Hüsrev and el-Halebi also recounted the legal status of the settlement as a city among the conditions of the Friday ritual's validity.[441] As will be discussed below, the norms changed in the sixteenth century, when villagers were also enjoined to perform the five daily canonical prayers and the Friday ritual in congregation in mosques. The accessibility of the place of worship is addressed as another condition by el-Halebi.[442] This concern seems to have been effective in the formation of the principle concerning the Friday ritual's performance in multiple congregational mosques within the same city. According to the mainstream Hanafi tradition, as reflected by Sheikh Bedreddin, people can convene for the Friday ritual in over one congregational mosque in the same town.[443]

Besides stipulations, Ottoman Hanafi scholars recounted various retributions for omitting the Friday ritual's performance. They prescribed particular forms of punishment for those who failed to take part in the Friday ritual and the five daily canonical prayers, beginning from the earliest centuries. Sheikh Bedreddin, for example, asserted that those who neglect to perform the daily obligatory prayers must be punished and beaten.[444] The current knowledge does not allow us to

[439] Şeyh Bedreddin, *Letaif*, 187.
[440] Ibid, 188.
[441] Molla Hüsrev, *Gurer ve Durer*, I, 239-243; Halebi, *Mülteka Tercümesi*, I, 256–258. For a comprehensive discussion on the definitions of town in the Hanafi legal tradition, see Johansen, "All-embracing town", 139–161.
[442] Halebi, *Mülteka Tercümesi*, I, 256–258.
[443] Şeyh Bedreddin, *Letaif*, 189.
[444] Sheyh Bedreddin, *Letaif*, 111.

determine the degree to which these punishments were implemented before the mid-fifteenth century. After the mid-fifteenth century, the failure to adhere to the Friday ritual and five daily canonical prayers was defined as an offense that necessitated punitive action.[445] After the conquest of Constantinople, Ottoman policies regarding the implementation of the religious law and practices, including the performance of the Friday ritual and five daily canonical prayers, seem to have transformed. Concurrent with the imperial policies of Mehmed II and his successors, the Ottoman political and religious elites displayed a growing concern for establishing a religious orthodoxy and implementation of a religious orthopraxy within the Ottoman realms. The Friday ritual and five daily canonical prayers, gained significance in this process, especially in the sixteenth century, when the Ottoman authorities took strict measures to ensure Muslim subjects' participation especially to the five daily canonical prayers.[446]

Beginning with the second half of the fifteenth century, several royal orders and imperial penal codes mention particular forms of punishment for those who do not participate in the five daily canonical prayers and the Friday ritual. The creation of an official position called *namāzcı* was among the first measures taken to provide the Muslim subjects' adherence to the five daily canonical prayers regularly. *Namāzcı* first appears in a royal order dated 1471 and was sent to the province of Rum, *vilāyet-i Rūm*, and was defined the responsible for the conduct of chastisement (*ta'ẓīr-i bi'l-ḍarb*) and penalty fine (*ta'ẓīr-i bi'l-māl*) to the neglecters of the daily obligatory prayers (*tārik-i ṣalāt*). In this order, the sanjak governers, kadis, and *subaşı*s were tasked with accompanying *namāzcı*s in their responsibility.[447] While

[445] Terzioğlu, "How to Conceptualize", 313–314.
[446] Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 47–49; Terzioğlu, "How to Conceptualize", 313–315; Sünnetçioğlu, "Attendance".
[447] Lugal and Erzi, *Fatih Devrine Ait*, 94–95.

Mehmed II's penal code does not include any provisions concerning this offense, the penal code of Bayezid II does. According to this rule, the governors should inspect the neighborhood's imam and ask them about those who do not pray, *namāz ḳılmayān*, who have to be punished.[448]

The same provision appears in Selim I's penal code in which rulings regarding the mentioned offense are elaborated and explained more clearly. This command invites the officers to examine those who abandon the daily obligatory prayers intentionally, *ḳaṣd ile namāz terk itse*, in every neighborhood and village, and to penalise them severely with a reprimand and capital punishment: 'in every neighborhood and every village, those who abandon the five daily canonical prayers intentionally shall be examined and severely chastised, and a fine of one *aḳçe* shall be collected for [every] two strokes.'[449] The same code also defines attendance at the Friday ritual as compulsory and regards this obligation's intentional violation as a crime that necessitates punishment: 'And [attendance at] the Friday prayer service is compulsory. [A person] who neglects [it] intentionally shall be severely punished, he has to be chastised, and a fine of one *aḳçe* shall be collected for [every] two strokes."[450] Sultan Süleyman's penal code repeats these two articles appearing in Selim I's penal code.[451]

This inquiry into the imperial penal codes suggests that provisions concerning the neglect of five daily canonical prayers were gradually intensified and elaborated in the second half of the fifteenth century. It seems the first decades of the sixteenth century witnessed the emergence of a defined code regarding the issue. Chastisement and penalty fines appeared as proper forms of punishment for the mentioned offense

[448] Akgündüz, *Osmanlı Kanunnameleri*, II, 296.
[449] Akgündüz, *Osmanlı Kanunnameleri*, III, 93.
[450] Ibid, 93.
[451] Heyd, *Ottoman Criminal Code*, 122.

by the early sixteenth century. Provisions about the disregard of attending the Friday ritual also appeared in the penal codes in this era. Besides, the surveillance of Muslim communities in villages began to be defined as a necessity in the early sixteenth century, whereas previously only the Muslims residing in cities or towns had been the subject of such examinations in the second half of the fifteenth century. It suggests that, contrary to Necipoğlu's claim,[452] measures for enforcing the Muslim communities living in the villages to attend the five daily canonical prayers predated Sultan Süleyman's era. Considering that it was a practice contrasting the conventional Hanafi rule, this regulation shows the intensity and limits of the authorities' measures to enforce orthopraxy.

A royal order issued by Sultan Süleyman suggests that in the 1540s at the latest, the fine penalty was annulled. This order sent to the kadi of Vize in 1546 warns the governor concerning the population's neglect of the daily obligatory prayers and the ruined state of the empty mosques in the town. The kadi was tasked with implementing the necessary punishment, which was defined as warning and menace (*tenbīh ve teḥdīd*), and prevents him from letting *namāzcı* to intervene in the implementation of punishments. The same order defines *namāzcı*'s interference to the issue, and his implementation of penalties as a torment to the public.[453] Based on this order and a fatwa of Ebussuud (d. 1574) that precluded the fine penalty for the mentioned offense, A. Demir argued that the implementation of the fine penalty, and the position of *namāzcı* were annulled in the 1540s.[454] Along with reprimand, the fine penalty reappears as a proper form of penalty in the codes of Murad III and

[452] Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 48.
[453] Demir, "Terk-i Salat", 52–53.
[454] Ibid, 47–48.

Ahmed I, which repeat the necessity of surveillance of Muslim communities in this task, while there is no reference to *namāzcı* in them.[455]

While penal codes define chastisement and penalty fine as proper punishments for the aforementioned offense, reprimand, chastisement, and imprisonment appear as the most common forms of penalties in the sixteenth-and seventeenth-century fatwas. As the chief mufti of Sultan Süleyman, Ebussuud pronounced various fatwas countenancing the punishment of those who neglect to participate in the daily obligatory prayers.[456] In the seventeenth century, scholars encouraged prayer leaders of mosques and the Muslim community to monitor the performance of the five canonical prayers within their neighborhoods, and entitled them to reprimand those who do not perform the five daily canonical prayers. In a fatwa issued by the chief mufti Sunullah Efendi (d. 1612), the reprimand was defined as an appropriate penalty for those who do not perform these prayers in their neighborhood's mosque without an excuse, although they heard the call for prayers.[457] The same question was asked to Esad Efendi (d. 1625), another chief mufti of the early seventeenth century, who recommended the same penalty, as well as to inseminate the negligence concerning the significance of performing the five daily canonical.[458] The same chief mufti encourages the kadis to reprimand those who omitted to perform the daily obligatory prayers:

> Question: For Zeyd, who serves as a kadi in a town, is it legitimate to reprimand those who do not perform the five daily canonical prayers, after he advises those who neglect them?
> Answer: It is legitimate and a penalty is necessary.[459]

[455] Akgündüz, *Osmanlı Kanunnameleri*, VIII, 115; idem, *Osmanlı Kanunnameleri*, IX, 502.
[456] Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 48; Düzdağ, *Şeyhülislam Ebussuud*, 92; Demirtaş, *Fetvaları ile Şeyhülislam*, 212.
[457] Ünaldı, "Sunullah Efendi'nin Fetava'sı", 64.
[458] Esad Efendi, *Feteva-yı Müntehabe*, 2a–2b.
[459] Ibid, 1b–2a.

Zekeriyazade Yahya Efendi, who worked as the chief mufti in 1622–1624 and 1633–1644, issued a fatwa that promotes prayer leaders in neighbourhoods to monitor the community members' performance of the five daily canonical prayers in the mosque, and to reprehend the negligent:

> Question: If Zeyd, the prayer leader in a mosque, asks Amr, who is a resident in his neighborhood, "Why do you not come to the mosque and pray with the congregation?", and Amr replies: "I swore not to perform the prayers in the mosque", what is the convenient retribution for Amr?
> Answer: It is necessary to reprimand.[460]

Along with several measures taken for the performance of the Friday ritual and five daily canonical prayers regularly, there was a growing concern for regulating some behaviors of the participants of the Friday rituals on a popular level. The necessity of silence during the sermons appeared among the most frequently pronounced rules regarding the ceremony. Both fatwas and jurisprudential treatises from the sixteenth century highlighted this rule among many others. Both Molla Hüsrev and el-Halebi asserted that during the Friday sermon, the assembly has to listen to the preacher without speaking, standing up, or performing prayers.[461] Ibn Kemal (d. 1536), who was chief mufti between the years 1526 and 1534, advised Muslims not to perform sunnah prayers before the preacher completes his sermon.[462] Similarly, he recommended that the assembly remains completely silent, and does not say "amen" when the preacher utters a prayer during the sermon.[463] Indeed, the necessity of silence during the sermons was an established principle that appeared in classical jurisprudential texts of the Hanafī tradition, which were written in the Arabic-speaking lands and for Arabic-speaking audiences.[464] In the Ottoman era,

[460] Demirtaş, *Açıklamalı Osmanlı Fetvaları*, II, 62.
[461] Halebi, *Mülteka Tercümesi*, 2, 262; Molla Hüsrev, *Gurer ve Durer*, I, 247.
[462] İnanır, *Şeyhülislam İbn Kemal'in*, 57.
[463] Ibid, 57.
[464] Kuduri, *Muhtasarü'l-Kuduri*, 91; Mevsili, *el-İhtiyar*, 171.

Friday sermons were delivered in Arabic. This would mean that most of the participants would not have understood its content in the predominantly Turcophone Rumi geography.[465] Nevertheless, it is possible that preachers also provided a Turkish precis of their sermon.

The Ottoman religious authorities seem to have prioritized ritual probity over comprehension. Fatwas attributed to İbn Kemal and Ebussuud suggest that the authorities' concern for silence during the Friday ritual aimed, at least on some occasions, to prevent some problematic behaviors that could be interpreted as manifestations of "unorthodox" or non-Sunni beliefs. In one of his fatwas, İbn Kemal was asked what has to be done with those who shout "hay huy" (a particular form of vocal dhikr mostly performed in various Sufi circles) during the Friday sermon, and he advised to violently preclude such behaviors on that occasion.[466] Ebussuud also replied affirmatively, when he was asked whether it is legitimate to pray out loud for the Four Rightly Guided Caliphs when the preacher mentions their names in the sermon. Contradicting the general rule concerning silence during the sermon, Ebussuud's endorsement of this behavior speaks for the authorities' concern for confessional expressions when the position of the Four Rightly Guided Caliphs in the Sunni creed is taken into consideration. A subsidiary question following this fatwa addresses the same apprehension for the utterance and expression of confessional boundaries. In continuation, Ebussuud was asked whether it is valid to eulogize and pray for Ali more zealously than the other three caliphs. He answered that all four of the Rightly Guided Caliphs have to be eulogized in an equal tone and style, and it is not appropriate to highlight the name of Ali.[467]

[465] Yavuz, *Başlangıcından Günümüze Cuma*, 71.
[466] İnanır, *Şeyhülislam İbn Kemal'in*, 57.
[467] Demirtaş, *Fetvaları ile Şeyhülislam*, 219.

3.1.2 "In the occultation of the Immaculate Imam": Safavids and the question of Friday ritual

In the Safavid context, the Friday ritual was a contested issue both at the theoretical and practical levels. As a Twelver Shi'i polity, the Safavid state inherited a troubled legacy regarding the theoretical framework and performance of the Friday ritual. In the period of the Greater Occultance, performing the Friday ritual had become problematic since Imami doctrine held the leadership of the Friday ritual to be a prerogative of the Immaculate Imams or their direct representatives.[468] In the physical absence of the Twelfth Imam and his four special deputies, the Twelver Shi'ite community remained in uncertainty about the observance of the Friday ritual. Several Imami jurists and scholars dealt with this problem and responded to the question of the Friday ritual in alternative ways. From the beginning of the Greater Occultance until the sixteenth century, Twelver Shi'i clerics embraced two main views on this problematic issue. A considerable number of prominent mujtahids, including Al-Mufid (d. 1022), al-Tusi (d. 1274), and Shahid al-Avval (d. 1384), maintained that it was possible for the Friday ritual to be led by mujtahids as general representatives of Imam Mahdi during the Greater Occultation.[469] Still, those who asserted this argument regarded the Friday ritual as optional and claimed that the Shi'i community had the right to perform the ordinary noon prayer instead of the Friday ritual. Other jurists, such as Sharif al-Murtaza (d. 1044), Ibn Idris (d. 1202), al-Daylami (d. 1056 or 1071), and Allama al-Hilli (d. 1325), contended that performing the Friday ritual cannot be legally valid (*mashrū*) in the physical absence of the Immaculate Imam or his special deputy.[470] They claimed that only the

[468] Arjomand, *Shadow of God*, 61–62; Sachedina, *Just Ruler*, 192.
[469] Sachedina, *Just Ruler* ,184–188; Kartaloğlu, "Gaybet Döneminde İmam'ın", 65.
[470] Sachedina, *Just Ruler*, 184, 191–193.

Immaculate Imams or their specially-designated representatives could legitimately lead the Friday ritual, and this opinion constrained many Shi'is from participating in the Friday ritual.[471]

The establishment of the Safavid state turned the question of the Friday ritual into one of the main issues of Imami jurisprudence at both the doctrinal and practical levels. Its connection with the religious, political, and social spheres rendered the Friday ritual into one of the main issues in the religio-political agenda of the newly emerged Imami Shi'i rule, which endorsed and endeavored to legalize this ritual. Accompanied by a group of Imami clerics, different Safavid shahs attempted to revive the Friday ritual both as a means to create a sharia-oriented society, and as a shield against the accusations of their Sunni rivals, especially the Ottomans, who blamed the Shi'i Safavids for neglecting the Friday ritual. Several Safavid shahs acknowledged the Friday ritual's symbolic connection with the sovereignty and legitimacy of Muslim rulers, and endeavored, for the first time in the history of Imami Shi'ism, to institute and authorize it.

The evidence suggests that the Friday ritual began to be performed in the earliest decades of Safavid rule in the Iranian realms, even if occasionally. After Ismail I declared rulership in Tabriz, one of his earliest deeds was to have the sermon delivered in the name of the Twelve Immaculate Imams from mosque pulpits.[472] Chroniclers from the same period related that Shah Ismail engaged in the same action in various other cities he conquered, including Baghdad, Herat, Mashhad, Samarqand, and Bukhara.[473] Khandmir reported that Friday rituals were performed in

[471] Stewart, "Polemics and Patronage", 427.
[472] Amini Haravi, *Futūhat-e Shāhi*,174; Anonym, *Alam-ara-ye Safavi*, 65; Khandmir, *Zayl-e Tarikh*, 65-66; Qazvini, *Lubb-u Tavārīkh*, 394; Qummi, *Khulāsat al-Tavārīkh*, II, 73.
[473] Amini Haravi, *Futūhat-e Shāhi*, 294, 333, 349; Anonym, *Alam-ara-ye Safavi*, 287, 372, 377; Qummi, *Khulāsat al-Tavārīkh*, II, 63; Qazvini, *Tārīkh-e Jahān-ārā*, 271; Khandmir, *Zayl-e Tarikh* 72.

the Friday mosques of Baghdad and Herat, and Shah Ismail I took part in the ritual in Herat.[474] Similarly, Amini Haravi mentioned two such occasions that occurred in Mashhad and Herat.[475]Various Safavid chroniclers from the sixteenth century, including Abd al-Latif Qazvini (d. 1554), Abdi Beg Shirazi (d. 1580), and Qummi (d. after 1590), eulogized Shah Ismail as the first ruler who had the sermons delivered in the name of the Twelve Imams, after enumerating a series of rulers from the Buyid and Ilkhanid eras, who attempted but failed to deliver the sermons in the name of the Immaculate Imams.[476]

During the reign of Shah Tahmasb (1524-1576) the Friday ritual began to be performed in various Iranian cities regularly, notwithstanding a relatively long period of disruption. In the first decade of Tahmasb's reign, the endeavors of an Imami cleric, al-Muhaqqiq al-Karaki (d. 1534), better known as Muhaqqiq al-Thani, played a crucial role in the popularization of the Friday ritual in Iran.[477] With the authorization and support of Tahmasb, Muhaqqiq al-Karaki undertook to popularise the Friday ritual by appointing a prayer leader in every village,[478]a remarkable parallel with Sultan Süleyman's decree of 1546 discussed in the previous section, and composing a treatise discussing the legality of performing the Friday ritual. His treatise *al-Ja'farīya fī al-ṣalāt* (the Jafari Treatise on Prayer) attempts to establish the theoretical basis for performing the Friday ritual.[479] Constituting the earliest Shi'ite treatise distinctly devoted to the question of the Friday ritual, this tract was written for propagating the argument that defines the Friday ritual as *takhyīrī*, optional, and

[474] Khandmir, *Tarikh-e Khabib*, 493, 515.
[475] Amini Haravi, *Futūhat-e Shāhi* 333–351.
[476] Qazvini, *Tārīkh-e Jahān-ārā*, 267; Abdi Beg Shirazi, *Takmilat al-Aḫbār*, 40–41; Qummi, *Khulāsat al-Tavārīkh*, II, 65.
[477]Jafarian, *Seyāset va Farhang*, I, 602.
[478] Newman, *Safavid Iran*, 38.
[479] Stewart, "Polemics and Patronage", 429.

regards the presence of a *mujtahid* or his direct representatives as a precondition of the validity of the Friday ritual.[480]

In 1533, Tahmasb's delegation of all religious affairs to al-Karaki, whom he adorned with the title of "the seal of mujtahids"[481], eliminated a major practical problem regarding the ritual's implementation, the presence of a *fāqīh-e jāme' al-sharāit*. This term denotes a jurist who fulfills all preconditions for the leadership of the ritual, including knowledge of the Quran and Arabic, and being just and honest.[482] As a mujtahid authorized by the Safavid shah, al-Karaki allowed the Friday rituals to be led either by a mujtahid or his direct appointees. Providing that an Imami cleric leads the service, Twelver Shi'is could legitimately convene for the Friday ritual, and perform either the two-cycle Friday prayer or the usual four-cycle midday prayer instead. Although al-Karaki's argument was one of the two most common views regarding the question in the pre-Safavid era, it brought an innovation on the practical level because it earned for the Twelver Shi'i community in Iran the opportunity to be led by a mujtahid in Friday rituals. On the other hand, the argument proposed by al-Karaki involved a practical problem because it made the ritual's performance impossible within the absence of a mujtahid. After the death of al-Karaki in 1534, the Friday ritual fell into abeyance for over two decades, because of the absence of a capable mujtahid in the Safavid lands,[483] and probably because of the ongoing debate on the legality of the performance of the Friday ritual.

Muhaqqiq's treatise on the Friday ritual triggered an intense discussion concerning this ritual's legitimacy during the Greater Occultation. His views found many supporters, and at the same time, became the subject of harsh criticism both

[480] Sachedina, *Just Ruler*, 186.
[481] Turner, *Islam Without Allah*, 78-79; Newman, *Safavid Iran*, 37.
[482] Jafarian, *Devazdeh Resāle-ye Fiqhī*, 61–62.
[483] Stewart, "Polemics and Patronage", 429.

within and outside the Safavid lands. His views became the subject of scholarly criticism in his lifetime when a group of outstanding Imami jurists, including al-Ardabili (d.1585) and al-Qatifi (d.1539) openly challenged his arguments. Muhaqqiq's critics argued that performing the Friday ritual is legally invalid during the Greater Occultation due to the physical absence of the Immaculate Imam or his directly appointed deputy. Known as *khurmat* or *taḥrīm*, this view regarded the performance of the Friday ritual as forbidden because of the impossibility of obtaining the Immaculate Imam's consent and his designation of someone for the leadership of this ritual.[484] The evidence provided by some contemporary Safavid sources suggests that this was not only a scholarly debate, but involved various other actors from the court and the public. Qummi related that al-Karaki's opponents, including Sheikh Husein Ardabili and Qadi Musafer Tabrizi, had influential patrons and supporters at Tahmasb's court, such as Makhmud Beg, the royal sealer. The same chronicler related that the faction of Sheikh Ardabili demanded from al-Karaki a public scholarly debate, but this disputation never took place. The opponents of al-Karaki, according to Qummi, went too far as they left various libelous letters in front of al-Karaki's house.[485]

The scholarly dispute between the supporters and opponents of the Friday ritual's observance gained momentum after the mid-sixteenth century, simultaneous with a growth in Shah Tahmasb's attempts to restore the Friday ritual, which had been in abeyance since Muhaqqiq's death. Tahmasb's attempts to revive the Friday ritual seem to have served two purposes. First, it was instrumental in establishing an orthopraxy among his subjects. Following the Amasya Treatise that ended the Ottoman-Safavid military conflict until the end of Tahmasb's reign, the shah

[484] Abisaab, *Converting Persia*, 17; Agajari, *Muqaddamaī bar Munāsabat*, 86.
[485] Qummi, *Khulāsat al-Tavārīkh*, II, 237.

transferred the Safavid capital from Tabriz to Qazvin in 1558,[486] where he would concentrate on the religious affairs within his realms. In this era, the Safavid lands witnessed an hardening in the confessional policies of the Safavid shah and his religious entourage.[487] His endeavors to revive the Friday ritual, which was among the major communal religious rites, were completely concordant with his confessional policies in general. Second, and equally important, the revival of the Friday ritual would invalidate one of the main arguments of the Ottoman authorities that were instrumentalised for legitimizing their military actions against the Safavids. This argument was the Safavids' failure to perform the Friday ritual. Throughout the sixteenth century, the Ottoman authorities blamed various Shi'i communities in general, and the Safavids in particular, for their failure to perform the Friday ritual in multiple contexts and through different media, including the polemical treatises written by Sunni scholars to criticize the tenets and practices of Twelver Shi'ism,[488] the Ottoman sultans' letters sent to the Safavid shahs, and in the Ottoman chroniclers' narratives.[489] For the most part, such accusatory statements appeared within the context of military expeditions against the Safavids. Apparently, Safavids'

[486] Brignoli, "Les palais", 159.

[487] From the beginning of his reign, Tahmasb displayed a concern for establishing and popularising a sharia-based understanding of Twelver Shi'ism within his lands, which was apparent in his intense patronage of Imami scholars, his public repentances, and prohibitions concerning the use of alcoholic beverages. The hardening of his policies started with the shah's "Edict of Sincere Repentance", where he, once again, repented for all his sins publicly. He ordered all his local governors (*amīr*) to repent for all their sins. Along with prohibitions regarding the consumption of alcoholic beverages and prostitution, Tahmasb prohibited the performance of musical instruments. In 1568, he allowed several Imami jurists and scholars to preach the principles of Twelver Shi'ism in mosques in every corner of his country. Qummi, *Khulāsat al-Tavārīkh*, II, 232–233, 386, 597, 599; Qazvini, *Tārīkh-e Jahān-ārā*, 287, 302; Stewart, "First Shaykh al-Islam", 393; Agajari, *Muqaddamaī bar Munāsabat*, 94, 126.

[488] The authors of polemical treatises such as al-Shirvani (d. 1540) and Mirza Makhdum (d. 1587) accused the Safavids of heresy for their disregard of the Friday ritual. Eberhard, *Osmanische Polemik*, 98.

[489]In one of his letters to Ismail I, for instance, Selim I criticized the Safavids for their disrespect for the Islamic pulpits, where sermons are delivered. This was clearly an allusion to the Safavids' omission of the Friday ritual. Sultan Süleyman repeated the same accusation in one of his letters to Shah Tahmasb, which was penned during one of his military campaigns against the Safavids.Various Ottoman narratives portrayed the Safavids as infidels and mischief-makers, who do not perform the obligatory prayers and who vandalize the pulpits and the places of worship. Celalzade Mustafa, *Selimname*, 49; Atik, "Lütfi Paşa", 173.

neglect of the Friday ritual and daily obligatory prayers was instrumentalised as a legitimizing argument that supported Ottoman military actions against the Safavids.

Tahmasb succeeded in reinstating the performance of the Friday ritual, to a great extent, with the support of a group of Imami jurists who regarded the Friday ritual as personally and individually incumbent for the Shi'i community in all periods and under all conditions. Known as *wujub 'aynī*, personally and individually incumbent, it was a new view regarding the Friday ritual.[490] Indeed, this new argument was not formulated in the Safavid realms, but in the Ottoman lands. The pioneer of this view was Zayn al-Din al-Amili (d. 1558), better known as the Second Martyr (al-Shahid al-Thani), who was an outstanding Twelver Shi'i scholar residing in Jabal Amil. In 1555, he penned a religious tract titled *Risālah fī ṣalāt al-jum'ā* (Treatise on the Friday Ritual), arguing that the Friday ritual is personally and individually incumbent for Twelver Shi'is.[491] For the first time in the history of Imami Shi'ism, a scholar regarded the Friday ritual as a personally incumbent religious obligation that has to be performed in all periods, including the era of the Greater Occultation, regardless of the presence or non-presence of a mujtahid.[492]

Al-Shahid al-Thani's views were transmitted to Iran by one of his outstanding students, Husein bin Abd al-Samad (d. 1576), who adopted his master's stance about the Friday ritual. Within a short period, the *wujub 'aynī* view gained currency among the Safavid jurists and became the most prevalent opinion about the Friday ritual.[493] As a disseminator of this view, Abd al-Samad, like his master al-Shahid al-Thani,[494]

[490] Jafarian, *Davazdah Resāle-ye Fiqhi*, 65.
[491] Stewart, "Polemics and Patronage", 429.
[492] Ibid, 431; Jafarian, *Davazdeh Resāle-ye Fiqhī*, 65.
[493] Jafarian, *Davazdah Resāle-ye Fiqhī*, 65.
[494]That Shahid al-Thani lived and studied in a predominantly Sunni environment and under Sunni dominance must have had a significant impact on his jurisprudential approach and method, which included frequent references to the Sunni schools of jurisprudence, and created a concern for bespeaking for Sunni audiences. As a Shi'i scholar persecuted by the Ottoman authorities in the end, his experiences regarding the Ottoman repression over various Shi'i and Alid communities, and his

was mindful of his community's position and image in the eyes of Sunnis, which is apparent in his assertions on the issue. He claimed that to disprove the accusations of the Ahl al-Sunnat, the whole Shi'i community has to perform the Friday ritual.[495] In the mid-sixteenth century, Tahmasb authorized Abd al-Samad as the sheikh al-Islam of his new capital city, Qazvin. As demonstrated by Devin Stewart, this position was created just after the adoption of Qazvin as the Safavid capital, and Abd al-Samad was the first leading jurist who occupied this position.[496] It was founded as a special office for instituting major changes in public religious policy, including the revival of the regular Friday ritual.[497] As the sheikh al-Islam of the new Safavid capital, Abd al-Samad played a significant part in the consolidation of the Friday ritual in Safavid Iran. As the uppermost religious authority, the sheikh al-Islam of the capital city could appoint prayer leaders, and take other measures for regularizing the performance of this ritual.[498]

After the mid-sixteenth century, all theoretical and institutional bases for legalizing the Friday ritual in the Safavid realms were firmly established by Tahmasb. However, this shah's attempts to legalize and popularize the Friday ritual could not eradicate the opposition to the performance of the Friday ritual completely, and following his death, in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, the Friday rituals were not performed regularly in Safavid Iran. Despite all endeavors of the Safavid elites, the regularity and continuity of the Friday ritual could not be ensured in the Safavid realms, and there were influential antagonists of the ritual

familiarity with the accusations of Sunni authorities against Shi'is must have had an inevitable impact on his argument regarding the Friday ritual. Stewart, "Ottoman Execution".
[495] Jafarian, *Seyāset va Farhang*, I, 603.
[496] Stewart, "First Shaykh al-Islam", 405.
[497] Ibid, 390.
[498] Jafarian, *Seyāset va Farhang*, I, 358.

until the end of the Safavid rule.[499] Various clues in narrative sources from the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century indicate that the successors of Tahmasb continued to struggle to establish continuity and regularity of the Friday ritual in Safavid Iran. Writing during the reign of Ismail II, for example, Hasan Rumlu (d. 1577) eulogized Shah Ismail because, during his reign, the Friday ritual began to be performed regularly.[500] Likewise, Munshi eulogized Sheikh Bahai (d. 1621) for restoring the Friday ritual in Iran as follows: "One of his achievements was the revival of the Friday prayer, which had been in abeyance for a considerable time because of differences of opinion among theologians regarding the conditions about it."[501]

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, Shah Abbas took several measures to popularize the ritual's performance, including the building of two Friday mosques, and succeeded in his aim, at least partially. In this effort he was aided by some of the most eminent clerics of his era such as Sheikh Bahai and Sheikh Lutfullah al-Maysi (d. 1622). As the sheikh al-Islam of Isfahan, Sheikh Bahai penned a treatise defending the legality of the Friday ritual during the Greater Occultation but defined its observance as optional for the Twelver Shi'i community.[502] In his catechism composed for the lay public in Persian, he addressed the dispute about the Friday ritual among the Imami scholars and gave the community the option to perform the ordinary daily noon prayer instead of the Friday ritual. He argued that the spiritual reward (*ṣawāb*) of the Friday ritual is bigger than that of the ordinary noon prayer: 'You should know that among the scholars there is conflict regarding the observance of the Friday ritual during the Occultation of Imam Mahdi, and it is

[499] Ibid, 606, 609.
[500] Rumlu, *Safevi Şahı*, 67.
[501] Munshi, *History of Shah*, I, 247.
[502] Stewart, 'Fayd al-Kashani', 37.

optional to perform the Friday prayer or noon prayer. However, since the spiritual reward (*ṣawāb*) of performing the Friday ritual is bigger than that of noon prayer, it is better to perform the Friday ritual instead of the other.'[503] Sheikh Lutfullah al-Maysi al-Amili, on the other hand, regarded the performance of the ritual as obligatory.[504]

However, contrary to the arguments put forward by Babaie and followed by other scholars, Shah Abbas' efforts to popularize and regularize the Friday ritual also failed to ensure the regular and continual performance of this ritual or to solve the problem concerning its legality.[505] Rather, the legality of the Friday ritual's performance during the Greater Occultation remained a contested subject throughout the Safavid period, and could not be solved either in the period of Abbas I or during the reigns of any of his successors. It is true that the initiatives of Shah Abbas to create a centralized religio-political authority and to promote the Twelver Shi'ite creed overshadowed those of his grandfather. Unlike Tahmasb, however, Shah Abbas could not gain the consent of his uppermost clerics for 'the unconditional or universal endorsement of Friday prayer as an emblem of Safavid Imamate theocracy'.[506] Except Lutfullah al-Maysi, most of the leading court jurists under Shah Abbas, along with their students, contended that performing the Friday ritual is legitimate but optional for the Shi'ite community.[507] As the sheikh al-Islam of Isfahan, Sheikh Bahai gave both clerics and society the option to attend the Friday ritual or avoid it, and he was followed by the most influential jurists of the era,

[503] Sheikh Bahai, *Jāme'-ye 'Abbāsī*, 86.
[504] Abisaab, *Converting Persia*, 56.
[505] Babaie, *Isfahan*, 55–57, 86; Babaie, 'Sacred Spaces', 188, 199; Rizvi, 'Architecture', 388; Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 34–35.
[506] Abisaab, *Converting Persia*, 72.
[507] Ibid, 56.

including Mir Damad (d. 1631).[508] As I discuss in the sixth chapter in greater detail, there is evidence suggesting that the Friday rituals were only sporadically performed in Safavid Iran in the seventeenth and early eighteenth century. Groups of Shi'i Muslims refused to perform the Friday ritual in Isfahan and other cities, and Safavid cities witnessed quarrels and even bloody fights between the opponents and defenders of the ritual. The ongoing dispute on the question is the most apparent in the juristic discussions regarding the legality of the Friday ritual, which found expression in a myriad of treatises devoted to the debate.

The scholarly and juristic debate concerning the legality of the Friday ritual continued through the seventeenth century and until the end of the empire. This long debate attests to the disputed character of the ritual, and probably made up one reason behind the irregularity of its performance. In the second half of the sixteenth century, jurisprudential treatises discussing the Friday ritual mushroomed in Safavid Iran. The treatise of al-Shahid al-Thani, who opposed Muhaqqiq al-Karaki's arguments regarding the question of the Friday ritual, triggered a wave of treatise-writing that continued until the end of the Safavid era. In two centuries, nearly a hundred juristic tracts were penned by Imami scholars, who argued for the Friday ritual's being optional (*takhyirī*), obligatory (*wujūb 'aynī*), or prohibited (*taḥrīm*) during the period of the Greater Occultation.[509] Besides, there were jurists whose views concerning the debate were ambiguous, and who did not express any conclusion in their treatises on the issue.[510] Jafarian's seminal book on the religious tracts concerning the issue of the Friday ritual enables us to draw a table that shows

[508] Ibid, 72.
[509] Jafarian, *Seyāset va Farhang*, I, 629.
[510] Jafarian, *Devazdeh Resāle-ye Fiqhī*, 92–95.

the number and distribution of the Safavid treatises on the Friday ritual throughout the sixteenth, seventeenth, and early eighteenth centuries. (Table 1)

Table 1. Jurisprudential treatises on the question of the Friday ritual[511]

	Mid-16th century	Late 16th-early 17th century	17th century	Late 17th-early 18th century	Date unknown	Number of tracts
Optional (*takhyirī*)	6	2	8	11	2	29
Obligatory (*wujūb ʿaynī*)	6	2	17	24	10	59
Illicit (haram*)*	1	1	5	7	2	16
Unclear		1	4	8	10	23

A close examination of the 111 treatises makes it clear that the debate about the Friday ritual continued unabated through the seventeenth century, and peaked at the turn of the eighteenth century.[512] Further, in all decades of Safavid rule, several clerics penned treatises that regarded the Friday ritual as prohibited during the Greater Occultation.[513] Even though the opponents of the Friday ritual's legality always constituted a minority group, their view seems to have made a significant impact both on the public and on other scholars. The presence of the most eminent clerics among the opponents of the Friday ritual must have ensured the continuation of opposition against this ritual, for the opposing clerics had the scholarly authority and institutional vehicles to propagate their views. The Safavid state did not oppress

[511] Prepared based on Jafarian, *Devazdeh Resāle-ye Fiqhī*.

[513] Ibid, 89–95.

the opponents of the Friday ritual, and these clerics could even accede to the uppermost positions in the Safavid religious bureaucracy, including the office of the sheikh al-Islam of Isfahan, and professorships in the royal madrasas of the capital city. For example, Ali Naqi Gumrahi was the sheikh al-Islam of Isfahan when he wrote a treatise in which he ruled the Friday ritual to be prohibited.[514] Likewise, Hasan Ali Shushtari penned a similar treatise opposing the Friday ritual, as a distinguished professor in the madrasa of Molla Abdullah in Isfahan, which was built by Abbas I in the name of Hasan Ali Shushtari's father.[515]

3.2 The Ottoman and Safavid rulers' patronage of mosques

Though to differing degrees and in different ways, the patronage of mosques occupied a place in the architectural enterprises of the Ottoman and Safavid rulers. Mosque patronage had long been one of the most prestigious architectural ventures for Muslim authorities, and ensured the visibility of piety, authority, generosity, and wealth of Muslim rulers, both spatially and ritualistically. The Quran promotes the community to patronize places of worship, and regards this deed as an insignia of devotion: "He alone can keep the mosques of Allah in a good and flourishing condition who believes in Allah, and the Last Day, and observes prayer, and pays the zakat, and fears none but Allah, so these it is who may be among those who reach the goal" (9: 18). Along with this Quranic instruction, the legacy of earlier Muslim authorities established the patronage of mosques as an emblem of political authority. It was a custom to mention the rulers' names in congregational mosques during the sermons on Fridays and the two Muslim eids, along with inscribing the names and titles of the patron-rulers on the domes, walls, and doors of the mosques they erected

[514] Jafarian, *Seyāset va Farhang*, I, 607.
[515] Jafarian, *Devazdeh Resāle-ye Fiqhī*, 614.

or refurbished. Further, it was a common practice for Muslim rulers to commemorate their success in holy war by erecting Friday mosques.[516] As rulers striving to establish themselves as supreme religio-political authorities within their domains, the Ottoman and Safavid rulers were cognizant of the religious and political significance of the patronage of mosques.

Mosque patronage enabled the Ottoman and Safavid rulers to display some of their kingly virtues, including piety, power, wealth, and generosity. The mosque, as a social, religious, and political venue, constituted one of the main public spaces of Islamic cities, including the Ottoman and Safavid ones. To be mentioned and commemorated as patrons of mosques improved the rulers' image in the eyes of the Muslim community and made their political presence visible. Constituting sumptuous architectural projects, the patronage of mosques made the imperial affluence visible while their construction and the philanthropic events they housed manifested their patrons' generosity. As venues of Muslim liturgies, mosques manifested the Ottoman and Safavid patrons' embrace and support of religious orthopraxy. Along with creating representational hallmarks, mosque patronage provided the Ottoman and Safavid rulers with a backdrop to intervene in the urban, social, and confessional landscape of the cities that fell under their dominion. Both architecturally and ritualistically, the Ottoman and Safavid mosques, which were created or transformed under royal patronage, served as venues in which confessional policies of the Ottoman and Safavid authorities were represented, enacted, and disseminated. Notwithstanding the similarities in their purposes and usages, the royal mosques in the Ottoman and Safavid contexts differed from each other in various aspects, including their number, loci, usages, and architectural

[516] Babaie, "Building", 45.

features. These differences reflected the political, confessional, and geographical differencess between the Ottomans and Safavids. They will be investigated separately in the following sections.

3.2.1 Friday mosques under the patronage of Ottoman rulers

For almost three centuries, Ottoman sultans espoused the tradition of building mosques in the cities that came under their rule. Between the mid-fourteenth and mid-fifteenth centuries, several congregational mosques were constructed by different Ottoman rulers in various cities in Bithynia and the Balkans.[517] After the conquest of Istanbul in the mid-fourteenth century, the Ottoman sultans' patronage of Friday mosques gained further significance, and congregational mosque complexes became the primary public institutions to be patronized by the Ottoman rulers. Mehmed II (d. 1481) and his successors, Bayezid II (d. 1512) and Sultan Süleyman (d. 1566), built monumental Friday mosques accompanied by their founders' mausolea, and different social-educational buildings in Istanbul.[518] (Figures C9–C18) The custom of constructing sultanic Friday mosque complexes in the capital city was interrupted during the period of Sultan Süleyman's successors, Selim II (d. 1574) and

[517] Murad I (r. 1362–1389) built Friday mosques in Bursa, Ankara, Filibe, Gelibolu, Karacabey, and Plovdiv in Bulgaria. Bayezid I (r. 1389–1402) contructed a congregational mosque in Bursa and Mehmed I (r. 1413–1421) completed the building of a Friday mosque in Edirne, whose construction was initiated by Musa Çelebi (r. 1411–1413). Murad II (d. 1421–1444, 1446–1451) established another Friday mosque in Edirne. These early Ottoman royal Friday mosques, except the Üç Şerefeli Mosque built by Murad II, are hypostyle mosques with multi-column prayer halls surmounted by multiple domes or roofs. The Üç Şerefeli Mosque consists of a unified covered room surmounded by a monumental dome, and an arcaded open courtyard preceeding this covered hall. See Ayverdi, *Osmanlı Mimarisinin İlk*, 219–224, 267–274, 295–303, 305–307, 336, 401–418; Kuran, *Mosque*, 151–152, 154–156, 177–181; Goodwin, *Ottoman Architecture*, 44, 55–57, 93–103; Kuban, *Ottoman Architecture*,143–145; Necipoğlu, "Anatolia", 151–153.

[518] Mehmed II and Bayezid II each built a Friday complex in their name in Istanbul, while Sultan Süleyman constructed three royal Friday mosque complexes in the capital, one for his deceased father Selim I (d. 1520), one for his deceased prince Şehzade Mehmed (d. 1543), and one in his name. For these royal mosque complexes, see Kafescioğlu, *Constantinople/Istanbul*, 67–75; Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 82–88, 191–222; Goodwin, *Ottoman Architecture*, 168–174, 195–211, 215–240; Kuban, *Ottoman Architecture*, 200–208, 270–276; Kuran, *Sinan*, 78–88; Crane, "Sultan's mosque"; Necipoğlu, "Dynastic Imprints".

Murad III (d. 1595), who constructed congregational mosque complexes in the provinces, rather than Istanbul.[519] This dynastic tradition of building Friday mosque complexes in the capital was to be revived by Ahmed I, who established such an architectural assembly at the very center of the capital city approximately half a century after the erection of the Süleymaniye complex, and other Friday mosques in the royal gardens of Üsküdar, Davudpaşa, İstavroz and Tersane.[520]

In terms of architecture, planning, and siting, the sultanic mosque complexes in Istanbul shared some distinctive patterns that accentuated their royal character and distinguished them in the urban texture. In terms of location, all were sited on the hilltops of the walled city, enabling them to be seen from different parts of Istanbul and its suburbs. Several contemporary visitors to or residents of Istanbul mentioned the visibility of the sultanic mosques, which spatially and visually dominated the urban landscape of the capital city. For example, Philippe du Fresne-Cenaye (d. 1610), who visited Istanbul in the late sixteenth century, recounted that the Süleymaniye Mosque could be seen from every part of the city thanks to its elevated location and high minarets.[521] Along with providing visibility, the sultanic mosques' placement on the successive hilltops of Istanbul affected the formation of the main ceremonial road of the Ottoman sultans, Divanyolu. The Ottomans transformed the northern branch of the Mese, the processional route of the Byzantine emperors, that faced the Golden Horn and was in line with the hilltops, where sultanic mosque

[519] Selim II built a Friday mosque complexes in Edirne and Konya, Murad III erected one in Manisa, while Sultan Ahmed's father Mehmed III did not establish any mosque complex. For the mosques of Selim II and Murad III, see Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 234–265; Goodwin, *Ottoman Architecture*, 261–270, 317–321.

[520] Information on the royal mosques in these gardens is very limited. Mustafa Safi related that the sultan's mosque in the İstavroz Garden had a special section for the sultan, suggesting that this mosque had a section similar to royal lodges in the sultanic mosques within the walled city. Further research is necessary to determine the architectural features and designs of Sultan Ahmed's mosques in the royal gardens. Mustafa Safi, *Mustafa Safi'nin*, I, 130; II, 231; Naima, *Tarih-i Naima*, II, 401, 404; Aslanoğlu Evyapan, *Eski Türk Bahçeleri*, 43, 46, 47, 49; Artan, "Arts and Architecture", 454.

[521] Fresne-Cenaye, *Fresne-Cenaye Seyahatnamesi*, 70.

complexes were located.[522] While the mosques of Mehmed II, Bayezid II, and the Şehzade Mosque are aligned with Divanyolu, the mosque of Selim I and the Süleymaniye Mosque were constructed in proximity to this processional road. With the construction of the sultanic mosque complexes along or near this route, Divanyolu became the main venue of the royal Ottoman processions, which assumed their definitive form in the second half of the sixteenth century. (Figure C19) Accompanying the mausolea of the deceased sultans, the sultanic mosque complexes on and near Divanyolu served as successive stops in various elaborate royal processions, which took place on different occasions, including royal funerals, girding ceremonies, or leaving the capital for military campaigns.[523] (Figure C20)

As regards architectural design, the sultanic mosques in Istanbul feature variations of a particular plan type. All were centered on wide prayer halls that were surmounted by monumental hemispherical domes and preceded by marble-paved and arcaded courtyards with elegant fountains at their centers.[524] (Figures C21–C22) Since they were intended to house large congregations, creating spacious interiors was among the major concerns of their designers. The choice for central domed plans provided the formation of wide and uninterrupted prayer halls and served as a symbolic reference to Byzantine Constantinople's main sanctuary, Hagia Sophia, converted into the city's primary royal mosque following the city's Ottoman

[522] The Ottoman sultans appropriated the Byzantine legacy and took over the processional route of the Byzantine emperors. Known as the Mese, this ceremonial road had two branches leading the processions from the Byzantine palace near the Hippodrome and Hagia Sophia to the two main gates of Constantinople, namely the Porta Aurea/Silivrikapı and the Charsia/Edirnekapı. Cerasi, "Urban and Architectural", 191.
[523] Necipoğlu, "Dynastic Imprints", 23–30.
[524] This plan-type's emergence in western Anatolia happened in the late fourteenth century, under the Saruhanid and Aydınid patronage in the Eagan basin, in the towns of Manisa and Selçuk. The Ulucami in Manisa and the Aydınoğlu İsa Beg Mosque in Selçuk have been interpreted as the precursors of the classical Ottoman Friday mosques, which emerged with the Üç Şerefeli Mosque in Edirne, and remained as the mere architectural design until the eighteenth century. Goodwin, *Ottoman Architecture*Necipoğlu,

conquest. The use of half domes and smaller domes flanking the main dome was a common feature, which appears in different configurations in each sultanic mosque. (Figure C23–C24) Certain architectural elements, whose use was a royal prerogative, marked these mosques' royal status and distinguished them from lesser structures. Monumental domes, arcaded marble-paved courtyards, multiple minarets with several galleries, and the use of precious materials, including marble revetments, stones, spolia, and İznik tiles, were among these distinguishing features. (Figure C25) Having a royal tribune (*ḫünkār maḥfili*), which provided the sultans with a segregated compartment in the royal mosques, was another distinctive character of these royal venues.[525] Further, the sultanic Friday mosques constituted the most monumental structures of Istanbul, and no other buildings could surpass them in terms of their dimensions.[526]

The sultanic mosque complexes constituted socio-religious institutions that served as venues for several functions. As all urban institutions, they needed financial support, and incumbents, who would undertake different tasks in the mosques and their dependencies. The Ottoman sultans answered the financial and organizational needs of their mosque complexes with endowments. They endowed the income of various urban and rural properties to their mosque complexes. The income obtained from various public baths, shops, and houses in Istanbul and its environs, as well as several agricultural lands in villages of different regions, constituted the main financial sources of these institutions. These revenues were

[525] Located on the prayer hall's southeastern edge, a royal tribune is a quadrangular room surrounded by lattices, which functioned as a segregated prayer room for the sultan. The royal tribunes first appeared in the mosque of Mehmed II, but previously-built sultanic mosques in Bursa and Edirne were added also such lodges in the seventeenth century. See Çetinaslan, "Bursa Ulu Camii", 190; Çetinaslan, "Edirne Eski Camii", 426; Çetinaslan, "Hünkar Mahfillerinin", 66; Necipoğlu, *Age Sinan*, 84.
[526] Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 119–122.

spent for various expenses of the mosques, including lighting, cleaning, or food that was served on special days and nights, and on the salaries of the personnel, which included imams, preachers (*ḫatīb)*, muazzins, various groups of Quran reciters, chandlers, doorkeepers, and cleaners.[527]A crowd of employees conducted different affairs in the complexes for the continuous practice of various functions. Writing in the late sixteenth century, Mustafa Ali related that the incumbents employed in sultanic complexes were called *ehl-i cihād*, people of holy war.[528] This attests to the significance attributed to the sultanic complexes' personnel in the sixteenth-century Ottoman world.

Serving as venues for the daily obligatory prayers and the Friday ritual was the foremost function of the sultanic mosques. Constituting the pioneers of a myriad congregational mosques in the capital city, the uninterrupted performance of the five daily canonical prayers in the sultanic mosques had special significance. Different measures were taken to provide the continuity of the five daily canonical prayers in the sultanic mosques. Mehmed II, for example, tasked five people to perform the five daily canonical prayers in congregation in his mosque, and these five people were among the incumbents of his waqf.[529] As other mosques in the city, the sultanic mosques constituted the nuclei of the neighborhoods in which they were placed, and regarding the legal measures taken by the authorities, male Muslims residing in these neighborhoods had to attend the five daily canonical prayers in these venues. This precept also ensured the regular performance of the five daily canonical prayers in the sultanic mosques with the attendance of steady congregations.

[527] *Fatih Sultan*, 50–52; Yılmaz, *Kanuni Vakfiyesi*, 58–85.
[528] Mustafa Ali, *Mevaidü'n-Nefais*, 101.
[529] *Fatih Sultan*, 51.

The sultans were among the attendees of the Friday congregations convened in the sultanic mosques. Concomitant with the growing significance of the Friday ritual, its performance was turned into an orchestrated ceremony for the Ottoman court. In the second half of the sixteenth century, it became a custom for the Ottoman sultans to ride in elaborate processions to one of the sultanic mosques of Istanbul to perform the Friday ritual.[530] In these ceremonies, the sultans were accompanied by the court members and their soldiers, who were adorned with military costumes and equipment, exhibiting the sultan's military strength. People from different social and religious classes, including local non-Muslims or foreign visitors, constituted the audience in these ceremonies. In this sense, the Friday processions made up a rare opportunity for the public to meet the sultan and his representatives. En route to the congregational mosques and back to the Sublime Porte, the members of the court and the head of the Yeniçeri army were conversing with the sultan about state affairs.[531] Likewise, the viziers were establishing a dialogue with the subjects of the sultan and accepting petitions from the public.[532] Domenica Hierosolimitana, who worked as a physician in the Topkapı Palace during the reign of Murad III, related that it was a custom of the sultans to give alms and gifts to their subjects before and after the Friday ceremonies.[533] (Figure C20)

The sultanic mosques in Istanbul also functioned as stages for various other religious activities and congregations. The holy month of Ramadan and special days and nights constituted instances, when sultanic mosques served as stages of various activities, including congregational worship, invocations, and prayers. The special

[530] Rüstem, "Spectacle of Legitimacy", 262, 266; And, *16. Yüzyılda İstanbul*, 123; Boyar and Fleet, *Social History*. 29–32.
[531] İpşirli, "Cuma Selamlığı", 90–92.
[532] Selaniki, *Tarih-i Selaniki*, II, 449, 454, 568.
[533] Hierosolimitana, *Yahudi Doktorun*, 88.

days and nights included *mevlid*, *reġāib*, *mirāc*, *berāt,* and *ḳadir*, which commemorated significant events in the Prophet's life and the Islamic calendar.[534] These days and nights were known as *ḳandīl*s for the minarets of mosques were adorned with candles on these occasions.[535] Visiting Istanbul in the mid-sixteenth century, Fresne-Cenaye and Dernschwam recounted that at these special nights and during the Ramadan, all mosques in the city were embellished with lamps called *ḳandīl*s, which burned all night long until sunrise.[536] The offering of special foods in the sultanic public kitchens was a part of these celebrations. The menus served in these venues were enriched on special days and nights. On ordinary days, the sultanic public kitchens served mutton (*ḳoyun eti*) and soup (*çorba*) to their recipients.[537] In the public kitchen of Mehmed II, this daily menu was replaced with a dish of meat called *zırbāç*[538] on Friday, Ramadan, eid and sacred nights (*leyālī-i mübāreke-i mufassala*).[539] Similarly, the public kitchen of Bayezid II offered *zırbāç* along with *zerde pilavı* (rice with saffron) on Friday, Ramadan, and eid nights.[540] The visitors of the Süleymaniye's public kitchen were served special dishes made of *dāne* (rice), and *zerde* (saffron and rice dessert) at the nights of Ramadan, the two Eids, *reġāib* and *berāt*.[541]

The congregational performance of the supererogatory prayers was a part of the sultanic mosques' ritual calendar on special days and nights, at least in the late fifteenth century. The endowment deed of the Fatih complex enumerated the prayers

[534] For detailed information on the meaning of these nights in the Muslim tradition, see Aslan, "Mübarek Gün", 200–202. For a discussion on the congregational performance of superarogatory prayers in the early modern Ottoman context, see Terzioğlu, "Bid'at, Custom".
[535] Fresne-Cenaye, *Fresne-Cenaye Seyahatnamesi*, 77.
[536] Dernschwam, *İstanbul ve Anadolu*, 102.
[537] *Fatih Sultan*, 56; Akakuş, *İstanbul'da Sultan*, 34; Yılmaz, *Kanuni Vakfiyesi*, 63.
[538] For *zırbāc*, see Akkor, *Osmanlı Mutfağı*, 126.
[539] *Fatih Sultan*, 57.
[540]Akakuş, *İstanbul'da Sultan*, 34
[541] Yılmaz, *Kanuni Vakfiyesi*, 63.

performed at *reġāib*, *berāt*, and *ḳadir* nights, as well as the *terāviḥ* prayers offered in Ramadan nocturnally, which had to be led by these mosques' prayer leaders.[542] This stipulation does not appear in the sixteenth-century sultanic endowments. This change seems to have emanated from the increasing opposition to performing supererogatory prayers in congregation in *ḳandīl* nights after the fifteenth century.[543] Still, the evidence suggests that in mid-sixteenth century, the congregational performance of supererogatory prayers in mosques in *ḳandīl* nights was still common in Istanbul.[544] However, the current evidence does not allow us to determine whether these supererogatory prayers were performed in congregation in the sultanic mosques in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Mevlid ḳandīli, when the birth of Prophet Muhammad was celebrated, had a special importance among the special days and nights. The evidence suggests that beginning with the sixteenth century the significance attached to this date increased gradually. While the waqfiya of the Fatih complex does not mention any stipulation regarding the *mevlid ḳandīli*, it was mentioned as a special occasion in the endowment deeds of the Bayezid and Süleymaniye complexes. The waqfiya of the Bayezid complex stipulates that in *mevlid ḳandīli*, a group consisting of the preacher (*ḫatīb*), prayer leader (*imām*) and *ḥüffāẓ*, should recite the *mevlid*, which is a canonized text narrating the Prophet's life and death. The same waqfiya mentions specific foods to be offered to the congregation, including *zırbāç aşı* and *zerde pilavı*.[545] The Süleymaniye's endowment deed prescribed the sequence of deeds that have to be followed by this religious rite. On the twelfth day of the month of Rabi al-Avval, ulama, pious men (*ṣuleḥā*), and those who memorized the Quran (*ḥüffāẓ*)

[542] Terzioğlu, "Bid'at, Custom", 433.
[543] See Terzioğlu, "Bid'at, Custom", 333; Aslan, "Mübarek Gün", 199–231
[544] Aslan, "Mübarek Gün", 335; Demirtaş, *Fetvaları ile Şeyhülislam*, 227.
[545] Akakuş, *İstanbul'da Sultan*, 34.

should come together in the mosque. A sweet-voiced and sweet-faced recites *mevlidnāme*, and after that, muazzins eulogize the Prophet. Last, the surah of al-Asr is recited. At the end of the ceremony, food and rosewater are served to the congregation.[546]

Daily and weekly recitations of the Quran and specific invocations formed another component of the sultanic Friday mosques' religious rituals. Nina Ergin has already remarked on the sultanic endowment deeds' stipulations regarding the appointment of several reciters, who were tasked with chanting particular parts of the Quran and some invocations in specific times.[547] These sessions included reciting of fascicles (*cüz*) and particular chapters (surah) of the Quran, eulogies, and salutations to the Prophet Muhammad, the Muslim creed (*shahāda*), and prayers for the waqfs' founders. Aftermaths of the Friday, Eid, and five daily canonical prayers appear as among these specific times. Chanting sessions seem to have been elaborated gradually in the sixteenth century, with an increase in the numbers of the recited surahs and chanters. An examination of the endowments of the Fatih, Bayezid and Süleymaniye mosques reveals that the number of reciters and chanted surahs had increased in each sultanic Friday mosque. Besides, the tasks of some reciters were elaborated and extended, especially in the Süleymaniye Mosque.[548] Studies of Christiane Gruber and Guy Burak have addressed the increasing significance and prevalence of prayer manuals in the sixteenth-century Ottoman world. These texts combined Quranic verses with particular prayers and invocations and were recited at specific times of the day, week, and year. While the recital of such manuals was

[546] Yılmaz, *Süleymaniye Külliyesi*, 64.
[547] Ergin, "Soundscapes".
[548] I continue to work on the organization and evolution chanting sessions in the sultanic mosques and plan to publish my findings in an article in the future. For reciters in the sultanic mosques and their tasks, see *Fatih Sultan*, 51; Akakuş, *İstanbul'da Sultan*, 27–28; Yılmaz, *Kanuni Vakfiyesi*, 142–148.

more widespread in Sufi circles before the mid-sixteenth century, they began to be appealed to by a more diverse clientele afterward.[549] Together with the increasing prevalence of these manuals, the augmented performance and elaboration of the chanting sessions in the sultanic Friday mosques betoken the centrality of the recital of the holy book, prayers, and invocations on a regular manner, both as a part of individual and communal worship.

Along with five calls to prayer, chanting sessions in sultanic Friday mosques offered auditory experiences to Muslim worshippers frequenting these sanctuaries. The sensorial experiences enjoyed in these edifices were not limited to the auditory ones. The studies of Nina Ergin have revealed that the royal mosques in Istanbul had a design that pleases different senses, by their audiences' aesthetic preferences. They were adorned with the equipment to appeal to the senses of sight, smell, touch, and hearing. The proportionate architectural and spatial organization, and the ornate decorative texture of these monuments were appreciated as visual qualities while incenses burned in specific times and occasions appealed to the sense of smell of visitors. [550]

Serving as venues for religious learning was also among the functions of the sultanic mosque complexes. They included madrasas for higher education, primary schools (*mekteb*) for children, and Quran recitation schools (*dār'ül-ḳurrā*).[551] The mosques also served for the educative purposes. Scholars and preachers were teaching various lessons on the Quran, hadith, and Islamic jurisprudence to the public in the sultanic mosques. Although such public lectures had been delivered in

[549] Gruber, "Pious Cure-All"; Burak, "Prayers, Commentaries".
[550] Ergin, "Soundscapes", and "Multi-Sensorial Message".
[551] The complexes of Mehmed II, Bayezid II, Şehzade, and Süleymaniye had madrasas. The complexes of Mehmed II, Bayezid II, Selim I, Şehzade, and Süleymaniye had primary schools. The Süleymaniye complex had a Quran recitation school. See Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 85, 89, 94, 192, 205.

royal mosques since the early Ottoman centuries, this practice seems to have gained currency in the sixteenth century. That the term *ders-i ʻāmm* began to appear in the sixteenth century supports this suggestion. Literally meaning "public lecture" in the Ottoman context, it became a term denominating the person who gave public lectures in mosques. *Ders-i ʻāmm* as a special position, however, did not appear in the sultanic mosques' endowment deed before the seventeenth century.[552] Various contemporary sources suggest that scholars or preachers fulfilled this task before the seventeenth century. According to its waqfiya, the Süleymaniye complex's employees included a preacher, *vāʼiẓ*, (in addition to a *ḫatīb*) who was tasked with sermonizing the congregation convened in the mosque concerning religious matters on Fridays and special days and nights.[553] Selaniki mentioned a *vāʼiẓ* named Emir Abdülkerim Efendi, who taught hadith and Quranic exegesis in the Süleymaniye Mosque on Fridays.[554] Similarly, Nevizade Atai recounted scholars came together and gave a lecture on the surah of al-En'am in the Süleymaniye Mosque.[555]

The attendance of the aforementioned religious performances held in the sultanic mosques was restricted to male Muslims. Women's attendance to the Friday ritual and five daily canonical prayers and their visit to mosques has been strongly discouraged and disapproved in the Hanafi tradition since the medieval era.[556] Following the tradition, Hanafi-Ottoman jurists disapproved of women's performance of the Friday ritual and five daily canonical prayers in mosques and

[552] Akgündüz, *Osmanlı Dersiamları*, 13–19.
[553] Yılmaz, *Süleymaniye Külliyesi*, 140.
[554] Selaniki, *Tarih-i Selaniki*, II, 525.
[555] Cited by Akgündüz, *Osmanlı Dersiamları*, 15; Atai, *Hadaiku'l-Hakayik*, 512.
[556] For example, al-Mavsili asserted that women's participation in the five daily canonical prayers in congregation in mosques is not permissible unless they are aged. Sheikh Bedreddin claimed that women's participation in the ritual prayers in Friday mosques and neighborhood masjids has to be regarded as reprehensible, and jurists should issue fatwas for discouraging them from visiting mosques. Mevsili, *el-İhtiyar*, 119; Şeyh Bedreddin, *Letaif*, 143.

advised them to stay in their homes..[557] For example, Ebussuud issued a fatwa for precluding women from partaking in the Friday ritual. When he was asked whether one must prohibit women's participation in the Friday ritual, he endorsed their prevention if the women in question were young.[558] The accounts of contemporary travelers confirm the exclusion of Ottoman women from mosques. Fresne-Cenaye, for example, asserted that women never came to mosques for performing their prayers.[559] Similarly, Lubenau, Hierasolimitana, and Dernschwam recounted that women never visit mosques, and always perform their prayers at home.[560]

Besides women, non-Muslims did not have access to sultanic mosques unless they had special permission. Visiting Istanbul as the envoy of the Habsburg king Ferdinand I (d. 1564), Busbecq (d. 1592) indicated that non-Muslims could visit Hagia Sophia and other mosques only if they have special permission.[561] Joseph Grelot (d. after 1680), a French merchant who traveled to Istanbul in the 1670s, could not get permission to visit Hagia Sophia. Then, he dressed like a Muslim and entered the mosque secretly with the help of a lamp-lighter, whom he bribed.[562]Ambassadors from European countries had the prerogative of visiting sultanic mosques with the sultan's special permission, and mostly, in the company of viziers or other high-ranking bureaucrats. Fresne-Cenaye, who accompanied the French ambassador Noailles,[563] reported that he visited the mosques of Mehmed II and Bayezid II as a part of the ambassador's retinue.[564] Ambassadorial privilege for visiting the sultanic mosques seems to have been related to the Ottomans' aim for

[557] Şeyh Bedreddin, *Letaif*, 143.
[558] Düzdağ, *Şeyhülislam Ebussuud*, 94.
[559] Fresne-Cenaye, *Fresne-Cenaye Seyahatnamesi*, 72.
[560] Lubenau, *Reinhold Lubenau Seyahatnamesi*, I, 288; Hierosolimitana, *Yahudi Doktorun*, 108; Dernschwam, *İstanbul ve Anadolu'ya*, 103.
[561] Busbecq, *Türk Mektupları*, 36.
[562] Grelot, *Late Voyage*, 114.

[564] Fresne-Cenaye, *Fresne-Cenaye Seyahatnamesi*, 71.

displaying the sultans' piety, wealth, and glory to the embassies of the rival empires. It is worth mentioning that like the European-Christian ambassadors, the Safavid envoys became the subject of this imperial show off and had the chance to visit the sultanic mosques. Reporting on the Safavid ambassadors' visit of the sultanic mosques in Istanbul, for example, Selaniki related that in 1567 (975 AH), Tahmasb's envoy Shahqulu Khan and his large retinue visited the mosques of Selim I and Sultan Süleyman, and made prostrations with gratitude for they saw these glorious monuments.[565]

3.2.2 Safavid Shahs' patronage of Friday mosques

The scale and intensity of the Safavid shahs' patronage of mosques seem limited and modest in comparison with that of the Ottoman sultans. Still, mosque patronage occupied a place in the architectural agendas of the Safavid shahs. Safavid rulers patronized various mosques within their realms, either by refurbishing the existing structures or constructing new ones. The number and scale of their renovations and repairs in the existing mosques exceeded their new constructions. This was partly because of the relative fragility of the main building material, brick, which necessitated recurrent repairs and renovations in the existing mosques. The continuing debates concerning the legitimacy of performing the Friday ritual, and the irregularity of this ritual's performance were also probably among the reasons behind several Safavid shahs' abstention from building new Friday mosques and contenting themselves with the upkeep and reparations of existing mosques. The concern for Shi'itizing the existing mosques and making the names and titles of the Safavid

[565] Selaniki, *Tarih-i Selaniki*, I, 68–70.

shahs visible in these venues, both achieved through the addition of inscriptions, also played a part in the preeminence of refurbishments in the existing mosques.

The Safavid state was established in an already Islamicised landscape with a myriad of mosques. Since Iran had a predominantly Sunni population that had lived under Sunni authorities for centuries, except the Buyid rule in the tenth century, the existing mosques in the Safavid lands were predominantly created for Sunni audiences and bore several Sunni insignia, including the inscriptions with Sunni references.[566] Some Ottoman sources from the seventeenth century mentioned the Safavids' avoidance of praying in mosques with Sunni emblems, which were subsequently removed from these mosques by the Safavids. Evliya Çelebi, for example, recounted that the Safavids avoided entering the Sunni mosques in Tabriz.[567] Likewise, Katib Çelebi related that the Safavids had removed the names of the first three caliphs from the walls of the Sultan Hasan Mosque in Tabriz, and only the name of Ali remained intact after the Safavids' intervention to this edifice.[568]

The Safavid shahs' patronage of Friday mosques began during Shah Ismail's era. The known sources do not offer any evidence for his building any mosques. He was instead credited with renovations and additions to several existing Friday mosques. Referring to his refurbishments in several mosques, his chronicler Amini Haravi praised the shah for his efforts for adorning mosques.[569] Ismail I renovated

[566] The construction and use of the congregational mosques were very rare in the history of Twelver Shi'ism, both within and outside Iran. The Barath Mosque in Baghdad, which was used as a congregational mosque by the Shi'i communities and destroyed by an Abbasid ruler in the ninth century, and Masjed-e Jame' of Qum in Iran were among the very rare exceptions of Friday mosques that were built for and used by Shi'i communities. Besides, it is known that a section of the Friday Mosque of Isfahan was assigned to the Shi'is in the twelfth century. Jafarian, *Seyāset va Farhang*, I, 598, 601; Tabatabai, *Turbat-e Pākān*, I, 109–114; Drechsler, *Geschicte*, 146–148; Lambton, "Evolution", 328. The mosques built in Cairo by the Ismaili Fatimid rulers including the Mosque of al-Aqmar, the Mosque of al-Azhar, and the Mosque of al-Hakim are also among the rare examples of Shi'ite Friday mosques. See Behrens-Abouseif, *Islamic Architecture*, 58, 67–72; idem, "Aqmar Mosque"; Bloom, "Mosque of al-Hakim"; Rabbat, "Al-Azhar Mosque".
[567] Evliya Çelebi, *Seyahatname*, II, 25.
[568] Katib Çelebi, *Cihannüma*, 470.
[569] Amini Haravi, *Futūhat-e Shāhi*, 76.

the vaults of two iwans and the main mihrab of Sava's old Friday mosque, and repaired its main dome's base.[570]Along with several Quranic verses, the names of Muhammad and Ali were repetitively inscribed on this mihrab, manifesting the new confessional character of the sanctuary.[571] Masjed-e Maydan in the same city, a twelfth-century sanctuary, was rebuilt and gained a stucco mihrab under Shah Ismail's patronage.[572] To the western mihrab in the southern dome chamber of the old Friday Mosque of Isfahan, Shah Ismail added a marble plaque bearing thuluth inscriptions, which involve saluting to the Prophet Muhammad and the Twelve Imams. Above this frieze are two inscriptions, one bearing the Shi'ite confession: "There is no God but Allah, Muhammad is his Messenger, Ali is the friend (*walī*) of God.", and a Persian chronogram praising Shah Ismail's refurbishments.

Shah Ismail is the progenitor of another architectural enterprise in the Safavid context, which was sustained by his successors. He added a marble plaque bearing his official order forbidding levying ransom and exacting tribute (*bāj u kharāj*) from Isfahan's neighborhoods and inns. [573] This royal order has a postscript bearing saluting the Twelve Imams, recounting their names in succession.[574] Following his father's example, Shah Tahmasb added several stone slabs to different Friday mosques in his realms, including Tabriz, Isfahan, and Kashan. Isfahan's old Friday Mosque houses two such inscriptional panels that bear a text enunciating one of the public repentances of Tahmasb and mentioning his titles, and an imperial order publicizing a tax deduction bestowed on Isfahan's merchants and artisans,

[570] Hillenbrand, "Safavid Architecture", 765–767; Mustafvi, "Dar Bab-e Masjid", 208; Babaie, "Building", 32; Khoddari Naini and Paq-najad, "Barrasī-ye Taẓyināt", 118–121.
[571] Khoddari Naini and Paq-najad, "Barrasī-ye Taẓyināt", 130; Hillenbrand, "Safavid Architecture", 765.
[572] Hillenbrand, "Safavid Architecture", 766; Pope, *Survey of Persian*, III, 1169; Babaie, "Building", 32.
[573] Karimiyan, "Mozulat-e Ijtimai", 198.
[574] Hunarfar, *Ganjīna-ye Āsār*, 86–87.

respectively.[575] Masjed-e Maydan in Kashan bears four different royal edicts issued by Tahmasb, two aiming to regulate the social-religious behaviors of Kashan's denizens,[576] and others enunciating tax deductions bestowed to the city's Shi'i population.[577]

Tahmasb seems to have repaired and renovated several Friday mosques, too. The façade of Isfahan's old congregational mosque's southern iwan gained a new polychrome mosaic faience decoration and inscriptional bands involving Quranic verses from the surah of Victory, and prayers to the Fourteen Immaculate Ones.[578] (Figure C26) An open court enveloped by two iwans and several arcades was added to the Seljuq Friday mosque in Barsiyan near Isfahan.[579] The southern entrance portal and the mihrab of the Friday Mosque in Kerman were also renovated in this era.[580] Epigraphic evidence suggests that the refurbishments in the Friday mosques of Isfahan and Kerman were conducted under the patronage of different significant figures who had close relationships with the Safavid court.[581] Since the tile inscription referring to this renovation project in Barsiyan Mosque is broken, it is not known whether it was Tahmasb, or another person who undertook the afore-mentioned repairs and refurbishments.[582] In all these cases, inscriptions mention the name of Shah Tahmasb or refer to his reign.[583] As Babaie has argued, this brings up the possibility of that these renovation projects were carried out by the afore-

[575] Ibid, 82, 88–90.
[576] The first prohibits the shah's subjects from visiting places like taverns, gambling houses, boza shops and brothels, and the second warns Kashan's Muslim population regarding the emergence of some ugly innovations and deeds that were not defined in the text. Naraqi, *Āsār-e Tārīkhī*, 155–157.
[577] Ibid, 158–159, 531–532.
[578] Babaie, "Building", 39; Hunarfar, *Ganjīna-ye Āsār*, 95–96; Degeorge and Porter, *Art*, 140, Hillenbrand, "Safavid Architecture", 770; Pope, *Survey of Persian*, VII, 1177.
[579] Pope, *Survey of Persian*, VII, 1177; Godard and Smith, "Material", 8, 35.
[580] Ahmad-zada, Nursi and Hunardan, "Bazshinasi va Tahlil", 59–62; Babaie, "Building Past", 39.
[581] In Isfahan, the patron was a *sadr*, Muhammad al-Isfahani, while the refurbishments in the Friday Mosque of Kerman were conducted by a local governor named Abdi Muhammad bin Mustafa. Babaie, "Building", 39; Ahmad-zada, Nursi and Hunardan, "Bazshinasi va Tahlil", 59.
[582] Godard and Smith, "Material", 35.
[583] Babaie, "Building", 38–39; Godard and Smith, "Material", 35.

mentioned patrons in the name or upon the order of Tahmasb.[584] This suggestion remains as a hypothesis until more research will be conducted. In either case, these arhitectural undertakings carried out by lesser patrons speak for an extended effort of Safavid elites to protect the prestigious Friday mosques in Iran, and to transform these edifices into distinctly Shi'i and Safavid monuments.

Shah Khudabanda (d. 1595) was also credited with patronizing the existing mosques through repairs and installing stone tablets. He added an inscription to the old Friday mosque of Isfahan, which mentions the shah's name as "the most just sultan" and "the shadow of God on earth". He repaired Masjed-e Nau in Shiraz, and added a stone tablet to the Masjed-e Maydan in Kashan.[585]

Following his predecessors' example, Shah Abbas added large stone tablets bearing his imperial edicts to various Friday mosques. Tax reductions offered to the Shi'i denizens of different cities constituted the most common theme of these royal orders. Abolishment or reduction of taxes for Shi'i population seems to have aimed to manifest the shah's protection of his Shi'i subjects, and encourage his Sunni and non-Muslim subjects to convert into Twelver Shi'ism. The Friday mosques of Damavand, Ardistan, Nishabur, and Mir Imad in Kashan gained such stone tablets inscribing Shah Abbas' tax reductions for his Shi'i subjects.[586] Fewer in number, Shah Abbas' royal orders inscribed on the Friday mosques involve other themes. His silver tablet on the entrance of the Friday mosque in Ordubad commemorates the shah's admiration for the city's denizens, who resisted to the Ottoman soldiers valiantly, and his sorrow for those who lost their lives in this military struggle.[587] The

[584] Babaie, "Building", 39.
[585] Hillenbrand, 'Safavid Architecture', 773–4; Hunarfar, *Ganjīna-ye Āsār*, 164–5, 389–91; Newman, *Safavid Iran*, 47.
[586] Keyani, *Tārīkh-e Hunar-e Mi'mārī*, 60–61; Mashkati, *List*, 59, 99–100; Bidgoli, "Sangnavishtaha-ye Shah Abbas", 55– 56; Naraqi, *Āsār-e Tārīkhī*, 163–165.
[587]Khuzani Isfahani, *Chronicle*, I, 432.

shah's stone tablet installed in the portal of the Friday mosque in Burujard, on the other hand, perpetuates his architectural renovations in this sanctuary, which included the addition of an iwan and two minarets.[588]

The Safavid shahs' patronage of mosques was not limited to refurbishments and restorations, but they built Friday mosques, too. In the literature on the Safavid architecture, there has been a dispute concerning whether the Safavid shahs constructed any congregational mosques before the seventeenth century, or not.[589] Several scholars have argued that no congregational mosque was erected by the Safavid shahs in the sixteenth century. Others have referred the Sahib al-Amr Mosque in Tabriz and Masjed-e Shah in Qazvin as mosques built by Shah Tahmasb, without engaging in a discussion on their ritual character, or whether they were Friday mosques or masjids.[590] The following discussion will present some clues and findings suggesting that at least two royal Friday mosques were erected in the mid-sixteenth century.

References in Ottoman, Safavid and European sources make it possible to determine and locate the two congregational mosques that were commissioned by Shah Tahmasb. Known as the Sahib al-Amr Mosque, Tahmasb's first Friday mosque was in Tabriz.[591] It punctuated the eastern side of the Sahibabad Square.[592] Michele

[588] Mashkati, *List*, 273.
[589]Babaie, *Isfahan*, 86; Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 34–35; Rizvi, "Architecture", 388.
[590] Hillenbrand, "Safavid Architecture", 769; Kareng, *Āsār va Abniya*, 8-11; Minorsky, *Tarikh-e Tabriz*, 88; Mukhlisi, *Fihrist-e Bināhā*, 125; Brignoli, "Les palais", 175; Szuppe, "Palais et Jardins', 154; Gulriz, *Minudar*, I, 578–579; Wilber, "Masgid-i Gami", 208-209; Amirshahi, "Ville de Qazvin", 70, 81–83.
[591] For the architecture and history of this mosque, see Kareng, *Āsār va Abniya*, 8–11; Minorsky, *Tarikh-e Tabriz*, 88; Mukhlisi, *Fihrist-e Bināhā*, 125; Yıldız, *Safevi Döneminde Tebriz*, 418–425.
[592] For the history and architecture of this square, see Aube, "Uzun Hasan Mosque", 33–34; Brignoli, "Palais royaux", 137–139, 142–147; Minorsky, *Tarikh-e Tabriz*, 57–59; Ebrahimi, "Sahibabad Square", 11–13; Lale, and Zoqi, *Tabriz dar Gozar*, 266–268; Yıldız, *Safevi Döneminde Tebriz*, 404–441.

Membre, who visited Tabriz in 1539, mentions this mosque in his description of the mentioned maydan:

> To the north (of the square) stand two beautiful mosques, one next to the other; and, on the east, at the side of the said maidiin, the said Shah is making anew another most beautiful mosque, so, on the side by the street runs a stream, which they call *chay*.[593]

Although his account does not offer any clues concerning the monument's architectural or spatial features, it provides information on the mosque's date of contruction. Considering that he visited the city in 1539 and saw the edifice under construction, the mosque was being built in the 1530s.[594] This mosque does not appear in the miniature depicting Tabriz and attributed to Matrakçı Nasuh, which is in his *Beyān-ı Menāzil-i Sefer-i 'Irakeyn*, an account of stages in Sultan Süuleyiman's Iraq Campaign in 1534. (Figure C27) In that painting, the Uzun Hasan Mosque with its blue dome and blue minarets flanking the portal, and the Hesht Behesht palace complex mark the northern and southern edges of the Sahibabad Square while the site of the future Sahib al-Amr Mosque is empty.[595] This helps us further date the construction of Tahmasb's mosque between 1534 and 1538.

A more comprehensive description of Sahib al-Amr Mosque was offered by Talikizade Mehmed Subhi (d. 1606), who partook in the Ottoman military campaign in 1585 against the Safavids. In his book named *Tebrīzīyye*, completed in 1593–94 (1002 AH), Talikizade provided significant information on the city's monuments and built environment.[596] In *Tebrīzīyye*, he described the Sahib al-Amr Mosque as follows:

> On the above-mentioned square [the Sahibabad Square], he [Uzun Hasan] constructed a pleasant mosque that is a counterpart of Shah Jahan's mosque,

[593] Membre, *Mission*, 29.
[594] Ibid, 29.
[595] Matrakçı, *Beyan-ı Menazil*, 27b–28a.
[596] Özkuzugüdenli, "Talikizzde Mehmed Subhi", 3.

> and Tahmasb erected a Friday mosque, which consists of two green domes, and is equivalent to this [the Uzun Hasan Mosque].[597]

According to Talikizade, the mosques of Shah Tahmasb (Sahib al-Amr), the Aqqoyunlu ruler Uzun Hasan (Nasiriyya), and the Qaraqoyunlu Jahan Shah (Muzaffariyyah or Masjed-e Kabud), were all comprised two domed chambers that were linked to each other. (Figures C28–C29) In the Uzun Hasan Mosque, these two chambers were linked to each other with a door, and the pulpit stood in the conjuncture of these two domed prayer halls. On Fridays, the preacher passed to the second domed chamber to lead the Friday ritual in front of the ruler. In other words, the second domed chamber behind the pulpit was reserved for the Aqqoyunlu rulers. Talikizade did not specify whether the Sahib al-Amr Mosque had such a door too, or whether its second domed prayer hall was also reserved for the Safavid shahs in the manner of the Uzun Hasan Mosque. However, his assertion regarding the uniformity of these two mosques' architectural layout suggests the possibility of the existence of a similar ceremonial configuration in the Sahib al-Amr Mosque, too.[598] Tahmasb's mosque in Tabriz was ruined in the following centuries.[599] Today, the dome with two flanking minarets, and an artery with two marble arcades constitute the only remaining parts of Tahmasb's mosque in Tabriz. On the marble panel facing the interior, there is an iscription containing a Quranic passage: "The places of worship belong to God, so call not, along with God, upon anyone" (72: 18). This inscription was signed by Ala al-Din Tabrizi, one of the most outstanding callipraphers of Tahmasb's reign.[600] (Figure C30)

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[597] Ibid, 56.

[599] Most probably, it was destroyed by the Ottoman armies during one of their successive occupations of Tabriz, or during one of the earthquakes in Tabriz. In 1635, the Ottomans destroyed the Uzun Hasan Mosque, and could have done this to Tahmasb's mosque, too. See Aube, "Uzun Hasan Mosque", 35; Katib Çelebi, *Cihannüma*, 470; Evliya Çelebi, *Seyahatname*, II, 25. For earthquakes, see Melville, "Historical Monuments", 171.

[600] Minorsky, *Tarikh-e Tabriz*, 88.

Known as Masjed-e Shah, the second mosque of Tahmasb was constructed in Qazvin. In the literature, there has been a discussion on the existence, location, and architecture of Tahmasb's Masjed-e Shah. Scholars like Babaie and Amirshahi have been skeptical about the existence of such a mosque.[601] Different researchers have argued that the Nabi Mosque, which was built by a Qajar shah in the early nineteenth century,[602] was a indeed a restoration of Tahmasb's Masjed-e Shah.[603] (Figure C31) Wilber, Amirshahi, and Ritter challenged this view, stating that the Nabi Mosque was built on the foundations of Tahmasb's Masjed-e Shah.[604] While the existing evidence does not allow us to determine whether Masjed-e Nabi was a restoration of Tahmasb's mosque or not, some sources from the Safavid era suggest that there was a Safavid monument in or near the location of this Qajar mosque.

Constituting the only known contemporary Safavid source mentioning this mosque, Abdi Beg Shirazi's *Jannat al-Aṣmār* supports the hypothesis concerning the existing of a mosque in or near the locus of the current Qajar mosque. Along with an *arasta* bazaar, this mosque was recounted by Abdi Beg among the new edifices constructed by Tahmasb in Sadatabad. He wrote: 'Next to this desirable shop (of a fruit seller) is a mosque resembling the firmament that is among the monuments of the shah, whose excellence reaches to the ninth heaven (*ʿarsh-janāb*). His [the shah's] Khosrow-like titles are inscribed on the mosque.'[605] Since Abdi Beg's treatise was written between 1557–1560,[606] it is reasonable to date the mosque's construction to before this interval. The best known primary source on the

[601] Babaie, "Building on the Past", 44–46; Amirshahi, "Ville de Qazvin", 81–83.
[602] For the Qajar mosque here, see Ritter, *Moscheen und Madrasabauten*, 101–102, 731-746; Zarii Muini and Zarii, 'Tarikh-e Masjid", 117–132.
[603] Gulriz, *Minudar*, 578–579; Zarii Muini and Zarii, 'Tarikh-e Masjid", 120; Eshraqi, "Dar al-saltana", 111.
[604] Wilber, "Masgid-i Gami", 208–209; Amirshahi, "Ville de Qazvin", 70, 81–83; Ritter, *Moscheen und Madrasabauten*, 101, 744.
[605] My translation. Shirazi, *Jannat al-Aṣmar*, 52.
[606] Losensky, "Palace of Praise", 2.

monument, Jean Chardin's account of Masjed-e Shah in Qazvin, is also in agreement with Abdi Beg's description. Visiting Qazvin in the late seventeenth century, Chardin mentioned Masjed-e Shah among the most beautiful and largest mosques of the whole Safavid realm, and asserted that this monument was at the end of a tree-lined street that begins in one of the doors of the royal palace.[607]

Neither Abdi Beg nor Chardin gave any further information regarding the architectural layout, decoration, functions, or construction date of this royal mosque. Yet, it can be suggested that its construction began after Tahmasb's design of a new royal precinct in 1543–44, and finished before Abdi Beg Shirazi completed his *Jannat al-Aṣmār* in 1560. We do not have any knowledge concerning the original layout and decoration of Masjed-e Shah in Qazvin since this mosque was ruined most probably during one of the several earthquakes in the city.[608] While there is no information on its architecture, Abdi Beg Shirazi's account allows us to determine the locus of Tahmasb's Masjed-e Shah. Accordingly, this monument was located near the Sadatabad Square and the city's bazaar area, to the west of the palatial precinct of the Safavid shahs.[609] Supporting this evidence, Gulriz, Zarii and Zarii Muini have underlined the mosque's spatial and architectural connections with a series of Safavid monuments in the same area, including a bazaar, caravanserai and a public bath, which all date to Tahmasb's period. They contend that these edifices must have been conceived as part of a single architectural project.[610] In a similar

[607] Chardin, *Voyages de Monsieur*, III, 25–26. Eshraqi has suggested that the tree-lined street mentioned by Chardin was most probably the forecourt of the royal caravanserai, which was flanked by trees and contained a pool in the Safavid times. Eshraqi, "Shahr-e Tārīkhī-ye Qazvīn", 12. Gulriz argued that the palace's entrance mentioned by Chardin can be one of several doors of the Safavid palace complex, which no longer stands today. Gulriz, *Minudar*, 578–579.
[608] Eshraqi, "Shahr-e Tārīkhī-ye Qazvīn", 11.
[609] Brignoli, "Les palais", 175; Szuppe, "Palais et Jardins », 154; For the Saadatabad, see Gulriz, *Minudar*, I, 647; Brignoli, "Palais royaux », 173–177; Eshraqi, "alentours du palais", 88–90; Wirth, "Qazvin-Safavidische Stadtplannung", 470; Amirshahi, "Ville de Qazwin", 65–76, 145, 154; Pehlevanzada, "Mutala'a-ye Tatbiqi-ye Tarrakhi", 83–86.
[610] Gulriz, *Minudar*, 578–579; Zarii Muini and Zarii, 'Tarikh-e Masjid", 120.

manner, Eshraqi, who has attached special significance to Abdi Beg Shirazi's text on Qazvin, underscored the conceptual integrity of Tahmasb's buildings in Qazvin including a mosque, bazaar, and a public bath.[611]

At this point, the question arises whether Tahmasb's mosques in Tabriz and Qazvin functioned as Friday mosques or as masjids. Talikizade's reference to the Sahib al-Amr Mosque as a Friday mosque offers a significant clue about this sanctuary's ritual usage as a congregational mosque. A Safavid source from the late sixteenth century confirms this edifice's status as a Friday mosque. Writing in the late sixteenth century, the Safavid historian Qadi Ahmad Qummi mentioned the Sahib al-Amr Mosque as "Masjed-e Shahi" (the royal mosque) on the Sahibabad Square, and recounted that the governor of Tabriz, Shahzada Sultan Husein Mirza, performed the Eid prayer in this mosque.[612] Qummi's account implies the existence of a pulpit on which the sermons were delivered in the Sahib al-Amr Mosque.

There is no such clear evidence for the usage of Masjed-e Shah in Qazvin. Its central locus within the city and gigantic dimensions eulogized by Shirazi, however, suggests that this edifice also functioned as a Friday mosque. That Safavid cities had multiple congregational mosques lends greater credence to this presumption.[613] In his *Tārikh-e Sultāni,* Astarabadi mentioned a mosque called Masjed-e Diyar in Qazvin, whose preacher was taken down from the pulpit upon of Ismail II's order for he abandoned the custom of cursing the first two Sunni caliphs in the Friday ritual. [614] It

[611] Eshraqi, "Dar al-saltana", 111.
[612] Qummi, *Khulāsat al-Tavārīkh*, II, 700. Qummi penned his chronicle between 1576 and 1590. See Dilek and Altan, *Safevi Tarihi*, 39.
[613] At least from the fourteenth century onwards, Iranian cities had multiple congregational mosques. In his *Nuzhat al-Qulub*, Hamdollah Mustawfi recounted that the city of Yazd had three Friday mosques. The number of Friday mosques had multiplied in the fifteenth century, when a Timurid patron built the Amir Chaqmaq Mosque that functioned as a congregational mosque along with other Friday mosques of this city. Limbert, *Shiraz*, 58. Tabriz and Kashan also had multiple Friday mosques in the post-Mongol era. Pirnia, *Mi'mārī-ye Irānī*, 294; Naraqi, *Āsār-e Tārīkhī*, 150; Darrabi, *Tārīkh-e Kāshān*, 424.
[614] Astarabadi, *Tārīkh-e Sultānī*, 99.

is known that the Safavids were using Qazvin's old Friday mosque as a venue of the Friday rituals, too.[615] This shows that the Friday ritual was performed in multiple mosques of Qazvin, and it seems unlikely that Tahmasb's royal mosque did not function as a Friday mosque, where a mosque of lesser importance -Masjed-e Diyar- served as a congregational mosque.

I suggest that the terminological uncertainty is one of the main reasons behind the confusion regarding the functional traits of the sixteenth-century royal Safavid mosques. The Safavid chronicles did not always refer to Friday mosques as *masjed-e jāmeʿ* (congregational mosque). It is possible to encounter the use of *masjed* as a term for several mosques that were designed or used as Friday mosques. For example, Masjed-e Diyar in Qazvin was mentioned as a *masjed,* even though it had a pulpit and was used as a congregational mosque.[616] Similarly, the Hakim Mosque in Isfahan, which was built in the mid-seventeenth century,[617] was referred to as a *masjed* in its foundation inscription,[618] despite that it was designed and served as Friday mosque.[619] Even Masjed-e Shah in Isfahan, which was clearly defined as a Friday mosque (*masjed-e jāmeʿ*), in its inscriptions,[620] was referred to as a *masjed* in some of the contemporary sources.[621] Clearly, looking at the terms used for denoting Safavid mosques is not enough to identify them as congregational mosques or masjids. Rather, one must investigate how the mosque was used.

As far as the sources suggest, no other royal Friday Mosque was built in Safavid Iran until Shah Abbas' reign. Beside Masjed-e Shah in Isfahan, which will

[615] Khuzani Isfahani, *Chronicle*, I, 415.
[616] Ibid, 99.
[617] Blake, *Half the World*, 152.
[618] Hunarfar, *Ganjīna-ye Āsār*, 213.
[619] Jafarian, *Seyāset va Farhang*, I, 614.
[620] Hunarfar, *Ganjīna-ye Āsār*, 429.
[621] Astarabadi, *Tārīkh-e Sultānī*, 202.

be described and discussed in the sixth chapter, Abbas I built a Friday Mosque complex in Farahabad, the summer capital of Shah Abbas. The mosque was located across the royal palatial complex in the city, on the southern edge of the city's new maydan, which was enveloped by successive shops.[622] (Figure C32) Being on a northwest-southest axis, it is a square building with a rectangular open courtyard and a four-iwan layout. To the south of the courtyard, it has a covered prayer room consisting of a domed mihrab hall and two flanking multi-domed and hypostyle side halls. Along with these domed sections in the southern wing, the mosque has some small rooms flanking the northern, eastern, and western iwans, whose functions are not definitely clear.[623] Kleiss suggested that they functioned as madrasas.[624] Brignoli argued that the madrasa was a separate structure that was erected next to the mosque.[625] The known primary sources do not specify the location of the madrasa/s built by Shah Abbas in Farahabad, although they recounted madrasas among the royal edifices built by him in this town.

Since there is a 20° difference between the directions of the maydan and the mosque, the mosque's square and domed entrance hall has a northwest-southeast orientation that is different from that of the courtyard.[626] For the mosque's designers, this difference provided an opportunity to create a more dynamic gateway offering multiple views of the mosque's pishtaq, which opens to the maydan on the north, and southern iwan from the maydan. The twisted vista creates a difference in the axes of the monumental pishtaq and the mosque's southern iwan, which had a similar

[622] For Shah Abbas' construction of Farahabad and its new maydan, see Yazdi, *Tārīkh-e 'Abbāsī*, 335; Munshi, *History of Shah*, II, 1060; Della Valle, *Safarnama-ye Della Valle*, 137; Kleiss, "Safavidische Sommerresidenz Farahabad"; Babaie, "Sacred Sites", 189–193.
[623] Kleiss, "Safavidische Sommerresidenz Farahabad", 353–359.
[624] Ibid, 355.
[625] Brignoli, "Les palais", 625.
[626] Kleiss, "Safavidische Sommerresidenz Farahabad", 353–359; Keyani, *Tārīkh-e Hunar-e Mi'mārī*, 189.

configuration with the pishtaq. A more elaborate form of the same configuration appears in Masjed-e Shah in Isfahan, as well as in the twisted entry-corridor of the Sheikh Lutfullah Mosque in the same city. This indicates a concern for creating dynamic views between the edifice and its site in the monumental mosque architecture of the period.

The paucity of sources renders an investigation of the ritual aspects of royal Safavid mosques a difficult task. Although we have very few direct references to the mosques of Tahmasb, contemporary sources provided significant information regarding the usages of Friday mosques in sixteenth-century Safavid Iran. As a part of the same socio-religious order and culture, the Safavid royal mosques must have served similar functions. An examination of sixteenth-century mosques in the Safavid realms suggests that Friday mosques of Safavid Iran, just as the Ottoman congregational mosques, functioned as venues of various religious and social activities.

Foremost, congregational mosques served as stages for the Friday ritual and the daily obligatory prayers. Beginning with the Safavid rule's inception, the Friday ritual and the daily obligatory prayers began to be observed according to the etiquette and manners of Twelver Shi'ism. Shah Ismail's chronicle Khandmir reported that after the conquest of Iranian cities, prayer leaders, *pīshnamāz*, were tasked with changing the manners and etiquette of prayers and other religious rites according to Imami Shi'ism. The call to prayer was also changed and the formula *'Alī walīyullāh*, Ali is God's friend, was added to its end.[627] In the Friday mosques of many conquered cities, including Tabriz, Herat, Samarqand, Mashhad, and Baghdad,

[627] Khandmir, *Tarikh-e Habib al-Siyar*, 467.

Friday sermons began to be delivered in the name of the Twelve Imams, and the shah's name was mentioned in them.[628]

The anonymous writer of *Ālamāra-ye Ṣafavī*, one of the main chronicles narrating Shah Ismail's era, reported a narrative implying that the deliverance of the Friday sermons in the name of the Twelve Imams and a Shi'i ruler was not easily accepted by the new subjects of the Safavid shah. The chronicler recounted that after the takeover of Tabriz, Qizilbash leaders accompanying Shah Ismail uttered their anxiety concerning that people would challenge the deliverance of the Friday sermon in the name of the Twelve Imams and a Shi'i shah. Upon that, shah declared that he does not fear from anyone, and will deliver the sermon in the name of the Immaculate Imams. According to the chronicler, Imam Ali came to the shah's rescue, appeared to him in a dream, and commanded that on Friday, Qizilbashs would stay armed in the Friday mosque and kill everyone who oppose the sermon. Next Friday, the sermon was delivered in the name of the Twelve Imams and Shah Ismail in the old Friday mosque of Tabriz, and Qizilbash soldiers murdered everyone who objected to the sermon. After the sermon, which was delivered by Mowlana Ahmad Ardabili, a prominent Shi'i scholar residing in Tabriz, the shah commanded to curse the Sunni caliphs, *tabarra'*. Those who rejected to curse were slayed with the swords of Qizilbash soldiers.[629]

In the Safavid context, ritual cursing was a part of the Friday rituals. Various chroniclers recounted that the cursing of the first two or three Sunni Caliphs (*sebb-e sheikheyn*) was an integral part of the ritual, whose neglect necessitated severe punishment.[630] They mentioned a preacher in Herat, who refused to curse the three

[628] Ibid, 467, 493, 515; *Ālam-ārā-ye Ṣafavī.*, 65, 287, 377; Amini Haravi, *Futūhat-e Shāhi*, 174, 294, 333, 349–351.
[629] *Ālam-ārā-ye Ṣafavī.*, 65.
[630] Astarabadi, *Tārīkh-e Sultānī*, 99; Junabadi, *Rawḍat al-Ṣafavīya*, 154, 169.

Sunni Caliphs in the city's main Friday mosque, and afterward, was killed in the city's bazaar.[631] Amini Haravi related that in one of the Friday rituals performed in the same mosque, Muslims who rejected cursing were killed, and those who cursed the first three Caliphs were rewarded with a golden *tumān*.[632] Khandmir indicated that cursing (*la'n va ta'n*) the caliphs on Friday mosques' pulpits became a custom, along with eulogies to the Twelve Infallibles and prayers for the state's continuation.[633]

Besides serving the Shi'i community as places of worship, congregational mosques were used as centers of high learning. Some of them, like the old Friday mosque of Isfahan, were used by the eminent Safavid clerics as sites of religious education. There were also mosques accompanied by madrasa structures. [634] Public lectures and preaching functioned as stages for religious instruction, too. In 1568, Tahmasb enacted an order tasking the prayer leaders and scholars with preaching in every town of his realms.[635] Quranic exegesis and the lives and merits of the Fourteen Immaculate Ones were among the main themes of these lectures and preachings. In his account of Tahmasb's reign, Khandmir mentioned a preacher, who died on the pulpit of the Friday mosque of Mashhad when preaching on the merits of the holy Imams.[636] As one of the most eminent scholars of Tahmasb's reign, Molla Shushtari (d. 1610), was commissioned with the task of preaching in the Friday Mosque of Mashhad, where he gave lectures on the Quranic exegesis from morning until night.[637]

[631] Khandmir, *Zayl-e Tarikh*, 72; *Ālam-ārā-ye Ṣafavī.*,, 346; Amini Haravi, *Futūhat-e Shāhi*, 349.
[632] Amini Haravi, *Futūhat-e Shāhi*, 346.
[633] Khandmir, *Tarikh-e Habib al-Siyar*, 468.
[634] Moazzan, *Sacred Geography*, 40–76.
[635] Agajari, *Muqaddamaī bar Munāsabat*, 126.
[636] Khandmir, *Zayl-e Tarikh*, 200.
[637] Agajari, *Muqaddamaī bar Munāsabat*, 126.

Shi'i commemorative ceremonies made up other significant events staged in Safavid congregational mosques. The first ten days of the month of Muharram were devoted to the commemorations of Imam Husein's martyrdom. These days, all public spaces of the Safavid cities, including the public squares, shrines, or bazaars, witnessed a series of elaborate theatrical ceremonies and processions, and congregational mosques were among the main sites where these Shi'ite ceremonies took place. According to Membre, these commemorative events included chanting and preachings in mosques:

> From evening to one hour of the night the companies go-round through the city and the mosques chanting in Persian the passion of the said Imam Husain… In the evening all the ladies betake themselves to their mosques, and a preacher preaches the passion of the said son of 'Ali, and the ladies weep bitterly. [638]

Besides their socio-religious functionality, Friday mosques served the Safavid shahs' political purposes as platforms where they could convey political or religious messages to a wide range of audiences. They could display their piety, generosity, and power in these edifices that hosted people from various social backgrounds. It was a common practice for the Safavid shahs to use congregational mosques for pronouncing their imperial orders regarding different issues, like the remission of taxes, or prohibition of intoxicating substances. Amini Haravi recounted an instance where an order of Shah Ismail was read out in the Friday Mosque of Herat.[639] As has been displayed, some of these imperial orders were monumentally inscribed on the walls or doors of different mosques. Similarly, it was a Safavid custom to read the *fatḥnāma*s, royal orders declaring the seizure of a city or a region, in Friday mosques.

[638] Membre, *Mission*, 43.
[639] Amini Haravi, *Futūhat-e Shāhi*, 349.

For example, the *fatḥnāma* declaring the conquest of Herat in 1510 was read in the Friday Mosque of the city.[640]

As the last point, it is worth mentioning that Friday mosques appear as sites of some significant political incidents that were related to the Safavid sovereignty, from the inception of the order onwards. In the mid-fourteenth century, Ibn Bazzaz related a dream narrative of Sheikh Safı in his *Ṣafvat al-Ṣafā*, which was repeated in many Safavid chronicles written in the three following centuries. In this narrative, Sheikh Safi appeared on the dome of the Friday Mosque of Ardabil, where he saw a sun that rose and illuminated all parts of the world. Then he looked and recognized that the sun was on his face. His mother interpreted his dream as a sign of Safi's good fortune as an influential and esteemed spiritual leader.[641] In this narrative, a congregational mosque emerged as a site of a prophetic dream heralding the prosperity of the Shi'ite Safavid dynasty. Shah Abbas' leading of an afternoon peayer (*namāz-e 'aṣr*) before his enthronement in the Friday mosque of Qazvin constitutes another interesting political incident that took place in a congregational mosque. Khuzani Isfahani recounted that on 27 September 1596 (7 Jumada al-Avval 1005), after sending Allahverdi Khan to the royal mint to coin money in the new shah's name, the shah went to Qazvin's Friday Mosque. In that sanctuary, Sheikh Bahai and Mowlana Mustafa, two prominent clerics of the age, delivered the sermon in the name of the new shah on the pulpit. The congeration performed the afternoon prayer under the leadership of the shah, the padishah of the age and the caliph of the time and the deputy of of the Hidden Imam (*bā imāmat-e padishah-e zamān va halīfa-ye davrān va nāīb bar ḥaqq-e ṣāḥib al-zamān*).[642]

[640] Khandmir, *Zayl-e Tarikh-e Shah*, 72.
[641] Ibn Bazzaz, *Safvat al-Safa*, 86.
[642] Khuzani Isfahani, *Chronicle*, I, 4–5.

3.3 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that in the Ottoman and Safavid realms, the prevalence and popularity of the Friday ritual's performance presented significant differences, and this divergence emanated from the difference in the conceptualization and stipulations of this ritual in the Hanafi and Imami jurisprudential traditions. The Friday ritual was a theoretically-established practice, and legitimately and regularly performed in the Sunni-Ottoman lands beginning with the Ottoman rule's inception. On the contrary, the legality of this ritual's performance remained questionable in the Safavid context until the end of the empire, and the Friday ritual was performed irregularly and probably by fluctuating number of congregations. Several Safavid shahs, especially Tahmasb and Abbas I, and some leading clerics attempted to legitimize and popularize this ritual's performance, but attending the Friday ritual had never been defined as a legal or religious duty to attend the Friday ritual in the Safavid context. On the other hand, the Ottoman authorities regarded the performance of the Friday ritual as a religious duty. This divergence in the conceptionalization and the implementation of the ritual was reflected in the Ottoman and Safavid rulers' patronage of mosques.

Building congregational mosques had primary significance for the Ottoman sultans', and successive Ottoman rulers constructed at least one Friday mosque mainly in their capital cities between the mid-fourteenth and late sixteenth centuries. The Safavid shahs did not patronize mosques with the same intensity and manners. Only two Safavid shahs, Shah Tahmasb and Abbas I, built congregational mosques in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but several shahs engaged in repairs and refurbishments in the existing Friday mosques of Iran. Besides the divergences in the conceptualization and performance of the Friday ritual and daily obligatory prayers,

the difference in the religious-architectural landscape of the Rumi and Iranian lands affected the Ottoman and Safavid rulers' dynamics of mosque patronage. While the Ottomans established their capital cities in former Christian-Byzantine lands which were Islamicized by their new owners, the Safavids inherited an already Islamicized realm with many congregational mosques, almost all built by the former Sunni rulers. Repairs and refurbishments of the existing mosques were more central in their architectural agenda because most of the existing Friday mosques of Iran, made of brick, were old and needed periodic repairs and renovations. Besides, and probably more importantly, repairs and renovations in the existing mosques provided the Safavid shahs with the opportunity to interfere to the Sunni inscriptions and symbols in the existing mosques, and to gain them a distincly Shi'i character. An equally common act of mosque patronage was to mount inscriptional panels bearing Safavid shahs' royal edicts, which was instrumental for manifesting the presence, authority, and benevolence Safavid sovereigns in the Safavid Friday mosques.

CHAPTER 4

THE URBAN CONTEXT:

ATMEYDANI AND THE NAQSH-E JAHAN SQUARE

The previous two chapters elucidated the political, religious, and architectural contexts in which the Masjed-e Shah and Sultan Ahmed complexes were shaped. This chapter explores the third contextual framework for the study of the Masjed-e Shah and Sultan Ahmed complexes. It describes and interprets the urban context of these two monuments. The Naqsh-e Jahan Square in Isfahan and Atmeydanı in Istanbul constituted the loci of the Masjed-e Shah and Sultan Ahmed complexes, and these two architectural complexes were parts of the urban squares on which they were located. Investigating the architectural-spatial and socio-functional features of Atmeydanı and the Naqsh-e Jahan Square is necessary for having a better insight into the spatial and urban elements that affected the configuration of the mosque complexes of Sultan Ahmed and Shah Abbas.

In the first two parts of this chapter, I investigate the chronologies, architectural-spatial configurations, and the neighboring monuments of the Naqsh-e Jahan Square and Atmeydanı. I address the centrality of these royal squares as sites of the court's architectural patronage both in the Safavid and Ottoman contexts, and the different trajectories of their formations. The third section of this chapter discusses the ceremonial, functional and social uses of the Naqsh-e Jahan Square and Atmeydanı. It shows the significance of both maydans in the ceremonial and public life of the Ottoman and Safavid capital cities. This chapter's overarching argument is that the construction of the Sultan Ahmed and Masjed-e Shah complexes on these

squares within the same decades integrated them to the significant architectural, ceremonial, and social centers of Isfahan and Istanbul.

4.1 The formation of the Naqsh-e Jahan Square

4.1.1 Spatial organization and architectural elements of the maydan

The Naqsh-e Jahan Square was constructed as part of Shah Abbas' large building program in Isfahan, which became the Safavid capital in the 1590s, and remained so until the dissolution of the Safavid state in the early eighteenth century.[643] The move of the capital city from Qazvin to Isfahan probably had diverse reasons and motives, including the fertility of the Isfahan oasis, the city's strategic location in the middle of the central (Fars) province, and economic significance stemming from its location on significant trade routes.[644] Isfahan's distance from the Ottoman border made it safer against the military attacks of the Ottomans, and the city's legacy as the former Seljuk capital was another factor that augmented its symbolic significance.[645] Khuzani Isfahani related that in the year 1591 (1000 AH), the takeover of Gilan by the Ottomans frightened people for the future of the capital city, Qazvin.[646] The same author referred to Isfahan as "the old capital of Iranian Sultans",[647] indicating the consciousness of the Safavid milieus regarding the political legacy of Isfahan.

[643] The date of Safavid capital's transfer to Isfahan has been disputed by scholars because Safavid chroniclers offer conflicting information regarding the question. The year 1597-98 (1006 AH) has been accepted as the transfer's official date by different scholars, including Pope, Hillenbrand, and Babaie. Pope, *Survey of Persian*, III, 1180; Hillenbrand, "Safavid Architecture", 775; Babaie, *Isfahan*, 85. Blake has argued that the shah decided to transfer in 1590, and the transformation occurred in two stages. Blake, *Half the World*, 19, 26. Likewise, Melville has argued that Abbas must have anticipated the capital's transfer to Isfahan from the beginning of his building projects in the city. Melville, "New Light", 164.
[644] Munshi, *History of Shah*, II, 725; Bakhtiar, "Reminiscences", 150; Blake, "Shah 'Abbas", 146.
[645] Babaie, *Isfahan*, 90-93; Bakhtiar, "Reminiscences", 150.
[646] Khuzani Isfahani, *Chronicle*, I, 109.
[647] Ibid, 329.

Shah Abbas' endeavour to create a new political, religious, and cultural center also seems to have been among the main motive behind his decision to transfer the capital. The creation of a new capital meant a decisive break from the previous order that was dominated by the Qizilbash amirs' confederate tendencies, and, ' Isfahan was a clean slate upon which Shah Abbas the Great could erect a new paradigm of authority.'[648] This new paradigm envisaged a centralized political domain consisting of the shah and his Shi'i clerics, his slave corps (gulams) and Armenian merchant community, and Shah Abbas' centralizing tendencies were reflected in the urban plan and built environment of Isfahan.[649] Urbanism and architecture were mobilized not only to provide a coherent infrastructure to the new capital, but also to pronounce the shah's religious, political and social visions.[650] Besides, as different scholars have pointed out, Isfahan's formation gave the shah the opportunity to create a capital city to rival the contemporary capitals of Istanbul and Delhi.[651] With their religious, palatial and civil architectural monuments designed in dialogue with the royal and religious rituals of the Ottoman and Mughal courts, the royal capitals of Istanbul and Delhi embodied these two dynasties' programs of royal authority, legitimacy and confessional agendas.[652] Shah Abbas' Isfahan would compete with the mentioned imperial capitals as a manifestation of his centralized state and Shi'ite polity.

Beginning in 1590, Shah Abbas embarked on several architectural projects in Isfahan, which continued for approximately three decades until his death. His

[648] Babaie, *Isfahan*, 88.
[649] Babaie et al., *Slaves*, 86. While the patronized clerics and slave bureaucrats conducted the military-adminitsrative affairs of the empire, the Armenian merchant community conducted international trade and became pivotal in the shah's project of an empire as an economic force. For Safavid shahs' patronage of Armenian merchants and their settlement in the new capital city, see Babaie et al., *Slaves*, 49–79; Blake, *Half the World*, 188–190.
[650] Rizvi, "Architecture", 373.
[651] Ibid, 384; Quinn, *Shah 'Abbas*, 51.
[652] Quinn, *Shah 'Abbas*, 39.

extended building projects in the city involved palatial edifices, royal and public gardens, bazaars and a caravanserai, mosques and madrasas, two new suburbs for migrant merchant communities, and several civic buildings, including a public bath, a public hospital, and a coffeehouse.[653] His new buildings and urban hubs concentrated to the south of the medieval Seljuq center, around the newly created Naqsh-e Jahan Square, and the Chahar Bagh Avenue, which constituted the foci of Shah Abbas' planned city.[654] While the Naqsh-e Jahan Square was intended to be the political, economic, and religious center of the new Safavid capital, the Chahar Bagh Avenue served both as a space for public leisure, an artery connecting the center of the city to its suburbs, and a building ground for the shah's high-ranking bureaucrats and governors, whose garden retreats flanked the royal avenue.[655] (Figure C33)

Maydan-e Naqsh-e Jahan is a large rectangular space with the dimensions of 524 × 159 meters.[656] The square's layout resembles to the four-iwan scheme with its design of an open internal courtyard whose edges are punctuated by the portals of four monuments.[657] This scheme made up the major architectural model in Iran since the Seljuks, and had been applied to vairous types of edifices including mosques, madrasas, and caravanserais. Beginning from the early sixteenth century, Safavids applied this architectural scheme to different kinds of buildings, too.[658] Its implementation in an urban square, however, seems to be a novel practice both in the Safavid era and the Iranian context in general. The monumental portals of the Qaysariyya Bazaar complex in the north, of the Masjed-e Shah complex in the south,

[653] Munshi, *History of Shah*, I, 536; Astarabadi, *Tārīkh-e Sultānī*, 133; Shamlu, *Qisās al-Khāqānī*, I, 186.
[654] Babaie et al, *Slaves*, 82.
[655] Ibid, 83; Blake, *Half the World*, 91–97; Hunarfar, *Āsār-e Tārīkhī*, 479–493; Babaie, *Isfahan*, 66–67; Hillenbrand, "Safavid Architecture", 777–779.
[656] Galdieri, "Two Building Phases", 68.
[657] Hillenbrand, "Safavid Architecture", 781–782; Bakhtiar, "Reminiscences", 151.
[658] For the explanation and analysis of this plan-type, see Chapter VI, 424–426.

of the Ali-Qapu Palace-Gateway in the west, and of Masjed-e Lutfullah in the east resemble to four iwans dotting the four edges of the spacious square, which functioned like an open courtyard in which various social groups came together for different events and activities. (Figures C34–C35)

As a spacious rectangular urban square, Maydan-e Naqsh-e Jahan comprised a regular and continual sequence of edifices.[659] It was ringed with two hundred two-storied shops, which are all equal to each other.[660] The lower story has two shops and the upper one is divided into four small rooms, two at the rear and two on the square.[661] The accounts of some seventeenth-century chroniclers suggest that shops on different parts of the surrounding bazaar were allocated to particular groups of artisans and tradesmen. Olearius related that on the side of the king's palace were goldsmiths, gruggifts, and lapidaries, and on the opposite, there were shops of merchants, who sell all kinds of stuffs of silk, cotton and wool.[662] Tavernier asserted that there were saddlers' shops between the Ali Qapu Palace and Masjed-e Shah, while shops of booksellers, book binders and trunk makers took place between Masjed-e Shah and the southwestern corner of the square.[663] The sequence of these identical shops, which constituted an enclosure for the whole maydan, was interrupted with the monumental portals of four buildings. (Figure C36)

The entryway of the Qaysariya Bazaar punctuates the middle of the square's northern edge. The Qaysariya Gateway leading to the Imperial Bazaar, *Bazar-e Shāhī* or Qaysariya, serves as the beginning of Isfahan's bazaar, which is one of the largest commercial sprawl not only in Iran, but also in the whole Islamic world.[664] In the

[659] Bakhtiar, "Reminiscences", 153.
[660] Blake, *Half the World*, 106.
[661] Ibid, 106.
[662] Olearius, *Voyages and Travels*, 219.
[663] Tavernier, *Tavernier Seyahatnamesi*, 151.
[664] Gaube and Wirth, *Bazar von Isfahan*, I, 3.

Safavid context, the word *qaysariya* had the meaning of "imperial", and was used for bazaars that were built and maintained by the Safavid shahs.[665] Formally, Qaysariya bazaars consisted of the juxtaposition of two *rasta* bazaars in a way to form a crossroads that is surmounted by a dome.[666] Architecturally, it has the same layout of a *chahār sū*, meaning four roads, which has been a common type of commercial structure in Iran. (Figure C37). The Qaysariya Bazaar of Isfahan features the same architectural scheme. The distinctive feature of the Qaysariya Bazaar in Isfahan, as in the case of other royal bazaars of this type, was its imperial character, and its dedication to the production and sale of precious goods and products.[667]

Consisting of two-storey arcades on both sides of the portal, the monumental gateway of the Qaysariya served not only as an entryway to the imperial bazaar, but also as an assembly of different structures, including the *naqqarakhāna*, and the royal mint.[668] Further, a series of coffee shops were lined in the arcades stretching on each side of the Qaysariya's portal.[669] The whole eastern wing of the square's northern side held a coffeehouse complex that comprised six domed chambers with chamfered corners.[670] Since the northern side of the square contains various architectural elements, its depth is twice the maydan's other edges.[671] The wide roof of this side was used as a tribune (*tamāshāgāh*) for the shahs to watch the square.[672] The portal of the Qaysariya stands at the center of this deeper edge, and was flanked by two lines of arcades forming an open forecourt in the middle. Two large

[665] Blake, *Half the World*, 108. Before the early seventeenth century, there were Qaysariyya bazaars in different cities, including Tabriz, Ardabil, and in the old maydan of Isfahan. Natanzi, *Nuqāvat al-Āsār*, 376; Olearius, *Voyages and Travels*, 178. For Isfahan's old maydan known as the Harun-e Velayet Square, see Golombek, "Urban Patterns", 23–29; Gaube, *Iranian Cities*, 165–166.
[666] Pirnia, *Mi'mārī-ye Irānī* 111; Gaube and Wirth, *Bazar von Isfahan*, I, 69–70.
[667] Pirnia, *Mi'mārī-ye Irānī* 111–112.
[668] Ritter, "herrlische Portal", 363.
[669] Emami, "Coffeehouses, Urban Spaces", 191; Olearius, *Voyages and Travels*, 154.
[670] Emami, "Coffeehouses, Urban Spaces", 192.
[671] Ritter, "herrlische Portal", 361.
[672] Pirnia, *Mi'mārī-ye Irānī*, 118.

inscriptional panels are placed opposite each other in the upper part of the sidewalls, which contain verses from Sa'di's *Gulistan*.[673] There are two murals on the upper walls on each the portal's each side, one depicting Shah Abbas in a war scene with Uzbeks, and the other picturing him hunting.[674] These paintings served as the manifestations of the shah's victories over his enemies, his military and physical power, and kingly glories with attribution to two kingly practice, namely war-making and hunting.[675] (Figures C38–C39)

On the western side of the Naqsh-e Jahan Square stands the Ali-Qapu Palace, which was a six-storied edifice that accommodated various administrative and ceremonial functions, including royal receptions and banquets, watching polo games, parades and festivities on the maydan, and for the administration of justice.[676] Meaning Sublime or High Gate, the name Ali Qapu was not used during Shah Abbas' era, but appeared during Shah Safi's reign.[677] The monument served as a monumental gateway to the royal palatial complex of the Safavid court. It was one of the six gates of the palace complex, which connected the palace with the Naqsh-e Jahan Square. The construction of the six-storied palace-gateway occurred in successive phases. Galdiere argued that the building was erected in five stages, the first three being completed during the reign of Abbas I.[678] This monument assumed its final configuration with six stories during the reign of Abbas II with his addition of a pillared hall (*talār*), which served as a ceremonial ground.[679] The first two floors of the palace served as the *qurchikhāna* (the house of the shah's special guardians)

[673] Ritter, "Monumental Epigraphy", 21.
[674] Hunarfar, *Ganjīna-ye Āsār*, 465; Ritter, "herrlische Portal", 362.
[675] For an iconographic interpretation of the murals depicting the war scene with Uzbeks, see Ritter, "Zum 'Siegesmonument'".
[676] Babaie, *Isfahan*, 117, 130–131.
[677] Blake, *Half the World*, 64.
[678] Galdieri, *Ali Qapu*, 138.
[679] Blake, *Half the World*, 64.; Babaie, *Isfahan*, 129; Hunarfar, *Ganjīna-ye Āsār*, 422–423.

and housed the several administrative offices, including those of the chief judge (*dīvān begī*); the grand master of the household (*khansalār-e 'azām*), the chief of the gatekeepers (*qapuchi bashī*), and the grand vizier.[680] (Figure C40)

During the Safavid times the gate of the Ali Qapu Palace was deemed a sacred threshold by Isfahan's inhabitants, including the shah, who never stepped on or rode over it.[681] Carved out of green porphyry, this semicircular entrance had a door that was brought from Imam Ali's mausoleum in Najaf.[682] This sacred threshold was guarded by many cannon balls that were taken during military campaigns. Visiting Isfahan in the 1620s, Herbert described the cannons in front of the Ali Qapu Palace as follows: "Afore the King's door are thirty-one demicannons of brass and twelve iron culverins unmounted, brought thither, (as I suppose, after some overthrow they gave the Portuguese, or Turk) from Ormus or Babylon."[683] In the mid-seventeenth century, Olearius asserted that the number of cannons, which stand on their carriages, was seventy,[684] and this brings to mind the possibility of that the Safavids recurrently brought cannons taken during their campaigns to Isfahan, and displayed them in front of the Sacred Threshold as a sign of their victories. Hunarfar argued that the number of the cannons was 110, which corresponds to the sum of Imam Ali's name according to *abjad,*[685] a system that assigns numerical values to the letters of Arabic alphabet. Together with the door that was taken from Imam Ali's tomb, this numerical account seems to have symbolized the Safavid palace's connection with the first Shi'i Imam, who was regarded as the true successor of Prophet Muhammad, and provided one of the main source of religio-political

[680] Babaie, *Isfahan*, 130.
[681] Blake, *Half the World*, 64; Hunarfar, *Ganjīna-ye Āsār*, 420.
[682] Blake, *Half the World*, 64; Hunarfar, *Ganjīna-ye Āsār* 420.
[683] Herbert, *Travels in Persia*, 129.
[684] Tavernier, *Tavernier Seyahatnamesi*, 151.
[685] Blake, *Half the World*, 64.

legitimacy for the Safavid shahs in their claims of rulership. As their claimed ancestor, Imam Ali seems to have been a symbolic figure, both in providing legitimacy for the Safavid dynasty, and guarding their palace symbolically and spiritually.

The Ali Qapu Palace served as a gateway to the Safavid palace complex at the same time. Named as *Dowlatkhāna-ye Mubarak-e Naqsh-e Jahān,* this palatial assembly was built in a royal garden that had been used as a locus for palatial buildings of different rulers and notables since at least the Buyids, and named as "the Naqsh-e Jahan Garden" since the mid-fifteenth century.[686] This garden was appropriated by the Safavid rulers in the sixteenth-and seventeenth centuries. In the early sixteenth century, Shah Ismail erected a palace in this garden, which was used as a ground for spending the winter retreat (*qishlāq*), hunting and reception of ambassadors and notables by his successors throughout the sixteenth century.[687] Until the turn of the seventeenth century, however, this royal district remained mainly as a suburban retreat, and was transformed into a monumental palatial complex during the reigns of Abbas I, Safi and Abbas II. [688] Comprising several administrative buildings, gardens and pavilions, the *dowlatkhāna* complex was 'a consolidation of diverse functions within a single royal precinct'.[689] It was bordered by the Naqsh-e Jahan Square on the eastern side, and by the Chahar Bagh Avenue on its western edge,[690] and had several gates and entrances that provided access to the boulevard and the square.[691]

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[686] Ibid, 58–60; Babaie, *Isfahan*, 124; Brignoli, "Palais royaux", 275–276.
[687] Blake, *Half the World*, 60; Junabadi, *Rawḍat al-Ṣafavīya*, 179; Qazvini, *Tārīkh-e Jahān-ārā*, 285; Shirazi, *Takmilat al-Aḫbār*, 51, 71; Khandmir, *Zayl-e Tarikh*, 75, 85; Qummi, *Khulāsat al-Tavārīkh*, I, 119.
[688] Babaie, *Isfahan*, 118; Blake, *Half the World*, 61; Brignoli, "Palais royaux", 276–286, 284–299.
[689] Babaie, *Isfahan*, 120.
[690] Blake, *Half the World*, 59.
[691] Babaie, *Isfahan*, 130.

The Safavid palaces in Tabriz and Qazvin had spatial and visual connections with the royal squares in Tabriz and Qazvin, and it continued in Isfahan in a more elaborate way. The palatial complexes in Tabriz and Qazvin had semi-open sections overlooking the Sahibabad Square and Maydan-e Asb.[692] In Isfahan, the gateway of the Safavid palace complex features a palace with a monumental configuration and functional diversity. In this sense, Isfahan's palace-maydan assembly constitutes the pinnacle, and the most elaborate form of a Safavid urban model, whose evolution can be observed in three successive Safavid capital cities. Besides its spatial connection with the main social and ceremonial centers of the capital city, the Safavid palace complex featured a sense of accessibility and transparency in its architecture.[693] Unlike the royal palaces in the contemporary capital cities of the Ottomans and Mughals, Isfahan's royal palace complex was not conceived as a palace-fort, and was not separated from its sites with fortified walls.[694] According to Babaie, this access and transparency of the Safavid palaces reflected the Shi'ite character of the dynasty, which necessitated ritual accessibility.[695]

Opposite the Ali Qapu Palace is the Sheikh Lutfullah Mosque. In the conventional historiography, this mosque has been regarded as a private royal chapel that was used by a selected number of clientele.[696] Based on a passage in Sheikh Lutfullah's *Risālah al-I'tikāfiyyah*, Treatise on Seclusion, Emami has argued that it

[692] The Safavid palaces in Tabriz and Qazvin had semi-open sections that were designed either as balconies/terraces or wider reception halls overlooking the main squares in these cities, the Sahibabad Square in Tabriz, and Maydan-e Asb in Qazvin. For descriptions and analyses of the Sahibabad Palace in Tabriz, see Barbaro, *Anadolu'ya ve İran'a*, 57; Brignoli, "Palais royaux", 137–139; Babaie, *Isfahan*, 32–40. For detailed descriptions and discussions of the Qazvin palace complex, see Brignoli, "Palais royaux", 178–225; Szuppe, "Palais et Jardins", 152-171; Gulriz, *Minudar*, I, 642–645; Babaie, *Isfahan*, 47-55.
[693] Babaie, *Isfahan*, 113.
[694] For a comparison of the Ottoman, Safavid and Mughal palaces, see Necipoğlu, "Framing the Gaze".
[695] Babaie, *Isfahan*, 115.
[696] Hillenbrand, "Safavid Architecture", 785; Babaie, *Isfahan*, 86.

was not a private sanctuary, but a Friday mosque. In that treatise, Shah Abbas was claimed to have said to Sheikh Lutfullah: "I want to build you a congregational mosque facing my abode, which can fit from a thousand to two thousand people, that Turkmen, slaves, and every other willing person including myself, may come to you."[697] Emami's view was partly confirmed by another contemporary chronicler, Munshi, who reported the shah's decided to erect the Masjed-e Shah complex because he dissatisfied with the mosque and madrasa he established opposite to his palace.[698] Munshi's account suggests that the Sheikh Lutfullah Mosque was conceived as a Friday mosque in its early stage, but decided to be replaced by another one. This raises the possibility that Sheikh Lutfullah Mosque functioned as a congregational mosque, at least for a short period. On the other hand, the known seventeenth-century sources do not mention any occasion on which Sheikh Lutfullah's mosque gathered Isfahan's Muslim population for the Friday ritual or the daily obligatory prayers, unlike Masjed-e Shah, the old Friday Mosque, and the Hakim Mosque. (Figure C41)

Contemporary chroniclers, except Khuzani Isfahani, referred to this mosque not as Sheikh Lutfullah Mosque, but as "a mosque with a monumental dome" (*masjed-e qubbat-e 'azīm*),[699] or "the domed mosque" (*qubbat masjed*).[700] It was called the mosque of Sheikh Lutfullah by several late seventeenth-century travelers.[701] Except McChesney, scholars have agreed on this mosque's association with Sheikh Lutfullah.[702] The accounts of Munshi and Khuzani Isfahani confirm the

[697] Emami, "Inviolable Tresholds", 164. The passage was translated by Abisaab, *Converting Persia*, 84.
[698] Ibid, 1038.
[699] Junabadi, *Rawḍat al-Ṣafavīya*, 759.
[700] Munshi, *History of Shah*, II, 1038.
[701] Blake, *Half the World*,
[702] McChesney, "Four Sources", 123–124; Hunarfar, *Ganjīna-ye Āsār*, 414–415; Pope, *Survey of Persian*, III, 1189; Blake, *Half the World*, 147–149; Babaie, *Isfahan*, 86; Emami, "Inviolable Treshholds", 164.

mosque's association with this sheikh. Munshi reports that Abbas summoned Sheikh Lutfullah from Qazvin to Isfahan, and afterwards, the sheikh began to live 'within the walls of the mosque that had been built opposite to the auspicious *dowlatkhāna*, and 'was busy being the prayer leader for the populace and teaching jurisprudence, reports about the Prophet, and the worship and service of God.'[703] According to Khuzani Isfahani, Shah Abbas brought Sheikh Lutfullah to Isfahan in 1594 (1002 AH), and ordered the construction of a mosque for the sheikh to perform the daily obligatory prayers and the Friday ritual. The shah charged the sheikh as the superintendent of the mosque and donated the spiritual benefit of this religious institution to his father-in-law.[704] Both chronicles asserted that the sheikh's expenses were paid from the revenues of the royal household.[705]

Better known as Sheikh Lutfullah, Lutfullah al-Maysi al-Amili was a leading Safavid cleric and the father-in-law of Shah Abbas at the same time.[706] He was among the distinguished Imami scholars who had migrated from Jabal Amil and were patronized by the Safavid court. Most probably, Sheikh Lutfullah's dignity in the eyes of Shah Abbas owed not only to his position as a distinguished scholar and a father-in-law, but also to his views regarding the legal status of Friday ritual during the Occultation of Imam Mahdi. He was the only leading cleric of Shah Abbas' reign, along with a lesser known scholar of the era, Abdullah bin al-Husein al-Tustari (d. 1612), who regarded the Friday ritual as an unconditional religious obligation.[707] The construction of a special mosque and madrasa in the very center of the capital city for such a scholar would give him the chance to convey his teachings to larger

[703] Munshi, *History of Shah*, I, 249, previously cited by Blake, *Half the World*, 149.
[704] Khuzani Isfahani, *Chronicle*, I, 146.
[705] Ibid, 146; Munshi, *History of Shah*, I, 249.
[706] Abisaab, *Converting Persia*, 55.
[707] Ibid, 3, 72.

audiences regularly. The building had covered rooms (*shabistān*) for the service of ascetics and gnostics,[708] which enabled the sheikh and his closer retinue to stay in the mosque during day and night. At the same time, the construction of such a mosque would concretize and make the shah's support of the sheikh and his views visible for the denizens of Isfahan.

Shah Abbas is mentioned as the patron of this mosque in the foundation inscription, running around the three sides of the iwan. He is referred to as "Abu'l-Muzaffer al-Abbas al-Huseini al-Musavi al-Safavi",[709] underlining his auspicious genealogy that comes from the line of the Imams. Decorated with colorful tiles and calligraphic panels, the mosque's entry gateway, like those to Masjed-e Shah and the Qaysariya Bazaar, features a recessed half-moon.[710] A twisted vestibule leads one to the mosque's prayer hall, which is surmounted by a monumental dome. Almost all surfaces of the entire mosque are covered with precious marbles, colorful tiles, and inscription panels that contain verses from the Quran and Arabic poems eulogizing the Fourteen Immaculate Ones.[711] Unlike most of the Iranian mosques, the Sheikh Lutfullah Mosque does not have minarets and an open courtyard with iwans.[712] The use of central domed chambers without open courtyards as mosques was not without precedent in Iran, but this plan type was preferred generally for mausolea throughout the centuries prior to the Safavids.[713] The architectural model with an open courtyard and minarets was reserved for the new Friday mosque of the city, Masjed-e Shah.

As the social and economic center of the whole city, the Naqsh-e Jahan Square became the focus of several other socio-civic and commercial institutions.

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[708] Khuzani Isfahani, *Chronicle*, I, 146.
[709] Hunarfar, *Ganjīna-ye Āsār* 402; Blair, "Inscribing the Square", 15.
[710] Blake, *Half the World*, 148.
[711] Keyani, *Tārīkh-e Hunar-e Mi'mārī*, 108–109; Hunarfar, *Ganjīna-ye Āsār*, 402–413.
[712] Blake, *Half the World*, 148.
[713] Hattstein and Delius, *Islam*, 354; Wilber, *Architecture of Islamic*, 35.

Along with the four monuments punctuating the square's edges, and the two-storied bazaar enveloping it, the maydan's environs gained different public edifices sponsored by the shah and the elites of Isfahan in the early seventeenth century. Caravanserai of Maqsud Assar is behind the southeastern edge of the square, the mansion of Imamqulu Khan, and the caravanserai of Aliqulu Khan on the square's eastern side were among the significant monuments that were erected by new elites of the capital in this era nearby the maydan, although they were not aligned with it.[714] Shah Abbas' buildings in this region included a caravanserai (*serāy-e shāh*), a public bath (*ḥamām-e shāhī*), a hospital (*dār al-shifā*) and a madrasa (the madrasa of Molla Abdullah), all in the bazaar area, to the north of the maydan.[715] That these four structures concentrated on the northern edge of the square near the bazaar area is far from being coincidental. (Figure C42) The social vitality of this site made it a suitable location for the mentioned royal public edifices.

4.1.2 Chronology of the maydan and its neighbouring monuments

The Naqsh-e Jahan Square and its adjacent edifices were not constructed simultaneously. As documented by different scholars, both the maydan and the royal structures around and near it were established gradually, and the shah's building project was multi-staged.[716] Royal construction projects in the area began in the early 1590s, and continued until the third decade of the seventeenth century. The difficulty of determining the chronology of the maydan and its neighboring monuments has been shown by McChesney and Melville, who translated and analysed the accounts

[714] Blake, *Half the World*, 43, 45, 103.
[715] Ibid, 43, 103; Heinz and Gaube, *Bazaar von Isfahan*, II, 158, 160, 185–186; Sadiqi, *Tārīkh-e Irān*, 153–154.
[716] McChesney, "Four Sources", 114–126; Babaie, *Isfahan*, 83–88; Blake, *Half the World*, 16–23; Melville, "New Light", 159–172.

of different contemporary chroniclers' regarding Abbas' construction projects in Isfahan.[717] Most scholars have contended that the Naqsh-e Jahan Square was constructed in two different phases,[718] while Blake has argued that the two rows of shops encircling the square were erected together in the second phase, and the maydan was constructed as a whole after 1602.[719] Both literary and archaeological evidence confirms that the maydan was established in two phases. The first phase seems to have begun in the early 1590s, when Shah Abbas issued a royal degree to initiate the reparation of the bazaars, and construction of shops and four road bazaars (*chahār sū*) in the old square of Isfahan.[720] At about the same time, he laid out the plan of a new maydan, along with a new Qaysariyya bazaar.[721] This suggests that Shah Abbas planned to have two royal squares in his new capital. Probably, he intended to repeat the two maydan formula of Qazvin, where his grandfather, Tahmasb, had renewed and appropriated the old maydan, and constructed a new square at the same time.[722]

Based on an archaeological investigation on the technical, planimetric and modular elements of the square, Galdieri has revealed that in the first phase, the Naqsh-e Jahan Square's configuration diverged from its later plan, which constitutes the present layout of the square.[723] His examination revealed that the initial project did not anticipate a line of shops opening toward the maydan, as opposed to the inner

[717] McChesney, "Four Sources"; Melville, "New Light".
[718] McChesney, "Four Sources", 114-116; Galdieri, "Two Building Phases", 65–67; Babaie, *Isfahan*, 83–84.
[719] Blake, *Half the World*, 105.
[720] Natanzi, *Nuqāvat al-Āsār*, 376–377; Junabadi, *Rawḍat al-Ṣafavīya*, 714, 759–760; Astarabadi, *Tārīkh-e Sultānī*, 33.
[721] Khuzani Isfahani, *Chronicle*, I, 120; Yazdi, *Tārīkh-e 'Abbāsī*, 113, 376–77; Astarabadi, *Tārīkh-e Sultānī*, 166.
[722] The evidence shows that Qazvin had an old square that was known as the Saadatabad Square in the Safavid period, and gained a new, Maydan-e Asb, during Tahmasb's era. See Gulriz, *Minudar*, I, 647; Brignoli, "Palais royaux", 173–177; Eshraqi, "alentours du palais", 88–90; Wirth, "Qazvin-Safavidische Stadtplannung", 470; Amirshahi, "Ville de Qazwin", 65–76, 145, 154; Pehlevanzada, "Mutala'a-ye Tatbiqi-ye Tarrakhi", 83–86.
[723] Galdieri, "Two Building Phases", 65.

ones situated on the two sides of the bazaar's internal throughfare.[724] After a close reading of four contemporary chronicles, McChesney has demonstrated that the literary sources provide clear confirmation of the archaeological findings.[725] With reference to Natanzi, he brought to light that in its first phase the square was a large space that was used for fireworks, military reviews, and royal entertainments.[726] Natanzi's account of a royal entertainment that was held for the welcoming ceremony of the shah in 1595 suggests that in this phase the square was enclosed with walls of the bazaar encircling the maydan. Upon the shah's order, the walls of the edifice (*'imārat*) surrounding the square were smoothed, painted white, and artists and painters depicted the pictures of bizarre creatures on these surfaces.[727] Natanzi's account reveals that in 1595 there was both a square and an edifice enclosing it, the walls of which were smoothed and painted in the aforesaid festivity.

Along with the surrounding bazaar, the Ali Qapu Palace-Gateway, the Qaysariya bazaar, and Sheikh Lutfullah Mosque began to be constructed in the first phase.[728] The Qaysariya Bazaar appears to be the first monument, whose foundations were laid in the area.[729] Chroniclers gave different dates for the construction of the Qaysariya bazaar.[730] Its plan was probably laid out in 1590 or 1591(999 or 1000AH), mentioned by Natanzi and Yazdi, respectively.[731] According to Khuzani Isfahani, this edifice's construction began in 1592–33 (1001AH) after the demolition of the old Qaysariya Bazaar.[732] The current evidence does not allow us to determine the exact date of the Ali Qapu Palace-Gateway's construction. Yazdi mentioned a royal

[724] Ibid, 66.
[725] McChesney, "Four Sources", 114.
[726] Ibid, 116; Natanzi, *Nuqāvat al-Āsār*, 376–77, 578–79.
[727] Natanzi, *Nuqāvat al-Āsār*, 578.
[728] Melville, "New Light", 164.
[729] McChesney, "Four Sources", 117.
[730] Yazdi, *Tārīkh-e 'Abbāsī*, 326.
[731] Natanzi, *Nuqāvat al-Āsār*, 376–77; Yazdi, *Tārīkh-e 'Abbāsī*, 113.
[732] Khuzani Isfahani, *Chronicle*, I, 120.

palace (*dowlatknāna*) among the buildings that were planned in 1591 (1000 AH),[733] while the date is given as 1593–94 (1002 AH) by Khuzani Isfahani.[734] In 1598 (1006 AH), the same author reported the shah's order to urge the palace's completion,[735] indicating that the palace's construction was not completed in 1598. In this early phase, the Ali-Qapu had probably only one or two stories. Blake has argued that the palace had only one storey that functioned as a simple gate before 1601.[736] Babaie has suggested that it had two stories before 1603.[737] At the present there is a consensus that the Sheikh Lutfullah Mosque's construction began in 1602–3 (1011 AH), which is the earliest date mentioned on the monument's portal.[738] Recently, Melville has revealed Khuzani Isfahani's report indicating that the plan of the Sheikh Lutfullah Mosque was laid out in 1593–4 (1002 AH).[739] This suggests that the monument's construction started at some point between 1593–34 and 1602–3. The foundations of the shah's public bath and madrasa near the maydan also seem to have been laid in this phase. According to Khuzani Isfahani, the shah erected a public bath near the maydan in 1593–94 (1002 AH),[740] and a madrasa for Molla Abdullah Thani Shushtari, in 1597–98 (1006 AH).[741]

Although their constructions began in the first phase, the Qaysariya Bazaar, the Ali-Qapu Palace-Gateway, and Sheikh Lutfullah Mosque were completed in the second phase. The Qaysariya was probably completed in 1602–3 (1011 AH).[742] Its

[733] Ibid, 244.
[734] Khuzani Isfahani, *Chronicle*, I, 146.
[735] Pope, *Survey of Persian*, III, 1189; Hillenbrand, "Safavid Architecture", 784; Babaie, *Isfahan*, 85; Blake, *Half the World*, 147; McChesney, "Four Sources", 124.
[736] Blake, *Half the World*, 61;
[737] Babaie, *Isfahan*, 85–86.
[738] Blair, "Inscribing the Square", 15.
[739] Melville, "New Light", 164. Khuzani Isfahani, *Chronicle*, I, 146.
[740] Ibid, 146.
[741] Khuzani Isfahani, *Chronicle*, I, 244. It is not clear whether the date given by Khuzani Isfahani marked the beginning or completion of the madrasa. Blake suggested that this building was probably built in 1612 (1021 AH) without referencing any contemporary source or inscriptional evidence. Blake, *Half the World*, 158.
[742] Yazdi, *Tārīkh-e 'Abbāsī*, 237.

monumental gateway and the maydan's northern portal were built afterwards, and completed before 1617.[743] The foundation inscription on Sheikh Lutfullah Mosque's monumental portal bears the date of 1603–4 (1012 AH) along with the calligrapher Ali Reza Abbasi's signature, indicating that at least its portal appeared at this date.[744] An inscription on its dome includes the date 1616–17 (1025 AH), and its mihrab bears the monument's latest inscription involving the date 1618–19 (1028 AH).[745] The main parts of the sanctuary must have already appeared at this date. The upper galleries of the Ali-Qapu Palace-Gateway, the water canal and line of trees circulating the whole square were also added in this later phase.[746] Shah Abbas' royal caravanserai to the north of the square in the bazaar area seems to have been erected in this phase, too. Blake has suggested that the shah's caravanserai in Isfahan was constructed in 1603 (1011 AH). The Safavid chronicler Valiqulu Shamlu indicated that the shah endowed his caravanserai and public bath in the name of Prophet Muhammad in 1605–6 (1014 AH)[747], and this suggests that the caravanserai should have been completed before this date. Studying the waqfs of the building, Sipanta confirmed that the building should have been completed by 1605.[748] As underlined by McChesney, the maydan's second phase reflects the shah's concern for creating a vital commercial area at this site.[749] The erection of a royal caravanserai near the maydan, along with a second row of shops around it, confirms this suggestion.

The beginning of the second phase coincided with the transfer of the shopkeepers in the Harun-e Velayat Square and the old bazaar to the Naqsh-e Jahan

[743] Ritter, "königliche Portal", 367, 372-3; Blake, *Half the World*, 108–9.
[744] Blair, "Inscribing the Square", 15.
[745] Ibid, 18.
[746] Astarabadi, *Tārīkh-e Sultānī*, 202; Junabadi, *Rawḍat al-Ṣafavīya*,760; Della Valle, *Pilgrim*, 124.
[747] Shamlu, *Qisās al-Khāqānī*, I, 186.
[748] Sipanta, *Tārīkhce-ye Awqāf*, 66.
[749] McChesney, "Four Sources", 118–119.

Square.[750] Junabadi related that the shah's decision to renew the old maydan and bazaars harassed the possessors of the shops in the bazaar area, and the grandees of Isfahan since they feared that the shah would confiscate their possessions.[751] Their discomfort led the shah to give up his project in the old square, and to initiate the formation of a new center in the Garden of Naqsh-e Jahan, where the *dowlatkhāna* was situated.[752] It seems, the complaints of Isfahan's grandees and artisans led the shah to direct all his attention to the new square, where he added another row of shops. The new square replaced the old maydan as the new religious and commercial center of Isfahan, and the old square remained relatively idle.

It is uncertain whether the maydan and all royal buildings around and near it were a part of a single plan. The accounts of some contemporary chroniclers give the impression of that the maydan and at least some of its neighbouring monuments were planned together. Junabadi related that the shah ordered the establishment of a new square that would contain shops, mosques, madrasas and caravanserais.[753] Similarly, Yazdi reported that Shah Abbas planned a building project, *'imārat*, consisting of a maydan surrounded with two rows of shops, coffeehouses, caravanserais, and public baths.[754] The square's geometrical plan with axially laid-out royal monuments confirms the argument for the existence of a single plan for the maydan and its adjacent structures. On the other hand, Munshi related that in 1611, 'Shah Abbas conceived the idea of building a great mosque adjacent to the Naqsh-e Jahan Square in Isfahan, a mosque which would be without equal in Iran and possibly in the entire civilized world.'[755]

[750] Yazdi, *Tārīkh-e 'Abbāsī*, 237.
[751] Junabadi, *Rawḍat al-Ṣafavīya*, 759–60.
[752] Ibid, 759–60.
[753]Ibid, 759.
[754] Yazdi, *Tārīkh-e 'Abbāsī*, 326.
[755] Munshi, *History of Shah*, II, 1038.

According to Munshi's report, the shah's dissatisfaction with the mosque and theological seminary he built on the northern and eastern sides of the maydan was the reason behind his decision to erect a new Friday mosque in Isfahan.[756] This refers to the possibility that the Masjed-e Shah complex was not a part of the Naqsh-e Jahan Square's original plan, and the Sheikh Lutfullah Mosque and the madrasa of Molla Abdullah were conceived as the royal mosque and madrasa structures of Abbas' urban project, which were mentioned by Yazdi and Astarabadi. The current evidence does not allow us to reach a definite conclusion concerning this question. If the shah decided to construct Masjed-e Shah in 1611, the aim for creating a rival Friday mosque of Ahmed I, whose foundations were laid a few years ago, could be among the reasons behind the shah's decision for the erection of Masjed-e Shah. Although the known sources do not offer any concrete evidence for it, the shah should have been informed about the sultan's Friday mosque project, thanks to the numerous contact zones between the courts of Shah Abbas and Sultan Ahmed, including spies, envoys, merchants, pilgrims, and travelers. It is known that Shah Abbas had an army of spies in the Ottoman lands who informed him regarding the significant events in the Ottoman empire.[757] It is also very probable that the shah's envoy, Muhammad Beg Rumlu, who was sent to Isfahan in 1610, should have informed Shah Abbas about the sultan's new foundation in Istanbul.[758] Similarly, the Safavid ambassadorial retinue, which visited Istanbul in 1612, and was taken to the sultan's presence after a spectacular procession through the construction site of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque, should have reported the shah concerning the sultan's new mosque project in Istanbul.[759]

[756] Ibid, 1038.
[757] Safakesh, *Ṣafavīyān dar Guzargāh*, 468; Blow, *Shah Abbas*, 162.
[758] Munshi, *History of Shah*, II, 1021.
[759] Mustafa Safi, *Mustafa Safi'nin*, II, 144.

4.2 The Hippodrome's transformation into Atmeydanı: ca. 1450–ca. 1600

Atmeydanı in Istanbul constituted one of the most significant urban centers of the Ottoman capital. This urban square is on the first of Istanbul's seven hills, occupying the place of the Byzantine Hippodrome. It is very close to the main political-administrative center, the Topkapı Palace, and one of the most significant religious sanctuaries of the city, Hagia Sophia. Likewise, it was directly connected to the Ottoman capital's main ceremonial boulevard, Divanyolu. Beginning with the late fifteenth century, Atmeydanı and its close environs served as the locus of several important architectural projects including viziers' palaces, public baths, and mosques erected by the members of the Ottoman dynasty and the imperial household. This square's transformation and gaining its final form took more than a century after the Byzantine capital's takeover by the Ottomans. Until the mid-sixteenth century, the remnants of the Hippodrome were visible on the square, which took its definite form in the early modern period with the construction of the Sultan Ahmed complex in the early seventeenth century.

Physically, functionally and symbolically, Atmeydanı appropriated the Byzantine Hippodrome, which constituted the most significant center of public life and courtly ceremonials in Constantinople. Along with the Hagia Sophia Church and the Imperial Palace, Constantinople's Hippodrome was a part of the Byzantine capital's tripartite administrative, religious, and ceremonial complex.[760] It was enveloped by several significant monuments and public buildings, including the Imperial Palace in the east, Hagia Sophia in the north, and the Baths of Zeuxippus (Constantinople's main bathing establishment) and the Senate Building on the northeast. In the northeast, the monumental Milion Arch connected it to the Mese,

[760] Magdalino, *Ortaçağ'da İstanbul*, 51.

the city's primary processional and ceremonial route. To its northwest was the Augustaion Square, which was lined with the Hagia Sophia, the Senate House, a Basilica, and two imperial hospitals.[761] (Figure C43)

The Hippodrome's construction had been initiated by Septimus Severus (d. 211) in the second or third century AC, and it was completed under Constantine I (d. 337) in the early fourth century.[762] Since it had been intended mainly to serve as a stage for races, it had been designed to provide a long platform for the running chariots and horses, and tribunes for crowded audiences, and the emperor and the elites. It was a rectangular platform, which was surrounded by three successive enclosure walls on its eastern and westers sides, and whose southern edge featured a curved end called the Sphendone.[763] It had imperial statues, columns, and adornments taken from different parts of the empire, and a royal lodge called Kathisma, where emperors viewed the races.[764] (Figure C44)

Between the fourth and twelfth centuries, Constantinople's Hippodrome served as the city's main public and ceremonial platform. Here, the emperors celebrated their victories and demonstrated their generosity by offering lavish entertainments regularly. Gladiator competitions, juggling, acrobatics, dramatic performances of various kinds, and wild beast fights were among such festive events.[765] The Hippodrome constituted the only place where people met their emperors, and could utter their opinions, critics and demands to him, even if via mediators called "mandator".[766] It assumed the role of people's assemblies, where

[761] Bardill, "Architecture and Archaeology", 86–96.
[762] Dagron, *Konstantinopolis Hipodromu*, 34–36.
[763] Casson, *Preliminary Report*, 1–6.
[764] Mango, "History", 36; Bardill, "Monuments and Decoration", 140–141; France-Auzepy, "İstanbul'un Hipodromu", 53; Dagron, *Konstantinopolis Hipodromu*, 43, 90–91.
[765] Roueche, "Factions and Entertainment", 50, 56.
[766] Frane-Auzepy, "İstanbul'un Hipodromu", 66.

people exchanged opinions, conveyed messages to the sovereigns, initiated political uprisings, and even replaced the emperors.[767] Further, it functioned as a platform, where social tensions, stratifications, and crises could be represented, mainly through the factions who supported different competing teams in the races.[768]

The Hippodrome remained as one of the key centers of Constantinople until the early thirteenth century, when it was plundered by Latin invaders.[769] Within one and a half century after the Latin invasions, it remained in a ruined state. The Ottomans encountered a devastated area when they conquered the city in the mid-fifteenth century.[770] Before the city's takeover, the environs of the Hippodrome and the Imperial Palace had only a few domed structures.[771] Until the early decades of the sixteenth century, this area remained more or less empty, with some remnants of the Sphendone, and several columns on its central axis. A few drawings from the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries display the ruins of the Hippodrome during the city's early Ottoman decades.[772] Based on an original drawing from the late fifteenth century, Vavassore's portrait of Istanbul is one of the earliest visual documentations of Atmeydanı in this period. (Figure C45) In this drawing, the Sphendone's two-storied and columned sections and columns lined up in the Hippodrome's centerline are visible. In addition, this drawing depicts several single-storied houses near the Sphendone, and in the closer environs of the Hippodrome. Panvinio's drawing of the Hippodrome is another visual document that captures the architectural environment of Atmeydanı in the early decades of the Ottoman rule, although the picture's print is dated 1600. (Figure C46) In this painting, sixteen columns lined in the platform's

[767] Dagron, *Konstantinopolis Hipodromu*, 11–13; France-Auzepy, "İstanbul'un Hipodromu", 67.
[768] Dagron, *Konstantinopolis Hipodromu*, 217–237; Roueche, "Factions and Entertainment", 61.
[769] France-Auzepy, "İstanbul'un Hipodromu", 5.
[770] Mango, *Brazen House*, 13; Atasoy, *İbrahim Paşa Sarayı*, 41.
[771] Denker, Yağcı, and Akay, "Büyük Saray Kazısı", 129.
[772] Atasoy, *İbrahim Paşa Sarayı*, 41–44; Kuban, "Atmeydanı", 19; Kafescioğlu, "New Look", 131.

center, and the Sphendone's two stories are depicted. Single-storied houses in front of the Sphendone and in the maydan's edges are also visible in the same image. These images display that in the earliest Ottoman decades, simple residential buildings constituted the only new structures on Atmeydanı and its closer environs.

In the drawings from the 1530s, some Ottoman monuments began to appear on the square. In the 1530s, Atmeydanı was no longer an empty area, merely with the ruins and columns of the Hippodrome. Its edges had gained several significant monuments that were erected by the Ottoman elites. Such buildings first appear in Van Aalst's drawing of Atmeydanı which is dated 1533. (Figure C47) This picture shows that the maydan's environs gained several new structures in these decades, although various buildings around the square, except the Firuz Agha complex, are not identifiable. A painting in *Beyān-ı Menāzīl* from exactly the same years provides a more detailed depiction of maydan in the 1530s. (Figure C48) The area still contained the Sphendone's remnants and several columns, but it was lined with several new structures. To the west of the square, the İbrahim Pasha Palace and the Firuz Agha complex are visible, whereas two vizierial palaces appear on the maydan's eastern side. These edifices' environs are portrayed as built-up areas with several new timber-roofed buildings and domed structures,[773] suggesting that the area housed some ordinary residential buildings besides new monumental structures.

In the late fifteenth century, Atmeydanı appeared as a significant locus for the architectural projects of the Ottoman elites, and gained several significant architectural monuments in the following century. At the end of the sixteenth century, the square and its environs became a densely built zone of the city. The construction boom in the area began during the period of Bayezid II, although a few

[773] For an analysis of this painting, see Kafescioğlu, *Constantinopolis/Istanbul*, 207 –226.

minor edifices were erected under Mehmed II, too. Güngörmez Masjid, a former Byzantine church, Üskübi İbrahim Agha Mosque and Muhterem Taşkendi Tomb were among the earliest building that were commissioned by Mehmed II's high-ranking officials.[774] Each of these were modest edifices, which were erected near the square, but not aligned with it. Most probably, the mosque complex and the palace of Firuz Agha, Bayezid II's chief treasurer, constituted the first structures that were built on Atmeydanı's edges and aligned with the maydan. Located on the square's southwest, at the juncture of Divanyolu and Atmeydanı, Firuz Agha's religious complex consisted of a mosque, a tomb and a primary school, whose construction was completed in the 1490s.[775] Similarly, his palace with three successive courtyards were erected in the same years, whose configuration emulated the Topkapı Palace's layout.[776] Besides Firuz Agha, several other bureaucrats in Bayezid II's court constructed a variety of buildings around this area. İshak Pasha's mosque and public bath, Nahılbend Mosque erected by an officer named Hasan Agha, and Acı Hamam patronized by Fenerizade Kazasker Alaaddin Ali can be counted among these structures.[777]

Beginning in the 1530s, all edges of Atmeydanı were built up by several new edifices patronized by different members of the Ottoman court and dynasty. The İbrahim Pasha Palace, the Helvacıbaşı Mosque, and *Çuḳur Çeşmeler* (Sunken Fountains) were lined up on Atmeydanı's western side. (Figure C49) To the east of the square was the tomb and primary school of İskender Pasha (d. 1569), which were located near the Marmara shores. Rüstem Pasha founded a public fountain on the

[774] Tanman and Çobanoğlu, "Ottoman Architecture", 37.
[775] Ibid, 38.
[776] Kafescioğlu, "New Look", 136.
[777] Tanman and Çobanoğlu, "Ottoman Architecture", 38.

remnants of the Sphendone, while Haseki Hürrem erected a double bath in the square's northeast.[778]

Atmeydanı's silhouette changed in a more radical manner in the 1550s. It lost the Sphendone's remnants and the Hippodrome's various columns. Its environs gained several vizierial palaces.[779] The dense construction activity, and the removal of various Byzantine materials decreased the visibility of the square's Byzantine past, and rendered the space into an almost completely Ottomanized center. Until the mid-sixteenth century, Atmeydanı's centerline and the ruined Sphendone housed numerous columns from the Byzantine era. A majority of these columns were used in the construction of the Süleymaniye complex in the mid-sixteenth century[780]while the rest seems to have remained in situ until the erection of the Sultan Ahmed complex, and used as spolia in this building complex.[781] In the 1570s, Gerlach mentioned nine columns on Atmeydanı,[782] while Lubenau, approximately ten years later, asserted that there were three columns in the square.[783] This suggests that the columns' removal occurred gradually in the second half of the sixteenth century.

Different travelers visiting Istanbul in the second half of the sixteenth century mentioned two columns on Atmeydanı, the Egyptian Obelisk and the Serpent Column.[784] (Figure C50) These two columns constituted two of the three ancient pillars that have survived until today. Especially the Serpent Column, which is a hallow bronze pillar representing a sculpture of three intertwined serpents,[785]

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[778] Ibid, 39–43.
[779] Atasoy, *İbrahim Paşa Sarayı*, 41.
[780] Dernschwam, *İstanbul ve Anadolu'ya*, 139; Atasoy, *İbrahim Paşa Sarayı*, 45.
[781] Casson, *Preliminary Report*, 2.
[782] Gerlach, *Türkiye Günlüğü*, II, 525.
[783] Lubenau, *Reinhold Lubenau Seyahatnamesi*, I, 190.
[784] Nicolay, *Muhteşem Süleyman'ın İmparatorluğunda*, 157; Lubenau, *Reinhold Lubenau Seyahatnamesi*, I, 190–192; Fresne-Cenaye, *Fresne-Cenaye Seyahatnamesi*, 69; Gerlach, *Türkiye Günlüğü*, I, 525; Dernschwam, *İstanbul ve Anadolu'ya*, 139; Schweigger, *Sultanlar Kentine Yolculuk*, 151.
[785] Bardill, "Monuments and Decoration", 165.

attracted special attention of travelers and Istanbul's denizens. Most probably, the main source of this attraction was a legend that was associated with this statue. According to the common belief, which emerged in the Byzantine period, this bronze statue had the power to keep snakes away from the city.[786] People kept believing this statue's magical power to protect the city from snakes in the Ottoman era. Different narratives from the Ottoman period indicate that after the city's takeover, Mehmed II beheaded one of the three snakes of this statue when he was playing javelin, and afterwards, a myriad of snakes appeared in the city.[787] (Figure C51)

In the 1520s, the square earned a group of statues that were brought from Hungary by İbrahim Pasha after a victorious military campaign, and put in front of his palace. These statues remained there for approximately ten years until the pasha was executed in 1536.[788] Hasan Beyzade asserted that, along with three bizarre sculptures (*ṣūret-i ġarīb*), İbrahim Pasha brought two cannon balls from the king's palace in Budin. The chronicler related that these cannon balls actually belonged to Mehmed II, who laid a siege to the city, but could not conquer it. Accordingly, the Hungarian emperor preserved these cannons within his palace, and displayed them as a subject of spectacle (*temāşā*) to people from different classes.[789] It seems, putting the mentioned sculptures on Atmeydanı was conceived as a parallel to the Hungarian king's act of displaying the Ottoman cannons in his palace. These sculptures seem to have served as objects that reminded the Ottoman military victories in Hungary.

[786] Berger, "Hippodrome of Constantinople", 203.
[787] While Gelibolulu Mustafa Ali claimed that İbrahim Pasha broke the said head, Schweigger and Lubenau asserted that it was broken by Mehmed II. A miniature painting from the sixteenth century displays Mehmed II throwing an arrow into the Serpent column and broke one of the snake heads. It seems, the common opinion was that it was broken by Mehmed II. Gelibolulu Mustafa Ali, *Künhü'l-Ahbar*, 462; Schweigger, *Sultanlar Kentine Yolculuk*, 151; Lubenau, *Reinhold Lubenau Seyahatnamesi*, I, 191–192.
[788] Celalzade, *Süleymanname*, 343; Yenişehirlioğlu, "İbrahim Pasha", 113–119.
[789] Ahmed Paşa, *Hasan Beyzade Tarihi*, III, 72–73.

Beside his statues, İbrahim Pasha's palace deserves special attention. This palace's construction can be assessed as a turning point in the history of Atmeydanı. After its erection, the square became a center of various architectural projects undertook by the Ottoman elites, and the new ceremonial center of the Ottoman sultans.[790] Also known as the Atmeydanı Palace,[791] the İbrahim Pasha Palace was a vizieral residence given as a gift by Sultan Süleyman to İbrahim Pasha, who served as the grand vizier for thirteen years between 1520 and 1536, and ruled the empire with a huge authority that was almost equal to the sultan's power, 'more than any other grand vizier before and after.'[792] Even though his grand vizierate represents a unique case in terms of his authority's limits, it marked the beginning of a new era in the political and administrative practices of the Ottoman court, as well as the Ottoman sultans' policies of self-representation.

From the reign of Sultan Süleyman onwards, grand viziers began to be chosen overwhelmingly from among the slaves who were members of the imperial household.[793] This was a strategy for eliminating the potential of any power bases in the Ottoman court, who could rival the sultan's absolute authority. Authorization of slaves as deputies or representatives in political-administrative matters gave the sultans the ability to assign the responsibility of daily political-administrative tasks without creating a real and an independent power base that would constitute an alternative to their power. For a slave, it was not possible to claim his own dynasty, or to leave a legacy for his offspring. After Ottoman sultans began to appoint grand

[790] Turan, "Sultan's Favorite", 153–55,169.
[791] Biga, *Tarih-i Nihadi*, I, 71.
[792] Turan, "Sultan's Favorite", 106–107; Atasoy, *İbrahim Paşa Sarayı*, 25–26.
[793] Although the empowerment of devshirmes as grand viziers had already begun during Mehmed II's reign, it became customary during Sultan Süleyman's reign. Most of the kul viziers of Mehmed II and Bayezid II were descendants of the Balkan-Byzantine aristocracies, not ordinary devshirmes. See Lowry, *Nature*, 26–27.

viziers from among their slaves, they became more and more secluded from the public, and retreated from daily administrative affairs. As discussed in the previous chapter, they withdrew from appearing in public and their own court, except during special events such as Friday processions or ceremonial festivities. Both in the court and the city, grand viziers assumed the role of the sultan's deputy, and became mediators between the sultan and his subjects.[794] In this sense, the construction of grand vizier's palace in the main public and ceremonial center of the capital city was not coincidental. While the sultan was residing in his fortified and secluded palace,[795] his authority became visible and accessible in the city through his grand vizier, whose palace was located on the main ceremonial and social hub of the capital.[796]

The date of construction of the İbrahim Pasha Palace is not known for sure. Although some historians argued that its construction goes back to the reign of Beyazid II,[797] the earliest documents regarding the construction and repairs of this palace belong to the 1520s.[798] The evidence suggests that prior to this palace's construction, there was a *mehterẖāne* (headquarters for the royal military band) on its site, a remarkable resemblance to the Persianate urban tradition of locating the royal kettle drum house on the city square.[799] Based on the waqfiyya of Firuz Agha dated the 1490s, Kafescioğlu has argued that the *mehterẖāne* and the palace of Firuz Agha, which occupied a large area including the space over the Binbirdirek, or Philoxenos cistern, were taken over for the İbrahim Pasha Palace's construction.[800] On the other hand, Öten has suggested that the *mehterẖāne* was a part of the İbrahim Pasha Palace

[794] Yılmaz, *Caliphate Redefined*, 13–14.
[795] For the Topkapı Palace, see Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial*.
[796] Turan, "Sultan's Favorite", 169–179.
[797] Çetintaş, *Saray ve Kervansaraylarımız*, 34; Atasoy, *İbrahim Paşa Sarayı*, 48.
[798] Konyalı, *İstanbul Abidelerinden*, 87–88, 96–97; Turan, "Sultan's Favorite", 143; Atasoy, *İbrahim Paşa Sarayı*, 48.
[799] Kafescioğlu, "New Look", 125.
[800] Ibid, 136.

in the seventeenth century and afterwards.[801] Both assertions can be true, and a second *mehterḫāne* could have been constructed as a part of the İbrahim Pasha Palace, which partly occupied the place of a former *mehterḫāne*. As I display in the following pages, other vizierial palaces facing Atmeydanı had similar *mehterḫāne*s, which appear as a common architectural element of the vizieral palaces in this ceremonial setting.

Even if its construction predated the 1520s, the İbrahim Pasha Palace began to appear as a significant place in this period as the grand vizier's residence. Located less than half-a-mile southwest of the Topkapı Palace, it occupied Atmeydanı's western edge, and the remnants of the Hippodrome western wall containing graded tribunes.[802] It was a gigantic structure consisting of five courtyards with several sections including a council hall (*dīvānḫāne*), a treasure room (*ḫazīne odası*), a bath, various kitchens, several rooms and terraces, barns, as well as a monumental tower.[803] Several sixteenth-century sources mentioned this palace among Istanbul's most monumental residences. Hierosolimitono indicated that İbrahim Pasha's palace was the second biggest palatial structure in the city.[804] Indicating its monumentality and strength, Dernschwam resembled this palace to a grandiose castle.[805] In the seventeenth century, Hasan Beyzade pointed to the solidity of this palace's door, which blocked numerous rebels attacking the palace for pending the grand vizier Ahmed Pasha during a revolt in 1603–4 (1012 AH).[806] (Figures C52–C53)

[801] Öten, "Sultan Ahmed Külliyesi", 291.
[802] Turan, "Sultan's Favorite", 143; Atasoy, *İbrahim Paşa Sarayı*, 45, 111.
[803] Atasoy, *İbrahim Paşa Sarayı*, 231; Konyalı, *İstanbul Abidelerinden*, 91; Çetintaş, *Saray ve Kervansaraylarımız*, 20–24.
[804] Hierosolimitono, *Yahudi Doktor'un*, 65.
[805] Dernschwam, *İstanbul ve Anadolu'ya*, 139.
[806] Ahmed Paşa, *Hasan Beyzade Tarihi*, III, 702–704.

The building had remarkable similarities with the Topkapı Palace. Similar to the sultans' palace, it was a stone structure with enormous dimensions, successive courtyards, a council hall, separate sections for inner and outer households, and a gigantic tower.[807] This architectural resemblance was concordant with the functional parallelism between the palaces of the grand vizier and the sultans. Just as the sultans held divan meetings and received visitors in their palaces, so too the grand viziers held receptions in this palace.[808] Benedict Curipeschits, who visited Istanbul in 1530 and witnessed a reception in the İbrahim Pasha Palace, depicted this palace's reception hall as a very ornate room adorned with precious textiles and materials, where İbrahim Pasha sits like a king.[809] As the residence of the sultan's representative, the grand vizier's mansion had to evoke the architecture and monumentality of the sultan's palace. Still, it featured particular differences from the sultan's palace in terms of its siting and architectural configuration. Unlike the Topkapı Palace, it directly overlooked a public square. Although it had strong walls and entrances, it was more accessible to its audiences than the sultan's palace, which had successive courtyards preceded by fortified gate buildings and towers.[810]

After İbrahim Pasha's execution in 1536, part of his palace was assigned to slave soldiers. Between the mid-sixteenth and mid-seventeenth centuries, the palace continued to be used as the residence of other grand viziers. Lala Mustafa Pasha (d.1580), Bosnalı İbrahim Pasha (d. 1601), Yemişçi Hasan Pasha (d. 1603), Silahtar Mustafa Pasha (d. 1642) and Recep Pasha (d. 1632) were among the grand viziers who resided in this palace.[811] Besides serving as a residence of several grand viziers,

[807] Atasoy, *İbrahim Paşa Sarayı*, 231; Turan, "Sultan's Favorite", 149–150.
[808] Turan, "Sultan's Favorite", 149–150.
[809] Curipeschitz, *Yolculuk Günlüğü 1530*, 44.
[810] Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial*, 33–40.
[811] Atasoy *İbrahim Paşa Sarayı*, 56–61; Konyalı, *İstanbul Abidelerinden*, 174–183.

this palace functioned as a tribune for the sultan and his distinguished guests on several festive occasions throughout the sixteenth century. During the preparations of the 1582 circumcision festival, its eastern façade gained a semi-open royal kiosk (*ḳaṣr-ı şāhnişīn*) and wooden belvederes for viewing the spectacles that were held on Atmeydanı.[812]

Simultaneous with the construction of the Sultan Ahmed complex, the İbrahim Pasha's Palace underwent an extended renovation and repair. Its kitchen, cellar, loggia, and some rooms were demolished and reconstructed in this process. Further, its royal mansion was replaced by a new semi-open pavilion,[813] which must have served as a royal tribune, too. An archival document dated 1613–14 (1022 AH) records repair costs of this palace, which counted 100,000 *aḳçe*s and was paid to Muhammed Agha, the head of royal architects.[814] This document is among the registers of Sultan Ahmed complex's construction, and this confirms that the İbrahim Pasha's Palace's reconstruction and the Sultan Ahmed complex's building were parts of the same architectural project, which reconfigured Atmeydanı as a whole.

As a parenthesis, the striking simultaneity of Sultan Ahmed's building projects in the Edirne Palace, which was also in front of a maydan, and Atmeydanı is worth mentioning. It indicates the sultan's concern for refining these ceremonial spaces for courtly celebrations and festivities in two centers of the empire. Both in Edirne and Istanbul, he attempted to reshape the urban squares with the addition of mosques and royal kiosk-tribunes facing the squares. Concurrent with the Sultan Ahmed Mosque's construction and the reconstruction of the İbrahim Pasha Palace's royal belvedere, Edirne's New Palace gained a new kiosk fronting the *Cirit* or *Sırık*

[812] Atasoy, *İbrahim Paşa Sarayı*, 86.
[813] Öten, "Sultan Ahmed Külliyesi", 289.
[814] TSM A. d. 205.0001, 7.

Meydānı (Javelin or Polo Square) from where Sultan Ahmed and his successors watched the ceremonies and festivities occurring on the city's maydan.[815] Sultan Ahmed's attempts to reshape the royal centers of the two capital cities seem to have a direct connection with his ceremonial agenda. He increased the spectacle and frequency of courtly ceremonials and public outings, and maydans, royal mosques and pavilions accompanying provided him with suitable ceremonial settings.

The İbrahim Pasha Palace was not the only vizierial residence around Atmeydanı. Visual and literary documentation reveals that there were at least four more vizierial palaces near the square, although none of them survived after the sixteenth century. Evliya Çelebi reported that five different vizierial palaces were demolished for the Sultan Ahmed Mosque's construction.[816] A sales sheet from the reign of Ahmed I renders it possible to identify two sixteenth-century vizier palaces that were situated on Atmeydanı's eastern edge.[817] It displays that two vizier palaces were sold to the sultan for opening space for his new mosque.[818] Known as the Ahmed Pasha Palace,[819] one of these palaces belonged to Ayşe Sultan, who was the daughter of Rüstem Pasha and Mihrimah Sultan,[820] and married two successive grand viziers, Bosnalı İbrahim Pasha and Yemişçi Hasan Pasha, respectively.[821] The document describes the mentioned palace's location and architectural features in a detailed manner. Accordingly, the palace was situated to the east of Atmeydanı. It was bordered by a road in the east, by a masjid and houses in the south, and the

[815] For this maydan and its relation with the Ottoman palace overlooking it, see Nutku, Özdemir, *IV. Mehmed'in*, 45; Osman, *Edirne Sarayı*, 21.
[816] Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi*, I, 100.
[817] TSM A. d.10748.
[818] Before, part of this document was published by Mustafa Bilge, and addressed by Tülay Artan and Aliye Öten in different articles. See Bilge, "Sultanahmed Cami"; Artan, "Politics of Ottoman", 365–408; Öten, "Sultan Ahmed Külliyesi".
[819] Fresne-Cenaye, *Fresne-Cenaye Seyahatnamesi*, 69; Bilge, "Sultanahmed Cami"; 529.
[820] TSM A. d. 10748, 2.
[821] Katib Çelebi, *Fezleke*, I, 233.

Mesih Pasha Palace in the north. The palace comprised two courtyards (*muḥavvaṭa*), one for the inner and the other for the outer households. The inner courtyard had a privy room (*ḫāṣ oda*), a reclusion room (*çileḫāne*), a bath, several two-storied rooms that were connected to each other with corridors, gardens with pools, a treasure room, a storeroom, and kitchens. The outer courtyard, on the other hand, contained a council hall, privy rooms, a treasure room, two barns, storerooms, rooms for tailors, gardens, a room with a terrace over the entrance door, as well as a room with *mehter* (kettle drums). The document mentions that various rooms, a bath, and a reclusion room of this palace were adorned with ceramic tiles.[822]

This description unfolds that the architectural layout and functions of this palace resembled to the İbrahim Pasha Palace. Similar to the İbrahim Pasha Palace, it consisted of inner and outer courtyards, and had a council hall, a terrace room over its entrance, and *mehterḫāne* sections. Although the palace's ownership belonged to a princess, it seems to have conceived as a residence for the grand viziers, too. The existence of a council hall confirms this suggestion. It could have been used by Ayşe Sultan's husbands, both being grand viziers. The known archival documents and narrative sources do not provide any information regarding the date of this palace's construction. Since Mihrimah Sultan and Rüstem Pasha married in 1539,[823] it can be suggested that this palace, which belonged to their daughter, was erected in the second half of the sixteenth century. It is also possible that it was constructed at an earlier date for someone else, and given to Ayşe Sultan later. Indeed, a miniature painting in *Beyān-ı Menāzīl* depicts two seperate buildings on the eastern edge of Atmeydanı, indicating the existence of two buildings on the site of Ahmed Pasha

[822] TSM A. d.10748, 2.
[823] Kaçar, "Mihrimah Sultan", 39.

Palace. One of these buildings can be the same palace, which was given to Ayşe Sultan in the second half of the sixteenth century.

The same sales sheet mentions a second palace that was sold to Ahmed I in 1018 (1609–10 AD).[824] This palace belonged to Bosnalı İbrahim Pasha (d. 1622), the son of Sokollu Mehmed Pasha (d. 1579) and İsmihan Sultan (d.1585).[825] In the 1570s, Gerlach recounted this palace among the monuments that were patronized by Sokollu Mehmed Pasha.[826] Unlike the Ahmed Pasha Palace, there is information on this palace's date of construction and architect. Constructed in the 1570s[827], the palace was addressed as one of the mansions built by Sinan. His autobiographies, *Tuḥfet'ü'l-Mi'mārīn* and the *Teẕkiretü'l-Ebniye*, mention a mansion beside the gate of Ahurkapısı and in the vicinity of Hagia Sophia.[828] The palace's location was defined as the Kabasakal Sinan Agha distinct in above-mentioned document, which indicates that the palace was surrounded by roads on three sides, and İskender Pasha's tomb and a certain Abdi Agha's houses on the other side.[829] The palace was depicted as an edifice centered on a single courtyard, containing a council hall, several two-storied rooms for the personnel, a fountain, mansions (*köşk*), a bath, storerooms, pools and a water-tank with a fountain, kitchens, a reclusion room and a treasure room with a basement. This palace's several sections were described as finely adorned places covered with ceramic tiles and contained cupboards decorated with mother-of-pearl.[830] The paintings of David Ungnad, the Habsburg ambassador to Istanbul in 1573–78, provide a glimpse into the luxury adornments of this palace's

[824] TSM A. d.10748, 4.
[825] Ibid, 4; Bilge, "Sultanahmed Cami", 531.
[826] Gerlach, *Türkiye Günlüğü*, I, 459.
[827] Artan, "Politics of Ottoman", 378.
[828] Ibid, 377.
[829] TSM A. d.10748, 3.
[830] Ibid, 3.

interior.[831] (Figure C54) The sale sheet's description suggests that Sokollu Mehmed Pasha's palace did not have a harem section, but was designed as a residence only for the grand vizier. Considering that Sokollu Mehmed Pasha and his wife İsmihan Sultan had another palace in Kadırga, it can be suggested that the palace on Atmeydanı was used only by the grand vizier as a place where he held councils and receptions, and conducted some administrative affairs of the empire. Another possibility is, as Artan has offered, that the palace had harem quarters that were not sold to Sultan Ahmed.[832]

The sales sheet and some narrative sources indicate the existence of other palaces or mansions in the vicinity of Atmeydanı. The sales sheet mentions the Mesih Pasha Palace as an edifice to the north of Ahmed Pasha Palace.[833] This indicates the existence of another vizier palace on the eastern side of Atmeydanı, to the north of the Ahmed Pasha Palace. In his travelogue, Gerlach mentions another mansion near the square, which Selim I gifted to his daughter Şah Sultan (d. 1577), the wife of Zal Mahmud Pasha (d. 1580).[834] Unfortunately, Gerlach does not specify the exact location and architectural features of this palace. Selaniki addressed to another vizierial palace in this area, which belonged to Sinan Pasha, and was used as a storehouse in the festival of 1582.[835] Further research can shed light on the architecture and exact locations of the palace of Şah Sultan and Sinan Pasha.

Although the known sources allow us to identify four vizierial residences in the region, it is probable that Atmeydanı's environs had more than four vizierial

[831] These images were previously published by Tülay Artan in her article of vizierial palaces. The paintings were reproduced by an artist named Zacharian Wehme (1558–1606), and by an anonymous artist in the last decades of the sixteenth century. Artan assessed these paintings and their copies in a detailed manner on the copies made by Wehme in her article. Artan, "Politics of Ottoman", 382–88.
[832] Ibid, 380.
[833] TSM A. d. 10748, 2.
[834] Gerlach, *Türkiye Günlüğü*, II, 654.
[835] Selaniki, *Tarih-i Selaniki*, I, 134.

mansions or palaces. In his autobiographies, Sinan asserted that he built around thirty mansions or palaces the majority of which were erected in the vicinity of Atmeydanı and Hagia Sophia, and which were patronized by viziers.[836] It appears that in the second half of the sixteenth century, Atmeydanı and its environs were the site of several vizierial palaces, and the square's eastern and western edges were marked by such monumental residences.

The abovementioned sales sheet certifies eleven more purchases to open up space for Sultan Ahmed's building complex. It provides significant clues for determining different edifices that surrounded Atmeydanı before the construction of the Sultan Ahmed complex. These eleven transactions occurred between 1602 (1011 AH) and 1609 (1018 AH). Nine purchases were conducted to provide a building area to the mosque on Atmeydanı's eastern side. The purchased properties included a land from İskender Pasha's endowment, a lime shop (*kireçḫāne*) from Hagia Sophia waqfs, two *bezirḫāne* (linseed-oil shops) between the *arslānḫāne* (lion's house) and the *naḳḳāşḫāne* (painter's house) buildings, two shops adjacent to the *arslānḫāne*, a masjid in the *naḳḳāşḫāne*, a furnace of the palace, and several houses of different dimensions.[837] For the hospital (*bīmārḫāne*) and public kitchen (*'imāret*), two houses occupying the square's southern edge were bought by the sultan.[838] Another archival document mentions five different houses that were sold to the sultan for his public kitchen's construction.[839]

These transactions reveal that Atmeydanı's southern edge contained several houses, which were demolished in the early seventeenth century for the construction of Sultan Ahmed's hospital and public kitchen. The square's eastern side, on the

[836] Artan, "Politics of Ottoman", 376.
[837] TSM A. d.10748, 4, 6, 7, 8.
[838] Ibid, 4–5.
[839] TMS A. d. 212, 4.

other hand, was lined by the *arslānḫāne*, the *naḳḳāşḫāne*, several shops, a few houses, and a masjid, in addition to the palaces of Ahmed Pasha and Sokollu Mehmed Pasha. According to the same document, the shops were situated around the *arslānḫāne*, which was, as Werner asserted in the early seventeenth century, pulled down for the construction of Sultan Ahmed's mosque.[840] Topçular Katibi confirmed the *arslānḫāne* was torn down for the Sultan Ahmed Mosque, and after this building's demolition, the first floor of the church near the armory became the new *arslānḫāne*, and its upper floor was rendered into the *naḳḳāşḫāne*.[841] This church was probably the Byzantine sacrarium called Khristos tes Khalkes, situated in the Great Palace's Khalke entrance overlooking the Hagia Sophia.[842] In the seventeenth century, Evliya Çelebi and Kömürciyan described the *arslānḫāne* as a two-storey building the first storey of which housed wild animals, and the second floor of which was used as a venue for the court artists.[843] Drawing on the accounts of Evliya Çelebi and Kömürciyan, various scholars have suggested that the *arslānḫāne* and the *naḳḳāşḫāne* shared different floors of a converted Byzantine church.[844] However, the sales sheet and the accounts of Werner and Topçular Katibi display that before the seventeenth century, the *arslānḫāne* and the *naḳḳāşḫāne* were seperate buildings that were located on Atmeydanı's eastern side.

Between the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, Atmeydanı and its environs witnessed an increase in the presence of dynastic monuments and ceremonials. This process involved the removal of several residential and

[840] Werner, *Padişahın Huzurunda*, 88.
[841] Abdülkadir Efendi, *Topçular Katibi*, I, 664.
[842] Eyice, "Arslanhane", 403; Denker, Yağcı and Akay, "Büyük Saray Kazısı", 129.
[843] Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi*, I, 20; Kömürciyan, *İstanbul Tarihi*, 5.
[844] Atıl, "Nakkaşhane", 29; Erdoğan, "Nakkaşhane", 41. Çağman, on the other hand, argues that the royal atelier was not based on a single edifice, but they were based in different buildings within and around the Topkapı Palace. Çağman, "Saray Nakkaşhanesinin Yeri", 35–46.

commercial structures marking the square's boundaries and the construction of different royal edifices. A quarter after the erection of the first dynastic monuments, the double bath of Süleyman and Hürrem, a series of dynastic mausolea, were erected in the vicinity of Atmeydanı. Between 1574 and 1639, four dynastic mausolea were constructed within the courtyard of the Hagia Sophia complex, all visible from Atmeydanı.[845] Situating the dynastic mausolea at this location provided the dynasty with the opportunity of marking their presence in the city's main public square, and contributed this maydan's transformation into an urban center, where the dynasty's presence was highlighted.[846] (Figure C55) This transformation was completed with the construction of the Sultan Ahmed complex. In early seventeenth century, all edifices on the square's eastern and southern edges were demolished, and replaced by different sultanic buildings. The maydan earned defined borders on its eastern, southern, and western edges, which were marked with parts of Sultan Ahmed's complex, and the İbrahim Pasha Palace, respectively. (Figure C56) Within this period, the construction of royal tribunes overlooking the maydan in the İbrahim Pasha Palace, and this palace's frequent use as the venue of sultanic ceremonies also highlighted the sultanic presence on Atmeydanı. This transformation occurred in a specific conjuncture, and should be assessed regarding to the political transformations of the period, which were discussed in the second chapter. The Ottoman sultans' initiatives to manifest their presence in the city's center coincided with their efforts to consolidate the dynasty's legitimacy and power, which were challenged by a series of political and military changes.

[845] Necipoğlu, "Dynastic Imprints", 27–33; Necipoğlu, "Imperial Monument", 208–210.
[846] Gürkan, "Hanedan Türbeleri", 655–684.

4.3 Ceremonials and social life in the Naqsh-e Jahan Square and Atmeydanı

The Naqsh-e Jahan Square and Atmeydanı were among the most vital public spaces in which people from different classes and origins convened for a variety of activities, including courtly ceremonials and festivities, commercial activities, games and entertainment, viewing the spectacles and curiosities (*tamāshā/temāşā* both in the Safavid and the Ottoman contexts) and public executions, as well as military training and sports.[847] These urban settings acted as venues for public encounters where the ruler, his dignitaries, and subjects came together in different contexts. The vitality of these maydans augmented the number and variety of the audiences of the Masjed-e Shah and Sultan Ahmed complexes.

The Naqsh-e Jahan Square and Atmeydanı appear foremost as grounds for martial games and trainings. Both maydans acted as venues of polo games and other similar martial sports that took place both in the routine of daily life, and on special occasions like ceremonial festivities and Eids.[848] Similar to the tournaments in the early modern Europe, such martial games and competitions, along with the mock plays animating military victories on theatrical stages, seem to have been used as a means of displaying the empires' military power and competency both to foreign and local audiences.[849]

The names of the Ottoman and Safavid squares are indicative of their function as stages for martial games, and their spatial layouts were coherent for the same purpose. The Safavid and Ottoman word for urban square was *maydān*, which

[847] Alemi, "Urban Spaces", 99–101; Bakhtiar, "Reminiscences"; Babaie, "Sacred Sites", 199-207; Nutku, "Festivities in Atmeydanı"; Kafescioğlu, "New Look"; And, *Kırk Gün*, 55–59; Blow, *Shah Abbas*, 162, 167, 176, 184.
[848] For martial tournaments in the Ottoman festivities taking place on Atmeydanı, see And, *Kırk Gün*, 71–74.
[849] Jarrard, *Architecture as Performance,* 56–70; Jafarian, *Seyāset va Farhang*, I, 396; Blow, *Shah Abbas*, 176.

designated hippodrome in old Persian. The word Atmeydanı is the Turkish translation of "hippodrome", and one of Qazvin's royal squares, the Maydan-e Asb had a denomination indicating the same meaning. Their width, rectangular forms and smoothed grounds rendered the maydans into convenient platforms for martial games and competitions. According to Kaempfer, the Naqsh-e Jahan Square had two high poles near its northern and southern edges that acted as targets during polo games and horse races.[850] (Figures C57–C58)

Various sources depicted Atmeydanı and the Naqsh-e Jahan Square as grounds on which the Safavid and Ottoman elites played javelin, polo and archery. For instance, Mustafa Ali recounted that İbrahim Pasha and other elites were playing javelin on Atmeydanı.[851] During the festival of 1582, the grandees played javelin on the same square.[852] In the Safavid context, the shahs participated in these games. Oruç Bey asserted that playing javelin with people on the maydan was a part of Shah Abbas' routine.[853] Similarly, Munshi recounted several occasions when Shah Abbas joined such games on the maydans of Tabriz and Isfahan.[854] In the mid-seventeenth century, Tavernier reported that the Safavid shah went out to the Naqsh-e Jahan Square to shoot arrows.[855] The Ottoman sultans, on the other hand, were only spectators of such games. For example, Reinhold asserted that every day the sultan viewed competitions on the maydan during the festival of 1582.[856]

Visiting Istanbul in the seventeenth century, Tournefort narrated that every Friday, after performing the Friday ritual, numerous young and well-dressed males

[850] Kaempfer, *Am Hofe*, 201.
[851] Mustafa Ali, *Künh'ül-Ahbar*, 462.
[852] Mustafa Ali, *Cami'u'l-Buhur*, 221–225.
[853] Oruç Bey, *İranlı Don Juan*, 34.
[854] Munshi, *History of Shah*, II, 869, 1063, 1159.
[855] Tavernier, *Tavernier Seyahatnamesi*, 151.
[856] Reinhold, *Lubenau Seyahatnamesi*, I, 446–453.

mounted on horses gathered in Atmeydanı, and played polo.[857] George Sandys, another seventeenth-century European traveler, depicted the martial games and competitions on Atmeydanı as follows: "There [on the Hippodrome] they exhibited their horse-races. Sipahis of court every Friday play, hitting one another with darts, as the other does with their hands."[858] John Fryer's description of a competition happening on the Naqsh-e Jahan Square provides us with an example of such tournaments:

> Whence [the imperial throne] the Emperor beholds the Combats between the Lions and Bulls, or Persian Rams set to run at one another, the tournaments of the nobles tilting at each other, or on coursers full speed, striving to shoot backward with bow and arrow (after the Parthian custom) at a Golden bowl fixed on a high pole, which who hits by fixing his dart, is not only extolled with threefold praise, but carries the prize away, and is taken notice of as a candidate for the next preferment.[859]

Courtly ceremonies and festivities constituted other significant events occurring on the Naqsh-e Jahan Square and Atmeydanı. Throughout the seventeenth century, the Naqsh-e Jahan Square became home to different festivities and celebrations happening on different occasions, including the welcoming ceremonies (*istiqbāl)*, receptions of significant people, military victories and Eids. Foreign visitors, envoys from different European and Islamic realms, were hosted and given banquets in places in or near the square. Along with banquets, mock plays, fireworks, and animal fights appear as parts of different celebrations and festivities. As far as the contemporary sources suggest, displaying his military power, wealth, and generosity both to foreign envoys and to his own subjects was among the main concerns of the Safavid shahs in sponsoring such convivial events in the capital city. The shahs were depicted as these festivities' active participants, watching the

[857] Tournefort, *Tournefort Seyahatnamesi*, 40.
[858] Sandys, *Relation*, 34.
[859] Fryer, *New Account*, 261.

spectacles, competitions and games, or walking around the square accompanied by their soldiers or guests. With its spacious ground for the crowded spectators and audiences, the Naqsh-e Jahan Square was conceived as one of the main stages for these ceremonial events, and featured an elegant scene with its glorious architectural monuments.

One of the earliest festivals celebrated in the Naqsh-e Jahan Square was a welcoming ceremony for the shah, which took place in November 1595 (Rabi' al-Avval 1004 AH).[860] The Naqsh-e Jahan Square was prepared for the celebrations, and the entire square was turned into a stage for the festivity. All walls and surfaces of the building (*'imārat*) surrounding the maydan were smoothed, painted white, and furnished with curious images. Fireworks were staged during nights, and masters of fireworks created views of the sun, various flowers, and trees with firework. Reenactments of military wars with the Uzbeks constituted a significant part of this festivity. Since the shah and his troops had recently returned from a victorious military campaign against the Uzbeks from Khurasan, war with the Uzbeks was chosen as the main theme of these plays. On the square's corners, four temporary castles were erected, each filled with a hundred images of Safavid and Uzbek soldiers decked out with military equipments. Natanzi asserted that the shah organized this show for displaying his military victories to the Uzbek envoys, who were invitees in this event.[861]

Another such great festivity was celebrated in 1610 (1019 AH) in honor of the Uzbek ruler Vali Muhammad Khan, who took refuge in the Safavid lands. In the khan's honor, several festive events and games were organized in the Naqsh-e Jahan

[860] This account was was related by Natanzi in his chronicle *Nuqāvat al-Āsār* and translated into English by McChesney, "Four Sources", 106–108.
[861] Natanzi, *Nuqāvat al-Āsār*, 576–579.

Square and the Qaysariyya Bazaar. Numerous people were brought from different parts of the Safavid lands to join these celebrations. Lodging in one of the *rasta*s surrounding the maydan, the khan viewed polo, archery competitions, firework displays, which were lashed to one of the royal elephants. After viewing the spectacles, the khan and the shah walked around the maydan to appreciate the illuminations in the shops surrounding the square, as well as in the Qaysariyya, which were adorned with precious carpets, lanterns and various curiosities.[862] According to Khuzani Isfahani, the khan became envious of the shah's wealth and glory when he saw the beauties in the Qaysariyya Bazaar.[863]

Occasionally, Ottoman envoys were also received by the shah on the Naqsh-e Jahan Square, and spectated celebrations occurring on the maydan. These receptions seem to have served as opportunities for insulting or impressing the Ottoman envoys. According to Della Valle, the Ottoman envoy joined a banquet offered to different countries' ambassadors on the Naqsh-e Jahan Square in 1619. The banquet was followed by the procession of numerous gifts presented to the shah by the Spanish ambassador, Don Garcia. During this event, the Ottoman envoy reportedly slipped and fell down near the Imperial Mint. He was disgraced for nobody attempted to pick him up, but laughed at him instead.[864] In 1656–57 (1067 AH), the Naqsh-e Jahan Square was prepared for an Ottoman envoy's procession to the Ali Qapu Palace. The square was enveloped by two rows of slaves wearing golden belts, artillerymen, and gunsmiths. Gilded tents, and silver and gold inlaid thrones were put in front of the palace door, and the shah's servants prepared saddles made of precious metals.

[862] Khuzani Isfahani, *Chronicle*, II, 584–587; Munshi, *History of Shah*, II, 1046.
[863] Khuzani Isfahani, *Chronicle*, II, 584.
[864] Della Valle, *Safarnama-ye Della Valle*, 247; *Carmelites in Persia*, 242; Falsafi, *Zandagānī-ye Shāh 'Abbās*, II, 790.

According to Qazvini Isfahani, this spectacle aimed to impress the Ottoman ambassador, who, mesmerised, prostrated before and kissed the shah's foot.[865]

Atmeydanı also served as a ceremonial ground for different celebrations and festivities held for the urban public and foreign visitors on various occasions, including wedding and circumcision ceremonies, religious holidays, the army going off to war, or the birth of a prince or princess. During these festive occasions, the maydan became a scene for games, banquets, spectacles, processions of people, animals, precious gifts, and objects, and various entertainment activities, where the court and the public met. Between the early sixteenth and mid-seventeenth century, when the court left Istanbul and moved to Edirne for half a century, twelve such festivals were celebrated in Atmeydanı.[866]

The earliest recorded royal Ottoman festival at the Atmeydanı occurred in the summer of 1530, to celebrate the circumcision of Sultan Süleyman's three sons. The square served as a multi-functional place for a variety of activities, including scholarly debates, competitive games, and performances of entertainment.[867] Sultan Süleyman watched these events and spectacles from the lodge that was set up for his throne at the İbrahim Pasha Palace.[868] During the festival, the sultan accepted the greetings and gifts of different groups, who were given banquets and robes of honor.[869] While rich banquets were used for manifesting the sultan's generosity and wealth, mock plays, animating Sultan Süleyman's victorious campaigns against the Hungarians, became instrumental for representing the sultan's military and political

[865] Qazvini Isfahani, *Irān dar Zamān*, 586.
[866] Nutku, "Festivities in Atmeydanı",72–74; Tül Demirbaş, "Atmeydanı", 684–696.
[867] Şahin, "Staging an Empire", 470.
[868] Nutku, "Festivities in Atmeydanı", 77; Yelçe, "Evaluating Three Imperial", 80–81.
[869] Yelçe, "Evaluating Three Imperial", 81–83.

power.[870] Various tents and weapons captured during different military campaigns that were displayed at the maydan also served to the same purpose. On the other hand, the wild animals from the sultan's menagerie, several interesting objects such as *naḫıl*s (objects made of wax or sugar fastened to a metal frame), and the lavish gifts presented to the sultan made the sultan's glory visible.[871] (Figure C59)

The biggest, longest, and the most grandiose festival in Ottoman history took place during the reign of Murad III in the summer of 1582, by virtue of Prince Mehmed's (later Mehmed III) circumcision.[872] Like the previous festivities, this festival also had several audiences from different classes, including ambassadors of European and Islamic countries, high-ranking bureaucrats, and commoners. Plunders of bowls full of coins and sweets (*çanaḳ yağması*),[873] and throwing banquets were essential parts of the 1582 circumcision wedding.[874] (Figure C60) Parades of trade guilds and artisans who displayed their skills and products, fireworks at nights, and the performances of several musicians and dancers were also among the festival's major events.[875] Reenactments of military wars with the Safavids constituted another significant part of the spectacles held on the maydan. In mock plays, Safavid soldiers were represented as weak soldiers who lost their castles, as evil-doing spies, or as hypocritical heretics.[876] It seems, this festivity partly aimed to intimidate the Safavid ambassador and to display to him the might of the Ottoman empire.[877] According to

[870] Since the festival coincided with military and political tensions between the Habsburgs and the Ottomans, wars in Hungary, the major area of military competitions between these two empires, were chosen as the main theme of the mock plays. Şahin, "Staging An Empire", 479–480, 486–487.
[871] Ibid, 478–480; Yelçe, "Evaluating Three Imperial", 94.
[872] For interpretations of this festival, see Terzioğlu, "Imperial Circumcision Festival"; Şahin, "Staging an Empire".
[873] Thousands of bowls put in front of the sultan's mansion were plundered by the public, and the sultan watched this event from his seat. Selaniki, *Tarih-i Selaniki*, I, 134.
[874] For banquets served in this event, see Mustafa Ali, *Cami'u'l-Buhur*, 103–106, 232–237.
[875] Gelibolulu Mustafa Ali, *Cami'u'l-Buhur*, 150–193, 202–220, 269–274; Ahmed Paşa, *Hasan Beyzade Tarihi*, III, 393–394; Nutku, "Festivities in Atmeydanı", 82–85; Terzioğlu, "Imperial Circumcision Festival", 84–85.
[876] Terzioğlu, "Imperial Circumcision Festival", 85–86.
[877] Nutku, "Festivities in Atmeydanı", 81.

Mustafa Ali, the glorious banquets offered bythe sultan had a similar effect on the Safavid envoy. He depicted the envoy's astonishment with the following verses: "Already who understood Shah-ı Ajam/ That is why you are deprived of this grace/ If the valiant beaming ore does not give quarter/ There cannot be a rooster in a village, the Shah of the Qizilbash."[878] An anectode related by Iranian traveler Oruç Beg suggests that mock plays were not the only means for humiliating the Safavid guests. He reported that the Iranian ambassador was thumbed off by the Ottomans at one of the most pompous part of this festival.[879] (Figure C61)

The Naqsh-e Jahan Square and Atmeydanı acted as platforms where the Safavid and Ottoman monarchs conveyed various messages through spectacular festivities described above. Mock plays revealing the empire's military strength, rich tables, skilled performers, artisans, tradesmen, as well as precious objects, handcrafts and curiosities paraded on the square conveyed several messages regarding the wealth, power, and order of the empire to various audiences and participants of the festivity. Ceremonies organized in the name of a royal imperial center inevitably evoked the literature on legitimacy, political symbolism and charisma.[880] Further, these festive events served as occasions for the public performance of cultural and political ideals as well as communal and individual identities.[881] They functioned as models and mirrors for contemporary social order and power relations.[882] The receptions of the rulers' elites and governors the banquets offered to different participants in a hierarchical order, the performances of the members of the military classes, artisans and tradesmen could be assessed as scenes where a sense of

[878] My translation. Mustafa Ali, *Cami'u'l-Buhur*, 249.
[879] Oruç Bayat Bey, *İranlı Don Juan*, 194.
[880] Şahin, "Staging An Empire", 471.
[881] Ibid, 463–464.
[882] Muir, *Ritual*, 5.

solidarity was created, and where loyalties and hierarchies were confirmed.[883] At the same time, festivals could act as a deliberate means of propaganda and persuasion.[884] This motive is mostly visible in the mock plays that animated the military and political success of the empire, even in the cases in which they do not reflect the reality.

The inclusiveness of the festivities as social events, and the spontaneity of at least some episodes were other significant aspects of these festivities and ceremonies. Such public ceremonies constituted a middle layer between the private and the public, together with other places of interaction, such as coffeehouses, marketplaces, and religious sanctuaries.[885] In this sense, they played a very significant role in the appearance of new publics 'through the shared experiences created during the events.'[886] Through these ceremonies, people from different classes and origins shared a culturally and politically charged space, acted their roles within the defined political and social order, and probably deemed themselves as an integral part of it, not just servants and subjects of the monarchs.[887] In such environments, it was unacceptable to control the flow of all events and the behaviours of all participants. These festive events are always implicit in spontaneity and upheaval of the social order. Bakhtin argued that official feasts, as opposed to carnivalesque events that celebrate temporary liberation from the prevailing order, confirm the existing religious and political order, hierarchies, norms and prohibitions.[888] As Terzioğlu has argued, this assumed dichotomy between the official feasts and carnivals does not always seem to be valid, if we consider the

[883] Yelçe, "Evaluating Three Imperial", 74.
[884] Burke, *Historical Anthropology*, 181.
[885] Şahin, "Staging An Empire", 489.
[886] Ibid, 490.
[887] Ibid, 490.
[888] Bakhtin, *Rebelais*, 9–10.

spontaneity of some events, and the transgression of rules during the official festivities[889] in the Safavid and Ottoman cases. As a known example, the festival of 1582, which went on longer than first planned but than was extended, ended earlier than it was planned due to the tensions between the Janissaries and the sultan, and the murder of some Janissaries in a struggle between the cavalrymen and Janissaries.[890] In the same festival, we see women among the audiences on the maydan although the participation of women in the festival was forbidden.[891] Although chroniclers did not record any such events in the festivals within the Safavid context, their inclusiveness and the factor of spontaneity possibly also endowed them with a carnivalesque character.

In the Safavid context, the carnivalesque aspect of officially organized public ceremonies is best observable in the Muharram rituals, which under the Safavids had a distinctively Shi'ite character.[892] Created and organized around the motif of death, these rituals were primarily mourning ceremonies consisting of processions, recitation of certain laments and texts that were being canonized in the age of confessionalization, and the performance of plays animating the martyrdom of Imam Husein.[893] Concordant with the confessional policies of Tahmasb, after the mid-sixteenth century, Muharram rituals saw an increase of state patronage, and expanded in their accommodation of different religious practices such as dramatic public

[889] Terzioğlu, "Imperial Circumcision", 91–95.
[890] Ibid, 88.
[891] Ibid, 92.
[892] Muharram rituals served to commemorate the martyrdom of Imam Husein, the third Imam of Shi'a, in the first ten days of the month of Muharram in the Islamic calendar. These rituals' first appearance as official public events had occurred in the tenth and eleventh centuries under Buyid rule in Iran, and Fatimid rule in Egypt. With the emergence of the Safavids, Muharram rituals emerged as a major public event in Iran, and played a significant part in the Shi'itization of the Iranian public. Rahimi, *Theater State*, 207–209.
[893] Ibid, 134, 215–232. Further readings for the history and anthropology of Muharram rituals in the larger Islamicate world, see Aghaie, *Martyrs of Karbala*; And, *Kerbela-Muharrem-Ta'ziye*; Mervin, "Ashura Rituals".

processions (*shabih*).[894] However, the real proliferation and elaboration of these ceremonies took place during the Isfahani era of Shah Abbas' rule. Certain Shi'i commemorations, including the Ghadir Khumm festival, the martyrdom of Imam Ali, and Muharram rituals, were expanded in this period as a part of Shah Abbas' initiatives to transform the scope and scale of existing cultural institutional dispositions.[895]

In the Isfahani period of Safavid rule, the shahs began to set the rules for these rituals, which began to feature elaborate ceremonial elements like guild combat, and to gain an increasingly representational dramatic character with the display of ritual representative objects such as turbans, banners and ceremonial armory.[896] These new elements are observable in the Muharram ceremonies of 1618–19 held in Isfahan, which were described by Della Valle as follows:

> The ceremonies with which they celebrate the asciur and lament this death is as follows. They all live in a state of dejection; they all in fact dress sadly, and many wear black, which otherwise they rarely put on; no one shaves head or beard; no one takes a bath; and they all abstain, not only from what is thought sinful, but also from every kind of enjoyment. Many poor people, too, are in the habit of burying themselves in busy streets up to the neck and even part of their heads in earthenware jars, wide all around from the feet and narrow to fit the head at the top. And these are sunk into the ground, out of sight, holding back the earth all about from the men who crouch inside, seeming as if they are really buried. And they remain like this from sunrise to nightfall, each keeping another poor wretch sitting down nearby, saying prayers and asking for alms from all the passers-by. Others place themselves in the square and move through the streets and houses (where there are people) all naked except for their shameful parts which they cover with a little black cloth, or a big, dark-coloured bag; and these paint themselves dark from head to foot, so that they look like so many gleaming black devils, varnished as are the hilts of our swords and other weapons. And this denotes the misery felt over the death of Hussein. In company with them go others, also naked, who are coloured not black but red, to signify blood and the violent death that was inflicted on Hussein. And all of them together go singing a dirge in his praise about the way he died, and beating time with castanets of bone and wood, which they hold in their hands to create a mournful sound, while gesticulating and moving their bodies to suggest great melancholy. They

[894] Rahimi, *Theater State*, 218.
[895] Ibid, 221.
[896] Ibid, 225–226.

> perform in front of everyone in the middle of a circle, like mountebanks or like teams of tumblers doing their tricks on the public square; and in this guise they make money, which the bystanders give to them as alms. Also, where people circulate in the square, towards noon every day, one of their mullahs preaches about Hussein, recounting his praises and his death. This is usually carried out by one of those from the generation of Mohamet (who are neither called emirs, as in Constantinople, nor shereefs, as in Egypt, but, by the Persians in Arabic, seidi or lords), wearing a green turban on the head, such as I have never seen here at other times (contrary to Turkey, where those of the same breed wear one constantly). And he sits on a slightly raised seat, encircled by an audience of men and women, some standing, some on the ground or on low standing benches. And from time to time, he shows some painted figures illustrating what he is recounting; and, in brief, in every way he endeavours as much as he can to move the onlookers to tears. Such preaching are heard every day in the mosque, and also at night in the public streets, in certain recognized places which they purposely adorn with many lights and with funeral displays; and the preaching is accompanied by the moans and groans of the hearers, and particularly the women, who beat their breast and make piteous gestures, often answering grief stricken with these last words from some of their hymns: Vah Hussein! Sciah Hussein! Meaning 'Ah Hussein! King Hussein! [897]

In Della Valle's account, the performative character, and the inclusiveness of the ritual as a social event, as well as the diversity of the venues of these ceremonies, are apparent. Muharram rituals created sites for both the performers and audiences to act as part of a public, who shared an established cultural and political environment, and a certain psychological domain. People from different classes and origins, including the shahs and their dignitaries, and commoners, women, and children, came together in this ritual environment, either as performers or audiences. Along with the streets and religious buildings, public squares appear as one of the venues in which these sites were created. Like courtly festivities, Muharram rituals constituted occasions for communication and conveying multiple messages through performative acts, if not speech and conversation. The participation and intervention of the monarchs and their elites did not diminish the public character of these rituals, and did not prevent the elements of spontaneity, uncertainty, social inclusivity, and

[897] Della Valle, *Pilgrim*, 142–144.

the probability of social upheaval. The sovereigns, it seems, were aware of the potential of the society to create their own semi-private social, cultural, and political domains that took shape outside their control. Their initiatives to shape and control various public spaces could partly be related to this potential. For this reason, the same public spaces, including the maydans, were chosen as sites where the sovereigns consolidated their power through displays of violence and retribution.

In this context, it must not be a coincidence that as among the main public spaces of Isfahan and Istanbul, the Naqsh-e Jahan Square and Atmeydanı functioned as sites of public executions. The execution of various rebels and people convicted of heresy or apostasy were held in these public squares. Public executions seem to have begun to be conducted in the Naqsh-e Jahan Square shortly after its construction. One such punishment took place in 1597–98 (1006 AH), when the eyes of Ali Khan, a rebel from Astarabad region, were scratched.[898] Similarly, Shah Abbas ordered the hanging of another rebellious leader, Garib Shah, who had organized a rebellion in Gilan, on the Naqsh-e Jahan Square, in order to make an example of him to other rioters.[899] In 1632 (1042 AH), the head of a rebel soldier named Yusuf Agha was paraded on the maydan, and viewed by Shah Safi and his subjects.[900]

Atmeydanı emerged as the locus of several occasions of public execution, starting in the second half of the fifteenth century. Almost all known public executions held on the Atmeydanı had a confessional character. One of the earliest accounts associating Atmeydanı with such a case narrates the story of an antinomian Sufi leader, Otman Baba, who came to Istanbul in the 1470s. In this interesting hagiography, Atmeydanı is mentioned as a site where Otman Baba and his adherents

[898] Khuzani Isfahani, *Chronicle*, I, 244–245.
[899] Shamlu, *Qisās al-Khāqānī*, I, 210. For Garib Shah's rebellion, see Newman, *Safavid Iran*, 75.
[900] Qazvini Isfahani, *Irān dar Zamān*, 119.

were settled in the tents they pitched, and the dervish displayed his spiritual power through oracles. After leaving the square, Otman Baba was summoned to Atmeydanı, where he challenged the sultan's spiritual authority with his miracles and was almost executed by means of empaling. In the end, however, Otman Baba escaped this terrible fate, and withdrew to a cloister in Istanbul.[901] In the narrative of Otman Baba, it is not obvious whether the authorities attempted to execute Otman Baba with accusations of heresy, or unrest, or challenging the sultan's authority.

Unlike Otman Baba, people who were executed in the Atmeydanı were accused of heresy or apostasy beginning at the end of the fifteenth century. Concordant with the condensation in Ottoman sultans' confessional policies, the number and frequency of such trials and executions increased in the sixteenth century. The first known such case is the execution of Molla Lütfi, who was decapitated in the Atmeydanı in 1494, after being sentenced to a trial in front of the clerics.[902] It was not only the first execution of a 'heretic' in Atmeydanı, but also the first known capital punishment of an Ottoman cleric on religious grounds.[903] Atmeydanı witnessed the execution of some Sufi leaders accused of heresy, too. The sheikhs of the Bayrami-Melami path were among the most suspicious religious leaders in the eyes of the Ottoman religious and political authorities. İsmail Maşuki, also known as Oğlan Şeyh (d. 1538), Hamza Bali (d. 1561), and Sütçü Beşir Agha (d. 1661–62) were among the Bayrami-Melami sheikhs who were executed by the Ottoman authorities as heretics and infidels.[904] As one of these Sufi leaders, the

[901] *Otman Baba Velayetnamesi*, 249–253. Previously cited by Kafescioğlu within the context of Atmeydanı. See Kafescioğlu, *Constantinopolis/Istanbul*, 136-140. For an earlier interpretation of this narrative, see İnalcık, "Dervish and Sultan",19–36.
[902] Ocak, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Zındıklar*, 239–268.
[903] In the fifteenth century, Sheikh Bedreddin was executed as a rebel, not because of heresy. Ocak, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Zındıklar* 204; Terzioğlu, "How to Conceptualize", 303.
[904] Gölpınarlı, *Melamilik ve Melamiler*, 48–54, 72–77, 158–160; Kılıç, "Tarikatin Gizli Direnişi", 324–367.

execution of Sheikh İsmail Maşuki took place in the Atmeydanı, after a trial headed by Sheikh al-Islam Ebussuud. Maşuki was beheaded alongside his twelve followers in the Atmeydanı, and his head was thrown into the Bosphorus after his execution.[905] The execution of this sheikh when he was in his early twenties had a significant place in the public memory of the city. It was memorialized through the construction of a mashhad (place of martyrdom) in the name of this young dervish on Atmeydanı after his execution.[906]

Some public executions held on Atmeydanı were not related with cases of heresy but still had a confessional dimension. One is the execution of a Christian man who was accused of adultery with a Muslim woman. Witnessing the incident in 1554, Dernschwam claimed that the Christian man could have saved himself if he had accepted the authorities' invitation to convert to Islam and to be circumcised, but he refused and was burnt alive as a result.[907] We encounter another such occasion in which a Muslim woman and a Jewish man were executed on Atmeydanı in 1680 on charges of adultery.[908] As Baer has demonstrated, the prescribed punishment for adultery was not capital punishment in the Ottoman legal practice, and authorities more generally tended to overcome such moral offenses with nonviolent methods.[909] It was a warning to the public, both Muslim and non-Muslim, not to violate confessional borders.

Another function of the Safavid and Ottoman royal squares was to serve as sites for political negotiation and public uprisings. This feature is more visible in the case of the Atmeydanı than in that of the Naqsh-e Jahan Square. As far as the known

[905] Gölpınarlı, *Melamilik ve Melamiler*, 48–49; Ocak, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Zındıklar*, 328; Niyazioğlu, "Practices of Remembrance".
[906] Tanman and Çobanoğlu, "Ottoman Architecture", 141.
[907] Dernschwam, *İstanbul ve Anadolu'ya*, 154.
[908] Baer, *Atmeydanı'nda Ölüm*, 89–110.
[909] Ibid, 101–103.

sources suggest, the Naqsh-e Jahan Square did not witness any public revolts or open political tensions between the court and the public, although the Maydan-e Asb in Qazvin occasionally acted as a place for political negotiation between the Safavid elites and rebellious Qizilbash groups and their supporters in the late sixteenth century.[910]

The period between the late sixteenth and the mid-seventeenth century presents a conjuncture in which there were frequent public revolts in Istanbul.[911] In this period of crisis,[912] demands and complaints of several groups of actors were expressed through a series of public revolts that were mostly led by the Janissaries and cavalrymen, and supported by other actors like members of the religious establishment, artisans and tradesmen.[913] These uprisings took place in certain locations in the walled city, including Atmeydanı, Etmeydanı, Bedesten, and the sultanic mosques on Divanyolu, including the mosques of Mehmed II, Bayezid II, and Ahmed I.[914] In most of these revolts, the Atmeydanı acted as a site in which the rebels convened, engaged in consultation, and negotiated with the sultan's

[910] Hasan Rumlu related that Maydan-e Tavilah (Maydan-e Asb) witnessed the conflict between the supporters of Shahzada Sultan Haydar and Ismail II after the death of Shah Tahmasb. The adherents of prince Haydar, who included some Qizilbash amirs and people from the public, convened for enthroning him, but the supporters of Prince Ismail killed the prince in the palace before the crowd could enter the *dowlatkhāne*. Hasan Rumlu, *Safevi Şahı*, 39–51.

[911] Various scholars have discussed different aspects of these revolts in their studies. See Sariyannis, "Mob"; Kafadar, "Janissaries and Other"; Tezcan, *Second Ottoman Empire*, 213–226; Yılmaz, "Siyaset, İsyan ve İstanbul (1453–1808)"; Yılmaz, "İstemezük"; idem, "Blurred Boundaries"; idem "Urban Protests".

[912] This period witnessed severe economic, social and political crises, which I discussed in the second chapter. See Chapter II, 57–61.

[913] Although almost all uprisings of the seventeenth century appear to have been led by Janissaries or cavalrymen, studies revealed that tradesmen and other civilians of Istanbul were among the participants and organizers of various rebellions in this period. Further, it was a period in which boundaries between military class and civil subjects became blurred with what Kafadar calls *esnafization* of the Janissaries, namely with their engagement in trade. Sometimes the artisans and shopkeepers could also mobilize against the Janissaries rather than under their leadership. See Kafadar, "Janissaries and Other", 115–119; "Mob", 2-12; Tezcan, *Second Ottoman Empire*, 177–-212; Yılmaz, "Blurred Boundaries", 175–193, idem; "Urban Protests", 559– 570; Yi, Eunjeong, "Artisans' Networks".

[914] Yılmaz, "Siyaset, İsyan", 125–126; Kafadar, "Janissaries and Other", 131–132; Yılmaz, "Urban Protests", 570–573.

representatives. These urban protests appear as politically charged events, and rendered the mentioned venues, including Atmeydanı, rendered into loci of political dissent.

A closer examination of some public uprisings from the period can provide a better insight into the use of Aymeydanı in these events. In his travelogue, Lubenau recounted a rebellion in Istanbul, which took place on June 22, 1600. Initiated by the Janissaries, who complained about the decrease in the money's value and increases in taxes, this uprising began in the Bedesten. In this event, Atmeydanı appears as the venue to which the rebels were summoned by the sultan's representative to utter their demands and negotiate regarding the issue.[915]

Atmeydanı was used as a gathering place for rebels, a site of negotiation between the authorities and dissidents in the revolt of 1622, too.[916] This event began when the Janissaries were informed regarding the plans of Osman II for abrogating the Janissary army and establishing a new military in Anatolia. Gossip and news regarding the sultan's plans caused a discomfort among the Janissaries of Istanbul, who initiated a bloody uprising that continued for three days. On the first two days, the dissidents followed a certain route. Different groups who gathered in the Süleymaniye Mosque and the Mosque of Mehmed II joined together in the Etmeydanı and walked to Atmeydanı. [917] On the first day, the rebels met the sultan's representatives in Atmeydanı, and conveyed their demands to the sultan. At the end of the this day, the public made an appointment for convening in Atmeydanı in the

[915] Lubenau, *Reinhold Lubenau Seyahatnamesi*, I, 436–437.
[916] This revolt constituted the most famous and bloody uprising of this period, and even of whole Ottoman history. It ended with the enthronement and murder of an Ottoman sultan, Osman II (r. 1618–1622). Pieterberg's book on the Ottoman historiography of this event in the seventeenth century constitutes the most prominent book on this event. See Piterberg, *Ottoman Tragedy*. For different studies on this event, see Tezcan, *Second Ottoman Empire*, 153–175; Yılmaz, "Siyaset, İsyan", 126.
[917] Hüseyin Tugi, *Musibetname*, 5–6, 35–37; Katib Çelebi, *Fezleke*, II, 545–549.

following day and dispersed.[918]On the second day, the rebels gathered in Atmeydanı, and walked to and entered the palace, set prince Mustafa free from his cage, and uttered their decision to replace him with Osman II.[919] The corpses of the grand vizier and palace officers, who were killed by rebels, were left in Atmeydanı, where people swore to them.[920] The riot ended on its third day, with the enthronement of prince Mustafa in the Topkapı Palace, and the murder of Osman II in the Yedikule prison.[921] In the following months, the same assembly consisting of soldiers, low-ranking clerics, and some 'city folk' (*şehirlü*)[922] convened again in Atmeydanı for various reasons such as claiming the heads of Osman II's murderers, or demanding the replacement of the grand vizier.[923]

Another significant function of the Naqsh-e Jahan Square and Atmeydanı was to serve as promenading spots for denizens of Isfahan and Istanbul. With the Friday mosques, palatial residences, shops and coffeehouses around them, they acted as thoroughfares for people frequenting these public buildings. Besides, they attracted people as vital promenades where the cities' beauties, spectacles, royal and civic buildings were viewed. Portraying Atmeydanı as a place of social mingling and erotic encounters, the sixteenth-century poet Taşlıcalı Yahya depicted the square as "the gathering place of equestrian beauties and well-spring of broken-hearted lovers."[924] Several seventeenth-century sources described the Naqsh-e Jahan Square in a similar manner, as an excursion spot not only for Isfahan's denizens, including men and women, elites and commoners, Sufis and poets, as well as the Safavid

[918] Hüseyin Tugi, *Musibetname*, 21–27; Katib Çelebi, *Fezleke*, II, 550.
[919] Hüseyin Tugi, *Musibetname*, 41–63; Katib Çelebi, *Fezleke*, II, 552–554.
[920] Katib Çelebi, *Fezleke*, II, 553; Hüseyin Tugi, *Musibetname*, 65, 88.
[921] Hüseyin Tugi, *Musibetname*, 88–108; Katib Çelebi, *Fezleke*, II, 558–563.
[922] Hüseyin Tugi, *Musibetname*, 47.
[923] Katib Çelebi, *Fezleke*, II, 565–577; Hüseyin Tugi, *Musibetname*, 127, 142–145.
[924] Levend, *Türk Edebiyatında*, 104; Previously cited by Kafescioğlu, "New Look", 125.

shahs. Kaempfer reported that on Ramadan nights, Isfahan's maydans, including the Naqsh-e Jahan, housed numerous musicians, itinerant confectioners, and theatre players.[925] The Carmelite father Paul Simon recounted dervishes among people promenading on the maydan, where they stood with cold water which they gave gratis to anyone demanding it. According to the same Carmelite father, women who hardly ever went out, not even to the mosques, were among the visitors of the maydan too, and were allowed to watch the games and performances taking place on the site.[926]

Among those who promenaded in the Naqsh-e Jahan Square were also the Safavid shahs and dignitaries. According to Della Valle's testimony, each and every day, Shah Abbas went out from his palace and scrolled around the maydan, where several officials were always ready and waiting for the shah's visit. Carrying decanters, several ghulam cupbearers were ready to serve wine to the shah and his accompanies, occasionally including foreign visitors.[927] Ukhdi, the collector of Safavid poets' biographies, portrayed the Naqsh-e Jahan Square as a place where poets read out their poems in front of other intellectuals, and the shahs. A poet names Khaje Shuayb Jushani was among them, who sang in the presence of the shah, and the era's prominent writers.[928] Besides the courtly displays of power and wealth, the square testimonies the entertainment and intellectual performances of Isfahan's ordinary denizens, and the shah's endeavours to take part and control the city's various publicities.

[925] Kaempfer, *Am Hofe*, 189.
[926] *Carmalites in Persia*, 156.
[927] Della Valle, *Safarnama-ye Della Valle*, 39, 235.
[928] Ukhdi, *Arafat al-Ashiqin*, 2236.

4.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have explored the urban context of the Masjed-e Shah and Sultan Ahmed complexes. The first two parts of this chapter have investigated the spatial-architectural formations of the Naqsh-e Jahan Square and Atmeydanı. I have shown that the Naqsh-e Jahan Square and Atmeydanı constituted significant centers of the court's architectural patronage. The Naqsh-e Jahan Square contained four monumental buildings and a surrounding bazaar that were commissioned by one patron, Shah Abbas, and its environs contained socio-religious buildings erected by the high-ranking members of the Safavid court. Being shaped by the interventions of a more diverse group of patrons through a longer period of time, Atmeydanı and its vicinities housed various edifices built by different patrons, including the rulers, members of the dynastic family and the high-ranking bureaucrats.

In line with several studies on the theme, my inquiry displays that the formation of the Naqsh-e Jahan Square and Atmeydanı followed different trajectories. The Naqsh-e Jahan Square was established in a few decades, whereas Atmeydanı's formation took approximately one and a half century before it gained its final form in the early seventeenth century. Further, Atmeydanı was an urban site that had a millennial history, and became the subject of various interventions, while the Naqsh-e Jahan Square was merely once modified in an early phase of its construction. The lack of a uniform enclosure defining the borders of Atmeydanı is another facet that differentiated it from the Naqsh-e Jahan Square. In the sixteenth century, Atmeydanı's eastern and western borders were determined with vizierial palaces, and different sections of the Sultan Ahmed complex defined its southern and eastern borders after the early seventeenth century. Its northern side was not marked by any enclosure or edifice. The borders of the Naqsh-e Jahan Square, on the other

hand, were determined by a surrounding bazaar, and by four axially located architectural monuments punctuating the square's four edges. In this sense, the Naqsh-e Jahan Square features a stronger sense of geometrical order and symmetry in comparison with Atmeydanı.

In the third section of this chapter, I have attempted to display the main functional features of the Naqsh-e Jahan Square and Atmeydanı. I have demonstrated that both squares were among the main primary public centers of the Safavid and Ottoman capital cities, where different people gathered for a variety of daily and occasional activities, including military games and training, or festivities. These urban hubs offered people from various classes and backgrounds a variety of social platforms to become public and to socialize. In the light of several contextual studies on the Ottoman festivities, I have argued that ceremonial festivities appeared as the most significant functions of these squares, which served as sites of encounter between the court and the city. I contend that the wisely choreographed festivities served as stages of the Ottoman and Safavid authorities for representing their power, wealth and generosity. At the same time, festivities provided people from different classes and backgrounds with the opportunity to perform their skills, seeing others and becoming visible in the public, and conveying messages regarding their loyalties or disloyalties. As underlined by different scholars, spontaneity and inclusiveness brought these festivities a carnivalesque character. These squares' function as spots of public executions helped to display the state's authority as well the confessional sanctions and disapprovals in the public arena. While the court used these spaces for the display of power, the public claimed their presence through popular uprisings, which were more visible in the Ottoman context. The construction of monumental

Friday mosques enhanced the state's visibility and implicitly manifested the regime's religio-political norms on these politically-charged sites.

CHAPTER 5

THE SULTAN AHMED COMPLEX

When, along with your majesty, they saw your success and faith and sword,
Bans and kings and unbelievers prostrated themselves before you.
And if the heretic shah accepts the True Religion (Sunni Islam)
If he asks not forgiveness for his crime and mutiny,
Our hope is that with the help of God, severing his head
With the blow of a sword, the Commander (Sultan Ahmed) causes to prostrate himself in worship.
Now with your sword you have made all the world Muslim.
And it is appropriate that numerous places of worship be built.[929]

Penned by Cafer Çelebi during the erection of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque, this poem reflects the religious, political and military motives of Ahmed I as the patron of a Friday mosque complex, and captures the political and religious disquiet around the sanctuary's construction. Erected in a period of political and military turmoil, the monumental mosque complex of Ahmed I was, to a greater extent, intended to compensate for the Ottoman sultan's loss of prestige both in the international and domestic arenas. Despite his victory against the Celali revolts in Anatolia, Sultan Ahmed could not take back the cities that had been lost to Shah Abbas I. The negative impact of Sultan Ahmed's loss of several cities in Azerbaijan to the Shah of Iran was doubled with his defeat against the Habsburg Emperor, who conquered some Ottoman cities in eastern Europe.

Subsequent military defeats, territorial losses and the lack of any victorious military campaigns, which was deemed a prerequisite for constructing royal mosque complexes, did not detain Ahmed I from undertaking a colossal and costly architectural project in Istanbul. Yet, he kept his hope and strove to win a requisite military victory throughout the construction process of his mosque. Shortly after his mosque's

[929] Cafer Efendi, *Risale-i Mimariyye*, 67.

foundations were dug in 1609, Ahmed I declared war against the Safavids, as an endeavour to retroactively legitimize his mosque project.[930] The choice of the Shi'ite Safavids as his target was compatible with the general religio-political agenda of the pious sultan, which was centered on Sunni Islam. The Safavids' confessional identity rendered them into the enemies of the true religion for the Ottoman authorities.

This chapter investigates the history of the construction, the architecture and the social-ritualistic context of the Sultan Ahmed complex against the backdrop of its patron's political and religious agenda, and the religious, political and cultural dynamics of his era. I argue that Sultan Ahmed's attempts to uphold his dynasty's reputation, power and legitimacy in a period of military and political difficulties played a pivotal role in his decision to undertake a monumental Friday mosque complex, and this agenda implicitly affected the configuration of the architectural, spatial and ritualistic characteristics of Sultan Ahmed's architectural assembly. The main argument of this chapter is that spectacle and theatricality formed the defining characters of the architecture and ceremonials created under Sultan Ahmed's patronage, and served as the main mechanisms through which he compensated the mentioned deficiencies. Deliberate references to the established architectural, religious and political legacy of the previous sultans, especially of Sultan Süleyman, served the same end. In line with Ottoman sultanic custom, the Sultan Ahmed complex served as an embodiment of various kingly virtues that were attributed to the Ottoman sultans and which constituted the bases of their political and religious legitimacy. Different parts of the architectural assembly, along with their purposefully configured social and ceremonial programs, were intended to represent the sultan's piety and benevolence, as well as his sense of responsibility for

[930] Rüstem, "Spectacle of Legitimacy", 256.

protecting the true religion (Sunni Islam) and the ulama, feeding his subjects and bestowing blessings and justice upon them.

This chapter has a context-sensitive and interpretative approach that makes it possible to locate the spatial, architectural and functional formation of the socio-religious complex within a broader historical framework. The first part investigates the chronology and organization of the construction activity through a large body of archival and narrative documents. In the longer second section, I examine the architectural and spatial configurations of all edifices of the complex, addressing their connections with each other and the building site. The third part investigates the endowment of the mosque complex. Finally, the fourth section examines the religious, ritualistic and social life in the complex, with a greater focus on the congregational mosque.

5.1 Construction at the Atmeydanı: Chronology and organization of Sultan Ahmed's building project

5.1.1 Chronology

Sultan Ahmed initiated the construction of his Friday mosque complex in 1609 (1018 AH). The project's inception date suggests that he took this decision before the summer of that year, when he purchased the land on which his mosque was erected. The sultan's desire to build a monumental mosque complex might have begun earlier, but his plans for building a Friday mosque without gaining a military victory attracted criticism, and delayed his initiation for the architectural project.[931] In 1613, the Venetian bailo Contarini, who was present in Istanbul, reported that the sultan's project was abhorred by many because he used the money that had to be spent for

[931] Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 514; Rüstem, "Spectacle of Legitimacy", 255.

waging wars against the infidels.[932] He added that the sultan tried to legitimize his mosque by highlighting the victory against the Celali rebels in Anatolia, and also promised to invade Candia in Crete with similar considerations.[933] Similarly, the Austrian ambassador Werner related that the sultan could obtain the permission for erecting this mosque from the chief mufti only with a promise for fulfilling the prerequisite before the project's completion. The sultan planned to use the booty that would be obtained in the Erdel campaign for his project, but this campaign resulted in failure.[934] A military campaign against the Safavids seems to have appeared as the most viable legitimizing solution to Ahmed I. He declared war against the Safavids in 1609, the year of his mosque project's inception. Expectations for a military victory against the Safavids are visible in Cafer Çelebi's poem quoted in the beginning of this chapter.

Sultan Ahmed could never obtain a military victory against his enemies, including the Safavids, and fulfill the prerequisites for legitimizing his mosque project. He constructed his mosque despite the ongoing criticisms, and engaged in different strategies to legitimize his project in the public eye. The accounts of two travelers who visited Istanbul in the late seventeenth century display the continuity of doubts concerning Sultan Ahmed Mosque's legitimacy even decades after the the construction's completion. Tournefort (d. 1708) related that since Ahmed I erected such a royal mosque conquering no city or castle, the contemporary religious authorities labelled his mosque as the mosque of infidel (*imansız mabedi*).[935] The same criticism was uttered by Joseph Grelot (d. after 1680) as follows:

[932] For a discussion on the custom of gaining military victory for building sultanic mosques, and this custom's canonization in the late sixteenth century, see Budak, "Ottoman Sultanic Mosques".
[933] Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 514.
[934] Werner, *Padişahın Huzurunda*, 88.
[935] Tournefort, *Tournefort Seyahatnamesi*, 25.

> However, Sultan Achmet, though he had not by any conquest extended the bounds of the Empire, resolved to Build a Mosque, to the end he might eternize his name, since his achievements did not suffice to recommend him to posterity. And though the Mufti, the Mullas, the Cheiks, and other Doctors of the Law, laid before him the sin of undertaking to erect such a costly fabric, since he had never been in any other Combats, that those which are daily to be seen for the exercise of the Pages, and the divertissement of the Prince, nevertheless he gave little heed to their admonitions, but carried on the work with a vigor answerable to his resolution; and when he had finished the Pile, because he had slighted this Chaplains exhortations, called it *Imansis Gianisi* (imansız Camisi), or the Temple of the Incredulous.[936]

Probably to find a middle way, the sultan's advisors recommended him, instead of initiating a new mosque project, to complete the mosque project of his grandmother Valide Safiye Sultan (d. 1619) in Eminönü, whose construction had begun in 1598, and remained incomplete after her exile to the Old Palace by Ahmed I in 1603.[937] Topçular Katibi recounted that the sultan initially thought of reviving his grandmother's mosque project but soon abandoned this idea.[938] Along with his antipathy for Safiye Sultan, the negative image of her mosque project in the public eye seems to have made him reluctant to complete the construction of this mosque instead of building a new one from scratch.[939] Safiye Sultan's mosque was regarded as illegitimate by the public and the religious authorities because of the illegitimate acquisition of the building site, where a synagogue, a church and many houses belonging to the Jewish population were located.[940]

[936] After Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 515; Grelot, *Late Voyage*, 211.
[937] Thys-Şenocak, *Ottoman Women Builders*, 189.
[938] Abdulkadir Efendi, *Topçular Katibi*, I, 561.
[939] Safiye Sultan dominated the Ottoman court as the queen mother during the reign of Mehmed III, and her exile was among the very first actions of Ahmed I, who desired to establish himself as an independent and powerful monarch. Peirce, *Imperial Harem*, 94–97.
[940] Safiye Sultan demolished the synagogue and the church securing their congregations with a written legal permission that was penned by an assistant judge that entitled them to construct new places of worship in other places. These congregations were not allowed to erect new sanctuaries in place of the demolished ones because of the illegality of this action according to the Hanafi law. The illegitimacy of her project was reminded to Safiye Sultan by the grand mufti in a letter addressing to her. Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 511–512.

The memory of his grandmother's mosque project influenced how Sultan Ahmed handled the affairs of his own building. He attempted to get the consent and support of the religious authorities in every single phase of his construction. Before he initiated his construction, he asked the grand mufti to issue a fatwa concerning the legality of building a mosque in Atmeydanı, and his request was confirmed by the chief mufti.[941] Mustafa Safi recounted that the sultan worried about breaking the hearts of property owners in the area, when he decided to build his mosque complex in Atmeydanı whose environs were intensely built.[942] Similarly, Cafer Çelebi indicated that 'the benevolent Shah did not consent to the tearing down of districts', and 'he did not wish that abodes and dwellings be removed.'[943] That the purchase of the properties on the construction site was conducted legally and recorded properly shows a similar concern.[944] Further, the sultan endeavoured to display the legitimacy of his mosque project by hosting the prominent religious figures of his age in subsequent festive events held in the construction site, as will be discussed in the last part of this chapter.

Mustafa Safi indicated that the sultan's choice of Atmeydanı as the locus of his mosque was divinely inspired. Various places were offered to him, including the Rüstem Pasha Palace, which was then the place of residence of his daughter Ayşe Sultan. The sultan chose the site of this palace that was on the qibla side of Atmeydanı, as the locus of his mosque. According to Mustafa Safi, its visibility from the sea, the freshness of its air, its brightness, and its location in a densely built and crowded part of the city made this palace the most convenient option for the sultan's

[941] Mustafa Safi, *Mustafa Safi'nin*, I, 50–51.
[942] Ibid, 50.
[943] Cafer Efendi, *Risale-i Mimariyye*, 66.
[944] The document of these purchases (TMSA 10748) was introduced in the previous chapter. See Chapter IV, 200–204.

mosque. The visibility of this site from the Marmara Sea was also mentioned by Cafer Çelebi, who described this place as 'the finest location in the city.'[945] Mustafa Safi added that this place's closeness to Hagia Sophia did not constitute a problem if the density and variety of the congregation in the center of the city was taken into consideration. He likened Istanbul to Cairo, which has numerous mosques attached to each other, each with a crowded congregation.[946] Mustafa Safi's emphasis on the size of the congregation in the mentioned location implies an apprehension concerning the site's proximity to another sultanic mosque, Hagia Sophia. Other contemporaries highlighted the attractiveness of Atmeydanı for the crowds as the reason behind the sultan's choice of this square. Topçular Katibi, for example, indicated that Sultan Ahmed decided on Atmeydanı because it was a large space with many spectacles (*şenliklü*).[947] Similarly, the endowment deed of the mosque complex defines Atmeydanı as a place of pleasure, *cā-yı sefā*, implying this site's allure for people.[948]

The purchase of two palaces in the Atmeydanı constituted one of the first steps of Sultan Ahmed's project even if the purchase of all necessary lands and properties would take more than a decade. Various properties in the environs of Atmeydanı were purchased by Ahmed I between 1609 and 1617 (1018–1026 AH) in two sets of transactions that occurred in 1609–11 (1018-1019 AH), and 1616–17 (1025–1026 AH). In the first phase, properties occupying the eastern side of the maydan were acquired, while the purchase of the lands and houses in the maydan's southern edge occurred in the second phase.

[945] Cafer Efendi, *Risale-i Mimariyye*, 65–66.
[946] Mustafa Safi, *Mustafa Safi'nin*, I, 49.
[947] Abdülkadir Efendi, *Topçular Katibi Tarihi*, I, 561.
[948] TIEM 2184, 20a.

The palaces of Ayşe Sultan, Mehmed Pasha and İbrahim Pasha, and the masjid, rooms and a shop in the *naḳḳāşḫāne* were among the first properties that were bought by the sultan in 1609–1610 (1018 AH). Ayşe Sultan's palace, which was sold in July-August 1609 (Rabi al-Avval 1018)[949], constituted the first purchase and known legal operation of Sultan Ahmed's building project. This was followed by the purchase of the Mehmed Pasha Palace that was bought in August in the same year (Rabi al-Thani 1018).[950] The İbrahim Pasha Palace was purchased in January 1610 (Zilqaddah 1018), while the masjid and rooms in the *naḳḳāşḫāne* were sold to the sultan by their owner in March 1610 (Zulhijjah 1018).[951] In the same month, a shop occupying the *arslānḫāne* (the imperial menagerie) basement, and a lime shop near Atmeydanı were bought by the sultan, which was followed by the purchase of two other shops in the *arslānḫāne* in April 1610 (Muharram 1019 AH).[952] The second set of purchases took place in 1616 and 1617 (1025-1026 AH). They involved the purchase of five different houses by the sultan for the construction of his public kitchen and hospital. While three houses were bought in the summer of 1616 (1025 AH), the purchase of two other houses took place towards the end of the same year.[953]

The provision of the building's site was followed by the beginning of construction work. The process between the digging of the mosque's foundation and the completion of the complex's last parts was documented in a relatively detailed way thanks to a series of registers (*defter*) kept between 1609 (1018 AH) and 1620 (1029 AH), along with the accounts of contemporary chroniclers. Based on the

[949] TMSA 10748.0001, 2.
[950] Ibid, 3.
[951] Ibid, 4–7.
[952] Ibid, 7. The document indicates that all these shops belonged to the Hagia Sophia waqf.
[953] TMSA D.212, 0001.

registers, Nayır and Öten have respectively offered a general chronology for the complex's construction. Nayır argued that the Friday mosque was the first edifice to be constructed in the complex, whose foundations were dug between November 1609 and February 1610. It was completed in 1617 along with the royal pavilion attached to it, and the arasta bazaar. She suggested that the construction of other parts of the complex were finished between 1619 and 1620 in a second phase.[954] Repeating more or less the same order of construction for other parts of the complex, Öten has shown that the first part of the edifice to be completed was the royal pavilion (*ḫünkār ḳaṣrı*), whose construction was finished in April 1615. Besides, she has demonstrated that the demolishing of the palaces and buildings on the construction site, and the digging of the mosque's foundations occurred progressively in a longer period. While the foundations of the domed prayer area were dug in 1610, as Nayır has shown, the foundations of the inner and outer courtyards were dug between February 1610 and September 1611.[955]

The accounts of contemporary witnesses and other archival registers make it possible to determine the dates of some other significant steps in the construction's chronology. According to Mustafa Safi, the construction began with the demolition of the buildings on Atmeydanı's eastern side, which was cleaned from excavations and leveled on October 8, 1609 (9 Rajab 1018 AH). The foundations of the mosque began to be digged after the application of its luscious depiction and unprecedented plan (*resm-i dīlpez̲īr and tarḫ-ı bīnaẓīr*) to the building site, which marked the loci of the four walls, mihrab, columns and galleries of the sanctuary.[956] Preparing two-dimensional plans of the sultanic monuments with a modular grid system and

[954] She used TMSA D.42 and TMSA D.5112. Nayır, "Osmanlı Mimarisinde", 46.
[955] Öten based her investigation on the chronology on the daily account register (*ruznamçe*) TMSA 35 and 5112. Öten "Arşiv Belgelerine Göre", 102–103, 700–702.
[956] Mustafa Saf', *Mustafa Safi'nin*, I, 52. See Necipoğlu, "Plans and Models", 224–243.

presenting them to the patrons, had been an established practice in Ottoman architectural culture since at least the late fifteenth century.[957] Besides serving as models in preliminary discussions with patron concerning the building' design, these depictions were used for marking out the ground plans at the building site in order to determine the actual monument at full scale and to lay the foundations in the original position.[958] The accounting book of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque which displays the incomes and expenditures of the building project between August 1609 (Jumada al-Avval 1018 AH) and February 1618 (Safar 1027), involves the expenditure for a similar depiction of the mosque, (*resm*)[959] which should have fulfilled the same functions. In her study on architectural technology in the early modern Ottoman era, Gülsün Tanyeli has demonstrated that the laying of a building's foundations was generally preceded with a measurement of the building site, and the application of the building's plan to this location in accordance with the standardized measurements of the above-mentioned modular grid system.[960] For the plan's application to the construction site, Ottoman constructors benefited from rope grid, which was mentioned by Cafer Çelebi as plumb-line stake, *düzen ibi çıbığı,* which was among the tools of the early-seventeenth century Ottoman architects and builders.[961] Most probably, the Sultan Ahmed Mosque's site was prepared for laying out the mosque's foundations with the same procedure.

The digging of the mosque's foundations continued until November 16, 1609 (14 Shaban 1018 AH), but it became apparent that the ground was damp and slippery, and not suitable for laying strong foundation. The building site was

[957] Necipoğlu, "Plans and Models", 224–243.
[958] Ibid, 234, 239.
[959] Barkan, *Süleymaniye Cami*, II, 286.
[960] Tanyeli, *Osmanlı İnşaat Teknolojisi*, 21–28.
[961] Ibid, 85; Cafer Efendi, *Risale-i Mimariyye*, 99.

strengthened with wooden stakes, which were driven into the ground, marking the mosque's four walls.[962] The use of wooden stakes for this purpose was an already established practice in the Ottoman architectural culture since at least the mid-sixteenth century, which was also conducted in the Yeni Valide Mosque's foundations.[963] After its consolidation with stakes, the site became ready for the laying out of the mosque's foundations, which took place on January 14, 1610, (8 Shavval 1610 AH).[964] (Figure C62)

The accounts of contemporary chroniclers provide clues concerning different phases of the mosque's erection. Mustafa Safi related that on November 5, 1610 (18 Shaban 1019), the construction site of the mosque served as the venue of a *mevlid* ceremony, when the mosque reached its "seventh layer".[965] Although it is not clear what "the seventh layer" meant, the expression implies that the walls of the mosque were raised to a certain level within ten months after the foundations were laid out. The same author praised the rapid progression of the construction in another place, when he reported the construction's advent in December 1611 (Shavval 1020 AH). He indicated that the length of the sanctuary's mihrab wall became 4 *z̲irā'* (approximately 2.7 meters), its general outline became apparent, its length exceeded those of the surrounding edifices, and it began to be seen from the sea. Upon the request of the sultan, the constructors conducted such an amount of work that could normally take many years to complete.[966] Topçular Katibi recounted that the

[962] Mustafa Safi, *Mustafa Safi'nin*, I, 53.
[963] Tanyeli, *Osmanlı İnşaat Teknolojisi*, 85–91. The Yeni Valide Mosque was built on seaside foundations that were much less stable than Atmeydanı area and this would have been reflected in the technology used to create the substructures for these two mosque complexes. While both would have used wooden pilings the amount and ways these were used must have been different in the two parts of the city. For an account of the digging of the Yeni Valide Mosque's foundations, see Selaniki, *Tarih-i Selaniki*, II, 761.
[964] Mustafa Safi, *Mustafa Safi'nin*, II, 128; Naima, *Tarih-i Naima*, II, 378.
[965] Mustafa Safi, *Mustafa Safi'nin*, I, 108.
[966] Ibid, 126.

mosque's dome neared completion in the winter of 1615 (Muharram 1024 AH) under favor of the hard work of the building superintendent, and its ornaments were applied before its completion.[967] The dome was closed a few months later, in June 1617,[968] before the mosque's inauguration in August of the same year.[969] The construction of the Friday mosque was completed within 6,5 years, between November 1609 and June 1617.[970] The evidence provided by other archival sources shows, however, that additions to the mosque continued at least until November 1619. A document showing some expenditures of the mosque between June and November 1619 (Jumada al-Avval–Zulhijjah 1028 AH) mentions the ablution fountains and an oriel above the main entrance of the prayer hall among the sections that were added to the sanctuary.[971]

The accounting book of the construction recounts the Friday mosque, the sultan's pavilion, the two lines of shops with upper rooms in the arasta bazaar and those facing Atmeydanı, the fountains, a big house and the house of the prayer leaders among the completed buildings of the complex.[972]As the center and most significant part of the complex, the Friday mosque's priority among other components is visible in its precedence in the building chronology. On the other hand, the priority given to the income-generating edifices of the complex's endowment, including shops, rooms and arasta bazaar, can be interpreted as a concern for providing a financial source for the rest of the project.

[967] Abdülkadir Efendi, *Topçular Katibi*, I, 629, 651–652.
[968] Abdülkadir Efendi, *Topçular Katibi*, I, 651–652.
[969] Abdülkadir Efendi, *Topçular Katibi*, I, 664.
[970] A partial chronology of the Friday mosque's construction phases between 1610 and 1616 was documented by Öten. Öten, "Arşiv Belgelerine Göre", 701–702.
[971] TMSA.D. 5112, 0014.
[972] Barkan, *Süleymaniye Cami*, II, 287.

The construction of all other edifices seems to have begun before the inauguration of the Friday mosque. The building of the public kitchen and hospital started before others. Partly published by Öten, the first daily account book (*ruznamçe*) mentions the expenses for a whitted wooden base (*tābān-ı yonma-yı çūb*) for the mausoleum's foundations, which date to July 1614.[973] This displays that the tomb's building began in July 1614. It was completed in 1619 (1028 AH), which was marked in a chronogram in its construction inscription.[974] The earliest register of the *'imāret,* which documents the expenditures of the public kitchen and hospital in December 1616 (Zilqadah and Zulhijjah 1025 AH), involves the expense paid for animals sacrificed for celebrating the laying out of the *'imāret*'s foundations.[975] This reveals that the foundations of the public kitchen and the hospital were laid in December 1616. The last register of the *'imāret*'s expenditures is dated to May-June 1620 (Jumada al-Thani 1029), which was most probably the date of this edifice's completion.[976]

The expenses of the madrasa and the Quran recitation school (*darü'l-ḳurrā*) were displayed in another register dated between April and June 1617 (Rabi al-Thani–Jumada al-Thani 1026 AH), which makes it possible to determine the beginning date of these buildings' construction. The document mentions wages paid to miners (*lağımcı*) for laying out the foundations of the Quran recitation shcool and the madrasa in April/May (Rabi al-Thani) and May/June (Jumada al-Avval) respectively.[977] While the date of completion of the the Quran recitation shcool is uncertain, the madrasa's building seems to have been finished on some date between

[973] Öten, "Arşiv Belgelerine Göre", 615–616.
[974] Önkal, "Osmanlı Türbelerinin Kitabeleri", 317.
[975] TMSA. D. 5112. 0008, 1.
[976] TMSA. D. 5112. 0008, 5.
[977] TMSA. D. 3684, 2–3.

November 1619 (Zilhijjah 1028 AH) and July 1620 (Shaban 1029 AH). A register displaying the expenses between these dates includes the madrasa, along with the coffeehouse, the rooms for the prayer leaders and some shops.[978] Constituting the latest register of the project, this document suggests that the madrasa was among the last finished buildings of the complex. Considering its less monumental dimensions and exclusion from this document, the the Quran recitation shcool's construction might have ended before that of the madrasa, seemingly before November 1619.

5.1.2 Organization, materials, and labour

The Sultan Ahmed complex was an enormous building project, which necessitated a centralized and complex organization, a huge number of workers with different skills and professions, and a variety of building materials. The incomes, expenses, construction materials and labour of Sultan Ahmed's mosque project were registered in different documents, including the daily and yearly compendiums (*icmāl*) of general incomes and expenses, registers (*defter*) documenting the purchases of particular construction materials, *mühimme* orders, and an accounting book (*muḥāsebe-i vāridāt ve meṣārif-i binā-i cāmī'-i şerīf*).[979] The two daily account books known as *defter-i ruznamçe* provide detailed information concerning the daily expenditures and organization of the construction, as well as its incomes.[980] These

[978] TMSA. D. 5112.0014.

[979] While the daily and annual registers are kept in the archive of the Topkapı Palace Museum, royal orders related to the construction project were recorded in successive *mühimme defter*s in the Ottoman Archives of the Prime Minister's Office. Necipoğlu has argued that the supervisor of Sultan Ahmed's project benefited from, and partly imitated, the registers of the Süleymaniye complex, which also contained a series of daily and annual accounts; accounting compendiums, and several *mühimme* orders published by Barkan in two volumes. Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan,* 179; Barkan, *Süleymaniye Cami*, I–II. A majority of the archival documents on the Sultan Ahmed complex's construction were introduced by Aliye Öten. See Öten, "Sources", 281–305, idem, "Arşiv Belgelerine Göre".

[980] The first book contains the expenses of the Friday mosque's construction between August 1609 (CA 1018) and April–May 1616 (Rabi al-Avval 1025 AH). See TMSA D.35. This bulky document was partly transcribed by Öten in her dissertation. Öten, "Arşiv Belgelerine Göre", 555–691. The second one records the incomes and expenditures of the project during the building of the

books consist of 247 and 57 folios respectively, and the density of these volumes indicates their comprehensiveness, as well as the length and intensity of the construction work.

The daily registers display that the construction did not have fixed working days, and the number and sequence of the working days changed from one week to another, most probably depending on some variables, like seasonal conditions. Similarly, the quantity and kind of materials, the amounts of expenditures, and the descriptions of workers' jobs display differences in various weeks, depending on the necessities of the construction's different phases. In table 2, one register from these daily account books can be investigated as an example of this recording system.[981]

Table 2. An example of daily account registers (ruznamçe) [982]

Saturday, September 7, 1609 (7 Rabi al-Avval 1018)
The cost of various water pockets of water-carrier (*torba-yı sāḳī-yi muḥtelife*), 24 pieces, 863 *aḳçe*s
The cost of pumps for drawing water (*ṭulumba berā-yı keşīden-i āb*), 7 pieces, 195 *aḳçe*s
The cost of ropes made from linseed fibers (*resen-i ıḫlamur*), 9 *aḳçe*s
The cost of implements (*edevāt*), 15 *aḳçe*s
The day wage of miners (*nafaḳa-yı lağımcıyān*), 20 *aḳçe*s
The cost of carts (*araba*) for bringing some implements from the shipyard, 40 *aḳçe*s
The cost of nails (*mismār*) bought from the bazaar, 200 pieces, 70 *aḳçe*s

complementary edifices (*tetimme-i binā-i cāmī'i şerif*) between 1616 (1025 AH) and 1617 (1026 AH). See TMSA D.40. In the front page, it is written that this book involves the registers of the period between June 1616 (CE 1025) and October-November 1617 (Zilqaddah 1029). However, it also contains the registers for 1618, 1619, and 1620.

[981] TMSA D.35, 3b. I would like to thank my friend Aydın Kurt for helping me reading this page written in *siyāḳat* script.

[982] TMSA D.35, 3b.

The mosque complex of Sultan Ahmed was built by a huge group of workers with different skills and from different origins.[983] The construction project was under the responsibility of a high-ranking staff, which involved three different positions, including the building supervisor (*binā nāẓırı*), the secretary (*binā emīnī*) and the chief architect (*sermi'mārān-ı ḫassa*). The building supervisor was responsible for the general organization of the construction, and the secretary was in charge of the financial management of the project.[984] The chief architect was tasked with various tasks related with the design and construction, including surveying the construction site with a committee of experts, codifying the costs and dimensions of building materials, determining the wages of construction workers, preparing cost estimates and plans, and overseeing the application of these plans.[985]

The building supervisor of the Sultan Ahmed complex was the chief black eunuch Mustafa Agha (d.1624), who served as a harem eunuch during the reigns of Murad III and Mehmed III.[986] He became the keystone of Sultan Ahmed's post-1607 sultanate, and served as the sultan's chief advisor, chief power broker, and religious alter-ego. He was the supervisor of the sultan's waqf established for the two holy Sanctuaries in Mecca and Medina.[987] Mustafa Agha's services as the administrator of Sultan Ahmed's waqf in the holy cities, and as the overseer of his renovation projects in the Kaba should have earned him the necessary experience in administrative and construction works, and rendered him a coherent candidate for such a position.[988] His

[983] Nayır and Öten have also investigated the workers of the construction in their dissertations. Nayır, "Osmanlı Mimarisinde", 88–93; Öten, "Arşiv Belgelerine Göre", 406–552.
[984] Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 176.
[985] Ibid, 161; Turan, "Osmanlı Teşkilatında Hassa", 50–52.
[986] Börekçi, "Factions and Favorites", 244; Değirmenci, *İktidar Oyunları*, 37–40.
[987] Börekçi, "Factions and Favorites", 242–246.
[988] It was a custom to choose building supervisors from trustworthy administrators with financial proficiency and preferably some experience in building work, such as endowment administrators, keepers of the royal purse, retired finance ministers, sanjak governors, or fief holders. Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 178.

proximity to the sultan as a royal favor and advisor, however, seems to have constituted the most significant reason behind his assignment to this position.

The secretary of Sultan Ahmed's mosque project was Kalender Efendi (d. 1616), who was among Mustafa Agha's proteges. He served as a second rank finance director (*defterdār-ı şıḳḳ-ı s̲ānī*) in the 1600s, and presented the sultan an album of calligraphy and illumination he had himself prepared before his assignment as the secretary.[989] He undertook this task until his death in 1616, the year when he was rewarded for his services with the rank of vizier.[990] While his experience as finance director made him a suitable nominee for the position of the secretary, the album of calligraphy and illumination he presented to the sultan must have also played a part in his assignment. After Kalender's death Hüseyin Agha and İdris Agha shared the position of secretary.[991] The name of Hüseyin Agha was mentioned as one of the *müteferriḳa*s[992] of the court in the sales sheet while İdris Agha's occupation was defined as the chief gardener (*bostāncıbaşı*).[993] Hüseyin Agha's name was further addressed as the scriber in the first daily account register, indicating that he began to serve in the project as early as 1609. Similar to Kalender, they seem to have had proximity with the chief black eunuch, and probably were a part of his faction in the court.

[989] Fetvacı, *World Emperor*, 61–89; Bağcı, "Presenting *Vassal* Kalender's", 255–269; Börekçi, "Factions and Favorites", 246.
[990] Ibid, 246.
[991] TMSA D. 211, 1; TMSA D.40, 2b.
[992] "Müteferrika" was a term implying a position in the Ottoman court. It was a general denomination used for particular officials, who were not in charge of specific tasks; but engaged in various duties in the court. Unlike the majority of other palace officials, they were chosen from among outstanding families and origins. See Afyoncu, "Müteferrika", 183.
[993] As Tezcan and Börekçi have demonstrated, the position of the chief gardener became one of the most significant positions in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century Ottoman court, and several chief gardeners served as royal favorites and power brokers in this period. Tezcan, *Second Ottoman Empire*, 12; Börekçi, "Factions and Fractions", 154, 202–205. For the position of chief gardener in the sixteenth anc seventeenth centuries, see Yıldız, *Bostancı Ocağı*.

As custom necessitated, the chief architect of the era was commissioned as the architect of Sultan Ahmed's mosque complex. Sedefkar Mehmed Agha occupied the position of the chief architect from 1606 until his death 1622–23.[994] His life and career are well known thanks to a contemporary treatise, *Risāle-i Mi'mārīyye*, penned by Cafer Çelebi.[995] Cafer Çelebi indicated that Mehmed Agha entered the service of the Ottoman palace as a Janissary recruit, served as a watchman in the garden of Sultan Süleyman's tomb, entered the service of Imperial Gardens, and became the gate keeper of the Sublime Porte.[996] After taking an interest in the science of music for a short period, he turned to geometry and architecture, and was educated as a master of mother-of-pearl and architect in the Ottoman palace.[997] Besides his long apprenticeship to three master architects, including Mimar Sinan, Davud Agha and Dalgıç Ahmed Agha, his travels in all the Arab lands and Balkan provinces for different services augmented his skills in architecture, since he gained the chance to observe various cities, fortresses and buildings.[998] Likewise, his service as the overseer of waterways of Istanbul (*suyolu nāẓırı*) for eight years before his appointment as the chief architect was a significant task that contributed to his experience as an architect.[999]

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[994] Afyoncu, *17. Yüzyılda*, 13; Gökyay, "Risale-i Mi'mariyye", 142; Çobanoğlu, "Mimar Mehmed Ağa", 13.

[995] This treatise constitutes one of the most significant sources shedding light on not only the life of Mehmed Agha but also the building projects of Ahmed I as well as on architectural technology and terminology within the context of the early seventeenth century. Its transcription in Turkish was prepared by Aydın Yüksel, and its translation in English was published by Howard Crane. See Cafer Efendi, *Risale-yi Mi'mariyye*; Crane, *Risale-i Mi'mariye: An Early Seventeenth Century Ottoman Treatise on Architecture*.This treatise focuses on the life of Mehmed Agha in its first four chapters, and his architectural works in the fifth and sixth chapters while its last three chapters were devoted to the explanation of a series of architectural terms. For examples of different studies on this treatise, see Kale, "Architect's Cubit"; Can, "Risale-i Mi'mariye'de Kavramlar".

[996] Cafer Efendi, *Risale-yi Mimariyye*, 24.

[997] Ibid, 26.

[998] He traveled in the Arab lands and especially on the Pilgrimage route during his service to Üveys 'Alī Pasha, the governor of Egypt, and in some Balkan provinces such as Salonica or Albania as an inscpector appointed by the sultan. Cafer Efendi, *Risale-yi Mimariyye*, 38–40.

[999] Ibid, 41.

These high-ranking officials presided over a large team which included groups of workers who were in charge of different tasks, and who were organized hierarchically. The workers employed in the construction were all paid,[1000] even though they included not only free masters and novices of different professions, but also Janissary recruits and slaves. The accounting book recounts a series of groups of workers with different responsibilities. Miners (*lağımcıyān*) constitute the first group on the list, whose tasks included the digging of the foundations of the complex's different parts, including a new cloaca and new waterways of the building complex.[1001] Porters (*ḥammālān*) and carters (*arabacıyān*) were in charge of transporting different building materials from various locations to Istanbul and carrying them to the construction site.[1002] Khurasan mortar mixers (*sebbāḳ*), carpenters (*neccārān*), blacksmiths (*ahengerān*), glassmakers (*cāmgerān*), locksmiths (*çilingīrān*), and masons (*sengtırāşān*) and cutters of different stones, including ashlar masonry and marbles (*köfekiciyān* and *mermerciyān*) were responsible for preparing the main building materials. Artisans who prepared wooden doors, windows, grills and lecterns (*üstādīye-i dolabhā-yı kebīr ve bābhā-yı mināreha ve pençerehā-yı garbī*), painters (*naḳḳāşān*), goldsmiths (*zergerān*) who prepared the golden crescents on top of the dome were among the paid craftsmen.[1003] Last, Janissary recruits (*yeniçeriyān*) and slaves (*esīrān*) constituted the so-called unskilled laborers, who must have shouldered the heaviest burden of the construction despite their modest daily allowances.[1004] Topçular Katibi related that in addition to

[1000] The account compendium (TMSA D. 42) displays that each group of workers, including slaves, were paid, whose total wages were listed in the same document. See Barkan, *Süleymaniye Cami*, II, 284–286.
[1001] Barkan, *Süleymaniye Cami*, II, 284.
[1002] Ibid, 284.
[1003] Ibid, 284–286.
[1004] Ibid, 285–286.

the Janissary recruits (*'acemi oğlanları devşürmeleri*), more than a thousand galley slaves and cottagers (*tersāneden esīrler ve rençberler*) served in the construction.[1005]

Although it is difficult to determine the number of labourers based on the known sources, the variety of their ethnic and religious identities is identifiable. The daily registers address various employees regarding their religious and/or ethnic backgrounds, and mention various Turkish, Kurdish, Armenian, and Jewish names. A carpenter with the name of Meneş, for example, was recurrently addressed as Meneş-i Yahudi, Meneş the Jew, in the first daily accounting register.[1006] Kirkor-i zimmi, -Kirkor the non-Muslim/dhimmi, Kürd Hüseyin, -Hüseyin the Kurd-, and Markos Ermeni- Markos the Armenian- are also examples of such denominations.[1007]

The provision of the labour force seems to have begun as early as the inception of the building project. Topçular Katibi reported that in 1609 (1018 AH), imperial orders were sent to the governors of different Anatolian and Balkan provinces, who were commissioned with transferring Janissary recruits to Istanbul for work in the construction of the New Mosque.[1008] A royal order dated to 1610, which was sent to the kadis of Mihaliç, Manyas, Gönen, Kırmasti, and Edincik, constitutes an example of such imperial commands. The kadis of these towns were ordered to send paid workers (*'ulūfelū*) and Janissary recruits (*'acemi oğlanı*) to be employed as wage laborers in the construction.[1009] Determining the ways of skilled employees' recruitment seems to be more difficult. As Necipoğlu has demonstrated, creating catalogue-like registers of named masters was a standard practice in the

[1005] Abdülkadir Efendi, *Topçular Katibi*, I, 560–562.
[1006] Öten, "Arşiv Belgelerine Göre", 243–244, 248, 257, 265.
[1007] TMSA D. 40, 2b–3a.
[1008] Abdülkadir Efendi, *Topçular Katibi*, I, 560.
[1009] BOA. A.DVNSMHM. D.79, 649.

sixteenth century.[1010] It is possible that the high-ranking staff of Sultan Ahmed's projects benefited from such existing lists in the provision of masters of various professions and crafts.

The building materials of Sultan Ahmed's project were as diverse as its workforce. A careful investigation of the daily and monthly registers, and the accounting book reveals that a fixed body of materials with standardized dimensions were used in all edifices of the complex, and the detailed list of materials in the accounting book seems to be valid for all the buildings. Several *mühimme* orders that were sent to the governors of different centers of production confirm the use of standardized dimensions and moulds for various building materials. Four special bulky books devoted to register the two main building materials, i.e. the ashlar masonry and marbles also offer evidence concerning the building materials.[1011]

The accounting book displays the expenditures of six main buildings materials in a detailed list, which involves timber (*kerāste*), nail (*mismār*) and iron (*āhen*), stone (*seng*), lead (*sürb*), lime (*gec*), and brick (*ṭuğla*). These six main materials are recorded as a list with reference to their dimensions, types, origins, or places of usage in the construction. For instance, the list of timbers includes 53 different entries, which are defined according to the mentioned criteria. Some kinds of timbers were recorded with reference to their types, such as hornbeam birch (*gülgen*) or elm (*ḳaraağaç*), while others were defined according to their usage, such

[1010]Displaying the empire's skilled labour sources, these lists were used in the selection of masters who were conscripted to work in the royal projects, probably together with their novices. Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 180.

[1011] The costs and quantities of ashlar masonry used in the mosque's construction were registered in two registers kept between June 1610 (Rabi al-Avval 1019 AH) and October 1611 (Shaban 1020), and between November 1614 (Shavval 1023 AH) and April 1616 (Rabi al-Avval 1025 AH). See TMSA. D. 36 and D. 37. The white marbles purchased for the Friday mosque were registered between May 1616 (Jumada al-Avval 1025 AH) and October 1617 (Shavval 1026 AH) while marbles of various kind were recorded in another book kept between August 1609 (Jumada al-Avval 1018 AH) and September 1615 (Shaban 1022). See TMSA. D. 38 and D. 41. Based on these four books, Nayır made a list of different marbles and stones in her dissertation. See Nayır, "Osmanlı Mimarisinde", 97–102.

as wood of columns (*sütūnhā*) or floor (*tabān*), or to their places of provision like timber plates from İznikmid, or timber columns from Üsküdar.[1012] Similarly, the diversity of types, dimensions and origins of the stones are reflected in four detailed lists under different subtitles, including limestone (*köfeki*), firestone (*seng-i ateş*) and various kinds of marbles (*mermer*).[1013] A majority of materials have particular references to their dimensions such as big (*kebīr*), medium (*vasaṭ*) and small (*ṣaġīr*), without specifying the actual measures, and this implies the existence of fixed standards for timber, nails, different types of bricks and stones.

The materials appearing in the registers and observable in the mosque coincide with those that had been used in the construction of the majority of Ottoman royal buildings since at least the mid-fifteenth century. Similar with the previous sultanic Friday mosques, the Sultan Ahmed mosque was constructed as a stone structure, with the use of ashlar masonry, various marbles, and prestigious decorative materials including polychrome İznik tiles and inlaid woods. However, its building materials display two remarkable changes from those of the previous sultanic congregational mosques. The first is the decrease in the number of spolia.[1014] As Nayır has demonstrated, the Sultan Ahmed Mosque departs from the previous sultanic mosques in terms of the very limited use of spolia. Based on an investigation of the two books of marbles,[1015] she revealed that the colorful marble columns in the forecourt and side galleries of the mosque were not registered, and must have been

[1012] Barkan, *Süleymaniye Cami*, II, 276–277.
[1013] Ibid, 278–280.
[1014] The use of precious g
erials and sections, especially marble columns, in the royal congregational mosques was an Ottoman custom. The most significant example of this phenomenon was the Süleymaniye Mosque, whose building materials contained a series of spolia taken from different ancient monuments in Istanbul and other cities. Barkan, *Süleymaniye Cami*, I, 331–361; Tanyeli, *Osmanli İnşaat Teknolojisi*, 48–51; Necipoğlu "Connectivity, Mobility".
[1015] TMSA. D. 38 and D. 41. Nayır, "Osmanlı Mimarisinde", 97–102.

taken from the Hippodrome.[1016] Casson argued that some of the existing marble columns in one of the arcades of the Hippodrome were used as spolia in the Sultan Ahmed Mosque,[1017] and the equality of the length of the mentioned columns with those of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque confirms this suggestion.[1018] The reasons behind the relatively limited use of spolia in the Sultan Ahmed Mosque are not clear. G. Tanyeli has argued that beginning with the late sixteenth century, there was a general decrease in the use of spolia in courtly architectural projects because the intense building activity in the first half of the sixteenth century probably used up the Byzantine spolia in and around the capital city. She further claimed that the monopolisation of the marble quarries in the Marmara Island by the Ottoman state, which occurred in the early seventeenth century, decreased the court's need for marble spolia.[1019]

The second noteworthy change is the increase in the use of iron in the construction.[1020] G. Tanyeli has demonstrated that the use of this material in the buildings patronized by members of the Ottoman court became widespread between 1520 and 1580, and it became a solution for almost all structural problems in the seventeenth century.[1021] This change in Ottoman architectural technology is reflected also in the Sultan Ahmed Mosque. In comparison with the previous sultanic congregational mosques, both the amount of iron and the number of its places of use increased in the Sultan Ahmed Mosque. The amount of iron used for the construction of the Sultan Ahmed complex is three times the iron used for the Süleymaniye

[1016] Nayır, "Osmanlı Mimarisinde", 101–102.
[1017] He does not specify which arcade's columns were used. Casson, *Preliminary Report*, 2.
[1018] Nayır, "Osmanlı Mimarisinde", 101.
[1019] Tanyeli, *Osmanlı İnşaat Teknolojisi*, 41, 44.
[1020] Iron had been used as a significant structural and supporting element in Ottoman royal mosques since the erection of the Üç Şerefeli Mosque in Edirne. Iron was used as raw material for nails, stretchers, girders, clamps, mortises and a variety of supporting elements like tenters, or rings. Tanyeli, Osmanlı İnşaat Teknolojisi, 13–22, 260.
[1021] Tanyeli, *Osmanlı İnşaat Teknolojisi*, 262–265.

complex, although the latter's acreage is almost twofold of the former.[1022] The increase in the number of iron girders from two into three, or the emergence of new kinds of tie-members made of iron in the Sultan Ahmed Mosque are also concordant with this architectural development.[1023] (Figures C63–C64)

The diverse building materials of the Sultan Ahmed complex were procured from different places, and a considerable number of them were transferred to the construction site from distant locations. Some building materials should have been taken from the royal storehouse of the Topkapı Palace, which was located in this palace's first courtyard, attached to different construction-related workshops.[1024] The registers suggest, however, a great majority of these diverse materials were brought to the construction site from distant places, in raw or refined forms. As the main construction materials, the ashlar masonry was provided from Ayastefanos (Yeşilköy) near Istanbul, while marbles were brought from the Marmara Island.[1025] Red stones known as *ṣomākī*, or porphyroid, were brought from Mihaliç, Kumburgaz, Marmara Island, İznikmid, Ayastafenos, Büyük Çekmece,[1026] and Rodosçuk, today's Tekirdağ.[1027]

Bricks were provided from free and state workshops in Darıca and Istanbul while timber and different woods came from distant places in the Balkans and Anatolia, such as Bartın, Üsküdar, and İzmit.[1028] Lime used in the construction was

[1022] Tanyeli, G. and Tanyeli, U., "Structural Use", 17.
[1023] Tanyeli, *Osmanlı İnşaat Teknolojisi*, 149, 206.
[1024] Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 161.
[1025] Nayır, "Osmanlı Mimarisinde", 97, 100; Öten, "Arşiv Belgelerine Göre", 212–213. Since at least from the sixteenth century, Ayastefanos, along with today's Bakırköy, Bahçelievler and Haznedar near this Ottoman village, housed quarries for ashlar masonry, which were operated by the Ottoman state. State marble quarries on the Marmara Island constituted the main source of marble used in the construction of Ottoman royal buildings, as had been the case for Byzantine buildings, along with marble spolia taken from different ancient monuments. Tanyeli, *Osmanlı İnşaat Teknolojisi*, 30, 33.
[1026] Nayır, "Osmanlı Mimarisinde", 101; Öten, "Arşiv Belgelerine Göre", 212.
[1027] TMSA D. 481, 0003.
[1028] Nayır, "Osmanlı Mimarisinde",102–105; Öten, "Arşiv Belgelerine Göre", 231, 235

registered as “Rumelian lime” and “Anatolian lime” in the registers, and Nayır has suggested that it was procured in the Darıca-Hereke region near Istanbul.[1029] In March 1612, a royal order was sent to the kadi of Üsküdar demanding lime, which shows that at least a part of lime was prepared in Üsküdar.[1030] Skopje and Sidre Kapısı were the places that provided lead for the construction.[1031] The authorities seem to have demanded the lead of Üsküp not only from its place of extraction but also from different places where this material was stored. In a *mühimme* order dated to January 1615, for example, the governor of Rodosçuk was tasked with purchasing all the existing lead of Skopje, including that which was warehoused in the hand of tradesmen, and transfer them to Istanbul with ships.[1032] A considerable amount of nails were brought from Serez.[1033]

All these building materials were transferred to the construction by teams of workers responsible for this task, using various vehicles. The accounting book mentions the wages of porters (*ḥammalān*), charioteers (*arabacıyān*), captains of ships carrying stones (*rü’esā-i sefā’in-i seng*) and the freight of ships (*navlūn-ı sefā’in*) among the expenditures of transportation.[1034] The transportation of the materials, which were brought from distant places, seems to have been a multi-tiered process, and each stage was under the responsibility of different groups of workers. Materials exported or produced within the same region were transferred to particular centers with either carts or ships, which were brought to the Ahurkapu Pier near the construction site, generally through sea routes.[1035] For example, royal orders sent to

[1029] Ibid, 105–106.
[1030] BOA. A.DVNSMHM.D.79, 378.
[1031] Nayır, “Osmanlı Mimarisinde”, 106–107; Öten, “Arşiv Belgelerine Göre”, 330.
[1032] BOA, A.DVNSMHM.D.80, 700.
[1033] Nayır, “Osmanlı Mimarisinde”, 108.
[1034] Barkan, *Süleymaniye Cami*, II, 284, 286.
[1035] Nayır, “Osmanlı Mimarisinde”, 97.

the governor of Salonica indicate this city served as a station, where lead taken from different cities in the Balkans was gathered, and transferred to the capital city on ships. In one of these *mühimme* orders, the governor of this city was informed that a sergeant named Mehmed was sent to the city to oversee the shipment of lead brought to Salonica from Rumelia.[1036] The accounting book mentions the charge of freight paid for these ships that transported lead from Salonica to Istanbul.[1037] Similarly, lime prepared in different places was transported to Üsküdar via ships, and gathered in this town near Istanbul. A royal order sent to the kadi of Üsküdar warns this governor concerning the inefficacy of the existing ships' capacity for bearing all the lime that was prepared in different places and transported to Üsküdar. He was ordered to transfer some of the burden to other ships that were coming and going between Üsküdar and Dilovası, a town near Düzce.[1038] Another such example is the pier of Anadolu Kavağı, which was used as a depot for firestone, from where this material was transferred to the construction site.[1039] Some materials, on the other hand, seem to have been transported to the Ahurkapu Pier directly from their places of extraction or production. For example, the pier of the Marmara Island was used for transferring marble extracted and refined on the same island,[1040] and the pier of Ayastefanos served as the spot for the transportation of ashlar masonry extracted within the same place.[1041]

The transfer of the building materials into the depot piers, and then to the pier of Ahurkapu and their transportation to the construction site, was under the responsibility of carters and porters. Different registers show the wages paid to

[1036] BOA, A.DVNSMHM.D.80, 306
[1037] Barkan, *Süleymaniye Cami*, II, 284.
[1038] BOA, A.DVNSMHM.D.79, 378.
[1039] TMSA D. 481, 3; TMSA D. 8002, 1–2.
[1040] TMSA D. 481, 3.
[1041] Barkan, *Süleymaniye Cami*, II, 285.

porters and carters, who carried various materials between different cities and the depot piers, or between the piers and the construction site. Some registers, on the other hand, refer to carriage and handling charges paid to the mentiond workers, without specifying their routes. The accounting book mentions the charges paid for the wheels that carried lead from Skopje to Salonica, and timber and stones of different kinds from unnoticed points to the construction site.[1042] This suggests that the lead gathered in Salonica was transported there from Skopje with wheels. Similarly, some of the timbers and stones sent to the construction site were carried there by carters. The monthly registers of the public kitchen contain wages paid to charters, who brought firestone and timber to the building, and to porters, who carried bricks to the same place.[1043] Likewise, the monthly registers of the madrasa and the Quran recitation school involve the wages paid to carters who transported iron, firestone and timber, and to porters, who carried timber and lime, among the expenses of the building.[1044]

The building materials reached the capital city in raw or refined forms, and some of them were treated in the construction-related workshops. The permanent workshops in the first courtyard of the Topkapı Palace, and in different places of the capital city, as well as temporary ones established near the construction site were used for preparing building materials. Öten has demonstrated that the basement and some open plots of the İbrahim Pasha Palace were used as workshops during the construction of the Sultan Ahmed complex.[1045] She also showed that some

[1042] Ibid, 284.
[1043] TMSA D. 481, 3; TMSA D. 8002, 2–3.
[1044] TMSA D. 3684, 2–3.
[1045] Öten, "İbrahim Paşa Sarayı", 289.

construction materials were stored in the mosque's basement, which was designed as a hypogeum (*maḫzen*).[1046]

Since at least from the construction of Süleymaniye around the mid-sixteenth century, sizes of the building materials as timbers, stones, and bricks were standardized, which reduced the reliance on custom-made building materials.[1047] A few royal orders sent to the governors of different centers of production confirm the continuity of the same practice within the period in which the Sultan Ahmed complex was built. A royal order sent to the governors of Karabirecik and Akyazı on July 21, 1596 (25 Zulqaddah 1004) warns them concerning a change in the dimensions of timbers, which were cut according to standardized dimensions and sent to the construction sites as semi-processed building materials.[1048] In another order dated to April 28, 1609 (23 Muharram 1018 AH) that was sent to the kadi of Salonica, this governor was commissioned with inspecting the production of nails in Serez. It warns the mentioned governor regarding that the newly sent nails were not produced in accordance with the standard dimensions.[1049]

Various skilled masters, who specialized in different media, and produced standardized components complemented by piecework, accompanied the head architects.[1050]Although determining the process of each material's refinement is difficult, it is possible to observe the diversity of these processes through some major examples. For example, the main building material, ashlar masonry, extracted in Ayastafenos were refined in a number of different quarries, whose majority was operated by non-Muslim stone masters.[1051] Bricks were provided both from state

[1046] Öten, "Arşiv Belgelerine Göre", 96.
[1047] Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 166.
[1048] Refik, *Hicri On Birinci*, 23.
[1049] Ibid, 38.
[1050] Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 166.
[1051] Nayır, "Osmanlı Mimarisinde", 98–99.

workshops and purchased from shops in the market.[1052] Lead, unlike ashlar masonry and bricks, reached the capital city in raw form, and was refined there, probably in the temporary royal workshops. A royal order sent to the kadis of Salonica and Sidre warns these governors about the quality of lead extracted in that region and sent to the capital city, and asks them to send pure lead, and not to mix it with other elements or mines.[1053]

The variety of origins of different building materials and workers, which were located in various regions and distances from Istanbul, attests to the capacity of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque's builders to manage a wide and complex organization from a center. It witnesses the variety of the material and human resources at the sultan's disposal as well as the geographical wideness of the area from which these diverse sources were recruited. As Necipoğlu has argued for the construction of the Süleymaniye complex, the management, organization and scale of Sultan Ahmed's building project illustrates the Ottoman central administration's ability 'to coordinate complex operations on a grand imperial scale.'[1054] In other words, his mosque project's construction displayed the sultan's ability to govern a huge and complex body of administrative entities, which in a way resembled his empire. Further, the royal building brought the affluence of the financial, material and human sources at Sultan Ahmed's disposal into view in the very center of his empire.

The provision of the abovementioned materials and labour force, and the running of such a massive building project necessitated a huge financial resource, as much as it required a sophisticated central organization. Sultan Ahmed spent a lot of money for his mosque project. In the words of Mustafa Safi, the amount of wealth

[1052] Barkan, *Süleymaniye Cami*, II, 281.
[1053] BOA, A.DVNSMHM.D.81, 31.
[1054] Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 179. See also, Necipoğlu, "Connectivity, Mobility".

spent for the erection of the New Mosque involved thousands of Egyptian treasuries, a figurative expression indicating the project's costliness.[1055] The purchase of land on which the monuments were raised cost 536,000 Ottoman *sikke*s.[1056] The accounting compendium displays that in the last month of 1616 (Zulhijjah 1025 AH), the amount of money paid for the noble mosque was 169,000,000 *akçe*s while the total of the expenses of the whole complex, including the royal pavilion, and the rooms and shops of the waqf, was 11, 341, 900 *akçe*s.[1057] According to another register displaying the payments delivered to the superintendent for the project's expenditures, the total amount spent between August 1609 (Jumada al-Avval 1018 AH) and March 1618 (Rabi al-Avval 1027 AH) was 1811 *yük*[1058] and 2944 *akçe*s.[1059] Unfortunately, it is impossible to calculate the total cost of the whole project based on the known archival materials. Yet the figures showing the expenditures suffice for indicating the extent of the wealth spent for the sultan's complex, which was, according to the anonymous author of *Tārīḫ-i Binā-yı Cāmi'-i Sultān Aḥmed-i Evvel*, erected without spending even a *sikke* from the imperial public treasury.[1060] This indicates the sultan's concern for showing that he did not use the public treasury for his project.

This emphasis on the construction's financial sources seems to have been a response to the harsh criticism against Sultan Ahmed for embarking on such a costly building project in the absence of a military victory. In other words, the sultan and his closer corteges had to prove the legitimacy of the building project, which was

[1055] Mustafa Safi, *Mustafa Safi'nin*, I, 108–109.
[1056] The sum of all sales conducted in the sultan's name is calculated based on the archital document displaying the details of these financial transactions. See TMSA D. 10748.
[1057] Barkan, *Süleymaniye Cami*, II, 287.
[1058] *Yük* is an Ottoman wheight unit, which did not have a fixed amount, and displayed differences regarding the types of transportation vehicles, such as ship (*gemi yükü*) and camel (*deve yükü*). İşbilir, "Yük".
[1059] TSM A. d. 211. 0001, 3–5.
[1060] Rüstem, "Spectacle of Legitimacy", 339.

claimed to be financed by the sultan's personal treasury. Unfortunately, testing the correctness of this claim is almost impossible in the light of the existing narrative and archival sources, which were penned by the sultan's closer retinue, or the members of his extended household. However, a document dated to 1616 (1025 AH) reveals that a high amount of the Yemeni treasure was spent for the project's expenses.[1061] This evidence shows that the tax revenues taken from Yemen constituted at least a part of the financial resource of the construction. In later account registers, rental resources generated from the shops and rooms began to appear by February 1618 (Safar 1027 AH),[1062] and this suggests that at least some of the expenditures were paid with the income provided from the waqf from this date onwards.

5.2 The layout and architecture of the Sultan Ahmed complex

The complex of Ahmed I consisted of various edifices featuring different architectural and functional configurations. It included a congregational mosque (*cāmī'*) with an adjacent royal pavilion (*ḫünkār ḳaṣrı*), a hadith college (*dārü'l-ḥadīs*), a Quran recitation school (*dārü'l- ḳurrā*), a public kitchen (*'imāret*), a hospital (*dārü'l-şifā*), a primary school (*mekteb-i sibyān*), the tomb of Ahmed I (*türbe*), a shop-lined street (*arasta*) and groups of shops with upper rooms (*dekākīn-i taḫtānī bā odahā-yı fevḳānī*), four public fountains (*sebīl*) and a water basin (*siḳāye*), a coffeehouse (*ḳahveḫāne*) and a public bath (*ḥamām*). A register recounting the parts of the complex mentions also a Sufi convent (*tekye*),[1063] which does not appear in any other document.[1064] Neither the contemporary narrative sources, nor architectural or archaeological evidence, suggests the existence of a Sufi convent as a

[1061] TMSA D. 212. 0001, 01.
[1062] Ibid, 5.
[1063] TMSA. D. 5112, 5.
[1064] Öten, "Arşiv Belgelerine Göre", 56.

part of the Sultan Ahmed complex.[1065] Shops, rooms and houses outside the arasta bazaar, one of the fountains, the public bath and coffeehouse, which were mentioned in different documents,[1066] completely disappeared, whereas other parts of the assembly lasted, in varying degrees of maintenance. The mosque, hadith college, Quran recitation school, primary school, mausoleum, three public fountains and royal pavilion have been preserved with minor changes while the public kitchen and hospital were partly demolished in the nineteenth century.[1067] The Friday mosque, hadith college, Quran recitation school, primary school, public bath and hospital, as well as the mausoleum formed social-charitable edifices, while shops, houses and rooms, public bath and coffeehouse served as income generating institutions, whose rental revenue supported the mentioned charitable foundations through an endowment established for the complex. (Figures C65–C66)

In terms of the variety of its components, the complex of Ahmed I partly differs from the previous sultanic complexes. The inclusion of a royal pavilion attached to the Friday mosque, a two-lined bazaar street, and a coffeehouse into a sultanic mosque complex appears as a novelty of Sultan Ahmed's complex. The emergence of these new architectural elements seems to have emanated from the changes in the ceremonial and representative agendas of the Ottoman sultans, and a general increase in the social-civic activities and spaces of the Ottoman capital city

[1065] It might have been planned to be added to the architectural assembly, and that the idea might have been abandoned in the construction process. Öten has argued that the edifice mentioned in the document could be the Düğümlü Baba convent near the İbrahim Pasha Palace, which was constructed in the sixteenth century. Öten, "Arşiv Belgelerine Göre", 206.

[1066] The accounting compendium mentions a congregational mosque, a royal pavilion, two lines of shops with upper rooms, a public bath, and 5 shops overlooking Atmeydanı among the completed parts of the complex in 1616 (1025 AH). See Barkan, *Süleymaniye Cami*, II, 287. An undated document in one of the account book of the complex recounts a hadith college, a madrasa, an *'imāret* consisting of a public kitchen, a storeroom and kilns, 22 rooms, a primary school, a Sufi convent, 4 public fountains and a water basin, a public hospital among the complementary buildings of Sultan Ahmed's Friday mosque. See TMSA. D. 5112. 0005. Another folio of the same document is devoted to a series of payments dated to 1619 (1028), which mentions a coffeehouse. See TMSA. D. 5112. 0014.

[1067] Nayır, "Osmanlı Mimarisinde", 84–85.

between the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.[1068] As Necipoğlu has aptly put it, the mosque of Sultan Ahmed heralded early modernity's dawning ethos in the increasingly civic and social touch of its ceremonies.[1069] The number, frequency and theatricality of various sultanic ceremonials and public appearances increased in this period, and it necessitated the inclusion of an additional palatial setting to the mosque. The incorporation of a coffeehouse into the complex must be related to the centrality of coffeehouses in the social and political life of Istanbul after the mid-sixteenth century, and the patron's desire to integrate this civic foundation into the royal complex.

Sultan Ahmed's architectural assembly departs from some previous sultanic complexes in Istanbul with the loose arrangement of its different edifices, too. It lacks the geometrical layout of the complexes erected by Mehmed II and Sultan Süleyman. Different edifices of the assembly were placed in the southern and eastern edges of Atmeydanı as groups that were created regarding their functional affinities.[1070] The intention for aligning the mosque and its various dependencies with Atmeydanı,[1071] and creating vital social spaces on the northern and eastern sides of the mosque, as well as visual and spatial connections and juxtapositions with Hagia Sophia, Topkapı Palace and Divanyolu seems to have also played a significant role in the composition of the complex's general layout.

The dependencies of the complex were placed at the eastern and southern ends of Atmeydanı, and on the northern and eastern façades of the Friday mosque's enclosure. The mosque is situated on the eastern side of Atmeydanı together with the

[1068] Kafescioğlu, "Sokağın, Meydanın, Şehirlilerin", 9; Fetvacı, "Music, Light", 236.
[1069] Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 516.
[1070] Nayır, "Osmanlı Mimarisinde", 46–47; Çobanoğlu, "Sultan Ahmed Camii", 497.
[1071] Fetvacı, "Music, Light", 236; Nayır, "Osmanlı Mimarisinde", 46-47; Çobanoğlu, "Sultan Ahmed Camii", 497.

royal pavilion within a wide enclosure, marking the eastern edge of this square. The northern side of the complex was marked with the tomb of Ahmed I, three educational buildings, including the hadith college, Quran recitation school, and primary school, and some shops. This northern façade faces significant monuments, including Hagia Sophia, the Haseki Bath, and the Topkapı Palace. It also overlooks the beginning of Divanyolu in the west. Located to the southwest of the Friday mosque, the public kitchen and hospital marked the southern edge of Atmeydanı, as a group of social-charitable buildings. Two lines of shops with upper rooms, public bath and two public fountains were lined in a way to form a bazaar street behind the qibla side of the mosque, overlooking the Marmara Sea. Shops, public fountains, and rooms dispersed on Atmeydanı and behind the northern and eastern side of the mosque's enclosure. I will investigate the architectural and spatial configuration of each group of edifices in the following pages.

5.2.1 The Friday mosque and the royal pavilion

5.2.1.1 The mosque's architecture

The congregational mosque constitutes the most central edifice of Sultan Ahmed's complex, situated on the eastern side of Atmeydanı, on an east-west axis. The mosque, with its preceding inner courtyard, it is elevated from the ground level. The elevation of the monument from the ground level augments its visibility from its environs and from greater distances. The northern, western and southern sides of the sanctuary are surrounded by an outer courtyard. An enclosure wall with several grilled-window openings and iron gates marks the borders of this outer courtyard, and separates it from the mosque's environment. The seventeenth century traveler Grelot related that the enclosure wall overlooking Atmeydanı had 72 grilled

windows, and its monumental entrances were closed with iron chains.[1072] Today, there are seven gates, which once connected the mosque courtyard with focal points surrounding the monument. On the west, there are three gates opening to Atmeydanı. The two gates on the north give access to the northern side while the one in the south connects the mosque with the road connecting the *'imāret* with *arasta* shops.[1073] That the number of gates opening to Atmeydanı is bigger than those on the other sides indicates this square's centrality for the intended visitors and audiences of the mosque.

The outer courtyard's configuration and the number of its gates were originally different. In the mid-seventeenth century, Evliya Çelebi asserted that the mosque's outer courtyard enveloped the edifice's four sides, and had eight gates resembling portcullises (*ḳal'e ḳapısı*). He further related that its ground was covered with white gravel instead of earth, and there were a variety of fruit trees in this outer courtyard.[1074] He eulogized the garden in front of the qibla-wall, which was full of several kinds of fragrant flowers and trees, and resembled the gardens of paradise.[1075] The row of trees in the mosque's outer courtyard is visible in the monument's depiction drawn by Grelot, who defined this outer courtyard as a maydan with several trees. He recounted that the northern side of this courtyard had small paths lined with numerous trees.[1076] This garden-like outer quadrangle seems to have been conceived as a promenade that provided a space of socialization for people frequenting the mosque, as well as a transition area between the mosque and its environs. The grilled window openings and multiple gates establish a visual and

[1072] Grelot, *İstanbul Seyahatnamesi*, 211.
[1073] Nayır, "Osmanlı Mimarisinde", 54.
[1074] Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi*, I, 100.
[1075] Ibid, 101.
[1076] Grelot, *İstanbul Seyahatnamesi*, 211.

spatial connection between the outer courtyard and the mosques' environs. On the other hand, the existence of strong gates indicates a concern for the security of the monument and its visitors, which seems reasonable if Atmeydanı's centrality in the urban revolts is taken into consideration. Grelot reported these gates were closed by huge iron chains.[1077] (Figures C67–C69)

The mosque's modular plan is composed of two near-square rectangles—a domed sanctuary and an arcaded courtyard with the dimensions of 53,50 x 49,47, and 54,20 x 51,50 metres, respectively.[1078] Its monumental size has been regarded as one of the distinguishing design elements of this mosque.[1079] It constitutes the second largest sultanic mosque after Süleymaniye. (Table 3) A marble-paved inner courtyard precedes the domed section from the west, on the Atmeydanı side. This courtyard has three entrances in the midst of its northern, western, and southern edges, which are accessed through marble-paved steps from the outer courtyard. The western gate facing Atmeydanı constitutes the main entrance to the inner courtyard, and distinguished from other entrances with a more elevated dome. Along with this recessed entry with a stalactite arch frame, the design of the outer façade on this side features differences from other two side entrances. This façade has two rows of grilled windows flanking the projected entrance. (Figure C70) The other side façades, are extended with double-arched galleries, having a row of twelve arched windows over them. At the end of each side gallery is an entrance, which features an arched gate and has a simpler design than the main entrance on the western edge of the forecourt.

[1077] Ibid, 210–211.
[1078] Nayır, "Osmanlı Mimarisinde", 50, 53.
[1079] Ibid, 65; Goodwin, *Ottoman Architecture*, 344; Aslanapa, *Ottoman Art*, 229.

Table 3. The dimensions of the Ottoman sultanic mosques[1080]

Mosque's name	Dimensions of the domed sanctuary	The dome's diameter
The Üç Şerefeli Mosque	60 × 24, 25 meters (1470 square meters)	24,1 meters
The mosque of Mehmed II	49,5 × 49,5 meters (2450 square meters)	26 meters
The mosque of Bayezid II	37 × 37 meters (1396 square meters)	18 meters
The mosque of Selim I	24,35 × 24,30 meters (591 square meters)	24 meters
The Şehzade Mosque	38 × 38 meters (1444 square meters)	19 meters
The Süleymaniye Mosque	69 × 62,3 meters (4298 square meters)	26,5 meters
The Selimiye Mosque	60 × 44 meters (2640 square meters)	31,5 meters
The Sultan Ahmed Mosque	53,5 × 49,7 meters (2658 square meters)	23, 5 meters

Opposite to the main entrance is an arcaded portico preceding the domed prayer hall. Serving as a semi-open prayer ground, this portico is marked with two small balconies known as *mükebbire*, which are symetrically placed on either side of the covered hall's main entrance.[1081] Other sides of the courtyard also have semi-open domed arcades that repeat the form and dimensions of the domed units forming the portico. Keeping the arches at the same level united the portico with the arcaded forecourt.[1082] Arches and pendentives connect each domed section to the walls of the inner courtyard, which has two rows of window openings, and carry the small domes in accompanied with the marble pillars circulating the courtyard. In sum, thirty identical domed units surround the inner courtyard of the mosque, and create a semi-

[1080] Akçıl, "Üç Şerefeli Cami", 277; Ayverdi, *Fatih Devri Mimarisi*, 91, 150; 230; Mülayim, "Süleymaniye Camii", 115, Mülayim and Çobanoğlu, "Selimiye Camii", 430; Yüksel, "Sultan Selim Camii", 514; Yüksel, *Beyazıd ve Yavuz*, Istanbul, 196.
[1081] Eser, "Osmanlı Cami Mimarisinde", 26.
[1082] Goodwin, *Ottoman Architecture*, 345.

open corridor enveloping this open quadrangle, which has a marble fountain in its center, featuring a domed baldachin carried by six marble columns. Although it is smaller and shorter than the domed units surrounding the forecourt, the fountain resembles them, and as another small domed unit, it augments the visual harmony within the inner courtyard of the mosque. As the one in the Süleymaniye Mosque's inner courtyard,[1083] it does not function as an ablution fountain. Evliya Çelebi asserted that it served rather as a decorative drinking fountain for the mosque's visitors while fountains beneath the side galleries facing the outer courtyard were used for ablutions.[1084] (Figures C71–C72)

The corners of the domed sanctuary and the inner forecourt are marked by three pairs of minarets with stalactite corbels. While two pairs were put on the edges of the domed sanctuary, another pair of minarets punctuates the western corners of the forecourt overlooking Atmeydanı. The distance between the two minarets on the forecourt's western edges is bigger than that of the pairs marking the domed sanctuary's four edges.[1085] This difference in the distances between the minarets of different pairs increases the visibility of each pair from Atmeydanı and from the Marmara Sea. This is concordant with a general tendency seen in the Sultan Ahmed Mosque's design for augmenting the variety of visual perspectives for viewers approaching the monument from different angles, which I will discuss in the following pages. (Figure C73)

The exterior of the domed sanctuary has three different façade designs. The anti-qibla façade is designed as an arcaded forecourt. On the opposite, the eastern façade is divided into five unequal zones with four buttresses, and these areas have

[1083] Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 213.
[1084] Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi*, I, 101.
[1085] Ülgen, *Klasik Devir Minareleri*, 214.

three rows of window openings. The windows on the eastern and western zones, which are wider than the others, have a bilateral order, and are placed within pointed-arch frames. Buttresses divide the northern and southern façades into three segments, the single row of fenestration also has a bilateral order and put is placed within pointed-arch frames. Unlike those on the qibla façade, all windows on these façades have arched frames within which two or three windows are located. The same façades are widened through two-storied arcaded galleries, which are divided into three zones with buttresses. While the galleries in the middle are covered by vaults, those on the side zones are surmounted by three smaller domes.

Entrance to the domed sanctuary is provided with three entrances that were opened in the midst of the northern, southern, and anti-qibla walls. Evliya related that the mosque originally had two more doors that were located on the qibla wall's corners. One was beneath the sultan's loggia, and used as the private entrance of the imam while the other one situated on the southern corner served as the gate of the muezzin.[1086] The gate on the western wall constitutes the main entrance to the sanctuary. This recessed entry with three stalactite arches is distinguished from the other entrances with its design. The placement of the mosque's foundation inscription, which I will discuss in the following pages, indicates its primacy over the side gates.

The domed sanctuary is a unified interior space that is achieved with a layered domical superstructure featuring a harmonious composition of half-domes, exedras and turrets descending from a central dome, and reaching to the four walls. The prayer hall is surmounted by a central dome with a diameter of 23,5 meters and height of 43 meters,[1087] which are supported by four half-domes. (Table 3) The half-

[1086] Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi*, I, 100.
[1087] Aslanapa, *Turkish Art*, 229–30; Çobanoğlu, "Sultan Ahmed Camii", 498.

dome on the mihrab axis is widened by two exedras, while each of the other three half-domes are supported by three exedras. Four small domes fill the corners between the half-domes and the mosque's edges. In addition, four hexagonal turrets at the base of the central dome, and four cylindrical and smaller ones flanking the eastern and western half-domes augment the dynamism of the pyramidal superstructure from the exterior. (Figures C74–C75)

Piers and pillars with different dimensions, and the four walls of the mosque carry the domical superstructure. The central dome is carried by four gigantic piers, each with a diameter of 5 meters,[1088] and connected to the walls with two arches. Half-domes also rest over these four piers bearing the central dome on the inner side while exedras supporting the half-domes are carried by walls and a row of two-storied pillars forming the side galleries of the mosque. Similarly, small corner domes are born by two rows of pillars on the inner side, and rest over the walls on the other. In all parts, transition to the domes is provided with pendentives of varying dimensions, those beneath the central dome constituting the biggest, and those bearing the exedras being the smallest. The architect attempted to create a continuity between the cylindrical piers and load-bearing arches by means of muqarnas decoration, which brought a sculptural character to the interior.[1089] (Figures C76–C78)

The wide prayer hall of the mosque is surrounded by three two-storied galleries running along the northern, western and the southern walls of the sanctuary. The qibla wall does not have such a gallery, but a *ḫünkār maḥfilī*, the sultan's loggia, on its northeastern corner. Connected to the sultan's pavilion located outside the mosque, this lodge is isolated from the prayer hall with grilled railings, and

[1088] Çobanoğlu, "Sultan Ahmed Camii", 499.
[1089] Kuban, *Ottoman Architecture*, 363.

functioned as a private prayer ground for the sultans. The loggia has a L-plan, and rests over ten columns with muqarnas headings. (Figure C79) The recessed marble mihrab and an ornate marble pulpit are also situated on the qibla wall. The galleries forming the mosque's second story rest over a row of pillars circulating the northern, western and eastern edges of the sanctuary. These marble pillars separate the side galleries from the wide prayer area beneath the main dome. In the general sense, the prayer hall is wide and plain. The vastness of the mosque was mentioned as first by Cafer Çelebi in his description of the monument.[1090] Along with huge columns bearing the central dome, a rectangular marble *mü'ezzīn maḥfilī*, a gathering place for muazzins, is the only architectural element that disrupts the plainness of the wide prayer hall beneath the dome. This *maḥfīl* is attached to the southeastern column bearing the central dome. Resting over ten octagonal pillars, it is accessed through a rectangular door on the column's side, and has marble railings on its four sides. (Figures C80–C81)

Along with a sense of spaciousness, brightness has been regarded as one of the most remarkable and appreciated features of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque's interior by several scholars.[1091] It is also the first quality Evliya mentions in his description of the mosque.[1092] The order of fenestration, and the use of multiple windows on the façades, as well as on the domes, half-domes and exedras, render the interior into a very light space. Each façade has three rows of windows, and the exedras, half-domes and the drum have each a line of fenestration. The use of varying frames for different rows of windows brought in a dynamism to the walls and domes with fenestration. While the first two rows of windows have rectangular frames those in

[1090] Cafer Efendi, *Risale-yi Mimariyye*, 67.
[1091] Nayır, "Osmanlı Mimarisinde", 49, 64; Aslanapa, *Turkish Art*, 230; Goodwin, *Ottoman Architecture*, 347.
[1092] Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi*, I, 100.

the middle rows are designed as pointed-arched windows. The windows on the half-domes and the central dome are set within round-arch frames. Circularity of window design increases in an ascending order, concordant with the gradual increase in the circularity of architectural elements of the structure in a similar order. (Figure C82) As Nayır has pointed out, the Sultan Ahmed Mosque belongs to an approximately two-centuries-old architectural tradition of Ottoman sultanic mosques.[1093] It shares most of the architectural and spatial features that define the Ottoman sultanic mosques in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. At the same time, it also features significant architectural innovations that reflect the aesthetic, ceremonial and spatial concerns of the age in which it was created. Similar to the sultanic mosques built in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the Sultan Ahmed Mosque features a variation of the plan-type with a central domed prayer hall with a preceeding arcaded courtyard. The use of multiple of minarets as a royal architectural prerogative, and the placement of the mosque within an outer enclosure were among the elements that were introduced into sultanic mosques in the fifteenth centuries with the Mosque of Mehmed II in Istanbul.[1094] Side galleries augmenting the dialogue between the interior and exterior of the mosques were introduced in the mid-sixteenth century with the Şehzade Mosque, and repeated in Süleymaniye.[1095] (Figures C83–C85) Similarly, the placement of ablution fountains beneath the side galleries was an innovation that appeared in the Süleymaniye Mosque.[1096] The extension of the central dome with four half-domes and exedras was experimented in the Şehzade

[1093] Nayır, "Osmanlı Mimarisinde", 48–50.
[1094] Kuban, *Ottoman Architecture*, 143–154; Kafescioğlu, "Visual Arts", 465; Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 212.
[1095] Erzen, *Sinan*, 94.
[1096] Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 213.

Mosque, which has been deemed as the precursor of the domical structure of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque.[1097] (Figure C86)

Among the architectural novelties of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque is the use of three pairs of minarets.[1098] It is the first and only sultanic mosque with six minarets. Having six minarets was mentioned among the most distinguished and appreciated architectural features of the sanctuary by several contemporary authors. Hasan Beyzade, for example, eulogized the monument as a beautiful mosque and unique sanctuary with six minarets.[1099] Similarly, the mosque's six minarets were among the first emphasized features of the sanctuary by Cafer Çelebi in his literary depiction of the monument.[1100] Some seventeenth-century writers indicated that the number of galleries in this mosque's minarets signifies the number of Ottoman sultans.[1101] Cafer Çelebi, for example, addressed this numerical allusion as follows: "The balconies of the minarets are equal in number to the generations of the Ottoman dynasty/ Which all resemble the litanies of the righteous/The fourteen sultans became the shahs of the world/ And this is the reason for the balconies being ten and four".[1102]

Indeed, the number of the balconies does not correspond to the number of the Ottoman sultans. Ahmed I was the fourteenth Ottoman sultan, while the number of galleries in the minarets was sixteen. Based on the above-quoted poem penned by Cafer Çelebi, Necipoğlu has argued the minarets were originally planned to have fourteen galleries, numerically equal to Sultan Ahmed's position as the fourteenth Ottoman ruler. She suggested that this numerical correspondence was intended to be

[1097] Kuban, *Ottoman Architecture*, 361; Aslanapa, *Osmanlı Mimarisi*, 124; Nayır, "Osmanlı Mimarisinde", 73.
[1098] Goodwin, *Ottoman Architecture*, 345; Nayır, "Osmanlı Mimarisinde", 52.
[1099] Ahmed Paşa, *Hasan Beyzade Tarihi*, III, 896.
[1100] Cafer Efendi, *Risale-yi Mimariyye*, p. 67.
[1101] Naima, *Tarih-i Naima*, II, 434; Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi*, I, 101; Ahmed Paşa, *Hasan Beyzade Tarihi*, III, 895.
[1102] Cafer Efendi, *Risale-yi Mimariyye*, 74.

another parallel with the Süleymaniye Mosque, whose ten minaret balconies symbolized Sultan Süleyman's dynastic lineage as the tenth Ottoman sultan.[1103] As Artan has indicated, six minarets of Sultan Ahmed's mosque could also have been intended to present a numerical allusion to the Great Mosque in Mecca, which constituted the only mosque with six minarets in the Islamic world.[1104] Creating a congregational mosque with an architectural reference to one of the most significant Muslim sanctuaries in Mecca would remind the sultan's sovereignty in the holy Muslim Lands to his mosque's audiences in the capital city, as this architectural reference would resemble Sultan Ahmed's congregational mosque to the mentioned sanctuary in Mecca. That some contemporary religious authorities deemed this architectural feature as illegitimate for competing with the Great Mosque in Mecca displays the recognition of the mentioned allusion by the contemporary viewers.[1105]

Besides embodying numerical and symbolic references, the six minarets of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque can be seen as an architectural innovation that reflects an endeavour for creating different visual perspectives for the audiences of the mosque.[1106] The sequence of three pairs of minarets provides different views from various focal points, including Atmeydanı, Divanyolu, and the Marmara Sea. The Sultan Ahmed Mosque's six minarets augments the possibilities of viewing for a visitor, who might approach to the mosque from a distance, or promenades in the mosque's environs.

[1103] Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 517.
[1104] Artan, "Arts and Architecture", 451. There were indeed a few religious structures with more than six minarets, including the great mosque of Basra with seven ones, and Oljaytu's mausoleum with eight minarets in Sultaniye. The Sultan Ahmed Mosque remains as the only known religious structure in the Islamicate world. Goodwin, *Ottoman Architecture*, 343.
[1105] Artan, "Arts and Architecture", 451.
[1106] Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 517.

The enlargement of side galleries towards the forecourt's outer façades has been defined as another significant architectural innovation of the mosque of Ahmed I.[1107] These galleries augment the relationship between the mosque's exterior and interior, as they increase the architectural and visual dynamism in the mosque's outer façades. A visually dynamic façade would direct the attendance of visitors and audiences to the monument. Further, the double galleries on the outer façades mirror the two-storied galleries of the prayer hall, and create a dialogical relationship between the mosque's exterior and interior.

Another novelty in the Sultan Ahmed Mosque's design is the balconies, *mükebbire*s on the portico that flank the sanctuary's main entrance.[1108] These balconies have modest dimensions that enabled them to house only one person, who reached to this section through the openings in the galleries inside the mosque. As has been demonstrated by Eser, such balconies first emerged in the Sultan Ahmed Mosque and became an integral part of the mosque design in the Ottoman culture afterwards.[1109] These balconies served as lecterns of muazzins, who were tasked with repeating the *takbīr*s invocated by the imam during congregational prayers.[1110] The emergence of such balconies reflects a growing concern for ensuring the synchronicity of the congregations convened inside the sanctuary and the forecourt. At the same time, these balconies augmented the dialogue between the interior and the exterior of the monument, carrying the vocal practices held in the interior into the open courtyard.

[1107] Nayır, "Osmanlı Mimarisinde", 65; Goodwin, *Ottoman Architecture*, 346; Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 517.
[1108] I thank my friend Özgün Deniz Yoldaşlar for reminding me of the emergence of *mükebbire*s in the Sultan Ahmed Mosque as a significant innovation.
[1109] Eser, "Osmanlı Cami Mimarisinde", 19.
[1110] Arseven, *Sanat Ansiklopedisi*, III, 1450; *Eczacıbaşı Sanat Ansiklopedisi*, II, 1318.

Most of the architectural innovations apparent in the Sultan Ahmed Mosque reflect a growing emphasis on the exterior of the architecture, and the monument's dialogue with its environment. In my view, the preference for the quatrefoil plan in the mosque's design is also part of an attempt to create a dramatic exterior and a perfect symmetry that offers striking views from different perspectives. The placement of four-half domes around the central hemispherical dome provides the opportunity to design a perfectly symmetrical superstructure, which forms a pyramidal silhouette on the four sides. This domical formation augments the superstructure's theatrical and symmetrical quality to a degree, which cannot be reached with a design with two-half domes, a plan that applied to the sultanic mosques of Bayezid II, Sultan Süleyman, and Hagia Sophia. As opposed to the common assumption, the choice of the Şehzade Mosque's design does not seem to have emanated primarily from a desire to emulate the architecture of the age of Süleyman and Sinan,[1111] but more probably, from an inclination to generate a dynamic exterior design, and enhancing its dramatic quality. Certainly, it is likely that both Sultan Ahmed and Sedefkar Mehmed consciously used architectural references to the monuments created by Süleyman and Sinan, and architectural and spatial elements of the Şehzade Mosque, including the quatrefoil design, can be assessed as a part of an endeavour to evoke the architecture of the age of Süleyman and Sinan. However, if it was the designers' main concern, they would prefer a model with two-half domes, the plan of the Süleymaniye Mosque, which was the main royal mosque of Sultan Süleyman, bearing his name. At the same time, Hagia Sophia, as the most appealing monument of the city for the Ottoman sultans who endeavoured to surpass it, has a similar plan with two half-domes.

[1111] Fetvacı, "Music, Light", 223; Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 517; Rüstem, "Spectacle of Legitimacy", 257–259.

It is more reasonable to suggest that the quatrefoil plan and exterior design of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque was related foremost to the spatial, architectural and ceremonial concerns of the period in which it was created. In this context, it must not be a coincidence that the second, and other single royal monument of the seventeenth century, the Yeni Valide Mosque in Eminönü, has a similar plan, and a similarly dramatic exterior design with dynamic façades offering multiple views. The Yeni Valide Mosque also features a quatrefoil plan with a central hemispherical dome and four ascending half-domes, turrets, and smaller corner domes. Its dynamic façade design involves double-storied side galleries on two sides, and multiple rows of fenestration and monumental buttresses on one other.[1112] Similar to the Sultan Ahmed Mosque, the whole building was elevated with a platform, and there is an emphasis on verticality in its design, giving the monument a commanding presence.[1113] The dramatic façades and domes provide varying views for those who approach the monument from the sea, and from the surrounding urban and commercial environment. Although the mosque was completed in the second half of the seventeenth century, its main design and construction was initiated at the turn of the sixteenth century, just before the construction of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque. (Figure C87) Thus, at least its main plan, and some of its design elements, reflect the spatial, architectural and aesthetic concerns of the early seventeenth century. In this sense, an emphasis on exterior, and creating theatrical architectural volumes with dramatic views can be defined as aesthetic and spatial predilections of the seventeenth century, which shaped the mosque of Ahmed I.

[1112] Thys-Şenocak, *Ottoman Women Builders*, 203–220; Nayır, "Osmanlı Mimarisinde", 143–154; Goodwin, *Ottoman Architecture*, 357–359; Kuban, *Ottoman Architecture*, 370–377.
[1113] Thys-Şenocak, *Ottoman Women Builders*, 209.

With its pyramidal silhouette, its multiple minarets and the dynamic and sculptural façade designs, the Sultan Ahmed Mosque offers different views to its visitors and audiences from different focal points. The mosque's three pairs of minarets and dynamic façades offer different views for its moving audiences who approach to the mosque from different routes and angles. The mosque's northern façade facing Hagia Sophia and the Topkapı Palace provided a sculptural view for the mounted or pedestrian visitors in the sultanic processions approaching to the mosque. The monumental entrance and fenestration design of the western façade overlooking Atmeydanı offers an inviting view to those who were looking at the mosque from the tribune of the İbrahim Pasha Palace, or promenaded in the square, which has the most majestic perspective of the three pairs of minaret at the same time. Similarly, the eastern façade, with its monumental buttresses and dynamic order of fenestration, faces the crowd of the bazaar street and those who approach to the walled city from the Marmara Sea. The mosque's placement on a vital social-ceremonial urban setting, and the increase in the ceremonial traffic in and around the mosque augmented the significance of the monument's relationship with its environment, and constituted the main reason behind the creation of dynamic views and theatrical façades. (Figures C73, C88–C89)

The growing significance and frequency of ceremonial affected not only the exterior design but also the formation of the mosque's lavish decorative program and furniture. In the following part, I will investigate the decoration and furniture of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque, which made up one of the most innovative features of the monument, as it was the most appreciated peculiarity of the mosque by its contemporary audiences.

5.2.1.2 Decoration and furniture of the mosque

The Sultan Ahmed Mosque is the most ornate sultanic mosque that was built by the Ottomans, and this feature has been defined as the most striking and innovative aspect of its design.[1114] Both the exterior and interior of the monument are more adorned than any other sultanic mosque in Istanbul or other cities, except the Yeşil Mosque in Bursa that was created as a zawiya and converted into a Friday mosque in the late fifteenth century. Although the ornamentational elements do not differ significantly from the previous sultanic mosques, the intensity of its lavish furnishings and decoration distinguish the monument from the more austere royal Friday mosques that were erected earlier. A variety of ornaments including tiles, monumental inscriptions, woodworks, as well as marble and stone engravings embellish the monument's interior and exterior surfaces.

5.2.1.2.1 The inscriptional program

Calligraphy constitutes one of the principal decorative elements of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque. Just as importantly, it conveys multiple messages concerning the meanings and functions of the monument, as well as the religio-political agenda of its patron. The mosque's exterior and interior are decorated with many inscriptions of different styles, configurations, dimensions and colours.[1115] Most of the calligraphic panels are written on green, blue or black backgrounds with golden or white, while a lesser number of them are inscribed directly on white marbles with gold. Some of the wooden doors and window cabinets also have calligraphic adornments that were

[1114] Fetvacı, "Music, Light", 223; Kuban, *Ottoman Architecture*, 363; Aslanapa, *Osmanlı Mimarisi*, 124.

[1115] The inscriptions of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque were documented and stylistically described by Gülsüm Ersoy (Top) and Aliye Öten without contextual assessment. See Ersoy (Top), "İstanbul'da Selatin Camilerinin", 85–91; Öten, "Sultan Ahmed Camii" 141–157.

created with bone or mother-of-pearl inlays. The inscriptions are written in different calligraphic styles including thuluth, *muhaḳḳāḳ*, *nesīh* and *reyhānī*. They were composed by a master calligrapher of the era, Seyyid Kasım Gubari.[1116]

The inscriptions on the mosque's exterior appear on the entrances, the pediments of some colonnades in the forecourt, and the portico's central dome. The preference of a dark green background for these golden calligraphic panels creates a contrast with the gray sandstone and white marble surfaces of the mosque's exterior. The interior inscriptions feature a more variegated color palette and stylistic diversity. The more colorful and dynamic compositions of the interior inscriptions are concordant with the brightly colored, lavish and theatrical decoration of the sanctuary's interior. As opposed to the exterior inscriptions that are designed as rectangular panels, those in the interior appear in different forms and frames, including rectangular panels, roundels, or circles. The interior inscriptions concentrate on the domical elements, pendentives, the four large columns carrying the central dome, the mihrab and the qibla wall. The golden inscriptions on the central dome and its huge bearing columns are written on a blue ground, while those on the half-domes, exedras and small corner domes have golden epitaphs written on black grounds. The golden epitaphs on the mihrab and qibla wall are designed as rectangular panels written on a dark green ground. Being at a human-scale level, they feature simpler and more readable compositions for the visitors, who would face the qibla wall during and after the prayers.

The predominantly Arabic inscriptions of the mosque feature Quranic verses, hadiths, prayers, the names of God, the Prophet and the four rightly guided caliphs,

[1116] Öz, "Sultan Ahmed Camii", 26; Ersoy (Top), "İstanbul'da Selatin Camilerinin", 85. In his biographical compilation on the calligraphers, Müstakimzade asserted Gubari was a master calligrapher in thuluth and *nesīh* styles, and created all thuluth inscriptions of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque. Müstakimzade, *Tuhfe-i Hattatin*, 333.

and poetry eulogizing the patron and celebrating his mosque's construction. The epigraphic program reflects the religio-political concerns and confessional predilections of the Ottoman authorities, highlighting the themes of the Friday ritual and the daily obligatory prayers, and doctrinal and practical codes of Sunni orthodoxy.[1117] As Fetvacı has indicated, Sultan Ahmed Mosque's inscriptional program relating to the ritual duties of Sunni Islam, along with the metaphor of paradise and themes of sovereignty, corresponds with that of the Süleymaniye Mosque.[1118]

The Sunni formulation of the Islamic confession of faith (*Kelime-i Şehādet)* constitutes the first epigraph that is encountered by the visitor who enters through the sanctuary's main entrance from Atmeydanı. The second theme appearing on this main gate is the five daily canonical prayers. Beneath the panel of the confession of faith on the entrance's pediment, the 103rd verse of the surah of Women, *al-Nisā'*, is inscribed: "Surely the prayer is a timed prescription for the believers." The same theme is repeated in the inscriptions on various other parts of the mosque. (Figure C90) On the pediment of the portico facing the inner forecourt, the believers are summoned to concern for the continuity of the daily obligatory prayers with the 238th verse of the surah of the Cow, or *al-Baqara*: "Be watchful over the prayers, and the middle prayer, and so you stand obedient to God." (2: 238) Opposite to this inscriptional panel is the 34th and 35th verses of the 70th Quranic surah, the Stairways (*al-Ma'ārij*) are inscribed on the pediment of the forecourt's western colonnade, behind the main entrance: "And who observe their prayers. Those shall be in Gardens, high-honored." (70: 34–35) (Figure C91)

[1117] For an interpretive description and analysis of the Süleymaniye Mosque's epigraphic program, see Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 217–219.
[1118] Fetvacı, "Music, Light", 227.

Messages regarding the five daily canonical prayers' importance appear also on the epigraphs on the domical elements. On the eastern exedra of the northern half-dome is the 43rd verse of the Surah of Cow, ordering the believers to 'perform the prayer, and pay the alms, and bow with those that bow.' (2: 43) The inscription on the western half-dome repeats the same order with a different verse from the holy Quran: "So perform the prayer, and pay the alms, and hold you fast to God, He is your Protector, an excellent Helper". (17: 77) On the exedras of the same half-dome, the significance of the five daily canonical prayers is mentioned with the subsequent verses of the same Quranic surah, the Surah of the Night Journey, *al-Isrā'*. On the eastern one, the 78th verse is scribed: "Perform the prayer at the sinking of the sun to the darkening of the night." (17: 78) On the exedra in the middle, the significance of the morning/fajr prayer is reminded with the second part of the same verse: "and the recital of dawn; surely the recital of dawn is witnessed." (17: 78) The epigraphs on the southern half-dome and its surrounding exedras define prayer as the most significant kind of worship, and focus on the ethical benefits of this worship with the 45th verse of the Surah of the Spider, *al-'Ankabūt*, which is written in three parts on three exedras: "Recite what has been revealed to thee of the Book, and perform the prayer; prayer forbids indecency and dishonour. God's remembrance is greater, and God knows the things you work." (29: 45)

On the mihrab, the blessings promised to the believers, and the spiritual benefits of praying in a sanctuary are presented through a Quranic narration that mentions the story of the Prophet Zachariah. As an old man, Zachariah was charged with a very difficult task, the protection of a lonely woman, Mary, with an infant boy, who claimed that she was a virgin, and her son was a prophet. When praying the Prophet Zachariah is heralded with the coming of a Prophet-son despite his

extremely old age, and this Prophet-son will eliminate doubts regarding Mary's claims by confirming Jesus' prophethood. The audiences of the inscriptions of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque must have been familiar with this narrative, which is told in the Surah of the House of Imran in the Quran. That the Prophet Zacharia encountered the harbinger angels when praying in the sanctuary conveys the message that worshipping in the mosque invokes God's blessings and rewards in times of difficulty. The 37th and 39th verses of this surah are inscribed on the mihrab:

> Her Lord received the child with gracious favour, and by His goodness she grew up comely, Zachariah taking charge of her. Whenever Zachariah went into her in the Sanctuary, he found her provisioned. 'Mary', he said, 'how comes this to thee?' 'From God', she said. Truly God provisions whomsoever He will without reckoning...And the angels called to him, standing in the sanctuary (*mihrab*) at worship, 'Lo, God gives thee good tidings of John, who shall confirm a Word of God, a chief, a chaste, a Prophet, a righteous. (89: 37–39)

Further, since the word mihrab was mentioned in these verses, their placement on the mosque's mihrab creates a symbolic and functional concordance between this architectural element and the epigraph adorning it.[1119] (Figure C92) The message of this story is clarified and supported by another Quranic verse that is inscribed above the third row of fenestration on the mihrab wall: "Those who believe and do deeds of righteousness, and perform the prayer, and pay the alms-their wage awaits them with their Lord, and no fear shall be on them, neither shall they sorrow." (2: 77)

Together with the Quranic verses regarding prayers, the epitaphs of particular groups of names with clear Sunni connotations in the Ottoman context render the mosque into a distinctly Sunnite sanctuary. The names of the Four Rightly Guided Caliphs and the names of the Ten Companions Promised Paradise, *'Aşere-yi*

[1119] Sülün, *Hatları ve Kitabeleriyle*, II, 322.

Mübeşşere in the Ottoman Turkish, are among such Sunni insignia. The names of the Four Rightly Guided Caliphs, accompanied by the names of Allah and Muhammad, appeared as a Sunni emblem first in the sixteenth century Ottoman sultanic mosques. In the sixteenth-century Ottoman world, it was common to inscribe these holy names in roundels in different mosques. In the Süleymaniye Mosque, the names of Hasan and Hüseyin, as the successors of the Four Rightly Guided Caliphs, were added to this formulation. As Necipoğlu has argued, the addition of the names of Hasan and Hüseyin can be interpreted as an endeavour for displaying the ecumenic pretension of the Ottoman authorities.[1120] In the Sultan Ahmed Mosque, the same formula is repeated, and the names of Allah, Muhammed, Ebubekir, Ömer, Osman, Hasan and Hüseyin are inscribed in roundels on the pendentives of the central dome, as well as the eastern and western half-domes. (Figures C93–C94) Concordant with their primacy, the names of Allah and Muhammad are written on pendentives of the eastern half-dome over the qibla wall. The inscription of the names of the first Four Caliphs on the pendentives over the four huge columns bearing the central dome can be assessed as a symbolic preference, evoking a similitude between the columns carrying the dome, and the caliphs who were seen as the four pillars of Sunni Islam. The names of Hasan and Hüseyin, on the other hand, adorn the pendentives on the western half-dome over the sanctuary's main entrance.

The names of the Prophet's Ten Blessed Companions appear in a very extraordinary composition on the mosque's qibla side. To the left of the mihrab is a geometric kufic composition known as *ma'qilī* or *bannā'ī*, which is 'arranged to form an octagon on whose center the terminals of the letters converge.'[1121] (Figures C95–C96) Along with the names of Allah, Muhammad, Ebubekir, Ömer, Osman,

[1120] Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 219.
[1121] Keskiner, "Octagonal Kufic Inscription", 86.

and Ali, the inscription bears the names of six companions of the Prophet, including Talha ibn Ubaydullah (d. 656), Zubayr ibn al-Avvam (d.656), Saʿd ibn Abu Vaqqas (d. 674), Saʿid ibn Zayd (d. 673), Abdullah ibn Masʿud (d.650), and Abd al-Rahman ibn Avf (d. 652),[1122] who were promised paradise according to Sunni doctrine. Keskiner has addressed the significance/function of these names as a talismanic formula, which was believed to have protective power in various Sunni regions.[1123] Its talismanic qualities aside, this formula addresses one of the principles of Sunni doctrine that differentiates it from Twelver Shi'ism. In contradistinction to the Twelver Shi'is, who looked to the guidance of the Twelve Immaculate Imams in religious and political matters, the Sunnis attributed significance to the companions of the Prophet at large without making any distinction among them. In this context, it is reasonable to assess this calligraphic panel can be assessed as a sign of the patron's adherence to Sunni doctrine and his endeavor for making this adherence visible in his mosque.

Eulogies for the patron and the architect is another significant theme of the sanctuary's inscriptional program. The construction epigraph that is inscribed on the mosque's main entrance, and two poems on the western and northern doors of the outer courtyard, praise Sultan Ahmed as the patron of the sanctuary. (Figure C97) The Arabic construction inscription is composed of three successive panels that adorn the recessed marble entrance on the anti-qibla side. It contains eulogies to Sultan Ahmed as the patron of the sanctuary, and as a ruler with kingly virtues that constituted the codes of the Ottoman sovereignty and its legitimacy. The sultan is defined as the shadow of God on earth, and as a sovereign who erects sanctuaries, provides the continuance of prescribed religious practices, serves to the two holy

[1122] Ibid, 86.
[1123] Ibid, 87.

Muslim sanctuaries, and rules his realms with justice and benevolence. The continuity of his appreciated genealogy is highlighted with the inscription of the names of all his ancestors within a panel on the entrance's pendentive in a manner to face the mosques' visitors. The tripartite construction inscription, whose configuration repeats those in the mosques of Mehmed II and Süleymaniye, reads as follows:

> This sanctuary was erected with the purpose of approaching God, and obtaining the intercession of the Prophet, peace be upon him, who is the ornament of the world. His slave (Sultan Ahmed) fills the scale of a balance with good deeds in conducting the affairs of the state with justice and benevolence. He enlivens the mosques in providing prayers to be offered, and the Qur'an to be recited, and he is the shadow of God, who also covers the believers' sins. He prides on serving the two holy Sanctuaries with a high esteem, with the favor of God, who has absolute dignity, is the asylum of everyone. He (Sultan Ahmed) is the fourteenth Ottoman sultan, who shines like the full moon, and the sun of his sovereignty enlightens all four sides. He is Sultan Ahmed, who is the son of the Sultan Mehemmed, who is the son of Sultan Murad, who is the son of Sultan Selim, who is the son of Sultan Süleyman, who is the son of Sultan Selim, who is the son of Sultan Bayezid, who is the son of Sultan Mehemmed, who is the son of Sultan Murad, who is the son of Sultan Bayezid, who is the son of Sultan Murad, who is the son of Sultan Orhan, who is the son of Sultan Osman. May God perpetuate his chain of sovereignty until the end of time; bestow blessings in the mosques of intimacy and the sanctuaries of sanctity; refresh the souls of his ancestors in the fragrant heavenly gardens. The construction of this glorious mosque began in the month of Shavval in 1018 (December in1609, or January in 1610), and its chronogram is 'it is a sanctuary that was raised upon the base of piousness.' Its construction was completed in the month of Ramadan in 1025 (September or October in 1616), and the chronogram of its completion is 'the mosque of Sultan Ahmed was completed with a big blessing and auspiciousness. The first prayers were offered in the Night of Qadr, and the chronogram of its date is 'he worshipped in the Night of Qadr'.[1124]

The two Turkish poems that were inscribed on the northern entrance of the forecourt and the western door of the outer courtyard can also be seen as construction epigraphs. The placement of Turkish poems on these focal points, one facing Atmeydanı and the other overlooking Hagia Sophia, seems intentional. These are the

[1124] My translation. Sülün, *Hatları ve Kitabeleriyle*, II, 319.

only inscriptions in the mosque that are in Turkish. The patron, or the designer/s of the mosque and its inscription, must have intended to address a wider public by locating Turkish construction inscriptions in the entrances overlooking these urban hubs. These Turkish epigraphs would make the patron's name and pious deeds visible to the heterogenous public, including non-Muslims or those who did not visit the mosque, who were promenading or engaging in business in Atmeydanı.

The inscription on the entrance facing Atmeydanı consists of four lines of paired verses, which involve eulogies to and prayers for the patron and architect of the mosque in a relatively simple language. (Figure C98) It begins with a prayer for those who engage in good deeds, and for Sultan Ahmed and the chief architect Mehmed to obtain felicity in the other world. Defining the mosque as an unprecedented sanctuary, the writer of the poem prays for the monument and its architect to gain fame, and to become a subject of people's conversations.[1125] The other Turkish poem on the northern entrance of the forecourt faces the outer courtyard, and is encountered by the visitors who entered the outer courtyard from the side of Hagia Sophia and the madrasa. The poem was composed by the superintendent of the construction, the chief black eunuch Mustafa Agha, and comprises 33 verses that are arranged in eight rows of four lines. It has a more elaborate language than the other Turkish poem. This long poem also begins with prayers for those who engage in pious acts, and especially Mustafa Agha, who is mentioned as the superintendent of the mosque commissioned by Sultan Ahmed. The author praises his patron by indicating that his enthronement brought good fortune, and as a patron who consecrates all his wealth for the construction of the mosque. He commends the building as an exalted sanctuary that cannot be erected within a

[1125] My translation. Sülün, *Hatları ve Kitabeleriyle*, II, 317.

thousand years, and its monumental dome as an object of seeing, which gives pleasure to its audiences. Mustafa Agha finishes his poem with prayers for his patron, and a chronogram of the completion of the mosque's construction: "And you, my lord, left a glorious trace in this epoch, 1028 (1618–19)".[1126]

In the epigraphic program of the mosque, Sultan Ahmed is praised not only as the patron of the mosque complex but also as the servant and the sovereign of the holy Kaba. Along with the main construction inscription over the primary entrance of the sanctuary that mentions Ahmed I as the servant of the two holy sanctuaries in Mecca and Medina, an inscriptional panel located near the mihrab refers to Sultan Ahmed as the servant of the Muslims, who brought a precious piece of marble from the holy Kaba to his mosque. In the inscription, it is indicated that this piece of marble was formerly laid near the holy Kaba, where the believers were circumambulating. The visitors of the mosque are advised to kiss this marble. The inscription ends with prayers to Sultan Ahmed, and a chronogram demonstrating the date of the marble's arrival to the mosque in 1614–15 (1023 AH): "This was a stone that laid on the circumambulation place in the Kaba."[1127] This piece of marble brought from the holy Kaba seems to have been placed in the mosque as an emblem of Sultan Ahmed's title as "the servant of the Two holy Sanctuaries". (Figure C99)

Epigraphs that contain allegorical or functional connotations with the architectural elements on which they are inscribed make up another component of the mosque's inscriptional program. Particular Quranic verses written on some domical elements evoke the celestial imagery that is associated with the domes of the mosque, which found an expression in some contemporary literary works. Hasan Beyzade, for example, compares the domes and the arches carrying them to a starry

[1126] My translation. Sülün, *Hatları ve Kitabeleriyle*, II, 319–322.
[1127] My translation. Sülün, *Hatları ve Kitabeleriyle*, II, 333.

sky, when the oil lamps were lighted at night.[1128] For embellishing the main dome and the four smaller corner domes, Quranic verses that address God's power and will in creating, maintaining, and enlightening the celestial elements were chosen. These verses may further refer to the talent of the patron and the architect in creating and maintaining a sanctuary with a monumental hemispherical dome. Inscribed on the centre of the main dome, another Quranic surah addresses God's power of maintaining the skies: "God holds the heavens and the earth, lest they remove; did they remove, none would hold them after Him. Surely He is All-clement, All-forgiving." (35: 41) (Figure C100). The choice of blue and black grounds for these golden inscriptions seems meaningful in this context. A domical scheme with golden letters on dark blue and black grounds engenders the effect of a starry sky.

The 35th verse of the Surah of Light, which encircles the periphery of the hemispherical dome, seems to have been chosen for highlighting the luminousness of the sanctuary, along with the allegory between the bright sky and the illuminated domes of the mosque: "God is the Light of the heavens and the earth; the likeness of His light is a niche wherein is a lamp (the lamp in a glass as it were a glittering star) kindled from a Blessed Tree, on olive that is neither of the East nor of the West whose oil well nigh would shine, even if no fire touched it; Light upon Light, God guides to His Light whom He will. And God strikes similitudes for men, and God has knowledge of everything." (24: 35) (Figure C101)

A similar epigraphic connotation appears on the eastern half-dome, bearing a Quranic verse: "I have turned my face to Him who originated the heavens and the earth, a man of pure faith; I am not of the idolaters." (6: 79) It was deliberately used that this verse is written on the half-dome on the qibla side, which indicates the

[1128] Ahmed Paşa, *Hasan Beyzade Tarihi*, III, 895.

direction to which Muslims face during prayers. (Figure C102) The inscription adorning the wooden door on the main entrance on the anti-qibla side constitutes another example of such an allegorical composition. The frontals of the door leaves contain a paired epigraphic panel that is created with mother in pearl inlay technique, and includes an Arabic prayer saying: "O God! Open the most auspicious doors for us!" This famous prayer sentence seems to have attributed auspiciousness to the sanctuary and its entrance as aisles conducting toward spiritual contentment, as it implicitly refers to the act of visiting the mosque and worshipping inside as vehicles for obtaining felicity. (Figure C103)

5.2.1.2.2 The splendid İznik tiles, golden paintings, and luxury woodwork

Ceramic tiles constitute the most dominant decorative element of the mosque's ornamentation. Beginning in the mid-sixteenth century, adorning royal mosques with under-glazed painted tiles prepared in İznik became a custom,[1129] and the designer/s of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque continued this architectural idiom. Royal orders sent to ceramic ateliers to İznik show that the tiles of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque were produced in İznik. Two different royal orders sent to the kadi of İznik respectively on May 28, 1609 (23 Safar 1018 AH) and April 2, 1613 (11 Safar 1022 AH) preclude the superintendents of the ceramic ateliers in İznik from producing and selling ceramics for the bazaar or other structures until the architectural works in the capital city were completed.[1130] This displays that in the first quarter of the seventeenth century, the ceramic ateliers in İznik continued to produce luxury wares and tiles only for the Ottoman court, as in the second half of the previous century. The ateliers

[1129] For İznik tiles, see Atasoy and Raby, *İznik*; Carswell, *Iznik Pottery*; Denny, *Iznik.*
[1130] Altınay, *On Birinci*, 35–37.

in Kütahya and Afyon were tasked with sending clay for the production of tiles in İznik.[1131]

In the exterior, at least one minaret seems to have been adorned with ceramic tiles. Today, only the section below the cone of the southeastern minaret is covered with turquoise tiles. It is not known whether other minarets had similar tile revetments, too. An archival document dated to 1615–16 (1024 AH) indicates that for the tiles of the mosque's four minarets, 92,928 coins were paid to a master ceramist with the name of Kaşici Hasan for 5808 tiles, 16 coins each.[1132] Although this document mentions a big number of tiles prepared for the minarets, there is no other evidence supporting that Sultan Ahmed Mosque's minarets were adorned with many tiles. Neither Evliya,[1133] nor his contemporaries referred to the use of many tiles for adorning these minarets. It seems more likely that the tiles ordered for the minarets were used in other parts of the mosque, probably in the interior.

Tile decoration is richest in the mosque's interior. The archival document displaying numbers and expenses of the tiles records that 14,335 pieces of tiles were bought for the mosque's interior.[1134] This is more that eleven times of the number of tiles ordered for the Süleymaniye Mosque, which is 1294.[1135] Different scholars have argued that along with newly produced tiles, ceramics decorating some earlier buildings were also reused in the decoration of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque.[1136] This suggests that the number of the tiles ornamenting Sultan Ahmed's monument was bigger than that is displayed in the above-mentioned archival document.

[1131] Öz, "Sultan Ahmed Camii", 26; Carswell, *Iznik*, 106.
[1132] TMSA D.10146, 2.
[1133] Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi*, I, 101–102.
[1134] Ibid, 2.
[1135] Barkan, *Süleymaniye Cami*, I, 18.
[1136] Atasoy and Raby, *İznik*, 349.

Inside the mosque, the two-storied galleries surrounding the northern, western and southern walls, and the qibla wall and *ḫünkār maḥfilī,* are decorated with colorful tile panels. The tile revetments are placed between the upper edge of the third row of fenestration, and the lower side of the third row of windows. This ordering of the ceramic tiles matches the human scale and attracts the visitors' attention to the panels. The tiles are designed as big panels that are successively lined up on the four walls of the interior, made of individual tiles of dimensions such as 28 x 20 or 28 x 18 centimetres. Their arrangement as such big panels constitutes an innovation in the Ottoman architectural practice.[1137] (Figures C104–C105) Along with their sizes, some tiles of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque feature differences from the ceramic tiles of the sixteenth century in terms of technique and glaze. Some of these broken white ceramics are covered with colorful glazes. In some of them, different colors of glazes are used in the same piece.[1138] Tahsin Öz has suggested that over fifty different compositions can be observed in the mosque's tile panels, which predominantly feature naturalistic floral themes.[1139] Aslanapa argued that the number of the tile panel designs is around seventy.[1140] The quality and painting of the tiles display differences in various sections of the building, those in the royal tribune and on the mosque's gallery level, forming the most qualified and cleanest among others.[1141] In the general sense, a decline in quality is observable in comparison with the tiles decorating the royal monuments erected in the second half of the sixteenth century. There appears a visible distortion in colors, including greens, white and the

[1137] Yetkin, "Sultan Ahmed Külliyesi'ndeki", 213.
[1138] Ibid, 213.
[1139] Öz, "Sultan Ahmed Camii", 27.
[1140] Aslanapa, *Turkish Art*, 277.
[1141] Carswell, *Iznik*, 107; Çobanoğlu, "Sultan Ahmed Camii", 500; Goodwin, *Ottoman Architecture*, 349.

appreciated red of the previous century, as glazes lost their brightness and transparency.[1142]

The repertoire of compositions involves a variety of trees and flowers including cypresses, tulips, hyacinths, carnations, pomegranate flowers, a bunch of grapes, and *rūmī*s, which are painted in different hues of blue, turquoise, yellow, green, red and black on white. While tiles on the lower levels feature predominantly naturalistic compositions, those on the upper galleries feature more stylized manners.[1143] (Figures C106–C107) The choice of an overwhelmingly floral repertoire for the mosque's tiles seems to have been concordant with the aesthetic imageries of the period. Along with a love of gardens and flowers, contemporary imageries of paradise seem to have played an equally important role in the formation of the mosque's overwhelmingly floral decorative scheme. As Fetvacı has demonstrated, several authors describing the mosque of Ahmed I in their literary works in the seventeenth century compared the mosque to a garden of paradise.[1144] For example, Cafer Efendi likened the prayer hall to a rose garden in a poem eulogizing the beauties of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque: "The prayer house of the rose garden became filled with ascetic worshipers." In another verse, he likens the sanctuary to a garden of paradise: "It is like the garden of heaven to the community of worshippers."[1145] He established analogies between some architectural elements of the mosque with particular paradisial plants and birds. For example, he compared the mosque's columns with cypress trees; the flames of lamps with tulips, and the sound of the water flowing from the fountain with that of a nightingale.[1146] Similarly,

[1142] Aslanapa, *Turkish Art*, 277; Goodwin, *Ottoman Architecture*, 349; Carswell, *Iznik*, 107.
[1143] Goodwin, *Ottoman Architecture*, 349. For detailed analyses of each tile panel, see Arlı, "İstanbul Sultan Ahmet", 63–155.
[1144] Fetvacı, "Music, Light", 228–231.
[1145] Cafer Efendi, *Risale-yi Mimariyye*, 73.
[1146] Ibid, 73.

Evliya Çelebi described the muezzin and *ḫünkār maḥfīl*s as *maḥāfīl-i cennet*, paradisial gathering-places.[1147] The waqfiyyah of the mosque complex, which describes the mosque as a beautiful mosque resembling paradise (*cāmī'-i laṭīf-i cennet-āsā*), also establishes an analogy between the sanctuary and the gardens of paradise.[1148]

The marble and stone engravings and paintings of the mosque also have an overwhelmingly floral repertoire. Stone and marble engravings with vegetal designs embellish both the exterior and interior of the edifice. The outer façade of the enclosure wall overlooking Atmeydanı is decorated with a row of stone carving featuring a leaf design. (Figure C108) The areas between the minarets' galleries were decorated with several stone engravings featuring floral designs such as cypress trees, which can, at the same time, be interpreted as a visual allegory to the tallness of the minarets. Similarly, the drinking fountain at the forecourt's center has marble engravings of carnations and interwoven leaves. (Figure C109) Likewise, the marble frames of the inscriptional panels on the forecourt have marble engravings with different floral designs and rosettes. Inside, the marble engravings concentrate on the frames of two drinking fountains on the huge columns carrying the dome, some of the door frames, and the borders of some tile panels. The engravings of the marble mihrab and minbar constitute the most ornate examples of engravings within the mosque, which are visible to all visitors. These engravings feature vegetal and geometrical designs, parts of them painted with gold. The most elaborate of all engravings is not visible to the mosque's audiences since they embellish the mihrab of the sultan's private loggia. This private mihrab is adorned with floral, geometrical

[1147] Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi*, I, 100.
[1148] TIEM 2184, 25b.

and star-shaped marble engravings that have colorful stone inlays such as jasper, and golden paintings.[1149] (Figures C95, C110)

The paintings adorn the stone surfaces above the third row of fenestration, where the tiles end. The domes on the mosque's porticos, and the ceilings of some lower window openings with wooden chastisement, are also adorned with colorful paintings, with a dominantly blue and red palette. Although a considerable amount of the original paintings disappeared during a restoration project in 1883, some of the original designs were unearthed in 1976 during another restoration work.[1150] Thus, the current paintings only partially reflect the original hand-drawn designs. Similar to the tiles and engravings, vegetal motifs constitute most of the paintings' designs. The hexagonal and octagonal star motifs on the central dome can be interpreted as a celestial allusion, which found expression in the inscriptional program of the domes, and in the contemporary literary works that were previously mentioned in this section.

Archival documents and narrative sources from the seventeenth century reveal that, besides colorful ones, there was a high amount of golden paintings in the mosque's ornamentation. The minarets, the mihrab, the pulpits, doors and windows of the sanctuary had sections painted with gold. An archival document dated to the end of October in 1616–17 (gurre-yi Shavval, 1025 AH) displays that 400 golden coins from the sultan's own treasury were given for the golden leafs decorating minarets.[1151] The same document indicates that for golden leafs and copper covering the minarets's cones, 1,640,000 coins were paid to the superintendent of the construction.[1152] Evliya Çelebi related that the minarets punctuating the domed

[1149] Öz, "Sultan Ahmed Camii", 28.
[1150] Çobanoğlu, "Sultan Ahmed Camii", 500.
[1151] TMSA D. 00212, 2.
[1152] Ibid, 3.

sanctuary's four corners were decorated with golden leafs, and had golden crescents on top of them.[1153] Displaying the purchases of gold necessary for the mosque's decoration, another document dated to 1617 (1026 AH) recounts the crescents over the mihrab and the pulpit, and on the main dome; two small domes; the windows, cabinets, and gates of the mosque; the doors and windows of the sultan's lodge among the parts that had golden decorations.[1154] (Figures C95, C110)

Embellished woodwork constitutes another significant element of the mosque's decoration. The mosque's window and door cabinets are made of wood, which are ornamented with geometrical engravings or inlays. At the same time, there is an ornate wooden lectern inside the sanctuary. Plaques of walnut trees are used for the production of the window and door cabinets while different woods, including walnut, boxwood and snakewood, are used for the lectern.[1155] The window cabinets on the mihrab wall, the wooden lectern, and all the door cabinets are ornamented with mother-of-pearl, ivory, bone or colorful wooden inlays, as well as geometrical engravings. The window cabinets on the portico and the northern, western, and southern walls have merely geometric designs.[1156] All the wooden cabinets have two-sided decorations. Evliya Çelebi related that there were also several wooden reading desks near the mihrab, which had mother-of-pearl inlay decorations.[1157] Although the woodworks of the mosque do not have the signs of the master/s who created these artful works, it can be suggested that the mosque's architect Mehmed Agha, as a master of mother-of-pearl and carpenter, was involved in their design and production. Based on an investigation on woodworks in the royal mosques and

[1153] Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi*, I, 101–102.
[1154] TMSA D. 212, 1.
[1155] Barışta, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu Dönemi*, 170–171.
[1156] Çobanoğlu, "Sultan Ahmed Camii", 500–501.
[1157] Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi*, I, 101.

mausolea of the seventeenth century, Barışta argued that there was an increase in the use of mother-of-pearl, ivory and bone inlays in the woodworks of the seventeenth century.[1158] This trend was concordant with an increasing concern with lavish decoration in the royal architectural works in the seventeenth century Ottoman context. (Figures C111–C112)

Lastly, decorations on the brass and bronze door cabinets of the forecourt are worth mentioning. These gigantic entrances leading to the forecourt are elaborately ornamented despite their resemblance to castle doors in terms of massiveness and materiality. Intricate geometrical designs, floral motifs, and inscriptions adorn the surfaces of these massive doors. The main door on the west constitutes the most ornate one among the others. It is made of brass and decorated with elaborate floral and geometric patterns as well as inscriptions. Evliya Çelebi's description suggests that this door once had silver rings and jeweled sections, which did not remain intact. He related that during the seventeenth century, people of Istanbul believed that this brass door was taken from a church in Estergon Castle in Hungary, but indeed, it was created in Istanbul by Evliya Çelebi's father, Derviş Mehemmed Zilli, who worked as the chief goldsmith.[1159] (Figure C113)

5.2.1.2.3 The furniture and precious manuscripts

The furniture of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque was as lavish as its decoration. Although almost nothing remains in situ, the accounts of the seventeenth-century authors, and a few archival documents provide significant information regarding the mosque's furnishings. Luxury oil lamps, rugs, textiles, and a variety of precious and rare objects that were hanged on the walls embellished its interior. The depictions of the

[1158] Barışta, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu Dönemi*, 157.
[1159] Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi*, I, 101; Öz, "Sultan Ahmed Camii'nin", 210–211.

contemporary observers suggest that the mosque's furniture was perceived as one of the most striking features of the mosque. Evliya Çelebi asserted that the Sultan Ahmed Mosque had a variety of precious hangings, which did not exist in any other mosque. According to his account, Sultan Ahmed ordered various jewelries and other precious gifts that were sent to him and his predecessors to be hung from the ceilings of his royal mosque. Notorious for his tendency to exaggerate, he claimed that these hanging furnishings were as expensive as one hundred Egyptian treasuries. He specifically praised the six precious emerald oil lamps, gifts of the vizier of Ethiopia, Cafer Pasha. These big oil lamps had a base in the shape of Solomon's seal and golden stems, and were hung on the sultan's loggia with golden chains.[1160] Similarly, Topçular Katibi eulogized the precious oil lamps, ornate lanterns, and decorative balls that adorned the mosque's dome and interior.[1161] Hasan Beyzade likened the ornate oil lamps hung on the dome to the stars appearing on the sky in the evenings.[1162] Ornamented oil lamps, balls, and ostrich egg shells were mentioned among the most beautiful decorative elements of Sultan Ahmed's mosque by Joseph de Tournefort, who visited this building in the seventeenth century. Among other precious hanging items, he mentioned two globes made of glass, which contain miniature models of a galley and the Sultan Ahmed Mosque.[1163]

Two archival documents dated to March-April 1617 (Rabi al-Avval 1026) contain lists of precious objects that adorned the Sultan Ahmed Mosque. In the list of objects decorating the Sultan Ahmed Mosque, 1558 pieces were recorded in 94 different categories, including precious oil lamps made of different materials and with different kinds of ornaments, balls of all shapes and sizes, painted eggs of

[1160] Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi*, I, 100–101.
[1161] Abdülkadir Efendi, *Topçular Katibi*, I, 653.
[1162] Ahmed Paşa, *Hasan Beyzade Tarihi*, III, 896.
[1163] Tournefort, *Tournefort Seyahatnamesi*, 23.

ostriches, chicken and geese, crystal or marble glasses, bowls and jugs, and incensories made of different precious stones. (Appendix A) There is no information regarding the origins of these objects, or whether they were bought or taken as gifts. In the accounting book of the mosque, different kinds of lanterns and mirror balls, golden painted pine cones, brass metal drum, and a variety of chains and oil lamps were recorded.[1164] Considering that the accounting book does not contain most of the objects in the first list and the fact that the numbers of objects varied in the afore-mentioned list and the book, the objects in the first list were presumably received as gifts, or were brought to the mosque from the palace following the construction of the mosque.

The list of objects that were sent by Ahmed I for decorating his mosque involves 50 objects that were recorded in 32 different categories, including various oil lamps, wooden balls with mother-of-pearl decoration, inkstands, and a variety of luxury tableware such as crystal or marble glasses, jugs and buckets. These precious objects were recorded as pieces that were sent by the sultan for the mosque's adornment.[1165] (Table 4) This shows that the objects in the second list belonged to the sultan, and most probably came from the royal treasury to the mosque. It is possible that they included the precious gifts that were mentioned by Evliya Çelebi as presents given to Sultan Ahmed and his predecessors.

A few specific objects appearing in the lists seem to have had commemorative or symbolic aspects. A picture depicting the Castle of Eger, *Eğri*, a crystal lamp from Medina, and an oil lamp taken from the Shrine of Imam Husein in Karbala can be assessed as among such objects.[1166] Most probably, the drawing of

[1164] TMSA D.211, 1.
[1165] TMSA D. 8021, 2
[1166] TMSA D. 8021, 1; Barkan, *Süleymaniye Cami*, II, 289–290.

Eger Castle was hung in the mosque to honor the last Ottoman conquest in European lands won by Ahmed I's father, Mehmed III.[1167] In a period of military setbacks and almost without conquest in the European lands, such an object reminding an Ottoman conquest in Europe would help veil the current throwback in the eyes of the mosque's visitors and audiences. Along with the miniature galley mentioned by Tournefort, this depiction appears to have been intended to represent the sultan's military strength and claims within his mosque that was erected despite its patron's military discrepancies.

Similarly, the oil lamp brought from the Shrine of Imam Husein in Karbala would remind visitors of the Ottoman possession of Iraq and patronage of the holy sanctuaries in this region, which had been a matter of military, political and religious dispute between the Ottomans and the Safavids. The crystal lamp brought from Medina, on the other hand, must have reminded and manifested the sultan's status as the servant of the two holy sanctuaries in Mecca and Medina. Indeed, the bringing of these precious objects from the holy lands was in line with Sultan Ahmed's practice of collecting relics and staging them in the royal mosque. As mentioned before, he brought a precious piece of marble from the holy Kaba and used it as a decorative revetment in the sanctuary. According to Evliya, the Prophet's footprint (*ḳadem-i şerīf*) brought from Qaytbay's mausoleum in Egypt was among the relics that were put in his mosque by Sultan Ahmed, who sent it back to Cairo on a dream he had.[1168]

[1167] Following Sultan Süleyman's death, his successors withdrew from leading campaigns for nearly three decades. Then, Mehmed III personally led a campaign over the Habsburgs in Hungary, and conquered the Eger Castle in 1596, after this relatively long break. Börekçi, *Macaristan'da*.
[1168] Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi*, X, 161–162.

Table 4. The list of objects that were sent by Ahmed I for decorating his mosque[1169]

The object's name	Number	The object's name	Number
Jasper lamp with a ball cover (*ḳandīl-i yeşīm, top ḳapaḳlı*)	1	Porcelain glass (*bardāḳ, faǧfūrī*)	1
Pearl shell made of jasper (*yeşīm pençe-i 'Aden*)	2	Bejeweled mother of pearl jug (*ṣedefkārī sürāḥī, muraṣṣa'*)	1
Marble lamp with a thousand candlesticks (*ḳandīl-i mermer, hezār fitīl*)	1	Jasper glass (*bardāḳ, ṣū yeşīmī*)	1
Marble pitcher made in Egypt (*mermer maşraba, Mışır işī*)	2	Porcelain bucket (*faǧfūrī ṣaṭıl*)	1
Lamp made of engraved boxwood (*ḳandīl-i oyma şimşīr*)	1	Jasper lamp ball (*ṣū yeşīmī top-ı ḳandīl*)	1
Green crystal Jar (*yeşīl billūr ḳavanoz*)	2	Jasper jar (*ṣū yeşīmī ḳavanoz*)	1
Green crystal lamp (*ḳandīl-i yeşīl sırça)*	1	Jasper lamp (*ṣū yeşīmī ḳandīl*)	1
White crystal bottle with fish inside (*billūr yeşīl şīşe, içlerinde māhīyye*)	3	Glass made of turtoise Shell (*bardāḳ-ı bağa*)	1
Small inkstand made of tortoise shell (*bāğadan küçük ḥoḳḳa*)	1	Small jasper glass (*bardāḳ-ı küçek, ṣū yeşīmī*)	1
Crystal lamp from Medina (*ḳandīl-i billūr, Medīne-yi Münevvere'den gelmiş*)	1	Porcelain jug (*faǧfūrī sürāḥī*)	1
Crystal bucket adorned with paintings (*ṣaṭıl-ı billūr, naḳışlı*)	2	Ostrich egg with turquoise (*deve ḳuşū 'ardesī, fīrūzelī*)	1
Crystal lamp ornamented with paintings (*ḳandīl-i billūr, naḳışlı*)	8	White marble inkstand (*beyāḍ mermer ḥoḳḳa*)	2
Crystal bucket with three candlesticks (*billūr ṣaṭıl üçer şam'danlı*)	2	Jasper inkstand (*ṣū yeşimī ḥoḳḳa*)	2
White porphyroid marble jar (*beyāḍ ṣomaḳi mermer küp*)	1	Big silver lamp (*ḳandīl-i gümüş, büyük*)	1

[1169] TMSA D. 8021, 2.

Jasper jug (*ṣū yeşīmī sürāḥī*)	1	Silver ball (*gevherī gümüş top*)	2
Black stone with circular coronets (*siyāh ṭāş, top tāçlı*)	1		
Total number		50	

Apart from the precious objects recorded in these two lists, contemporary observers and other archival sources mentioned gilded manuscripts kept in the mosque. Abdülkadir Efendi mentioned several books of Quranic exegesis and other diverse manuscripts that were put in the mosque's cupboards.[1170] Evliya Çelebi related that the mosque had hundreds of gilded manuscripts of the Quran that were placed on the embellished lecterns in front of the mihrab wall. He indicated that there were 9000 such manuscripts that were bestowed as gifts by the rulers and viziers of various regions.[1171] The bibliophile grand vizier Mehmed Pasha and Kalender Pasha (d.1616) were among the donors of manuscripts.[1172] The collection of the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts in Istanbul includes one of the Quran manuscripts Mehmed Pasha donated to the mosque.[1173] The same collection contains other copies of the Quran bearing Sultan Ahmed's seal, suggesting that the sultan, too, was among the donors.[1174] (Figures C114–C117)

An undated archival document shows that Ahmed I tasked twelve salaried and eight unwaged scribes with preparing 37 manuscript copies of the Quran.[1175] Among the salaried scribes is the calligrapher Hasan, who was mentioned as the

[1170] Abdülkadir Efendi, *Topçular Katibi*, I, 654.
[1171] Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi*, I, 101.
[1172] Farhad and Rettig, *Art*, 114.
[1173] Şahin, *1400. Yılında*, 414.
[1174] Ibid, 418; Farhad and Rettig, *Art*, 277.
[1175] TMSA D. 9601, 1. This document was first mentioned by Tahsin Öz in an article only as "a record of the 37 gilded manuscripts written for the Sultan Ahmed Mosque", without being transcribed or analysed. Öz, "Sultan Ahmed Camii", 26.

apprentice of Ahmed Karahisari (d. 1556), the most remarkable calligrapher of the sixteenth century, who made calligraphic panels for the Süleymaniye Mosque.[1176] Probably, he was Hasan ibn Ahmed, or Hasan Çelebi (d. after 1594), one of the most prominent apprentices of Karahisari.[1177] The document reveals the manuscripts were bound after they were checked and revised by *ḥüffāẓ*.

Table 5. Salaried scribers/calligraphers (*'ulūfelu kātibler*), who wrote manuscripts of the Quran for the mosque[1178]

Name of the scriber/calligrapher	Number of copies	Name of the scriber/calligrapher	Number of copies
Kadı Mahmud	2	Muhammed, son of Şükrullah	2
Kasım	2	Hacı Abdi from Salonica	2
Sarı Memi	2	Ali, the son of Hüsam	1
Şeyhzade Derviş	2	Behram, slave of Davud Pasha	2
Ahmed, Şeyhzade Derviş's Brother	2	A Student with the Name of Piri	2
Hamdi, Şeyhzade Derviş's Brother	2	Hasan, a Student of Karahisari	1
Muhammed, son of Hüsam	2		

Table 6. Unsalaried scribes/calligraphers (*'ulūfesiz kātibler*), who wrote manuscripts of the Quran for the mosque[1179]

Name of the scribe/calligrapher	Number of copies	Name of the scribe/calligrapher	Number of copies
Kavuncuzade Mevlana Alaaddin, a student of Şeyhzade	2	Mevlana Bali, muezzin in the Mosque of Sheikh Vefa	1
Birgili Sufi Ahmed	1	Scribe Abdülkadir	1
Mevlana Katib Zeyneddin	2	Scribe Emir	1
Scribe Abdüllatif	1	Hüsam, a Student of Karahisari	2

[1176] Alparslan, *Osmanlı Hat Sanatı*, 53–58.
[1177] Ibid, 59.
[1178] TMSA D. 9601, 1.
[1179] Ibid, 1.

A list of different textiles in the account book of the mosque and royal pavilion indicates the mosque had a variety of luxury fabrics, including carpets and curtains. The list demonstrates that the rugs (*ḳalıçehā*) of the mosque were woven in Karaman and Iran, the felts (*keçehā*) were prepared in Salonica, and the zamarras (*kebehā*) came from Yanbolu, a city near Edirne, in contemporary Bulgaria.[1180] The document does not specify where in the mosque these fabrics were used. Among the purchases for the mosque are also red broadcloths (*çuḫā-yı sürḫ*) for the mosque's curtains, green baizes (*çuḫā-yı çimenī*) for covering the Qur'an manuscripts, as well as red and blue broadcloths (*çuḫā-yı sürḫ* and *mavi*) for the pulpit's pavement. For the sultan's loggia, curtains with red and green broadcloths and silk belts (*tekbend-i ḫarīr*) were purchased.[1181]

This inquiry concerning the decorative program of Sultan Ahmed's mosque displays that various ornaments of this sanctuary constituted the most distinguishing and outstanding architectural feature of this monument, which was erected in a time of crisis and weakness. Rendering the mosque into a luxury object of spectacle, the density, ostentation, and expensiveness of its decoration seem to have been intended for compensating for its patron's deficiencies. As Aslanapa aptly put it, especially the interior of the mosque evokes a palatial building with its sumptuous decoration and furnishing.[1182] Similarly, Necipoğlu has argued that the use of extensive tile revetments enhanced the palatial character of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque.[1183] I argue that the lavish decoration and furnishings of the mosque's interior should be understood in relation to the heightened ritual presence of the sultan and his court within the sanctuary. As discussed in this chapter's last part, the construction of the

[1180] TMSA D. 211, 11; Barkan, *Süleymaniye Cami*, II, 281.
[1181] TMSA D. 211, 11; Barkan, *Süleymaniye Cami*, II, 281.
[1182] Aslanapa, *Osmanlı Mimarisi*, 124.
[1183] Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 517.

Sultan Ahmed Mosque coincided with the officialization of the *mevlid* rituals as a courtly ceremony, which began to be celebrated in the mosque of Sultan Ahmed. Incorporating this theatrical courtly ceremony should have necessitated the formation of a palatial setting within the mosque.

5.2.1.3 The palace in the mosque: The royal pavilion

The royal pavilion, or *ḫünkār ḳaṣrı*, constitutes the most novel architectural element of the Sultan Ahmed complex, which formed a prototype for almost all royal mosques that were erected after the construction of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque until the end of the empire. The royal pavilion of Ahmed I is located on the northeastern corner of the mosque, attached to the base of the northeastern minaret and the northern side gallery. Its placement on this corner provided visual or spatial connections with significant processional or urban routes and points. It had both visual and spatial connections with the Royal Gate of the Topkapı Palace, *Bāb-ı Hümāyūn*, which stands across the royal pavilion. The building's eastern façade has a view of the Marmara Sea, whereas the western façade overlooks Atmeydanı.

The entrance to the royal pavilion is provided from the outer courtyard by means of a ramp, which is connected to a vaulted corridor leading to the edifice. The entryway seems to have been designed as a ramp, probably for providing a proper route for the sultan, when he reaches the pavilion mounted on his horse. Assessing it as a 'baroque development', Goodwin has argued that this ramp is the first of its kind within the setting of an Ottoman palace.[1184] However, Atasoy and Öten demonstrated that the İbrahim Pasha Palace had a similar ramp on its entrance overlooking Atmeydanı, which provided access to the palace for those who reached to the

[1184] Goodwin, *Ottoman Architecture*, 346.

building mounted on the horse.[1185]A very similar ramp connected to a vaulted corridor is apparent also in the royal pavilion of the Yeni Valide Mosque, which was constructed in the second half of the seventeenth century.[1186] It is quite reasonable to suggest that it was an architectural trend of the late sixteenth-and seventeenth century royal palatial architecture, which had a connection with urban-ceremonial centers and became stages of royal processions, to have sloping entryways that were proper for both pedestrian and mounted processions.

Raised on an elevated basement, the royal pavilion is a two-storied building with a L-shaped plan. The connection with the first and second stories is provided with a ramped vaulted corridor, which is opened and connected to the ramp in the entrance. Its second floor consists of two rooms that served as the private lodge of the sultan, where he resided before and after the Friday ritual, or watched the events in the mosque's courtyard and Atmeydanı. While one room faces the outer courtyard of the mosque and Atmeydanı the other one has a view of the Marmara Sea. These two rooms are connected to each other via a door, and to the *ḫünkār maḥfilī* on the mosque's northeastern corner through a vaulted corridor.[1187] In terms of architectural style, the pavilion follows the norms of some contemporary residential edifices with its walls of alternating courses of stone and brick, and its hipped roof.[1188] The colonnaded passage overlooking the eastern part of the pavilion, which offers views of the Marmara Sea, was also a common feature both in religious and residential architecture of the period. (Figures C118–C119)

[1185] Öten, "Sultan Ahmed Külliyesi", 303.
[1186] Thys-Şenocak, *Ottoman Women Builders*, 224.
[1187] Nayır, "Osmanlı Mimarisinde", 78–79; Kuran, "Sultan's Pavilion", 569–571; Çobanoğlu, "Sultan Ahmed Camii", 501; Kuban, *Ottoman Architecture*, 365.
[1188] Rüstem, "Spectacle of Legitimacy", 262.

The pavilion's interior also resembles a royal palatial setting. Since the building was damaged due to several fires, and became the subject of multiple restorations between the seventeenth and twentieth centuries, a considerable part of the interior's decoration, furniture and design elements were lost. Nayır has suggested that the interior had a completely different roof design, which is unknown to the modern researcher.[1189] Still, archival documents attest to the existence of a very ornate interior design and furniture of the royal pavilion's interior. Similar to a residential palatial setting designed for the sultan, the two rooms of this royal pavilion have furnaces and recesses on the walls.[1190] The archival documents cover the expenditures of the luxury textiles and tile ceramics, which were purchased for the royal pavilion. A document dated to 1615–16 (1024 AH) mentions the expenditures of ceramic tiles decorating the royal kiosk along with the interior and minarets of the Friday mosque, although it does not specify the number and cost of the kiosk's tiles.[1191] This reveals that the interior of the sultan's pavilion was adorned with tile revetments. The accounting book shows that for the royal pavilion and the mosque, rugs from the Iranian lands and Karaman, felts from Salonica, and red rugs were bought. Among the purchases are also red broadcloths, blue and red cushions, calico curtains for the pavilion, curtains and covers for the royal furnaces, and red velvets and broadcloths for its seats.[1192]

The introduction of royal pavilions to the architectural program of the Ottoman sultanic mosque complexes has been assessed as a phenomenon related to particular changes within the Ottoman architectural culture and politics. Kuran, Necipoğlu and Rüstem demonstrated that the emergence of the royal kiosks, which

[1189] Nayır, "Osmanlı Mimarisinde", 78.
[1190] Ibid, 78.
[1191] TMSA D. 10146, 2.
[1192] Barkan, *Süleymaniye Cami*, II, 282.

were attached to the sultanic mosques and served as tribunes of ceremonial stages, was related to a change in the ceremonial agenda of the Ottoman sultans, whose public visibility was enhanced through increased spectacle and various kinds of ceremonials.[1193] The royal pavilion was an embodiment of this increasing pomp and spectacle in the form of courtly ceremonials, and it highlighted sultanic presence within the spatial and social framework of the sultanic congregational mosque. Functioning as a palace within a religious setting, which resembles palatial buildings, the attachment of the royal kiosk to the sultan's Friday mosque would also concretize the alignment of the palace and the mosque.

Bringing a gender dimension to the question, Thys-Şenocak has addressed the possibility of the mother sultan's interference in the emergence of these royal pavilions. She argued that the initial phase of the Yeni Valide Mosque in Eminönü had the plan of such a royal kiosk attached to the mosque, and it predated the formation of the Sultan Ahmed complex. In the initial phase of the mosque's construction, Safiye Sultan might have interfered with the design of the royal pavilion, which resembled the royal waterfront retreats in the Topkapı Palace, such as the Sepetçiler and İncili kiosks, and the harem apartments in the Old Palace and the Topkapı Palace. Designed as a contemporary residence for the mother sultan, the resemblance of the royal pavilion in the mosque to the female residential edifices in the palace seems meaningful.[1194] Thus, it is very probable that the designer/s of the Sultan Ahmed complex was familiar with the plan of Safiye Sultan's mosque complex, and her design of a residential quarter in the mosque might have influenced the design of Sultan Ahmed's royal kiosk attached to his mosque.

[1193] Kuran, "Sultan's Pavilion", 295; Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 516; Rüstem, "Spectacle of Legitimacy", 262, 266.
[1194] Thys-Şenocak, *Ottoman Women Builders*, 230.

5.2.2 Creating a façade at the north: Sultan's mausoleum, hadith college, Quran recitation school and primary school

The mausoleum of Ahmed I, the hadith college, the Quran recitation school, and the primary school are aligned along the mosque's northern edge. While the mausoleum and the Quran recitation school are placed within the same enclosure overlooking Atmeydanı, the hadith college and the primary school are situated on each side of the mosque's outer entrance facing the north. As Rüstem has rightly argued, the mausoleum's alignment with the hadith college can be regarded as a symbolic expression of the sultan's identification as 'the patron in perpetuity and a friend of the ulama'.[1195] The tomb's alignment with the Quran recitation school can be interpreted in the same manner. A concern with providing visual and spatial connection with the Topkapı Palace and Divanyolu as the route of the dynastic processions must have played an equally significant role in the placement of the royal mausoleum on this side overlooking Hagia Sophia, whose southern enclosure also house three dynastic mausolea. The mausoleum's placement on the mosque's northern edge instead of behind its qibla wall is a departure from the established architectural custom. Following the mausolea of his three predecessors within the enclosure of Hagia Sophia, i.e. Selim II, Murad III and Mehmed III, Sultan Ahmed's tomb is situated so as to be visible from Atmeydanı and Divanyolu. This change in the location of dynastic mausolea can be related to the growing vitality of Atmeydanı as a ceremonial center in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century.[1196]

The mausoleum of Ahmed I is made of ashlar masonry, and its outer façades are covered with marble revetments. It is centered on a brick floored square hall, where the sarcophagi of 36 other members of the Ottoman dynasty are located.

[1195] Rüstem, "Spectacle of Legitimacy", 290.
[1196] Gürkan-Anar, "Hanedan Türbeleri İçin", 655–683.

According to Evliya Çelebi, Ahmed I, his chief consort Kösem Sultan, and his sons Şehzade Bayezid, Şehzade Süleyman, and Şehzade Muhammed, Osman II, Murad IV were among the dynastic members who were buried in this mausoleum.[1197] The four corners of the monument are slightly cut in the exterior. The edifice is surmounted by a hemispherical dome that is 15 meters high and rests on arches relying on the walls of the mausoleum. The transition between the weight-bearing walls and the dome is provided with squinches. The building is preceded by a marble portico consisting of three modules, the right and left ones being smaller and covered by small domes, and the middle one being surmounted by a vaulted roof. By passing through the vaulted middle module of the portico, one reaches to the tomb's single entrance leading to the interior, which is a light space illuminated by three rows of fenestration, with a total number of 52.[1198] The asymmetrical array of windows augments the dynamism of the tomb's façades. The most innovative architectural element of this is the extension on its southern wall.[1199] Although the reason and function of this addition is not clear, it could have emerged as the result of a concern for increasing the visual and spatial connection between the tomb and the Quran recitation school, which is placed on the direction of the mentioned extension. (Figures C120–C121)

The interior of the mausoleum is as ornate as it is luminous. Paintings, colorful İznik tiles, and inscriptional panels decorate the walls of the building. It has a lavishly decorated wooden door and window cabinets, and luxury cupboards. The dome with its carrying arches, and the areas above and between the third row of

[1197] Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi*, I, 171.
[1198] Önkal, *Osmanlı Hanedan Türbeleri*, 194–195; Kuban, *Ottoman Architecture*, 369; Nayır, "Osmanlı Mimarisinde", 86–87; Çobanoğlu, "Sultan Ahmed Camii", 501.
[1199] A similar extension is apparent on the mausoleum of Turhan Sultan in the Yeni Valide complex, which was erected in the second half of the seventeenth century. Visible in the plan, Şenocak, *Ottoman Women Builders*, 235.

fenestration, are ornamented with colorful paintings. It is not known how the current paintings reflect the original designs. The wall paintings have a dominantly floral repertoire consisting of carnations, pomegranate flowers, and tulips while interwoven zigzags with *rūmī* motifs adorn the dome. (Figure C122) The pattern of interwoven zigzags embellishing the dome generally appears on the kiswa, the cover of the holy Kaba, fragments of which would be used as coffin covers in Ottoman royal mausolea. The application of the same design to this royal mausoleum's dome may be a reference to the patron's restoration of the Kaba. Equally possible is an intention to mirror the motif of coffins' covers on the dome surmounting them. Since the original coffin covers are lost, it remains as a speculation. (Figure C123)

Colorful tile panels with a rich floral repertoire adorn the surfaces between the wooden closets and the windows. A variety of flowers and plants, including rosettes, palmettes, leaves and pomegranate flowers, are painted in blue, red, turquoise, and green on a white ground. Similar to the mosque's tiles, the ceramics of the mausoleum are made of broken white clay, and varnished alternately with yellow, turquoise, or achromatic glazes.[1200] In the zone between the first and second row of fenestration, the whole surah of Kingdom, *al-Mulk*, is written in monumental thuluth style in white on a dark blue ground. Focusing on the themes of sovereignty, the day of judgement and the afterlife, this surah provides a coherent choice for the inscriptional program of a ruler's tomb, who had claims of world dominance. (67: 1–30)

The tomb's epigraphic program also involves poems commemorating the deceased sultans' good deeds and achievements. On the recessed entrance, a Turkish

[1200] Yetkin, "Sultan Ahmed Külliyesi'ndeki", 213–214; Önkal, *Osmanlı Hanedan Türbeleri*, 195; Çobanoğlu, "Sultan Ahmed Camii", 501.

poem eulogizing and perpetuating Ahmed I and providing a chronogram for the building is inscribed on a green background in gold:

> The sultan who deserves heaven, who invites to the Sun and is a man of the bright path, namely Sultan Ahmed, the shah with a Süleyman-like power and the asylum for the shahs, realized that this world is ephemeral, and became desirous of the heavens, and endeavored for the eternal otherworld. His pure soul flew to heaven, and his pure body was buried under this spacious mausoleum. O God, make heaven the resting place of that just ruler, and reward him with the felicity in heaven. This is the chronogram of his glorious mausoleum's construction: Let the tomb of Sultan Ahmed be the most paramount. 1028 (1619)[1201]

The extension on the mausoleum's southern wall bears another Turkish poem, which commemorates Osman II as the builder of the tomb. This poem of ten couplets eulogizes Osman II as the sovereign of Iran, Turan and the Arab lands, the shadow of God on earth, and the implementor of the sharia. It praises the sultan for the construction of his father's mausoleum, and includes prayers for the continuity of his dynasty, as well as for his afterlife.[1202] ln the same part of the edifice is another poem in Turkish praising Murad IV. It seems to have been added to the tomb's epigraphic program after the burial of Murad IV. It is written in *ta'līq* style on a marble ground with golden letters. Consisting of seven couplets, it praises Murad IV as a ghazi, a servant of the religion and the conqueror of Baghdad and Yerevan (Revan), and offers prayers for him.

> Murad Khan is a powerful and good matured ghazi warrior fighting for God's sake. That warrior-shah served the religion of God. Leaving his comfort, he fought against the enemy, and never showed mercy to his opponent. He conquered Revan and Baghdad successively, and testified it in front of two witnesses. His companions became either martyrs or ghazis, and obtained the felicity, dead or alive. Since he preferred the state of the otherworld, may God augment his rank. When that warrior sultan passed away, God appealed to him heralded him with heaven. 1049 (1639–40).[1203]

[1201] My translation. Önkal, "Osmanlı Türbelerinin Kitabeleri", 317.
[1202] My translation. Önkal, "Osmanlı Türbelerinin Kitabeleri", 317–318.
[1203] My translation. Önkal, "Osmanlı Türbelerinin Kitabeleri", 319.

Similar to the mosque, the allegorical and symbolic concurrency between particular architectural elements and the inscriptions adorning them is visible in the mausoleum. The wooden entrance door, which has geometrical and mother-of-pearl inlay decorations, bears an Arabic inscription with exactly the same meaning of the epigraph on the mosque's wooden entrance. This is a prayer that literally means: "O, the Opener of doors, open the auspicious door for us!"[1204] The Quranic inscription embellishing the dome has attributions to the analogy between the sky and the dome: "God holds the heavens and the earth, lest they remove; did they remove, none would hold them after Him. Surely He is All-clement, All-forgiving." (35: 41)

Besides its lavish decoration, the mausoleum had very ornate and luxurious furniture in the seventeenth century. Evliya Çelebi related that this bright tomb, adorned with a series of precious jewelry, belts, crowns, topknots, incense burners, and lamps, was more ornate than all others.[1205] Although nothing remained in situ except a few huge candle sticks, there are several precious objects that were taken from the tomb to the Turkish and Islamic Arts Museum in Istanbul in the early twentieth century. Among these luxury objects a Quran stand, gilded Quran manuscripts, a silver censer, two jeweled, one silver candlesticks, and seven jewel belts can be dated to the seventeenth century. These are suggested to be belong to the deceased sultans or şehzades, who were buried in the tomb.[1206] One of the Quran manuscripts has a note in its first folio, which says, "This holy manuscript (*muṣḥāf-ı şerif*) belongs to Şehzade Sultan Muhammed, and was recited by him while he was alive. It was given for being recited at the bedside of his grave."[1207] This indicates

[1204] My translation. Önkal, *Osmanlı Hanedan Türbeleri*, 196.
[1205] Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi*, I, 171.
[1206] Ölçer, *Turkish and Islamic*, 256, 296, 302, 304–305, 307.
[1207] TIEM, 521, 4a.

that at least some of the Quran manuscripts belonged to the dynastic figures buried in the mausoleum, and had ritual functions. (Figures C124–C127)

In terms of its building materials, architectural and decorative features, the mausoleum of Sultan Ahmed follows the tradition of the previous sultanic tombs. Similar to his ancestors' tombs, the mausoleum of Ahmed I is a centrally planned building with a monumental dome, a preceding arched portico, and a lavish decoration. Following the tradition, ashlar masonry and precious marbles were used as the building's main construction materials.[1208] It has particular similarities with the tomb of Selim II, which had also a square plan, and marble revetments that are unusual within the context of the royal mausolea.[1209] The opposing placement of the tombs of Ahmed I and Selim II that is within the enclosure of Hagia Sophia may have played a role in the application of a similar plan for Sultan Ahmed's tomb. As the most monumental one among the royal tombs within Hagia Sophia's enclosure, the mausoleum of Selim II would offer an appropriate architectural model for mirroring. The use of domed central plans, arched porticos preceding the buildings, lavish tile decoration, and ashlar masonry and marble as the main construction material converges these royal buildings with the sultanic mosques in terms of their architectural language and configuration. These edifices were conceived as structures for perpetuating the memory of the deceased sultans, as well as marking the presence and the continuity of the ruling dynasty within the urban centers, along with their accompanying Friday mosques.[1210]

[1208] For architectural, formal and decorative features of the Ottoman mausolea, see Önkal, *Osmanlı Hanedan Türbeleri*; Doğanay, *Osmanlı Tezyinatı*; Önkal, "Osmanlı Türbelerinin Kitabeleri"; Kuran, "Mimar Sinan'ın Türbeleri", 230–233.
[1209] Kuran, "Mimar Sinan'ın Türbeleri", 232; Önkal, *Osmanlı Hanedan Türbeleri*, 24.
[1210] Necipoğlu, "Dynastic Imprints", 23-36.

On the south of the mausoleum of Sultan Ahmed is the Quran recitation school. It stands between the tomb and the mosque in a way to face Atmeydanı on its western façade. In the literature, there has been a discussion on the proper situation and identification of Sultan Ahmed's Quran recitation school. Tahsin Öz was the first scholar to identify the edifice between the mosque and mausoleum as the Quran recitation school, albeit without presenting any textual evidence.[1211] While Çobanoğlu has also referred to the mentioned building as a Quran recitation school with reference to Öz,[1212] Nayır and Öten remain sceptical about this. [1213]The archival evidence, and the conceptual and spatial connection between the this building and the hadith college, supports the assumption of Öz regarding the identification of the building. There is a monthly register covering the yearly accounts of the construction expenditures in which the disbursements for the Quran recitation school and the hadith college were registered together.[1214] This displays that the hadith college and the Quran recitation school were erected together at the same time. Their spatial proximity and the functional connection and integrity as educational institutions providing service for advanced students also support the argument concerning the identification of the Quran recitation school.

The Quran recitation school is a square building with a central plan, which is surmounted by a dome. It is a simple and relatively small building in comparison with other architectural components of the complex. The design of such a simple and small building as a domed edifice seems to owe to a concern for creating a venue with coherent acoustic qualities, which would enable the students to recite the Quran in an appropriate setting for the performance. Similarly, it suits the overall preference

[1211] Öz, *İstanbul Camileri*,
[1212] See, for example, Çobanoğlu, "Sultan Ahmed Camii", 501.
[1213] Nayır, "Osmanlı Mimarlığında", 81; Öten, "Arşiv Belgelerine Göre", 195.
[1214] TMSA. D. 3684, 2–4.

of all sultanic monuments, where the dome is the preferred roofing elements for square modules. The multiple fenestration also serves to the same end for creating a bright interior that is suitable for the ongoing reading activity within the structure. The school's connection with its neighboring edifices, the mausoleum and the hadith college, is provided with the arrangement of its arcaded yard, and roofed entrance. On the northern façade of the building is an arched porch overlooking the mausoleum of Ahmed I, which has a view of the sarcophagi through the window on the mausoleum's bulge in the south. I suggest that with the emplacement of the mausoleum and the Quran recitation school within the same enclosure in proximity with each other, the architect or the patron intended to provide an opportunity for augmenting the number of the Quran recitations, which can be heard from the tomb, and was believed to refresh the souls of the deceased. As I will discuss in the last section of this chapter, several employees were tasked with reciting the Quran in the mausoleum of Ahmed, and most probably, the recitations in the school were also audible from the tomb's inside. In some other royal complexes built in the sixteenth- and seventeenth centuries, such as those of Süleymaniye in Istanbul and the Yeni Valide in Eminönü, the mausoleum and Quran recitation school were also placed in proximity to each other, which suggests a similar concern.[1215] On the other side, the school's roofed entrance is situated on its southern façade, facing the college. This placement seems to have been intended to ease the traffic between the hadith college and the Quran recitation school for the students, some of whom, most probably, were frequenting both edifices. Further, it augments the Quran recitation school's visual and spatial connection with the college, as its accompanying center for advanced education. A similar connection with madrasa and the Quran recitation school is

[1215] Thys-Şenocak, *Ottoman Women Builders*, 232; Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 205; Tanman, "Darülkurra. Mimari", 547.

visible in some previous royal complexes too, including the complex of Nurbanu Sultan in Üsküdar, and that of İsmihan Sultan and Sokollu Mehmed Pasha in Eyüp.[1216]

The hadith college is situated on the north of the mosque, to the east of the mausoleum and Quran recitation school, parallel to the qibla direction. Archival sources and the endowment deed provide conflicting and ambigious information concerning to this edifice. The waqfiya mentions a madrasa and a hadith college in different pages, but does not clarify whether these words denote different buildings or the same edifice.[1217] A monthly register covering the construction expenses mentions a hadith college along with the Quran recitation school.[1218] An undated register recounting the complex's parts mentions a madrasa and a hadith college separately,[1219] and it suggests that at least the initial plan of the complex had two different madrasas, one for learning hadith. In no other document, however, there is reference to two different madrasas, and there is no archaeological or historical evidence supporting the existence of two separate building that would function as a madrasa and a hadith college. It seems the existing building was built as a hadith college, which is confirmed by the above-mentioned monthly register, and the waqf's stipulation concerning the professors' expertise in the science of hadith.[1220]

The hadith college of Sultan Ahmed is a rectangular building consisting of a central teaching hall, and a series of successive small domed chambers with a parallel domed portico that were aligned up along an open courtyard. Entrance to the courtyard is provided by a door opening on its western façade, overlooking the

[1216] Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 282; Tanman, "Darülkurra. Mimari", 547.
[1217] TIEM 2184, 26a, 52a.
[1218] TMSA D. 3684, 2–4.
[1219] TMSA 5112, 5.
[1220] TIEM 2184, 22b.

mausoleum and Quran recitation school. The positioning of the entrances of the hadith college and Quran recitation school facing each other seems to have been intended to provide a connection between these two educational buildings. Ashlar masonry constitutes the main construction material of the college. Located in the northwestern edge of the courtyard, the main teaching hall is a square building with a central plan, and surmounted by a hemispherical dome. Based on the existence of a mihrab, a common feature of Ottoman madrasa classrooms, Nayır has suggested that the teaching hall was functioning as a masjid for the students and professors at the same time.[1221] Its entrance is on the southern façade, overlooking the courtyard. This room is distinguished from the domed chambers enveloping the courtyard with its bigger dimensions and its projection towards the north. Around the open courtyard are 24 smaller square domed student rooms. These domed cells have multiple fenestrations with differing numbers and arrangements both on the outer and inner façades. The eastern outer façade has the most symmetrical arrangement of fenestration, as the number of windows are bigger that those on the other façades of the edifice, most probably because of the visibility of this façade from the mosque's northern entrance overlooking Hagia Sophia. The building also has restrooms on its southeastern corner, and a fountain at the center of the courtyard.[1222] (Figures C128–C129)

In terms of its architectural configuration, the hadith college of Sultan Ahmed follows the plan of earlier sultanic madrasas in Istanbul, which are rectangular edifices centered on an open courtyard that are surrounded with multiple domed chambers, and a central teaching hall that is situated at the center of any façade. The

[1221] Nayır, "Osmanlı Mimarisinde", 79–80.
[1222] Ibid, 79–81; Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlı Medreseleri*, 35; Çobanoğlu, "Sultan Ahmed Camii", 501; Kuban, *Ottoman Architecture*, 369.

main novel feature of Sultan Ahmed's college are the placement of the central hall on a corner, and its projection towards the north, which would increase the attention of the visitors of Hagia Sophia and the Haseki Bath, and the attendants of processions between the Topkapı Palace and Sultan Ahmed's royal kiosk.

As a simple building of relatively modest dimensions, the primary school is situated near the northeastern edge of the mosque's outer enclosure wall. Raising over a double barrel vault, it is a square building consisting of a single hall with a restroom attached to the landing. Although we do not have clear evidence whether the edifice reflects its original interior design completely, its current configuration suggests that the building had a furnace and niches on the walls. Entrance to the building is provided from an entrance opening on the building's western façade, overlooking the hadith college.[1223] (Figure C130)

5.2.3 Facing Atmeydanı on the south: The public kitchen and the hospital

On the southern edge of Atmeydanı are the public kitchen and the public hospital. Together, they form an architectural frame for the southern side of the maydan, which was previously a semi open place with dispersedly situated residential buildings. That in the account books, they were registered and mentioned together displays that these edifices were erected together and simultaneously.[1224] The construction of this group of edifices, and their configuration in a way to mark the southern edge of Atmeydanı rendered the maydan into a square, whose three sides were marked with façades of the buildings. The reason for their configuration as an assembly seems to be their conceptual and functional affinity, as public institutions

[1223] Çobanoğlu, "Sultan Ahmed Camii", 501; Nayır, "Osmanlı Mimarlığında", 81.
[1224] TMSA D. 8002, 1–3, 5.

displaying and concretizing the sultan's benevolence, generosity, and performance of his role as the protector of his subjects.

With the construction of the Mekteb-i Sanayi in 1866, some parts of the public kitchen and hospital were ruined, and some of its sections remained behind the Mekteb-i Sanayi.[1225] The pantry, refectory and the kitchen of the *'imāret* became subject to modifications and additions after the seventeenth century. Nothing remains from the hospital except its outer walls and foundations.[1226] The narrative and archival sources do not provide sufficient evidence for reconstructing these buildings in their original configurations, and determining the original architectural configurations of the public kitchen and hospital in their entirety is a difficult task. Among the few studies on these edifices, the publications of Süheyl Ünver and Zeynep Nayır provide the most comprehensive reconstructions based on the nineteenth-century remains.[1227] In this investigation, I describe these buildings mainly following these scholars' reconstructions, even while acknowledging that it is uncertain whether these models completely reflect the seventeenth-century configurations.

The *'imāret* consists of four different structures, including a bakery (*fırūn*), a kitchen (*maṭbāḫ*), refectory (*tabḫāne*) and pantry (*kiler*).[1228] These edifices were lined successively on an east-west axis on the southern edge of Atmeydanı. An archival document displaying some expenditures of the complex mentions the bakery, kitchen and pantry as three sections of the *'imāret*,[1229] but different scholars

[1225] Tanman and Çobanoğlu, "Atmeydanı ve Çevresinde", 57.
[1226] Nayır, "Osmanlı Mimarlığında", 84–85.
[1227] Ünver, "Fatih Darüşşifâsı Planı", 21–22; Nayır, "Osmanlı Mimarisinde", 84–86, images 73–79. For other studies on the public kitchen and the hospital, see Yıldırım, "Klasik Dönemde İstanbul", 145; Gürbıyık, "Osmanlı İmaretlerinin", 31; Çobanoğlu, "Sultan Ahmed Camii", 502; Kuban, *Ottoman Architecture*, 369.
[1228] Çobanoğlu, "Sultan Ahmed Camii", 502; Nayır, "Osmanlı Mimarlığında", 84.
[1229] TMSA D. 5112, 5.

have demonstrated that it had a refectory too.[1230] Further, the endowment deed refers to two doormen (*bevvāb*) working in the stable (*aḫūr*) of the *'imāret*, and this indicates the existence of a stable in the public kitchen, without clarifying its location.[1231] The bakery constitutes the easternmost edifice of the assembly. It was a square edifice consisting of four equal domed units. Each of its domes has a projected chimney on it. To the west of the bakery was the kitchen, which was a rectangular building consisting of six domical chambers arranged in two rows of three units. It was preceded by an arched portico, and its façades had multiple fenestration. Concurrent with its functional traits, the building had an elaborate system of ventilation, with its multiple chimneys and window openings on the domes. Being the biggest edifice of the *'imāret* buildings, the pantry was situated behind the kitchen. It shared a similar plan with the kitchen, as a rectangular structure with six equal domes arranged in two rows. Unlike the kitchen, however, it did not have a preceding portico and fenestration on its façades.[1232] Most probably, with the omission of windows, it is intended to provide a cooler setting for the upkeep of the kitchen's provisions. There is no infirmation on the architectural configuration of the refectory. (Figures C131–C135)

The *'imāret*'s different parts were connected to each other in terms of their placement and material, architectural and visual traits. They were situated next to or behind each other, with tiny distances between them. The use of ashlar masonry as the main construction material and the application of identical domical units with closer dimensions created a visual coherence between all edifices of this assembly.[1233] The visual coherence provided by the successive identical domes is

[1230] Çobanoğlu, "Sultan Ahmed Camii", 502; Nayır, "Osmanlı Mimarlığında", 84.
[1231] TIEM 2184, 62a.
[1232] Nayır, "Osmanlı Mimarisinde", 84–85.
[1233] Ibid, 84.

apparent in a painting from the early eighteenth century, drawn by Cornelius Loos, which constitutes the only known visual material depicting the southern edge of Atmeydanı in its pre-nineteenth century context.[1234] In this painting, the bakery and the kitchen are identifiable as two successive edifices that lined up along the square's southern edge. The successive domes and masonry façades with multiple fenestrations created the effect that the two edifices, along with the pantry and hospital, whose domes are visible behind the kitchen and the bakery, constituted a single structure. (Figure C136)

Located within the curve of the Byzantine Hippodrome's Sphendone, the hospital forms the westernmost building of Sultan Ahmed's complex. Since it was situated behind the *'imāret* structures, probably only part of it was visible from Atmeydanı.[1235] Constituting the biggest edifice of the assembly on this edge of the Atmeydanı, it was a square building consisting of 26 successive small domed chambers that were lined up around an open courtyard. There was an arched portico consisting of 20 domed units, which were situated inside the courtyard and parallel to the rooms, and featured identical dimensions with them. Along with the domed rooms, which probably served as venues for physical examination and treatment, there was a bath consisting of two sections and serving the patients. Entrance to the courtyard was provided from an opening on the north, overlooking Atmeydanı.[1236] The accounting book covering the expenditures of the hospital reveals that the

[1234] Kafescioğlu, "New Look", 135.
[1235] It is visible on the complex's plan prepared by Nayır. See Nayır, "Osmanlı Mimarisinde", image 25.
[1236] Ibid, 85–86.

hospital also had a masjid, probably functioning as the prayer room for the doctors and patients.[1237] (Figure C137)

5.2.4 The social-civic edifices of the complex: The arasta, public bath, shops, rooms and public fountains

The arasta bazaar, public bath and two public fountains of the Sultan Ahmed complex were lined up in front of the mosque's eastern façade. Together, these buildings formed a bazaar street flanked with shops, which had a public bath and a public fountain near its two ends. The formation of a bazaar area in this part of the mosque created a third social center within the sanctuary's environment, along with Atmeydanı and the mosque's northern side.

The arasta bazaar consists of two rows of successively lined up shops that are situated along a route parallel to the mosque's qibla wall. E. Yi suggested that this area's proximity to the wholesalers near the walled city's harbour area in Kadırga and Eminönü region must have played a part in the location of the arasta bazaar in this particular area.[1238] The first row of shops that is nearer to the mosque were designed as two-storied edifices with upper rooms covered with domes, whereas shops in the opposite line were single storied-structures. The complex's accounting book mentions two rows of shops on the place of the Mehmed Pasha Palace, along with upper rooms with ground shops on the opposite. The document specifies the number of the shops on the place of the Mehmed Pasha Palace as 16 while the number of the shops on the opposite is registered as 32.[1239] This shows that in 1618,

[1237] The document shows the expenditures of the locks, lime, and nails that were purchased for the masjid of the hospital and the marble lime that was bought for its masjid's mihrab. TMSA D. 8002, 2, 5.
[1238] Yi, *Guild Dynamics*, 30.
[1239] Barkan, *Süleymaniye Cami*, II, 287.

the date of accounting book, the arasta bazaar had 46 shops. Published by Nayır, an undated document from the seventeenth century displaying the waqf's income-generating buildings mentions 80 shops in the mosque's eastern side, including 39 shops behind the domed rooms, 33 shops in front of the Mehmed Pasha Palace's place, and 7 shops behind the royal pavilion.[1240] This register displays that after 1618, 34 more shops were added to the bazaar street.

The formation of a two-lined bazaar street was an innovation within the context of an Ottoman sultanic complex. Among earlier sultanic complexes, only the Süleymaniye had a series of shops lined in various parts of the complex, but they do not form a two-lined bazaar street.[1241] The only known courtly predecessor of this architectural arrangement, namely the formation of a bazaar street by lining it with shops on two sides, was Sokollu Mehmed Pasha's (d. 1579) complex in Lüleburgaz.[1242] It was common, on the other hand, to accompany various architectural complexes erected by the lesser members of the Ottoman court in this period with single lines of shops, such as the architectural complexes of Kılıç Ali Pasha in Tophane, Bayram Pasha in Davut Pasha, and Kuyucu Murad Pasha near Beyazid.[1243] Within the context of the seventeenth century, a two-line bazaar street also appeared in the Yeni Valide complex in Eminönü, with an L-shaped configuration and as a covered bazaar.[1244]

At the southern end of the arasta bazaar is the bath of Sultan Ahmed complex. Since the edifice was severely damaged in a fire in 1912, determining its original layout in its entirety is a difficult task. Nayır has suggested that it comprised three

[1240] Nayır, "Osmanlı Mimarisinde", 45.
[1241] Çelik, *Süleymaniye Külliyesi*, 45.
[1242] Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 349.
[1243] Ibid, 431; Nayır, "Osmanlı Mimarlığında", 170, 175.
[1244] Thys-Şenocak, *Ottoman Women Builders*, 245–253.

sections like almost all early modern public baths, including a cold bath (the frigidarium), a warm bath (the tepidarium), and a hot bath (the caldarium) with two private rooms attached to it. In its current state, the building consists of a warm bath and a hot bath with two adjacent square private rooms. The hexagonal hot bath is situated amidst the L-shaped warm bath, and they are connected to each other with two doors on each corridor of the tepidarium. Opposite these doors are two other entrances, leading to the private rooms. The cold bath completely disappeared, and there is no information concerning its situation and architectural configuration.[1245] (Figure C138) Together with the shops and the public bath, two public fountains placed on the bazaar's northern and southern entrances.[1246] Situated on the western line of the arasta shops adjacent to the mosque's enclosure, these two fountains are single-storied structures with grilled window openings. Öten has argued that, similar to the shops in their line, these fountains should have been designed as two-storied buildings.[1247]

The mosque's northern side and the complex's parts overlooking Atmeydanı were also enriched with the addition of rooms, shops, houses and public fountains. Archival documents reveal that originally, the complex owned a number of shops, rooms, and houses, which were concentrated on the edges of Atmeydanı and the mosque's northern edge facing Hagia Sophia. The account book displays the expenses for the excavation of the shops' foundations near the Arslanhane, and defines them as upper rooms and ground shops (*odahā-yı fevkāni ve dekākīn-i taḥtānī*). This indicates that these were two-storied buildings, whose ground floors formed shops, and upper stories were used as rooms. The function of the upper

[1245] Nayır, "Osmanlı Mimarisinde", 83–84; Haskan, *İstanbul Hamamları*, 36–39.
[1246] Çobanoğlu, "Sultan Ahmed Camii", 502; Nayır, "Osmanlı Mimarlığında", 88.
[1247] Öten, "Sultan Ahmed Külliyesi", 368–369.

rooms is unclear.[1248] The above-mentioned document displaying the income-generating edifices of the complex identifies that there were five shops on the site of Arslanhane as 5.[1249] These shops also appear in the accounting book as "5 new shops in front of Atmeydanı" (*der muḳābele-yi Meydān-ı Esb*).[1250] If the document refers to *arslānḫāne* structure that was demolished during the mosque's construction, the first group of shops must have been situated somewhere on the eastern edge of Atmeydanı. Based on the mentioned register of income-generating edifices, Nayır has demonstrated that on this same edge of the maydan, there were 6 more shops near the tomb of Ahmed I, and some houses adjacent to the mosque's entrances facing Atmeydanı.[1251] In the drawing of Loos and other depictions of Atmeydanı, a group of houses are visible on the square's eastern edge, next to one of the gates opening to the maydan. (Figures C139–C140)

The same waqf register mentions another group of shops, rooms and houses on the southern side of Atmeydanı. Accordingly, there were 8 shops, 4 houses and an unspecified number of rooms next to the public kitchen's wall.[1252] Together with the two public fountains in the mosque's enclosure wall overlooking Atmeydanı, which had latticed window openings in blind arches facing the square,[1253] these shops, rooms and houses increased the number and variety of social and residential structures, and gathering points around Atmeydanı. The documents reveal that the

[1248]They may have been used as storage rooms, or places of accomodation for the shops' owners. Another possibility is that they were for rent. Barkan, *Süleymaniye Cami*, II, 283.
[1249] Nayır, "Osmanlı Mimarisinde", 45.
[1250] Barkan, *Süleymaniye Cami*, II, 287.
[1251] Nayır, "Osmanlı Mimarisinde", 44.
[1252] Ibid, 45.
[1253] Öten, "Sultan Ahmed Külliyesi", 373–374. Within the context of the late sixteenth and the whole seventeenth century, the placement of several public fountains on architectural ensembles' enclosure walls, some of them facing the central streets or maydans of the city, became widespread. The complexes of Kılıç Ali Pasha in Tophane (built in the 1570s), Koca Sinan Pasha in Divanyolu (erected in 1594), and Köprülü in Çemberlitaş (erected in 1660-61) constituted examples of such architectural assemblies with public fountains overlooking main venues and squares. See *Age of Sinan*, 429, 508–510; Nayır, "Osmanlı Mimarisinde", 162–163, 172–173, 175, 178.

northern edge of the mosque was also enriched with the erection of 8 two-storied shops beside the primary school, and 11 rooms near the hadith college.[1254] Together with the founder's mausoleum and the educational buildings, these rooms and shops augmented the social traffic in the mosque's northern side.

5.3 The waqf of the complex

As a large socio-religious institution with several sections that serve a variety of functions, the complex of Ahmed I needed financial sources and large personnel. To meet the needs of his complex, the sultan established a huge waqf, and endowed the tax income collected from the populations of some cities and villages. Further, he established revenue-generating buildings in Istanbul, including a series of shops, rooms, houses, and a public bath, as a part of his architectural assembly, whose rental revenue was allocated to the complex's endowment. Several sources provide information concerning the waqf of the Sultan Ahmed complex, including its endowment deed, a register of the income-generating buildings, several *mühimme* orders, and registers displaying the endowment's revenues and expenditures. Among others, the endowment deed is of the greatest significance since it provides detailed information regarding the institution. The date of its composition is given as 1613 (1022 AH) on the last folio.[1255] (Figure C141)

The endowment deed begins with an Arabic introduction, which includes eulogies to Sultan Ahmed, as the sovereign of Arabic and Iranian realms, and the patron of mosques and religious sanctuaries.[1256] In the first pages, the sultan's discernment of the transience of this world and its possessions, and the perpetuity of

[1254] Nayır, "Osmanlı Mimarisinde", 45.
[1255] TIEM 2184, 75a.
[1256] Ibid, 1a–4a.

charitable endowments and their spiritual benefits are given as the main reason behind his decision to establish waqfs, and donate his wealth to philanthropic deeds.[1257] Engaging in philanthropic deeds, and serving their subjects are mentioned as a dynastic predilection and a responsibility of the Ottoman sultans.[1258] In this way, Sultan Ahmed's construction of a mosque and his philanthropic projects were connected to a dynastic tradition. The document indicates that with the construction of a mosque and establishment of endowments, the sultan purposes to join the ranks of the eulogized with all kinds of charities in this world (*enva'-ı ḫayrāt ile meşkūrīn*), and the accepted with several philanthropic deeds in the afterlife (*'uḳbāda esnāf-ı meberrāt ile mebrūr*).[1259]

After revealing the sultan's aims and intentions, the document continues with details concerning the establishment of the waqf and the complex. Nasuh Pasha, who was grand vizier between 1611 and 1614,[1260] was inducted as the sultan's deputy for conducting the affairs of his waqf.[1261] The first task of the deputy was to purchase the palace of Ayşe Sultan, and to demolish this building for digging out the foundations of 'his palace in the other world', (*binā-yı saray-ı āḫiretleri içün*)[1262], namely for his Friday mosque.[1263] The sultan's granting of his wealth for erecting a mosque and establishment of a waqf is eulogized with a Turkish poem, which reads as follows: "For that sagacious and agent Shah of Shahs/ Had a grasp of the benefits of charities/ He helped the path of the religion/ Expended his wealth for donations/ The responsibility for benevolence of that source of benevolence/ Is directed towards the

[1257] Ibid, 5a–10a.
[1258] Ibid, 10a–12a.
[1259] Ibid, 17.
[1260] İşbilir, "Nasuh Paşa", 427.
[1261] TIEM 2184, 18a–19b.
[1262] Ibid, 21b.
[1263] Ibid, 20a–22a.

way of philanthropy/ He built an elegant mosque/ Which cannot be depicted by the describer"[1264]

Afterwards, the document recounts the other edifices that were built and endowed by the sultan along with his Friday mosque. A Quran recitation school, a madrasa for scholars of hadith with specific knowledge on the hadith compilations of Buhari and Muslim, a primary school for children, and a hospital for those suffering from illnesses are mentioned as the sultan's donations in the document.[1265] It is not clear why the public kitchen was not a part of this list, but there are instructions regarding its employees and running in the following pages.[1266]

According to the endowment deed, Sultan Ahmed donated the tax income of small towns and villages in the provinces of Kilis and Kil in eastern Anatolia, İzdin, Atina, Alasonya and Talende in the Balkans, and the taxes taken from Turcoman groups in Aleppo to the waqf of the his complex.[1267] For the governors in these regions, it is forbidden to interfere in the financial affairs in these towns and villages, and to demand taxes from people living there. Collection of taxes and their allocation into the sultan's endowment in the capital city is defined as the responsibility of the minister of the sultan's waqf, the chief black eunuch Mustafa Agha, who was in charge of designating and inspecting employees for this task.[1268] The endowment deed indicates that Mustafa Agha would hold the position until the end of his life, and after his death, the future chief black eunuch would take over the task.[1269] In

[1264] My translation. TIEM 2184, 23.
[1265] Ibid, 24b–28b.
[1266] TIEM 2184, 29b–67b.
[1267] Ibid, 30a–31a.
[1268] Ibid, 31b–34a.
[1269] Ibid, 34b–36b.

other words, the administration of Sultan Ahmed's waqf was to be a de facto responsibility of the chief black eunuch.[1270]

Although the endowment deed does not involve a detailed list of all revenue generating sources, several archival documents provide some further information concerning them.[1271] A series of orders sent to the kadis of Alasonya, İzdin and Dömenek in the earliest years of the waqf provides significant details pertaining to taxes collected within a particular region in the Balkans that were assigned to the waqf, and the procedures of the revenue collection in this region. Some of the earliest of these orders are dated to 1612 (1020 AH). A royal order sent to the kadi of Alasonya upon the consent of Mustafa Agha informs this governor concerning the allocation of the taxes taken from the denizens of Alasonya, Tırhala, Dömenek and Veleskin to the waqf of Sultan Ahmed in Istanbul. In the document, it is indicated that these taxes were previously assigned to a certain pasha, whose name is not mentioned in the order, and the kadi is commissioned with averting the intervention of this pasha and any other governors to the taxing affairs of the people living in these cities.[1272] In another royal order sent to the kadis of Alasonya and Dömenek, it is indicated that the tiche and grains taken from the denizens of Alasonya and its eleven villages have to be sent to Istanbul from the pier of Golos.[1273] An additional

[1270] The administration of royal waqfs became the responsibility of the chief black eunuchs, in concordance with their growing power in the Ottoman court. The management of the only other sultanic mosque of the seventeenth century, the Yeni Valide complex, belonged also to the chief black eunuchs. Thys-Şenocak, "Yeni Valide Complex", 262. Tournefort, who visited Istanbul in the second half of the seventeenth century, confirmed that the endowments of Istanbul's sultanic mosque complexes were under the supervision of chief black eunuchs. Tournefort, *Tournefort Seyahatnamesi*, 25. This was concordant with the growing significance and centrality of the chief black eunuchs in the Ottoman court and royal patronage networks in the period

[1271] Some of these *mühimme* orders were previously mentioned in an article written by Aliye Öten, see Öten, "Sources", 84–85. Here I have tried to give more detailed information concerning these orders, and add some extra orders that were not addressed by Öten.

[1272] BOA, A.DVNSMHM. D. 79, 10.

[1273] These villages are Kiliselü, Emirahur (İmrahor), Hacı Bayramlar, Bazarlu Fakih, Kara Hüseyin, Tavaslı, Davudili, Germiyanlı, Siga-yı Bozorg, Kumanapa, Likodi and Protor. BOA, A.DVNSMHM. D., 79: 28.

order in the same *defter* was sent to the same governors for demanding the taxes in kind taken from the non-Muslim population of Alasonya and its twelve villages, as well as that of Dömenek and its eight villages. According to this order, the non-Muslim population were held responsible for sending 2/15 of the sum produced from their own grapes, and the barrel tax to Istanbul for the endowment of Sultan Ahmed's complex.[1274] The kadis of Yenişehir, İzdin and Velestine were ordered to send the grains taken as tax in kind from these cities and their villages from the pier of Golos to Istanbul in another royal order from the same year.[1275]

These earliest *mühimme* orders sent to the kadis in the region were supposed to inform the administrators concerning the allocation of the taxes taken from the nearby towns and villages to the waqf of Ahmed I in Istanbul, and to establish the procedures of tax collection and its transportation into the capital city. They provide significant clues regarding the running of the system. First, the administrators of the cities were informed that the taxes collected from particular cities and villages specified in the document were assigned to the sultan's waqf, and intervention of any local authorities to the tax collection process was prohibited. In this way, it was intended to guarantee the collection of the whole taxes by an official commissioned by the waqf's superintendent, Mustafa Agha, and their transformation into the capital. Then, the authorities demanded the taxes taken from the whole region to be collected within the same city, Golos, and sent to Istanbul together via seaway. The orders further display that at least a considerable part of the taxes allocated to the waqf of Ahmed I were in kind.

[1274] The villages of Alasonya included Kiliselü, Veleşnik, Mirahurlu, Hacıbayramlu, Bazarlu Fakih, Karahüseyinli, Tavaslı, Davudbeylü, Germiyanlı, Livadi, Likodi ve Dibralık, and the villages of Dömenek included Kavaya, Şikar?, Boztur, Umurobası, Magula, İvlahoyan and Palyokasrı. BOA, A.DVNSMHM. D.79, 677.
[1275] BOA, A.DVNSMHM. D. 79, 26.

Different orders sent to the same kadis in the following years dealt with inconveniences in the system's running, which resulted from the malpractices of the tax collectors, or the interventions of other people to the process. The lack of any instructions defining the ways and procedures of the system, and the thematic shift in the orders' content towards the practical problems, suggest that the waqf's tax collecting procedures and rules were set within the earliest years of the institution. One of these later orders sent to the kadis of Dömenek and Alasonya in 1615 (1023 AH) conveys the sultan's promise for eliminating the oppression of a certain tax collector assigned by Mustafa Ağa upon the tradesmen, who were charged with sending their taxes from the annual fair held in Alasonya to Ahmed I's waqf in Istanbul.[1276] In another order dated to 1617 (1026 AH), the kadi of İzdin was charged with examining a legal case concerning the extortion of the non-Muslim populations' belongings by bandits in the region, and demanded the return of their money and belongings to these people.[1277] The pursuit of the legal cases of the endowment's taxed populations by the center displays a concern for providing the continuity of the revenue stream from these populations, and preserving the monopoly of the waqf officials in collecting the revenue in the assigned cities or towns.

Another set of archival documents provides significant clues concerning some other sources of revenue that were not mentioned in the endowment deed. It appears that the revenue-generating sources of Sultan Ahmed's waqf were not limited to the taxes taken from the cities and towns that were listed in the endowment deed. Some orders sent to the kadis of Galata and Edirne reveal that the tax income taken from the populations of Galata and Edirne was allocated to the waqf of Sultan Ahmed complex, too. Dated to 1617 (1026 AH), an order informs the kadi of Galata

[1276] BOA, A.DVNSMHM.D., 80, 1059.
[1277] *82 Numaralı Mühimme*, 138.

concerning the oppression of the superintendents, who were responsible for collecting a wine tax from non-Muslims, *ḫamr emīnleri*, over the Galata's non-Muslim populations, and their demand for the wine tax, which was assigned to the waqf of Sultan Ahmed. The kadi is tasked with preventing the intervention of the mentioned superintendents into the collection of taxes from these people.[1278] This order displays that the wine-taxes collected from Galata's non-Muslim populations were assigned to the waqf of Sultan Ahmed complex. Confirming this, Evliya Çelebi and Tournefort indicated that the tax income taken from Galata was allocated to Sultan Ahmed Mosque's waqf.[1279] The tax income generated from Galata's population appears also in some later registers. For example, an account book displaying the waqf's revenues and expenditures between 1667 and 1669 (1078 and 1080 AH) recounts the taxes collected from Galata's population among the endowment's incomes.[1280] An order sent to Edirne's kadi in 1618 (1027 AH) alerts this officer concerning the taxed populations' legal cases, which were under the responsibility of the waqf's inspector. In the document, it is indicated that the mentioned population tended to consult other legal authorities in the city for their trials, and the kadi of Edirne was commissioned to prevent any other officials from intervening in the mentioned legal cases.[1281] This order unfolds that at least some of the tax income taken from Edirne or its villages were also dedicated to Sultan Ahmed's waqf. Other orders sent to the kadi and governor (*beylerbeyi*) of Aleppo in the same year mentioned Turcoman populations of this region among the subjects whose taxes were allocated to Sultan Ahmed's waqf. [1282] Similarly, an archival

[1278] Ibid, 102.
[1279] Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi*, I, 102; Tournefort, *Tournefort Seyahatnamesi*, 26.
[1280] TMSA.D.03572.0003, 3.
[1281] *82 Numaralı Mühimme*, 139.
[1282] *82-1 Numaralı Mühimme*, 329–331.

document involving the names of approximately 400 Armenians living in Rodosçuk (contemporary Tekirdağ) displays that the taxes collected from at least a certain amount of Rodosçuk's non-Muslim population was allocated also to the waqf of the Sultan Ahmed complex.[1283]

Altough not mentioned in the endowment deed, the rental revenue of some urban foundations in Istanbul was assigned for the waqf of the Sultan Ahmed complex. An archival register published by Nayır and mentioned earlier in this chapter contains a list of the income-generating buildings of the endowment of Sultan Ahmed's complex. In this document, a public bath near the mosque, the bath of the public hospital, 115 rooms located in different places including the arasta bazaar, edges of Atmeydanı, and a particular maydan with the name of "top arabacıları" (gun-carriages), 196 shops in the northern and eastern edges of the mosque enclosure and beside the public kitchen, 4 houses near the same edifice, and 2 cisterns in an unknown location were recounted among these revenue-generating buildings.[1284] These edifices, along with some others outside Istanbul, appear also in a register from the mid-seventeenth century, which mentions the public bath near the mosque, an inn in Edirne, rooms near the mosque, shops, nine houses, and a few grounds, including that of a particular Hadice Sultan and of the mosque's garden among the waqf's sources of rental income.[1285] It is not clear whether all revenue-generating sources appearing in the registers existed from the beginning, or were added to the waqf at a later date after the endowment's establishment. It is possible that within the decades and even centuries, new tax incomes or other revenue generating sources were added to the waqf by the successive sultans or other

[1283] MAD.D. 4601.
[1284] Nayır, "Osmanlı Mimarisinde", 45.
[1285] TMSA.D.03572, 3.

members of the dynasty. As Barkan demonstrated, subsequent Ottoman sultans reviewed their predecessors' endowments after their enthronements, and did alterations in the waqfs' income-generating sources, and the employees' salaries.[1286]

The employees of the complex of Ahmed I were as varied as its revenue yielding sources. (Table 7) Among the employees of the waqf mentioned in the endowment deed are a trustee (*nāẓır*), who is responsible for overseeing the incomes of the waqf and its general organization, two scribers (*kātīb*), who register the waqf's expenses and incomes, and an unspecified number of people who collect the revenues of the endowment.[1287] According to the endowment deed, the Friday mosque had the largest group of incumbents, who were commissioned with a variety of tasks, including preaching, delivering sermons, reciting the Quran and particular prayers, and the upkeep of the sanctuary.[1288] A preacher (*vā'iẓ*), who delivers the sermon on Fridays and the two eids, two imams, an unspecified number of muazzins, people who call to prayer five times a day, and a *muvaḳḳıt*, a person tasked with determining the time of the call to prayer, are among the main employees of the mosque.[1289] Those who memorised the Quran (*ḥüffāẓ*), eulogizers of the Prophet Muhammad (*na'tḫān*s and *ṣalavatḫān*s), and invocators of particular surahs and prayers known as *tevḥīdḫān*, *aşrḫān*, *yāsīnḫān*, *tebbetḫān* and *en'amḫān* formed a more crowded group of incumbents, whose daily tasks will be explained in the next section.

[1286] Barkan, "Şehirlerin Teşekkülü", 244.
[1287] TIEM 2184, 37a–38a.
[1288] Based on another archival document (TMSA D. 5113), a group of employees hired in the Friday mosque were briefly introduced by Bilge, "Sultanahmed Cami", 355–256.
[1289] TIEM 2184, 38b–40a.

Table 7. The employees of the Sultan Ahmed complex (according to the endowment deed)

Employee	Number	Employee	Number
Trustee of the waqf (*nāẓır*)	1	The chief of guardians and *ḳandīlci*s in the mosque	1
Scribe (*kātīb*)	2	Teacher in the primary school (*mu'allīm*)	1
Tax collector	?	The assistant of the teacher of the primary school (*ḫalīfe*)	1
Preacher (*vāiẓ*)	1	Madrasa professor (*müderris*)	1
Prayer leaders in the mosque (*imām*)	2	The assistant of the madrasa professor (*muīd*)	1
müezzīn	?	Door keeper of the madrasa (*bevvāb)*	1
muvaḳḳit	1	Cleaner of the madrasa (*ferrāş*)	1
Quran reciters (Fridays)	?	Physician in the hospital (*ṭabīb*)	*1*
The chief of Quran reciters (Friday)	1	The Sheikh of the *'imāret*	1
na'tḫān	1	*naḳīb*s (Assistants) of the sheikh	4
Quran reciter (after morning prayers)	30	The assistants of *naḳīb*s	6
Quran reciter (after noon prayers)	30	Cooks at the public kitchen (*ahçı*)	6
Quran reciter (after afternoon prayers)	30	Bakers of the public kitchen	6
tevḥidḫān	20	Door keeper of the public kitchen (*bevvāb*)	2
The chief of *tevḥidḫān*s	1	Storekeeper (*kilerci*)	1
Ṣalavatḫān	20	Dishwasher (*bulaşıkçı*)	2
The chief of *ṣalavatḫān*s	1	Wood bearer	1
Aşrḫān	2	Cleaner of rice in the public kitchen	2
Yāsīnḫān	1	Cleaner of wheats in the public kitchen	2

Tebbetḫān	1	Individual responsible for giving the uneaten in the public kitchen to street animals	1
En'amḫān	5	Door keeper of the *'imāret*'s stables	2
Individual who offer supererogatory prayers in the mosque	20	Individual responsible for the waterways	6
Caretaker of the mosque (*ḳayyım*)	6	Individual responsible for the upkeep of the buildings (*meremmetçi*)	3
ḳandīlci	4		

The mosque's other employees were in charge of the protection, order, and upkeep of the building. As caretakers of the mosque (*ḳayyım*), six people were charged with opening and closing the doors, laying out the rugs and mats, and cleaning the prayer hall. These six people were expected to work in two shifts, each shift involving three incumbents.[1290] Another four people, *sirrācīyān*, were tasked with kindling the oil lamps each day without intermission.[1291] The number of mosque's cleaners (*ferrāş*) is also four, and their responsibility is defined both as cleaning the mosque and organizing the cleaning process.[1292] Last, one pious and trustworthy person should act as an overseer of these employees, who was responsible for warning those who do not engage in their responsibilities as necessary.[1293]

[1290] Ibid, 49b.
[1291] Ibid, 50a.
[1292] Ibid, 58b.
[1293] Ibid, 50a–50b.

The mosque's dependencies also had various incumbents, whose number was fewer than that of the mosque. The endowment deed mentions a teacher, who is knowledgeable on reading the Quran, and an assistant as the employees of the primary school, who should teach 30 children in this edifice.[1294] The personnel of the hadith college included a professor, who has to be an expert of hadith scholarship, and the hadith compilations of Buhari and Muslim. The endowment assigns an assistant for the professor, who was charged with guiding and helping the 15 boarding students of the college in their free times, a *bevvāb*, and a cleaner, *ferrāş*, who were in charge of the upkeep and order of the building.[1295]

According to the endowment deed, the *'imāret* had the second most crowded personnel of the whole complex after the Friday mosque.[1296] The endowment deed of the Sultan Ahmed complex mentions 34 employees who were charged with conducting different affairs of the *'imāret*. The administration of the whole institution was given to the responsibility of a person, who was defined as the sheikh.[1297] His responsibilities included the organization and registration of the institutions' incomes and expenses, and being in service of those who visited the public kitchen. He had to be present in the edifice during the two food services and inspect the meals and bread cooked and served to the visitors. The sheikh had four *naḳīb*s, who served as assistants of the superintendent. Their task was defined as allocating the food that was served in the *'imāret*.[1298] The document mentions

[1294] Ibid, 50b–51b.
[1295] Ibid, 51b–54a.
[1296] Indeed, the number of the mausoleum's employees exceeds that of the public kitchen. However, the incumbents of the tomb were not mentioned in the endowment deed, but in later waqf registers that will be explained in the following pages.
[1297] TIEM 2184, 56b.
[1298] Similar to the term of sheikh, the term *naḳīb* had been used to denote a position in the Ottoman convents, namely the assistantship of the sheikh. Uyar, "Nakib", 322. It seems, the name of this position was also preserved within the process of the transition from zawiya to the public kitchen. The royal public kitchens began to be denominated as *'imāret*s in the second half of the fifteenth century, which was previously a term designating the zawiya buildings on which the majority of the royal

another four assistants, who were in incharge of serving the *naḳīb*s in tidying up the edifice after each food service.[1299] Further, the institution had six cooks (*ṭabbāḫ*), six bakers (*ṭabḫ-ı nāna ḳādir altı nefer üstād*), two doormen (*bevvāb*), a storekeeper (*anbārcı*), two dishwashers (*bulāşıḳçı*), a person who is responsible for carrying wood, an incumbent tasked with giving the uneaten to the animals, two officials who cleaned rice and two others who cleaned wheat, and two doormen who served in the stable.[1300] While the public kitchen had such a crowded personnel, the hospital had only one professional physician among its salaried personnel.[1301]

Lastly, the endowment deed mentions nine employees who were in charge of maintaining its general upkeep and infrastructure. Three of them were commissioned with observing the structural conditions of the edifices, and doing the necessary repairs or innovations within the knowledge of the endowment's trustee. The responsibility of the other six workers, on the other hand, was defined as keeping the complex's waterways in good condition.[1302]

The endowment deed indicates that the employees of the waqf were daily salaried workers, but it does not specify the amount of their daily salaries. In other words, the daily salaries of each group of personnel were intentionally left empty in the document, most probably because the amounts of the wages were expected to be changed within years. Fortunately, waqf registers showing the wages of the endowment's employees provide significant information concerning the amounts of

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Ottoman complexes were centered before the takeover of Constantinople. As dervish lodges with multiple sections and services, these institutions were led by sheikhs, leading figures in Sufi orders and organizations. Although the term's usage changed in the late fifteenth century from denoting zawiyes to royal public kitchens, the terminology concerning its manager remained intact, and the administrators of royal public kitchens continued to be called as sheikhs in the following centuries. See Budak, "İmaret Kavramı Üzerinden", 31.

[1299] TIEM 2184, 61b.

[1300] Ibid, 59a–62a.

[1301] Ibid, 56a.

[1302] Ibid, 62a–62b.

their salaries. Dated to July–August 1618 (Shaban 1027 AH), the earliest waqf register displays the amount of salaries paid to the endowment's personnel within the first year of the mosque after its inauguration. A detailed list of the daily and monthly wages of the complex's employees can be seen in the table 8. An examination of the salaries suggests that the amounts of the wages given to the personnel varied according to the hierarchy of the incumbents. Except preachers, scribe, trustee and moneychanger, employees were offered meals each day.[1303] Most probably, they took their meals from the complex's public kitchen, as the waqf's incumbents were mentioned among the diners, or *ṭa'amḫorān*, of the *'imāret*.[1304] Besides a daily salary and meals, the prayer leaders of the mosque were offered accommodation, most probably since their task necessitated them to be present in or near the mosque during the whole day.[1305] The expenses of the houses built for prayer leaders were mentioned in an archival document.[1306]

Table 8. Salaries and names of the employees at the Sultan Ahmed complex (according to the first waqf register dated to 1617)[1307]

Employee	Name	Daily salary
Minister	the chief black eunuch	100 *akçe*s
Preacher	Aziz Mahmud Hüdayi	100 *akçe*s
Preacher	Mevlana Şeyh Sivasi Efendi	25 *akçe*s
Preacher	Mevlana Şeyh İbrahim Efendi	22 *akçe*s
Preacher	Mevlana Mahmud Efendi	70 *akçe*s
Trustee	Piyale Agha	100 *akçe*s
Imam, sheikh of the Quran recitation school, *yāsīnḫān*, *'ammeḫān*, *tebārekeḫān*, *cüzḫān*	Mevlana Muhammed Efendi	20 *akçe*s each for the first four tasks + 3 *akçe*s for the leadership of *cüzḫān*s+ 5 *akçe*s each for meal and accomodation

[1303] TMSA D. 481.0001, 2–5.
[1304] TIEM 2184, 66a.
[1305] TMSA D. 481.0001, 1
[1306] Barkan, *Süleymaniye Cami*, II, 287.
[1307] TMSA D. 481.0001, 2–5.

Imam, *yāsīnḫān*, *'ammeḫān*, *tebbetḫān*, the head of *cüzḫān*s	Mevlana Derviş Efendi	20 *akçe*s each for the first four tasks + 3 *akçe*s for the leadership of *cüzḫān*s+ 5 akçes each for meal and accomodation
Imam	Mevlana Hüseyin Efendi	20 *akçe*s each for the first four tasks + 3 akçes for the leadership of *cüzḫān*s+ 5 akçes each for meal and accomodation
Scribe	Yusuf Ali	30 *akçe*s + meal
Accountant of the waqf	Zülfikar	20 *akçe*s + meal
mu'arrīf	Kasım Halife	14 *akçe*s+ meal
Scribe of the mosque's salaried personnel	Abdullah	7 *akçe*s
aşrḫān (after noon prayers)	Mevlana Muhammed	6 *akçe*s + meal
aşrḫān	Halil Ebu Lehem	6 *akçe*s +meal
Keeper of Quran manuscripts (*ḥāfiẓ-ı maṣāḥıf*)	Muhammed Efendi	8 *akçe*s + meal
Keeper of Quran manuscripts (*ḥāfiẓ-ı maṣāḥıf*)	Mevlana Muhammed	8 *akçe*s + meal
ḥāfiẓ-ı maṣāḥıf (keeper of Quran manuscripts)in the mosque, responsible for correcting them (*taṣḥīḥ-i maṣāḥıf*)	Mustafa Muharrem	8 *akçe*s + 10 akçe +meal
Keeper of Quran manuscripts	Abd el-halim	8 *akçe*s + meal
Na'tḫān	Mustafa el-Şeyheyn Sütçüzade	10 *akçe*s + meal
Na'tḫān	Mustafa el-Şeyheyn Ahizade	10 *akçe*s + meal
Keeper of manuscripts	Mevlana Muhammed Kadızade	10 *akçe*s + meal
muvaḳḳīt	Ahmed Mustafa	20 *akçe*s + meal
Individual responsible for incenses in the mosque (*buḫūrī*)	Derviş Veli	20 *akçe*s + meal
Painter of designs on the fountain in the mosque's forecourt	Muhammed Halife	6 *akçe*s + meal
Painter of designs in the prayer hall	Mahmud Hicazi	8 *akçe*s + meal
Bookbinder of the manuscripts, cleaner in the royal pavilion	Muhammed bin Yadigar	9 *akçe*s + 8 akçe +meal

Tailor responsible for sewing the mosque's curtains	Muhammed Halebi	8 *akçe*s + meal
Cleaner of the balls in the mosque	Davud Muhammed	6 *akçe*s + meal
Cleaner of the mirror balls inside the mosque	Ali	6 *akçe*s + meal
Cleaner of the balls in the mosque	Hüseyin Gürcü	6 *akçe*s + meal
Moneychanger (*ṣarrāf*)	Hacı Osman	5 *akçe*s

This register further displays that the number of some employees was higher than specified in the endowment deed. This suggests that even in such an early phase, this institution became the subject of changes and modifications. For instance, while the number of preachers is specified as one in the endowment deed, the register mentions four different preachers among the salaried personnel of the endowment.[1308] Similarly, the number of prayer leaders is shown as two in the endowment deed, whereas the names of three different prayer leaders were recorded in the account register.[1309] The same register also shows that the complex had some extra incumbents. The accountant of the endowment, the *mu'arrīf*, and the cleaners responsible for the upkeep of the decorative balls are among such positions, which were not defined in the endowment deed, but appear on the list of employees in an account book.[1310] The same register further displays that some employees were tasked with more than one responsibility within the same edifice or in different parts of the complex. The first imam of the mosque, for example, was in charge of leading the congregational prayers; a member of chanters of particular surahs and parts of the Qur'an, i.e. *yāsīnḫān*s, *tebārekeḫān*s, '*ammeḫān*s and *cüzḫān*s as well as working as the sheikh of the Quran recitation school. This explains the reason for the lack of any

[1308] TMSA D. 481.0001, 1.
[1309] Ibid, 2.
[1310] Ibid, 5.

position for this school in the endowment deed. Similarly, the second imam was also commissioned as the prayer leader and the chief of *cüzḫāns* as well as among the *yāsīnḫān*s, *'ammeḫān*s and *tebbetḫān*s.[1311]

The mausoleum of Ahmed I had also a series of employees with various tasks including a tomb keeper (*türbedār*), prayer leaders, *cüzḫān*s, *ṣalavatḫān*s, invocators, an individual responsible for incense burners (*buḫūrī*) and watchmen (*bekçi*), which were not mentioned in the endowment deed, but appeared in the mentioned register.[1312] (Tables 9 and 10) The assignment of three groups of watchmen shows a concern for providing security of the mausoleum, which housed several precious objects. Some payments recorded in the register display the continuing works in the complex's decoration and furnishings. The painters responsible for drawing the motifs inside the mosque's prayer hall and on its fountain in the forecourt, and the tailor sewing the mausoleum's curtains were among such incumbents.[1313]

Table 9. The employees working in the mausoleum of Ahmed I (*cemā'at-i müteferriḳa-yı ḫüddām-ı türbe-yi şerīf*)[1314]

Employee	Name	Daily salary
Tomb keeper (*türbedār*)	Mevlana Ahmed Efendi	8 *aḳçe*s + meal
Prayer keader, tomb keeper (*türbedār*)	Mevlana İsmail	8 *aḳçe*s + meal
The head of *devirḫān*s (*ser-maḥfīl*) in the mosque, *yāsīnḫān* in the mausoleum	Mevlana Ahmed Hulusi	3 *aḳçe*s
The head of *ḫüffāẓ* in the mosque, the reader of the surah of *Duhān* in the mausoleum	Mevlana Ahmed Hulusi	3 *aḳçe*s
ḫāfīẓ and prayer (*muṣalli*) in the mosque, *'ammeḫān* in the mausoleum	Muhammed Efendi	3 *aḳçe*s
Imam, *tebārekeḫān*	Mevlana Ahmed	3 *aḳçe*s

[1311] Ibid, 1.
[1312] Ibid, 5.
[1313] Ibid, 3, 5.
[1314] TMSA.D. 481.0001, 5

Turban-maker (*destyārī*)	Dilaver Çerkes	3 *akçe*s
Water-bearer (*saḳā*) in the mausoleum	Hacı Halil	2 *akçe*s
Individual responsible for incense burners (*buḫūrī*)	Seyyid Ahmed	2 *akçe*s
Keeper of Quran manuscripts (*ḥāfıẓ-ı maṣāḥıf*)	Mahmud Hicazi	3 *akçe*s
Keeper of Quran manuscripts (*ḥāfıẓ-ı maṣāḥıf*)	Ahmed Hüseyin	3 *akçe*s
Book-binder (*mücellīd*)	Muhammed	3 *akçe*s
Embroider of curtains (*perdedūz*)	Muhammed Ali	3 *akçe*s
Gardener (*bağbān*)	-	3 *akçe*s
Keeper of the Quran manuscripts' covers (*ḥāfıẓ-ı Qur'ān-pūş*)	Abdullah	2 *akçe*s
Cleaner (*ferrāş*)	Derviş Hüseyin	7 *akçe*s + meal
Cleaner	Yunus bin Hüseyin	7 *akçe*s + meal
Individual responsible for oil lamps *(sirrācī*)	Ahmed Mustafa	7 *akçe*s + meal
Individual responsible for oil lamps	Mustafa Muhammed	7 *akçe*s + meal
Cleaner of bathrooms (*ferrāş-ı kenīf*)	Ali	8 *akçe*s + meal
Guardian of Quran *eczā* (*ḥāfıẓ-ı eczā-yı şerīfe*)	Muhammed Efendi	3 *akçe*s
Cleaner of the tomb's interior (*ferrāş-ı ḥarem-i türbe*)	Murad bin Yahya	2 *akçe*s
Individual responsible for lighting and snuffing the candles and lamps (*sirācī*)	Muhammed Mustafa	7 *akçe*s + meal
Individual responsible for lighting and snuffing the candles and lamps	Ahmed Mustafa	7 *akçe*s + meal
Individual responsible for preventing people from writing or drawing on the walls of the tomb and its restroom (*māni'un-nuḳūş*)	Osman Halife bin Ahmed	4 *akçe*s

Table 10. The employees working in the mausoleum of Ahmed I[1315]

Employee	Number	Daily Wage	Monthly Salary
Prayers (*muṣallīyān*)	8	48	1400 *akçe*s
Reciter of the Quran (*ezcaḫān*), after morning prayer	30	62	1860 *akçe*s
Reciters of the Quran, after noon prayer	30	62	1860 *akçe*s
Reciters of the Quran, after afternoon prayer	30	62	1860 *akçe*s
müsebbiḥān (those who repeat the invocation of "Subhanallah", namely eulogies to God)	20	41	1230 *akçe*s
ṣalavatḫān (those who repeat the salavat, greeting to the Prophet Muhammad)	20	41	1230 *akçe*s
Watchmen (*bekçiyān*), who work in the morning	16	48	1440 *akçe*s
Watchmen, who work from noon until evening	16	48	1440 *akçe*s
Watchmen, who work from evening until morning	20	60	1800 *akçe*s

The meals, which were served in the public kitchen and whose amounts and quality of the ingredients, constitutes another significant theme concerning the endowment of the Sultan Ahmed complex. Since this theme is related to the social context of the public kitchen, it will be discussed in the following section. Following the stipulations regarding the *'imāret*, the endowment deed ends with one last

[1315] Ibid, 5.

condition, which stipulates that a devout person, who made the pilgrimage to Mecca for his own sake before, would make the pilgrimage in the name of Sultan Ahmed each year.[1316] Assigning a person as an agent for the prescribed pilgrimage to Mecca was a dynastic tradition in the Ottoman period. The predecessors of Ahmed I also deputised people for making the pilgrimage in their names, whose expenditures were borne by the endowments they established for their mosque complexes.[1317] The Ottoman sultans did not make pilgrimages, and assigning deputies for this task via their waqf foundations would make it visible that they indeed were aware of this religious duity and did not neglect it.

5.4 Rituals, ceremonial, and social life in the complex

5.4.1 Spectacle and banquets in the construction

Beginning from the digging of its foundations, the Sultan Ahmed Mosque became the venue of various ceremonials, feasts, religious rituals, and social or political events. It served as a ground for recurrent sultanic visits and courtly ceremonials. The sultanic visits and spectacular events began as early as the inception of the construction process, and continued until its completion and afterwards. Mustafa Safi related that Sultan Ahmed got involved in the construction process from the beginning, and visited the ground on his horse and in the company of court cavalry.[1318] According to the same author, it was a custom of the sultan to visit the construction site very often, and to view the workers building his mosque from his new royal pavilion, which was erected in the construction ground for the sultan to watch, *seyr u temāşā*, the construction, and the conditions of his subjects.[1319] He

[1316] TIEM 2184, 66.
[1317] Akakuş, "İstanbul'da Sultan", 29; Yılmaz, *Kanuni Vakfiyesi*, 65.
[1318] Mustafa Safi, *Mustafa Safi'nin*, I, 50.
[1319] Ibid, 50, 52.

sometimes went out from the palace's garden gate with his closer retinue, or when he was not in the palace, but in one of his royal gardens, he reached the construction from the sea or by land, and watched the builders working in the construction from the pavilion.[1320]

Some records in the daily registers support the chronicler's account concerning the frequent sultanic visits to the construction site. For example, the sultan visited the construction site on 13 March 1614 (1 Safar 1023 AH), and several animals were sacrificed in honor of this sultanic visit.[1321]Another such visit occurred on 28 February 1615 (29 Muharram 1024 AH), when the sultan approached to the construction site from Atmeydanı to see the digging of the foundations of the mosque's courtyard, the interlocking of the mosque's large arches, and the demolition of the Mehmed Pasha Palace. This royal visit also witnessed the sacrifice of several lambs, which were probably served to the workers in the construction.[1322]

Along with recurrent sultanic visits, the mosque witnessed several ceremonies and spectacular activities within the process of its approximately ten years of construction. As Necipoğlu and Rüstem have demonstrated, the digging of the mosque's foundations, its dome closing, and opening were celebrated with feasts.[1323] It was a well-established custom to celebrate the foundation laying and inauguration of sultanic mosques with festivities, royal processions, feasts, sacrifices and distribution of gifts, but the festive events staged for celebrating different phases of Sultan Ahmed Mosque's construction differed from the previous ones in terms of

[1320] Ibid, 50, 124–125. Rüstem has argued that the pavilion mentioned within the context of these earlier visits and ceremonies was an ephemeral structure, which was later replaced by the actual royal pavilion. This indicates a concern for creating a royal setting in the mosque from the very beginning, and shows that the venue was conceived as a ceremonial place from the inception of its construction. That the royal pavilion was the firstly completed edifice of the complex also shows the same purpose. Rüstem, "Spectacle of Legitimacy", 266.
[1321] TMSA D. 35, 160b, after Öten, "Arşiv Belgelerine Göre", 410.
[1322] TMSA D. 35, 195a, after Öten, "Arşiv Belgelerine Göre", 628.
[1323] Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 516; Rüstem, "Spectacle of Legitimacy", 262–291.

their number and elaboration.[1324] The first festive event was staged for digging the mosque's foundation, which took place on 8 October 1609 (9 Rajab 1018). Palace astrologers determined an auspicious time for the beginning of the digging, and on that day, religious scholars and sheikhs, viziers, bureaucrats, and high-ranking officials gathered on the construction site. The sultan was also present in his royal pavilion, and watched the inception of the digging, which was conducted by the sheikh al-Islam Mevlana Muhammed Efendi, and continued respectively by Sheikh Mahmud Hüdayi, the grand vizier Murad Pasha and other viziers, judges of the army, and scholars. Afterwards, Sultan Ahmed came, and continued to dig the foundations with a pickaxe. The event continued with animal sacrifices and banquets offered to the elites and the common people who were watching the ceremony.[1325] The first daily register mentions purchases of sheeps for sacrifice (*gāv berā-yı ḳurbān*), silver dining tables (*ṣofra-yı nuḳra*) and copper vessels (*ṭās-ı nüḥās*) among the expenditures dated to 3 October 1608 (4 Rajab 1018).[1326] These tablewares and sacrificial lambs must have bought for the banquet held during this ceremony.

A second celebration was held approximately five weeks later, on 16 November 1609 (14 Shaban 1018), for laying the mosque's foundations. This event took place at an unusual time towards morning, at 2 am, since astrologers determined it as the most convenient and auspicious time for the event. It took place with the participation of the sultan, various high-ranking bureaucrats and religious dignitaries, who placed the foundation stones in the same order. Afterwards, the sultan,

[1324] Rüstem, "Spectacle of Legitimacy", 266. For example, Murad II laid out the foundations of his Friday mosque in Edirne, the Üç Şerefeli Mosque, with a ceremony in 1437–38, before he left Edirne for a military campaign to Hungary. Similarly, the opening of the Süleymaniye Mosque was celebrated with a festivity staged in 1557. Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 60, 143. The digging of the foundations of the Yeni Valide Mosque in Eminönü was celebrated with a big feast where animals were sacrificed, and people from different classes were offered dishes. Abdülkadir Efendi, *Topçular Katibi*, I, 297.
[1325] Mustafa Safi, *Mustafa Safi'nin*, I, 52.
[1326] TMSA D. 35, 5b, after Öten, "Arşiv Belgelerine Göre", 558.

accompanied by Kalender Agha, laid out a few stones in the place of the mihrab. On this day, 150 grandees taking part in the ceremony were rewarded with robes and offered banquets. When the foundation was laid and the bases were placed, animals were sacrificed, and dishes were served to the employees working in laying the foundation and commoners watching the event.[1327]

The most spectacular ceremony in the construction took place on June 8, 1617 (4 Jumada al-Thani 1026) to celebrate the closing of the mosque's monumental dome.[1328] A special text describing this event titled "History of the Construction of the Mosque of Sultan Ahmed I", *Tārīḫ-i Binā-yı Cāmī'-i Sultān Aḥmed-i Evvel*, was penned for perpetuating it, which is the single known example of an Ottoman monograph depicting a ceremony centered on architecture.[1329] Accordint to this text, for the celebration, a stage was prepared within the mosque's courtyard, where a monumental royal tent adorned with luxury textiles was erected, and a bejeweled throne was put inside this tent's portico.[1330] Naima and Abdülkadir Efendi related that there were indeed multiple tents established in the mosque's courtyard.[1331] These tents must have been put on the outer courtyard since the inner forecourt is not sufficiently wide for housing multiple monumental tents.[1332] The sultan came to the mosque from the Topkapı Palace mounted on his lavishly clothed and adorned horse, and with a spectacular procession. (Figure C142) The event began with the sultan's distribution of luxury caftans to Mahmud Hüdayi and his dervishes, and continued

[1327] Mustafa Safi, *Mustafa Safi'nin*, I, 53-54; Naima, *Tarih-i Naima*, II, 378; Abdülkadir Efendi, *Topçular Katibi*, I, 561–562.
[1328] Rüstem, "Spectacle of Legitimacy", 272; Naima, *Tarih-i Naima*, II, 431; Abdülkadir Efendi, *Topçular Katibi*, I, 651–652.
[1329] Rüstem, "Spectacle of Legitimacy", 270–291, 300–344. Along with this text, the seventeenth century historians Abdülkadir Efendī and Naima also gave shorter accounts of this ceremony in their chronicles. Abdülkadir Efendi, *Topçular Katibi*, I, 651–652; Naima, *Tarih-i Naima*, II, 431.
[1330] Rüstem, "Spectacle of Legitimacy", 336–337.
[1331] Naima, *Tarih-i Naima*, II, 431; Abdülkadir Efendi, *Topçular Katibi*, I, 651–652.
[1332] Rüstem, "Spectacle of Legitimacy", 272.

with the closing of the mosque's dome with prayers by the same sheikh, the grand mufti, the viziers, the chief treasurer and Mustafa Agha, who all climbed to the dome upon the sultan's order. The ceremony proceeded with a sermon delivered by Mahmud Hüdayi, which was followed by the distribution of robes to all the viziers, the scholars, the dignitaries, the mosque's construction staff, and people from lower classes.[1333] *Tārīḫ-i Binā-yı Cāmī'-i Sultān Aḥmed-i Evvel* highlighted the sultan's generosity displayed in this event as follows: "It is clearer and brighter than day—and a matter of doubtless certainty—that not a tenth of a tenth of such generosity had been seen before."[1334]

Among the audiences of this event were foreign ambassadors. The Venetian bailo and the ambassadors of Habsburg and French empires were among them, who viewed the ceremony from a balcony in the İbrahim Pasha Palace overlooking the mosque and the processional route.[1335] They participated in the ceremony not only as viewers, but also with their gifts consisting of precious textiles that were hung on the Sultan Ahmed Mosque.[1336] The author of *Tārīḫ-i Binā-yı Cāmī'-i Sultān Aḥmed-i Evvel* mentioned the Safavid ambassador among the foreign invitees:

> The sultan was watched that day by the ruthless [foreign] ambassadors who were present at the assembly, and when they—despite having not a trace of faith in their hardened hearts, wherein the devil and rebellion resided—saw the selfless favor that the magnanimous sultan conferred on the people of the world, together with the good works and pious deeds done in the path of God and the effort and labor exerted in the course of the religion of Muhammad, countless infidels could not help but come to Islam, wherewith they were honored with the glory of Islam and decked in royal favor. And even the remaining wicked infidels could not help but say countless prayers for the life and state of the mighty and exalted sultan, that he should remain secure and stable on his throne of glory; and so they confirmed as was right the glory and power pertaining to the religion of Muhammad and to the emperor of Islam, while seeing for certain the ignominy and vengefulness of their [own] false rites; and whether the ambassador of the reprobate Qizilbash [Safavid] or

[1333] Ibid, 337–339.
[1334] Ibid, 339.
[1335] Ibid, 286–287.
[1336] Ibid, 289.

> whether Venetian, Fleming, or Frank—they are one scourge alike—all of them were frustrated and confounded, their heads hung in vexation and sadness, and each of them was plunged into utter disgrace. [1337]

The mosque was opened on the first Friday of Shaban in 1617 (1026 AH) with a big pageant, whose details were narrated by Abdülkadir Efendi. The mosque's inauguration and the performance of the first Friday ritual were celebrated as a festive event with the participation of the sultan, his high-ranking bureaucrats, foreign invitees from the east and the west, religious scholars and sheikhs, and common people, who filled the mosque and its environs. Before the sultan's arrival at noon, amber and oodh incense were burned inside the mosque, and the poor were served candies and sherbets that flew from the mosque's fountains. Prayers, chanting the Quran, and sermons preceded the Friday ritual, which was performed with the participation of the sultan. Another two sermons were delivered by Mahmud Hüdayi and Sivasi Efendi after the Friday ritual, and the ceremony continued with invocations chanted by dervishes, who were rewarded with garments and alms.[1338]

The archival evidence reveals that several smaller steps of the mosque's construction witnessed the sacrifice of lambs, which must have been served to the workers and incumbents working in the construction. Among these many occasions were the demolition of *aslānḫāne* on 25 January in 1610 (29 Shavval 1018 AH),[1339] the digging of the foundations of the rooms near the mosque on 2 May 1611 (18 Safar 1020 AH),[1340] the foundation of the mosque's scaffold in 16 September 1611 (8 Rajab 1020 AH),[1341] the placement of the columns in the mosque and its courtyard

[1337] Ibid, 339–340. Based on a comparison between the account of the events provided by the Venetian bailo, Rüstem has argued that most probably, such conversions did not actually take place. Rüstem, "Spectacle of Legitimacy", 289.
[1338] Ibid, 654–655.
[1339] TMSA D. 35, 12b, after Öten, "Arşiv Belgelerine Göre", 563.
[1340] TMSA D. 35, 60b, after Öten, "Arşiv Belgelerine Göre", 590.
[1341] TMSA D. 35, 88b, after Öten, "Arşiv Belgelerine Göre", 594.

in 30 May 1613 (10 Rabi al-Avval 1022 AH),[1342] and the placement of the large iron beam in the prayer hall in 11 June 1614 (3 Jumada al-Avval 1023 AH).[1343] The known sources do not mention the participation of the sultan and the courtly members to the banquets held for celebrating the construction's smaller steps.

Several spectacular ceremonies and banquets staged for celebrating the significant phases of the mosque's construction seem to have been intended to display the sultan's piety, generosity, and claim to power and legitimacy through the construction of a monumental Friday mosque, which became the subject of severe criticism and opposition, to different audiences. As has Rüstem argued, these events and the sultan's recurrent appearances on the mosque's construction side can be assessed as gestures displaying Sultan Ahmed's attachment to his mosque project, and as a part of his endeavour to legitimize his legally suspect project through acts of piety and benevolence.[1344] The establishment of royal tents in the mosque's courtyard, which formed a unique practice, resembling the military encampments, can also be interpreted as a symbolic act intending to compensate the sultan's failure to lead a military campaign.[1345] Similar to his hunting expeditions and encampments, the tents erected in the mosque had martial references that would retrieve the sultan's lost prestige as a ghazi warrior and ruler with military achievement and competence.

5.4.2 The canonization of *mevlid* ceremonies as a courtly ritual

The annual *mevlid* ceremonies constituted the most spectacular and prominent religious rituals that were held in the Sultan Ahmed Mosque regularly.[1346] The birth

[1342] TMSA D. 35, 129b, after Öten, "Arşiv Belgelerine Göre", 537.
[1343] TMSA D. 35, 165b, after Öten, "Arşiv Belgelerine Göre", 322.
[1344] Ibid, 290.
[1345] Ibid, 282–284.
[1346] This ritual was performed to celebrate the birth anniversary of the Prophet Muhammed each year on the 12th day of Rabi al-Awwal in the Islamic calendar. Celebrating the Prophet's birth was an old

anniversary of the Prophet Muhammed was included in the festive calendar of the sultanic mosque complexes in Istanbul. Beginning with the early sixteenth century, the endowment deeds of the sultanic mosques stipulated the celebration of the *mevlid* in the royal mosques, with the recital of the *mevlid* text and service of food.[1347] It is not known whether the sultan adhered to these ceremonies, or the event was celebrated in a courtly environment before the second half of the sixteenth century.

The first reference to a *mevlid* ceremony within the context of the court rituals dates to the end of Sultan Süleyman's reign. Selaniki related that during Sultan Süleyman's campaign of Szigetvar in 1566, the *mevlid* text was read in the sultan's tent, and the same ritual was repeated in the grand vizier's tent the following day.[1348] The same author indicated that on February 10, 1588, (12 Rabi al-Avval 996 AH), Murad III ordered all minarets in Istanbul to be adorned with candles, and the *mevlid* text to be read within the mosques in the capital city.[1349] Generally, this date has been accepted as the beginning of the official *mevlid* ceremonies in the Ottoman empire.[1350] Selaniki's account suggests that after approximately ten years, the celebration of the Prophet's birthday with banquets in the royal mosques of Istanbul was banned by the grand mufti Sunullah Efendi (d. 1612). He condemned the superintendents of the sultanic mosques' endowments for serving candies and sweets in adorned trays and beverages in glass dippers to the grandees, and ignoring the

practice that had emerged as early as the tenth century, and had been practiced in various parts of the Islamicate lands since then. Holmes, *Devotional Piety*; Bilkan, *Mevlid*; 44–47; Ateş, *Vesiletü'n-Necat Mevlid*, 1–20; Pekolcay, *Mevlid*, 17–33; Özel, "Mevlid", 475–479; Okiç, "Çeşitli Dillerde Mevlidler", 23–24. The evidence suggests that the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad had been celebrated in the Ottoman lands since the fourteenth century. Research on Ottoman waqfiyyas revealed that as early as the fourteenth century, there were references to *mevlid* in various Ottoman endowments, which display that the Prophet's birth anniversary had been celebrated in some ways that is yet unknown to the researchers. Şeker, "Osmanlılar'da Mevlid Törenleri", 479; Özel, "Mevlid", 477; Okiç, "Çeşitli Dillerde Mevlidler", 36–37; Hızlı, "Mevlid'e Dair", 44; Bilkan, *Mevlid*, 48.

[1347] See Chapter III, 143–144.

[1348] Selaniki, *Tarih-i Selaniki*, I, 36.

[1349] Ibid, 197–198.

[1350] Pekolcay, *Mevlid*, 24; Şeker, "Osmanlılar'da Mevlid Törenleri", 479; Özel, "Mevlid", 477; Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 515.

poor, who were present in the ritual. He labeled these banquets offered to the grandees as a *bid'at*, namely an [ugly] innovation, and recommended serving food to the common people in the public kitchen and madrasas on that day.[1351]

Sultan Ahmed revived the *mevlid* ritual as a courtly ceremony and integrated it into the ritual program of his new congregational mosque, which became the prescribed venue of all courtly *mevlid* ceremonies within the centuries to come. His insistence on restoring the *mevlid* ritual as a courtly ceremony began before the inauguration of his mosque, and the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad was celebrated in different temporal courtly settings, including the one established in the Sultan Ahmed Mosque's construction. According to the chroniclers' accounts, the earliest *mevlid* ceremony held during the reign of Sultan Ahmed dated to November 5, 1610 (18 Shaban 1019), and it was celebrated within the construction site of the new royal mosque.[1352] Abdülkadir Efendi reported that in the evening on Rabi al-Awwal 12, the scaffolds of the New Mosque, namely the Mosque of Sultan Ahmed, was embellished with candles, and the birthday of the Prophet Muhammed was celebrated with the chanting of the *mevlid* text within the same place the day after that evening.[1353] Mustafa Safi related that a ceremonial setting was established within the construction place, which was filled with lavishly decorated sofas prepared for each group of grandees, including scholars, the members of the court, and the grand mufti. The event began with an enormous banquet, which was offered both to the grandees and the common people. The feast was followed by a sermon delivered by Mahmud Hüdayi, and the performance of the congregational noon prayer led by the same sheikh. The event ended after the chanting of the text of *mevlid* by *ḥüffāẓ*, and

[1351] Selaniki, *Tarihi Selaniki*, II, 826.
[1352] Mustafa Safi, *Mustafa Safi'nin*, I, 105.
[1353] Abdülkadir Efendi, *Topçular Katibi*, I, 629.

the service of various candies and sherbets, which were offered within luxury wares that belonged to the sultan.[1354] Indeed, these wares could be the same tablewares that appear in the lists displaying the mosque's furnishings, which I introduced before in this chapter.

Abdülkadir Efendi recounted that six years after the first one, on March 30, 1616 (12 Rabi al-Avval 1025), a second *mevlid* ceremony was held in the New Mosque, during which the exterior (*ṭaşrası*), environs of the mosque and the maydan were full of Muslims. Similar to the first one, this second *mevlid* ceremony took place with the participation of the viziers, the members of the court, and scholars, including Mahmud Hüdayi, who delivered a sermon and gave a speech on the Quranic exegesis before *ḥüffāz* chanted the text of *mevlid*. Sherbets and sweeties were served to the assembly, who were refreshed with fragrant incenses burned in censers.[1355]

The ritual continued to take place within the sanctuary after its inauguration in 1617.[1356] An archival source from 1617 (1026 AH)[1357] displays the expenses of the very first *mevlid* ritual celebrated after the mosque's opening. The document recounts the expenditures of food and tableware made for the chanting of the *mevlid* in the mosque of the magnificent sultan.[1358]

[1354] Mustafa Safi, *Mustafa Safi'nin*, I, 105, 106.
[1355] Abdülkadir Efendi, *Topçular Katibi*, I, 651.
[1356] TMSA D. 8021,7; Barkan, *Süleymaniye Cami*, II, 288.
[1357] The date of this archival source is not recorded, but that it is in a register showing the mosque's expenses from 1617 (1026 AH) makes it reasonable to suggest that the mentioned archival document belongs to the same date.
[1358] TMSA D. 8021, 7.

Table 11. The expenses of the *mevlid* ceremony in 1617[1359]

Purchases of sugar, rock candy, and rosewater (*iḫrācāt-ı nebāt, aḳīde, gülāb*)	
Herbal sugar (*nebāt*)	6000 *akçe*s
Rock candy (*aḳīde*)	15440 *akçe*s
Incense of agalwood (*agar-ı miskī*)	5500 *akçe*s
Rosewater (*gülāb*)	1600 *akçe*s
Sugar (*sükker*)	4800 *akçe*s
Honey (*'asel*)	4200 *akçe*s
Dish, glass, jug and portage (*ṭabaḳhā ve şişehā ve bardaḳhā ve ḥammālīye*)	4600 *akçe*s
Purchases of desserts (*iḫrācāt-ı ḥulvīyyāt*)	
Sugar and the necessary ingredients (*sükker ve ḫarc-ı lāzıme*)	17960 *akçe*s
Dishes for *ḥalva* and *palūde*, spoons for compote, wooden dishes	6600 *akçe*s
Purchases for the main course (*iḫrācāt-ı ṭa'ām-ı ḫāṣ ve ḥarcī*)	
Clarified butter (*revgān-ı sade*)	16234 *akçe*s
Honey (*'asel*)	7800 *akçe*s
Rice (*erz*)	9000 *akçe*s
Meat (*güşt*)	5760 *akçe*s
Goose, chicken, pigeon and goashawk (*bāt, decac, kebūter, çāḳır*)	6840 *akçe*s
Spices including salt and saffaron (*nemek, mevīzāb, za'frān ve ḫarc-ı lāzıme*)	1200 *akçe*s
Sugar (*sükker*)	3800 *akçe*s
Bread (*nān-ı ḫaṣ*)	3200 *akçe*s
Round and flat bread (*nān-ı ḥarcī*)	5000 *akçe*s
Vegetables (*sebzevāt*)	1800 *akçe*s
Fruits (*meyve-i mütenevvi'a*)	6100 *akçe*s
Wages paid to water-bearers (*saḳā*) and porters (*ırgad*), and money paid for wooden trays (*sini-i ahşāb*)	4440 *akçe*s
Purchases of supplies (*iḫrācāt-ı levāzımāt*)	
Coffee (*ḳahve*), sugar candy (*sükker-i mükerrer*), coffee cups (*fincān*)	3500 *akçe*s
Raw amber (*'anber-i ḫam*), agalwood (*'ud*), and musk (*misk*)	10850 *akçe*s
Total	152274 *akçe*s

This list shows that the rich dishes offered to the guests included a main course consisting of meat, rice, bread, and desserts such as halvah, compote and

[1359] Ibid, 7.

other sweets prepared with fruits. Some spices like amber and musk should have been used in the preparation of particular sherbets,[1360] and could be used as incenses burned during the event. Coffee, candy sugar and coffee cups seen in the last group indicate that coffee was offered to the invitees, and this shows the inclusion of coffee to the courtly menus in this era.[1361] Desserts, sugar and meat constituted the most expensive food in the early modern Ottoman period, and in this sense, the dishes offered in the *mevlid* ritual can be assessed as elite menus. If the hierarchical order and menus of the courtly banquets are taken into consideration,[1362] it is very probable that the tables of the elites and the common people differed from each other. For example, it is known that the white meats of chicken, pigeons, and geese appeared on the list were among the most expensive foods of the period, which were hardly consumed outside courtly circles in the early modern Ottoman Empire.[1363] Most probably, the white meat was offered only to the sultan and probably to his most-high ranking invitees. Most probably, the material and quality of the tablewares used in the food service to the protocol members and the common people also differed from each other. It is very unlikely that the wooden spoons or trays were put on the elites' tables, but must have been used in the service of the common people. The sultan and his grandees must have eaten in luxury wares made of glass, ceramic, or other precious materials, which were probably the luxury tableware that appeared in the list of the mosque's furniture.[1364]

[1360] Yerasimos, *Sultan Sofraları*, 30.
[1361] Yerasimos argued that although the denizens of the Ottoman cities embraced coffee beginning with the mid-sixteenth century, this beverage did not enter the palace throughout the sixteen century. Yerasimos, *Saray Sofraları*, 31.
[1362] The banquets offered to the elites and common people duing the imperial circumcision festivities of the sixteenth century exemplify this phenomenon. See Tezcan, *Bir Ziyafet Defteri*; Yerasimos, *Sultan Sofraları*, 36–42; Erdoğan İşkorkutan, "1720 Şenliği'nde Yemek", 117–152.
[1363] Bilgin, "Seçkin Mekanda", 53; Işın, *Osmanlı Mutfak İmparatorluğu*, 177; Yerasimos, *Sultan Sofraları*, 31.
[1364] TMSA D. 8021.

Some contemporary narratives offer clues pertaining to the order and details of the *mevlid* celebrations in the Sultan Ahmed Mosque within the context of the first half of the seventeenth century. The first such account belongs to the *mevlid* ceremony that took place in 1630 (1040 AH) with the participation of the sultan (Murad IV), viziers, scholars, and all high-ranking members of the court. The assembly, who convened in the sanctuary, listened to the chanting of the *mevlid* text, and served desserts and sherbets.[1365] The second *mevlid* ritual depicted by the same author, Naima, occurred three years later, in 1633 (1043 AH). He indicated that as is the custom (*mu'tād üzre*), the assembly of the *mevlid* took place within the New Mosque, which is an expression implying that the celebration of this event in the Mosque of Ahmed I began to be perceived as a custom within less than two decades. The author mentioned a tension that appeared between two preachers, Sivasi Efendi and Kadızade Efendi, who subsequently delivered sermons from the pulpit of the mosque. Kadızade Efendi, who gained the sultan's favour, gave a speech on the exegesis of a Quranic surah on the theme of encouraging justice (*tergīb-i 'adl*) and prohibiting the wrong (*nehy-i münker*). Some groups in the assembly who were listening to his sermon attempted to force the preacher down from the pulpit because of his pejorative and arrogant demeanour, but were prevented by the same preacher, who warned the mentioned groups by saying that they were in the sultan's presence.[1366] Abdülkadir Efendi, who gave a more detailed account of the same event, related that for celebrations of the *mevlid*, mosques were adorned with oil lamps, and the *mevlid* was chanted in the New Mosque with the participation of the viziers, scholars, the sayyid and their chief (*nāḳibu'l-eşrāf*), the sultan's cortege (*riḳāb-ı humāyūn*), and the sheikhs of various Sufi orders. He indicated that the event

[1365] Naima, *Tarih-i Naima*, II, 691.
[1366] Ibid, 758.

began before sunrise with sermons on the Quranic exegesis and hadith, continued with other sermons delivered by Sufi sheikhs, and the chanting of the *mevlid*.[1367]

The *mevlid* ceremony that occurred in 1646 (1056 AH) constitutes the last example provided by Naima. In this account, he provides a clearer description of the protocol followed in the event. Accordingly, the grand mufti Muid Ahmed Efendi, as the highest member of the protocol, sat in front of the mihrab, while people occupying the second rank in the hierarchy were lined on both sides of the mihrab. All viziers were situated to the left of the mihrab while the leading religious scholars such as Karaçelebizade Mahmud Efendi (*ṣadr-ı Rūm*), Aziz Efendi, Çivizade Efendi and Behai Efendi took their places on the right side of the mihrab. The author related that upon the order of the sultan, Behai Efendi changed his place, and sat after Karaçelebizade Mahmud Efendi.[1368]

These accounts suggest that these ceremonial events had a particular protocol and order. The sultan, the grand mufti and other high-ranking members of the religious bureaucracy, viziers, the court members and outstanding Sufi sheikhs constituted the members of these protocols, which seem to have an established order of seating within in the prayer hall in front of the mihrab. The sermons delivered by prominent preachers, the chanting of the *mevlid* text, and the offer of banquets seem to have constituted the main parts of the ritual. While sermons were delivered by outstanding scholars or sheikhs the *mevlid* text was chanted by *ḥüffāẓ*. Along with main courses, the service of desserts, sherbets, and coffee established as a custom of these rituals, which concretized the sultanic benefaction and protection both over the high-ranking members of his bureaucratic establishment, and his subjects.

[1367] Abdülkadir Efendi, *Topçular Katibi*, II, 143–144.
[1368] Naima, *Tarih-i Naima*, II, 1097.

Why did the *mevlid* ceremony appeared as such an elaborate courtly ritual within the context of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century? Sultan Ahmed appropriated this ritual as another opportunity for courtly spectacle and established it as a canonized religious ceremonial. This was concurrent with representational and ceremonial agenda of Sultan Ahmed, who aimed to retrieve the old glorified image of the Ottoman rulers as the protectors of religion. At the same time, the construction of a monumental Friday mosque as a stage of canonized religious rituals should be assessed as part of his endeavours to emulate Sultan Süleyman, and surpass his accomplishments in the construction of a distinctly Sunni religious landscape within his realms. While Sultan Süleyman was known for his achievement in the consolidation of the five daily canonical prayers as a legal and religious canon Sultan Ahmed has been associated with the canonization of another religious ritual.

The preference for the Prophet's birthday, *mevlid*, among other special days known as *ḳandīl*s appears as another legitimate question. I argue that *mevlid* was chosen because it was useful for emphasizing the Sunnism of the Ottomans. It was a special day, and a special ritual centered on Prophet Muhammed, who constituted the center of the Sunni doctrine, as oppose to the Imami one, which attached a comparable significance and authority to the Twelve Imams along with the Prophet. Celebrating the birthday of Prophet Muhammed created an opportunity to reemphasize the Prophet's centrality, to make his life and message known to a larger public, and to eulogize this most eminent religious figure of Sunni Islam.

The canonization of a text as an integral part of the *mevlid* celebrations seems to have rendered this special ritual into a coherent courtly and public ceremonial celebrating Sunni Islam. Commonly known as *Mevlid-i Şerif*, the text titled *Vesīletü'n-Necāt*, literally meaning "Means of Salvation", had been recited on

different occasions, including the birthday of Prophet Muhammed by many Ottoman Muslims since the fifteenth century.[1369] It was written in 1409 by Süleyman Çelebi (d. 1402), an Ottoman author lived in Bursa, who worked as a prayer leader in the Ulu Cami.[1370] *Vesīletü'n-Necāt* is a long poem in mathnawi style that comprises 19 parts and 360 lines.[1371] Except for its introduction in Arabic, the text is in Turkish, written in a relatively simple language. The birth, several significant phases, and death of the Prophet form the main theme of the text while other religious topics, such as the oneness of God and correct ethical behaviours, are also touched upon.[1372]

A few particularities of this text seem to have contributed to its popularity and canonization by the Ottoman authorities within the context of a religious ceremonial. Its comprehensibility is one of the main factors that rendered this text into one of the most popular and widely read texts in the Ottoman world. It presents a modest language that was comprehensible both for Ottoman elites and non-literate public. The collation of various literary and cultural constituents such as Sufi notions, anecdotes, and folk legends into the text's stylistic and thematic structure seems to be equally influential in its widespread adoption. Researchers examining the sources of the *mevlid* text have argued that it emulated, and even directly copied verses from particular popular texts and stories like *Danişmendnāme*.[1373] As Bilkan has demonstrated, the assessment and presentation of Prophet Muhammed in a manner that is common in Sufism, as the center of all ontological categories and the reason for the universe's creation, was another factor that contributed to its

[1369] Şeker, "Osmanlılar'da Mevlid Törenleri", 479.
[1370] For more detailed information on Süleyman Çelebi's life and career, see Ateş, *Vesiletü'n-Necat Mevlid*, 21–35; Pekolcay, *Mevlid*, 16–25; Bilkan, *Mevlid*, 22–26.
[1371] Indeed, the *Vesiletü'n-Necat* of Süleyman Çelebi did not remain as a fixed text, and became the subject of several alterations and especially additions after it was written. The numbers of the text's sections and lines reflect the original text's features, which was transcribed by Ateş. See Ateş, *Vesiletü'n-Necat Mevlid*, 91–147.
[1372] Ateş, *Vesiletü'n-Necat Mevlid*, 38–40, 43–57.
[1373] Bilkan, *Mevlid*, 40–44, 49; Ateş, "Çeşitli Dillerde Mevlidler", 50–57.

popularity.[1374] The *mevlid* fitted perfectly to different understandings of Islam, including sharia-oriented, Sufi, or "folk" versions, which could not be separated from each other with distinct lines, and could be embraced by Muslims with different leanings.

The *mevlid* can safely be assessed as a text, which propagates Sunni Islam centered on the Prophet's sunnah. Presenting his phases of life in a narratological manner, it introduces the audiences to their leading figure, and acknowledges the supremacy of character, and the religious and behavioral manners proposed by him. Along a focus on the Prophet's life and sunnah, the poem propagates essential tenets of Sunni Islam, such as the rightfulness of Abubakr's caliphate. In the section narrating the Prophet's illness before his passing, Abubakr is presented as the deputy in leading the congregational prayers within the Mosque of the Prophet, which has been one of the main arguments of Sunnis concerning the legitimacy of Abubakr's caliphate.[1375] "Mustafa attempted to the mosque and pray/ He could not find strength in himself to do this/ He said to the muezzin that if he could not do it/ Abubakr had to act as imam instead"[1376]

Narratives regarding Süleyman Çelebi's composition process of *Vesīletü'n-Necāt* indicates the existence of a concern for propagating the tenets of Sunni Islam, and falsify the arguments of its opponents. Different writers from the sixteenth century, including Mustafa Ali and the biographer Latifi, related the account of an event that constituted the reason behind Süleyman Çelebi's decision to write a text proving Prophet Muhammed's merits and his supremacy over previous prophets. Accordingly, in Ulu Cami in Bursa, a preacher was delivering a sermon on a Quranic

[1374] Bilkan, *Mevlid*, 44.
[1375] Ibid, 38–39.
[1376] My translation. Ateş, "Çeşitli Dillerde Mevlidler", 130.

verse that emphasized the significance of believing in Prophets making no distinction among them, and indicated that he does not value Prophet Muhammad above Prophet Jesus. The majority of the audiences in the mosque agreed with the preacher and supported his claims, except an Arabic speaking person. This event promoted Süleyman Çelebi to compose a poem proving Prophet Muhammed's superiority and his merits. Mustafa Ali claimed this preacher was an Iranian tradesman, *tācīr-i 'Acem*.[1377] It is not certain whether this story is the product of a sixteenth-century imagination, or related an actual event that occurred in the early fifteenth century. It is certain, however, at least from the early decades of the sixteenth century, the *mevlid* began to be conceived as a text written and served to propagate the doctrine of Sunni Islam against heterodox understandings that question the Prophet's centrality.

The claim regarding the origin of the mentioned preacher in the Ulu Cami is indicative of the perception of Iranian scholars and their religious leanings in the Rumi lands, or by Rumi scholars-intellectuals, within the context of the mid and late sixteenth century. *Vesīletü'n-Necāt*, which was believed to be penned for defending the rightest Islamic doctrine against the void one/s embraced and propagated by profane Iranians, seems to have gained significance and prominence within the context of the mid-sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, when Ottoman political and religious authorities elaborated their confessional measures and policies partly against, and as a counterpart of the Safavid Shi'ism. If the simultaneous canonization of particular Shi'ite rituals like the *'āshūra* by the Safavid authorities in the sixteenth century is taken into consideration, it can be argued that the Ottoman authorities

[1377] Gelibolulu Mustafa Ali, *Künhü'l-Ahbar*, 82; Latifi, *Latifi Tezkiresi*, 62–63.

adopted and appropriated an already existing religious text, *Vesiletü'n-Necāt*, and ritual, *mevlid*, as a counterpart of the Shi'ite ones in Safavid Iran.

One last feature of *Vesīletü'n-Necāt* that makes it a suitable text for a theatrical ceremony is its narratological and dialogic feature. Except for its introduction in Arabic involving classical eulogies to God, the Prophet and his companions, the text consists of subsequent parts of a single narrative, which includes subsidiary stories and legends. Storytelling and listening to narratives that sometimes accompanied by performative plays was a common practice of socialization in the early modern Ottoman culture.[1378] In this sense, the *mevlid* as a text featuring a narrative style seems to have been a coherent choice for a ritual with audiences from various social classes, who embraced storytelling as a favorite activity for socialization and entertainment. The dialogical and performative character of the text also renders it further as a coherent text for the *mevlid* ceremonies. As Bilkan has underscored, various parts of the text address directly to its audiences, invite them to engage in dialogue with the narrative, and to participate in it with different acts and performances such as praying, reciting salawat, or crying together.[1379] In the second part of the text, for example, the author invites his listeners to remember God, and to cry and groan for the love of God: "Come with love, let us say Allah/ Let us groan with sorrow and tears"[1380] In the last section narrating the Prophet's death, the text invites the listeners to remember the grievances following the Prophet's death, and to cry together for this painful grief. "This saying is clearly about the death of Mustafa/ When you hear, cry out with 'sigh'/ Shed tears with grief/ Sacrifice your life for his love"[1381]

[1378] See Nutku, *Meddahlık ve Meddah*; Değirmenci, "Spoken Word".
[1379] Bilkan, *Mevlid*, 50–51, 58–61.
[1380] My translation. Ateş, *Vesiletü'n-Necat*, 93.
[1381] My translation. Ibid, 128.

5.4.3 Prayers, preaching and chanting sessions in the mosque

The Friday ritual and the five daily canonical prayers occupied a central place in the ritual calendar of the mosque. The personnel employed in the mosque, and their tasks defined in the endowment deed, provide the most detailed information concerning the Friday ritual and the five daily canonical prayers performed in the mosque. This part of the endowment deed concerning the stipulations on the incumbents and the rituals begins with a definition of the procedures of the Friday ritual, and it demonstrates this ritual's primacy in the mosque's ceremonial program. An unspecified number of people, who included a chief among themselves, were charged with reading the Quran, and another person, *na'tḫān*, was tasked with eulogizing the Prophet Muhammad and prayering for Sultan Ahmed before the Friday ritual. After the chanting of the Quran and prayers, a sweet-voiced and pious preacher delivers the sermon. The document stipulates the preacher to be knowledgeable about the Quranic exegesis and it suggests that the sermons included the interpretations of the Quranic verses and themes.[1382] The Friday sermons were supposed to be delivered in Arabic, as in all Ottoman congregational mosques. A fatwa from the seventeenth century confirms the preachers were expected to have the knowledge of Arabic language, and had to understand the sermons they delivered to the assembly. The chief mufti Çatalcalı Ali Efendi responded to the question negatively, when he was asked whether someone who does not understand the meaning of the sermon he delivers is competent to be a preacher in a mosque.[1383]

The names of two significant preachers appear in the list of employees in the first waqf register, dated to 1617. One is the Celveti sheikh Mahmud Hüdayi, a prominent religious figure of the period, who had a close relationship with the

[1382] TIEM 2184, 40a–43a.
[1383] Demirtaş, *Fetava-yı Ali Efendi*, II, 21–22.

Ottoman court, and personal contacts with Mehmed III, Ahmed I, Osman II and Murad IV, as well as some high-ranking statesmen such Halil Pasha (d. 1629).[1384] His closest affinity was with Ahmed I, who conferred with the sheikh for the interpretation of his dreams, and bestowed him precious gifts and positions in the religious establishments.[1385] He worked as a preacher in the mosque of Mehmed II between 1595 and 1599, and continued to do the same job with the same salary after 1617 in the Sultan Ahmed Mosque.[1386] Katib Çelebi related that Mahmud Hüdayi was preaching in this mosque every Monday.[1387]

The Halveti sheikh[1388] Abdülmecid Sivasi (d. 1639) is another significant name that was mentioned among the employees of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque. His name, Mevlana Şeyh Sivasi Efendi, was recorded as the second preacher of the mosque.[1389] Sivasi was also a very prominent religious figure of the era, who established close contacts with the members of the Ottoman court, including the sultans. He joined the Eger Campaign as the army sheikh in 1595, and worked as a preacher in the selatin mosques in Istanbul, including Hagia Sophia and Şehzade Mosques.[1390] The seventeenth-century biographer Şeyhi related he began to preach every Friday in the mosque of Sultan Ahmed after its opening in 1617 (1026 AH).[1391]

The recruitment of Sufi sheikhs as preachers in the Ottoman mosques was not a new phenomenon in the early seventeenth century. At least from the late fifteenth

[1384] The sheikh consulted the sultans and statesmen in a variety of issues, including esoteric and exoteric religious sciences, and political issues, and became influential in particular political decisions like the assignment of bureaucrats. Baskıcı, "Piety and Politics", 54–69; Tezeren, *Seyyid Aziz Mahmud*, 61–65.
[1385] The ministry of the mosques of Mehmed II, Mihrimah Sultan in Üsküdar, and Sultan Ahmed Mosque was among such prestigious positions, which earned the sheikh a high income. Yılmaz, *Aziz Mahmud Hüdayi*, 58–64; Baskıcı, "Piety and Politics", 69–70.
[1386] Yılmaz, *Aziz Mahmud Hüdayi*, 52–54.
[1387] Katip Çelebi, *Fezleke*, II, 683.
[1388] On the Halvetiyye, see Curry, *Muslim Mystical Tought*; Aydın, *Halveti Tarikatı Şeyhlerinin*; Karataş, "Ottomanization",71–89.
[1389] TMSA D. 481, 1.
[1390] Gündoğdu, *Türk Mutasavvıfı*, 57–64.
[1391] Şeyhi Mehmed Efendi, *Vekayi'ul-Fuzala*, I, 331.

century onwards, several Sufi sheikhs had served as preachers in various Friday mosques in Istanbul and other cities.[1392] The sheikhs of Hüdayi and Sivasi, Sheikh Mehmed Üftade (d. 1580) and Sheikh Şemseddin Sivasi (d. 1597), were also preachers in the mosques.[1393] The period between the late sixteenth and the mid-seventeenth century, however, differed from previous decades in terms of the Sufi-preachers' growing prominence as political commentators penning political advice treatises, and preachers holding positions in the high-ranking mosques of Istanbul.[1394] The commissioning of these two Sufi sheikhs as the highest-ranking employees of a sultanic mosque indicates the continuity of a collaboration between the Ottoman sultans and leaders of particular Sufi orders as religio-political agents. As Tezcan has demonstrated, mosque preachers had a growing impact on the Ottoman society as semi-independent opinion makers beginning from the late sixteenth century,[1395] and as figures with closer relationships with the general public, prominent Sufi figures would serve as alternative and stately sponsored opinion-makers within such an environment. In a similar vein, Gürbüzel defined the

[1392]Although the relationship of various Sufi orders with the Ottoman state was different and could display differences in distinct periods, it can be claimed that at least particular Sufī orders established alliances with the Ottoman state, accepted patronage and positions in the religious-bureaucratic institutions, and were gradually institutionalized throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Halvetis, Nakşibendis and Bayramis (excluding the Hamzavis) had close close affinities with the Ottoman authorities, and in a sense, worked as religio-political agencies in the process of Sunnitization of the Ottoman state and society. Their assignment as mosque preachers was a manifestation of their association with the Ottoman state, as well as their agency as influential religious and political figures in the formation of the Ottoman religious and political spheres. See Terzioğlu, "Sufis", 96; Curry, *Muslim Mystical Thought*, 77.

[1393] Mehmed Üftade worked as a preacher in the Emir Sultan Mosque in Bursa between 1529–1536; while Şemseddin Sivasi served as a preacher in Meydan Mosque in Sivas. See Azamat "Üftade", 282; Aksoy, "Şemseddin Sivasi", 524.

[1394] The studies of Terzioğlu, Gürbüzel and Tezcan shed light on the growing influence of the political agency and influence of Sufi-preachers within the context of the late sixteenth and first half of the seventeenth century. See Terzioğlu, "Sunna-Minded Sufi"; Gürbüzel, "Teachers", 84–125; Tezcan, *Second Ottoman Empire*, 122–128.

[1395] Tezcan, *Second Ottoman Empire*, 122–124.

preachers and Sufi sheikhs of the seventeenth century as intermediaries between the learned and unlearned and between the written and oral cultures.[1396]

The daily working calendar of the mosque's employees shows that in the Sultan Ahmed Mosque, the day began before the morning prayer, and ended after the performance of the night prayer in congregation. The endowment deed reveals that the five daily canonical prayers performed in congregation formed the essential temporal points around which several chanting sessions were programmed. The chanting sessions and sermons formed the appendages of the ritualprayers that enriched the vitality of the mosque's ritual program and probably the number of its visitors. A number of groups of reciters were commissioned with reading the Quranic verses, prayers and invocations before and after the daily canonical prayers.

Three different groups, each involving 30 people, were asked to recite the Quran after the morning, noon and afternoon prayers. In this way, the whole text would be read three times each day before the evening. After the reading was completed, prayers for the soul of Ahmed I would be offered by the chanters, who, according to the document, had to involve a leader among themselves[1397] Another group of 20 people, *tevḥīdḫān*s, should repeat the invocation of *kelime-yi tevḥīd* 3500 times after the morning prayers. This group had to involve a leader too, who was tasked with prayering for the patron's soul after the completion of a specified number of 70,000 invocations every morning.[1398] A different group with 20 people were charged with saying salavat, *ṣalavātḫān*s, a particular formulation of greeting to the Prophet Muhammed, his companions and family, 1000 times after each noon prayer. Similar to the previous group, this one had also to include a leader, who was charged

[1396] Gürbüzel, "Teachers", 38.
[1397] TIEM 2184, 43b–44a.
[1398] Ibid, 44b–45a.

with praying for Sultan Ahmed's soul.[1399] The endowment mentions two *'aşrḫān*s, those who read a few parts from the Quran immediately after the five daily canonical prayers, who should recite Quranic verses after the congregational noon and afternoon prayers, and pray for Ahmed I.[1400] While the document does not specify the Quranic verses that have to be chanted by the *'aşrḫān*s reading a few particular verses was defined as the task of some other employees. One person was charged with chanting the verse of Yasin, *yāsīnḫān*, the 36th verse of the Quran, after the congregational morning prayer while another one, *tebbetḫān*, was tasked with reading the verse of 'Amm, the 78th Quranic verse, after the congregational afternoon prayer.[1401] Another five people, *en'amḫān*s, were commissioned with reading the sixth verse of the Quran each day of the week.[1402] The total number of chanters in the mosque is 139, almost 20 more chanters than those in the Süleymaniye Mosque.[1403] This indicates that the gradual increase in the number of chanters in the sultanic Friday mosques in Istanbul continued and peaked in the Sultan Ahmed Mosque.

Prayers performed in congregation in the Sultan Ahmed Mosque were not limited to Friday and the five daily canonical prayers. Performing particular supererogatory prayers in mosques with congregation was an already established tradition before the seventeenth century. The custom of Istanbul's denizens of convening in royal mosques and performing supererogatory prayers in congregation in *ḳandīl* nights[1404] seems to have continued in the seventeenth century Ottoman mosques, including the Sultan Ahmed Mosque. Unfortunately, there is no mention of

[1399] Ibid, 45b–46a.
[1400] Ibid, 46b–47a.
[1401] Ibid, 47a–47b.
[1402] Ibid, 48b.
[1403] See Chapter III, 144.
[1404] See Chapter III, 144–145.

congregational performance of supererogatory prayers within the context of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque in the seventeenth century, but the evidence indicates the significance of the special nights and implies the existence of special rituals within the mosque. Abdülkadir Efendi indicated that in 1617 (1026 AH), Sultan Ahmed performed the *terāvīḥ* prayers in seclusion every night in his mosque.[1405] Despite the lack of any reference to *berāt*, *reġāib* and *mi'rāc* nights within the context of the mosque, the endowment deed mentions these nights among special occasions in which the visitors of the public kitchen were served *zerde,* a dessert that was offered in the *'imāret* merely on religiously significant days. This suggests that the *ḳandīl* nights were among the special days in the calendar of the Sultan Ahmed complex, and it is reasonable to assume that the mosque also witnessed additional religious performances.

Debates concerning the legitimacy of the congregational performance of supererogatory prayers also confirm the popularity of these rituals within the context of the first half of the seventeenth century. The Kadızadelis defined the congregational performance of the *berāt*, *reġāib* and *mi'rāc* prayers in mosques as an ugly innovation (*bid'at*), and challenged those who performed these rituals within the context of the mid-seventeenth century.[1406] It is reasonable to assume that the intensity of the Kadızadeli opposition was directly proportional to the prevalence of the congregational performance of some supererogatory prayers in *ḳandīl* nights. Fetvas from the period display that despite the Kadızadeli opposition, these rituals kept their currency in the Ottoman society, and were deemed as legitimate by the religious authorities. Two fetvas issued by the chief mufti Esad Efendi attest to the congregational performance of some supererogatory prayers in *ḳandīl* nights as a

[1405] Abülkadir Efendi, *Topçular Katibi*, I, 655, 664.
[1406] See Terzioğlu, "Bidat, Custom"; Bilkan, *Sofularla Fakihlerin Kavgası*, 160–161.

popular legal question within the context of the early seventeenth century. Both questions query the legitimacy of congregational performance of *reġāib* and *mi'rāc* prayers. The chief mufti confirmed the legitimacy of these prayers' congregational performance. [1407]A fatwa issued by Zekeriyazade Yahya Efendi constitutes another example of the same phenomenon. He replies the question positively when he was asked about the legitimacy of the congregational performance of the *berāt*, *reġāib* and *mi'rāc* prayers in the mosques:

> Question: Is it legitimate for the imams to lead he *reġāib* prayers on the first Friday of the month of Rajab; the berat prayers on the fifteenth night of the month of Shaban the *ḳadir* prayers on the twenty-seventh night of the holy Ramadan, and the *tesbīḥ* prayers in congregation?
> Answer: It is legitimate, and it is performed as usual... (As was endorsed by Ebussuud).[1408]

5.4.4 The sultanic and courtly processions

The Friday rituals constituted the primary occasions of the sultanic visits to the Sultan Ahmed Mosque. Both the founder of the mosque and his successors frequented the mosque on Fridays with spectacular processions. From the beginning of his reign, Friday processions occupied a central place in Sultan Ahmed's ceremonial agenda, and in accordance with his ceremonial policy, they had an overwhelmingly spectacular character. Rüstem has incisively argued that during the reign of Ahmed I, the Friday processions 'had been restored to its full splendor'.[1409] Before the construction of his mosque, he visited the sultanic mosques for the performance of the Friday rituals. Mustafa Safi related that on the first Friday after his enthronement, the sultan went to the Süleymaniye Mosque with a majestic

[1407] Esad Efendi, *Feteva-yı Müntehibe*, 4b.
[1408] Demirtaş, *Açıklamalı Osmanlı Fetvaları*, II, 62.
[1409] Rüstem, "Architecture", 186.

procession of soldiers (*mevkıb-ı pür-ḥaşmet ve 'asker-i bā-şevket*).[1410] According to Sandys' account, the sultan most frequently visited Hagia Sophia on Fridays.[1411] One of these Friday processions described by him sheds light on the order and spectacle of Sultan Ahmed's parades:

> When he goes abroad, which is lightly every Friday (besides at other times upon other occasions) into the Mosque, and when in state; there is not in the world to be scene a greater spectacle of humane glory, and if (so may I speake) of sublimated manhood. For although (as has been said) the Temple of Sancta Sophia which he most frequently frequents is not above a stone caft from the outmost gate of the Seraglio, yet hath he not so few as a thousand horse (besides the arches of his guard and other footmen) in that short procession: the way on each side inclosed as well within as without with *Capagies* and *Ianizaries*, in their fearlet gownes, and particular head ornaments. The *Chauses* ride formost with their gilded maces; then the captaines of the *Ianizaries* with their *Aga*; next the Chieftaines of the *Soachies*; after them the *Sanziaks*: those of the souldierie wearing in the fronts of their bonnets the feathers of the birds of Paradise, brought out of Arabia, and by some esteemed the Phoenix. Then the flow of *Baffos* and *Beglerbegs*: after them the Pretorian footmen called *Solachi*, whereof there be in number three hundred. There are attired in calsouns and smocks of callico, wearing nomore over them then halfe-fleeued coates of crimson damask, the skirts tuckt under their girdles: having plumes of feathers in the top of their coppet bannets; bearing quiuers at their backs, with bowes ready bent in their left hands, and arrows in their right: gliding along with a marvellous celerity. After them seven or nine goodly horses are led, having caparisons and trappings inestimable value; followed by the idiolized *sultan* gallantly mounted.[1412]

Sandy's depiction of the sultan's procession clearly reflects the impressiveness of the event and its effect on a foreign audience. For sure, he was not the only onlooker of the procession for it took place in the junction of the two most central promenades of the city, Atmeydanı and Divanyolu, and must have been viewed by crowded local and foreign audiences from different classes. The diversity and crowd of his soldiers, who were carrying various impressive military costumes and equipment, would function as a show displaying the wealth and power of the

[1410] Mustafa Safi, *Mustafa Safi'nin*, I, 19–20.
[1411] Sandys, *Relation*, 32.
[1412] Ibid, 75–76.

sultan and his army. This show off would have had a specific significance within the context of the lack of a real military victory gained by an army led by the sultan. Similar to his public hunting expeditions and the feasts in his mosque's construction place, the sultan's Friday processions had a martial aspect that would implicitly express his martial competence and strength, and compensate his military defects in the public eye. Unfortunately, there is no detailed account of Ahmed's Friday processions to his mosque, which is not surprising if the shortness of time between the opening of his mosque and the sultan's death is taken into consideration. It can be assumed that the few parades to his own mosque were of a similar fashion with his parades to Hagia Sophia on Fridays. The sultan's pompous procession to the mosque from the Topkapı Palace on the day of the dome closing ceremony, which has been described before, confirms this suggestion.

The Sultan Ahmed Mosque did not constitute the range of merely sultanic processions, but also a destination in some other parades such those of foreign ambassadors, or of the high-ranking members of the Ottoman court. The construction of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque seems to have added an alternative processional route between Divanyolu and the Topkapı Palace, which seems to have been used occasionally. Mustafa Safi related that the Safavid envoys, who arrived at Istanbul on September 22, 1612, were welcomed in Üsküdar by a crowded assembly involving the grand vizier Nasuh Pasha, viziers and ulama, and then taken to the Topkapı Palace with a procession passing through the construction of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque, from beneath the pavilion erected by the sultan.[1413] For sure, the use of this route for the ambassadorial procession aimed to show the construction of a new sultanic mosque to the Safavid guests. Nasuh Pasha's marriage that occurred in the

[1413] Mustafa Safi, *Mustafa Safi'nin*, II, 144.

same year constitutes another example. As a part of the festivities, the chief black eunuch, harem eunuchs, halberdiers and other soldiers paraded to the Topkapı palace with a spectacular procession passing through the construction of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque.[1414] It is uncertain whether these elite processions remained as occasional events within the context of the mosque's construction process that were introduced to display the construction and increasing the human traffic around it, or continued as a trend in the following years and decades.

5.4.5 The public and the mosque

Accounts concerning daily life in the mosque and the ordinary people's presence in it suggest that the mosque of Sultan Ahmed was among the most attractive and popular mosques of Istanbul. In the seventeenth century, Evliya Çelebi mentioned the crowd of the congregations in the Sultan Ahmed Mosque a few times. He related that sometimes the congregation convened in the mosque became very crowded so that people had to perform their prayers in the galleries (*dehlīzler*) and open places (*ṣaṭıḥlār*) in the two sides of the mosque's outer courtyard.[1415] In pharanthesis, we learn from the two fatwas issued by Esad Efendi that it was permitted to perform the five daily canonical prayers in congregation in the mosque's courtyard.[1416] This suggests that the forecourt and outer courtyard of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque could also have served as grounds for the daily obligatory prayers. The emergence of *mükebbire*s in the portico can also be related to this practice. Evliya further indicated that night and day, the upper galleries of the mosque were full of the poor from India and Uzbekistan.[1417] Similarly, the eighteenth-century writer Ayvansarayi related that

[1414] Abülkadir Efendi, *Topçular Katibi*, I, 621–623.
[1415] Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi*, I, 101.
[1416] Esad Efendi, *Feteva-yı Müntehibe*, 3a–3b.
[1417] Ibid, 101.

the mosque of Ahmed I was the most famous mosque of the capital city after Hagia Sophia, which became very crowded during the eids, and on the day of the *mevlid* ceremony.[1418]

The people who took part in the Friday rituals, five daily canonical prayers and other religious ceremonies in the Sultan Ahmed Mosque were predominantly Muslim men. According to Sandys, the women of Istanbul did not have the permission to come to mosques, although they could secretly look through the gates of these sanctuaries.[1419] Fetvas from the seventeenth century, which discouraged young women from participating in the five daily canonical prayers in mosques, attest to the same phenomenon. For example, the chief mufti Feyzullah Efendi did not permit the visit of females to mosques for performing the five daily canonical prayers in congregation unless they were old women.[1420]

Religious rituals do not seem to have constituted the only social events that attracted the visitors' attention. The mosque was perceived as a promenade for its seventeenth-century audiences. Cafer Çelebi indicated that 'the noble mosque and pleasant sanctuary are as an excursion spot' and 'the sacred excursion spot is like a rose garden.'[1421] The forecourts and outer courts of the sultanic mosques of Istanbul functioned and were regarded as maydans with various trees and flowers, where Muslim males convened for socialization and conversation.[1422] As a sultanic mosque, the Sultan Ahmed Mosque seems to have continued this custom, and its spatial integrity with Atmeydanı, one of the most central excursion places in Istanbul,

[1418] Ayvansarayi, *Hadikatü'l-Cevami*, 60.
[1419] Sandys, *Relation*, 55.
[1420] Kaya, *Feteva-yı Feyziye*, 8.
[1421] Cafer Efendi, *Risale-yi Mimariyye*, 66, 73.
[1422] See Uğurlu, "İstanbul Halkının". In the sixteenth century, Hierosolimitono asserted that there were several maydans in Istanbul, the majority of which were situated in front of sultanic mosques, those of Süleymaniye and Bayezid II having priority among them. Hierosolimitono, Yahudi Doktor'un, 57. Similarly, Evliya Çelebi counted the maydans of Süleymaniye, Selimiye, Valide Mosque, and Ebu'l-Feth among the most famous squares of Istanbul. Evliya Çelebi, Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi, I, 237.

should have augmented its social traffic as a promenade. As much as its vast and green courtyards, both the exterior and interior spaces of the sanctuary were designed in a way to offer a multi-sensorial aesthetic experience to its audiences, as has been already demonstrated by Fetvacı.[1423]

The grandiosity of the mosque's decoration and furnishings, and the rhythm and harmony in its architectural and spatial configuration shows a concern for creating an eye-pleasing space. Along with its luxury furnishings and decoration, brightness was among the most praised features of the mosque, which was mentioned in the endowment deed, and some contemporary descriptions of the edifice. Besides various kinds of lamps illuminating the interior, the adornment of the mosque's minarets with thousands of oil lamps, *ḳandīl*s, at nights during the Ramadan attracted the contemporaries' attention. According to Evliya Çelebi, during the Ramadan, the mosque's six minarets were illuminated with 12,000 oil lamps, which made the minarets look like cypresses made of light.[1424] The brightness of the edifice's interior, and the illumination of the whole building at night must have heightened the visibility of the monument's eye-pleasing architectural and decorative elements during day and night.

Despite the more general tendency of the Ottoman architectural historians to focus overwhelmingly on the visual and spatial aspects of the monuments, the auditory and olfactory dimensions of the Ottoman mosques have begun to attract the attention of the scholars within the last decades. In various publications, Ergin has demonstrated the importance of sound in the Islamicate cultures, the audial aspects of Muslim worship, and the Ottoman mosques' sonic dimensions.[1425] The architectural-

[1423] Fetvacı, "Music, Light", 228.
[1424] Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi*, I, 102.
[1425] Ergin, "Soundscapes", 204, and "Multi-Sensorial Message",105–118.

structural elements generating acoustic effects, and the intensity of the recital practices attest the centrality of audiary experience in the architectural designs and social-ritual agendas of the sixteenth century mosques in Istanbul. The domical compositions with half-domes, exedras, and smaller lateral domes, inserted fenestration in the walls, the application of sound-reflective tiles in the walls and sound-absorbing horasan plaster to the domes were among architectural measures taken for maximizing the mosques' acoustic qualities within the context of the sixteenth century.[1426] With its domical configuration, multiple fenestration, and tile decorations, the Sultan Ahmed Mosque features the same architectural elements augmenting its acoustic qualities. The use of various types of marbles with different sound-reflecting features was among such elements. Cafer Çelebi described this feature of the mosque's marbles as follows:

> Do you not see how under the pickaxe the marble makes the noble sound *huve,* which is the exalted name and third person pronoun for God-whose name be exalted, may His glory be praised and His power be universal? Like the sound made by sufis and dervishes when attaining a state of rapture and ecstasy with the *sema'* such sounds also come from the marble which is being dressed…When looking at this noble building, I saw twelve types of marble. From each marble a different sound or type of melodic mode is produced. From the types of sounds of the twelve marbles I observed in the same manner twelve modes.[1427]

The significance of the audible experience is also reflected in the intensity and frequency of the vocal practices inside the sanctuary, which were discussed in the previous pages. The endowment deed stipulates that *ḥüffāẓ* and reciters of the Quran have to be knowledgeable in *ḳıra'āt ve tilāvet*, reading the Quran rhythmically, and the eulogizers of the Prophet Muhammed and the *mu'arrīf* should have a nice voice.[1428] This indicates a concern for creating an appealing vocal

[1426] Ergin, "Soundscapes", 214.
[1427] Cafer Efendi, *Risale-yi Mimariyye*, 68.
[1428] TIEM 2184, 41a, 41b, 42b, 43b, 48b.

performance for the audiences of these sessions. In his poem penned for praising the Sultan Ahmed Mosque, Cafer Çelebi compared the nice voice of a *ḥāfīẓ* in the mosque to that of a nightingale of a rose garden,[1429] and this exemplifies the appreciation of vocal performances in the mosque by the contemporary audiences. In addition to the nice voices of the chanters, the same author appreciated the sound of water flowing from the mosque's fountain, and resembled it to the voice of a caged nightingale: "The spouted fountain is a caged nightingale /For, like the nightingale, it continually produces a pleasing sound."[1430]

The mosque of Sultan Ahmed also offered olfactory and haptic aesthetic experiences to its audiences. The scent of various trees, plants and flowers in the outer courtyard was praised by Evliya Çelebi, who indicated that the crowded assembly convened in the sanctuary was attracted by the fragrance of the trees and flowers grown in the garden in front of the mihrab wall.[1431] The incense burned in the luxury censers was another source of fragrance. The mosque had luxury incense burners among its furnishings, and it was a part of particular rituals and festive events to burn different fragrant incense in the censers within the edifice. Both in the larger Mediterranean and Islamicate cultures, incense was regarded as a symbol of divine presence and functioned as a purificator substance within the context of religious sanctuaries.[1432] As a part of both traditions, it was an established Ottoman custom to perfume the spaces of worship with sweet smells and fragrances on holy days, including the two Eids and Fridays, with the purpose of sanctifying and purifying these sanctuaries.[1433]

[1429] Cafer Efendi, *Risale-yi Mimariyye*, 65.
[1430] Ibid, 73.
[1431] Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi*, I, 101.
[1432] Hedrick and Ergin, "Shared Culture", 333–334.
[1433] Ibid, 331.

The freshness of the air and the breeze at the mosque's site were equally appreciated by the same audiences, which appealed to their senses of touch and smell at the same time. Cafer Çelebi eulogized the air and breeze of the building spot as follows: "This abode became pleasant and airy like paradise/ From time to time the gentle morning breezes visit it."[1434] Similarly, the anonymous writer of the *Tarīḫ -i Bīnā-yı Cāmi'-i Sultān Aḥmed-i Evvel*, praised the pleasant breeze in the mosque, and the taste of its water, which also indicates the total effect of various sensory experiences in the mosque, rendering the sanctuary into a paradisial garden: "You would think its delicious water and its pure perfumed breeze/ The pureness of the spring of Kawthar and the air of the Paradise of Refuge."[1435] The fragrance of the burned incense, and the flowers, the floral images appearing on different surfaces, and the taste of delicious water and the fresh breeze together created an effect of a garden inside the prayer hall. This effect should have augmented the sanctuary's resemblance to a paradisial garden, as one manifestation of the divine that are promised to the worshippers. As Ergin aptly puts it, 'hearing, seeing, feeling, smelling, and taking part in these aspects would lead to an experience greater than the sum of the separate sensory perceptions; ideally it would lead to a multi-sensorial experience of the divine.'[1436]

One last point regarding the social context of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque is its usage as a venue of gathering and negotiation in some significant political events of the early seventeenth century. As Fikret Yılmaz and Gülay Yılmaz have already indicated, the classical social spaces of the early modern Istanbul, including mosques, dervish convents, bazaars and public baths, witnessed an increase in social

[1434] Cafer Efendi, *Risale-yi Mimariyye*, 66.
[1435] Rüstem, "Spectacle of Legitimacy", 341.
[1436] Ergin, "Soundscapes", 214.

and political conversation, in concordance with the emergence of new socio-political places like coffeehouses, and of new ways of socialization involving political actions of all kinds.[1437] As a part of this phenomenon, particular mosques in Istanbul, including those of Mehmed II, Bayezid II, and Sultan Ahmed, and the Orta Cami near the Etmeydanı, appeared as scenes of significant political activity. Along with this enlargement of the political sphere in general, the increasing significance of the religious scholars, bureaucrats and students as political actors seems to have had a considerable influence on the appearance of mosques as vital centers of political activity.[1438] Different mosques were associated with particular groups probably because of the spatial connection and proximity between the residential or working places of these groups with the mentioned mosques. For example, the mosque of Mehmed II was a gathering place of the high-ranking members of the ulama, and the Orta Cami near the Etmeydanı emerged as a venue associated with the Janissaries.[1439]

The Sultan Ahmed Mosque did also become a scene for different political events within the context of the seventeenth century.[1440] On the first day of the revolt in 1622, which ended with the murder of Osman II, this mosque served as a point of consultancy and negotiation between the rebellious and the sultan's deputies, namely the high-ranking religious bureaucrats and scholars. Tugi related these scholars entered the mosque of Sultan Ahmed on their horses, and dismounted when they arrived at the sanctuary, where they came together with a group of soldiers among the rebels, and listened to their demands in order to convey them to the sultan.[1441]

[1437] Yılmaz, "Siyaset, İsyan", 130, 133; Yılmaz, "Urban Protests", 569.
[1438] Yılmaz, "Siyaset, İsyan", 133.
[1439] Ibid, Yılmaz, "Urban Protests", 569.
[1440] For some different examples other than discussed here, see Yılmaz, "Urban Protests", 572–573.
[1441] Tugi, *Musibetname*, 36–38.

The proximity of the mosque to the Topkapı Palace, as the center of the court, and Atmeydanı, as one basis of the rebels, must have played the most significant role in the preference of this place as the venue of negotiation between two sides. An attempt for a political uprising occurred on March 1632, when a group of soldiers gathered near the Topkapı Palace to demand the murder of Defterdar Mustafa Pasha (d. 1656). Naima indicated the rebels were settled in the Sultan Ahmed Mosque and the shops in the region due to heavy snow.[1442]Another such event occurred on January 6, 1632, when a group of sipahis convened in the courtyard of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque for demanding their rights from the grand vizier Tabanı Yassı Mehmed Pasha (d. 1639). Before this event, the same group of sipahis came together in the Okmeydanı, and conveyed their demands concerning an issue about their residential places to the grand vizier. Upon the rejection of their submission, they convened in the Sultan Ahmed Mosque,[1443] which was one of the closest spots to the Topkapı Palace, and gave one the chance of being seen and heard by the court, as well as the public. In 1648, the Sultan Ahmed Mosque was chosen as the venue of another group of rebels who attempted to dethrone Sultan İbrahim, and demanded Şehzade Mehmed to be brought to the Sultan Ahmed Mosque for the ceremony of allegiance.[1444]

5.4.6 Social life and rituals in other parts of the complex

Constituting the edifice with the most crowded personnel after the Friday mosque, the mausoleum of Ahmed I appears to have had a defined daily ritualistic schedule. An account register provides clues concerning some daily rituals occurring in the

[1442] Naima, *Tarih-i Naima*, III, 710.
[1443] Ibid, 717.
[1444] Ibid, 1187.

tomb. According to the document, parts of the Quran were read by three groups of reciters, each with 30 people after the morning, noon and afternoon prayers. The existence of eulogizers of God and Prophet Muhammad among the incumbents displays repetitive invocations were also a part of the daily ritualistic routine in the mausoleum of Ahmed I. Times and numbers of these invocations were not defined in the document. Concordant with the common Ottoman-Islamic tradition, the Quran and particular invocations were read for the soul of the deceased sultan at his burial site. The endowment deed of the Süleymaniye complex, which defined the daily tasks of several chanters in Sultan Süleyman's mausoleum, suggests that there was a more or less defined custom concerning these daily chanting sessions. Similar to the chanters of Sultan Ahmed's mausoleum, three groups of Quran chanters, each with 30 people, were tasked with reading parts of the Quran after morning, noon and night prayers.[1445] The existence of several Quran manuscripts in the mausoleum confirms the centrality of chanting sessions in the mausoleum. Similarly, the existence of some incense burners in the tomb shows that the mausoleum was a perfumed regularly or occasionally.

The mausoleum of Sultan Ahmed became the subject of visits offered by the members of the Ottoman dynasty and common people. Evliya Çelebi named the mausoleum of Ahmed I as a place of visit, *ziyāretgāh*, a common denomination for tombs and burial sites of significant people, which were visited frequently.[1446] Sultanic processional visits to successive dynastic tombs, which occurred after enthronement of new sultans and before or after other significant occasions,[1447] continued in this period, too. Topçular Katibi recounted that Osman II offered an

[1445] Yılmaz, *Kanuni Vakfiyesi*, 162.
[1446] Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi*, I, 171.
[1447] Necipoğlu, "Dynastic Imprints".

occasional visit to his ancestors' mausolea in April, 1621 (Jumada al-Ahir 1030 AH).[1448] The visit of Murad IV to dynastic tombs after his girding ceremony on August 20, 1623 (23 Shavval 1032 AH) in the Eyüp Shrine was also among such occasions.[1449] According to Evliya Çelebi, in 1631–32, the same sultan visited the tombs of his ancestors, including those of Mehmed II, Şehzade Mehmed, Bayezid II and Ahmed I, after he performed the Friday ritual.[1450]

The neighbouring buildings of Sultan Ahmed's mausoleum, the hadith college, Quran recitation school, and primary school, probably had a more limited habitué. Forming primarily educational foundations, these edifices were intended to serve students and their educators. It is not clear whether visiting these foundations was permissible for those who were not students, educators, and incumbents working in these buildings. In the endowment deed, the total number of students in the primary school is defined as 30, which were given lessons by a teacher (*mu'allīm*), accompanied by an assistant (*ḫalīfe*).[1451] The teacher's responsibility was defined as teaching the Quran (*ta'līm-i Kitāb-ı Mübīn*) to children, and that of his assistant was to help him with this task.[1452] The endowment deeds of some earlier royal mosques, including those of Bayezid II, Sultan Süleyman and Nurbanu Sultan, define teaching how to read and write, how to perform the five daily canonical prayers, and the moral codes of the society and instructing the Quranic knowledge as teachers' responsibilities.[1453] Most probably, the teacher in Sultan Ahmed's primary school was also responsible for the same tasks.

[1448] Abdülkadir Efendi, *Topçular Katibi*, II, 763.
[1449] Ibid, 1135.
[1450] Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi*, I, 114.
[1451] TIEM 2184, 50b–51a.
[1452] Ibid, 51b.
[1453] Akakuş, "İstanbul'da Sultan", 33; Yılmaz, *Kanuni Vakfiyesi*, 152; Sabırlı, *Afife Nurbanu Valide*, 85.

According to the endowment deed, the hadith college had a smaller number of students, 15, along with one professor (*müderris*), an assistant (*mu'īd*), a doorkeeper (*bevvāb*) and a cleaner (*ferrāş*). Stipulations concerning the quate of professors and students in royal madrasas, which were mentioned in the endowment deeds of earlier sultanic madrasas, suggest the existence of a defined contingent for these positions in all sultanic madrasas in Istanbul. Each of the multiple madrasas in the complexes of Mehmed II and Sultan Süleyman had also one professor and 15 students.[1454]

Hadith colleges were higher education institutions for advanced students who sought to specialize in hadith studies. After the mid-sixteenth century, the number of hadith colleges erected by the members of the Ottoman court increased,[1455] concordant with the greater significance attached to hadith studies.[1456] Beginning with the Süleymaniye complex, hadith colleges began to appear as parts of royal complexes. The mosque complexes of Selim II in Edirne and Nurbanu Sultan in Üsküdar had also hadith colleges.[1457] Scholars contend that, in the early modern period, Ottoman these colleges did not have fixed syllabi. Along with canonized Sunni compilations, including *Saḥiḥ-i Buḥārī*, *Saḥiḥ-i Muslīm*, *Mesābīḥ al-Sünne* and *Meşāriḳ al-Envār*, texts on hadith methodology appear to have been studied in the Ottoman hadith colleges.[1458] The endowment deed of the Sultan Ahmed complex stipulates that the professor has to be an expert on *Saḥiḥ-i Buḥārī* and *Saḥiḥ-i Muslīm*, suggesting that these two canonical texts were among the books taught in

[1454] *Fatih Sultan Mehmed Vakfiyeleri*, 52–53; Yılmaz, *Kanuni Vakfiyesi*, 164, 275.
[1455] Yardım, "Anadolu Selçukluları", 531.
[1456] Pfeifer, "New Hadith Culture".
[1457] Yardım, "Anadolu Selçukluları", 531.
[1458] Karacabey, "Osmanlı Medreselerinde"; Ayaz, "Hadis İlimlerinin Tedrisatı"; Yardım, "Anadolu Selçukluları".

Sultan Ahmed's hadith college.[1459] Students who took lessons on the science of hadith from their professor during daytime were each given a room in the edifice. Along with providing accommodation, the sultan's endowment handled the nourishment of students[1460] who were eating in the public kitchen.

The number of students, teacher/s and incumbents of the Quran recitation school was not defined in the endowment deed. Accounting registers of the endowment display that one of the prayer leaders of the congregational mosque was tasked as a teacher in this school at the same time, but there is no mention of any other official or student in the earliest waqf documents. Interestingly, the endowment deeds of earlier sultanic complexes do not involve any information concerning the personnel or contingents of earlier sultanic Quran recitation schools. On the other hand, Nurbanu Sultan's waqfiyyah mentions an employee, *şeyḫü'l-ḳurrā*, whose responsibility was defined as teaching methods of chanting the Quran to 12 *ḥüffāẓ*, 4 days a week.[1461] This endowment from the late sixteenth century provides an example of the running of a royal Quran recitation schools within the period in which Sultan Ahmed's Quran recitation school was established.

The public kitchen and hospital were erected to offer food and medical treatment to those who otherwise could not afford these services. The public kitchen had crowded personnel, who worked for the service of daily two meals. Although it seems impossible to determine the exact number of its diners, probably hundreds of people were offered food in this foundation. Evliya Çelebi reported that in the sultanic public kitchens of Istanbul, various people, including poor, young, old, and passers by, were served bread and soup every day.[1462] As one of these foundations,

[1459] TIEM 2184, 51b.
[1460] Ibid, 52a–54b.
[1461] Sabırlı, *Afife Nurbanu Valide*, 84.
[1462] Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi*, I, 153.

the public kitchen of Ahmed I must have served to the same clientele, besides the madrasa students and some incumbents of the congregational mosque.

Sultan Ahmed's public kitchen offered different menus to different visitors on daily, weekly and annual bases. The contents and quantities of each menu, and of the nutritions used in the preparation of meals, were defined in the endowment deed. Accordingly, the daily menu of the public kitchen comprised rice, mutton and wheat bread. The document specifies neither the meals that were prepared with these nutritions, or the number of daily meals. It is known that the Ottoman public kitchens, including those established by the sultans, offered two meals each day, one in the morning and one in the afternoon.[1463] As a part of this tradition, the *'imāret* of Ahmed I should have given two meals each day. The contents of these two meals can also be suggested, looking at the daily menus of other contemporary sultanic public kitchens, which consisted of soup, meat and rice or wheat dish. It seems the recipients were also given some piece of wheat bread as a part of their meals. Combining the most basic form of food, soup and bread,[1464] with a relatively more luxury nutrient, meat,[1465] the sultanic public kitchens, including that of Ahmed I, offered a balanced and symbolic daily menu. As Singer aptly put it, soup was both a symbolic and real dish, representing 'the most basic form of nourishment, the minimal meal of subsistence, and the food which even the poor could aspire

[1463] Ergin, Neumann and Singer, "Introduction"; Ünver, *Fatih Aşhanesi Tevzinamesi*; Akakuş, "İstanbul'da Sultan", 36.
[1464] Singer, *Ottoman Benevolence*, 59.
[1465] The recruitment of meat and wheat for Istanbul, Edirne and Bursa, and the arrangement of fixed prices for these nourishments was the sultan's responsibility in the Ottoman empire. Since the state controlled the stocks and prices of the meat, it was accessible and affordable for the majority of the capital city's denizens. Still, in comparison with soup and bread, it was an expensive food, and especially for the majority of the people from lower classes, who ate from the public kitchens, it was a considerably expensive nutrient. Pedani demonstrated that around 1640, the price of meat was about ninefold of bread's price. Yerasimos, *Sultan Sofraları*, 48–49; Pedani, *Osmanlı'nın Büyük Mutfağı*,123; Ünsal, *İstanbul'un Lezzet Tarihi*, 65.

daily.'[1466] The same is valid also for bread. The choice of these two basic foods for a menu offered by the sultan implicitly conveys the message that the sultan provides the most basic needs of his subject, who literally eats the sultan's bread in his *'imāret*.

The neighbouring building of the public kitchen, the hospital, contrasted with the *'imāret* in terms of the number and density of its clientele. In contrast to the vitality of the public kitchen, the hospital seems to have served a limited number of people, if its spatial and organizational limits are taken into consideration. Evliya Çelebi indicated that Sultan Ahmed's hospital was the favorite of Istanbul's denizens, who brought poor and ill people to this foundation for healing, since its endowment is stronger than the others, it had a fresher air, and more compassionate and kinder incumbents. If we compare the personnel of Sultan Ahmed's public hospital to those of Mehmed II and Sultan Süleyman, as given in their endowment deeds, however, it appears that the number of the employees in Sultan Ahmed's public hospital was fewer that those hired in earlier royal public hospitals. The hospital of Mehmed II had two physicians and a surgeon[1467] while three physicians, six eye doctors, a surgeon, and a few pharmaceutists were hired in that of Sultan Süleyman.[1468] On the other hand, Sultan Ahmed's endowment mentions merely one physician as the hospital's personnel.[1469] It is possible that in the mid-seventeenth century, when Evliya eulogized Sultan Ahmed's hospital and endowment, the number of this public hospital's doctors and incumbent was increased. Another possibility is that it was not the number or competence of the hospital's personnel, but their kind attitudes mentioned by Evliya that made this foundation favorable for

[1466] Singer, *Ottoman Benevolence*, 59.
[1467] *Fatih Sultan Mehmed Vakfiyeleri*, 53–54.
[1468] Yılmaz, *Kanuni Vakfiyesi*, 314–318.
[1469] TIEM 2184, 56a.

Istanbul's denizens. Evliya added that the chief black eunuch, as the waqf's administrator, frequently visited the patients in this edifice.[1470] It seems the foundation's physical proximity to the palace rendered it into the subject of more frequent visits and supervision by the administrators, chief black eunuchs, who were based in the Topkapı Palace.

Lastly, shops, coffeehouse, fountains, and the public bath placed on different locations around the congregational mosque formed the complex's most open spaces in social terms. Commercial buildings, public baths and fountains of Ottoman Istanbul constituted social places that were open to all people with different religious, social and ethnic affiliations. Curiously, the known seventeenth century narrative sources and travelogues provide no account of the shops, fountains and public bath of Ahmed I, but it can be suggested that they featured the same characteristic with other commercial and public spaces in the city, and functioned as gathering places for people from different classes. In her investigation of the guilds of seventeenth century Istanbul, Eunjeong Yi determined that the formation of a vital commercial life in the arasta bazaar took time, and a considerable number of the complex's shops were still empty in 1618. This study also reveals that at least a part of the shops in the arasta bazaar were rented to shoemakers, who were gradually, and forcefully, moved to this bazaar with a sultanic order issued by Osman II.[1471] Once established, this bazaar area must have formed a third social hub around the congregational mosque, along with Atmeydanı and the mosque's northern façade, whose vitality was intended to be augmented with the addition of shops, rooms and fountains on their edges.

[1470] Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi*, I, 153.
[1471] Yi, *Guild Dynamics*, 232.

5.5. Conclusion

Having investigated the architectural, spatial, and ritualistic formation of the Sultan Ahmed complex, this chapter leads to several conclusions. First, Sultan Ahmed's construction project on Atmeydanı enabled the sultan to display his ability to organize and control a huge and diverse body of human and material sources at one of the main public and ceremonial hubs of the Ottoman capital. For more than a decade, Atmeydanı witnessed the transfer of different building materials and workmen of various origins from varying distances, and these attested to Sultan Ahmed's possession of a vast material and human wealth under his sovereignty. Further, the project's high-ranking staff mirrored the patronage and power relations in the early seventeenth-century Ottoman court. The choice of two prominent favorites in the sultan's court, the chief black eunuch Mustafa Agha and Kalender Efendi, as the most high-ranking functionaries in the construction project speaks for and confirms the increasing significance and centrality of favorites in the early seventeenth-century Ottoman court.

Second, the Sultan Ahmed complex does not have a loose arrangement, as has generally been argued in the scholarship. A concern for defining the edges of Atmeydanı, and for creating social hubs with different functional affinities in the northern and eastern edges of the mosque played a significant role in the spatial arrangement of the complex. While educational buildings and the tomb of the founder were aligned to the northern façade of the complex the public kitchen and hospital were put together as philanthropic institutions on the southern edge of Atmeydanı. Social and commercial buildings of the complex concentrated on the eastern side of the congregational mosque, and formed a third social center around the sanctuary. A concern for defining the edges of Atmeydanı, and for creating social

hubs in the northern and eastern edges of the mosque played a significant role in the spatial arrangement of the complex. The spatial and architectural layouts of each building of the complex and their façade designs reflect a concern for integrating the edifices into the mentioned social centers around the complex.

Presenting spectacular views for those who approach the monument from Atmeydanı, Topkapı Palace, Marmara Sea and Divanyolu constitutes one of the most remarkable features of the Friday mosque, which was created as a variation of the central plan-type with a monumental dome, multiple minarets, and a predeeding courtyard. In terms of its general design, the monument can be regarded as part of an architectural tradition of the sultanic congregational mosques built after the mid-fifteenth century. The extraordinary extension of the outer side galleries, the increase of the minarets' number to six, an augmented theatricality and symmetry in the designs of the outer façades and the pyramidal superstructure, and a more ornate decoration and elaborate furnishings constitute the monument's distinctive features, which differentiate it from the previous sultanic mosques in Istanbul. I have argued that all these distinctive features were related to a concern for creating theatrical and dynamic views of the sanctuary from different processional routes and its neighbouring promenades, and for designing an ornate and theatrical setting for elaborated and canonized religious ceremonials, including the Friday processions and *mevlid* rituals.

I have contended that the emergence of an extravagant architectural and decorative language in Sultan Ahmed's mosque was concomitant, and related with the refashioning of the Friday processions as a spectacular courtly event, and the canonization of *mevlid* ceremonies as an official courtly ritual held in the sanctuary. Further, I have argued that these ceremonials' prominence manifested the sultan's

promotion of Sunni orthopraxy and orthodoxy. While Friday processions made the sultan's attention to performing the Friday ritual visible, the *mevlid* ceremonies exhibited his embrace of Sunni Islam through the commemoration and praise of the Prophet Muhammad. In this sense, especially the *mevlid* ritual had a confessional ethos, which was also visible in the mosque's epigraphic program and furnishings. Besides the significance of the five daily canonical prayers, which reflected the patron's promotion of orthopraxy at the same time, themes and names related to Sunni Islam dominated the mosque's epigraphic program. The Prophetic relics brought from the holy lands reflected the same phenomenon. The existence of a hadith college, built as a school for teaching Sunni hadith literature, also manifested the confessional character of Sultan Ahmed's architectural ensemble.

The conceptualization of the war against the Shi'i Safavids as a legitimizing pretext of Sultan Ahmed's architectural project, and this sultan's concern for emphasizing the confessional distinctions with the Safavids must have played a similarly significant role in the fashioning of his complex as a Sunni sanctuary. In order to obtain the necessary military victory for legitimizing his architectural endeavor, the sultan engaged in a long warfare with the Safavids, which continued until the completion of Sultan Ahmed Mosque's construction. I have argued that the choice of Safavids as a military target was not coincidental within the context of the erection of a sultanic Friday mosque, a Sunni sanctuary built by the caliph of Muslims and the sovereign of two holy sanctuaries in Mecca and Medina. The defeat of Safavids would mean the defeat of Shi'i heterodoxy and the Ottoman sultan's most powerful rival with claims of religious and political leadership of the Muslims. The Ottoman sultan, however, was defeated on the warfare against the Shi'i Safavids, as he could not avert the endeavors of the shah for promoting and

spreading Twelver Shi'ism, who was busy with constructing a Shi'i Friday mosque complex in his capital all in the same breath.

CHAPTER 6

THE MASJED-E SHAH COMPLEX

The sign of Kaba appeared in the Iranian realms.[1472]

According to the account of Molla Jalal al-Din Munajjim, on the second night of January 1608 (14 Ramadan 1016), Shah Abbas had a dream and woke up in tears. In his dream, he was in the city of Medina, at the head of Prophet Muhammad's holy tomb. He stood in front of this shrine's glorious and beautifully adorned dome that bears golden-painted floral designs and silver inscriptions on its lapis lazuli ground. The sacred sarcophagus of the Prophet was visible from behind a wall underneath this dome, laid at the center of the room. The shah's grand vizier was also present there and informed the shah concerning a request of the Ottoman sultan, Ahmed I, who wanted to repair this holy dome and demanded a fair amount of lapis lazuli for being used in the renovation. The shah responded negatively and repeated this answer three times: "I will not give lapis lazuli to anyone, and I myself will repair this dome." Abbas added that he will renovate this holy shrine's inscriptions and commissioned his calligrapher Molla Ali Reza for this task. Then and there, the shah sent his qurchibashi Mulk Beg to Mecca, and told him thus: "We will construct this house! We will construct this house! We will construct this house!"[1473]

This dream depicts Shah Abbas as a passionate Muslim ruler and patron of architecture. It underlines that the patronage of religious architecture was conceived as a means of competition against the Ottoman sultan, Abbas' strongest rival. Associating his name with the great rulers and builders of Iranian and Islamic history, Shah Abbas

[1472] The chronogram of Masjed-e Shah's foundation composed by Sharif al-Din Hasan Shifa'i Isfahani, Ukhdi, *Arafat al-Ashiqin*, 2356.
[1473] Yazdi, *Tārīkh-e 'Abbāsī*, 355.

realized his dream of being a powerful monarch, and established a centralized government and enlarged his realms from Shirvan to Baghdad, and from Qandahar to Kars. A series of building projects and the patronage of significant religious buildings reinforced his dominance in political and religious spheres as they attested to the religio-political inclinations and socio-economic policies of Shah Abbas the Great. Along with the formation of two new capital cities embodying his centralizing and confessional visions and the patronage of the Safavid dynastic shrine in Ardabil and other Sufi lodges reinforcing his role as a murshid-ruler, he concentrated his efforts as a builder and patron on extending his ancestors' efforts for creating a Shi'ite landscape in the Safavid realms. The renovations in the two central Shi'i shrines in Mashhad and Qum, the elaboration of particular Shi'ite rites including *'āshūrā* and Ghadir Khumm, and the erection of Friday mosques in different cities served as architectural and ritualistic vehicles to this end.[1474] At the same time, they provided the Safavid shah, who dreamed to own the sanctuaries in Mecca and Medina, and adorn his name with the title of the servant of them, with creating alternative religious sanctuaries and pilgrimage sites in his own realms. The Shi'ite centers of pilgrimage and worship he patronized helped him distinguish the religious landscape of his realms from those of his major Sunni rival, the Ottoman sultan, and compete with him as a devout and powerful Muslim monarch and patron of religious sanctuaries.

This chapter investigates the history of such a Shi'ite sanctuary, the Masjed-e Shah complex, erected by Shah Abbas I as part of his extensive architectural program and confessional initiatives. As the chronogram penned for its foundation indicates, this Friday mosque complex was conceived as a counterpart of the holy Kaba, and a place of worship 'to rival the temple at Mecca and the mosque at Jerusalem', in the words of

[1474] For Shah Abbas' patronage of religious architecture, see Chapter II, 86–93.

Iskandar Munshi.[1475] The formation of a Shi'ite congregational mosque, which was accompanied with adjoined twin madrasas, will be assessed and analyzed as an embodiment of its patron's religious and political regime, an architectural and ritualistic arena for reflecting his confessional agenda, and as a monument that served as a means for competing with his major rivals, the Ottoman sultans, who had the prestige of guarding the holy sanctuaries in Mecca, Medina, and Jerusalem, and adorned their names as patrons of mosques within their extensive realms.

Consisting of four main parts, the chapter investigates the construction, architectural-spatial configuration, and social-ritualistic organization of the complex in an integrated manner, and within the context of the underlying cultural, religio-political, and social dynamics of the period. Along with several secondary studies, this inquiry relies on contemporary Safavid chronicles, travelogues, compilations of poems and collections of poets' biographies, endowment deeds, a few jurisprudential texts, and my observations at the site. It aims to contribute to the literature on the topic by presenting a more extended chronology of the construction, a more detailed description and analysis of its architectural, spatial, and decorative features, and the organization of the building materials and stuff. Its main contribution is elucidating the ritualistic and social program of the complex, which has remained so far largely as an understudied topic.

The first section examines the construction process, chronology, building materials, and staff of the monument. It investigates different stages of this long construction project, which took a few decades to be completed, and the repairs and renovations in the edifice that continued throughout the seventeenth century. In the longer second section, the spatial, architectural, and decorative configuration of the Masjed-e Shah complex is investigated. Besides offering a comprehensive description of the

[1475] Munshi, *History of Shah*, II, 1038.

monument's architectural and spatial facets, it aims to demonstrate the continuities and differences between Masjed-e Shah, and Iranian mosques before the seventeenth century. The third and fourth parts investigate the endowment and social-ritualistic formation of the complex, respectively.

6.1 The construction in the Naqsh-e Jahan Square: The chronology and organization of the Masjed-e Shah complex's construction

6.1.1 The chronology

In 1611 (1020 AH), Shah Abbas initiated the construction of a Friday mosque complex in the Naqsh-e Jahan Square.[1476] Yazdi related that Shah Abbas started the construction of the Masjed-e Shah complex on Friday, 29 April 1611 (20 Safar 1020 AH), and gave money and orders to his engineers and masters of building for commencing the construction. According to him, the plan (*tarkh*) of the mosque had already appeared before the purchase of the land and the beginning of the construction.[1477] The acquisition of the land, where the monument will rise, constituted one of the initial steps of the project. Considering that the foundations were laid on a week after the building's initiation,[1478] the acquisition and demolishment of the edifices on the site step should have occurred before April 1611. The southern edge of the Naqsh-e Jahan Square was selected as the construction site, where some buildings were, purchased and demolished upon the shah's order. According to Munshi, there was a large warehouse (*khān*) on this site while Yazdi mentioned a house that belonged to someone named Mawlana Mir Ali Thani.[1479] Probably based on an oral tradition, Chardin mentioned a melon stand belonging to an old

[1476] Pope, *Survey of Persian*, III, 1188; Blake, *Half the World*, 781; Babaie, *Isfahan*, 87.
[1477] Yazdi, *Tārīkh-e 'Abbāsī*, 411–412.
[1478] Ibid, 412.
[1479] Munshi, *History of Shah*, 2, 1038; Yazdi, *Tārīkh-e 'Abbāsī*, 413.

woman, which was bought and demolished for the mosque project.[1480] Various traditions concerning the buildings demolished for the construction of Masjed-e Shah are not necessarily mutually exclusive, and probably, the monument's construction site included more than one edifice.[1481]

Yazdi's account regarding the purchase of the mentioned house displays the shah's concern for legalizing the acquisition of the building site and receiving their owners' approval.[1482] Upon the resistance of the house's owner for keeping the estate under his possession, the shah ordered one of his architects to construct a more beautiful house near the site and bestowed it to Mir Ali Thani for convincing him to sell his old house to the shah. Besides endowing a new house to Mir Ali Thani, Abbas purchased his old house in return for 300 *tumān*s.[1483] On 7 May 1611 (23 Safar 1020 AH),[1484] at an auspicious hour determined by the astrologers through an examination of the royal horoscope, skilled engineers and architects laid out the mosque's foundations.[1485] Poets created different chronograms for this date. Quoted by Khuzani Isfahani in his chronicle, the chronogram created by a poet Mawlana Vafai is as follows:

> For the sanctuary of ascetics, the shah of the time
> Laid out an edifice resembling the wall of Alexander
> Although it is not the Ka'ba, it has the semblance of the Kaba[1486]

Approximately two months after laying out the monument's foundations, on 17 June 1611 (5 Rabi al-Thani 1020 AH), the mosque's qibla was determined by a group of religious scholars.[1487] Unfortunately, the known contemporary sources provide little evidence for the following steps of the construction. Different scholars have referred to

[1480] Chardin, *Voyages*, VIII, 57.
[1481] Melville, "Four Sources", 122.
[1482] Blow, *Shah Abbas*, 241.
[1483] Yazdi, *Tārīkh-e 'Abbāsī*, 413.
[1484] Ibid, 413.
[1485] Munshi, *History of Shah*, 2, 1038; Yazdi, *Tārīkh-e 'Abbāsī*, 413.
[1486] Khuzani Isfahani, *Chronicle*, II,
[1487] Yazdi, *Tārīkh-e 'Abbāsī*, 414.

the dates appearing on the inscriptions for determining the dates of the completion of the mosque's portal in 1611 and western iwan 1630.[1488] Dates mentioned in several inscriptions on the mosque's various parts suggest a chronology of the completion of the monument's some other sections. The iwans, the domed halls behind the iwans, the dome in the mihrab sanctuary, the mihrab in the same hall, and madrasas bear inscriptional panels with different dates, which show that the tile revetments covering the mosque's various parts were completed in different years, most probably after the erection of the mentioned sections. The inscriptions suggest that the monumental portal was the first completed part of the mosque, whose inscription bears the date of 1616–17 (1025 AH).[1489] The portal's completion before other parts of the mosque indicates a concern for creating a uniform decorative skin on all edges of the Naqsh-e Jahan Square,[1490] and forming axially laid out monumental portals on its four sides.[1491] That the building of the Qaysariya Bazaar's gateway was finished on the same date in 1616–17[1492] confirms this suggestion.

The dates on the inscriptions suggest that there were ten years between the completion of the tile revetments of the portal, and those of other parts of the mosque. Accordingly, the decorations of the mosque's iwans with their domed sections, and the mihrab sanctuary and hypostyle prayer halls, were completed between 1625–26 (1035 AH), and 1630–31 (1040 AH). According to the dates in their inscriptions, the decoration of the northern and eastern iwans seems to have been completed 1625–26 (1035 AH).[1493] The inscriptions on the main dome of the building surmounting the mihrab sanctuary bear the date of 1626–27 (1036 AH).[1494] The epigraphs on the mihrabs under this dome and in

[1488] Blake, *Half the World*, 781; Babaie, *Isfahan*, 87; Pope, *Survey of Persian*, III, 1188.
[1489] Hunarfar, *Ganjīna-ye Āsār*, 427.
[1490] Ibid, 427.
[1491] Ibid, 427; Blair, "Inscribing the Square"
[1492] Blake, *Half the World*, 140.
[1493] Hunarfar, *Ganjīna-ye Āsār*, 446, 451.
[1494] Ibid, 438.

the eastern hypostyle prayer hall, and the smaller domed hall behind the eastern iwan, were dated to 1628–29 (1038 AH).[1495] The installation of the tile revetments of the domed hall behind the western iwan seems to have occurred one year later, in 1629–30 (1039 AH).[1496] The fitting of the western iwan's tile revetments and that of the silver-gilded monumental gate on the portal occurred after Shah Abbas' death, respectively in 1630–31 (1040 AH), and 1636–37 (1046 AH).[1497]

This evidence shows that the main parts of the mosque were completed between 1616 and 1636, and repairs and additions in the complex continued until the end of the Safavid era. The mosque was inaugurated before the decoration of the iwans and the covered prayer halls were finished. According to Khuzani Isfahani, the mosque was opened to worship in 1623–24 (1033 AH), with an opening speech conducted by Muhib Ali Beg Lala, the overseer of the building project.[1498] The same author informs us about the shah's eagerness to see the completion and opening of his Friday mosque. He indicated that as early as 1619–20 (1029 AH), the shah urged project's staff to finish the building quickly, and assigned two new overseers to the project with this purpose.[1499] Despite his insistence and impetuosity, Shah Abbas passed away in 1629, and could not see his monument's completion. The complex was finished seven years after his death, and became the subject of successive repairs and renovations in the rest of the century.

The first known interference to the monument belongs to Shah Safi, who faced the mosque's wooden gate with silver 1636–37 (1046 AH).[1500]After approximately twenty-five years, Shah Abbas II engaged in repairs in the complex. According to Qazvini Isfahani, it was reported to the shah that some of the sanctuary's arches had collapsed, and

[1495] Ibid, 441–442, 449.
[1496] Ibid, 451.
[1497] Ibid, 434, 451.
[1498]Khuzani Isfahani, *Chronicle*, II, 876.
[1499] Ibid, 789.
[1500] Hunarfar, *Ganjīna-ye Āsār*, 433–434.

needed to be reconstructed, when he visited Masjed-e Shah on a Friday in 1660–61 (1071 AH) for performing the Friday ritual with the congregation. Upon this, the shah initiated repairs and renovations in Masjed-e Shah.[1501] His patronage in the complex was perpetuated with an inscriptional panel added to the southeastern madrasa,[1502] revealing that he intervened to the architectural or decorative skin of this madrasa, along with repairs of the mosque's damaged arches. Epigraphic evidence unfolds that Shah Suleiman annexed a mihrab to the western oratory behind the main prayer hall, or added an inscriptional band on an existing mihrab in this hall. Further, he augmented the number of the mosque's water basins (*ābsang*), adding a new one to the western oratory behind the main prayer hall.[1503]

While there is evidence shedding light on the chronology of the mosque, there is not enough information concerning the history of the madrasas' construction. There has been a discussion on the building dates of the double madrasas flanking the mosque. These madrasas became the subject of repairs and renovations and gained inscriptional panels commemorating the architectural interferences by later rulers of Iran. Based on the inscription on its entrance, the southwestern madrasa's construction has generally been attributed to Shah Suleiman, who repaired the mosque complex in the early years of his reign. For this reason, this madrasa has been named the Suleimaniya madrasa, *Madrasa-ye Suleimaniya*.[1504] The construction of the southeastern madrasa of the complex, which is known as the Nasiriya Madrasa since it was renovated by Nasir al-Din Shah Qajar (d. 1896), has been attributed to different Safavid rulers. Two dates appearing on this madrasa's different inscriptions, 1666–67 (1077 AH) and 1683–84 (1095 AH), display

[1501] Qazvini Isfahani, *Irān dar Zamān*, 659.
[1502] Hunarfar, *Ganjīna-ye Āsār*, 457.
[1503] Ibid, 442–444.
[1504] Keyani, *Tārīkh-e Hunar-e Mi'mārī*, 111; Mashkati, *List of Historical*, 42; Pajman, "Mutala'a-ye Tarikhi", 83.

that Abbas II and Shah Suleiman added to this edifice's decorative skin.[1505] While Hunarfar contended that this building was commissioned either by Shah Abbas I or Abbas II,[1506] Keyani attributed this building to Shah Suleiman.[1507] Pajman suggested that it was Shah Abbas I who established this edifice.[1508]

Except for the complex's endowment deed, no contemporary source provides a clue concerning the construction dates of the madrasas. The endowment deed dated to 1614 mentions professors (*mudarrisān*) and boarding students among the waqf's beneficiaries. The same document gives the location of a groups of houses, which were mentioned among the revenue-yielding structures of the waqf, as "behind the madrasa", and this indicates that there was at least one separate madrasa structure/section in the original plan of the complex.[1509] That it mentions only one madrasa, and does not characterize its site as the southeastern or southwestern one recalls the possibility of the existence of a single madrasa in this initial phase of the complex. The symmetrical layout of the two courtyard madrasas flanking the domed sanctuary, and the architectural entirety and coherence of the whole complex, however, indicate the creation of a single plan in the inception. It is possible that the double courtyards was conceived as a single madrasa. In other words, the architectural integrity of the mosque and madrasa courtyards supports the possibility that both madrasas were erected during the period of Shah Abbas I.

[1505] Hunarfar, *Ganjīna-ye Āsār*, 454.
[1506] Ibid, 453.
[1507] Keyani, *Tārīkh-e Hunar-e Mi'mārī*, 111.
[1508] Pajman, "Mutala'a-ye Tarikhi", 84.
[1509] Sipanta, *Tārīkhce-ye Awqāf*, 58–60, 61.

Table 12. The chronology of the Masjed-e Shah complex

The event	The date
The drawing of the mosque's plan	Probably early 1611
The acquisition and destruction of the edifices on the building site	Probably early 1611
The shah's order for initiating the construction	29 April 1611 (20 Safar 1020 AH)
The digging of the mosque's foundations	7 May 1611 (23 Safar 1020 AH)
The determination of the qibla by scholars	17 June 1611 (5 Rabi al-Thani 1020 AH)
The completion of the portal's decoration	1616–17 (1025 AH)
The assignment of new administrative staff for the building project	1619–20 (1020 AH)
The mosque's inauguration with an opening speech given by Muhib Ali Beg	1623–24 (1033 AH)
The completion of the northern and eastern iwans' tiles	1625–26 (1035 AH)
The installment of the main dome's tile revetments	1626–27 (1036 AH)
The completion of the inscriptions on the mihrabs in the eastern hypostyle prayer hall, and the smaller domed hall behind the eastern iwan	1628–29 (1038 AH)
The installation of the tile revetments of the domed hall behind the western iwan	1629–30 (1039 AH)
The fitting of the western iwan's tile revetments	1630–31 (1040 AH)
The installation of the silver-gilded monumental gate on the portal	1636–37 (1046 AH)
Repairs of the mosque's damaged arches by Abbas II	1660–61 (1071 AH)
The addition of an inscriptional panel to the southeastern madrasa by Shah Abbas II	1666–67 (1077 AH)
The repairment of the building and the additions of new inscriptional panels and a new water basin by Shah Suleiman	1683–84 (1095 AH)

6.1.2 The building staff, materials, and organization

As a big royal architectural project in the Safavid capital, the Masjed-e Shah complex must have been run by an extended administrative and building staff. The lack of archival

materials and the relative silence of contemporary narrative sources make it difficult to determine the names, numbers, and responsibilities of all administrative staff, architects, engineers, and workers of the construction. The accounts of a few contemporary chroniclers and the inscriptions on the mosque make up the mere sources concerning the building's staff. While the known sources allow determining the names of the building's overseer/s (*sarkār*), two architects (*mi'mār*), five calligraphers (*khattāt*), a designer (*tarrākh*), a tile-maker (*kāshītirāsh*), and a mason (*bannā*), the names and numbers of other building staff remain unknown.

At the head of the construction project was Muhib Ali Beg, better known as Lala Beg, whose name appears in the portal inscription as the supervisor, or contractor (*mushrīf*).[1510] Muhib Ali Beg was a significant figure in Isfahan in the first two decades of the seventeenth century. Being one of the closest companions of Shah Abbas, he played a paternal role in his household in Isfahan as an officer of ghulam origin, along with Allah Virdi Khan, another ghulam, and a high-ranking member in Abbas' court.[1511] He served as the guardian, *lala*, of the ghulams, as the shah's chief-negotiator with Europeans, especially the Dutch and the English, who demanded to buy silk,[1512] and was responsible for the administration of Isfahan's royal buildings (*sarkār-e 'imārat-e khassa-ye sharīfa-ye Iṣfahān*).[1513] The assignment of a ghulam as the supervisor of the capital city's royal edifices designates the new status of ghulams in the seventeenth century Safavid politics as the new political-administrative elites.[1514] During his tenure as the supervisor of the

[1510] Hunarfar, *Ganjīna-ye Āsār*, 429; Melville, "Four Sources", 122.
[1511] Melville, "Four Sources", 122; Babaie, et al., *Slaves*, 15, 90. Rizvi has suggested that Muhib Ali Beg was the patron of the 1605 Shahnama manuscript, which was presented as a gift to Shah Abbas by his favorite ghulam. Rizvi, "Suggestive Portrait", 242.
[1512] McChesney, "Four Sources", 122.
[1513] Munshi, *History of Shah*, II, 1170.
[1514] In the Isfahani period, ghulams replaced the Qizilbash elites and came to the forefront as the shah's new political-administrative staff, and parts of his extended household. Babaie, et al., *Slaves*, 1; Newman, *Safavid Iran*, 52; Ouinn, *Shah Abbas*, 28; Mitchel, *Practice of Politics*, 180.

royal buildings in Isfahan, he was in charge of several royal building projects besides the Masjed-e Shah complex.[1515]

According to Khuzani Isfahani, Muhib Ali Beg served as the overseer of Masjed-e Shah's construction until 1619 (1029 AH). Contemporary sources do not offer any information regarding Lala Beg's responsibilities as the overseer of the building. McChesney has suggested that his tasks included organizing building materials and labor, obtaining the land, and ensuring the consistent progress of the building.[1516] Babaie has shown that during his tenure as the supervisor of the new cathedral in New Julfa, Lala Beg chose a suitable location, and took royal architects to survey the land. Joined by some unnamed architects, he sent the blueprints, on paper and wood, for the shah to be reviewed before the beginning of the construction.[1517] Presenting plans to the shah before the construction of royal buildings appears as a custom in the Safavid architectural practice. Qazvini Isfahani mentioned plans displayed to the shah before the initiation of his repairments in the Shrine of Imam Ali in Najaf.[1518] Most probably, the same process was valid for the Masjed-e Shah project, and Muhib Ali Beg was responsible for surveying the construction site and presenting the architectural models or drawings to the shah alongside the chief architect or a team of architects. Yazdi mentioned that such a plan (*tarkh*) depicting Masjed-e Shah and the residences on the building site was prepared by the chief architect and presented to the shah before the construction's inception.[1519]

[1515] Muhib Ali Beg was responsible for administrating the housing project for Tabrizi refugees, who were given land on the north of the Zayanda river. He was tasked with the construction of the New Julfa Cathedral, which was erected in the Julfa district for relocated Armenian communities. The caravanserai, water tanks, and pond of Zainab Bagum (d. 1641–42), the aunt of Shah Abbas, were also among royal architectural projects completed under Muhib Ali Beg's supervision. Further, he was tasked as the supervisor of a hydraulic project to bring waters of the Kurang River to Isfahan and to link them with the Zayanda river. Munshi, *History of Shah*, II, 1170; Babaie, et al., *Slaves*, 12, 90; Newman, *Safavid Iran*, 66;

[1516] McChesney, "Four Sources", 122–123.

[1517] Babaie, et al., *Slaves*, 89.

[1518] Qazvini Isfahani, *Irān dar Zamān*, 111–112.

[1519] Yazdi, *Tārīkh-e 'Abbāsī*, 412.

Having several other significant responsibilities, Muhib Ali Beg could not devote all his time and effort to the mosque project, and this brought about his replacement by two other officials. In 1619, Abbas commissioned Ashur Beg and Shahbardi Beg with the task of overseeing the mosque project.[1520] Unfortunately, there is no information concerning these two figures. Although Muhib Ali Beg was dismissed from this administrative position, he continued to appear as an important figure in the project's later phases. That he gave a speech during the mosque's inauguration ceremony speaks for Muhib Ali Beg's continuing significance in the shah's mosque project. Unlike his task as the building overseer, his role as the administrator of the mosque's endowment, established in 1614 with Muhib Ali's contributions, seems to have continued during his lifetime. The endowment deed mentions his name as the waqf's legal administrator.[1521] Besides playing a part in its organization, he donated a large number of properties to the waqf of Masjed-e Shah complex.[1522] That he resided next to Masjed-e Shah can be regarded as a sign of his attachment with Shah Abbas' mosque project.[1523]

The chief architect, *mi'mārbashī*, appears as another significant figure in the creation and construction of the Masjed-e Shah complex. The foundation inscription on the portal mentions the name of Ali Akbar Isfahani as the architect (*mi'mār*) of the monument, along with the names of Shah Abbas and Muhib Ali Beg as the patron and supervisor of the mosque, respectively.[1524] (Figure C143) His attribution, *nisbah*, "Isfahani" suggests that his birthplace was Isfahan. He was born in 1577–78 (985 AH) and entered Shah Abbas' service as an architect at the age of thirty in 1596–97 (1005AH). He

[1520] Khuzani Isfahani, *Chronicle*, II, 789–790.
[1521] McChesney, "Waqf and Public", 178; Sipanta, *Tārīkhce-ye Awqāf*, 51.
[1522] McChesney, "Waqf and Public", 179.
[1523] Babaie, et al., *Slaves*, 91.
[1524] Hunarfar, *Ganjīna-ye Āsār*, 429. Babaie has demonstrated that since the fifteenth century, the names of architects, along with the names of their patrons, began to appear on the foundation inscriptions that were generally put on the edifices' portals and façades facing urban landscapes. She has assessed this phenomenon as a sign of their increased visibility and prominence as sub-imperial agents. Babaie, "Chasing After *Muhandis*", 27–33.

was trained by Badi al-Zaman Tuni Yazdi, the chief architect of the era, and took part in several royal construction projects until 1611–12 (1020 AH) when he was assigned as the chief architect and the architect of Masjed-e Shah.[1525] Nasrabadi mentioned the name of Ali Akbar Isfahani in his compilation, *Tazkira-ye Naṣrābadī*, among the talented poets of the age. He indicated that son of Ali Akbar was also an architect who worked for Shah Abbas I.[1526] Yazdi's account on Masjed-e Shah's inception reveals that in its initial phase, the chief architect was Badi' al-Zaman Tuni Yazdi. The same author indicated that before the demolition of the house on the construction site, the plan (*tarkh*) of the mosque had already been drawn, and this suggests that at least the initial plan of Masjed-e Shah was designed by Badi al-Zaman Tuni Yazdi, rather than Ali Akbar Isfahani.[1527] Probably, both architects contributed to the design of the building. McChesney suggested that along with these two architects, Lala Beg should have had a hand in the monument's design.[1528]

The chief architect was one of the leading figures in the royal Safavid building projects, including that of the Masjed-e Shah complex. In the late seventeenth century, Kaempfer described the chief architect as a high-ranking official who was responsible for the plans and repairs of the royal edifices. Inspecting constructions and sales agreements were also defined among his tasks.[1529] Apparently, there was a division of labor between the chief architect and the building supervisor. While designing and repairing buildings and organizing the technical sides of construction was under the chief architect's responsibility, the supervisor was tasked with organizing the financial and administrative affairs of building projects. Some responsibilities seem to have been shared by these two officers, including surveying the construction sites and making of sales and purchases

[1525] "Barshi az Zandagi" *ILNA*, 15 September 2016 http://news.mrud.ir/news/27920 (retrieved on 29 January 2022.
[1526] Nasrabadi, *Tazkira-ye Nasrabadi*, 360, 438.
[1527] Yazdi, *Tārīkh-e 'Abbāsī*, 414.
[1528] McChesney, "Four Sources", 123.
[1529] Kaempfer, *Am Hofe*, 113.

regarding the building site. Yazdi related that Shah Abbas tasked master Badi al-Zaman Tuni Yazdi with convincing Mir Ali Thani, the owner of the residence on the site chosen for the building, to sell his house.[1530] This displays that along with the building supervisor, the chief architect played a role in surveying the land and the purchase of the buildings in the instance of Masjed-e Shah, too. The case of the New Julfa Cathedral explained before also confirms the cooperation between the building overseer and the chief architect. In surveying the land chosen for the cathedral, Muhib Ali Beg was accompanied by a team of architects, which likely involved the chief architect.[1531]

Popular narrations concerning Sheikh Bahai's role in the design of Masjed-e Shah have to be briefly examined here. M. Nafasi has displayed that Sheikh Bahai has traditionally been regarded as among the designers of Masjed-e Shah, along with the Naqsh-e Jahan Square, and several other Safavid buildings.[1532] The same researcher has demonstrated that the known contemporary sources do not mention the sheikh's name as among the designers or architects of Masjed-e Shah and the Naqsh-e Jahan Square. On the other hand, he argues, scientific texts he wrote, and the syllabi of the courses he taught in Isfahan's colleges demonstrate his knowledge of geometry, engineering, and architecture.[1533] Therefore, it is very probable that as the chief religious and legal authority in the empire, the sheikh contributed to some design elements or was consulted by the architects and engineers concerning their works.[1534] In his *Kashkul-e Baḥā'ī*, Bahai's Begging Bowl, he had a short section on Constantinople's monuments and Friday

[1530] Yazdi, *Tārīkh-e 'Abbāsī*, 412.
[1531] Babaie, et al., *Slaves*, 12.
[1532] Nafasi, "Baha al-Din Amili", 48–50.
[1533] One of his treatises on accounting, algebra, and geometry, titled the Summary of Accounting (*hhulāsat al-khisāb*), involves sections pertaining to calculating the dimensions of diverse architectural units, such as arches and minarets. Containing comprehensive knowledge of different architectural units and materials, this treatise attests to Sheikh Bahai's acquaintance, if not expertise, with architectural and urban conceptions. Mahrafza, "Barrasi-ye Asar-e Mi'mari", 59.
[1534] Ibid, 59–75.

mosques[1535] displaying his interest and knowledge of diverse urban and architectural cultures. The cooperation between architects-engineers and legal experts in the early modern Ottoman world has been demonstrated by Gül Kale.[1536] Treatises examined by Mahrafza suggest that a similar relationship existed in the Safavid world, too, and Sheikh Bahai was a part of that culture.

Even though it seems difficult to determine whether he played a part in the monument's design or not, it is known that Sheikh Bahai was involved in Shah Abbas' mosque project. The summary of the complex's endowment deed was penned by him,[1537] which suggests that as a legal expert, he consulted the shah and Muhib Ali Beg, the waqf's creators. Further, it has been believed that the qibla of Masjed-e Shah was determined by the sheikh, who created a gnomon for the same mosque.[1538] More significant, however, were his pieces of advice for erecting mosques, which were uttered in the catechism he wrote upon Shah Abbas' order. Spiritual benefits of building mosques were expressed by him as follows: "Constructing (*binā nihādan*) and repairing (*'imārat kardan*) a mosque has a big spiritual benefit (*ṣawāb*), and it is narrated from Imam Jafar, peace be upon Him, that God will build a house in paradise for every person who erects a mosque."[1539] This should have had an encouraging effect on Shah Abbas' decision to build three monumental mosques in Isfahan and Farahabad, and repairing many others in other cities.

The royal Safavid construction projects were run under the responsibility of large teams comprising the supervisor, the chief architect, and lesser architects, engineers,

[1535] Sheikh Baha'i, *Kashkul-e Bahā'ī*, 76.
[1536] Legal cases concerning different issues like portion of the inheritance necessitated the survey and measurement of lands and edifices. This required the legal experts to have considerable knowledge of architecture, geometry, and measurements, and to team up with architect-engineers. Kale, "Intersections Between", 138–146.
[1537] Sipanta, *Tārīkhce-ye Awqāf*, 51.
[1538] Nafasi, "Baha al-Din 'Amili", 49–50; Newman, *Safavid Iran*, 189.
[1539] My translation. Bahai, *Jāme'-ye 'Abbāsī*, 36.

building masters, and workers. Munshi reported that in the hydraulic project for diverting the Kurang River to Isfahan, Muhib Ali Beg was accompanied by a team of experienced engineers who reported to him concerning the conditions of the project's site.[1540] This displays that, as the overseer of Isfahan's royal buildings, he worked as the head of a group of architects, engineers, and masters who conducted the design and actual work of construction. Babaie has argued that as the guardian of ghulams, he had also a wide network of trainees, who helped him to craft Isfahan into a capital city.[1541] The royal construction projects from the era, including the buildings in Farahabad and the renovations in the shrine of Imam Reza, were also conducted by teams of architects, engineers, and building masters, which were brought from different parts of the Safavid realms, and even from the Ottoman lands. Shedding light on the working and organization of Safavid royal architectural projects, this strongly suggests that Masjed-e Shah was created with the contribution of several architects, engineers, masters, and labor force.

Contemporary sources mentioned only a few groups of workers who took part in the construction of the Masjed-e Shah complex. Yazdi indicated that for commencing the building, Shah Abbas paid 2000 *tumān*s to a group of master builders (*ustādān-e binā*), stone masters (*sangtrashān*), stone porters (*sangbār*), and laborers (*fa'ala*) for providing the necessary devices, instruments and materials for the new mosque's construction (*asbāb va ālāt va masālikh-e binā-ye masjed-e jadīd*).[1542] Munshi mentioned cautious engineers (*muhandisān-e mudaqqiq*), and masters with exceptional skills (*ustādān-e nāderkār*) among those who worked for laying the mosque's foundations.[1543] The signatures appearing on different tiles panels have allowed researchers to determine the names and origins of at least some staff hired in the project. Several buildings erected in

[1540] Munshi, *History of Shah*, II, 1170– 1171.
[1541] Babaie, et al., *Slaves*, 90.
[1542] Yazdi, *Tārīkh-e 'Abbāsī*, 411.
[1543] Munshi, *History of Shah*, II, 1024.

post-Mongol Iran bear the names and inscriptions of different masons and tile-makers,[1544] and this practice was continued in the Safavid era.[1545] The signatures in Masjed-e Shah belong to five calligraphers, a mason, a designer and a tile-maker. One of the tile panels on the pishtaq bears the names of Nasrullah, the designer and Ghuffar al-Isfahani, the tile maker. (Figure C144) Similarly, the name of a mason, Qasim al-Isfahani, the master of masons, appears on an inscriptional frieze on the western madrasa.[1546] The calligraphers designing Masjed-e Shah's monumental inscriptions involved Ali Reza Abbasi, Abd al-Baqi Tabrizi, Muhammad Salih Muvarrikh, Muhammad Ghani and Muhammad Reza al-Imar.[1547] Among these figures, Ali Reza Abbasi was a significant figure in the court of Shah Abbas, as the head of the shah's royal library. He was responsible for an atelier of calligraphers, painters, illuminators and bookbinders, and all the supporting cast of paper-makers, glue-makers and gold-sprinklers.[1548] As the head of the royal workshops, he may have played a part in the selection and composition of Masjed-e Shah's decorative repertoire, along with creating some of its inscriptions.

Building materials used in the construction of Masjed-e Shah can also offer clues concerning the building staff hired in the project. Brick, *ājur,* blocks of tempered mud baked in a kiln, constitutes the main construction material of Masjed-e Shah. The walls, domes, minarets, and iwans of the monument are made of bricks. Being the main customary building substance in most of Iran, it has traditionally been made from a blend of water-soaked earth, chaff, and straw, and formed in wooden molds.[1549] The color of

[1544] For different examples, see Degeorge and Porter, *Art*, 97, 111, 117; O'Kane, "Architecture", 213, 224, 226, 228.
[1545] Along with Masjed-e Shah, the old congregational mosque of Isfahan, and the Sheikh Lutfullah Mosque are adorned with tiles bearing the names and signatures of masons and tile-makers. See Babaie, "Chasing After *Muhandis*".
[1546] Hunarfar, *Ganjīna-ye Āsār*, 457.
[1547] Ibid, 428, 432, 439, 441, 442, 449, 453, 454.
[1548]Canby, *Shah Abbas*, 36; Soucek, "ʿALĪ-REŻĀ ABBĀSĪ," 880; Abbasi and Mahdi, "Hunarmandan va Asar", 247–250.
[1549] Azarpay, "Brick", 447-449; Zander, "Observations Sur L'architecture", 295–297.

bricks used in Iranian architecture has displayed differences depending on the color and type of the mud in which they are created. The bricks used in Masjed-e Shah are straw-colored.[1550] These oblong pieces with the dimensions of 5 x 20[1551] were laid using the method of stretcher bond.[1552] Oruç Beg, better known as Don Juan, defined gypsum mortar (*gac*)[1553] as the material used for bonding the bricks,[1554] which was probably used for the same purpose in Masjed-e Shah, too. The number of bricks used in the whole structure has been estimated as eighteen million.[1555] Probably, bricks used in the construction were being produced in a kiln, or kilns, established near the building site. Since at least the medieval era, Iranian masons had the ability to erect kilns in any location near the construction sites.[1556]

Other materials used in the building involved marble (*sang-e marmar*), wood (*chūb*), cement (*sīmān)*, and lime (*ahek*), besides some precious materials used in the decoration including silver and jasper. The yellowish marbles cover the walls of the portal, courtyard, and domed sections until the dado level. The mihrab and minbar were also constructed with huge monolithic marble blocks. Carved stone was used for pillars in the hypostyle prayer halls flanking the domed mihrab hall. Relating a local narration famous among Isfahan's architects and engineers, Muhammad Reza al-Isfahani, a geographer who lived in the Qajar era, indicated that stones were also used in the monument's foundation along with cement in order to strengthen it.[1557] The evidence from

[1550] Keyani, *Tārīkh-e Hunar-e Mi'mārī*, 25.
[1551] I measured the bricks during my fieldwork in the monument.
[1552]The method of stretcher bond is to lay bricks horizontally as stretchers on the faces of walls. The bricks' length is along the wall's horizontal direction. http://www.civilprojectsonline.com/civil-projects/types-of-bonds-in-brickwork-stretcher-and-header-bond/ (accessed on 5 February 2021).
[1553] It is made by calcinating hyrated calcium sulphate in small kilns made of rubble masonry, and has been preferred to lime mortar in Iranian architectural tradition. Golombek and Wilber, *Timurid Architecture*, 94.
[1554] Oruç Beg, *İlişkiler*, 29.
[1555] Pope, *Survey of Persian*, III, 1188; Dahkhah, "Motala'a-ye Tarikhi", 79.
[1556] O'Kane, *Timurid Architecture*, 44.
[1557] Isfahani, *Nasf-e Jahan*, 64.

the medieval era confirms this account. Golombek and Wilber have displayed that in Ilkhanid and Timurid periods, rubble masonry was used in foundations of several buildings, including the Shrine of Ahmad Yasavi and the Gawhar Shad complex in Herat.[1558] Huge monolithic stones formed the building material of the huge water basins (*ābsang*), and for paving the floors, too.

Wood was utilized as girders for supporting the mosque's main dome,[1559] and as the stuff for the madrasas' gates. Scaffolds of the construction must have been also made of wood, which had been a custom in pre-modern architectural culture.[1560] Initially, the door of the main entrance of the sanctuary was also made up of wood, but faced silver during Shah Safi's period.[1561] The plane tree (*chinār*) has been the most commonly used strain of wood in Iranian architecture,[1562] along with poplar (*sanūbar*), pinewood (*kāj*) and walnut tree (*chūb-e gardū*).[1563] The gates and girders of Masjed-e Shah also must have been made of one or more of these woods. Visiting the construction site, Figueroa witnessed jaspers of several colors and slabs of marble being cut and polished for Masjed-e Shah.[1564] Currently, jasper does not appear as a decorative element in the mosque. Probably, it was used as an ornamentation element or for the revetment of some surfaces in this initial phase and lost in the following decades or centuries.

Figueroa's account indicates the existence of a workshop in Isfahan where at least some of the building materials were prepared. Most probably, the stone cutters he encountered did not constitute the only group of laborers who worked for the construction. The building materials used in the structure suggest that brickmakers, carpenters, cement

[1558] Golombek and Wilber, *Timurid Architecture*, 95.
[1559] Dinani, *Hybrid Double Dome*, ii.
[1560] Golombek and Wilber, *Timurid Architecture*, 95.
[1561] Sabit, "Hadiya-ye Shah Safi", 222.
[1562] Zander, "Observations Sur L'architecture", 294.
[1563] Keyani, *Tārīkh-e Hunar-e Mi'mārī*, 27.
[1564] Figueroa, *Commentaries*, 412.

producers, and lime mortars were among groups of laborers hired in the projects. As another group of workers, stone porters mentioned by Yazdi must have been carrying stones and marbles between this workshop, the marble and stone quarries, and the building site. Munshi mentioned the discovery of a marble quarry near Isfahan simultaneously with laying the building's foundations. According to him, this discovery is a dear sign and manifest indication of the strength of the shah's faith, and his standing in the eyes of the Heavenly Architect.'[1565] The discovery of marbles seems to have lived in the city's memory throughout the seventeenth century for Chardin mentions this discovery as a significant event regarding Masjed-e Shah's construction. He related that before this marble quarry's discovery, the shah attempted to remove the old congregational mosque's marble columns and reuse them in his own mosque. To prevent the old mosque's destruction in this way, the mollas threw themselves at his feet.[1566]

It is not clear whether other building materials were also originated in Isfahan, or brought from distant centers. Similarly, the known sources do not provide any clue for whether the workshop mentioned by Figueroa had other masters and workers specialized in the different materials' production. It can be suggested that there were brick kilns and ateliers for carpenters, lime mortars, and other masters in Isfahan, probably near the construction site.

6.2 The architecture of the Masjed-e Shah complex

The Masjed-e Shah complex comprised a congregational mosque and two madrasas, and five shops in the flanks of the portal and at the entrance of the mosque. Severel other commercial structures near the complex and the Qaysariya Bazaar belonged to the complex's endowment, but it is not certain whether they were built for this purpose and as

[1565] Munshi, *History of Shah*, II, 1038.
[1566] Chardin, *Voyages*, VIII, 57.

a part of Shah Abbas' complex, or constructed previously and their incomes were dedicated to the waqf. Masjed-e Shah's endowment deed recounts an inn called *khān-e safīd*, the White Inn, to the south of the mosque, houses behind the madrasa, a shop of second-hand bookseller on the flanks of the mosque's portal, two-door shops of a herbalist at the mosque's entrance, two shops of a second-hand bookseller at the mosque's entrance, an inn with the name of *zargarbashī*, the chief goldsmith in the Qaysariya Bazaar, and shops in the caravanserai of *charshibashī*, the chief of the imperial heralds, as commercial structures whose revenues supporting the complex's waqf.[1567] The mosque, the double madrasas, which have been preserved with small changes, and the five shops at the entrance and portal form an architectural unit at the southern edge of the Naqsh-e Jahan Square, and the income-generating edifices were situated around this architectural unit, and the Qaysariya Bazaar in a scattered manner.

In terms of its architectural components, the Masjed-e Shah complex can be assessed as a part of an architectural and urban tradition in post-Mongol Iran. Between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries, several architectural complexes centered on congregational mosques, and comprised of different structures as madrasas or khanqahs were built in Iran. Successive dynasties, including the Timurids, Aqqoyunlus, and Qaraqoyunlus erected several such complexes in various parts of Iran. Erected in Tabriz in 1315, the Friday mosque of Ali Shah was among the earliest examples of Iranian congregational mosques accompanied by subsidiary edifices or sections serving to different socio-religious purposes. It was accompanied by a madrasa and a khanqah

[1567] Sipanta, *Tārīkhce-ye Awqāf*, 54–55. Gaube and Wirth suggested that the inn of the head goldsmith was at the end of the Qaysariya Bazaar while Blake has argued that this inn should have been situated next to the Imperial Mint on the Qaysariya Bazaar's entrance complex. Gaube and Wirth, *Der Bazaar*, II, 175; Blake, *Half the World*, 120. The caravanserai of the chief of the imperial heralds was also in the bazaar area near the Qaysariya. Gaube and Wirth, *Der Bazaar*, II, 197; Blake, *Half the World*, 123–124.

flanking the monumental Friday mosque, and Ali Shah's mausoleum.[1568] (Figure C145) In the fifteenth-century, the number of Friday mosque complexes was multiplied. Among such ensembles was the Nasiriya complex in Tabriz, which included a Friday mosque, a madrasa and its founder's mausoleum.[1569] (Figure C146) Built by a Timurid governor, the congregational mosque of Amir Chaqmaq in Yazd constituted the central part of an architectural complex comprised of a khanqah, a caravanserai, and a water cistern lined up around a maydan.[1570] Within the same century, Kashan gained a similar complex built by the Qarayounlu ruler Imam al-Din Shirvani, which was arranged around an urban square, *Maydān-e Sang*, and consisted of a caravanserai, a public bath, and a madrasa along with a Friday mosque.[1571] (Figure C147) The Timurid patrons and patronesses also created Friday mosques accompanied by social, commercial, and educational structures. Both accompanied by madrasas and mausolea, the Friday mosques of Bibi Khanum in Samarqand, and Gawhar Shad in Herat were also among such monuments.[1572] (Figure C148)

The first century of the Safavid rule in Iran witnessed a remarkable decrease in the patronage of Friday mosques in Iran. Our information concerning the Friday mosques constructed by Tahmasb, which are suggested to be the only congregational mosques erected in this era, is quite limited, and the known sources do not provide any clue whether they were single structures, or accompanied with additional edifices. In this

[1568] Kareng, *Āsār va Abniya*, 22; Blair and Bloom, *Architecture in Iran*, 395; O'Kane, "Iran and Central", 125; idem, "Taj al-Din 'Alishah"; Yıldız, *Safevi Döneminde Tebriz*, 168–169; Ajurlu and Mansuri, "Architecture of Azerbaijan"; Pope, *Survey of Persian*, III, 1059–1061. Ali Shah's masuoleum was disappeared. It was mentioned in contemporary literary sources. See O'Kane, "Taj al-Din Alishah", 208; Yıldız, *Safevi Döneminde Tebriz*, 168.
[1569] Ökten, "Imperial Aqqoyunlu Construction", 377–382; Yıldız, *Safevi Döneminde Tebriz*, 184–207; Nadir Mirza, *Tārīkh va Cografya*, 109.
[1570] Pirnia, *Mi'mārī-ye Irānī* 294; Golombek and Wilber, *Timurid Architecture*, 99; Mashkati, *List of Historical*, 71-72.
[1571] Darrabi, *Tārīkh-e Kāshān*, 508–514; Naraqi, *Āsār-e Tārīkhī*, 170; Golombek and Wilber, *Timurid Architecture*, 390-391
[1572] Lentz and Lowry, *Timur*, 88, 90–93; O'Kane, *Timurid Architecture*, 20, 82; Aube, "Complex of Gawhar", 66–69.

sense, the Masjed-e Shah complex in Isfahan constitutes the first and only known Friday mosque complex erected in Safavid Iran. Shah Abbas' congregational mosque in Farahabad may also have been a part of an architectural ensemble, or at least established as a part of a larger waqf involving other revenue-generating structures beside this mosque. Its integrity to the maydan enveloped by shops, and the concurrence of its erection with other urban institutions including a public bath and a madrasa, recalls the possibility of the existence of a single endowment, or plan for the mentioned edifices along with the mosque. In the lack of any concrete evidence, however, this remains as a hypothesis. Despite the lack of any Safavid precedence, the Masjed-e Shah complex is connected to an architectural tradition and can be regarded as the resurrection of a building type that was preeminent in the post-Mongol architectural culture in Iran.

6.2.1 The Friday mosque and madrasas

The congregational mosque complex of Shah Abbas is situated at the southern end of the Naqsh-e Jahan Square. The massive whole is built into a plan inscribed within an outer quadrangle measuring 140 x130 meters, approximately 19,000 square meters in area.[1573] Entry to the mosque is gained through a gigantic vaulted gate overlooking to the Naqsh-e Jahan Square. Standing directly across from the Qaysariya Bazaar's monumental gateway, this entrance is designed as an imposing portal with double minarets, and establishes a spatial and visual connection between the sanctuary and the urban square.

Punctuating the mid-point of the square's southern edge, the portal encircles three sides of an oblong space, set back in the maydan's arches. This small open space was originally enveloped by a low parapet, with an opening on the axis of the entrance, which is seen in a drawing in Chardin's travelogue. (Figure C149) It might have been conceived

[1573] Hillenbrand, “Safavid Architecture”, 788; Babaie and Haug, “Isfahan x. Monuments (3) Mosques”.

as a transitory zone between the different atmospheres of the vital urban square and the religious sanctuary.[1574] In the middle of this rectangular space is an octagonal pool, reflecting the façade's harmonious forms and ornate decorative texture. Witnessing Muslims' manners and rituals in Safavid mosques, Kaempfer depicted the pools situated in front of the mosque portals as basins served for cleaning the bodies and cloths of the mosque's visitors before entering the sanctuaries.[1575] Similarly, Chardin noted that the pool in the courtyard of Isfahan's old Friday mosque, which was fed by fresh water, was used for ritual ablution.[1576] Wiping away the uncleanness (*najāsat*) from one's body and clothing before taking ablution is also defined as among the stipulations of a coherent ritual ablution in Sheikh Bahai's *Jāme'-e 'Abbāsī*.[1577] Muslims frequenting the mosque may have been eliminating the dirtiness from their garments and bodies using the water in this octagonal pool.

The monumental portal is flanked with two-storied and double-arched sections, with gates facing the open space in front of the portal. Echoing the configuration of the shops around the maydan, these sections seem to have been the shops mentioned in the endowment deed. The placement of shops in a mosque's portal section may appear strange, but this had other examples in Isfahan. A seventeenth-century treatise on Safavid poets mentions a clinic above the portal of Isfahan's old congregational mosque, which belonged to a famous poet and physician named Sharif al-Din Hasan Shifai Isfahani.[1578]

At the center of the portal is a pishtaq, a rectangular frame in the shape of an iwan, which is 27,50 meters high. (Figure C150) Providing a space that is both open and enclosed, the iwan constitutes a coherent architectural form for an entrance, a semi-open

[1574] Pope, *Survey of Persian*, III, 1185.
[1575] Kaempfer, *Am Hofe*, 136.
[1576] Chardin, *Voyages*, VIII, 159.
[1577] Ibid, 6.
[1578] *Arafat al-Ashiqiyn*, 2240, 2956.

area of transition between the inside and outside of the mosque. The half-dome created by the vaulted iwan is filled with descending stalactites. (Figure C151) Behind this half dome are interbedded rectangles framing the silver-faced gate of the sanctuary. The inner frame enclosing the entrance has a recessed pointed arch, creating a formal dialogue with the portal iwan. Arranged in bilateral symmetry, three arches embedded in the muqarnas vault also augment the visual coherence created by the repetitive use of pointed arches in the portal-iwan. (Figure C152) The pishtaq is flanked by slender chimney-like minarets of 42 meters, and breaks into a two-tiered arcaded wall, echoing the arrangement of the shops around the square, and creating a visual continuity with the maydan's edges. (Figure C153) A more lavish tile decoration, and the luxury marble revetments up to the dado level, however, distinguish the arcaded walls of the portal from the shops recessed on the maydan's four sides.[1579]

The mosque's entrance leads the visitor to a high, dim, and domed vestibule. At its center stands a huge circular water basin made of stone, which probably served drinking water to the visitors. Pope argued that it functioned as an ablution basin,[1580] which is falsified by jurisprudential evidence and contemporary witnesses. Since still water kept in a water basin quickly gets polluted, it appears to be unsuitable for ritual ablution. The Twelver Shi'ite jurisprudence, similar to the Hanafi one, has defined the use of freshwater as one of the main stipulations concerning the validity of ritual ablution,[1581] and for this reason, Muslims have been using running water to take ablutions. Further, Kaempfer indicated that pools at the center of the mosques' open courtyards, nourished by running water, served as ablution bases for Muslims.[1582] Today, a small open courtyard to the west

[1579] Pope, *Survey of Persian*, III, 1185; Golombek, "Anatomy", 6; Babaie and Haug, "Isfahan x. Monuments (3) Mosques"; Dadkhah, "Mutaāla'ā-ye Tārīkhī", 80; Babaie, "Splendid Mosques", 146.
[1580] Pope, *Survey of Persian*, III, 1186.
[1581] Bahai, *Jāme'-ye 'Abbāsī*, 6.
[1582] Kaempfer, *Am Hofe*, 136.

of the mosque's vestibule is used for ritual ablution. It is not certain whether it was a part of the mosque's original design, and used as a ground for ritual ablution. Pirnia indicated that such courtyards, or small squares (*maydāncha*), were integral parts of several congregational mosques in pre-modern Iran, and served as venues for the accommodation of the mosques' watchmen (*nigahbān*), and the upkeep of oils used in candles and lamps. Generally, they were situated near the entrance, before arriving in the courtyard and the mihrab hall.[1583] The one in Masjed-e Shah fits this depiction, and could have been functioned as an accommodative space for the complex's employees, and storage for keeping the utensils and necessaries utilized in the mosque and madrasas. However, having successive ablutions that are separated from each other by walls, the design of the small courtyard in Masjed-e Shah is more suitable for ritual ablutions. In any case, it seems improbable that the huge water basin in the vestibule was for ritual ablution, and it must be either the small courtyard, or the pool inside the courtyard, as Kaempfer argued for several mosques, or both, that was used as Masjed-e Shah's ablution section/s. (Figure C154)

The mosque's vista consists of a rectangular and domed entrance room flanked with two smaller domed chambers, and two twisted corridors run left and right. Comprising a small domed chamber, the eastern corridor is shorter than the western one, which is also composed of three identical domed units, but reached by another three identical vaulted chambers. The visitor reaches the courtyard, passing through one of these twisted corridors, which lead to arched openings flanking the northern iwan of the open courtyard. If one prefers the eastern one, s/he has to pass to a domed chamber, and turn left to access the opening to the east of the northern iwan. If the western corridor is used, the visitor should turn right twice after entering a domed chamber, and walk a

[1583] Examples of these small courtyards are seen in the old congregational mosques in Isfahan and Yazd. Pirnia, *Mi'mārī-ye Irānī*, 290.

longer distance to reach the courtyard. Along with the rotations, a rhythmic series of two-storied arches stretching in each direction offers changing views and angles of each corridor, the courtyard, and the iwans to the visitor passing through. (Figure C155) Besides serving as a passageway, this circular vestibule constitutes an architectural unit upon which the whole plan rotates, for the maydan and the mosque have different axes. While the square runs north to south, the mosque's axis should be in the direction of Mecca, northeast to southwest.[1584] The mosque's principal façade had to remain flush with the southern edge of the Naqsh-e Jahan Square, whereas the mosque had to be reoriented towards the direction of prayer, Mecca. (Figure C156) The designers and architects of the monument solved this problem with the creation of a twisted vestibule, and exploited the potential for visual and theatrical impact.[1585] (Figurs C157–C159)

The mosque has a wide rectangular courtyard with dimensions of 50 x 60 meters.[1586] It is organized around four high and wide iwans opening at the center of each side. (Figures C160–C161) The identical eastern and western iwans have square small domed chambers behind, whereas the southern one invites the visitor to the main covered prayer hall. Serving as the muazzin's cage, a roofed wooden structure known as *goldasta* tops the western iwan. The southern iwan is distinguished from the others with its 48-meter-long double minarets,[1587] monumental dimensions, and squinch-net vaulting. These four iwans are connected by rhythmic arcades. Except for the qibla side, the arches run in two stories. The design and rhythm of these double arcades repeat those surrounding the maydan, creating a visual congruity between two neighbouring and connected structures. (Figure C162) Similar to those surrounding the square, at least some of the upper arcades around the mosque's central seems to have had residential qualities. According to

[1584] Pope, *Survey of Persian*, III, 1186.
[1585] Babaie, "Splendid Mosques", 159.
[1586] Dadkhah, "Mutaāla'ā-ye Tārīkhī", 81.
[1587] Ibid, 81.

Chardin's testimony, the central courtyard's upper galleries served as abodes for mollas and their disciples.[1588]

The successive arcades on the northern façade of the courtyard lead the visitor to four connected identical domed units, forming columned and arcaded corridors on each side. The repetitive pointed arches share the form of the iwans, and create visual and formal continuity and unity in the whole façade of the courtyard. The number of double arcades displays differences on each side of the courtyard. Whereas the lateral iwans are each flanked by three successive double arches, five sequential arcades fringe the northern iwan. The southern iwan, on the other hand, has two flanking arched openings leading to hypostyle cloisters on each side of the main prayer hall. Each corner of the southern façade is marked with double arches, which are shorter than the neighboring arched openings and identical with the arcades enveloping the courtyard's other sides. Fed by running water through canals from outside the mosque, a horizontally situated oblong pool lays at the center of the courtyard, reflecting the double arcades and iwans (Figure C163)

To the south of the courtyard lay the mosque's covered prayer halls, forming a tripartite architectural ensemble that repeats the courtyard's dimensions. It comprises a domed chamber and two flanking hypostyle oratories. Accessed directly through the southern iwan, the main domed hall features a square of 20 x 20 meters, housing the main mihrab and the stone minbar. Except for the qibla side, each wall has a huge arched opening at its center, connecting the room with the courtyard and the lateral oratories. On the qibla wall, the tiled mihrab is placed on a buttress, serving as the prayer niche. In front of it is a hollow lower than the hall's prayer ground, functioning as the prayer leader's

[1588] Chardin, *Voyages*, VIII, 56.

location during prayers. Most probably, it was conceived as a symbol reminding Imam Ali's laceration in the same location in Kufa Mosque. (Figures C164–C165)

Having a considerable distance between its two shells, a discontinuous double-shell dome surmounts the prayer hall.[1589] The outer bulbous dome with a high drum has a height of 54 meters while the inner one is 38 meters high.[1590] Between the inner and outer domes is a distance of 16 meters. Transition between the dome and the walls is provided with a squinch-net leading to an octagonal base, which is created by eight pointed arches recessed on the hall's walls and edges. On the qibla wall, each side of the buttress is divided into two superimposed arched niches, the lower ones blind, the upper ones forming balconies on the edges. The corners connecting the huge arched openings on three sides shares the same design, featuring superimposed double arcades with upper balconies. The use of repetitive superimposed arcades renders each wall into a network of successive arches descending from the dome. Brightness provided by eight latticed windows on the drum and the gigantic iwan opening brings the harmonious composition of repetitive pointed arches into view. (Figures C166–C168)

On each side of this main domed hall is a hypostyle oratory of ample dimensions, a *shabistān*, featuring extensions of the main mihrab sanctuary. That both halls contain mihrabs indicates that they served as praying grounds. Pointed arched openings on its eastern and western sides connect the domed mihrab hall with these flanking cloisters. At the same time, they have direct access to the courtyard through identical arched openings, fringing the southern iwan. Having a north-south orientation, each of these identical oratories forms an oblong hall with dimensions of 20 x 40 meters. Each hall consists of eight uniform domical units, resting on octagonal marble pillars. Transition to the domes is provided by kite-shaped squinch-nets, forming a star-shaped configuration on the inner

[1589] Ashkan and Ahmad, "Discontinuous Double-Shell", 289.
[1590] Dadkhah, "Mutaāla'ā-ye Tārīkhī", 82.

surface of each dome. The concentration of vault thrusts onto the relatively slim stone columns rendered possible the surmounting of vast areas with the minimum solid interruption, and the wideness of the arches enabled the whole congregation to follow a single prayer leader in the entire sanctuary.[1591] The slim halls are brightened through tripartite fenestrations opened inside four pointed arches recessed on the side walls. The light's arrival through latticed windows creates changing reflections inside. (Figures C169–C171)

The evidence suggests that Masjed-e Shah's covered prayer sections were not limited to the main domed sanctuary and its flanking cloisters. Muhammad Hasan Jabiri Ansari, who composed a history of Isfahan and its monuments in the 1940s, argued that the small hypostyle rooms to the north of the lateral iwans functioned as winter prayer halls.[1592] That Iranian mosques' some covered spaces, *shabistān*, have sometimes denominated as *zimistān* and hence been associated with winter[1593] supports this suggestion. While the room next to the eastern domed hall consists of four identical domed units, its counterpart on the western side comprises three such units. Based on the fact that they are completely covered and more proper as winter halls, Emami has confirmed Ansari's suggestion concerning these parts' function.[1594] It might be suggested that both the hypostyle halls flanking the main domed chamber in the south, and the completely covered rooms to the north of lateral iwans functioned as winter prayers halls, depending the severity of the cold. Since the known contemporary sources are silent about these sections' function, these suggestions remain as hypothetical.

The function of square domed chambers behind the side iwans is also not completely clear. Golombek has suggested that these halls were probably parts of the

[1591] Pope, *Survey of Persian*, III, 1187; Golombek, "Anatomy", 7.
[1592] Ansari, *Tarikh-e Isfahan*, 362.
[1593] O'Kane, "Iran", 119.
[1594] Emami, "Inviolable Thresholds", 178.

madrasas.[1595] Emami has supported this suggestion based on the extensive use of hadiths in their inscriptions, which lends them a scholastic aura.[1596] Chardin's report on these lateral rooms confirms the suggestion of Golombek and Emami. The traveler reported that the side iwans contained several books that were used in teaching.[1597] Each hall houses a mihrab put on its southern wall, suggesting that they were used as prayer grounds too, at least by the madrasa staff. Measuring 12 x12 meters,[1598] these identical square rooms figure smaller replicas of the main domed sanctuary, repeating its main configuration. Each room is covered by a dome carried by a squinch-net leading to an octagonal base. The division of the walls and edges into zones with superimposed arches also echoes the main prayer hall's design. (Figure C172) Unlike the main prayer hall, these smaller halls have direct access to the lateral courtyards, provided with double entrances opened on either side of their mihrabs.

Two rectangular courtyards flank the entire assembly of covered prayer halls on the mosque's southern edge. Featuring a north-south orientation, each courtyard has the dimensions of 30 x 50 meters,[1599] overreaching the length of the covered prayer ensemble, and bulging into the borders of the mosque courtyard. They are connected to the central courtyard by three arched openings on each side, and have openings to the domed rooms behind the lateral iwans. Containing trees and a pool at its center, each courtyard is surrounded by successive single-storied arcades. The number of identical arcades stretching on the long edges is ten, while their short sides are composed of four uniform arches flanking iwans, rising at the center of each short edge. The southern iwan in each courtyard serves a a gate opening to the street behing the complex, providing access to the

[1595] Golombek, "Anatomy", 8.
[1596] Emami, "Inviolable Thresholds", 178.
[1597] Chardin, *Voyages*, VIII, 56.
[1598] Calculated based on Pope's plan. Pope, *Survey of Persian*, III, 1187.
[1599] Calculated based on Pope's plan. Pope, *Survey of Persian*, III, 1187.

visitors. Today, the eastern courtyard has some cells (*hujra*), which must have been added in the late nineteenth century. They do not appear in the earliest plan of the complex, prepared by Pascal Coste in the 1840s.[1600] (Figure C157)

In terms of its architectural and spatial configuration, the Masjed-e Shah complex can be regarded as a part of an approximately five centuries-old architectural tradition in Iran. It owes several features to earlier buildings erected in the region.[1601] At the same time, some significant innovations in its formal and architectural design distinguish this monument from the previously built mosques of Iran. Masjed-e Shah's general design follows one of the prominent plan-types of Iranian mosques built in Islamic Iran, which was established as the classical congregational mosque beginning with the Seljuq era. The first four Islamic decades in Iran witnessed the erection of hypostyle mosques with inner courtyards, repeating more or less the congregational mosques constructed in Arab lands.[1602] Beginning with the ninth century, mosques comprised of square domed chambers, *chahār tāq*, four arches, appeared as among the most common plan types preferred in Islamicizing Iran.[1603] In some of the kiosk mosques established in Khurasan and Iranian Iraq, *Iraq-e Ajām*, monumental iwans resembling the majestic one in the Sassanian Palace at Ctesiphon were incorporated into the plans.[1604] In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, most of these domed chambers, along with several hypostyle mosques, were rendered into courtyard mosques through the incorporation of rectangular or square precincts.[1605] Changing in number between one and four, iwans dotting the courtyards' edges were an integral part of this plan type.[1606] With the transformation of several

[1600] Coste, *Monuments Moderne*, 25.
[1601] Pope, *Survey of Persian*, III, 1188; Golombek, "Anatomy", 7; Babaie and Haug, "Isfahan x. Monuments (3) Mosques"; Hillenbrand, "Safavid Architecture", 789.
[1602] Pirnia, *Mi'mārī-ye Irānī*, 262–264; O'Kane, "Iran and Central", 119–120.
[1603] Chelmenizkij, "Architecture", 356; Godard, *Kunst des Iran*, 231–234; Grabar, "Visual Arts", 633;
[1604] Godard, *Kunst des Iran*, 231, 237, 241; O'Kane, "Iran and Central", 121.
[1605] Chelmenizkij, "Architecture ", 354.
[1606] Godard, *Kunst des Iran*, 235.

existing mosques and the erection of new ones under Seljuq patrons, the congregational mosque in Iran evolved into its classical form of a courtyard with multiple iwans, hypostyle halls, and a domed chamber on the qibla side.[1607]

The first four iwan mosque of Iran, *Masjed-e Jāme'-ye Iṣfahān*, or the Friday mosque of Isfahan, served as an architectural model for the majority of Iranian Friday mosques built after the eleventh century, including Masjed-e Shah, not only with its general layout, but also with the spatial, architectural, and decorative experiments it witnessed under the patronage of successive Muslim dynasties.[1608] The Friday mosque of Isfahan is centered on a rectangular open courtyard, whose edges are punctuated by four monumental iwans, and which was surrounded by several hypostyle covered sections. This four-iwan structure was built by the Seljuq patrons in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries on the foundations of an Abbasid mosque, which featured a hypostyle structure with a maqsurah. The Seljuq patrons introduced a monumental dome in front of the mihrab, over the maqsurah, *Gonbad-e Mālek al-Mulk* (the dome of Malek al-Mulk), four iwans on the edges of the courtyard, and a square pavilion surmounted by a dome opposite to the maqsurah dome, behind the northern iwan, *Gonbad-e Tāj al-Mulk* (the dome of Taj al-Mulk). The Ilkhanids, Muzaffarids, Timurids, and Safavid built discrete architectural units alongside the mosque, which were more or less integrated to it. The areas between and behind the iwans had different hypostyle rooms and sections, which served as praying or educational grounds.[1609] With its general layout, symmetrically-located iwans, various covered sections, and monumental maqsurah dome, this mosque

[1607] Blair and Bloom, *Art and Architecture*, 5.
[1608] For the history of the Friday mosque of Isfahan, see Galdieri, *Isfahan: Masgid-i Guma*, I–III; Grabar, *Great Mosque*; Pope, *Survey of Persian*, III, 954–960; Pirnia, *Mi'mārī-ye Irānī*, 272–273; Keyani, *Tārīkh-e Hunar-e Mi'mārī*, 58–60.
[1609] In the post-Mongol era, some sections of the mosque began to be used by particular groups, including Sufis and Shi'is. There was a Shi'ite prayer area near the eastern iwan, and a room near the northern dome for all-night praying Sufis. Grabar, *Great Mosque*, 71–72.

offered a model for successive generations of Iranian builders, including the Safavids. (Figures C173–C174)

Until the Safavid period, four iwan courtyard scheme remained as the most common layout preferred for the Friday mosques that were patronized by the successive ruling elites. Besides the Friday mosque of Isfahan, the congregational mosques Qazvin, and Zavareh that were built by the Seljuq patrons, those established by the Mongols in Varamin and Kerman, and the Timurid Friday mosques in Samarqand, Mashhad, and Herat can be counted as among examples of four iwan courtyard mosques built in the pre-Safavid era.[1610] These four iwan mosques have prayer halls filling in the areas between the iwans, which were generally surmounted by sets of smaller domes, as in the examples of the old Friday mosques in Isfahan, Kashan, and Ardistan, and the Timurid ones in Khurasan.[1611]

Its suitability for the realm's climate, with hot dry summers and cold, often snowy winters can be among the reasons behind this scheme's preeminence as a plan-type of congregational mosques.[1612] The four-iwan courtyard mosques featuring a combination of open and covered prayer grounds offered suitable sections to congregations for sharply changing weather. Iwans, providing spaces both open and enclosed,[1613] form semi-closed areas fitting the hot and dry summer days with their shading capacities, whereas covered prayer halls were needed in the course of snowy winter seasons.[1614]

Besides the major spatial composition, the designers of the Masjed-e Shah complex incorporated a set of existing architectural forms and elements into the monument. Masjed-e Shah combines the preeminent elements featuring a classical Iranian

[1610] Grabar, "Visual Arts", 631–632; Wilber, *Ilkhanid Architecture*, 35; O'Kane, *Timurid Architecture*, 195.
[1611] Naraqi, *Āsār-e Tārīkhī*, 82; Mashkati, *Historical Sites*, 58; Grabar, *Great Mosque*, 37.
[1612] O'Kane, "Iran and Central", 119.
[1613] Babaie, "Splendid Mosques", 146.
[1614] O'Kane, "Iran and Central", 119.

mosque, including a monumental dome covering the mihrab hall, an arcaded courtyard, hypostyle halls, iwans, and domed units.[1615] Emerged in diverse periods and regions, each of these architectural units appears in an elaborately integrated manner in the monument's design. Forming the mosques' inner façades, arcaded courtyards have remained as one of the primary spatial components of Iranian Friday mosques, at least since the Seljuq era. In the post-Mongol period, a new emphasis on articulated courtyard façades emerged, which was achieved through the introduction of open or blind arches, double-storied arcaded galleries, and polychrome tile decoration.[1616] The articulation of double arcaded galleries into mosque courtyards has previously been experimented in the Friday mosque of Yazd and various Timurid congregational mosques in Khurasan, including the Bibi Khanum Mosque in Samarqand, and the Gawharshad Mosque in Mashhad.[1617] (Figure C175) Following these earlier examples, the design of Masjed-e Shah's courtyard façade as a double arcaded gallery augmented its visual and spatial conjugation. (Figure C163)

In terms of their placement and compositions, the iwans and domed elements of Masjed-e Shah also follow diverse earlier examples. Similar to previously built four-iwan mosques, the iwans of Masjed-e Shah were situated cross-axially in the midst of each side of the courtyard, and this enhances the space's symmetrical ordering. At the same time, the iwans increase the courtyard façade's visual dynamism, along with the surrounding arcaded double gallery. Directing the visitors into the covered halls and the mihrab sanctuary can also be counted among the iwans' functions, considering that entrance to these sections is provided through the iwans. Except for the northern one, each iwan of Masjed-e Shah leads one to a domed hall behind. The southern iwan's featuring of more monumental dimensions, and its articulation with pairing minarets, also emphasize this

[1615] Ibid, 121.
[1616] Pinder-Wilson, "Timurid Architecture", 729, 744.
[1617] Babaie, "Splendid Mosques", 164; O' Kane, *Timurid Architecture*, 195.

function. Following the example of various precedents, such as the old Friday mosques in Isfahan, Qazvin, and Varamin, Masjed-e Shah's qibla iwan presents larger dimensions in comparison with the other ones,[1618] emphasizing the significance of the mihrab sanctuary.

All covered prayer sections of the mosque are marked with domes, one of the architectural forms associated with royalty and sanctity, similar to the iwan.[1619] In the Seljuq period, monumental domes became the standard means of roofing for maqsuras, as in the example of Isfahan's old Friday mosque,[1620] while smaller multiple domes covered other sections. Various kiosk mosques, including those in Qazvin, Natanz, Save, Qum, and Gulpayegan, which were later transformed into multiple iwan courtyard mosques, had already monumental domes covering their maqsuras.[1621] Huge domes were also used for covering maqsuras in several mosques built by successive Turcoman dynasties, including the Ali Shah and Uzun Hasan mosques in Tabriz.[1622] Masjed-e Shah's mihrab sanctuary behind the southern iwan is also covered by a monumental dome. (Figure C176)

Masjed-e Shah's smaller domes behind the side iwans, and its double dome surmounting the mihrab hall can be attributed to more specific predecessors. The placement of domes behind the side iwans has only one known precedent in Iranian architecture, and it is the Bibi Khanum Mosque in Samarqand.[1623] (Figure C177) Double-shell domes, on the other hand, have a long history in this architectural tradition, although their proliferation in mosque architecture occurred in the Timurid and Safavid epochs.[1624]

[1618] Gulriz, *Minudar*, 528; al-Isfahani, *Nasf-e Jahan*, 60, 62; Grabar, "Visual Arts", 629; Sarre, *Persischer Baukunst*, 66; Mehafzad, "Mutala'a-ye Tarikhi", 81.

[1619] Using domes for covering prayer halls is as old as the first mosques in Iran, built in the eighth and ninth centuries. Kiosk mosques are seen in various regions, and nine-bay congregational mosques in Khurasan and Central Asia featured such domed sanctuaries of the pre-Seljuq era. Finster, *Masajed-e Avvaliya*, 119-142; O'Kane, "Iran and Central", 121.

[1620] Grabar, *Great Mosque*, 55.

[1621] Godard, *Kunst des Iran*, 234; Pirnia, *Mi'mārī-ye Irānī*, 267–268.

[1622] See Chapter III, 155–156.

[1623] O'Kane, *Timurid Architecture*, 126; Golombek and Wilber, *Timurid Architecture*, 259.

[1624] Double domes were introduced to the Iranian architecture in the eleventh century, first experimented in mausolea, and then began to appear in a few mosques, including the Friday mosque in Ardistan, and the old congregational mosque in Isfahan, in the domed chamber erected by Taj al-Mulk. They were fully developed in the Ilkhanid era, mostly in monumental tomb structures, the

Covering mihrab halls with double-shell domes became a standard in the royal Timurid mosques, the mosques of Bibi Khanum in Samarqand, and Gawhadshad in Mashhad, forming the most monumental examples.[1625] The preference of double-shell domes had practical and aesthetic motivations. Achieved by the separation of the weathering surface from the internal shell, providing improved weather protection against cold and humidity is defined as its main practical benefit.[1626] Aesthetically, separating the inner and outer shells makes it possible to increase the outer one's altitude, and to keep the inner one closer to the hall's floor. In this way, the dome gains a monumental view for its audiences outside the mosque while it presents a closer view to the beholder inside the sanctuary.[1627]

The monumental pishtaq and the vestibule connecting the entrance to the courtyard were also defined as parts of the mosque architecture in Iran, and had several examples served as models for Masjed-e Shah in Isfahan. The emergence of both elements occurred in the Ilkhanid era and they became widespread in the Timurid and Safavid periods.[1628] Beginning with the fourtheenth century, the entrances of several Friday mosques built in different parts of Iran also began to be marked with high portals with fringing minarets. The congregational mosques in Yazd and Kerman, and Masjed-e Kabud in Tabriz are among the earliest precedents of this architectural arrangement applied in mosques.[1629] In a few instances, the portal minarets are paired off with another double minaret flanking the qibla iwan, including the lost Ilkhanid Friday mosque in Sultaniya, and the Bibi

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mausoleum of Oljeitu in Sultaniya constituting the most preeminent example. Hattstein and Delius, *Islam*, 354; Keyani, *Tārīkh-e Hunar-e Mi'mārī*, 60-61; Babaie, "Splendid Mosques", 155; Wilber, *Ilkhanid Architecture*, 56.

[1625] Pinder-Wilson, "Timurid Architecture", 738; O'Kane, *Timurid Architecture*, 126; Mihrafraz, "Gonbad-e Du-Pushi", 47, 52.

[1626] Ashkan and Ahmad, "Discontinuous Double-Shell ", 289; Mihrafraz, "Gonbad-e Du-Pushi", 48.

[1627] Mihrafraz, "Gonbad-e Du-Pushi", 51.

[1628] Portals with flanking minarets facing the streets or squares emerged in the second half of the thirteenth century in Anatolian madrasa complexes, the Çifte Minareli Madrasa in Erzurum and the Gökmedrese in Sivas. In the fourteenth century, this arrangement became standard for various shrine complexes in Iran, including those of Nur al-Din Abd al-Samad in Natanz, and the Rabi Rashidi in Tabriz. Blair, *Ilkhanid Shrine Complex*, 28; Blair, "Ilkhanid Architecture", 70.

[1629] Mashkati, *List of Historical*, 6; Pinder-Wilson, "Timurid Architecture", 733.

Khanum Mosque in Samarqand.[1630] The emergence of monumental pishtaqs overlooking urban landscapes can be assessed as a sign of the urban squares (*maydān*) or streets' (*khiyabān*) increasing significance in the post-Mongol era. The addition of flanking minarets to monumental portals augmented the visibility of these entrance gateways from considerable distances.[1631] Their pairing with double minarets rising on the qibla iwan would further increase the mosque's visibility from different angles and distances, as seen in the case of Masjed-e Shah.

Portals facing the urban hubs necessitated the formation of transitory spaces that would connect the entrances to the mosques' courtyards or prayer halls. In this sense, the almost simultaneous emergence of entrance complexes or vestibules, *dehlīz*, in the early fourteenth century, with that of the portals seems far from being a coincidence.[1632]Although they had been a part of several congregational mosques and other types of buildings since the early fourteenth century, the vistas of the early seventeenth century Safavid mosques feature innovations in their spatial layout. As different scholars have pointed out, the twisted corridors of Masjed-e Shah constitute one of the most inventive parts of this monument.[1633] The only predecessor of this architectural design is the Sheikh Lutfullah Mosque, whose vestibule forms an angled corridor connecting the mosque's entrance with the domed prayer hall. Besides providing a connection between the entrance and the courtyard, the vestibules made it possible for the mihrab halls and the portals to be put in different axes, as in the examples of Masjed-e Shah in Isfahan, and Shah Abbas' Friday mosque in Farahabad. Twisted vistas created the

[1630] O'Kane, *Timurid Architecture*, 126.
[1631] Golombek and Wilber, *Timurid Architecture*, 100.
[1632] Blair, *Ilkhanid Shrine Complex*, 49; Blair and Bloom, *Art and Architecture*, 14.
[1633] Golombek, "Anatomy", 8–9; Babaie and Haug, "Isfahan x. Monuments (3). Mosques"; Hillenbrand, "Safavid Architecture", 787.

opportunity for designers to direct the mosque in the qibla direction while at the same time aligning the mosque's entrances with the urban centers they overlook.

Another function of Masjed-e Shah's angled vistas is to create changing and spectacular views of the courtyard for the visitor, who walks through one of these corridors for entering the mosque. Having multiple turns, each walkway forms a meandering corridor and does not lead the visitor directly to the courtyard, nor does it offer a view of it until the last bend. Inviting the visitor to move on, the dim entrance room and narrow corridors do not evoke any idea concerning how the road takes them to the courtyard, and this arouses the beholder's curiosity. The visitor who takes either path gazes at the ever-changing angles created by the arched walls and vaulting of the corridor. After taking the last turn, s/he suddenly encounters one of the side iwans, and then the monumental qibla iwan behind the spacious and bright courtyard, respectively. The pointed-arched openings of each corridor constitute frames of the spectacular views created by the iwans and the double arcades enveloping the wide courtyard. (Figures C178–C180)

Indeed, all arched openings facing the courtyard, including the four iwans, and the ones connecting the cloisters and the madrasa precincts to the main courtyard, offer such framed views that change as the beholder moves and changes her/his standing. Similarly, the arched sideways flanking the north iwan, and the transverse vaults of the oratories fringing the main mihrab hall create changing views of repetitive and interwoven arched frames. As one walks in the courtyard, and in the covered or semi-open parts of the building, s/he gazes at constantly changing, rhythmic and dynamic views of the iwans, minarets, and numerous arcades that form a harmonious and integrated architectural unit together. (Figures C181–C183)

As observed separately by Pope and Hillenbrand, a concern for creating selective viewpoints inviting movement dominates the monument's design.[1634] The views of the mosque offered to audiences in the public square are equally dynamic. As Babaie has mentioned, the skewed axis of Masjed-e Shah created theatrical views of the pishtaq and the qibla iwan for the beholder promenading in the square, emphasizing the gradual escalation of minarets and domes.[1635] From different points at the square, the successive minarets and the bulbous dome offer spectacular views to the monument's audiences. (Figures C184–C186) This renders the monument into an object of spectacle and constitutes one of the most creative features of the Masjed-e Shah complex. The concern for creating spectacular and dynamic views must have been related to the social vitality of the square and the mosque, which acted as stages of theatrical ceremonies at the same time.

The monumental scale and the spacious configuration of the monument constitute other significant features of Masjed-e Shah, which distinguish it from the previously built Friday mosque in Iran. Its spacious courtyard, wide mihrab hall, and monumental double-shell dome have unprecedented dimensions. No Iranian mosque erected before Masjed-e Shah has a dome over fifty meters in hight, nor an open courtyard as spacious as that of Masjed-e Shah. The dimensions of some major four iwan courtyard mosques in Iran can be seen in Table 13 and compared with those of Masjed-e Shah.

[1634] Pope, *Survey of Persian*, III, 1186; Hillenbrand, "Safavid Architecture", 788.
[1635] Babaie, "Splendid Mosques", 158.

Table 13. The dimensions of some four iwan courtyard mosques in Iran[1636]

The mosque	The courtyard's dimensions	The mihrab hall's dimensions	The dome's height
The old Friday mosque of Isfahan	55 x 65	16 x 16	30
The Friday mosque of Qazvin	20 x 20	14 x 14	35
The Friday mosque of Qum	46 x 26	12,6 x 13	27
The Friday mosque of Varamin	25 x 25	10 x 10	
The Mosque of Gawharshad in Mashhad			43
The Bibi Khanum Mosque in Samarqand	30 x 20	7 x 7	40
Shah Abbas' Friday mosque in Farahabad	46,5 x 31	11,80 x 11,80	16
Masjed-e Shah	50 x 70	20 x 20	54

Among the innovative features of Masjed-e Shah are two completely new architectural elements, water basins known as *ābsang*, and the *goldasta* minaret on top of the western iwan. The mosque has seven water basins made of stone. The entrance room, the eastern corridor, the oratories flanking the mihrab sanctuary, and the domed chamber behind the western iwan house these large circular basins serving drinking water to visitors. In their study on Isfahan's *ābsang*s, Tusi and Mani demonstrated that the emergence of this architectural element stemmed from a concern for emphasizing the Shi'ite character of the Safavid state in the monuments they created, and for Shi'itizing Isfahan. Appearing in different religious and secular buildings, these water basins mainly intended to commemorate the thirstiness experienced by Imam Husein and his

[1636] Ritter, *Moscheen und Madrasabauten*, 919; Grabar, *Great Mosque*, 27; Ghannad, "Study", 474; Gulriz, *Minudar ya Bab*, 528; Nazari, "Masjed-e Jame'-e Kabir", 48; Kleiss, "Safavidische Sommerresidenz", 354-357; Pope, *Survey of Persian*, III, 1187,1188; Grabar, "Visual Arts", 630; O'Kane, "Iran and Central", 126

companions at Karbala, beside manifesting their patrons' benevolence.[1637] Masjed-e Shah's water basins can also safely be assessed as architectural elements embodying the confessional character of the sanctuary and its patrons, and the shahs' benevolence. (Figure C187)

The emergence of *goldasta*, on the other hand, appears to have been related to a practical need. The term *goldasta* denotes a roof pavilion, a small and open turret functioning as muazzin's cage.[1638] Masjed-e Shah's *goldasta* was probably the earliest example of this architectural element.[1639] According to Chardin, its name was derived from bouquets because of these turrets' formal resemblance to flower bouquets. The traveler indicated Safavids were using these turrets as muazzin's cage instead of minarets for preventing women from being seen by muazzins climbing to minarets that are higher.[1640] Bloom has offered another view and suggested that the emergence of this type of muazzin's cage emanated from a jurisprudential rule prohibiting calling for prayer from stages that are higher than the roof.[1641] (Figure C188)

The incorporation of two lateral courtyards within the walls of the mosque constitutes the most original architectural feature of the Masjed-e Shah complex.[1642] The courtyards in the southeastern and southwestern corners of the mosque have been defined as madrasas by all scholars studying the topic, except Emami, who has remained sceptical concerning their function. Considering the lack of cells around them, as oppose to other madrasa structures in the region, and of any contemporary references to their function as madrasas, he has suggested that these lateral courtyards may have functioned as pleasant

[1637] Tusi and Mani, "Sangabhā-ye Isfahān", 51–54.
[1638] Ritter, *Moscheen und Madrasabauten*, 203.
[1639] Ibid, 205.
[1640] Chardin, *Voyages*, VII, 252.
[1641] Bloom, *Minaret*, 179.
[1642] Golombek, "Anatomy", 8; Hillenbrand, "Safavid Architecture", 787.

venues for prayer, or open-air grounds for madrasa students during summer.[1643] In my opinion, it is more likely that they were conceived as madrasa courtyards since their spatial configuration is akin to the madrasa plans in the region.[1644] (Figures C189–C190)

If they were conceived as madrasa courtyards, as suggested by the conventional wisdom, and supported as by the waqf document, their incorporation into the original plan of a congregational mosque presents a unique case in the Islamic architectural tradition. It is true that from the earliest Islamic centuries onwards, several Iranian mosques served as centers of higher education,[1645] and this practice continued in the Safavid era.[1646] As discussed previously in this chapter, accompanying separate madrasa structures with Friday mosques was alson seen in some complexes built in post-Mongol Iran. Before Masjed-e Shah, however, none of the Iranian courtyard madrasas made up an integral part of the mosque structure, and there is no architectural precedent of the Masjed-e Shah complex in the Iranian architectural tradition. Different scholars have deemed some Timurid mosque complexes as models for Masjed-e Shah. Pope argued that Gawharshad's congregational mosque in Mashhad inspired the designers of Masjed-e Shah[1647] while O' Kane regarded Gawharshad's mosque complex in Herat as Masjed-e Shah's architectural predecessor.[1648] None of these two complexes had madrasas as an integral part of the mosque structures. In the Herat complex, the madrasa forms a separate edifice,[1649] and the mosque in Mashhad does not include a separate courtyard madrasa structure.[1650] (Figure

[1643] Emami, "Inviolable Thresholds", 178.
[1644] Most of the Iranian madrasas were centered on oblong courtyards that were surrounded by arcades and whose short edges featured as iwans leading to teaching halls. See Pirnia, *Mi'mārī-ye Irānī*, 341–365.
[1645]Until the eleventh century, most congregational mosques also served as venues of teaching, when the Seljuq patrons began to establish separate madrasa structures. Keyani, *Tārīkh-e Hunar-e Mi'mārī*, 9. Several Friday mosques in the post-Seljuq era, especially in the Ilkhanid period, continued to serve as madrasas. Blair, *Ilkhanid Shrine Complex*, 191.
[1646] The old congregational mosque of Isfahan, for example several mosques housed teaching circles and debate sessions of scholars. Moazzin, *Sacred Geography*, 41–42.
[1647] Pope, *Survey of Persian*, III, 1188.
[1648] O'Kane, *Timurid Architecture*, 20.
[1649] Aube, Lorain and Bendezu-Sermiento, "Complex of Gawhar", 62–63.
[1650] Golombek and Wilber, *Timurid Architecture*, 328–331.

C148) The most prominent examples of courtyard madrasas that were integrated into the plan of congregational mosque complexes belong to the Ottoman architectural tradition.

The Friday mosque of Mehmed II (r. 1451–1481) had two rows of axially located eight madrasas within its outer courtyard. Another example is the congregational mosque complex of Sultan Süleyman built in the 1550s, which is surrounded by a wide platform flanked by two rows of madrasas.[1651] (Figures C16, C18) Unlike Masjed-e Shah, however, these Ottoman madrasas were not adjacent to the mentioned sultanic mosques on two sides, but located in their larger courtyards. Despite the difference in their spatial configurations, the mosque-madrasa connection shared by the mentioned Ottoman mosques and Masjed-e Shah is worth considering. Having underlined the Safavids' knowledge of the Ottoman urban culture and the interconnection between the two sides, determining any specific connection between the mentioned sultanic madrasas and the Masjed-e Shah complex is difficult. However, the primacy of madrasas in the Ottoman sultanic mosque complexes could have inspired the patrons of Masjed-e Shah. In both contexts, the attachment of royal madrasas to the Friday mosques can be assessed as a manifestation of the significance attached to these institutes of higher education as places for confessional indoctrination.

The latitudinal axis of its central courtyard is also among distinguishing architectural features of the Masjed-e Shah complex.[1652] Since at least the construction of the Varamin Mosque in the Ilkhanid era, the central courtyards of almost all Iranian congregational mosques had an elongated axis leading from the portal to the qibla wall. This established custom was changed in Masjed-e Shah, and here, the massive size of the southern iwan, with its flanking minarets, marks the qibla direction. This orientation was conceived to retain the mosque's view from the Naqsh-e Jahan Square because 'it leads to

[1651] See Kafescioğlu, *Constantinopolis/ Istanbul*, 81–82; Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 210.
[1652] Emami, "Inviolable Thresholds", 178–179.

a closer clustering of domes, iwans, and minarets, which in turn gives a more harmonious profile to the building.'[1653] According to Emami, Masjed-e Shah's monumental silhouette, achieved by outward display of minarets and domes, along with its vast interior spaces, bears a resemblance to sixteenth century Ottoman imperial mosques in Istanbul.[1654] Similar to the incorporation of double madrasas to the mosque's original plan and the use of monumental domes for covering the main prayer hall, this architectural feature exemplifies the convergences between the Safavid and Ottoman architectural-spatial concepts, and evokes the possibility of an interconnection between these two architectural cultures.

6.2.2 The decoration of the Masjed-e Shah complex

6.2.2.1 Tiles

The Masjed-e Shah complex is a lavishly decorated structure. Polychrome underglaze-painted ceramics form the dominant decorative element, beside a few examples of stone carving sprinkled inside and out, and silver engraving at the entrance gate. Following the majority of the previously built Safavid religious buildings, it is totally clad in a veil of tiles inside and out, such as Masjed-e Ali and the Shrine of Harun-e Velayet in Isfahan, or the Sheikh Safi Shrine in Ardabil.[1655] The architectural predilection for covering the interior surfaces, façades, minarets and the exteriors of domes of architectural monuments with polychrome underglaze-painted tiles emerged in the Ilkhanid period and accelerated under Timurid patronage.[1656] The use of glazed tiles on earthen building materials has practical and aesthetic advantages. Besides earning vaults and domes a protective coating

[1653] Ibid, 179.
[1654] Ibid, 179.
[1655] Porter, *Islamic Tiles*, 71; Babaie, "Building", 35–36.
[1656]Wilber, "Development of Mosaic"; Porter, *Islamic Tiles*, 62–81; Degeorge and Porter, *Art*, 103–121; Babaie, "Splendid Mosques", 148–153.

against the weather, they enhanced the monuments' visibility from a distance. Further, it created a great impetus toward the augmenting bold usage of color in architecture.[1657] This decorative preference reached a peak during the Safavid epoch. Along with the Sheikh Lutfullah Mosque, Masjed-e Shah constituted the most intensely tiled mosque in Iran. Experimented in the Masjed-e Shah complex, covering a wide surface of approximately 50,000 square meter with underglaze-painted polychrome tiles, is without precedent in Iranian architectural tradition.[1658] This intensive use of colorful tiles was instrumental for creating an extravagant decoration, which reflects the aesthetic appeals and sensibilities of the era encountered in several contemporary European and Islamic architectural cultures, including the Ottomans. As Necipoğlu has pointed, the appearance of the same phenomenon in the Sultan Ahmed Mosque speaks for this shared sensibility.[1659] The sanctuary's creation as a stage of theatrical religious ceremonies and banquets offered by the court, which will be discussed in this chapter's last part, must also have augmented the concern for designing a palatial decoration and environment in the mosque.

Ceramics covering Masjed-e Shah's different sections were produced with three distinct methods, including cut-tile mosaic (*mu'arriq*), seven colors (*haft rang*) known as cuerda seca[1660], and glazed brick (*bannā'ī*).[1661] The use of two or three techniques in tile revetments of the same building is not without precedent in Iran. Several Timurid monuments also combined mosaic faience, glazed brick, and *haft rang* in different sections.[1662] In Masjed-e Shah, the majority of large flat surfaces are lined in *haft rang* ceramics, whereas cut-tile mosaics are preferred mostly in concave areas.[1663] (Figures

[1657] Wilber, "Development of Mosaic", 18, 23; Mahir al-Naqsh, *Kashi va Karbord*, 47.
[1658] Alimordi, "Sayr-e Tahavvul-e Kashikari", 4.
[1659] Necipoğlu, "Transregional Connections", 272.
[1660] In her dissertation, Holakooei demonstrated the differences in the production of cuerda seca and *haft rang* tiles, and contends that the two terms are not synonyms. Holakooei, "Technological Study", 185-186.
[1661] Doğan, "Isfahan Mescid-i Şah'ta", 73.
[1662] Porter, *Islamic Tiles*, 64.
[1663] Degeorge and Porter, *Art*, 155.

C191–C192) Glazed bricks appear on the inner surfaces of the iwans and the vestibule, along with some squinches and corners. (Figure C193) Although *haft rang* is not a new technique in the seventeenth century Iran, its extensive use distinguishes Masjed-e Shah from previously built Iranian monuments. Since the Timurid era, mosaic faience, or cut-tile mosaics, had been defined as the most preferred medium of revetment for most royal architectural monuments. Cut-tile mosaic comprises variously shaped segments cut out of monochrome tiles, and assembled according to a predetermined pattern.[1664] Since making mosaic faience is slow and expensive, the designer/s of Masjed-e Shah limited its use merely on some curved surfaces, after they faced the pishtaq with cut-tiles.[1665]

It is generally argued that Shah Abbas' impatience to see his monument finished, led the monument's designers to embrace *haft rang* tiles instead of faience mosaic.[1666] Degeorge and Porter challenge this argument, and assert that 'this assessment fails to take account of the centuries of effort that first had to be acquired to master the technological skills required.'[1667] Whether it is preferred for this reason or another, *haft rang* technique is speedier and less costly than mosaic tiles.[1668] Deriving its name from six colorful glazes, green, brown, turquoise, violet, blue, and yellow, applied on a white fired glaze, *haft rang* denotes a set of rectangular tiles put together and compose a whole design. The mixture of different glazes is prevented by the use of black lines underlining each motif in the whole pattern.[1669] Despite its practical advantages, *haft rang* tiles of Masjed-e Shah do not have the same quality as cut-tile mosaics adorning parts of the same monument, especially those covering the pishtaq. Along with its tiles' higher quality, its placement facing north causes the pishtaq always to remain in shadow, and protects its tile

[1664] Pope, *Survey of Persian*, III, 1326; O'Kane, *Timurid Architecture*, 68.
[1665] Porter, *Islamic Tiles*, 68.
[1666] Ibid, 68; Holakooei, "Technological Study", 4; Blow, *Shah Abbas*, 224.
[1667] Degeorge and Porter, *Art*, 155.
[1668] Ibid, 154.
[1669] Holakooei, "Technological Study", 5.

revetments from negative effects of the sunbeams. It has also been taken into consideration that almost all tiles of Masjed-e Shah were replaced in the 1930s, based on the revetments that remained in situ.[1670] Thus, it is uncertain whether the difference between the quality of the monument's mosaic and *haft rang* tiles was originally as big as it is today.

The decorative program of the monument involves a diversity of patterns, and combines epigraphic compositions with floral and geometric elements, appearing either on tiled panels or carved stones. Inscription bands alternate with panels presenting a splendid diversity of vegetal and geometrical motifs. Whereas stone carvings remain colorless or painted in black, the tiles are deployed in a vast palette including different tones of blue, lapis lazuli, yellow, green, white, red, gray and black. (Figure C194) Cobalt blue, turquoise and yellow constitute the predominant colors of the palette. Colorful compositions mostly appear in panels decorated with floral compositions, which predominate the edifice's ornamentation program. Most visible surfaces present polychrome vegetal patterns painted under a colorless glaze. The walls, iwans, and arches of the monument are adorned with diverse compositions of palmettes, leaf and arabesque scrolls, chinoiserie lotus blossoms, and flower posies and vases, mostly appearing in arched frames. (Figures C195–C196) The majority of marble corners beneath the tile panels are carved as vases, and the walls of the monument resemble to gardens with diverse flowers and plants put in these marble amphoras. (Figure C197) As observed by Porter, the repetitive and extended use of vegetal motifs' distinct variations earned uniformity to Masjed-e Shah's tile works, which is defined as one of the distinguished features of its decoration.[1671] Similarly, the domical elements are lined in variations of a

[1670] Ibid, 19.
[1671] Porter, *Islamic Tiles*, 75.

single pattern, a medallion spreading like a sunburst, often painted in yellow. (Figure C198)

As different scholars have pointed out, both floral motifs and medallions of Masjed-e Shah are based on a visual repertoire repeated in different media, including textiles, carpets, book binding and illumination. As under the Timurids, there was a well-defined court style appearing on different works of art and architecture, and earning courtly works of art a visual and stylistic uniformity.[1672] Shah Abbas oversaw a highly organized artists' workshop producing textiles, paintings, carpets, and luxury items.[1673] The establishment of defined court designs and visual vocabularies was not peculiar to the era of Abbas I. Royal workshops and ateliers, mostly known as *ketabkhāna*, had been a part of the Iranian court cultures since the medieval era, culminating during the Ilkhanid and Timurid epochs. The first Safavid royal workshop-cum-library was founded during the age of Ismail I, and improved by Shah Tahmasb. In the mid-sixteenth century, a classical mode of ornament associated with the Safavid empire was codified, simultaneously with the Ottoman empire.[1674] Transmuting the Timurid-Turkmen repertory of decorative patterns, the visual vocabulary established in Tahmasb's royal workshop provided the base of Shah Abbas' decorative repertoire appearing on different media, including architectural monuments. Similar to his great grandfather, he endeavored to mark his empire's territories with a recognizable visual idiom.[1675] From Isfahan to Ardabil and Mashhad, the architectural ornamentation commissioned by Abbas I announces a unified visual landscape identified with the person of the shah, and his religio-political

[1672] Canby, *Shah Abbas*, 20; Porter, *Islamic Tiles*, 76.
[1673] Canby, *Shah Abbas*, 36.
[1674] Necipoğlu, "Early Modern Floral", 133.
[1675] Ibid, 154.

agenda.[1676] The political centralization realized by Shah Abbas was paralleled by an artistic centralization.[1677]

The paired peacocks and a paradise garden motif with different animals are among the visual patterns appearing both on Masjed-e Shah and on different media commissioned by the Safavid elites. The main gate of Masjed-e Shah contains the image of two confronted peacocks flanking a vase with flowers. (Figure C199) A tile panel on the northern wall of the eastern cloister depicts an image of a garden with birds, tigers, lions, deers, monkeys, and turtles wandering around cypresses and other different trees. (Figure C200) Both the paired peacocks and the garden image are seen with changes in some details on a carpet known as *Tapis de Mantes*, created in the second half of the sixteenth century.[1678] (Figure C201) The paired peacocks also appear on the pishtaqs of Ardabil Shrine and the Kerman Friday Mosque, both decorated in the sixteenth century by Safavid patrons.[1679] While adorning religious sanctuaries with floral motifs is a common phenomenon in the Islamic architectural tradition, the use of animal figures as a decorative element within the context of the religious architecture has very few examples. Decorating places of worships, especially prayer sections, with figurative images has often been discouraged in the Islamicate context due to the fear of idolatry.[1680] The same concern was shared by the sheikh al-Islam of the period, who regarded drawing images of animate beings on the mosque's wall as an unlawful act (*ḥaram*) in his catechism.[1681] The figures' placement at the entrance gates facing the urban sites, outside the visual borders of the prayer halls, may have rendered their usage tenable.

[1676] Canby, *Shah Abbas*, 21.
[1677] Blow, *Shah Abbas*, 219.
[1678] *Istanbul, Isfahan, Delhi*, 200.
[1679] Ibid, 247.
[1680] Doğan, "İsfahan Mescid-i Şah'ta", 67.
[1681] Sheikh Baha'i, *Jame-e Abbasi*, 71.

The second tile panel on the northern wall of the eastern cloister, depicting an image of a garden with birds, tigers, lions, deers, monkeys, and turtles, constitutes a more extraordinary case. Its placement on the wall of a prayer hall, and visibility to those performing prayers, brings to the mind the question of its legitimacy. Even if rare, there are other examples of this phenomenon in the contemporary Islamic world. For instance, some figurative mosaics of Hagia Sophia in Istanbul remained intact, and Muslims performed prayers in its prayer hall adorned with figurative images until the early eighteenth century.[1682] The placement of Masjed-e Shah's garden depiction, as the figurative images in Hagia Sophia except the virgin and child mosaic right above the mihrab, outside the qibla direction, could have rendered them into tolerable images.[1683] Regarding the tile panel in Masjed-e Shah, a more significant question is the reason behind its articulation of the sanctuary's decorative program. Although its extraordinariness has been underlined,[1684] there has not been a discussion concerning its meaning and function in the sanctuary's decorative program. As the mere scholar paying special attention to this tile panel, Doğan has argued that Isfahan's contemporary Armenian art constituted its source of inspiration. Five of Isfahan's Armenian churches erected in the early seventeenth century are adorned with *haft rang* tile panels with garden images resembling the one depicted in Masjed-e Shah.[1685] The stylistic and thematic resemblance between the mentioned tiles has been assessed as a sign of influence between the Armenian and Safavid-Islamic art by Doğan.[1686] The decorative, stylistic, and architectonic similarities between the Islamic and Christian monuments of the city were more probably the result of the court's centralizing policies, and employment of the same

[1682] Necipoğlu, "Life of An", 211–218.
[1683] It has to be underlined that unlike the case of Hagia Sophia, the garden imagery in Masjed-e Shah does not incorporate humans and no Christian iconogography.
[1684] Degeorge and Porter, *Art*, 155; Golombek, "Anatomy", 9.
[1685] Carswell, *New Julfa*, 25–28.
[1686] Doğan, "Isfahan Mescid-i Şah'ta", 91–93.

groups of architects and other building staff. In the second part of this chapter, I have mentioned the Safavid court's intervention to and control over Isfahan's building projects, including the churches in Julfa. It is quite possible that Armenian artists and architects had been hired by the Safavid court both in Islamic and Christian monuments, and an interplay between the experience and repertoire of Armenian and Muslim artists and architects is an expected phenomenon. With the figurative tile panel in Masjed-e Shah, however, an Armenian, or Christian influence, seems as a remote possibility. Different versions of the image of paradisial garden had already appeared on different media, including carpets and manuscript paintings, produced in the Safavid and pre-Safavid Iran, and it was a part of Islamic-Iranian visual vocabulary before the Julfan Armenians arrival at Isfahan.

What was, then, the motive behind this scene's incorporation into the royal mosque's decorative repertoire? I argue the answer lies on the contemporary conceptions of the monument and Isfahan as ita site as a paradisial garden. Based on contemporary literary evidence, different scholars have asserted Isfahan, with its architectural monuments and gardens, had been conceptualized as a paradise-like city, and embodiment of the city of paradise.[1687] Paradise and garden constituted two themes that were inextricably attached to this city, and recur in taxonomic distinctions and associative depictions.[1688] In contemporary prose and poetry, the city had often been likened to paradise with the use of epiteps like *behesht-qarīn* (resembling paradise), or *firdavs-qarīn* (resembling the Heaven of Firdavs), *jannat-nishān* (sign of heaven, or like a heaven)[1689] In describing Shah Abbas' decision to build Masjed-e Shah, Munshi indicated that Shah Abbas had made the city of Isfahan like a paradise with charming buildings, parks in which perfume of the flowers uplifted the sprit, and streams and gardens', and 'its

[1687] Babaie, *Isfahan*, 7; Walcher, "Between Paradise", 331.
[1688] Walcher, "Between Paradise", 331.
[1689] Daneshpazhuh, "Isfahan va Tavuskhana-ye An", 169; Qazvini Isfahani, *Irān dar Zamān*, 98; Shamlu, *Qisās al-Khāqānī*, I, 276.

residential buildings, its Qaysariya, its caravanserais, and its markets called to mind the Koranic verses: Eram, the possessor of lofty buildings, the like of which have not been created in these regions.'[1690] Munshi's depiction clearly displays that Isfahan and its monuments had been conceived as paradisial settings, and Masjed-e Shah was to be articulated into this paradise-like urban environment.

Paradisial imagery's relevance to Masjed-e Shah has been underlined by Golombek, who interpreted the use of water and trees as 'an allusion to the concept of the mosque as a preview of paradise.'[1691] In his seminal study on Iranian architecture, Pirnia has also assessed the use of pools and trees in mosques as an allusion to paradise within the context of Iranian mosques.[1692] Floral motifs, peacocks and the image of a paradisial garden appearing on Masjed-e Shah's tiles can also be interpreted as visual elements evoking a paradisial image, along with its trees and pools. The association of peacocks with gardens of paradise is confirmed by contemporary poetry. In different poems, Saib Tabrizi (d.1676) uses the phrases of the peacock of paradise, *tavūs-e jannat* and *tavūs-e behesht*, implying this bird's association with heavenly gardens in the Safavid imagery.[1693] Peacocks' appearance in the actual gardens of Isfahan, which were associated with paradise, confirms this suggestion too. The Pavilion of Eight Paradises, *Hesh-Behesht*, for instance, has a tile panel with a peacock image overlooking the garden surrounding the edifice. (Figure C202) In the late seventeenth, the city gained a peacock garden, the abode of peacocks, *tavūs-khāna*, home to peacocks brought from Georgia. This garden and its peacocks were likened to a heavenly setting by late Safavid poet

[1690] Munshi, *History of Shah*, II, 1038.
[1691] Golombek, "Anatomy", 10.
[1692] Pirnia, *Mi'mārī-ye Irānī*, 291.
[1693] See ghazals 2890 and 4588. https://ganjoor.net/saeb/divan-saeb/ghazalkasa

Simnanı: "This paradisial garden (*bāgh-e behesht*) became a place of peacocks (*jā-ye tavūs*)."[1694]

6.2.2.2 The epigraphic program[1695]

Besides floral ornaments, inscriptions constitute another predominant element in Masjed-e Shah's decorative program, which was documented by Hunarfar, and discussed by Khoury, Blair and Babayan.[1696] The monument's pishtaq, iwans, domes, prayer halls, mihrabs and some water basins contain circular or quadrangular inscriptional panels executed in different styles. The visitor of the sanctuary first encounters the inscriptions on the portal screen, referring to the patron, the foundation and functions of the sanctuary, and emphasizing its distinctive Shi'ite character through particular hadiths, invocations, and poems. The pishtaq has a horizontal foundation inscription composed in two sections. While the first one runs around the three sides of the iwan below the muqarnas semi-dome, the other is set on the external frame of the iwan's arch. This thuluth inscription consists of two lines, separated by the elongated risers of *lām, alif*, and similar tall letters. (Figures C203–C204) Bearing the date of 1616–17 (1025 AH), it is written in white on lapis lazuli ground, and signed by Ali Reza Abbasi. Contrasting with the rest of the text, the shah's name is written in light blue in the panel above the entrance gate. (Figure C142) Highlighting the patron's name with a distinct color is not an innovation in the seventeenth century Isfahan. Earlier examples of this composition are seen in the old congregational mosque in Isfahan, the Harun-e Velayat Shrine, and Masjed-e Ali.[1697] The

[1694] Daneshpazhuh, "Isfahan va Tavuskhana-ye An", 197.
[1695] I would like to thank my friend Zeynep Kocaaslan for assisting me in reading and translating the Arabic inscriptions discussed in this part.
[1696] Hunarfar, *Ganjīna-ye Āsār*, 427–463; Khoury, "Ideologies and Inscriptions"; Blair, "Inscribing the Square", 19–24; Babayan, *City as Anthology*, 40–46. I could not Access to Khoury's master thesis and refer to this study via Babayan.
[1697] Blair, "Inscribing the Square", 15, 19.

inscription addresses the pillars of the shah's legitimacy, including his dynastic and spiritual genealogies, justice and benevolence. It shows that the sanctuary was erected through the private funds of Shah Abbas, and its spiritual rewards were dedicated to his great grandfather, Shah Tahmasb:

> Having the most honorable genealogy, the most benevolent lineage, the highest glory and the strongest evidence; and being among the most judicious and beneficent sovereigns, the dust of the Sacred Threshold, Abu al-Muzaffar al-Huseini al-Mosavi al-Safavi Bahadur Khan ordered this congregational mosque's building through his personal funds. At the moment, all powerful rulers of the world stay at his gate, lowly and their foreheads drabbled with the dust of his threshold. He dedicated the spiritual rewards of this deed to his great and generous grandfather Shah Tahmasb, may God illuminate his grave.[1698]

Framing the three sides of the monumental pishtaq, the second part of the foundation inscription mentions the mosque as a venue for performing the Friday ritual, and perpetuates the names of the overseer and architect of the sanctuary:

> Designed as a Friday mosque, the construction of this edifice has been completed with the help and favor of God. This sanctuary is al-Aqsa Mosque, whose environs are blessed. Lucky are those who took part in the organization of this structure and its columns. It is referred [here] to Muhibb Ali Beg Lala, the exalted and matchless, who did his job with the meticulousness of an engineer.[1699]

Each entablature fringing the entrance gate bears four cut-tile epigraphic medallions lined across a paisley design, written in thuluth, in black on turquoise ground. It involves the 18th verse of the surah of the Repentance, *al-Tevbe*, a passage encouraging believers to build and inhabit mosques: "Only he shall inhabit/build (*'amara*) God's places of worship who believes in God and the Last Day, and performs the prayer, and pays the alms, and fears none but God alone; it may be that those will be among the guided."[1700] (9: 18) (Figure C205)

[1698] My translation. Hunarfar, *Ganjīna-ye Āsār* 429.
[1699] My translation. Hunarfar, *Ganjīna-ye Āsār*, 430.
[1700] Hunarfar, *Ganjina-ya Asar*, 430.

The double arcades flanking the portal are adorned with three pairs of identical inscriptional bands symmetrically lined on either side. Designed as cut-tile mosaics, each panel is executed in nastaliq style, written in white, red, and yellow on cobalt. One of these inscriptions bears the famous hadith addressing Imam Ali's exalted and intercessory status in acquirance of religious knowledge and gnosis, as well as his heirdom of the Prophetic knowledge: "The Prophet said: I am the city of knowledge, and Ali is its gate."[1701] This hadith's placement on the entrance gate seems to have had symbolic references. An earlier example of this hadith's placement on a religious monument's gate appeared in the Shrine of Harun-e Velayet in Isfahan.[1702] The eastern door of this sanctuary bears the same hadith, referring to the symbolic association between the gates of sacred places providing access to sanctuaries, and Imam Ali as a spiritual agent leading the believer to the domains of gnosis and true religious knowledge.

Decorating the entablatures on either side of the identical double arcades of Masjed-e Shah's portal, the Shi'ite invocation known as *Nādi 'Alīyyan* (Call on Ali) recalls Imam Ali's status as an intercessor, and his spiritual guardianship (*walayah*): "Call on Ali, the manifestation of marvels/ He will support you in all calamities/ Every sorrow and worry will disappear/ Through your prophethood O Muhammad, and through your friendship O Ali".[1703] Below the same entablatures is a quadrangular white kufic inscription written on dark blue ground and repeats the words "Allah", "Muhammad" and "Ali". Beneath this composition is a Persian verse eulogizing the Prophet Muhammad: "Epithed as the illeterare (*'ummī*), he was among the prophets of world/ Named as Ahmad, he was the happiness of the world/

[1701] Ibid, 430.
[1702] Hillenbrand, "Safavid Architecture", 763.
[1703] My translation. Hunarfar, *Ganjīna-ye Āsār*, 430.

Since he did not have a shadow/ Shadows disappear in a place where he is accompanied by his private".[1704] (Figure C206) Adorned with vegetal motifs carved in marble, a stone carving basmalah is inscribed beneath the western one of these identical panels.[1705] (Figure C194)

The two identical minarets flanking the portal are lined in glazed brick square kufic inscriptions with a spiral composition, written in black on turquoise ground. The trunk of each minaret bears the surah of the Sincere Religion, *Iḫlas*: "Say: 'He is God, One, God, the Everlasting Refuge, who has not begotten, and has not been begotten, and equal to Him is not any one." (112: 1–4), the words of "Allah", "Muhammad, "Ali", and the phase of "God is the greatest".[1706] Under the muqarnas head of each minaret reads the 56th verse of the surah of the Confederates, *al-Aḥzāb*: "God and His angels bless the Prophet. O believers, do you also bless him, and pray him peace." (33: 56) (Figure C207) In terms of style and content, these minarets' inscriptions resemble those adorning the minarets flanking the southern iwan, which were also executed in Kufi, and written red on turquoise ground. These glazed brick inscriptions also repeat the words "Muhammad" and "Ali", and the 56th verse of the surah of the Confederates is inscribed on the heads of these minarets too.[1707] The correspondence between the contents, styles, and palette of the inscriptions adorning these pairs of minarets creates a visual harmony.

Combining a Quranic verse with two hadiths, the thuluth inscriptions inside the main gate refer to Imam Ali's caliphate, and the exalted status of the People of the House. Further, it reminds the significance of frequenting mosques to the visitor passing through this door:

[1704] My translation. Hunarfar, *Ganjīna-ye Āsār*, 430.
[1705] Ibid, 431.
[1706] Hunarfar, *Ganjīna-ye Āsār* 431–433.
[1707] Ibid, 462.

> God ordered: 'A mosque that was founded upon godfearing from the first day is worthier for thee to stand in; therein are men who love to cleanse themselves; and God loves those who cleanse themselves.' (9: 108) It is narrated by Ibn Abbas that he heard the Prophet saying: 'Ali is my successor and caliph; Fatimah is his wive and the lord of all women; Hasan and Husein are the lords of the youth of paradise. Whoever has them as their friends neighbours me, and whoever shows hostility to them treats me as an enemy. Whoever obeys them complies with me, and whoever inflicts pain o them hurts me. Whoever favours them is good towards me; whoever visits them will be treated by God in the same way; whoever gives up visiting them will not be visited by God; whoever helps them will be supported by God; whoever disappoints them will be disappointed by God's will. O God, if the prophets are of value for you, Ali, Fatimah, Hasan and Husein are of value for me, cleanse their dirties and purify them.' The commander of the faithful Ali uttered: 'Whoever frequents mosques will obtain one of the following habits: 1. Owning a good brother on the path of God 2. A desirable knowledge 3. A decisive verse of the Quran 4. An expected favour 5. An advice preventing you from making mistakes 6. Hearing a word leading you to the true path 7. Giving up engaging in a sinful deed because of shame or godfearing. The Prophet commanded: 'I am the city of knowledge, and Ali is its gate.' For sure, the Prophet told the truth.[1708]

Executed in nastaliq, a Persian chronogram inscribed on the silver door's two wings eulogizes Shah Safi, and perpetuates his patronage in the sanctuary, which is defined as 'the second Kaba of Iraq and Hijaz', and praying inside it is deemed as equal with circumambulating the Kaba. The last line of the poem gives the date of the gate's revetment with silver and gold by Shah Safi as 1042 (1632–33 AC):

Shah Safi, the sovereign of the time

> The Shah who frightens his enemies and gladdens his subjects
> From this door the angel-charachtered Shah
> Opens a road into the peerless Kaba
> When do my words draw to a close
> If I begin to describe this mosque's features
> A mosque, having the honor of Masjed al-Haram
> Praying in it is equal to praying in that Lord of the mosques
> The house of the builder of the time and space
> The second Kaba of Iraq and Hijaz
> The spirits of pigeons in the [Masjed] al-Haram
> Fly in the air of this sanctuary's fringe
> The firm silver of its door resembles to the Zarashk Gate[1709]
> With its stamp on melted gold
> This door is recently opened

[1708] My translation. Hunarfar, *Ganjīna-ye Āsār*, 433–434.
[1709] A monumental gate in Qazvin.

In Isfahan, for people of the prayer
This edifice is a monument
That was opened with blessing in the morning of pre-eternity
Circumambulating it prolongs one's lifetime
Similar to fresh water in the gardens of Najaf
The chivalry of the realms of knowledge
Khusraw of the epoch, the excellent sovereign
The sharia-affectionate Shah
Took an inspiration in the time of prayer
And gave an order for the gate of this mosque
To be faced with silver and gold
His goldsmiths pulled their fingers out
In their pleasurable workshops
With the favorite of the Shah it was finished
The shout arrived from the heavens
Wahib contemplated a chronogram and uttered
The Kaba was opened in Isfahan[1710]

The visitor passing through the corridors of the vestibule encounters glazed brick inscriptions bearing salawats to the Fourteen Immaculates, different compositions of the words "Allah", Muhammad" and "Ali", and the invocations of "Glory to be to God", "Praise be to God", and "There is no God but Allah", and "God is the greatest".[1711] These diverse epigraphic compositions are placed either on the blind arches on the walls, or on squinches. (Figure C208) When s/he arrives at the courtyard, the visitor encounters monumental *haft rang* inscriptional friezes running around the three sides of the four iwans, all executed in thuluth, in white on lapis lazuli. The epigraphic bands adorning the iwans are placed either on arch profiles, on the inner walls, and under the semi-domes. The southern iwan has an additional inscriptional frieze framing its front, which belongs to the Qajar era.[1712]

The northern iwan bears some invocations from Jawshan, a long Shi'a Islamic prayer containing attributes and names of God,[1713] a surah, a royal order issued by Shah Abbas, and salawats to the Fourteen Immaculates. Facing the

[1710] My translation. Hunarfar, *Ganjīna-ye Āsār*, 433–434.
[1711] Ibid, 436.
[1712] Ibid, 460.
[1713] For the prayer of Jawshan, see Aydınlı, "Prayer of Jawshan".

courtyard, some inscriptional medallions, executed in thuluth and written in white on lapis lazuli, were put on the arch profile. They read some invocations repeated in the Jawshan Prayer, including *yā z̲e'l-arshī va'l-sultān* (o, the owner of grandness and sovereignty), *yā ze'l-'afvī va'l-ġufrān* (o, the owner of mercy and forgivingness), *yā ze'l-mennī va'l- iḥsān* (o, the owner of favour and benevolence).[1714] (Figure C209) The two-lined thuluth inscription framing the iwan and running inside its three sides is signed by a calligrapher named as Abd al-Baqi.[1715] (Figure C210) It involves the entire surah of Man, *al-Insān*, composed of thirty-one verses. The surah focuses on the aim of man's creation, reward and punishment in the afterlife, and the significance of engaging in virtuous deeds for entering paradise. Performing the daily obligatory prayers is highlighted among these pious acts. The 25th and 26th verses of the surah read as follows: "And remember the Name of thy Lord at dawn and in the evening and part of the night; bow down before Him and magnify Him through the long night." (76: 25–26) On the western flank of the same iwan is a marble panel bearing a royal order issued by Shah Abbas in 1628–29 (1038 AH). This long panel perpetuates the shah's beneficence to a group of artisans and tradesmen in Isfahan, the merchants and dervishes from Salmani and Suleimani families, who were exempted from taxes. The order indicates that this tax break is an outcome of the shah's mercy and justice, and warns Isfahan's officers concerning meeting the case. The spiritual reward of this beneficence is granted to his father by Shah Abbas.[1716]

Similar to the northern one, the western iwan has nine inscriptional medallions, executed in thuluth and written in white on lapis lazuli, which face the courtyard and read some invocations repeated in the Jawshan Prayer, including *yā*

[1714] My translation.
[1715] Ibid, 446.
[1716] Hunarfar, *Ganjīna-ye Āsār*, 434–436.

baqiyyān lā yefnā (o, the eternal One, who does not have an end), *yā settār al-ʻuyūb* (o, the one, who veils one's disgraces), *yā ḥayy lā yamūt* (o, the living, who never dies), *yā ġaffār al-zunūb* (the all-forgiving, who forgives the sins).[1717] (Figure C211) The iwan's three sides have two thuluth inscriptional bands on the dado level. Signed by Muhammad Reza Imami, a two-lined thuluth inscriptional band on the iwan's eastern wall reads the 18th verse of the surah of Repentence, which was mentioned before, and the 18th verse of the surah of the Jinn, *al-Jinn*: "The places of worship belong to God; so call not, along with God, upon anynone."[1718] (72: 18) The Quranic verses are supported by a Shi'i hadith on the same theme, narrated by Abdullah al-Sadiq and his father Imam Baqir: "Whoever has the Quran as his speech, and the mosques as his home will own a residence in the paradise built by God."[1719] This hadith is placed on the western wall of the same iwan. (Figure C212)

The walls and dome of the prayer hall behind the western iwan are also lined up with inscriptional panels. Similar to those on the iwan, they were executed in thuluth, and written in white on lapis lazuli. Signed by Muhammad Reza al-Imami al-Isfahani, a rectangular inscriptional panel runs along the three walls of the room on the dado level:

> It is narrated from Ibn Abbas that when they were sitting in the assembly of the Prophet, Gabriel arrived with a crystal filled with musk and amber. Ali, Hasan and Husein were sitting beside the Prophet. Addressing to the Prophet, Gabriel uttered, he brought God's greetings to him, and God wills to salute you with this beautiful greeting 'Peace be upon you'. God ordered Gabriel to salute Ali and his sons with the same greeting, too. Ibn Abbas indicated the Prophet took the crystal in his hands; repeated the sentences 'God is the greatest.', and 'There is no god but Allah.', and read the following verses sharply: 'In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. *Tā-hā*. We have not sent down the Quran upon thee for thee to be unprosperous.' (20: 1–2) Than, he smelled the crystal and gave it to Ali. Ali took it and read this verse: 'In Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. Your friend is only God, and His Messenger, and the believers who perform the prayer, and pay

[1717] My translation.
[1718] Hunarfar, *Ganjīna-ye Āsār*, 450.
[1719] My translation. Hunarfar, *Ganjīna-ye Āsār*, 450.

> the alms.' (5: 55) After smelling it, Ali passed the crystal to Hasan, and Hasan read this verses: 'In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. Of what do they question one another? Of the mighty tiding whereon they are at variance.' (78: 1–3) After smelling the crystal, Hasan gave it to Husein, who read the following verse: 'In Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. Say: 'I do not ask of you a wage for this, except love for the kinsfolk; and whoever gains a good deed, We shall give him an increase of good in respect of it. Surely God is All-forgiving, All-thankful.' (42: 23) Afterwards, Husein returned the crystal to the Prophet, who read the following verses: 'In Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. God is the light of the heavens and the earth.' (24: 35) Ibn Abbas indicated: 'I do not know whether it [the crystal] was escalated to the heavens, or hidden by the earth.' It is narrated from Ali that he heard from the Prophet that he will be succeeded by Twelve Imams; the first will be Ali, and the last will be the one through him. God will conquer the east and the west. Ibn Abbas narrated he heard the Prophet saying: 'When I was escalated to the heavens, I saw it was written on the gate of the paradise: 'There is no god but Allah. Muhammad is his Messenger. Ali is the friend of God; Hasan and Husein are chosen by God. Curse be upon those who treat them as enemies.'[1720]

Signed by Abd al-Baqi Tabrizi, the inscriptions adorning the base of this hall's dome combine hadiths from Sunni and Shi'i compilations, including Ibn Hanbal's compilation *al-Musnad*, and Ibn al-Maghzali's *al-Manāqib*:

> It is narrated from Salman that the Prophet ordered: 'I and Ali were a divine light (*nūr*) in the hands of God, eulogizing and consecrating Him. It was fourteen thousand years before God created Adam. When God was creating Adam, he placed that divine light in his seed. That divine light reached Abd al-Muttalib, reverting from sperm to sperm, and remained in Abd al-Muttalib's seed as one until it split into two, prophethood and caliphate.
>
> It is narrated from Jabir ibn Abdullah in his compilation *al-Musnad*: The Prophet uttered: 'Indeed, God created a divine light and placed it into Adam's sperm, and protected it until it was split into two in the bodies of Abdullah and Abu Talib. Then, He made me appear as a prophet, and Ali as my caliph.
>
> In his book *al-Manāqib*, al-Maghazali narrated from Aisha: Ali bin Abu Talib came and the Prophet, peace be upon Him and his family, gazed at Ali and said: 'He is the Lord of the youth of Arab.' Aisha responded: 'O, the Messenger of God, are not you the Lord of the youth of Arab?' He replied: 'I am the Lord of the sons of Adam, and Ali is the Lord of Arabs.[1721] (Figure C213)

[1720] My translation. Hunarfar, *Ganjīna-ye Āsār*, 451–452.
[1721] My translation. Hunarfar, *Ganjīna-ye Āsār*, 451.

The eastern iwan does not have any inscription framing it, but two-lined thuluth inscriptions running on its two sides. (Figures C214–C215) They contain two hadiths concerning Imam Ali's deputyship:

> Abu Naim al-Muhdis narrated in his book that concerning the verse 'Ask those of Our Messengers We sent before thee', (43: 45) the Prophet uttered that on the night of the journey (*isrā'*), God gathered all prophets and ordered: 'Ask them for what purpose they were sent.' They responded: 'In order to confess that there is no God but Allah, to confirm your prophethood and Ali's deputyship (*walāyat*).
>
> It is narrated from Abu Dhar al-Giffari that the Prophet Muhammad said this for Ali bin Abu Talib: 'You are the one who split the heaven and the hell. You shall enter the paradise without being questioned when you knock on its door.'[1722]

The three walls of the square domed hall behind this iwan bear two hadiths, executed in thuluth, written in white on lapis lazuli. Taken from a Sunni compilation, one of these hadiths recounts the Ghadir Khumm event, which has been assessed as an auspicious incident where the Prophet declared Imam Ali as his deputy by Shi'i Muslims.[1723] The involvement of a narrative in one of the four canonical Sunni hadith compilations has been used as a supportive argument by Shi'is:

> In his *al-Musnad*, Ibn Hanbal narrated from Bera bin Azib that en route returning from the farewell pilgrimage, on Ghadir Khum, the Prophet called on someone from us to clean the empty space between two trees for performing the prayer, and that area was cleaned. At that moment, he raised Ali's hand and uttered: 'Am I not closer to Muslims than themselves?'. The assembly confirmed and said: 'Yes, you are so.' The Prophet continued: 'Then, whoever regards me as his friend/guardian has Ali as his friend/guardian. O God, support those who are loyal to Ali, and be the enemy of those who are hostile to Ali. Upon that, Omar approached to Ali and said: 'Congratulations, you became the lord of every single Muslim man and woman.'
>
> In his *al-Manāqib*, Ibn al-Maghazili narrated from Abu Hurayra that on the day of Mecca's conquest, the Prophet summoned Ali, and uttered: 'Are you seeing this idol upon the Kaba?'Ali responded positively, and after that, the Prophet said ordered Ali to climb on the Prophet's shoulder, and take that idol down. Ali asked the Prophet to take him on his shoulder instead, and the Prophet responded: 'Swear to God, if the families of Rabbia and Muzar

[1722] My translation. Hunarfar, *Ganjīna-ye Āsār*, 446.
[1723] On the Ghadir Khumm event, see Moussavi, "Gadir Komm".

> would attempt to carry a part of my body, they cannot do this. However, you remain standing where you are.' Afterwards, the Prophet grasped Ali's heels of foot, and raised him, so the whiteness of his arm-pits became apparent. Then, he asked Ali of what he was seeing. Ali replied: 'I see God honored me with you. If I want to touch the sky, I can do it.' The Prophet ordered Ali to take down the idol, and Ali threw it down. The Prophet pulled from under Ali, and Ali fell to the ground and laughed. The Prophet asked: 'O Ali, why did you laugh?' Ali replied: 'I have fallen from the roof of the Kaba, and nothing happened to me.' The Prophet ordered: 'How would it be possible that something happens to you, when it is me who has raised you, and it was Gabriel who has taken you down.' It is narrated from Abu Dhar al-Ghiffari that the Prophet declared: 'Whoever disputes with Ali concerning the issue of the caliphate would fight against God and his Prophet.'[1724]

Signed by the calligrapher Muhammad Gani, the epigraphic frieze running on the dome's base behind the eastern iwan bears the last ten verses of the surah of the Victory. These verses narrate the victory of the Prophet Muhammad and his companions in Mecca, and advise Muslims to engage in good deeds, and follow the right path in order to be supported by God. In these remedies for being victorious, performing the prayers occupies a central place, as underlined in the conclusive verse of the surah:

> Muhammad is the Messenger of God, and those who are with him are hard against the unbelievers, merciful one to another. Thou seest them bowing, prostrating, seeking bounty from God and good pleasure. Their mark is on their faces, the trace of prostration. That is their likeness in the Torah; and their likeness in the Gospel: as a seed that puts forth its shoot, and strengthens it, and it grows, stout and rises straight upon its stalk, pleasing the sowers, that through them He may engrace the unbelievers. God has promised those of them who believe and do deeds of righteousness forgiveness and a mighty wage.[1725] (67: 30) (Figure C216)

On the mihrab in this prayer room, the 144th verse of the surah of the Cow, *al-Baqara*, is inscribed, signed by Muhammad Salih al-Isfahani. These verses refer to Muslims' direction of prayer, and the choice of these sections for adorning the mihrab is symbolic:

> We have seen thee turning thy face about in the heaven: now we will surely turn thee to a direction that shall satisfy thee. Turn thy face towards the holy

[1724] My translation. Hunarfar, *Ganjīna-ye Āsār*, 449.
[1725] Ibid, 449.

> mosque; and whereever you are, turn your faces towards it. Those who have been given the Book know it is the truth from their Lord; God is the heedless of the things they do.[1726] (2: 144)

The southern iwan has the longest inscriptions of the whole sanctuary, which continues inside the domed prayer hall. Written by Abd al-Gani Tabrizi, a two-lined inscriptional band runs on the three walls of the iwan below the muqarnas vault, and continues inside the prayer hall. The inscription begins on the western wall of the iwan, runs around the four walls inside the domed prayer hall, and ends on the iwan's western wall. (Figures C217–C219) It contains five hadiths taken from Ibn al-Maghazili's *al-Manāqib*, a Twelver Shi'i source compiling narrations concerning Imam Ali, besides a Sunni hadith from Ibn Hanbal's *al-Musnad*. The involvement of a Sunni hadith, which narrates the Prophet's designation of Ali as his deputy in Ghadir Khumm, augments this statement's credibility for both Shi'i and Sunni audiences, and earns this panel a polemical character:

> In his *al-Manāqīb*, Ibn al-Maghazili narrated from Anas that on the day of the event of *al-Mubālaha*, cursing, when the Prophet declared the brotherhood of *al-Anṣār*, the helpers, with *al-Muhājirūn*, the fellow emigrants of the Prophet, Ali was standing, and the Prophet was seeing Ali and where he was standing. Despite this, the Prophet did not match Ali with anyone from the helpers, and declare them brothers. Upon that, Ali left the assembly, his eyes to be filled with tears. The Prophet looked for Ali, and asked where Abu al-Hasan, the father of Hasan, was. The attendants replied Ali left the assembly. The Prophet ordered Bilal to find Ali and summon him, and Bilal left to find Ali. Ali was crying when he arrived at home, and Fatimah asked him the reason for his sorrow. Ali explained that the Prophet did not couple him with anyone from the helpers, although he had matched and declared them brothers.' Fatimah responded by saying, 'O Ali, do not be sad, it is possible that the Prophet will declare you as his brother.' Bilal conveyed the Prophet's message to Ali and told him to respond. When Ali went to the Prophet, the Prophet asked him why he was crying. Ali replied: 'O Prophet! Although you saw me standing in the assembly and knew my place, you did not couple me with anyone from the community' The Prophet responded: 'I planned to declare you as my brother. Does it not make you happy to be my brother?' Ali responded positively, and uttered: 'Definitely, being your brother is a joy for me. Upon that, the Prophet took Ali's hand, climbed to the pulpit, and ordered: 'Ali is [a part] of me, and I am [a part] of him. Ali's relationship

[1726] Ibid, 450.

with me resembles Harun's position after the Prophet Moses. Whoever has me as his friend/guardian has Ali as his friend/guardian.' When Ali was leaving joyfully, Omar ibn Khattab complimented him: 'O the father of Hasan! Congratulations, you have become my lord and the lord of all Muslims.'

In his *al-Manāqib*, Ibn al-Maghazili narrated from Jabir bin Abdullah that two men arrived from the city of Najran, and the Prophet invited them to Islam. They responded positively and became Muslim. The Prophet uttered: 'You are lying, and if you want, I can inform you concerning the issues that retain you from believing. They said: 'Yes, recount'. The Prophet said: 'The love of cross, drinking wine, and eating pig retains you from becoming Muslim.' The Prophet invited them to curse those who lied, and the two groups agreed to meet the following day. The next day, the Prophet summoned Ali, Fatimah, Hasan and Husein, and invited the two men from Najran to abide by the agreement. They refused to join and declared that they would pay the tribute. Upon their refusal to attend, the Prophet uttered: 'Swear to God who tasked me with prophethood. If they accepted to attend, God would make fire rain on them.' Jabir indicated that these Quranic verses were revealed concerning them: 'Come now, let us call our sons and your sons, our wives and your wives, our selves and your selves, and let us humbly pray and so lay God's curse upon the ones who lie.' (3: 61) Shabi said that what is meant by our sons is Hasan and Husein; what is meant by our wives is Fatimah, and what is meant by ourselves is Ali bin Abu Talib.'

In his *al-Manāqib*, Ibn al-Maghazili narrated from Zayd bin Erkam: 'I went to the Prophet and heard him saying 'Today, I will make you brothers as God makes the angels brothers of each other.' Afterwards, he turned to Ali and uttered that Ali is his comrade and brother, and read this verse from the Quran: 'As brothers, they shall be upon couches set face to face.' (15: 47) And 'Friends on that day shall be foes to one other, but the God-fearing.' (47: 67) Muhammad bin Abdullah bin Abu Rafi narrated that on the day of the Uhud war, someone called out that there is no sword but Zulfiqar and there is no youth but Ali. In another narrative about Ali, it is told that the Prophet said: 'Before the creation of the heavens, it was written on its door that Muhammad is the prophet of God, and Ali is his brother.[1727]

Ibn al-Maghazili narrated from Ibn Abbas: When we are sitting beside the Prophet with a group of young people from the family of Bani Hashim; we saw a falling star. Upon that, the Prophet said that upon whose house this shooting star disappears, he will be my successor. The young people in that assembly pursued that star, and saw that it disappeared upon the house of Ali bin Abu Talib. They uttered: 'O Prophet! You love Ali so much that God revealed to the verses of 'By the star when it plunges, your comrade is not astray, neither errs, nor speaks he out of caprice.'

In his *al-Musnad*, Ibn Hanbal narrated from Abd al-Malik ibn 'Atiyya: I went near Zayd ibn Arkam, and said: 'My uncle spoke of the Prophet's sayings

[1727] My translation. Hunarfar, *Ganjīna-ye Āsār*, 439–441.

> concerning Ali in Ghadir Khum, and I want to hear about this event from you.' He replied: 'I am afraid of the mischief of your Iraqi community upon me. I responded: 'I will not hurt you.' He continued: 'Yes, we were at Jahfa and it was noon. The Prophet took and raised Ali's hand and commanded: 'O people, do not you know I am closer to you than yourself?' They responded positively. Upon this, the Prophet said: 'Anyone who has me as his guardian/friend (*mawla*), has Ali as his guardian/friend.'
>
> In his *al-Manāqib*, Ibn al-Maghazili narrated from Jabir ibn Abdullah: 'The Prophet took Ali's arm and raised it, and uttered: He is the supporter of the righteous, and the enemy of infidels. Whoever supports him will gain the favor [of God], and whoever harms him will be frustrated' He continued: 'I am the city of knowledge, and Ali is its gate. Whoever demands knowledge shall reach to me through that gate.' [1728]

Along with the tiled inscriptional bands, the flanks of the southern iwan have two marble panels bearing two distinct orders issued by Shah Abbas. Dated 1625–26 (1035 AH), the order hanged on the western wall proclaims a tax reduction granted to the artisans of the rice bazaar.[1729] While this order manifests the shah's beneficence to a particular group of artisans in the city, the second one on the eastern wall perpetuates his benefaction to all Shi'i population in Isfahan. This undated royal order concretizes Shah Abbas' charity and justice to his subject, and his guardianship of the Shi'i community. At the same time, it can be deemed as an economic vehicle to encourage the capital's non-Shi'i denizens to convert into Twelver Shi'ism:

> The order of the just ruler is that … in the month of Ramadan, the time of obedience and worship, since the Shi'a of the Immaculate People of House are engaged in fasting, salawat, and worship, our exalted sovereign exempted them from taxes. Upon the royal order, the court officials registered the Shi'i population of Isfahan, who have been loyal to this dynasty. The viziers and officials of the royal court are ordered to stay away from the Shi'i population, and not to demand any payment from them. The great sayyids, scholars, mujtahids, the common people and the educated-cultivated class, the people of village and city… residing in Isfahan became happy for this news, and engaged in praying for the perpetuity of the state.[1730]

[1728] My translation. Hunarfar, *Ganjīna-ye Āsār*, 433–441.
[1729] Ibid, 444.
[1730] This abridged and abbreviated translation is mine. Hunarfar, *Ganjīna-ye Āsār*, 445–446.

Written by Muhammad Salih Isfahani, the rectangular inscriptional panel upon the marble mihrab in the main prayer hall repeats the theme of Imam Ali's successorship and exalted status regarding another hadith: (Figure C220)

> It is narrated from the Prophet that he said: 'Even if a slave of God has a position that is equal to Noah's position among his community, has as much gold as a mountain and granted all of it to charity, has a long life and goes to the pilgrimage for a thousand times, and is killed between Safa and Marwah as an oppressed, but does not confirm your friendship/guardianship, he cannot enter paradise.[1731]

The Arabic epigraphic band running on the dome's base conveys multiple messages, including Imam Ali's exalted status, the significance of performing prayers, and Shah Abbas' devotion to the Twelver Shi'ite creed. The enemies of the shah and the followers of the Umayyads were cursed. According to Gülru Necipoğlu, this inscription implicitly cursed the Ottomans,[1732] Shah Abbas' major rival and enemy. Besides, it has symbolic connotations, likening the sanctuary's dome to the sky:

> In Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. Praise be to God, the One, the Owner of all existence, who is not in need, the Perpetual. He is the One who ascended to the sky, built a columnless roof for it, and adorned the palace of the heavens. He is the One who illuminated it with a shining sun, a bright moon, and numerous wonderful stars. He is the One who created the universe with an eternal wisdom. The magnificence of the edifice he created cannot be underestimated; it has solid foundations, which cannot be compared with any worldly foundations. Peace be upon the last of the Prophets, the exalted, the one who was sent as a blessing to all nations, our Lord Abu al-Qasim Mohammad, and his Companions. To those [Companions] who endeavored on the way of God, and rightly obeyed the Prophet, and especially his uncle's son, groom, guardian, successor, brother, confidential vizier, the Imam of the universe, the lantern of the right path, the word of piousness, the biggest proof of God, our lord and leader Ali bin Abu Talib-peace be upon Him until the end of the time. As God commanded in his book, 'Only he shall inhabit/build (*'amara*) God's places of worship who believes in God and the Last Day, and performs the prayer, and pays the alms, and fears none but God alone; it may be that those will be among the guided.' (9: 18) The perfect sky-like dome of this sanctuary, whose foundations are laid on piousness, was erected by the king of the world's kings, the one who enslaves the rulers, supported by the Owner of the universe, the mighty and

[1731] My translation. Hunarfar, *Ganjīna-ye Āsār*, 441.
[1732] Necipoğlu, "Transregional Connections", 269.

> magnificent sovereign, the shadow of God on earth, the sultan and the son of the sultan the victorious Shah Abbas al-Musavi al-Huseini al-Safavi Bahadur Khan. May God perpetuate his sovereignty, strengthen his soldiers. May his state last until the end of the time. May God protect his health and the supremacy of his knowledge, perpetuate his realms' prosperity. God disappointed his enemies, made his life fertile, and glorified him and his creed, Twelver Shi'a. O God, kill those who are loved by the Umayyads, and obey them, and put them into hell. O God, support him [Shah Abbas] for the sake of Muhammad and His Family.[1733]

The monumental dome's exterior has eight glazed brick epigraphic panels put between the fenestrations. These inscriptions are executed in kufic, written in white on a turquoise ground, and repeat the following invocations: "Glory be to God", and "Praise to be to God", and "There is no God but Allah", and "God is the greatest", and "Sovereignty belongs to God".[1734] The style and colors of these epigraphic panels unite with those adorning the double minarets flanking the southern iwan, creating a visual harmony between these architectural elements. (Figure C221) Upon these panels is another inscriptional band running around the drum of the dome. Written in white on lapis lazuli, this inscriptional frieze repeats the form and palette of the inscriptions lining up the iwans, and has a visual connection with these decorative elements. It bears the entire surah of Man, which is introduced before. The visual coherence between the inscriptions on the exterior of the Sheikh Lutfullah Mosque's dome, and those adorning the exterior of Masjed-e Shah's main dome, is also worth mentioning. Similar to the latter, the exterior of the Sheikh Lutfullah Mosque is embellished with a thuluth epigraphic frieze running around the drum, and square kufic inscriptional bands put between the fenestrations. (Figure C222) While the theme of the thuluth epigraph bearing short Quranic verses differs from that of Masjed-e Shah, the invocations executed in kufic match with those put between Masjed-e Shah's fenestrations, reading "Glory be to God", and "Praise to be to God",

[1733] My translation. Hunarfar, *Ganjīna-ye Āsār*, 463.
[1734] Ibid, 408.

and "There is no God but Allah", and "God is the greatest", and "Sovereignty belongs to God".[1735] (Figure C223)

The inscriptions in oratories flanking the main prayer hall appear on the frames and pediments of the mihrabs, along with a water basin in the western cloister. The mihrab in the western hall is framed by a thuluth inscription, written in gold on lapis lazuli, and written by Muhammad Reza al-Imami.[1736] It contains the first fourteen verses on the surah of the Night Journey, *al-Isrā'*. These verses focus on the significance of the Quran as a guide for Muslims, and invite them to engage in good deeds and to contemplate the creation as signs of God's power. Bearing the sign of the same calligrapher, the inscriptions on the pediment of the same mihrab contains the 142th verse of the surah of the Cow, *al-Baqara*: "The fools among the people will say, 'What has turned them from the direction they were facing in their prayers aforetime?' Say: 'To God belong the East and the West; He guides whomsoever He will to a straight path.'" (2: 142) While these verses address the direction of prayer marked by the mihrab, the following hadith appearing in the same place underlines the significance of performing prayers: "The Prophet, peace be upon Him, uttered that prayer is Muslim's ascension."[1737] The stone water basin in this oratory has also a carved inscription executed in nastaliq. It perpetuates the benevolence of Shah Suleiman, who donated this water basin to the sanctuary:

> Upon the order of Suleiman of the time, the shah of the world…water has been brought, and at present, it extinguished the fire of oppression. In Masjed-e Shah, [the construction of] this glass of water, whose fountains pour out the glass of Jamshid, is completed… this life-giving water is heard saying: 'Sell your honor (*āb-e rūkh*) in return of the water of eternity to the memory of the martrys…Sami created the following chronogram: 'I told about the zam-zam that rises from the second Kaba.[1738]

[1735] Ibid, 408.
[1736] Hunarfar, *Ganjīna-ye Āsār*, 453.
[1737] My translation. Hunarfar, *Ganjīna-ye Āsār*, 453.
[1738] My translation. Hunarfar, *Ganjīna-ye Āsār*, 443–444.

The two mihrabs in the eastern oratory are also framed and adorned with inscriptional bands. Signed by Muhammad Reza Imami, the thuluth inscriptions framing the western mihrab in this cloister bear a hadith:

> Abu Abdullah narrated that when Gabriel, peace be upon Him, taught the call to prayer to the Prophet, peace be upon Him, the Prophet's head was on Ali's lap. He asked, 'O Ali, did you hear?'. Ali responded positively. The Prophet further asked: 'Did you memorize it?'. The latter replied: 'Yes.' The Prophet continued: 'Call on Bilal, and teach him the call to prayer.' Ali summoned Bilal, and taught him the call to prayer.[1739]

On the same mihrab is another thuluth inscription, containing the ninth verse of the surah of the Congregation, *al- Jum'a*: "Oh believers, when proclamation is made for prayer on the Day of Congregation, hasten to God's remembrance, and leave trafficking aside; that is better for you, did you but know."[1740] (62: 9) The eastern mihrab is framed by a thuluth inscription written by Muhammad Reza Imami, bearing a hadith narrated from Imam Sadiq via Abu Abdullah:

> Whoever hears the muazzin saying that 'there is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is His Prophet' should utter this sentence with the aim of approval and gaining spiritual reward: 'I also confess that there is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is His Prophet. I confine myself to this confession against evil people and deniers, and am supported by everyone who confirms this confession.' Uttering this confession earns one a spiritual reward by the number of those who deny, and those confirm it.[1741]

On the pediment of the same mihrab, the 55th verse of the surah of the Table, *al-Māidā*, is inscribed: "Your friend is only God, and His Messenger, and the believers who perform the prayer and pay the alms, and bow them down."[1742] (5: 55) (Figure C224)

In comparison with the mosque, the madrasas have a very limited number of inscriptions. One of the few epigraphs appearing in the southwestern madrasa dates

[1739] My translation. Hunarfar, *Ganjīna-ye Āsār*, 442.
[1740] Ibid, 442.
[1741] My translation. Hunarfar, *Ganjīna-ye Āsār*, 436.
[1742] Ibid, 443.

to the era of Abbas II, perpetuating the shah's renovations in this structure. The portal of this madrasa has a thuluth inscription signed by Muhammad Reza Imami. The first part of this epigraph is damaged, and only part of it is readable. It mentions the name of Shah Suleiman as 'the lord of the Arab and Iranian rulers, who popularized the creed of the Immaculate Imams, the sultan and the son of the sultan, the victorious Shah Suleiman al-Musavi al-Safavi, al-Huseini Bahadur Khan'.[1743] Along with this inscription, some of the arches surrounding the madrasa courtyard bear some square kufic inscriptions repeating different compositions of the words "Allah", "Muhammad", and "Ali". Similar to the western one, the eastern madrasa is adorned by an inscriptional band framing the mihrab behind the southern iwan, and has some square kufic inscriptions on its arches enveloping the courtyard. (Figure C225) Signed by Muhammad Reza Imami,[1744] the thuluth inscription framing the mihrab behind the southern iwan bears the 238th verse of the surah of the Cow, *al-Baqara*: "Be watchful over the prayers, and the middle prayer; and do you stand obedient to God." (234: 2) The gates opening to both madrasas are also flanked with paired square kufic inscriptions, repeating the words "Allah", "Muhammad", and "Ali". Written in black and turquoise, these epigraphic compositions are put on each side of the iwans and portals they embellish and repeat the same words and compositions on either side. (Figure C226)

The Masjed-e Shah complex has an epigraphic program that combines inscriptions executed in different styles and compositions and refers to multiple themes. Stylistically, it is in line with the visual and aesthetic trends of the Safavid architectural culture, which, to a large extent, reflect decorative idioms shaped in post-Mongol Iran. The building is adorned with several circular or quadrangular epigraphic tile panels that concentrate on

[1743] My translation. Hunarfar, *Ganjīna-ye Āsār*, 457.
[1744] Ibid, 454.

the portal, courtyard façades, prayer halls, and corridors of the edifice. The visitor approaching to the building from the maydan encounters a portal with several inscriptions in diverse forms and compositions, most of which feature monumental dimensions are visible from the farther edges of the maydan. S/he beholds different epigraphic panels on the walls of the two corridors leading to the courtyard, and those on the iwans when promenading in the courtyard. Each prayer hall offers different views of several inscriptional bands placed on the domes' bases, framing the mihrabs, and running around the walls. Similarly, the visitor approaching the complex from the south encounters monumental inscriptions adorning the gates leading to madrasa courtyards, which have several inscriptional panels on their façades.

As observed by Blair, most of Masjed-e Shah's inscriptions outline or define the architectural forms of different sections they adorn.[1745] The monumental portal's outer rectangle and inner arch, the mihrabs in different prayer sections, and the northern iwan's arch are among such parts framed by such inscriptional bands. The double minarets flanking the portal and the qibla iwan, the bases of domes in the mihrab sanctuary and the prayer halls behind the side iwans, and the drum of the double dome surmounting the main prayer hall are winded around by epigraphic bands, which repeat the architectural form of the sections they decorate. Similarly, the walls of the iwans, the rooms behind the side iwans, and the domed chamber behind the qibla iwan are surrounded by rentangular epigraphic bands, following the contours of these quadrangular rooms.

The monument's inscriptions were executed in different styles, including thuluth, kufic, nastaliq and naqsh. While thuluth and nastaliq inscriptions are composed as *haft rang* and mosaic tile panels, the few naqsh epigraphs appear in walls and water basins as carved in stone. Kufic is applied in *bannā'ī* technique in which glazed bricks laid on their

[1745] Blair, "Inscribing the Square", 24.

ends form inscriptions and geometrical decorative schemes.[1746] Thuluth is preferred for the longer texts. The foundation inscription on the portal, the epigraphic bands running on the walls and dome bases of the single-domed prayer sections, and the sides of the iwans bear such epigraphic bands, all featuring two-lined compositions. Their execution as double-lined inscriptions rendered it possible to fit long texts in a limited space. Kufic is also applied in the inscription of the sacred names, invocations and short quatations from the Quran. The few nastaliq compositions appear in Persian poems, edicts, and the craftsmen's signatures.[1747] The palette of the monument's inscriptions is not as wide as its floral decorations. Almost all inscriptions are written in white, except a few golden and yellow sections, and on either lapis lazuli or turquoise grounds.

Thuluth and kufic form the predominant styles among other. All monumental inscriptions of the monument are executed either in thuluth or in kufic. The preference of thuluth script reflects an early modern Islamic tendency which was observed in the Ottoman (up to the late sixteenth century) and Mughal monumental mosques too. Necipoğlu has underscored that thuluth dominated the Ottoman, Safavid and Mughal monumental epigraphy, rooted in a shared Timurid culture.'[1748] The preference of these scripts can be observed in several other Safavid religious monuments, including the Harun-e Velayat Shrine, Masjed-e Ali and the Sheikh Lutfullah Mosque in Isfahan, and the shrine complexes in Ardabil and Mashhad.[1749] Aesthetic appeal seems to have played a significant role in the preference of thuluth and kufic scripts for monumental inscriptions. As Pope aptly put it, 'both the kufic and thuluth alphabets provide wide bands of compact and stately verticals rhythmically spaced, austere and rigid, or slender

[1746] O'Kane, *Timurid Architecture*, 68; Porter, *Islamic Tiles*, 65.
[1747] Blair, "Inscribing the Square", 26.
[1748] Necipoğlu, "Religious Inscriptions", 34.
[1749] Hillenbrand, "Safavid Architecture", 763; Babaie, "Building", 34–35; Rizvi, *Safavid Dynastic Shrine*, 48, 53–55; Farhat, Islamic Piety, 187, 193, 213; Hunarfar, *Ganjīna-ye Āsār*, 402–413.

and flexible as the architectural necessities demand.'[1750] Further, the careful placement of kufic and thuluth compositions in different frames and on architectural sections featuring different shapes provided the designers of the monument with the opportunity of creating a visual balance between varying circular and quadrangular forms. Almost all thuluth inscriptions are put in rectangular frames, and this cursive script's rounded forms creates a contrast with the angularity of the quadrangular frames in which they fit in. The square kufic inscriptions' angularity, on the other hand, contrast with the circular forms of architectural sections they embellish, including minarets, exterior of the main dome, and several pointed arches in the corridors and madrasa courtyards.

A concern for legibility appears as a shared feature of almost all monumental inscriptional compositions of the Masjed-e Shah complex. Both cursive and square kufic inscriptions are clear and readable for the literate audiences. Here, the question of legibility arises as a legitimate question. Different scholars have pointed to the increasing level of literacy in the seventeenth century Safavid capital.[1751] Along with the conventional literati of the Islamic empires, namely bureaucrats and scholars, urban populations from different classes, especially merchants, began to contain an increasing number of literate people.[1752] This suggests that the inscriptions of the Masjed-e Shah complex were legible for at least part of the urban population, beside the members of the court and the scholarly elites. Yet, determining the level of the legibility of the monument's inscriptions is a difficult task. The monument's carefully choreographed inscriptional programme,[1753] however, draws on different levels of literacy in Arabic and Persian,[1754] and involves inscriptions, graphic letters

[1750] Pope, *Survey of Persian*, III, 1338.
[1751] Emami, "Discursive Images", 165; Babayan, *City as Anthology*, 70–71.
[1752] Babayan, *City as Anthology*, 71.
[1753] Blair, "Inscribing the Square", 26.
[1754] Babayan, *City as Anthology*, 43.

denominating the sacred names and invocations in geometric shapes, which served as legible icons even for the illiterate.[1755] The inclusion of Persian inscriptions, whose number is very few compared to the Arabic ones, also speaks of a concern for widening the targeted audience of the monument's epigraphs. (Table 14) Although Arabic remained as the standard language for formal religious and foundational epigraphs, Persian inscriptions served as an additional embellishment in Safavid architectural culture.[1756]

In terms of its contents, Masjed-e Shah's epigraphic program involves a foundation inscription, Quranic verses, hadiths from Twelver Shi'ite and Sunni compilations, poetic compositions, Shah Abbas' royal orders, the names of Allah and the Fourteen Infallibles, and particular invocations and Shi'ite prayers. Babayan has described the sanctuary's inscriptions as a book, a collection of religious texts from the Quran and the hadith, and 'an assembled manual educating worshippers into proper Shi'a etiquette and belief.'[1757] The distinctive tenets of the Twelver Shi'ite creed and the centrality of prayers in the Islamic practice make up the main themes of the sanctuary's inscriptional program. The theme of Imam Ali's deputyship is given special attention. The number of the inscriptions focusing on this theme is bigger than those involving other themes, as they constitute the longest epigraphic friezes in the sanctuary. As has been underscored by Emami, the quotations made from Sunni hadith sources deserve particular attention since they render the mosque's surfaces into a polemical text[1758] attempting to prove Imam Ali's political and spiritual successorship. Sunni hadiths concerning to the superiority of

[1755] Ibid, 5.
[1756] Ritter, "Monumental Epigraphy", 30. The portal of the Qaysariyyah in Isfahan, and the Madrasa of Kasagaran in the same city had also Persian verses in their inscriptional programs. See Ritter, "Monumental Epigraphy". It was not a new phenomenon in the seventeenth century Isfahan. The portal of the Harun-e Velayat Shrine also bears a Persian couplet, addressing to a tendency for the use of Persian poetry in the inscriptions of Safavid religious buildings beginning from the early early sixteenth century. Babaie, "Building on the Past", 34; idem, "Safavids and Later".
[1757] Babayan, *City as Anthology*, 43.
[1758] Emami, "Inviolable Thresholds", 176.

Imam Ali, and the Prophet's designation of him as his successor have been among the most important textual evidence referred by Shi'i scholars in their polemical treatises over Sunnism.[1759] Several Shi'ite *akhbār* and Sunni hadiths narrating major historical events, Ghadir Khumm and *al-Mubāhalah*,[1760] were instrumentalized to prove the designation of Ali and his progency as the Prophet's successors and their exalted status in the Muslim community.

The existence of references to the main tenets of Twelver Shi'ism, and Shi'ite *akhbār* in religious buildings' epigraphic programmes is not peculiar to the Masjed-e Shah complex. Particular Quranic verses referring to the People of House, and implying the Shi'i Imams' successorship in the eyes of Shi'is appeared in the major Shi'ite shrines in Qum, Mashhad, Kashan and Varamin as early as the earliest Islamic centuries in Iran. The Imami Buyid patrons used such references in at least one congregational mosque, the Jurjir Mosque in Isfahan. The use of *akhbār* in reference to the mentioned themes remained limited with the major Shi'ite shrines in Mashhad and Qum until the Ilkhanid era, when various kinds of religious buildings began to involve varying Shi'ite references in their inscriptional programmes. The mihrab added to Isfahan's congregational mosque by Oljeitu contained Quranic verses, pious invocations, and Shi'ite *akhbār*.[1761] Similarly, the Blue Mosque in Tabriz had inscriptions involving divine blessings on the Fourteen Infallibles.[1762] Yet, the use of Shi'ite references in religious edifices' inscriptions remained limited until the Safavid period.

The Safavid patrons made use of Shi'ite inscriptions on an unprecedented scale,[1763] and instrumentalized them for Shi'itizing existing sanctuaries in their realms. As

[1759] An example of this method in the Safavid context can be examined in al-Karaki's polemical treatises, see Abisaab, *Converting Persia*, 27.
[1760] Moussavi, "Gadir Komm"; Scmucker, "Mubalaha".
[1761] Blair, "Writing About Faith", 102, 106–107; O'Kane, "Architecture", 220.
[1762] Hillenbrand, "Safavid Architecture", 772.
[1763] Babaie, "Safavid and Later".

discussed in the third chapter, several congregational mosques in different cities gained new inscriptions containing Shi'i references and blessings to the Fourteen Pure Ones.[1764] The same tendency is observable in the newly built religious edifices too. The Harun-e Velayet shrine in Isfahan, for instance, bears monumental kufic inscriptions repeating the names of "Allah", "Muhammad", and "Ali". On the same building's eastern door, the Prophetic saying "I am the city of knowledge, and Ali is its gate" is inscribed.[1765] The use of Shi'ite sayings and hadith in inscriptions, however, was limited before the reign of Shah Abbas. The majority of the Shi'ite inscriptions on sixteenth-century religious buildings comprised blessings to the Fourteen Immaculates, and the names of "Allah", "Muhammad", and "Ali".

This changed in the early seventeenth century. As May Farhat has observed, Shi'i sayings and hadiths inscribed on tombs gained popularity during the age of Abbas I.[1766] Under Abbas I, the iwan leading to the main entrance of Imam Reza's mausoleum earned inscriptional friezes involving particular Shi'ite *akhbār* and Sunni hadiths that proclaim the special status of People of the House to the succession of the Prophet.[1767] Allahverdi Khan's tomb in the same shrine complex had similar Sunni and Shi'i hadiths referring to the same themes.[1768] Yet, the use of these references within the context of a Friday mosque is unique in Masjed-e Shah in Isfahan in the Safavid context. Although it contains blessings to the Shi'ite Imams and poems eulogizing the Fourteen Pure Ones,[1769] the Sheikh Lutfullah Mosque's epigraphic programme lacks Shi'ite or Sunni *akhbār* that had been addressed in the polemical literature. The appearance of such polemical references in the shrine and congregational mosque seems to have been related to the diversity of their

[1764] See Chapter III, 150–151.
[1765] Hillenbrand, "Safavid Architecture", 763.
[1766] Farhat, "Islamic Piety", 198.
[1767] Ibid, 212.
[1768] Ibid, 193.
[1769] Hunarfar, *Ganjīna-ye Āsār*, 412–413.

audiences, including Sunnis. May Farhat has demonstrated that the shrine of Imam Reza occasionally housed Sunni visitors, the Ottoman admiral Seydi Ali Reis being one of them.[1770] As discussed in this chapter's last part, Masjed-e Shah became the subject of an Ottoman envoy's processional visit. Besides the few Sunni audiences, references to the hadiths addressed in the polemical literature must have been intrumentalized as vehicles for strengthening Shi'i visitors' faith in the exalted status of People of the House, and the successorship of the Twelve Imams.

The three main themes Masjed-e Shah's epigraphic program, namely the belief in Imam Ali's superiority and successorship, the significance of prayers, and Shah Abbas' patronage and beneficence, are referred in different inscriptions in each spatial unit, including the portal, the courtyard, and domed prayer halls. The portal bears epigraphic panels referring to the patron's kingly virtues, the significance of prayers and mosques, and the main tenets of the Shi'a creed. The inscriptions around the courtyard involve hadiths regarding Imam Ali's exalted status and deputyship, Qur'anic verses encouraging the erection and inhabitation of mosques, and royal orders eternalizing Shah Abbas' benevolence and support of Twelver Shi'ism. Similarly, each prayer hall lead by the monumental iwans also presents different epigraphs repeating the same themes. (Table 14) This balanced and artful distribution of inscriptions guarantees the visitor to encounter all the main themes whenever he performs the prayer in a section of the mosque, or promenades through it. In general, the inscriptions can be assessed as a medium through which Shah Abbas manifested his policy of popularising and promoting the Twelver Shi'ite doctrine and its orthodox practices. Perpetuating the patronage and benevolence of Shah Abbas and other patrons is another function of the inscriptions.

[1770] Farhat, "Islamic Piety", 161.

Table 14. Inscriptions of the Masjed-e Shah complex

Place	Content	Theme	Language	Style and Color
The pishtaq	Foundation inscription	Shah Abbas' kingly virtues, patronage and the building's functions	Arabic	Thuluth, white on lapis lazuli
Entablatures on the portal	Quranic verses (9: 18)	Significance of building and inhabiting mosques	Arabic	Thuluth, black on turquoise
Double arches on the portal	Hadith	Imam Ali's exalted status and successorship	Arabic	Nastaliq, white, red and yellow on cobalt
Entablatures flanking the double arches flanking the portal	Prayer of *Nādi 'Aliyyan*, poems	The intercession and spiritual exaltedness of Imam Ali, grandness of the Prophet Muhammad	Arabic and Persian	Nastaliq, yellow on cobalt
Double minarets on the Portal	Quranic verses (12: 33–56), names of "Allah", "Muhammad", "Ali" and Invocations like "God is the Great"	Oneness of God, the exalted status and prophethood of the Prophet	Arabic	Kufic, black on turquoise, thuluth, white on lapis lazuli
Main entrance's interior	Quranic verses (9: 108), hadiths	Significance of frequenting mosques, exalted status of the People of House	Arabic	Thuluth, white on lapis lazuli
Silver door	Poem	Chronogram eulogizing Shah Safi's patronage in the mosque	Persian	Nastaliq
Corridors between the entrance and the courtyard	Names of "Allah", "Muhammad", "Ali", Salawats		Arabic	Kufic

	to the Fourteen Infallibles			
The northern iwan	Quranic verses (76: 1–14), Shah Abbas' order	Significance of performing the daily obligatory prayers, creation, afterlife, the shah's benevolence and tax reduction	Arabic	Thuluth, white on lapis lazuli, Naqsh, stone carving
The western iwan	Quranic Verses (9: 18, 72: 18), hadiths	Significance of frequenting places of worship	Arabic	Thuluth, white on lapis lazuli
The domed hall behind the western Iwan	Hadiths from Shi'i and Sunni compilations	Successorship of Imam Ali and the Twelve Imams, Imam Ali's exalted status	Arabic	Thuluth, white on lapis lazuli
The eastern Iwan	Hadiths	Imam Ali's deputyship	Arabic	Thuluth, white on lapis lazuli
The domed hall behind the eastern Iwan	Hadiths from Shi'i and Sunni compilations, Quranic Verses (48, 2:144)	Imam Ali's successorship, significance of performing the prayers, the direction of prayer	Arabic	Thuluth, white on lapis lazuli
The southern Iwan	Hadiths, Shah Abbas' royal orders	Imam Ali's deputyship and exalted status, the shah's benevolence and tax reduction offered to his subjects	Arabic	Thuluth, white on lapis lazuli
The domed prayer hall behind the southern Iwan	Hadiths, prose	Imam Ali's deputyship and exalted status, significance of performing the prayers,	Arabic	Thuluth, white on lapis lazuli

		kingly virtues of Shah Abbas		
The western oratory	Quranic Verses (17: 1–14, 2: 142), hadiths	Significance of performing the daily obligatory prayers, the direction of prayer	Arabic	Thuluth, gold on lapis lazuli
The eastern oratory	Hadith, Quranic verses (5: 55, 62: 9)	Imam Ali's exalted status, call to prayer	Arabic	Thuluth, white and yellow on lapis lazuli
The southwestern courtyard	Prose eulogizing the patronage of Abbas II, names of "Allah", "Muhammad", "Ali"	The patronage of Abbas II	Arabic	Thuluth, white on lapis lazuli, kufic
The southeastern courtyard	Quranic verses (2: 238)	The significance of performing the daily obligatory prayers	Arabic	Thuluth, white on lapis lazuli, kufic

6.2.2.3 Furnishings, relics, manuscripts

Our very limited knowledge on the furniture of the Masjed-e Shah complex is based on the endowment deed of Shah Abbas and Lala Beg, two waqf scripts belonging to two seventeenth-century Isfahanids, and the accounts of some European travelers and a local poet. These sources suggest that the complex had furnishing, most of them serving for the devotional, ritualistic, and educational needs of the visitors, some revealing the sanctuary's distinct Shi'ite character.

Provisions mentioned in the endowment deed provide some clues concerning the furniture used in the sanctuary's daily affairs. Torches (*mash'al*), oil lamp hooks (*qandīl-āvīz*), candlesticks (*sham'dān*), and tallow-burners (*pīya-sūz*) are among such

items of furniture,[1771] which apparently were used for lighting the edifice. It appears, as all pre-modern Muslim place of worship, the Masjed-e Shah complex was illuminated by oil lamps and candles, most of which must have been placed in the covered sections. A seventeenth-century poet's verse addressed as 'its oil-lamps in the covered hall (*shabistān*) are luminous.'[1772] Despite the lack of any information on these items' quantities, it can be suggested that the edifice needed a high number of lamps and candles, considering that three of the five daily canonical prayers have been performed nocturnally, the evening and night prayers being offered together in the Imami practice. Although the endowment deed does not mention any lamp stands, Masjed-e Shah could have owned several lamp and torch stands, considering that the contemporary Safavid shrines contained several huge lamp stands made of brass or copper, and inlaid with inscriptions and floral compositions.[1773] In terms of their forms and decorations, Masjed-e Shah's lamp stands could have been similar to other contemporary Safavid lamp stands standing in several shrines. (Figure C227)

Rush mats (*būzyā*), incense (*bukhūr*), and waterbags (*khīq*) are other relevant provisions mentioned in the endowment deed.[1774] It appears that at least some floors of the edifice were shielded by rush mats, although some others seem to have been covered with carpets (*farsh*) and mats (*ḥaṣīr*), according to Mir Najat's description: 'Inside that hall (*ṣoffah*) is the carpet made of the sea of observance/ Prayer mat made of the sea of mercy's wave.'[1775] The mentioning of incense among the provisions indicates the existence of incense burners inside the sanctuary, which, according to the endowment's stipulations, had to be burned on special days and

[1771] Sipanta, *Tārīkhce-ye Awqāf*, 57.
[1772] My translation. Mir Nejat Isfahani, "Vasf-e Isfahan", 369.
[1773] For these lamp stands, see Melikian-Shirvani, *Safavid Metalwork*, 550, 557; Canby, *Shah Abbas*, 84–87; *Istanbul, Isfahan, Delhi*, 254–255.
[1774] Sipanta, *Tārīkhce-ye Awqāf*, 57–58
[1775] My translation. Mir Nejat Isfahani, "Vasf-e Isfahan", 370.

nights.[1776] As mentioned in the previous chapter within the context of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque, perfuming the places of worship with certain incenses was widespread in premodern Muslim cultures, which apparently was in practice in early modern Ottoman and Safavid cultures too, as seen in the cases of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque and Masjed-e Shah. Unfortunately, the known sources do not provide any information concerning the number and qualities of Masjed-e Shah's incense burners.

Water basins mentioned in the endowment deed manifest the patron's concern for serving water to the sanctuary's visitors. As several *ābsang*s in the complex, water bags implicitly manifest the sanctuary's Shi'ite character, reminding Imam Husein's thirst in Karbala, and creating a contrast between the Imam's enemies begrudging drinking water from him and his accompanies, and his benevolent adherent, the shah.

Clay prayer seals (*mohr*) are another group of Masjed-e Shah's furnishings, which also revealed the sanctuary's Shi'ite character. The poet Mir Najat informs us about the existence of several prayer seals inside the mosque of Shah Abbas, praising the beauty of their shapes that resemble the hair and moles of the beloveds: 'The layout of clay prayer seals (*mohr*) and rosaries in the corridor (*dalān*)/ Is far nicer than moles and hair of beauties.'[1777] It has been a distinctive practice of Twelver Shi'i Muslims to prostrate themselves over moulded prayer seals made of the soil of Karbala, often featuring a circular shape.[1778] (Figure C228) Different seventeenth-century travelers attested to the widespread use of such prayer seals by Safavids. When describing the Safavid mosques, the Carmelite Father Paul Simon indicated

[1776] Sipanta, *Tārīkhce-ye Awqāf*, 57. The special days and nights will be discussed in the following section.
[1777] My translation. Mir Nejat Isfahani, "Vasf-e Isfahan", 370.
[1778] See Venzlaff, "Mohr-e Namaz".

that the Persians 'spread a garment or their outer garment on the ground, placing on it a stone.'[1779] Another early seventeenth-century Carmelite father, Fr. Vincent, recounted a dialogue between the shah and the Fathers residing in Isfahan, which provides significant clues concerning the conception and meaning of prayer seals by seventeenth-century Muslims of Isfahan. According to this account, the Fathers asked the shah whether it would be right to call the Safavids as idolaters for they prostrate themselves and 'worship seals and beads made of earth,' and uttered their opinions on it, which regarded this practice not as a sign of idolatry, but of 'piety and reverence for that soil, as it comes from the places of the sepulture' of their ancestors. [1780] The shah declared that they worship on earthen prayer seals as an act of recognizing that God created them from that form of earth and adoring the Creator of this. The German traveler Adam Olearius described the prayers seals used by Safavids as follows:

> The Persians have a stone, wherewith they often touch their forehead, while they are at their Prayers; or haply they lay the stone upon the ground, and touch it with their foreheads. It is made of greyish Earth, which is to be had about Metzef [Najaf] and Kufa…The Figure of it is Octagonal, and it is somewhat above three inches Diameter, and contains with the names of their Twelve Saints, that of Fatimah.[1781]

Shi'ite books and relics were also among precious furnishings of the Masjed-e Shah complex. Chardin recounted that over the marble mihrab of the main domed-chamber was a gold-encrusted cabinet in which the blood-soaked robe of Imam Husein, and a Quran that was copied by Imam Reza were kept.[1782] Although the manuscript seen by Chardin appears more likely as a relic than an ordinary manuscript accessible for every visitor, his account implies that religious books were

[1779] *Carmelites*, 156.
[1780] Ibid, 250.
[1781] Olearius, *Voyages and Travels*, 279. Previously cited by Rizvi, "Suggestive Portrait", 231.
[1782] Chardin, *Voyages*, VIII, 55.

part of the mosque's furnishings, and it had furniture designed for this purpose. According to the same traveler's previously mentioned account, the side iwans in the main courtyard also contained various books which were used in teaching.[1783] Two waqf scripts from the late seventeenth and early eighteenth-century confirm that the complex had a manuscript collection, which was nourished by granted books. Dated to the early eighteenth century, the first of these book waqfs was arranged in the name of a prayer leader who worked in the royal mosque. It bears the name of Muhammad Baqir, the son of Ali Reza Amili, the prayer leader of Masjed-e Shah (*pīshnamāz-e Masjed-e jādīd-e 'Abbāsī*), and the date of 1711–12 (1123 AH). The prayer leader granted the manuscript copy of the East of two Suns (*Mashrīq al-Shamsayn*) penned by Sheikh Bahai.[1784] A later document concerning this waqf shows that the compilation granted by the prayer leader consisted of six volumes.[1785] Bearing the date of 1687–88 (1099 AH), the second book waqf was founded by two people named Khajj Almas and Najafqulu Biqa, who donated a manuscript named the Bases of Religious Provisions (*Qavā'id al-Akhkām*) to the madrasa of Masjed-e Shah.[1786] Ahmadi has demonstrated that other Safavid madrasas did also have collections of endowed manuscripts, which were often donated by people willing to patronize religious learning, but unable to construct madrasas. He further displayed that manuscript collections of several Safavid madrasas were open to the use of people from outside, provided that the borrower adhered to Twelver Shi'ism.[1787]

[1783] Ibid, 56.
[1784] Jafarian and Jaziri, *Waqfnāmahā-ye Ketāb-e Safavī*, 161.
[1785] Ibid, 159.
[1786] Ibid, 304.
[1787] Ahmadi, *Dar bāb-e Awqāf*, 78–79.

6.3 The waqf of the Masjed-e Shah complex

The upkeep and maintenance of the Masjed-e Shah complex were provided by a waqf established in 1614 (1023 AH). As the waqf's founders and donors, Shah Abbas and Lala Beg endowed the complex with commercial and agricultural properties in and around Isfahan.[1788] Primary and secondary sources concerning the waqf are very limited, and this renders an investigation of this foundation a difficult affair. The mere primary source on the endowment is a summary (*rūnavisht*) compiled by Sheikh Bahai in September 1614 (Shaban 1023 AH).[1789] This summary was published by Sipanta in his seminal collection of Isfahan's waqfs.[1790] Sipanta and Hunarfar argued that the present summary of the waqf was originally inscribed on a stone panel in the western corridor of the mosque's vestibule. Merely a basmalah remained intact from this stone-carved inscriptional panel.[1791] As for the secondary sources on the topic, only Blake and McChesney offered considerably brief analyses of the summary published by Sipanta.[1792] Here, I will engage in a more comprehensive scrutiny of the endowment deed. Besides providing a detailed enumeration of the incomes, expenses, and staff of the waqf, I will touch upon the endowment's structure and dynamics in comparison with some contemporary waqfs founded for Safavid madrasas. Along with the economic structure and employees of the foundation, the text provides significant insight into the ritual life and calendar of the mosque and madrasa, which has not been the subject of an in-depth investigation.[1793] One contribution of this investigation is to use the deed as a source

[1788] McChesney, "Waqf and Public", 178; Blake, *Half the World*, 144.
[1789] McChesney, "Waqf and Public", 178.
[1790] Sipanta, *Tārīkhce-ye Awqāf*, 50–62.
[1791] Ibid, 49; Hunarfar, *Ganjīna-ye Āsār*, 431.
[1792] Sipanta, *Tārīkhce-ye Awqāf*, 50–62; McChesney, "Waqf and Public", 178–181.
[1793] Moazzin briefly refers to the waqf's stipulations concerning the Muharram ceremonies. See Moazzin, *Sacred Geography*, 122.

for scrutinizing the ritual and daily life in the complex, which will be covered in the following part of this chapter. Further, my investigation brings a few manuscripts endowed to the complex into the view of a more general readership. Published by Jafarian and Jazini, these book endowments offer a glimpse into the non-royal waqfs established by the lesser-members of the Safavid society, of which very little is known.[1794]

The endowment deed's summary recounts the income-generating properties and the expenditures of the complex, the staff and their tasks, and stipulations concerning the complex's revenues and employees. It has a brief introduction showing that the summary of the endowment's sources, expenses, and stipulations was penned by Sheikh Bahai, who, it is noted, always prayed for the state's perpetuity. The introduction mentions the name of Muhib Ali Beg Lala, the son of Muhammadqulu Khan, as the legal manager, *mutavallī*, and one of the two donators of the waqf, along with Shah Abbas 'the dog of the Threshold of Imam Ali bin Abu Talib al-Huseini al-Musavi al-Safavi.'[1795] The text stipulates that the trusteeship of the waqf belongs to Muhibb Ali Beg for life, and will be inherited by his progeny.[1796] The entrusting of a bureaucrat of ghulam origin as a waqf's trustee is a rare practice in Safavid Iran.

Customarily, the administratorship of Safavid mosques and madrasas were given either to *ṣadr*s, the chief of all religious offices, or to other people chosen by the founder, depending on the waqf's type. In Safavid Iran, there were two groups of waqfs, one *shar'ī* (legal), and the other *tafvīḍī* (entrusting). While the *shar'ī* waqfs were managed by trustees determined by the endowment's founder, the *tafvīḍī*

[1794] Jafarian and Jaziri, *Waqfnāmahā-ye Ketāb-e Safavī*, 159–161, 304.
[1795] Sipanta, *Tārīkhce-ye Awqāf*, 50–51.
[1796] Ibid, 62.

endowments were under the responsibility of the *ṣadr*.[1797] The *tafvīḍī* waqfs were under the control of the religious bureaucracy since the *ṣadr* had the warrant to assign or replace the prayer leaders, muazzins, professors, and other employees hired in mosques and madrasas. Likewise, he had the authority to appoint or dismiss the administrators of other religious institutions.[1798] In this sense, *tafvīḍī* waqfs constituted considerably more independent foundations. Different waqfs founded by Shah Abbas were arranged either as *shar'ī* or *tafvīḍī* waqfs. His waqf dedicated to the Fourteen Immaculates was a *tafvīḍī* endowment entrusted to the *ṣadr*,[1799] whereas his endowment in the Shah Abd al-Azim shrine was *shar'ī*, consigned to Sheikh Bahai and his descendants.[1800]

With *shar'ī* waqfs, entrusting a religious scholar or a sayyid as the manager was a common practice. Sheikh Bahai's assignment as Shah Abd al-Azim shrine's manager is an example of this custom. Built in the late seventeenth century by the physician Hakim al-Mulk in Isfahan,[1801] the management of the madrasa of potters (*madrasa-ye kāsagarān*) was given to a sayyid named Mir Muhammad Said.[1802] Similarly, the aforementioned physician's wife charged a religious scholar as the trustee of his madrasa's endowment.[1803] It was also a common practice for the waqf's founder to undertake his endowment's administratorship. The founders of two mid-seventeenth century madrasas built in Isfahan, the madrasa of Nuriyyah and the madrasa of the Short Road (*Jādda-ye Kūchak*), undertook the management of their waqfs.[1804] In his endowment for the Chahar Bagh Madrasa complex, Shah Sultan

[1797] Ansari, "Dastur al-Muluk" 493; Kondo, "Shah Abd al-Azim'", 48.
[1798] Ahmadi, *Dar bāb-e Awqāf*, 27-34; Floor, ""Sadr" or head", 461, 471; Sifatgol, "Safavid Administration", 407.
[1799] Ahmadi, *Dar bāb-e Awqāf*, 38; Sipanta, *Tārīkhce-ye Awqāf* 42.
[1800] Kondo, "Shah Abd al-Azim", 56.
[1801] Blake, *Half the World*, 168.
[1802] Ahmadi, *Dar bāb-e Awqāf*, 112.
[1803] Ibid, 91; Blake, *Half the World*, 168.
[1804] Ahmadi, *Dar bāb-e Awqāf*, 98; Sipanta, *Tārīkhce-ye Awqāf*, 74.

Husein stipulated that the waqf's administratorship belongs to himself, and his progeny after his pass away.[1805] As a *shar'ī* endowment, the waqf of Masjed-e Shah was consigned to a bureaucrat of ghulam origin, instead of himself, or someone from religious class. This decision was in line with the shah's policy of creating a new political elite of ghulam origin, and a manifestation of his favor to and cooperation with Lala Beg. The arrangement of Masjed-e Shah's waqf as a *shar'ī* endowment, on the other hand, can be assessed as a strategy for providing the complex's independence from religious bureaucrats' intervention.[1806] The shah's concern for blocking state officials' intervention was expressed in the endowment deed, too. In the text, the sadr, judges, viziers, and governors were instructed not to interfere with the waqf's affairs.[1807]

The longest part of Masjed-e Shah's endowment deed is devoted to the enumeration of the endowed (*mawqūf*) properties and revenues of the waqf.[1808] Comprehensive documentation of the entire list of properties and revenues can be seen in Appendix B. Properties recounted in this list are restricted to donations made in the first years of the waqf. The number of possessions' might have been increased in the following decades, but the present sources do not allow us to determine further states of the foundation. The present list involves properties of different types, including 14 farmlands (*mazra'* or *arāḍī*), 17 villages (*qarya*), 3 gardens (*bāgh*), 2 caravanserais (*khān*), 9 shops (*dukkān*), an unspecified number of houses (*khāna*), a kitchen (*karkhāna*), a mansion (*mālikāna*), a pavilion (*qasr*), and an ice-house (*yakhchāl*). The majority of the land properties granted to the waqf were in nearby villages to Isfahan, such as Lanjan, Baraan, Barkhar, and Karaj. On almost every

[1805] Sipanta, *Tārīkhce-ye Awqāf*, 130.
[1806] Ibid, 40.
[1807] Ibid, 62.
[1808] Ibid, 51–55.

occasion, the income from the farmland is measured in kind.[1809] Produces yielded from farmlands and villages included wheat (*gandom*), grain (*gollah*), barley (*jū*), straw (*kāh*), rice (*shaltūk*), oil (*zahān*), different types of grape (*'anab*), date (*akhmar*), corn (*dakhān*), cotton (*jūzaq*), and opium (*afyūn*). From the repeated use of the phrase 'one quarter/half of one-quarter of that amounts to', it appears that frequently, merely 25 or 12,5 percent of the total yield was granted to the waqf.[1810]

[1809] McChesney, "Waqf and Public", 179.
[1810] Ibid, 179.

Table 15. The in-kind incomes of the waqf of Masjed-e Shah

The yield	The amount
Wheat (*gandom*)	15.987 *man*s/ 47.961 kg
Grain (*gollah*)	53.487 *man*s/ 160.461 kg
Barley (*jū*)	10.181 *man*s/ 30.543 kg
Straw (*kūh*)	2.646 *man*s/ 7.938 kg
Rice (*shaltūk*)	7.726 *man*s/ 23.178 kg
Oil (*zahān*)	635 *man*s/ 1905 kg
Grape (*'anab*)	1.149,5 *man*s/ 3.448,5 kg
Date (*akhmar*)	1.613 *man*s/ 4.839 kg
Corn (*dakhān*)	62 *man*s/ 186 kg
Cotton (*jūzaq*),	2.610 *man*s/ 7.830 kg
Opium (*afyūn*)	4050 *man*s/ 12.150 kg

Fewer in number, the commercial properties whose rental revenue was bestowed to the endowment, were located in Isfahan. The rental revenues of gardens, shops, caravanserais, houses, and the mansion provided cash income to the waqf. The annual cash revenue of the foundation counts 146 *tumān*s and 20.219,5 *dīnār*s. (Table 16) The income measured in yields constituted the majority of the waqf's total revenues, suggesting that the economy of Isfahan was not largely monetized in the early seventeenth century.[1811] This suggestion is confirmed by the evidence displaying that much of the tax revenues of Shah Abbas' court were in kind.[1812] Both Lala Beg and Shah Abbas granted in-kind and cash incomes to the waqf of Masjed-e

[1811] Blake, *Half the World*, 145.
[1812] Safakesh, *Ṣafavīyān dar Guzargāh*, 360.

Shah. Whereas Shah Abbas endowed a higher number of properties, the largest piece of agricultural property, the village of Vanan in Lanjan, and the major cash-generating commercial property, the Caravanserai of the Chief of the Imperial Heralds with two flanking shops, were granted by Lala Beg.[1813]

[1813] Ibid, 145; McChesney, "Waqf and Public", 179–180; Sipanta, *Tārīkhce-ye Awqāf*, 54–55.

Table 16. The cash income of Masjed-e Shah's waqf

The property	The revenue
The farmland of Babakrai in Barkhar	10 *tūmān*s
The village of Mulk-abad in Barkhar	12 *tūmān*s
The village of Adaryan in Marbayn	5750 *dīnār-e Tabrīzī*
A garden with single entrance (*bāgh-e yakdarb*) in Murtakan-e Ardistan	1 *tūmān* and 4000 *dīnār*s
A garden with single entrance in Khusrawiyyah, Lanjan	1 *tūmān* and 3000 *dīnār*s
A garden with single entrance in Dastjard-e Qaban	1 *tūmān*s and 7000 *dīnār*s
The mansion (*mālikāna*) Asfariz dar Marbayn	3 *tūmān*s and 1725 *dīnār-e Tabrīzī*
The White Inn (*Khān-e Safīd*) to the south of the mosque	10 *tūmān-e Tabrīzī*
A warehouse (*tīmcha*) to the south of the mosque	5 *tūmān-e Tabrīzī*
The farmland of Fasharak in Qahparah	3 *tūmān* and 4787 *dīnār*
A Kitchen (*karkhāna-ye tabbākhī*) to the south of the old well (*chākh*)	3650 *dīnā*s
Walled houses (*khānahā-ye mukhūta*) to the south of the madrasa	6000 *dīnār*s
A shop of a second-hand bookseller (*dukkān-e ṣaḥāfī*) on the flanks of the mosque's portal	3 *tūmān*s
Two shops of herbalist (*dū-bāb dukkān-e 'aṭṭārī*) on the mosque's entrance	6 *tūmān*s
The Inn of the Chief Goldsmith (*Khān-e Zargarbashī*) beside the Qaysariyya	?
The Inn of the Chief of the Imperial Heralds (*Khān-e Charshibashī*) with two flanking shops	90 *tūmān-e Tabrīzī*, assigned to the mosque's illumination (*rūshanāī*)
Two shops of a second-hand bookseller at the mosque's entrance	3 *tūmān*s and 6000 *dīnār*
Total	146 *tūmān*s and 20.219,5 *dīnār*s

The income generated from these properties was allotted to the staff and maintenance of the complex. Keeping the complex and the underground canals (*qanāt*) irrigating the agricultural properties in good repair is defined as the

administrator's first task concerning the income's expenditure. The remaining revenue is assigned to the personnel hired in the complex, professors and students of the madrasa, and provisions. The text enumerates 66 employees receiving cash or in-kind revenues, or both. The personnel involved a superintendent (*mutavallī*), head of mosque servants (*khādimbashī*), treasurer (*takhvīldār-e jīns*), prayer leader (*pīshnamāz*), preacher (*khatīb*), commentator (*mu'arrīf*), head clerk (*mustavfī*), muazzins, Quran memorizers (*ḥuffāẓ*), lamplighters (*cheraghchī*), candle lighters (*mash'al-dār*), *kafsh-dār* (responsible for shoes), water carriers (*saqā*), *ābkash* (responsible for drawing water from the well), door-keepers (*darbān*), pitcher-carriers (*ibrīqchī*), and sweepers (*farrāsh*). Although not mentioned among the personnel on the list, there was a *rawḍhakhān*, who chanted the text *Rawdhat al-Shuhadā* (the Garden of Martyrs),[1814] paid by the waqf. His income appears on the list showing the provisions' expenses.

Table 17. The personnel of Masjed-e Shah's waqf[1815]

The Employee	Number	Name	Income
The Trustee (*mutavallī*)	1	Muhib Ali Beg Lala	%5 of cash revenues
The head of mosque servants (*khādimbashī*)	1	Baba Muin, the son of Baba Qasim	1400 *man*s/ 4200 kg grain
The treasurer (*takhvīldār-e jīns*)	1	Dargahqulu	7 *tūmān*s
The prayer leader (*pīshnamāz*)	1	Agha Husein	12 *tūmān-e Tabrīzī*, 1000 *man*s/ 3000 kg wheat, 200 *man*s/ 600 kg barley, 30 *man*s/ 90 kg straw, 300 *man*s/ 900 kg rice

[1814] This text will be explained in the following section.
[1815] Sipanta, *Tārīkhce-ye Awqāf*, 60–61.

The preacher (*khatīb*)	1	Mawlana Kamal al-Din Muhammad	1700 *man*s/ 5100 kg in-kind
The commantator (*mu'arrīf*)	1	Qadi Jamal al-Din	3 *tūmān*s and 500 *man*s/ 1500 kg grain
The head clerk (*mustavfī*)	1	Mirza Taher	12 *tūmān*s and 700 *man*s/ 2100 kg grain
ḥuffāẓ	15		400 *man*s/ 1200 kg wheat
Muazzins	7		500 *man*s/ 1500 kg grain for each
Rawḍhakhān	1		1 *tūmān* and 2000 *dīnār*s
Lamplighters (*cheraghchī*)	6		400 *man*s/ 1200 kg grain for each
Candlelighters (*mash'al-dār*)	4		400 *man*s/ 1200 kg grain for each
Kafsh-dār (responsible for shoes)	4		400 *man*s/ 1200 kg grain for each
Sweepers (*farrāsh*)	10		400 *man*s/ 1200 kg grain for each
Water carriers (*saqā*)	2		400 *man*s/ 1200 kg grain for each
Ābkash (responsible for drawing water from the well)	5		400 *man*s/ 1200 kg grain for each
Door-keepers (*darbān*)	4		400 *man*s/ 1200 kg grain for each
Pitcher-carriers (*ibrīqchī*)	1		800 *man*s/ 2400 kg grain for each

The recipients also included professors (*mudarris*) and 37 students. The text indicates that the professors' number is 12, but recounts the names of merely 9 professors.[1816] Tasked with serving in the mosque at nights, 3 students are entitled to receive 3 *tūmān*s while the remaining are paid 2 *tūmān*s.[1817] The professors were

[1816] Sipanta, *Tārīkhce-ye Awqāf*, 58.
[1817] Ibid, 61.

receiving both in-kind or cash revenues, whose amounts were probably depending on their ranks or professional competencies.

Table 18. Professors in the madrasa of the Masjed-e Shah complex[1818]

Name	Income
Agha-ye Mirza Ismail Khatunabadi	14 *tūmān-e Tabrīzī*, 500 *man*s/ 1500 kg wheat, 500 *man*s/ 1500 kg barley, 500 mans/ 1500 kg rice
Molla Muhammad Husein Burujardi	2500 *man*s/ 7500 kg wheat, 1000 *man*s/ 3000 kg barley, 1000 *man*s/ 3000 kg rice
Molla Muhammad Husein Gilani	7 *tūmān-e Tabrīzī*, 500 *man*s/ 1500 kg wheat, 500 *man*s/ 1500 kg barley
Mir Muhammad Salih	750 *man*s/ 2250 kg wheat, 750 *man*s/ 2250 kg barley
Sufi Ramadan	200 *man*s/ 600 kg wheat
Molla Muhammad, the son of Molla Agha Husein	500 *man*s/ 1500 kg grain
Molla Muhammad Ali Simnani	1 *tūmān*, 6 *khirwār*s/ 18 kg grain
Molla Rahim Yazdi	500 *man*s/ 1500 kg grain
Molla Muhammad Husein Gilani	7 *tūmān*s, 1000 *man*s/ 3000 kg grain

Provisions contained tallow-burners, candlesticks, oil lamp hooks, torches, lamps, rush mats, waterbags, brooms, ice, porridge (*ḥalīm*) served in the tenth of Muharram and food (*ṭa'ām*) served during the month of Ramadan, and on special days and nights (*ayyām va layālī-ye mutabarrikah*). The text contains a special stipulation concerning provisions of lighting. It is indicated that their expenses will be covered with revenue generated from the Inn of the Chief of the Imperial Heralds, endowed by Lala Beg.[1819] Lala Beg might have followed the instructions on the

[1818] Ibid, 59–60.
[1819] Sipanta, *Tārīkhce-ye Awqāf*, 57.

provisions concerning mosques (*aḥkām-e masājīd*) put by Sheikh Bahai in *Jāme'-e 'Abbāsī*. In this catechism, lighting lamps in the mosque is recounted among the sunnah concerning the use of mosques. The text heralds it is narrated by the Prophet: "All angels and bearers of the earth would pray forgiveness for whoever lights a lamp in the masjid until that lamp goes out."[1820] This stipulation further implies the significance attributed to the nocturnal prayers offered in the sanctuary.

Table 19. Provisions provided by Masjed-e Shah's waqf[1821]

Provision	Number	Expenditure
Tallow-burners (*pīya-sūz*)	6	Paid with cash generated from rental revenue of the Inn of the Chief of the Imperial Heralds (*Khān-e Charshibashī*)
Candlesticks (*sham'dān*)	9	Paid with cash generated from rental revenue of the Inn of the Chief of the Imperial Heralds (*Khān-e Charshibashī*)
Lamps for toilets (*cherāgh ba jihat-e bayt al-khalā*)	30	Paid with cash generated from rental revenue of the Inn of the Chief of the Imperial Heralds (*Khān-e Charshibashī*)
Oil lamp hooks (*qandīl-āvīz*)	100	Paid with cash generated from rental revenue of the Inn of the Chief of the Imperial Heralds (*Khān-e Charshibashī*)
Torches (*mash'al*)	4 each night	Paid with cash generated from rental revenue of the Inn of the Chief of the Imperial Heralds (*Khān-e Charshibashī*)
Rush mats (*būzyā*)		12 *tūmān*s
Waterbags (*khīq*)	4	400 *dīnār*s

[1820] Sheikh Bahai, *Jāme'-ye 'Abbāsī*, 71.
[1821] Sipanta, *Tārīkhce-ye Awqāf*, 57–58.

Porridge (*ḥalīm*) served on the tenth of Muharram (*'āshūrā*)		3 *tūmān*s
Broom (*jārūb*)		1 *tūmān* and 2000 *dīnār*s
Food (*ṭa'ām*) served during Ramadan nights		30 *tūmān*s
Food (*ṭa'ām*) served on special days and nights (*ayyām va layālī-ye mutabarrikah*)		2000 *dīnār*s
Incense (*bukhūr*) burned on special days and nights		1 *tūmān* and 2000 *dīnār*s
Ice (*yākh*)	6 *khirwār*s/ 18 kg	The rental revenue generated from the ice-house of the waqf

The endowment deed stipulates that the spending of the entire revenue was in the manager's trust. Anyone spending money, or engaging in any affairs regarding the foundation without the trustee's consent, is cursed and deemed as if he treats the Fourteen Immaculates as enemies. The waqf's administrator is prevented from changing the endowment. Further, he is tasked with avoiding leasing out the properties to extravagant people, and anyone else, for over three years.[1822] Putting an upper limit on renting commercial properties seems to have been a common practice in Safavid Iran. The founder of the madrasa of Nuriyyah also stipulated that the endowment's commercial properties cannot be leased out for more than a year.[1823] These restrictions might have aimed to prevent commercial properties from being misused and rented to third parties.

[1822] Sipanta, *Tārīkhce-ye Awqāf*, 56.
[1823] Ibid, 89.

6.4 Rituals in Masjed-e Shah

The Masjed-e Shah complex functioned as the venue of several religious and social events and rituals occurring on singular and orderly basis. Unlike the social and ceremonial life in the Sultan Ahmad complex, events and rituals taking place in the Masjed-e Shah complex remain mostly unknown due to the silence of primary sources on the question. Along with the complex's endowment deed, fragmentary depictions provided by local and foreign contemporary witnesses constitute the main bulk of an inquiry on the daily and ceremonial life in the complex. The evidence gathered from this limited body of sources suggests that the Friday ritual and daily obligatory prayers, religious ceremonies occurring on special days and nights, and banquets offered on significant regular and singular events constituted the main ceremonial program of the congregational mosque. On the other hand, the madrasa of the complex served mainly as an institution for higher education, whose residents took charge, and joined in the daily tasks and ceremonial events occurring in the congregational mosque. In concordance with the edifice's inscriptional program, its ritual calendar reflects Shah Abbas' religious agenda and kingly virtues. The venue's ritual program concretizes the shah's appeal and support for religious orthopraxy, his concern for performing, reinforcing, and disseminating the Twelver Shi'ite tenets and identity, as well as his piety, benevolence, and mercy, as a Shi'ite just ruler.

Masjed-e Shah was created foremost as a sanctuary for performing the Friday ritual and five daily canonical prayers. Although its endowment deed does not define it as a congregational mosque, *masjed-e jāmī'*, but rather as the new Abbasid mosque, *masjed-e jadīd-e 'Abbāsī*, and the new Sultanic mosque, *masjed-e jadīd-e sultānī*,[1824] its foundation inscription names the building as a congregational mosque,

[1824] Sipanta, *Tārīkhce-ye Awqāf*, 50.

al-masjed al-jāmī', and shows that the edifice was erected for the performance of the Friday ritual, *al-salāt al-jum'a*.[1825] The existence of a prayer leader (*pīshnamāz*), and a preacher (*khatīb*) among the employees, and the accounts of contemporary visitors confirm this evidence. In the waqfnama, a certain Agha Husein, known for his competence (*ṣalāḥiyat*) and merit (*faḍīlat*), was assigned as the prayer leader, and tasked with leading the congregation in the five daily canonical prayers (*farāyiḍ-e pancgānah*).[1826] That the prayer leader's responsibility was defined as leading the five daily congregational prayers in the waqfiya indicates a concern for this ritual's regular performance in the mosque.

In accordance with the Imami practice, the Safavid Shi'is seem to have been combining the five daily canonical prayers and pray three times a day. Several European travelers visiting Isfahan in the seventeenth century stated that in Safavid mosques, Shi'i Muslims were performing three daily prayers. Some of them mentioned the number of daily calls for prayers as three, indicating the congregations were convened in the mosques thrice a day. The Carmelite father Paul Simon, who was sent as a mission to Isfahan in the early seventeenth century, related that the Persians go to mosques and say their prayers thrice daily, morning, noon, and evening.[1827] It was confirmed by Figueroa, who visited the city in the same years, and indicated that Muslims were called to prayer from the mosques' minarets three times a day.[1828] Du Mans regarded the call for prayers in Safavid mosques as non-punctual in comparison with the contemporary Ottoman practice and reported their times as two or three.[1829] In his catechism, Sheikh Bahai pointed out that reciting the

[1825] Hunarfar, *Ganjīna-ye Āsār*, 429.
[1826] Sipanta, *Tārīkhce-ye Awqāf*, 58.
[1827] *Carmelites*, I, 156.
[1828] Figueroa, *Commentaries*, 415.
[1829] Du Mans, *Estat*, 171.

call for prayer thrice a day had been deemed as a sunnah by the majority of the Imami ulama,[1830] and the Safavid practice appears to have followed this religious rule. The daily obligatory prayers must have been performed three times in Masjed-e Shah, too.

It is difficult to determine how regularly the daily obligatory prayers were performed in Masjed-e Shah, and the level of the populace's attendance in these rituals. The congregational performance of the daily obligatory prayers was promoted by Sheikh Bahai, but was not defined as an obligation. In *Jāme'-e 'Abbāsī*, he regarded performing the daily obligatory prayers in the congregation as laudable (*mustaḥabb*), and strongly recommended (*istiḥbāb-e mu'akkadah*). He encouraged Shi'i Muslims to perform the daily obligatory prayers in congregation, quoting a saying by Imam Jafar al-Sadiq: "Performing the daily obligatory prayers in congregation is twenty-four-fold worthier than performing them individually."[1831] Still, attendance at the daily obligatory prayers in congregation was not defined as a religious obligation, and their performance on a regular basis was not enforced in the Safavid context.

The evidence suggests that at least some Shi'i Muslims in Safavid Iran preferred to perform the daily obligatory prayers not in congregation, but individually. Visiting Iran in the mid-seventeenth century, Evliya asserted that Iranian mosques lacked congregations because people of Iran rarely performed their prayers in congregation, but prayed individually within the mosques. He added that the reason for their neglect was their belief that the daily obligatory prayers should be led only by the Immaculate Imams.[1832] The famous Safavid poet Mir Nejat

[1830] Sheikh Bahai, *Jāme'-ye 'Abbāsī,* 39.
[1831] Ibid, 92.
[1832] Evliya Çelebi, *Seyahatname*, II, 216; idem, *Seyahatname*, IV, 184, 218.

Isfahani (d. 1710) makes a similar observation in his poetic depiction of Masjed-e Shah: "People of observance are worshipping in every part/ Settling in it like felicity."[1833] At the same time, the poet's description suggests that in the late Safavid era, Masjed-e Shah was frequented by a large number of worshippers. According to Kaempfer's report, Shah Suleiman was among the denizens of Isfahan who frequented Masjed-e Shah, usually before sunrise and in disguise.[1834]

Despite the sanctuary's creation as a Friday mosque, it is not certain whether the Friday rituals were performed regularly in it in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. In the third chapter, it has been shown that the legitimacy of performing the Friday ritual and the daily obligatory prayers remained in disputee throughout the period of Safavid rule, including in the reign of Abbas I. Considering his manifold endeavors to popularize the Friday ritual, including the erection of Masjed-e Shah, it can be suggested that this religious rite might have gained considerable prevalence in the early seventeenth century. Iskandar Munshi's eulogistic account of Sheikh Bahai's efforts confirms this suggestion: "One of his achievements was the revival of the Friday prayer, which had been in abeyance for a considerable time because of differences of opinion among theologians regarding the conditions pertaining to it."[1835] This statement implies that in that era, the ritual began to be performed after a period of negligence. Yet, the current evidence does not allow us to determine to what extent the Shi'ite populace of Isfahan followed Sheikh Bahai's advice to perform the Friday ritual. Considering that the vast majority of the contemporary mujtahids, including Sheikh Bahai, gave Muslims the option of performing the daily noon prayer instead of joining the Friday ritual, it seems very

[1833] My translation. Mir Nejat Isfahani, "Vasf-e Isfahan", 369. I thank Dr. F. Emami for sharing his digital copy with me.
[1834] Kaempfer, *Am Hofe*, 76, 78.
[1835] Munshi, *History of Shah*, I, 247.

probable that at least some among the populace preferred the first option. The lack of any legal or social enforcement for performing the ritual, as opposed to the contemporary Ottoman practice, might have caused the population's attendance to the ritual to remain at a limited level.

The complaints of several late Safavid clerics suggest that the popularity of the Friday ritual decreased again in Isfahan and other Safavid cities in the second half of the seventeenth century. For example, a cleric named Molla Muhammad (d. 1673–74) dwelling in Yazd complained about the regret of the city's denizens for performing the Friday ritual and the fewness of Friday congregations.[1836] The account of Fayd Kashani (d. 1680), who was later assigned as the leader of Friday prayer in Isfahan by Abbas II,[1837] suggests that Kashan's state was not considerably different from that of Yazd in the mid-seventeenth century. In a letter addressing a colleague from Khurasan, Kashani complained about the indifference of his city's people to the Friday ritual, for he could not find a congregation for performing the Friday ritual. According to Kashani's report, similar to Kashan, various cities and towns of Iran were suffering from the dispute concerning the Friday ritual, for while some groups completely abandoned the practice, others began to perform it outside the settlements with their own prayer leaders. [1838] Jafarian demonstrated that Isfahan witnessed similar conflicts and debates concerning the disputable state of the Friday ritual, and in the early eighteenth century, the city witnessed the murder of a Friday prayer leader in one of these bloody fightings.[1839]

Still, there is evidence that the Friday rituals were performed in Masjed-e Shah, even if not always regularly, and with large congregations. Travelers and

[1836] Jafarian, *Seyāset va Farhang*, I, 606.
[1837] Ibrahim, "Life and Intellectual", 61.
[1838] Kashani, *Dah Resāle*, 278–291.
[1839] Jafarian, *Seyāset va Farhang*, I, 615.

chroniclers mentioned a few instances in which the Friday sermon was delivered in the name of the Safavid shahs, and their participation in the ceremony. At the same time, these accounts provide some clues concerning the ceremony's order and parts. The chroniclers of Shah Safi reported that on the first Friday after his coronation, the sermon was delivered by Mir Muhammad Baqir, better known as Mir Damad (d. 1631), in the name of the new shah in Masjed-e Shah, where a large congregation (*jamiyat*) convened for the ceremony.[1840] Although the details of this Friday sermon were not depicted in the chronicles, the Friday sermon's rules recounted in *Jāme'-e 'Abbāsī*, and accounts of Friday sermons delivered in other contemporary Iranian cities provide clues concerning these preachings. As prescribed by Sheikh Bahai, each sermon should involve praises (*ḥamd*) of God, salawat to the Prophet Muhammad and his family, a preach (*va'ẓ*), and reading a short section (*sūrah*), or a whole phase (*āyat-e tāmm al-fāida*) from the Quran.[1841] In his report on a Friday sermon delivered in Najaf's main congregational mosque in 1622 (1032 AH), Fazli Beg recounted the mentioning of the shah's name, and prayers for the state's continuity (*davām-e dowlat*) as among the sermons' main sections, along with eulogies to God, Prophet, and the Immaculate Imams. He mentioned Shah Abbas' admonishment for his name not being mentioned during Friday sermons, and the stipulation that he be referred to as the dog of Ali's threshold, *kalb-e āsitāna-ye 'Alī*.[1842] Kaempfer confirmed that prayers for the shah's health constituted an integral part of the Safavid Friday ceremonies.[1843]

The late Safavid chronicle of Qazvini Isfahani provides the account of two Friday rituals held in Masjed-e Shah, which occurred with the participation of Shah

[1840] Khajagi Isfahani, *Khulāsat al-siyar,* 39; Qazvini Isfahani, *Irān dar Zamān,* 4.
[1841] Sheikh Bahai, *Jāme'-ye 'Abbāsī,* 58.
[1842]Khuzani Isfahani, *Chronicle*, II, 843, 864.
[1843] Kaempfer, *Am Hofe*, 137.

Abbas II, and an Ottoman ambassador respectively. These reports have particular significance for displaying a Safavid shah's attendance at a Friday ritual performed in Masjed-e Shah, and the Safavid authorities' endeavor to show their embrace of the Friday ritual to the Ottomans. Accordingly, the shah visited Masjed-e Shah on a Friday in 1660–61 (1071 AH) when acongregation convened on the mosque (*dar yakī jama'āt*(, and performed the Friday ritual with the congregation, for the reinforcement of religion and observance (*takviyat-e dīn u iṭāat*).[1844] This account displays that despite the sustained dispute and challenges concerning the performance of the Friday ritual, Safavid shahs, or at least Abbas II, continued to practice the ritual, and endeavored to promote its performance, as it is stated by his chronicler as "the reinforcement of religion and observance." As implied with this expression, the shah's participation in the ceremony aimed to consolidate orthopraxy and manifested his endorsement of the Friday ritual.

The same concern seems to have been shared by his predecessor Shah Safi, who aimed to display the ceremony's performance in the capital city to his Ottoman rivals. The same chronicler narrated an Ottoman envoy's visit to Masjed-e Shah, and his performance of the Friday ritual with a Safavid retinue. On 14 July 1638 (2 Rabi al-Avval 1048 AH), the Ottoman ambassador was welcomed by a group of high-ranking bureaucrats near Isfahan, and taken directly to Masjed-e Shah upon Shah Safi's order. Accompanied by the *ṣadr*, Mirza Habibullah, he performed the Friday ritual in the sanctuary.[1845] This visit appears to have been conceived as an answer to the ongoing Ottoman accusations concerning the Safavids' neglect of the Friday ritual, and their disrespect for mosques. Besides proving the ritual's performance by the Shi'i Safavids, this ceremony held in Masjed-e Shah would demonstrate the

[1844] Qazvini Isfahani, *Irān dar Zamān*, 659.
[1845] Ibid, 301.

Safavid shahs' patronage of congregational mosques that were as monumental as those erected by the Ottoman sultans.

Besides the Friday ritual and the daily obligatory prayers, special days and nights in the Muslim and particularly Shi'ite calendar occupied a significant place in Masjed-e Shah's ritual program. The endowment deed mentions the month of Ramadan, *'āshūrā*, and some sacred days and nights (*ayyām va layālī-ye mutabarrakah*) as special dates in the sanctuary's ritual calendar. Contextual evidence makes it possible to determine the special dates addressed as the sacred days and nights in the waqfnama. As has been demonstrated by different scholars, the Safavids were celebrating the birthdays of the Fourteen Immaculates and holding mourning ceremonies on the anniversaries of their passing away.[1846] Prophet Muhammad's designation of Imam Ali as his successor was also among the main Shi'i festivals celebrated as the Eid of Ghadir Khumm on the 18th day of the month of Zilhijja.[1847]

In addition to Ramadan, *'āshūrā*, and the Gadir Khumm, Kaempfer recounts nine special dates that were deemed as sacred in the Safavid realms. The fortieth day of Imam Husein's martyrdom, *arba'īn*, and the anniversary of Imam Hasan's death were commemorated with mourning rituals on 20th and 28th of the month of Safar, respectively.[1848] Caliph Omar's murder by an Iranian was celebrated as a festival held on 9 Rabi al-Avval, and the 15th of Shaban, known as *rūz-e barāt*, was believed to be a special day when believers' sins can be forgiven.[1849] The birthday of Prophet Muhammad was commemorated on 17 Rabi al-Avval,[1850] five days after the Sunni

[1846] Falsafi, *Zandaganī-ye Shāh 'Abbās*, I, 462; Safakesh, *Ṣafavīyān dar Guzargāh*, 360.
[1847] Blow, *Shah Abbas*, 185; Kaempfer, *Am Hofe*, 190.
[1848] Kaempfer, *Am Hofe*, 187–188.
[1849] Ibid, 188.
[1850] Ibid, 188.

Ottomans' *mevlid ḳandīli*. On the 19th, the 21st, and 23rd nights of Ramadan, people were filling the mosque for reviving the probable night of power.[1851] Some special days and nights mentioned by Kaempfer overlap with the dates defined as times of some supererogatory prayers in Sheikh Bahai's catechism, including the eid of Ghadir Khumm, and the Prophet's birthday. In the compilation, the first Friday night of Rajab known as *raġā'ib* night, and the 24th of Zilhijja as the anniversary of the event of cursing, *rūz-e mubāhalah*, appear as other significant dates revived with performing recommended prayers.[1852] Most probably, these two days also marked significant dates in the ritual calendar of Masjed-e Shah. Commemorating an important event in the Shi'i history, the event of cursing might have owned a special significance, considering that the mosque has some inscriptions addressing this event.

Among other special dates in the mosque's ritual calendar, the first ten days of the month of Muharrram, and especially its tenth day, *'āshūrā*, seem to have had special significance. Both the witnessing of contemporary visitors of the sanctuary and specific stipulations mentioned in the endowment deed imply the centrality of the Muharram ceremonies. The increased importance and spectacle of the Muharram ceremonies under Shah Abbas' patronage was addressed in the fourth chapter. As among the most vital social spaces in Isfahan, the royal mosque served as a stage of these theatrical rituals, along with the squares and streets of the city. During his visit to Isfahan in 1618 (1027 AH), Della Valle spectated the mourning rituals held in the city and related that the city's mosques formed the main venues of these ceremonies, besides various open spaces. He reported the mosques were fraught with participants of the ceremony during the daytime while the crowd continued to lament on open

[1851] Ibid, 189.
[1852] Sheikh Bahai, *Jāme'-ye 'Abbāsī*, 76–77.

public spaces nocturnally.[1853] The participants' mobility between the mosque and maydan was confirmed by Du Mans, who indicated that the ensemble convened on the Naqsh-e Jahan Square, and marched to Masjed-e Shah.[1854] While processions and stage-plays constituted the main events occurring in open public spaces, the mosques functioned as stages of *rawḍakhānī*, and special foods offered to the participants.

Despite the lack of any contemporary account of a *rawḍakhānī* ritual held in Masjed-e Shah, the existence of a *rawḍakhān* among the mosque's incumbents reveals that this sanctuary also became the venue of these ceremonies, like other Safavid mosques addressed by travelers. *Rawḍakhānī* denotes a Shi'ite mourning ceremony commemorating the martyrdom and suffering of Imam Husein and his accompanies murdered in Karbala. Meaning "who recites *Rawḍat* (*al-Shuhadā*)", this public lamentation's name is derived from a literary masterpiece's title, *Rawḍat al-Shuhadā* (The Garden of the Martyrs).[1855] This text was composed by Kamal al-Din Husein Kashifi (d. 908/ 1502-3), a polymath, scribe (*munshī*), a professional preacher (*vā'iẓ*), and a master in the science of stars (*'ilm-e nujūm*), who penned several scientific and literary works under the late Timurid patronage.[1856] Although his confessional leaning is not certain, he is known with his reverence to the House of Prophet,[1857] and *Rawḍat* manifests this adherence. Composed at the dawn of Shah Isma'il's reign in 1502–3 (908 AH), it constitutes a skillful and large synthesis of hagiographic, historic, and legendary narrations of the drama of Karbala.[1858] The main theme of the text is calamities experienced by prophets, Imam Husein, and his

[1853] Della Valle, *Safarnama*, 101.
[1854] Du Mans, *Supérieur*, 55–56.
[1855] Chelkowski, P., "Rawda-Khwani". Consulted online on 18 May 2021. http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_6256
[1856] Jafarian, *Taammolī dar Nuhzat*, 320–327; Subtelny, "Husayn Va'iz-i Kashifi"; Mitchell, "Preserve and Protect", 485–490; Rusta and Qarachahi, "Vakāvī-ye Jāigāh", 43–46.
[1857] Jafarian, *Taammolī dar Nuhzat*, 292; Ranjbar, "Sayr dar Maqtal-navīsī", 95; Subtelny, "Husayn Va'iz-i Kashifi", 466.
[1858] Calmard, "Popular Literature", 328.

progeny. Besides an introduction and a conclusion, it consists of ten chapters in which prose and poetry are combined in a complementary manner. Although it covers a much longer period, the event of Karbala, and troubles encountered by Imam Husein and his companions form the text's central foci. Almost half of the book, including its chapters from seven to ten, is devoted to narrating the tragedies of Imam Husein and his progeny, but reference is made to the themes of martyrdom and the Karbala event at the end of each chapter.[1859]

Rawḍat fits into the category of *maqātīl* literature, or *maqtal-navīsī* in Persian, which focuses on the assassinations or unnatural deaths of significant religious figures.[1860] Both mourning rituals and the public recital of *maqtalnāma*s were popular in the Safavids realms, and the Safavid authorities instrumentalized these ceremonies as vehicles for popularizing the Imami creed in Iran. As different scholars have underlined, *maqtalnāma*s, and hagiographies (*manāqīb*) of the Imams played a significant part in the spread of the distinct Twelver Shi'ite notions and ideals, manifested in the lives and martyrdoms of Imams.[1861] These texts' recital in public spaces and during some religious ceremonies rendered them into means of Shi'ite propaganda, staged in the mould of a popular performance, story-telling, or *qissakhānī*.[1862] In the general sense, the public recital of *maqtalnāma*s' and elegies

[1859] Jafarian, *Taammolī dar Nuhzat*, 358; Rusta and Qarachahi, "Vakāvī-ye Jāigāh", 49.
[1860] For this genre, see Ranjbar, "Sayr dar Maqtal-navisi", 86; Günther, "*Maqqtil* Literature", 192. Although this genre's history goes back to Islam's earliest centuries, the post-Mongol era has been defined as its zenith, probably in direct proportion to the augmenting Shi'ite tendencies, or pro-Alid loyalties in Greater Iran. This genre's proliferation was paralleled by the spread of mourning rituals held in Muharram, where some *maqtalnāma*s were recited. Kashifi penned *Rawḍat* upon the request of a Timurid prince in Herat named Sayyed Mirza, in order to be recited in the Muharram mourning ceremonies (*majālīs-e 'azādārī*) in Khurasan. He took an active role as a preacher in several mourning assemblies convened in Muharram in different cities of Khurasan. Jafarian, *Taammolī dar Nuhzat*, 291, 323–324, 336; Rusta and Qarachahi, "Vakāvī-ye Jāigāh", 42.
[1861] Jafarian, *Taammolī dar Nuhzat*, 355; Moazzin, *Sacred Geography*, 130-134; Rusta and Qarachahi, "Vakavi va Jaigah-e Siyasi", 49.
[1862] Story-telling, and the public recital of particular epics such as *Ḥamzanāma*, *Abū-Muslīmnāma*, and *Shāhnāma*, were among the most popular public performances in the Safavid realms/ Calmard, "Popular Literature"; Jafarian, *Taammolī dar Nuhzat*, 554; Calmard, "Shi'i Rituals", 140.

for the Imams and martyrs of Karbala displays a strong resemblance to the performance of *qissakhānī*,[1863] and this similarity renders it into a convenient medium of propaganda embraced by the Safavid authorities. The integration of *rawḍakhānī* into Masjed-e Shah's ritual program, as the appearance of a *rawḍakhān* in the endowment deeds of other Safavid madrasas in the seventeenth century,[1864] manifests this phenomenon.

Rawḍat al-Shuhadā was among the most popular *maqtalnāma*s in Safavid Iran and gained a canonical status in time so that the public recital of *maqtalnāma*s as a performance began to be named after this text.[1865] According to Kaempfer, it was a custom to read a part of *Rawḍat* each of the first ten days of Muharram.[1866] *Rawḍat* has some linguistic and stylistic features that helped this text earn prominence within the context of the Muharram rituals. First, it was composed in Persian. Besides educated elites, Muharram gatherings were taking place with the participation common people, who probably could not understand Arabic. A text composed in the vernacular language of the society would address a more extended audience. Yet, *Rawḍat* did not constitute the first and only *maqtalnāma* written in Persian,[1867] and its language is not enough for explaining its canonization and popularity. Despite the literary sophistication it has, the text's language is intelligible and considerably simple, and it has a wording appealing to people from different classes of society with different levels of knowledge.[1868]

[1863] Rusta and Qarachahi, "Vakāvī-ye Jāigāh", 51; Kashifi, *Rawdat al-Shuhada*, 40.
[1864] Moazzin, *Sacred Geography*, 130
[1865] Ranjbar, "Sayr dar Maqtal-navisi", 85; Rusta and Qarachahi, "Vakāvī-ye Jāigāh", 39.
[1866] Kaempfer, *Am Hofe*, 187.
[1867] Jafarian, *Taammolī dar Nuhzat*, 357; Kashifi, *Rawdat al-Shuhada*, 47-50; Ranjbar, "Sayr dar Maqtal-navisi", 90.
[1868] For the text's literary and linguistic features, see Kashifi, *Rawdat al-Shuhada*, 82–88.

More than anything, however, its narrative style and dialogical language seem to have constituted this text's most significant features, rendering it into a convenient text for the Muharram ceremonies.[1869] Despite its attempt to report several historical events in a detailed manner, *Rawḍat* was not composed as a historical text, but fits more conveniently into the category of epic (*dastān*). As different scholars have argued, it is more appropriate to assess it as a literary production, rather than a historiographical work.[1870]Approaching it to the forms of popular literature, its narrativity has augmented the text's appeal, without dismissing its didactic functions. Its main purpose was not informing the audiences about the sequence or details of historical events, but to rouse their emotions, and to include them in the performative lamentation. This was achieved through a stirring language, inclusion of many dialogues, and hyperbolic descriptions of violent scenes and tragedies.[1871] This tragic manner of telling can be seen in the narration of the two sons of Muslim, a companion of Imam Husein at Karbala: "In that place, a groan was heard from earth and time, and shout raised to the sky, and those two saplings who withered in their early spring lamented."[1872] A similar turn of phrase is observable in the author's introduction to his report of the Karbala drama:

> Indeed, this explanation comprises sadness and trouble…, which can neither be expressed by the pen nor uttered by the tongue.
> I always fear when I narrate it
> The tongue will burn from an endless fire
> And if I attempt to write it, too
> The pen will be broken, and the paper will burn.[1873]

[1869] Chalkowski, "Rawdat al-Shuhada", 100; Kiya and Nanir, "Mashhad al-Shuhada", 273; Rusta and Qarachahi, "Vakavi va Jaigah-e Siyasi", 40, 46.
[1870]Jafarian, *Taammolī dar Nuhzat*, 275, 304, 354; Ranjbar, "Sayr dar Maqtal-navisi", 96; Rusta and Qarachahi, "Vakāvī-ye Jāigāh", 40; Kiya and Nanir, "Mashhad al-Shuhada", 273.
[1871] Kashifi, *Rawḍat al-Shuhada*, 40, 88, 90.
[1872] My translation. Kashifi, *Rawdat al-Shuhada*, 460–461.
[1873] My translation. Kashifi, *Rawdat al-Shuhada*, 465.

Its dialogical manner constitutes another significant feature of *Rawḍat*, which increases the performative and inclusive character of *rawḍakhānī* rituals. There is considerable evidence suggesting that these ceremonies had a performative feature. Attending a *rawḍakhānī* ceremony in Muharram of 1618 (1027 AH), Della Vella mentioned a sayyed preaching on a pulpit, who began *rawḍakhānī* after delivering his sermon. When he was narrating the violent scenes and the tragic deaths of the martyrs, the preacher occasionally sat and stood up, and expressions of different emotions were visible on his face. Meanwhile, the audiences listened to and joined him beating their chests, and lamenting as "Ah Husein, vah Husein!"[1874] It appears that *rawḍakhān* were not simply reciting the text, but also animating the scenes with fitting gestures and mimics. Further, he was not listened to by silent and motionless audiences, but by listeners actively joining this performative lamentation. Further, some addressings, explanations, and instructions in *Rawḍat* invited the audiences to take part in the lamentation, and to engage in specific actions, including crying, groaning, and beating the chests. Especially the text's tenth part recited on the day of *'āshūrā* has several such instructions. In this section, it is indicated that in the days of Muharram, adherents of the People of House (*tarafgīrān-e Ahl-e Bayt*) do not rejoice, but beat their chests and cry, which brings about the forgiveness of their sins.[1875] The narrator invites the participants to recall Imam Husein's thirst, and cry out for his tragedy:

> Remember the thirst of the Shah of martyrs
> Take out the jewel of tears from the sea of your bloody eyes
> Whoever cries for Hosein on this day
> Will laugh at the presence of God, the sovereign[1876]

In another poem, the audiences are invited to lament, undress their chests, and cry:

[1874] Della Valle, *Safarnama*, 101.
[1875] Kashifi, *Rawdat al-Shuhada*, 636.
[1876] My translation. Kashifi, *Rawḍat al-Shuhadā*, 693.

Come, o beloved, lament for the progeny of the Prophet
Undress your chests from the pain of the Shah of Karbala
Tears drop into the soil flowing from those thirsty lips
Remember those smiling lips when you are crying[1877]

While contemporary sources offer relatively more information concerning the Muharram ceremonies, the evidence on the rituals held in Safavid mosques on other special days and nights is quite limited. Some expenditures and stipulations in the endowment deed offer a few clues about the events occurring in Masjed-e Shah on these days and nights. One of the first stipulations mentioned in the endowment deed is that during Ramadan nights, the number of lamps burned in the mosque must be increased.[1878] During Ramadan nights, and especially in its last ten days, the mosque was housing a larger number of worshippers who seem to have spent longer hours in the mosque nocturnally. This suggestion is confirmed by Kaempfer, who indicated that especially on the 19th, 21st, and 23rd nights of Ramadan, mosques of Iran were filled with numerous people performing prayers.[1879] The service of food was another element that might have attracted visitors to Masjed-e Shah during Ramadan. The waqfnama mentions foods offered during this month, without specifying their content or the number of meals.[1880] Visitors might have been served either evening, or pre-dawn meals, or both. Banquets offered to visitors were not limited to Ramadan nights but formed a part of the mosque's ritual program. Along with Ramadan, *ʻāshūrā* night was among special dates when people were offered food in the mosque. In the waqfnama, it is indicated that at these nights, worshippers convening in the sanctuary should be offered *ḥalīm*, a special kind of porridge that can be consumed as a dessert, too.[1881] The document does not mention any provision

[1877] My translation. Kashifi, *Rawḍat al-Shuhadā*, 634.
[1878] Sipanta, *Tārīkhce-ye Awqāf*, 57.
[1879] Kaempfer, *Am Hofe*, 189.
[1880] Sipanta, *Tārīkhce-ye Awqāf*, 58.
[1881] Ibid, 58.

concerning the service of food on other special days and nights, but stipulates perfuming the sanctuary on these dates.[1882]

Evidence provided by contemporary chronicles reveals that offering meals in the mosque was not limited to special days and nights of the year. The sanctuary functioned as a venue for banquets on special occasions, too. The fortieth day and the first anniversary of Shah Abbas' death were among these instances. The chroniclers report that on the fortieth day of the shah's passing, a crowded assembly comprised of elites and common people assembled in the new Abbasid congregational mosque.[1883] After the performance of *khatīm* prayer, approximately two thousand cups of meal were served to the participants. The narrator noted that the banquet included a variety of foods but did not depict the menu.[1884] According to Khajagi Isfahani, Shah Abbas' death anniversary was commemorated with a similar event that occurred in Masjed-e Shah. Ulama, notables (*fuḍalā*), and Sufis convened in the mosque were served two thousand tables, after the chanting of the Quran.[1885] As has been underlined by Emami, these banquets offered after the shah's passing away display that Masjed-e Shah was conceived as an arena for staging the state's benevolence towards the populace.[1886] It is uncertain whether these commemorations were restricted with the event of Shah Abbas' death, the builder of the monument, or established as a practice for death anniversaries of his successors, too.

In his study on seventeenth-century *shahrāshūb*s, Emami has demonstrated that various literary depictions of Isfahan portray an overall picture of 'a bustling city with its peculiar sounds, tastes, and sights.'[1887] In these literary creations, the city's

[1882] Ibid, 58.
[1883] Khajagi Isfahani, *Khulāsat al-siyar*, 41; Qazvini Isfahani, *Irān dar Zamān*, 6.
[1884] Khajagi Isfahani, *Khulāsat al-siyar*, 42.
[1885] Ibid, 71.
[1886] Emami, "Inviolable Thresholds", 179.
[1887] Emami, "Discursive Images", 172.

natural and urban texture appears both as venues of socialization for the city's denizens and visitors, and as promenades presenting aesthetic sceneries.[1888] Along with gardens, streets, squares, coffeehouses, and other public buildings, Masjed-e Shah was conceived as among the promenades of the city, offering aesthetic appeal to its audiences. Mir Nejat's poetic portrayal of Isfahan, some verses of which have been already mentioned before, offers significant insights concerning the perception and experience of Masjed-e Shah by its seventeenth-century visitors. That his depiction of the city begins at the most prominent religious edifice of Isfahan implies the sanctuary's centrality and significance. After extolling the city's vastness, bastions, and walls, the poet touches on the city's high buildings, shrines, and mosques, and distinguishes Masjed-e Shah that is described as an unmatched monument:[1889] "Each mosque [of Isfahan] has become a Masjed al-Haram/ Especially the congregational mosque which the ages/ Have not seen its equivalent in Iran".[1890] The sanctuary's spatial-architectural elements, decorations and items of furniture, some revealing the mosque's Shi'ite character such as clay prayer seals (*mohr*), are perceived as beauties to be appealed to, and objects of spectacle (*sayr*) and contemplation (*tamāshā*):

> The wholeness of its structure resembles that of the religion
> It is as wide as the hearts of people of religion
> …
> Contemplating (*tamashā*) its door (*dār*) and gate (*bāb*) is a [kind of] worship
> China remains embarrassed in front of its tiles (*kāshī-kārī*)
> …
> Its oil-lamps in the covered hall (*shabistān*) are luminous
> Resembling the heart inside the chests of believers
> …
> Spectating (*sayr*) the grandeur of its sky-like repetitive domes
> The cone of affection falls from the head [of the beholder]
> Inside that hall (*ṣoffah*) is the carpet made of the sea of observance
> Prayer mat made of the sea of mercy's wave

[1888] Emami, "Discursive Images".
[1889] Ibid, 177.
[1890] My translation. Mir Nejat Isfahani, "Vasf-e Isfahan", 369.

Behold that beautiful pool (*howz*) inside the mosque
Behold the wave of honor in the sea of blessing
…
The layout of clay prayer seals (*mohr*) and rosaries in the corridor (*dalān*)
Is far nicer than moles and hair of beauties
Its grandeur is derived from the moon's sublimity
Oh God! What an iwan and gateway (*dargāh*)
…
The paving stone around it became colorful
Like the sermon of preachers, enlivened and solemn
…
The inscription on it has an elegant adornment
Resembling the lineament on face of the graceful beloved.[1891]

The kindness and sincerity of its personnel are also mentioned among the elements increasing the place's attractiveness for worshippers, who seem to have deemed the mosque as an especially sacred sanctuary where prayers and invocations are responded positively:

With a sigh heaved at its prayer niche (*miḥrāb*)
The heart's request is obtained, as quickly as a candle's drop
Its sincere incumbents in the service
Assist and company lords of the faith
The insightful (*ahl-e naẓār*) gain blessing in two worlds
From the arch of the sanctuary's prayer hall (*tāq-e sofa-ye maqsūrā*), at any moment.[1892]

Although visuality appears as the most dominant sensory element in Mir Nejat's poem, the edifice seems to have offered a multisensory experience to its audiences. Besides several visual qualities appealing to the beholder's eye, the fresh air of the mosque is praised by the same poet: "Its air is fresher than the refined conversation of the educated/ Its open space (*faḍā*) is as pleasant as sincere commitment."[1893] Similar to incenses burned on special days and nights, the mosque'a fresh air seems to have appealed its visitors' sense of smell. In another poem composed by a certain Sami, adorning the water basin patronized by Shah

[1891] My translation. Mir Nejat Isfahani, "Vasf-e Isfahan", 369–370.
[1892] Ibid, 370.
[1893] Ibid, 370.

Suleiman, the drinking water served in the mosque is likened to zam zam near the Kaba, and depicted as life-giving water. This indicates flavor as another sensory quality experienced in Masjed-e Shah. Despite the lack of any literary reference, some provisions and daily actions mentioned in the endowment deed show the existence of auditory experiences in the edifice. The existence of Quran memorizers among the employees, who were tasked with chanting the whole text each day,[1894] designates that listening to the Quran was included in auditory experiences in the sanctuary.

Who were the visitors promenading in the edifice, and the participants of religious rituals held in Masjed-e Shah? The evidence suggests that the mosque was more frequently visited by Muslim males. Several contemporary travelers noted the lack of any women in Safavid mosques, including the Carmelite father, Paul Simon, and John Fryer.[1895] On the other hand, Chardin related his witnessing of women praying in mosques, who were separated from prayer leaders with a tapestry or veil.[1896] Figueroa mentioned women praying in the Great Mosque, the old congregational mosque of Isfahan, in the month of Muharram:

> They customarily send their servants ahead with carpets to carefully save a place for them before the sermons begin, with great pomp and ostentation, the more distinguished and prominent among them claiming the best locations, though this invariably leads to quarrels and disputes over who should have them. Around the top of the inside of this mosque, there is a fairly wide balcony, or gallery, which was considered more comfortable and respectable than the ground floor below.[1897]

This account suggests that women of Isfahan from different classes frequented the old congregational mosque, at least occasionally, and they were not completely excluded from mosques. According to Figueroa's report, women were participating

[1894] Sipanta, *Tārīkhce-ye Awqāf*, 60.
[1895] *Carmalites*, 156; Fryer, *New Account*, 394.
[1896] Chardin, *Voyages*, VII, 376.
[1897] Figueroa, *Commentaries*, 658.

in the ritual on special balconies inside the mosque, and this implies the existence of spatial segregation between two genders in the sanctuary. Masjed-e Shah's balconies in the mihrab hall and courtyard could have also functioned as women's sections. As has been noted, Safavid Muharram ceremonies held in the square had participants of both genders, and this appears to be valid for the same rites occurring in the mosques, too.

While women's participants in Muharram rituals is confirmed by contemporaries, there is no information regarding their attendance to the Friday rituals and the daily obligatory prayers. In his catechism, Sheikh Bahai recounted women among eight groups for whom the ritual is as lapsed (*sāqit*), and adds that if anyone from these eight groups, except women, performs the ritual, it is not deemed as lapsing.[1898] It seems the sheikh did not encourage women to participate in the ritual, but did not forbid it either. In the following pages, where he discusses the same topic, the Friday ritual, he makes an explanation concerning the stipulations of being a prayer leader and mentions congregations that are comprised of or included in women.[1899] This also suggests that women were not proscribed from participating in the Friday ritual. Still, it is not certain whether they attended the Friday rituals in Safavid mosques in the seventeenth century. Sheikh Bahai's instructions concerning the mosques also imply that women were not proscribed from visiting mosques. He does not recount women's visits among abominable (*makrūkh*) or unlawful (*ḥaram*) deeds. Merely menstrual women's presence in a mosque is seen as unlawful by the sheikh.[1900]

[1898] Sheikh Bahai, *Jāme'-ye 'Abbāsī*, 84.
[1899] Ibid, 84–85.
[1900] Ibid, 71.

The madrasas of the Masjed-e Shah complex had a partly shared social and ceremonial life with the mosque, echoing the spatial and architectural integrity of these two architectural units. The madrasas served primarily as educational institutions, but their attendees were probably participating in the religious rituals performed in the mosque, too. Based on the shared endowment deed of the madrasas and the mosque, Moazzin has suggested that commemorative constitutive events in Shi'i history mentioned in the waqfiyya were commemorated in the whole complex and should be assessed as a part of the madrasas' ceremonial program too. Further, she has conceptualized these rituals as significant vehicles for transmitting religious knowledge, and as a part of madrasa students' education.[1901]

It is very probable that the mosque also functioned as a ground for educational activities, which was a common practice for Safavid mosques, even those with separate madrasa rooms. The old congregational mosque of Isfahan was among such sanctuaries, where several prominent scholars, such as Muhammad Taqi Majlisi (d.1070/1659) and Muhammad Baqir Majlisi, held their teaching circles and debate sessions.[1902] The venue of these sessions suggests they were open to the public, and visitors of the mosques had the chance to audit the classes or discussions going on in the edifices. According to Pirnia, the open courtyards of the madrasas had a similar function and served as a ground for scholarly conversations and debates.[1903] Considering the spatial openness and connectivity between the lateral courtyards, side iwans, and upper galleries surrounding the central courtyard, all associated with teaching, books, and madrasa staff, at least some of the teaching activities would be open to the visitors of the mosque too.

[1901] Moazzin, *Sacred Geography*, 122.
[1902] Ibid, 41–42.
[1903] Pirnia, *Mi'mārī-ye Irānī*, 344.

The endowment deed shows the madrasas had 37 boarding students taking lessons from 12 professors, who had taught at the madrasa every day except holidays. The document stipulates all students should reside in the cells,[1904] perform their daily religious obligations, and engage in learning religious sciences. Having a higher salary, 3 students were tasked with assisting the employees working in the mosque in daily affairs at night, a stipulation confirming the connectivity of the social life in the mosque and madrasas.[1905] Unfortunately, the endowment deed does not provide any other information about the madrasas. There is no information on the daily lives and responsibilities of students and professors, and the curriculum thaught at the madrasas in any contemporary sources.[1906]

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter examined the architectural, spatial, and ritualistic formation of the Masjed-e Shah complex. The inquiries conducted in this chapter suggest several conclusions. First, the organization and diversity of the materials and building staff attest to the centralized nature of cultural and architectural projects in the seventeenth-century Safavid court. They, at the same time, manifested the shah's power for organizing an ambitious construction project at the very center of his capital. While the large body of building materials and staff underlined the vast human and material wealth under his suzerainty, miraculous events that happened at the construction site promoted the shah's image as a divinely supported ruler. The project's high-ranking staff manifests the shah's promotion of bureaucrats of ghulam-

[1904] As explained in the second part of this chapter, some arcades opening to madrasa courtyards had small rooms behind. These might have been used by students as accomodations.
[1905] Sipanta, *Tārīkhce-ye Awqāf*, 59, 61.
[1906] For the daily lives of students and professors, and the cirricula thaught in contemporary Safavid madrasas, see Chardin, *Voyages*, V, 26; Fryer, *New Account*, 343; Kaempfer, *Am Hofe*, 147; Moazzin, *Sacred Geography*, 166, 178–179; Ahmadi, *Dar bāb-e Awqāf*, 57, 62.

origin and reflects the power and patronage dynamics in the early seventeenth century Safavid court. The involvement of Sheikh Bahai, Isfahan's sheikh al-Islam, in different tasks and phrases of the project concretizes the shah's collaboration with the Imami scholars, and the latter's ever-growing impact on the cultural and religious life of the city.

Second, I have argued that the Masjed-e Shah complex was a part of an established architectural culture, despite its innovative architectural elements and configuration. It adopts a major plan-type in the Islamic architecture in Iran, the four-iwan courtyard scheme, which has made up the dominant architectural model for the Iranian mosque since the Saljuq era. Further, the monument combines and appropriates a set of existing architectural elements, including iwans, arcades, minarets, open, semi-open, and closed prayer halls, in a refined manner. Along with the continuities with the tradition, the monument has particular innovative architectural features, which appeared as outcomes of the urbanistic, architectural, and aesthetic trends of the period.

As observed by different scholars, the Masjed-e Shah complex departs from the previous Iranian mosques with its monumental scale, extravagant decoration, and a theatrical design offering multiple views and inviting movement within and around the building. The building's placement on the edge of the royal square, and the difference between the axes of the edifice and the maydan created opportunities for achieving the most spectacular views of the monument. The minarets and domes of the building offer dynamic views to the beholder promenading on the square, and to the spectator walking in the courtyards of the mosque and madrasas. The latitudinal orientation of the mosque's central courtyard, another innovative feature in the monument's design, marks the massive qibla iwan with its flanking iwans and

monumental dome behind, and earns the edifice a monumental silhouette from the square. Besides incorporating double madrasas to the Friday mosque, this concern for creating monumental and theatrical outward profiles from significant urban points can be assessed as a convergence between the classical Ottoman sultanic mosques and the Masjed-e Shah complex.

The sense of movement and theatricality predominating the space was achieved not only to create spectacular accents, but also monumentality and a splendid decoration, which was another shared feature between Masjed-e Shah and the contemporary Ottoman sultanic mosque erected by Sultan Ahmed. As Golombek has aptly put it, 'even within the walls of the mosque the sense of pomp and ceremony predominates', and 'sense of the theatrical, the dramatic, the grandiose must be seen as a reflection of the personality of the Shah.'[1907] In the formation of this theatrical and grandiose sanctuary, the religio-political agenda of its patron, and the growing significance of the state-sponsored ceremonials seem to have played equally important roles, along with the patron's personality. The monument acted as a stage for diverse splendid and theatrical religious ceremonies, including the banquets given to the members of the court and the common people, *'āshūrā* gatherings, *rawḍakhānī* performances, and the occasional Friday rituals performed with the participation of the shahs, or an Ottoman envoy taken to the site with a splendid procession. Similar to the Naqsh-e Jahan Square, Masjed-e Shah acted as a scene of diverse spectacular events and ceremonies, and it was reflected in the theatricality and grandeur of its design and decoration.

The third and most central argument of this chapter is that the Masjed-e Shah complex, as a distinctly Shi'ite sanctuary, was a part of the efforts towards the

[1907] Golombek, "Anatomy", 11.

confessionalization of Isfahan in the seventeenth century. Its inscriptional program, particular architectural elements and items of furniture, and ritualistic calendar earned the edifice a manifestly Twelver Shi'ite character. The whole edifice functioned as a site where the Shi'i Imams were recurrently commemorated through different ways, including epigraphs praising and blessing them, particular relics belonging to them, water basins recalling the Karbala event, and rituals memorializing the Imams' birth and death anniversaries. Its carefully choreographed epigraphic program renders the edifice into a book presenting and propagating the distinctive tenets of Imami Shi'ism to different audiences. Appearing as the program's predominant themes, the Shi'i Imams' heirship to the Prophet and their exalted status were demonstrated with reference to several Shi'i *akhbār* and Sunni hadiths, in a similar manner to Shi'i polemical treatises written for proving the deputyship of Imam Ali and his progency to the Prophet.

The simultaneity between the mosque's construction, the officialization of Muharram ceremonies, and the canonization of *Rawḍat al-Shuhādā* and its public recital in the mosque indicate the integrity of Shah Abbas' ceremonial and architectural agendas. The shah's support of orthopraxy, the promotion of the Friday ritual and the erection of the Masjed-e Shah complex also speak of this integrity. The establishment of this Friday mosque, and the assignment of a personnel for providing the regular performance of the Friday ritual inside it, manifested Shah Abbas' support for the performance of the Friday ritual in congregation against the ongoing debate concerning this ritual' legality, and the Ottomans' continuous accusations regarding the Shi'ite Safavids' fail to perform it. The construction of a monumental congregational mosque, and the integration of two madrasas to it in a manner reminiscent of contemporary Ottoman mosque complexes, acted as an answer to the

accusations uttered by the shah's main rival and enemy, the Ottomans, beside speaking for the patron's aim of promoting the Shi'ite orthopraxy and spreading Shi'ite education. The monument was, at the same time, instrumental in creating a distinctly Shi'i religious landscape in his new capital city, which would compete with the most splendid capital of the Sunni realms, Istanbul, and its rulers. The Safavid shah, who dreamed of being the sovereign and patron of the holy shrines under Ottoman control, attempted to realize his dream by creating an alternative religious sanctuary in his capital city, which would compete with his rival's contemporaneous congregational mosque in Istanbul, and architectural undertakings in the holy lands. With its madrasas, monumental dimensions, splendid decoration, confessional character, and theatrical configuration and ceremonials, Shah Abbas' mosque both competes with, and offers parallels to Sultan Ahmed's mosque complex, which was the product of a comparable architectural and religio-political agenda, and the cultural, political and religious dynamics of the early seventeenth century.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION: COMPARISONS AND CONVERGENCES

This dissertation has investigated the urban, architectural, and ritualistic formations of two simultaneously erected royal architectural ensembles in the first half of the seventeenth century, the Masjed-e Shah and Sultan Ahmed complexes, constructed by two rival monarchs. It has approached these Friday mosque complexes as platforms mirroring the religio-political agendas of their royal patrons and the urban, architectural, and religious currents of the early seventeenth century Ottoman and Safavid worlds. The two royal Friday mosque complexes, which were aligned with royal urban squares and acted as stages of choreographed religious ceremonials, were conceptualized as spaces where the Safavid and Ottoman sovereigns' confessional policies and imperial identities were created, projected, and staged. This inquiry has traced an increasing emphasis on demarcating confessional distinctions, the canonization of distinct religious rituals and texts, and the court's endeavors to augment its dominance and visibility in the capital city through monumental architecture and spectacular ceremonies as the significant dynamics of early-seventeenth century Istanbul and Isfahan. It has interpreted the construction and configurations of the Sultan Ahmed and Masjed-e Shah complexes against these dynamics and with reference to the architectural and religious traditions that underlaid these ensembles' spatial and ritualistic designs.

This concluding chapter is devoted to encapsulating the narrative developed in the present dissertation with its main arguments, exploring the convergences and parallelisms, and highlighting the differences between the urban, architectural, and ceremonial configurations of the Masjed-e Shah and Sultan Ahmed complexes. It

does so with reference to the confessional policies of the Safavid and Ottoman sovereigns, the spatial and ceremonial sensibilities of the Safavid and Ottoman states in the early seventeenth century, and the religious and architectural customs of the Iranian and Rumi lands, which affected the spatial-architectural designs and the ritualistic formations of the Masjed-e Shah and Sultan Ahmed complexes.

7.1 Patrons and patronage

Sultan Ahmed and Masjed-e Shah complexes manifested the comparable religio-political agendas of their patrons, Shah Abbas, and Sultan Ahmed. These two rival rulers were heir to imperial identities and confessional policies elaborated and appropriated in their struggle for power, legitimacy, and rivalry. They had analogous ambitions and religio-political agendas centered on imperial grandeur and confessional policies which were manifested in their architectural patronage.

The late sixteenth century's military, political and social troubles and the long-lasting Safavid-Ottoman conflict shaped the agendas of Shah Abbas and Sultan Ahmed and affected the main dynamics of their reigns. Both rulers ascended to the throne at a young age, amid turmoil in the Safavid and Ottoman lands, and witnessed rebellions, economic crises, and prolonged military struggles on diverse fronts. Besides these problems, alternative power bases challenging the Ottoman and Safavid courts weakened the legitimacy of both dynasties in the late sixteenth century and in the early years of the reigns of Ahmed I and Abbas I. An internal war between various Qizilbash leaders, who supported different Safavid princes and caused a succession crisis, shook the Safavid dynasty's legitimacy. The Ottoman sultans' withdrawal from leading military campaigns, the loss of lands in the east and west, and the increasing influence of court favorites and royal women evoked

mistrust against the dynasty and challenged its legitimacy. Inheriting such severe troubles, Abbas I and Ahmed I, who were supported and accompanied by court-centered retinues and allies as well as leading men of religion, attempted to overcome them and establish themselves as powerful sovereigns.[1908]

Creating loyal power bases and retinues, displaying their piety, embracing distinct confessional policies, and patronizing religious institutions and architecture were among the primary instruments Sultan Ahmed and Shah Abbas used to achieve their goals. Both rulers devoted the initial years of their rule to eliminating alternative power bases. After checking the centrifugal powers in their realms, they devoted their energies to fighting against external enemies, including each other. Shah Abbas was victorious on both fronts against the Uzbeks and Ottomans, but Sultan Ahmed could not gain any military triumph and continued to lose lands on the western and eastern fronts. The early seventeenth century witnessed a long period of war between the Ottomans and Safavids, which centered on the competition over eastern Anatolia, Caucasia, and *'Irāq-e 'Arāb*. Besides a shared ambition for universal leadership, confessional disputes escalated the rivalry and triggered successive military campaigns against each other. Nourished by an impetus for defeating "Shi'i heterodoxy" identified with the Safavids, Sultan Ahmed spent most of his short reign assaulting Caucasia and eastern Anatolia. Shah Abbas was victorious in all military confrontations with the Ottomans and gained control of the Caucasus and *'Irāq-e 'Arāb* before he passed away.[1909]

Continuous military activity supported the quest of Shah Abbas and Sultan Ahmed to gain power and legitimacy in their realms, just as their emphasis on confessional policies and their displays of piety. Both rulers established close

[1908] See Chapter II, 41–67.
[1909] See Chapter II, 93–106.

relationships with clerics, patronized them, and earned their support. They supported religious orthopraxy through legislative initiatives and endeavored to demarcate the social and confessional boundaries between their Muslim and non-Muslim subjects. Both monarchs engaged in orchestrated shows of piety, advertised through pilgrimages or literary creations. Exhibiting their religious devotion, their embrace of orthopraxy and distinct confessional predilections through the patronage of religious sanctuaries and rituals occupied an equally important place in the agendas of Ahmed I and Abbas I.

Sultan Ahmed renovated the Kaba, made donations to the Prophet's Mosque in Medina, and crowned his name as the patron of the holiest Islamic sanctuaries. He brought different relics that belonged to the Prophet Muhammad to Istanbul and invented a tradition centered on one of them, the Prophet's cloak. Patronizing the Prophet's Mosque in Medina, bringing the holy relics associated with him, and the invention of the tradition of visiting the Prophet's cloak reflected and advertised the sultan's devotion to the Prophet and its sunnah, implying his embrace of Sunnism. Shah Abbas manifested his devotion to Shi'ism in his patronage of the shrines of the Immaculate Imams and their progeny at different sites, including Mashhad, Qum, Kashan, Karbala, Najaf, and Baghdad. The patronage of Friday mosques occupied an equally important place in the architectural agendas of Shah Abbas and Sultan Ahmed. Their mosque patronage disclosed their attachment to and support of religious orthopraxy, promoting the Friday ritual and the daily obligatory prayers. At the same time, the construction of the Masjed-e Shah and Sultan Ahmed complexes were manifestations of the patrons' divergent confessional predilections.[1910]

[1910] See Chapter II, 67–93.

Despite manifesting comparable religio-political agendas in the cases of Sultan Ahmed and Shah Abbas, the construction of these Friday mosque complexes signified different meanings within the context of the Ottoman and Safavid architectural cultures and manners of royal patronage. The Safavid and Ottoman dynasties had contrasting customs of mosque patronage. For the Ottoman rulers, building Friday mosques had primary importance, and successive sultans constructed at least one congregational mosque mainly in their capital cities between the mid-fourteenth and late sixteenth centuries. Although this tradition was interrupted in the last quarter of the sixteenth century, it was briefly revived by Sultan Ahmed in the early seventeenth century with the construction of the Sultan Ahmed complex.[1911] The Safavid monarchs did not patronize Friday mosques in the same manner and intensity as the Ottoman sultans. Before Abbas I, one Safavid ruler, Shah Tahmasb, constructed Friday mosques in Tabriz and Qazvin. The predecessors of Shah Abbas, except Ismail II (d. 1577), preferred to refurbish and repair the existing congregational mosques in different cities of Iran, including Isfahan, Kashan, Shiraz, Barsiyan, and Kerman, and marked their presence in these religious spaces by installing stone tablets bearing royal orders or new inscriptions mentioning their titles.[1912] Thus, Shah Abbas' construction of Masjed-e Shah reflects an exception in the Safavid architectural tradition. In contrast, the construction of the Sultan Ahmed complex was a part of an established custom.

The divergence in the observance and legal status of the Friday ritual and the differences in the Iranian and Rumi religious landscapes yielded distinct manners of mosque patronage in the Safavid and Ottoman contexts. The distinction in the implementation and conception of the Friday ritual mainly resulted from differences

[1911] See Chapter III, 136–148.
[1912] See Chapter III, 148–166.

in the approaches of the Hanafi and Imami jurisprudential traditions to this ritual and its stipulations. The patronage of Friday mosques occupied a central place in the Ottoman sultans' agenda, mirroring that the Friday ritual was a more established practice in the Ottoman realms, where attending the Friday ritual was a clearly defined religious obligation for all adult and healthy Muslim men.[1913] Besides the significance attached to the Friday ritual, the quest for Islamicizing the conquered lands underlay the Ottoman rulers' patronage of mosques. Three successive Ottoman capitals and most of the early Ottoman towns were formerly Byzantine lands and building mosques and converting Christian sanctuaries supported the Islamization and Sunnitization of these landscapes. Similar to the previously-built royal Ottoman mosques, Sultan Ahmed's Friday mosque complex manifested the Ottoman sultans' promotion of the Friday ritual and Sunni orthodoxy, and augmented the number and presence of sultanic Friday mosques in the former Byzantine capital.

For the Safavids, by contrast, even the legality of the Friday ritual's performance was disputed since leading the Friday ritual was deemed a prerogative of the Immaculate Imams, and during the occultation of the Twelfth Imam, Shi'i authorities took different positions concerning the permissibility and stipulations of performing this ritual. Unlike the Ottomans, the Safavids never regarded this ritual's observance as a religious and legal duty, and the Friday ritual was not performed regularly and by the whole Safavid-Imami populace. The disputable legitimacy and stipulations of performing the Friday ritual, its relative unpopularity, and its observance in an irregular manner and merely by a part of the Shi'i population seem to have detained most Safavid shahs from building new Friday mosques.[1914]

[1913] See Chapter III, 112–122.
[1914] See Chapter III, 122–134.

Unlike the Ottomans, the Safavids ruled an already Islamicized realm with many congregational mosques, most of them erected and formerly used by Sunni populations. Repairs and refurbishments in the existing mosques, several of them involving changes in the Sunni epigraphic programs, provided the Safavid patrons with the opportunity to transform these Sunni sanctuaries' confessional character. The proliferation of certain rituals, including cursing sessions, Shi'ite commemorative events, and prayer etiquette, played an equally significant part in Shi'itizing the existing Friday mosques in Iran. Founded in the former capital of Sunni Seljuqs, Masjed-e Shah contributed to the Shi'itization of the Safavid capital and disclosed its patron's promotion of the Friday ritual and Shi'i orthopraxy. Invalidating the Ottoman accusations regarding Shi'i society's neglect of the Friday ritual, which was used as a frequently uttered pretext for successive Ottoman military campaigns against Safavid Iran, seems also to be among Shah Abbas' motives behind erecting a royal Friday mosque, as his grandfather and role model Tahmasb had done.[1915]

7.2 Loci

One of the most salient correspondences between the Masjed-e Shah and Sultan Ahmed complexes was their alignment with royal urban squares. While Sultan Ahmed's massive ensemble was integrated into Istanbul's oldest and most central square, Atmeydanı, and transformed it, Shah Abbas' Mosque complex was built up as a part of Isfahan's new maydan, the Naqsh-e Jahan Square. Despite differences in their architectural components, spatial configurations, and formation processes, both maydans acted as important centers of courtly architectural patronage and pageantry,

[1915] See Chapter III, 128–130.

as well as being important urban public spaces. Locating the Sultan Ahmed and Masjed-e Shah complexes on Atmeydanı and the Naqsh-e Jahan Square meant making these ensembles part of carefully choreographed architectural and social-ritualistic environments.

Before the construction of the Sultan Ahmed complex, Atmeydanı was an open area surrounded by a range of different buildings, including several vizierial palaces, the court artisans' atelier, an edifice housing the sultan's menagerie, shops, and ordinary residences, and preserved the ancient obelisks and other remnants of Constantinople's Hippodrome. While vizierial palaces marked its eastern and western sides, it had no clear northern and southern borders. The densely built up areas adjacent to the square acted as the loci of several royal buildings erected by the members of the dynasty and the courtly elites. The site's spatial and visual proximity to the Topkapı Palace and Hagia Sophia rendered it an attractive locus for royal constructions, as did the Byzantine memory. The construction of the Sultan Ahmed complex altered the square's spatial configuration and earned this maydan three defined borders. Except for the İbrahim Pasha Palace along the maydan's western edge, which acted as the seraglio of the sultan's principal representative in public and occasionally as a ceremonial setting for the sultan, all vizierial palaces, shops, residences, and other edifices were removed from the plots adjoining the maydan. In the early seventeenth century the site became a public square marked only by royal monuments.[1916]

The establishment of the Naqsh-e Jahan Square occurred at a different juncture. Unlike Atmeydanı, whose formation took over one and a half centuries before it was given its ultimate configuration in the early seventeenth century, the

[1916] See Chapter IV, 189–208.

Naqsh-e Jahan Square was built within a few decades and through the initiatives of a single patron, Shah Abbas. In contrast to Atmeydanı, which underwent various transformations, Isfahan's new square was once modified only once, during its initial construction phase. It was built to replace the city's old maydan, the Harun-e Velayat Square in proximity of the Great Mosque of Isfahan, and the medieval center to the south. Two rows of shops enveloped the oblong open space. Four cross-axially positioned royal monuments, the Ali Qapu Palace-Gate, the Sheikh Lutfullah Mosque, the Qaysariya Bazaar's entry complex, and the Masjed-e Shah complex, marked its edges.[1917]

The two maydans defined the spatial and architectural environments of the mosque complexes in question. Occupying the Naqsh-e Jahan Square's southern edge, Masjed-e Shah was visually and spatially connected with the ceremonial palace-cum-gate of the palace ensemble, the Qaysariya Bazaar's entrance complex featuring a royal belvedere for viewing the spectacles of the maydan, a coffeehouse, a kettle drum house, and the royal mint, as well as another prestigious religious sanctuary built for the most eminent religious figures of the era, Sheikh Lutfullah. Similarly, the Sultan Ahmed complex was articulated into a network of royal monuments near and around the maydan, involving the İbrahim Pasha Palace opposite Sultan Ahmed's Friday mosque, Hagia Sophia with its dynastic mausolea, the Topkapı Palace, the royal baths of Hürrem to the maydan's north, and several other socio-religious monuments scattered around the square's precincts. Being neighbors to various public edifices, including congregational mosques, madrasas, and commercial buildings, augmented the social traffic and the number and diversity

[1917] See Chapter IV, 167–189.

of the audiences of the complexes of Shah Abbas and Sultan Ahmed as well as the squares on which they were located.

The ceremonial and social functionalities of these urban hubs were as significant as the maydans' architectural surroundings. Atmeydanı and the Naqsh-e Jahan Square housed a variety of occasional and frequent activities of different kinds. These events involved courtly spectacles and festivities, military sports, games and training, public executions, and confessional displays. Serving as promenades and commercial and social interaction spots for the public were also among their primary purposes. Defining the squares' primary function from which the word *maydān* was derived, acting as grounds for military games, horse races, and military training rendered Atmeydanı and the Naqsh-e Jahan Square venues where the state's military strength and capacities were exhibited.[1918] Rewarding the winners of various competitions was not rare and provided the court with an opportunity to display its benevolence to the public. Some martial and athletic activities veiled tribal or social disputes, as with Haydari-Nimati conflict in the Safavid case. Encouraging rival parties to take part in competitions held on the square, the Safavid state used these events as opportunities to discharge hidden social tensions.[1919]

Public executions staged on the Naqsh-e Jahan Square and Atmeydanı were among the sharpest means of the state to show its authority. More numerous in the Safavid case, public executions were displays of the state violence and were implemented in brutal ways such as burning the corpse. Often staged for punishing political disloyalties and confessional deviations, these public executions expressed the state's concern for deliberative obedience and religious accuracy.[1920]

[1918] Chapter IV, 208–210.
[1919] Perry, "Haydari-Nimati Conflicts".
[1920] See Chapter IV, 220–223.

Among the primary functions of Atmeydanı and the Naqsh-e Jahan Square was serving as stages for festivities sponsored by the court. Courtly spectacles had particular importance, for they were among the few instances, especially in the Ottoman context, where the monarchs, their grandees, and the commoners encountered each other and came together. The Naqsh-e Jahan Square and Atmeydanı housed many festivities celebrated regularly or occasionally. Celebrations organized for princes' circumcisions and marriages of the dynasty's female members were the principal occasions for Ottoman festivities held on Atmeydanı. The festive events were more diverse in the Safavid case, including welcoming ceremonies staged for the shah or his prestigious foreign guests, new year celebrations, and celebrations of victorious military campaigns. In both contexts, festive events involved banquets served to various guests and the public, performances of musicians, dancers, acrobats, and athletes, processions of artisans, soldiers or precious gifts, fire plays, and mock plays animating wars with rival states.[1921]

The different constituents of these festivals had distinct functions. Financing the festival, offering banquets, and gifts presented to guests exhibited the ruler's benevolence and wealth.[1922] As Derin Terzioğlu has pointed out, performances and games earned the events a carnivalesque aspect that provided its participants with opportunities to reverse the existing social roles and rules,[1923] and retiring from daily life's hardships and troubles for a while. Processions of soldiers and artisans, as underscored by Yerasimos, helped convey messages concerning the permanence of the order and the rule in the realm.[1924] Mostly staged during and after military confrontations, mock plays animating war scenes were supposed to show off the

[1921] See Chapter IV, 210–217.
[1922] See Chapter IV, 216–217.
[1923] Terzioğlu, "Imperial Circumcision".
[1924] Yerasimos, "Imperial Procession".

military strength of the ruler's armies to various audiences, which sometimes included the representatives of the rival empire, occasionally ridiculed through these dramas.

The Safavid state used drama and theatricality to display its confessional agenda via state-sponsored mourning ceremonies staged in different public venues, including the Naqsh-e Jahan Square. These commemorative ceremonies aimed to perpetuate the martyrdoms of two Shi'i Imams, Imam Ali and Imam Husein. Involving processions and dramas animating the Karbala event, Muharram ceremonies commemorating Imam Husein's martyrdom became the subject of the Safavid court's special attention.[1925] Babak Rahimi underscored these events' highly performative character and conceptualized them as sites for their participants and audiences to be part of a public within a shared religious, political, and emotional atmosphere. Addressing the carnivalesque aspects of Muharram rituals, he has demonstrated that these ceremonies possessed elements of uncertainty, spontaneity, social inclusivity, and the probability of social upheaval.[1926] These aspects converged Muharram rituals with festivities held on the Naqsh-e Jahan Square, which also acted as sites of social encounters and simultaneously or consciously built publics.[1927]

Despite forming a public space, the Naqsh-e Jahan Square was not the space of any organized or simultaneous social upheaval. On the other hand, Atmeydanı witnessed several organized social upheavals that emerged in the late sixteenth century and continued throughout the seventeenth century. Besides reflecting the economic and political crises of the era, these successive episodes of dissent

[1925] See Chapter IV, 217–220.
[1926] Rahimi, *Theater State*, 215–232.
[1927] The festivities held in Atmeydanı were conceptualized as sites for creating publics by Kafescioğlu and Şahin. This framework fits the Safavid festivities celebrated in the Naqsh-e Jahan Square, which shared almost the same elements and a similar setting. See Kafescioğlu, "Picturing the Square"; Kaya, "Staging an Empire".

concretized the early modern Ottoman society's political agency and public presence. Atmeydanı's choice as a venue for these acts of dissent, and its function as a spot of negotiation between rebels and the sultans' representatives, attested to this urban hub's centrality among the capital's public spaces. Locating his mosque complex in this urban square where distinct publics became visible allowed Sultan Ahmed to manifest his presence and authority in the central public square of Istanbul. The choice of the Naqsh-e Jahan Square as the locus of Shah Abbas' mosque complex served a similar purpose.

7.3 Architecture

The Masjed-e Shah and Sultan Ahmed complexes were designed as architectural ensembles combining Friday mosques with subsidiary buildings. Socio-religious complexes, some centered on Friday mosques, existed both in Iran and the lands of Rum since the late medieval era, although their roots go back to the early Islamic centuries.[1928] Friday mosque complexes became the most preferred subject of royal architectural patronage in the fifteenth-century Ottoman context. The Ottoman sultanic Friday mosque complexes emerged in the fifteenth century with the Üç Şerefeli Mosque in Edirne, and such ensembles sustained their preeminence until the end of the empire. Between the mid-fifteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the six sultanic Friday mosque complexes constituted the Ottoman capital's most iconic and monumental buildings.

Like in the Ottoman lands, Friday mosque complexes gained popularity and were favored by the ruling classes in post-Mongol Iran, especially in the fifteenth

[1928] For medieval mosque complexes in Islamic lands, Anatolia, and Iran, see Hillenbrand, *Islamic Architecture*, 59–62; Çobanoğlu, "Külliye"; Yiğit, "Ribat"; O'Kane, "Iran", 125; Necipoğlu, "Anatolia", 142

century. The first known such complex, that of the Ilkhanid vizier Taj al-Din Ali Shah (d. 1324), was founded in the first half of the fourteenth century in Tabriz. All erected in the fifteenth century, the Friday mosque complexes of Amir Chaqmaq in Yazd and Imam al-Din Shirvani in Kashan, the Nasiriya complex in Tabriz, Bibi Khanum complex in Samarqand, and Gawharshad's mosque complex in Herat attest that such ensembles mushroomed in Iran in this century.[1929] Although the custom of building Friday mosque complexes seems to have almost disappeared in the first century of the Safavid rule, Shah Abbas briefly revived it in the early seventeenth century.

After the fourteenth century, building Friday mosques with different socio-religious edifices became an established practice in both realms. However, mosque complexes of Iran and Rumi lands displayed some differences in their components and architectural configurations. Compared to the fifteenth-century Iranian mosque complexes, the Ottoman sultanic ensembles contained more edifices with more diverse functions. Besides monumental Friday mosques, all sultanic mosque complexes in Istanbul included madrasas, their founders' mausolea, public kitchens, primary schools, and revenue-yielding structures like shops and public baths that were generally built as parts of the complexes. Public hospitals, Quran recitation schools, and places for the accomodation of passengers, *ṭab'ẖāne*s or caravanserais, were also present in several sultanic complexes in Istanbul.[1930] On the other hand, most post-Mongol Iranian mosque complexes had merely two or three structures - madrasas, khanqahs, or the mausolea of their founders in most cases-[1931] along with

[1929] See Chapter VI, 412–413.
[1930] See Chapter III, 137.
[1931] Except for the Amir Chaqmaq complex, all had madrasas, and except for the complexes of Amir Chaqmaq and Imam al-Din Shirvani, all included their founders' mausolea. The complexes of Ali Shah, Nasiriya, and Amir Chaqmaq had khanqahs. See Chapter VI, 412–413.

congregational mosques. (Figures C146–C148). Some revenue-generating buildings, like shops, bazaars, and baths, were also present, such as those in the complexes of Ali Shah, Amir Chaqmaq, and Imam al-Din Shirvani.[1932] Merely the Nasiriya complex included a public kitchen, and only the complexes of Imam al-Din Shirvani and Uzun Hasan included hospitals.[1933] None of them had caravanserais, primary schools, and Quran recitation schools.

Partly mirroring the divergences in local architectural traditions, the number, variety, and spatial configuration of the constituents of the Masjed-e Shah and Sultan Ahmed complexes differed. Sultan Ahmed's architectural ensemble contained more buildings with different functions. It had three educational buildings (a hadith college, a Quran recitation school, and a primary school), three types of social-charitable edifices (a public kitchen, a hospital, and several fountains), four kinds of revenue-generating structures (a coffeehouse, shops, houses and rooms for rent, and a public bath). An important distinction is the presence of the sultan's mausoleum and the royal pavilion. Shah Abbas' complex, on the other hand, consisted of two madrasas, and some revenue-yielding structures (shops and houses) besides the congregational mosque.

Regarding their layout, the Masjed-e Shah complex features a more integrated spatial configuration, for most of its main constituents do not form different individual edifices. The mosque, madrasas, and the shops flanking the portal were designed as integral parts of the same architectural unit. Merely the houses behind the madrasas, as mentioned in the endowment deed,[1934] were configured as separate

[1932] Yıldız, *Safevi Döneminde Tebriz*, 168; Naraqi, *Āsār-e Tārīkhī*, 170; Pirnia, *Mi'mārī-ye Irānī*, 294.
[1933] Uzun Hasan's complex (the Nasiriya) had a hospital (*bīmaristān*) and a public kitchen (*dār al-ḍiyāfa*). Yıldız, *Safevi Döneminde Tebriz*, 204. For Imam al-Din Shirvani complex in Kashan, see Pirnia, *Mi'mārī-ye Irānī*, 294.
[1934] Sipanta, *Tārīkhce-ye Awqāf*, 55.

structures, and were probably proximate to the complex's main building.[1935] The complex of Ali Shah in Tabriz presents an earlier experiment in designing Friday mosques and subsidiary buildings as integral parts of the same structure. The madrasa and khanqah of Ali Shah were located on both sides of the Friday mosque's entrance corridor and connected to it via doors. These two edifices seemed like corner rooms of Ali Shah's Friday mosque.[1936](145) Masjed-e Shah's designers must have been informed of this monument in Tabriz and may have elaborated its design in the Masjed-e Shah.

Still, incorporating courtyard madrasas into the main plan of a Friday mosque does not have any precedent in Iranian architectural history, and Masjed-e Shah's design has no precedent in Iran. Another potential source of inspiration for this unique design is the mosque complex of Mehmed II in Istanbul, which has courtyard madrasas flanking the Friday mosque's outer courtyard. Although the madrasas of Mehmed II were not parts of the mosque's main plan, their symmetrical placement at the outer courtyard's edges might have served as a source of inspiration for Masjed-e Shah's designers, who seem to have been familiar with Ottoman Istanbul's architectural culture.[1937] The sultanic custom of combining congregational mosques with madrasas as venues of religious indoctrination, which began in the mid-fifteenth century with the Üç Şerefeli mosque in Edirne and continued in Istanbul's sultanic mosque complexes, may also have inspired the patron and creators of Masjed-e Shah. Besides several mosque-madrasa complexes built in post-Mongol Iran by different Timurid and Turkmen patrons, the successive sultanic mosque complexes in

[1935] As mentioned in the previous chapter, Masjed-e Shah's endowment deed mentions other revenue-yielding buildings, most located near the Qaysariya, but it is not certain whether they were built as a part of the Masjed-e Shah complex. See Chapter VI, 411–412.
[1936] Yıldız, *Safevi Döneminde Tebriz*, 176–178; O'Kane, "Taj al-Din Alishah", 211.
[1937] Sheikh Bahai's knowledge and interest in Istanbul's Friday mosques have been mentioned in the previous chapter. See Chapter VI, 405–406.

Istanbul, all accompanied by madrasas, may have served as models for Masjed-e Shah.[1938]

Unlike the Masjed-e Shah complex, almost all edifices of the Sultan Ahmed complex, except the Friday mosque and the attached royal pavilion, were planned as separate free-standing buildings and grouped according to their functions on different sides of the congregational mosque. Most sultanic Friday mosque complexes in Istanbul comprise individual free-standing or adjacent buildings, and the Sultan Ahmed complex reflects this architectural custom. The Friday mosques of Bayezid II and Selim I in Istanbul, which had flanking *ṭab'h̲āne*s, constitute an exception to this custom.[1939]

Besides mirroring different architectural conventions, some divergences in the components and designs of the Sultan Ahmed and Masjed-e Shah complexes speak for their patrons' distinct ceremonial agendas and dynastic customs. The presence of a sultanic mausoleum and a royal pavilion in the Sultan Ahmed complex, and a royal tribune inside the Friday mosque endowed this ensemble with particular settings for courtly ceremonials. As the last in the chain of sultanic mausolea attached to royal Friday complexes in early modern Istanbul, Sultan Ahmed's tomb served as one among the spots of sultanic processions and visits to successive royal mausolea on and near Divanyolu.[1940] Similarly, the royal pavilion was a transitional palatial setting for the sultan between the mosque and his route from the Topkapı Palace. From this palatial setting, he viewed ceremonial events in the mosque's outer courtyard and probably in Atmeydanı. At the same time, it served as a special entrway to the mosque for the sultan. The royal tribune inside the mosque, which

[1938] For the post-Mongol mosque complexes of Iran, see Chapter VI, 412–413. For the Ottoman sultanic mosque complexes, see Chapter III, 136–137.
[1939] Kafescioğlu, "Lives and Afterlives", 285.
[1940] See Chapter V, 380–381.

was directly connected to the royal pavilion, was a spatial manifestation of the sultanic custom of praying in seclusion.[1941] Masjed-e Shah's lack of any separate building or section for the shah and dynastic members designates a difference in the ceremonial agenda of the Safavid shahs, who partook in the Friday rituals with the rest of the congregation with no spatial barriers and did not perform their prayers in secluded settings.[1942] In this sense, divergences in the policies of publicity of the Safavid shahs and Ottoman sultans, as demonstrated by Necipoğlu,[1943] can be observed in the design of royal mosque complexes too.

The absence of the founder's mausoleum in Masjed-e Shah is related to the Safavid shahs' custom of burial in shrines. Unlike Sultan Ahmed's ancestors, who preferred to rest under the shadow of the Friday mosques perpetuating their military victories, the Safavid shahs chose either their ancestors' shrine in Ardabil, or the shrines of the Immaculate Imams or their progeny. Shah Abbas followed his predecessors' custom and chose the shrine of an Imamzada as his eternal residence,[1944] while Sultan Ahmed continued the tradition of his dynasty and was buried near his Friday mosque.

The divergences in the materiality of the two complexes are also worth mentioning. The construction materials of the Sultan Ahmed complex seem more diverse, including ashlar masonry, iron, various kinds of woods, marbles and metals, cement, and lime.[1945] Almost all edifices comprising the Sultan Ahmed complex, except the royal pavilion's upper section, made of alternating layers of stone and brick, are built of ashlar masonry, a prerogative of royal buildings. Used in the

[1941] See Chapter III, 139.
[1942] See, Chapter III, 165–166, and Chapter VI, 495.
[1943] See, Necipoğlu, "Framing the Gaze".
[1944] Godard, "Tomb of Shah".
[1945] See Chapter V, 250–254.

mosque, royal pavilion, mausoleum, marbles and İznik tiles also represented these buildings' royal character.[1946] Unlike the Sultan Ahmed complex, Masjed-e Shah is a brick structure. The entire building is made up of oblong bricks, the primary building material in Iranian architecture.[1947] Wood, metals, stone, jasper, marble, cement, and lime were also used in this building's construction. Unlike its counterpart in Istanbul, stone and marble were used to a limited degree. Stone was used as columns bearing the domes in hypostyle cloisters. Marble was used as revetments covering some walls and the floors, and in mihrabs and minbars.[1948]

Another significant divergence between the building materials of the two complexes is that iron was not used in Masjed-e Shah as a strutting element. Iron could have been used as a raw material for nails in this sanctuary's construction, but its stretchers and girders are wood.[1949] Iron was used as the raw material for stretchers, girders, clamps, mortises, and a variety of supporting elements like tenters or rings in the Sultan Ahmed complex.[1950] As has been underlined by G.Tanyeli, iron's frequent use as a strutting material in the early modern Ottoman monuments represented a convergence between the Ottoman and European architectural cultures as parts of the larger Mediterranean basin, while its infrequent use in Iranian architecture mirrors divergences in the materiality and building techniques between Iranian and Mediterranean domains.[1951]

The complexes of Shah Abbas and Sultan Ahmed centered on Friday mosques, which constitute the most monumental parts of their ensembles. The congregational mosques of Ahmed I and Abbas I feature diverse architectural plan types that had

[1946] Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 119–122.
[1947] Azarpay, "Brick", 447–449; Zander, "Observations Sur L'architecture", 295–297.
[1948] See Chapter VI, 407–411.
[1949] Dinani, *Hybrid Double Dome*, ii.
[1950] Tanyeli, *Osmanlı İnşaat Teknolojisi*, 149, 206.
[1951] Ibid, 273–281.

been in vogue in Iranian and Rumi lands prior to their constructions. Masjed-e Shah is a four-iwan courtyard mosque that is centered on an oblong open courtyard, whose edges are dotted by four monumental iwans. (Figures C157–C159) Since the Seljuq era, the four-iwan courtyard plan was the most preferred architectural layout for Iranian Friday mosques,[1952] and the architects of Shah Abbas appropriated this plan type in Masjed-e Shah. On the other hand, the Sultan Ahmed Mosque features a central domed and forecourted plan type. It has a wide prayer hall, which is surmounted by a monumental hemispherical dome supported by four half domes and preceded by an arcaded and marble-paved courtyard. (Figures C67, C76–C77) Central domed mosques with preceding courtyards emerged in the fourteenth-century in western Anatolia, and the layout of these mosques became canonical for the Ottoman sultanic Friday mosques beginning with the mid-fifteenth century.[1953]

Masjed-e Shah's main prayer hall is situated to the south of its courtyard and consists of three-square modules with the same dimensions. It combines a domed chamber over the mihrab sanctuary with two flanking hypostyle halls surmounted by multiple domes. This tripartite module forms a semi-fragmented unit despite being connected via wide arches. Masjed-e Shah's prayer rooms may not have been limited with this tripartite module to the south of the courtyard. It seems probable that the domed rooms behind the lateral iwans and the two hypostyle rooms to the north of these rooms were also used as praying halls.[1954] Most of the four iwan mosques of Iran had praying sections between iwans and the main prayer halls on the qibla side, and Masjed-e Shah's designers could have continued this custom.[1955] Unlike Masjed-

[1952] For a discussion of four iwan courtyard plan, see Chapter VI, 423–424.
[1953] See Chapter III, 139.
[1954] For a discussion of the rooms behind the lateral iwans and the hypostyle rooms to their north, see Chapter IV, 420–422.
[1955] See Chapter VI, 423–424.

e Shah, Sultan Ahmed Mosque's prayer hall features a unified space. This unity was achieved by covering the entire room with a hemispherical dome rising on four main piers and supported by four half-domes. This hall's configuration as a unified room under a single hemispherical dome brought it a sense of spaciousness that contrasts Masjed-e Shah's oblong and semi-fragmented main prayer room featuring a narrower space.

Besides their diverse configurations, the distinction in their dimensions affected the roominess of these two mosques' main prayer halls. Whereas the Sultan Ahmed Mosque's domed sanctuary covers an approximately 2,650 square meter area, Masjed-e Shah's central prayer unit forms less than half of it, with its size of 1,200 square meters. The Sultan Ahmed Mosque's prayer hall can host more than twice as many people as Masjed-e Shah's main prayer room to the south of its courtyard. This gap between the capacities of their main prayer rooms can be assessed as a reflection of the different densities of Masjed-e Shah and the Sultan Ahmed Mosque's expected congregations, mirroring the diverse conceptions and performance of the Friday rituals and daily obligatory prayers in seventeenth-century Isfahan and Istanbul.

Unlike the main covered prayer halls, the open courtyards of Masjed-e Shah and Sultan Ahmed Mosque have almost equal dimensions and cover approximately 3,000 square meters. This information confirms the above suggestion concerning the mosques' capacity, as, in total, the domed sanctuary and the courtyard of Sultan Ahmed Mosque form a wider unit compared to Masjed-e Shah. While the Sultan Ahmed Mosque's courtyard and domed hall are almost equal in dimensions, Masjed-

e Shah's courtyard is bigger than its main covered praying unit, reflecting the traditional design of Iranian four-iwan courtyard mosques.[1956]

Despite featuring similar dimensions, the courtyards of Masjed-e Shah and Sultan Ahmed Mosque differed in their layout and the design of their edges, based on the respective architectural traditions that they partook in. Whereas the sides of Majed-e Shah's courtyard comprise four gigantic iwans marking the edges' mid-points and rhythmic arcades between the iwans, the Sultan Ahmed Mosque's inner courtyard is enveloped by a continuous domed arcade. These courtyards' relationships with the main covered prayer rooms also featured differences. While the Sultan Ahmed Mosque's domed chamber is accessed through a monumental wooden gate, Masjed-e Shah's main prayer hall in the south is not separated from its courtyard through doors but is connected to it via the grand arches of a monumental iwan.

The spatial connection of the courtyards of Masjed-e Shah and the Sultan Ahmed Mosque with the maydans was also provided through different transitive architectural units. The spatial and visual relationship with the urban squares is comparable in both mosques' courtyards, which are not directly accessible from the squares. In Masjed-e Shah, the transition between the mosque's courtyard and the Naqsh-e Jahan Square is achieved through an angled passageway, which was instrumental for aligning the mosque with the qibla axis at the same time, since the maydan and the mosque have different axes. A sizeable outer courtyard is between Atmeydanı and Sultan Ahmed Mosque's courtyard. Masjed-e Shah's twisted entryway and the Sultan Ahmed Mosque's outer courtyard form transitionary spaces

[1956] See Table 16.

between the maydans and the mosques, which prepared the visitors to leave the worldly atmosphere of the squares and enter the spiritual domain of the sanctuaries.

Despite featuring different plan types and differing in their dimensions, the designs of the mosques of Sultan Ahmed and Shah Abbas displays some conceptual affinities. One of these parallelisms is their offering of several spectacular views from the maydans. Both monuments present changing and dramatic views for audiences promenading across distinct edges of the squares and gazing at them from the neighboring monuments. Different perspectives were created with a careful configuration of multiple pairs of minarets and domical units of diverse sizes. Despite the difference in their forms, numbers and placements, both monuments' minarets played the most significant part in creating diverse views. In Masjed-e Shah, the difference between the axes of the mosque and the maydan was made use of as an opportunity to locate two pairs of minarets in diverse orbits. Pairs of minarets flanking the portal and the southern iwan do not appear in alignment from any point of the maydan. In the Sultan Ahmed Mosque, a comparable effect was created by increasing the number of minarets to six, unique in the Ottoman architectural practice, and gradually augmenting the distances between each of the three pairs of minarets.[1957] They offer changing views from the distinct edges of the square and appear as slanting from the belvedere of the İbrahim Pasha Palace. (Figures C73, C88–C89, C184–C186)

The utterly symmetrical design of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque's domical units, achieved through applying the four half-dome model, was also instrumental in creating spectacular views. The mosque's descending domical superstructure appears as a pyramidal unit and offer constantly changing strings for the itinerant gazes

[1957] Ülgen, *Klasik Devir Minareleri*, 214.

strolling in the maydan and around the monument. (Figures C74–C75). Masjed-e Shah's domical units that are visible from the maydan, on the other hand, cluster behind the portal and around the qibla iwan, and offer more scattered views, still creating a crescendo up to the central dome over the mihrab sanctuary. As the highest part of the sanctuary, this dome constitutes the most monumental section and the central focus of the entire edifice, achieved through its double-dome design, making it possible to elevate the upper layer to an unprecedented degree.[1958] As has been underlined by Farshid Emami, the horizontal placement of Masjed-e Shah's courtyard allowed the architect to generate the mosque's changing views from the Naqsh-e Jahan Square because 'it leads to a closer clustering of domes, iwans, and minarets, which in turn gives a more harmonious profile to the building.' Achieved by the outward display of domes and minarets, Masjed-e Shah's monumental silhouette has been assessed by the same author as a feature of this monument that converges it with the Ottoman imperial mosques in Istanbul.[1959] (176, 184, 186)

Another convergence between the mosques of Sultan Ahmed and Shah Abbas is their extravagant decoration. Both monuments have been regarded as the most ornate Friday mosques of the architectural traditions they belonged to. Polychrome tiles make up both edifices' dominant decorative elements, although the placement and techniques of their ceramic revetments display some differences. The ordering and techniques of Masjed-e Shah's tiles reflect the decorative traditions of Iranian architectural culture, especially its post-Mongol forms. Covering broad exterior surfaces with polychrome tiles became widespread in post-Mongol Iran, reaching its peak under the Timurids. As a part of this architectural legacy, Masjed-e Shah's dome, minarets, façades, portal, and interior surfaces were covered with polychrome

[1958] See Chapter VI, 427.
[1959] Emami, "Inviolable Thresholds", 179.

tiles to an unprecedented degree. Covering such a vast surface with underglaze-painted polychrome tiles has no precedent in Iranian architectural history. Following the Timurid custom, Masjed-e Shah's tiles were produced with different techniques, including cut-tile mosaic (*mu'arriq*), seven colors (*haft rang*) known as cuerda seca, and glazed brick (*bannā'ī*). Unlike its Timurid precedents predominantly adorned with cut-tile ceramics, however, different surfaces of Masjed-e Shah are covered by *haft rang*, most probably preferred for the relative speed, ease, and cheapness of its production.[1960]

In contrast to the tiles of Masjed-e Shah, the tiles adorning the Sultan Ahmed Mosque were produced in a single technique. All are underglaze-painted polychrome tiles produced in İznik. The use of İznik tiles for decorating royal Ottoman monuments had been in vogue since the mid-sixteenth century, and the Sultan Ahmed Mosque's tile decoration mirrors this trend. However, the density of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque's tile revetments is without precedent in the history of Ottoman sultanic Friday mosques. Unlike Masjed-e Shah, merely the interior of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque is adorned with polychrome tiles, mirroring the custom of earlier Ottoman royal mosques.[1961]

The tiles of Masjed-e Shah and the Sultan Ahmed Mosque have a comparable visual repertoire dominated by floral motifs. Since the mid-sixteenth century, the preeminence of almost realistic floral ornaments was a shared phenomenon in the Safavid and Ottoman royal arts and architectural decoration. Floral motifs predominated the visual repertoire established and canonized in the royal ateliers of Tahmasb and Süleyman,[1962] which provided the bases of the decorative repertoire of

[1960] See Chapter VI, 436–438.
[1961] For tile decorations of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque, see Chapter V, 289–292.
[1962] Necipoğlu, "Early Modern Floral", 133; idem, "Kanun".

the two early seventeenth-century monuments built by Shah Abbas and Sultan Ahmed. Besides the legacies of these comparable yet distinct decorative canons, the envisioning of mosques under consideration as paradisial settings seem to have played an equally significant role in the emergence of analogous visual repertoires. As Fetvacı has demonstrated, several contemporary literary depictions of Sultan Ahmed Mosque compared this sanctuary to heavenly settings, and its walls with many floral motifs echoed paradisial gardens.[1963] Scholars like Golombek and Pirnia have underscored the paradisial imagery's relevance to Masjed-e Shah.[1964] Along with its trees and pools, the motifs of peacocks, flowers, and a paradisial garden decorating its walls have been assessed as visual elements evoking a paradisial image.[1965]

Monumental epigraphy constitutes another primary decorative element of Masjed-e Shah and the Sultan Ahmed Mosque. Both monuments' interior and exterior surfaces bear numerous inscriptional panels and friezes, most of which were executed in thuluth. The prominence of a single calligraphic style, thuluth, in both monuments seems to have been related to comparable aesthetic predilections and shared cultural roots. As underlined by Necipoğlu, thuluth dominated the Ottoman, Safavid and Mughal monumental inscriptions.[1966] Despite mirroring shared roots and aesthetic preferences, the inscriptions of Masjed-e Shah and the Sultan Ahmed Mosque display some differences. Most of Masjed-e Shah's epigraphic friezes are executed on tiles and are longer than those of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque, most of which are written on stone surfaces. Further, the inscriptions of Masjed-e Shah display an almost equal distribution in the exterior and interior, whereas the Sultan

[1963] Fetvacı, "Music, Light", 228–231.
[1964] Golombek, "Anatomy", 10; Pirnia, *Mi'mārī-ye Irānī*, 291.
[1965] See Chapter VI, 443–444.
[1966] Necipoğlu, "Religious Inscriptions", 34.

Ahmed Mosque's epigraphic panels are more intense in the interior. While the dome, minarets, portal, and iwans of Masjed-e Shah bear several monumental inscriptions, only the pediments of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque's main entrances are adorned with epigraphic panels. Inside, both monuments' inscriptions concentrate on the domes and around the mihrabs. In the Sultan Ahmed Mosque, some punctual points like pediments and half-domes were also chosen as the sites of epigraphic panels. In contrast, in Masjed-e Shah, long inscriptional friezes run along the walls of the main domed sanctuary and the domed rooms behind the lateral iwans.

Religious texts in Arabic dominate the inscriptions of Masjed-e Shah and the Sultan Ahmed Mosque. Two Turkish poems on the epigraphic panels facing Atmeydanı, and poems on the portal, main gate, and some water basins in Masjed-e Shah constitute the few inscriptions executed in vernacular languages. The preeminence of religious texts executed in Arabic in early modern mosques' epigraphic programs has been demonstrated by Necipoğlu,[1967] and Masjed-e Shah and the Sultan Ahmed Mosque reflect this trend. Religious texts appear as the predominant content of the inscriptional programs of Masjed-e Shah and the Sultan Ahmed Mosque. However, the types and themes of the two mosques' inscriptional programs display some differences. Whereas hadiths dominate Masjed-e Shah's epigraphic program, that of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque is predominated by Quranic inscriptions. Derived from several Sunni hadith compilations and Shi'i *akhbār*, the selection of hadiths adorning Masjed-e Shah's walls focus on the virtues and deputyship of Imam Ali and rendered the monument a Shi'i polemical text.[1968] This confessional tone was enhanced by eulogies and salutations to the Fourteen Immaculates, and some poetic expressions praising Imam Ali. Emphasis on the

[1967] Necipoğlu, "Religious Inscriptions".
[1968] Emami, "Inviolable Thresholds", 176.

significance of praying and visiting mosques is also evident in Masjed-e Shah's inscriptions, although it does not constitute the epigraphic program's central theme.[1969]

Praying appears as a central theme in the Sultan Ahmed Mosque's inscriptions, most of which involve Quranic verses regarding prayers. This divergence in the major themes of the two inscriptional programs can be assessed as reflections of their patrons' different religious priorities. Defending and propagating the Shi'ite creed appears as the primary concern of Masjed-e Shah's patron. Still, despite the difference in their distributions and densities, the importance of praying and confessional indicators appear as common themes of both inscriptional programs. The confessional ethos evident in Masjed-e Shah's epigraphs can also be observed in the Sultan Ahmed Mosque's inscriptional program. The names of the Four Rightly-Guided Caliphs and the Ten Companions Promised Paradise are among the inscriptions marking the Sunni character of the mosque and its patron.[1970]

Besides inscriptions, relics played a significant part in earning the mosques of Sultan Ahmed and Shah Abbas distinct confessional characters. Both patrons showed their attachment to specific religious figures and denominations associated with them by displaying relics attributed to these figures in their mosques. To display his devotion to the Prophet and its sunnah, Ahmed I brought the Prophet's footprint (*ḳadem-i şerif*) from Qaytbay's mausoleum in Egypt and displayed it in his mosque.[1971] The blood-soaked robe of Imam Husein and a Quran that Imam Reza copied were the two Shi'i relics kept in Masjed-e Shah and revealed the confessional character of the sanctuary and its patron.

[1969] See Chapter VI, 444–473.
[1970] See Chapter V, 278–289.
[1971] Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi*, X, 161–162.

Masjed-e Shah's Shi'ite ethos was evident in its book collection and some of its furniture too. This complex had a collection of manuscripts that contained several Shi'ite texts. Praying seals made of Karbala soil, an item used while praying by Shi'a Muslims, and water basins and bags for serving drinking water to the mosque's visitors as a reminder of Imam Husein's thirst in Karbala, were also among the pieces of furniture, implying the sanctuary's Shi'ite facet. Other items of furniture of the same mosque primarily served the daily needs of the sanctuary, including lighting and perfuming the edifice.[1972] Some attest to the multi-sensory experiences offered to the mosque's audiences, which appeared among the major concerns of contemporary visitors in literary depictions of the sanctuary.[1973] Different kinds of lamps helped to reveal the sanctuary's visual qualities during nocturnal visits, and incense burners adorned it with fragrances. A similar concern for offering multi-sensory experiences to its audiences is also evident in the Sultan Ahmed Mosque's furniture, which included several kinds of lamps and some incense burners. Similar to the poetic depictions of Masjed-e Shah, literary descriptions of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque praised its diverse qualities appealing to different senses.[1974]

Besides involving the necessary equipment for lighting and perfuming the space, the Sultan Ahmed Mosque's furnishing and luxury objects, which included numerous precious hangings and some items from the imperial treasury,[1975] played a significant role in endowing the mosque's interior with a palatial character, with its rich polychrome İznik tiles and luxury woodworks.[1976] The mosque's convergence to the contemporary palatial settings with its luxury items of furniture, precious objects,

[1972] For the manuscripts, relics, and furniture items in Masjed-e Shah, see Chapter VI, 472–477.
[1973] Mir Nejat Isfahani, "Vasf-e Isfahan", 369–370; Sipanta, *Tārīkhce-ye Awqāf*, 60.
[1974] Fetvacı, "Music, Light", 228.
[1975] See Chapter V, 295–303. See also Appendix A.
[1976] Aslanapa, *Osmanlı Mimarisi*, 124; Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 517.

and dazzling decorations seems to have been related to its use as a courtly ceremonial setting in the canonized *mevlid* celebrations. Although there is no evidence suggesting the existence of similar luxury items in Masjed-e Shah, extravagance and exhibitionism appear as shared characteristics of the decoration and architecture of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque and Masjed-e Shah. Theatricality and pomp constitute the main foci of the early seventeenth-century Ottoman and Safavid capitals and courts, which appeared in the architectural and ritual programs of the royal Friday mosques and the royal maydans in which they were articulated.

As Gülru Necipoğlu has also pointed out, the emergence of a new theatrical architectural and ritual language was a common phenomenon of the late sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries, which can be observed in both Islamic and European courts.[1977] Associated particularly with the baroque style in the European context, this new turn in architectural design is characterized by dynamic architectural volumes incorporating dramatic views and lavish decorative programs.[1978] The theatrical and outward-looking architectural configurations and splendid decorations of Masjed-e Shah and the Sultan Ahmed Mosque converge these sanctuaries the contemporary baroque monuments of Europe.[1979] The appearance of comparable architectural and visual languages can be interpreted as one of the early modern convergences that emerged from a growing dialogue between the early modern European and Islamic courts.[1980]

[1977] Necipoğlu, "Transregional Connections", 272.
[1978] Warwick, "Ritual Form", 305–316; Mumford, *City in History*, 375; Kostof, *City Assembled*, 140; Norberg-Shulz, "Baroque", 59; Ballon, "Architecture", 83.
[1979] Before Necipoğlu, Goodwin used the term "baroque" within the context of the Sultan Ahmed complex to describe the royal pavilion's ramp. Goodwin, *Ottoman Architecture*, 346. The term has not been used regarding Masjed-e Shah before Necipoğlu. Within the context of Iranian architecture, a discussion on the theme appeared within the field of Qajar studies, and the concept's relevance to Safavid architecture has not been discussed. See Ritter, *Moscheen und Madrasabauten*, 511–517.
[1980] See Subrahmanyam, "Connected Histories", 738–739; idem, "Tale of Three"; Zimmermann, "Beyond Comparison".

7.4 Rituals

The Sultan Ahmed and Masjed-e Shah complexes housed regular and occasional religious rituals, commemorative ceremonials, educational and charitable activities, royal processions, and courtly banquets. While sources are almost silent concerning the activities during Masjed-e Shah's construction, it is known that Sultan Ahmed complex served as a ground for recurrent sultanic visits, spectacular ceremonials, and banquets beginning with the digging of its foundations. As has been demonstrated by Necipoğlu and Rüstem, the digging of the mosque's foundations, its dome closing, and opening were celebrated with courtly processions, ceremonies, and banquets.[1981] As Rüstem has argued, the sultan's recurrent appearances at the construction site, and the spectacular events marking the project's different phases can be interpreted as gestures showing the sultan's attempt to legitimize his legally suspect project through deeds of benevolence and piety.[1982] At the same time, they were instrumental in conveying messages regarding the sultan's religious devotion, power, wealth, and benevolence to local and foreign audiences. The Safavid envoys were among the participants of these festive events and became the subjects of a sultanic show-off at the construction site. The contemporary sources mentioned Safavid envoys on two different occasions. In 1612, a Safavid ambassador was taken to the Topkapı Palace with a procession passing through the construction of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque from beneath the pavilion erected for the sultan.[1983] Another Safavid envoy was among the invitees to the dome closing ceremony in 1617.[1984] This clearly shows that Sultan Ahmed endeavored to display his enormous architectural project to the

[1981] Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 516; Rüstem, "Spectacle of Legitimacy", 262–291.
[1982] Rüstem, "Spectacle of Legitimacy", 290.
[1983] Mustafa Safi, *Mustafa Safi'nin*, II, 144.
[1984] Rüstem, "Spectacle of Legitimacy", 339–340.

representatives of his main rival and impress Shah Abbas with his imperial glory and religious devotion.

Courtly processions to the Sultan Ahmed Mosque did not happen merely during occasional festive events but also on Fridays. From the inception of his reign, Ahmed I attached much significance to Friday processions, which had an overwhelmingly spectacular character. As Rüstem has underlined, the Friday procession 'had been restored to its full splendor during the reign of Sultan Ahmed.[1985] These processions signified the sultan's support for and attachment to the Friday ritual. Although sources do not mention any such royal processions by the Safavid shahs to Masjed-e Shah, they recounted several occasions on which different Safavid shahs performed the Friday ritual and daily obligatory prayers in this mosque.[1986] It was an Ottoman envoy, instead of a Safavid shah, whose visit to Masjed-e Shah to perform the Friday ritual was preceded by a splendid courtly procession,[1987] displaying the Safavids' endeavor to prove their religious probity and their observance of the Friday ritual. This demonstrates that the Ottoman accusations regarding the Safavids' disregard of the Friday ritual remained valid in the seventeenth century.

The performance of this ritual and the congregational performance of the daily obligatory prayers differed in Masjed-e Shah and Sultan Ahmed Mosque because of the diverse conceptualizations of these rituals in Sunni and Imami schools of law. Confirming the ongoing Ottoman allegations, the Friday ritual and daily obligatory prayers were not regularly performed in seventeenth-century Isfahan. Still, the establishment of Masjed-e Shah and the assignment of a prayer leader to lead the

[1985] Rüstem, "Architecture", 186.
[1986] See Chapter VI, 495–496.
[1987] Qazvini Isfahani, *Irān dar Zamān*, 301.

daily obligatory prayers reveals Safavid authorities' espousal of these rituals. The evidence suggests that the Friday ritual and daily obligatory prayers were performed in Masjed-e Shah throughout the seventeenth century, though probably irregularly and with limited participation. Performing the Friday ritual and daily obligatory prayers in the congregation was not a legal obligation in Safavid Isfahan, and strong opponents of the performance of the Friday ritual always existed in the Safavid capital. Most probably for this reason, participation in the Friday ritual in Masjed-e Shah seems to have remained limited and irregular.[1988] The performance of the Friday ritual and five daily canonical prayers with the congregation was assured in the Ottoman capital, and they were performed regularly in the Sultan Ahmed Mosque.

Besides the Friday ritual and daily obligatory prayers, special days and nights in the Muslim calendar occupied an important place in the ritual programs of Masjed-e Shah and the Sultan Ahmed Mosque. Some special dates overlapped in both sanctuary's calendars, including *berāt*, *reġāib* and *qadir* nights, and Prophet Muhammad's birthday, the last two being celebrated at different nights in the Sunni Ottoman and Shi'i Safavid lands, but special days and nights in Masjed-e Shah's ritual calendar outnumbered those in the mosque of Sultan Ahmed. Some significant events in the Imami memory, including the births and deaths of the Fourteen Immaculates, Imam Ali's designation as the Prophet's successor, i.e. Ghadir Khumm, and Caliph Omar's murder, were commemorated in the Safavid lands and regarded as special days and nights. These dates must have corresponded to the special days and nights mentioned in Masjed-e Shah's endowment deed without specification. Such commemorative events had a special significance in the Imami creed and practice,

[1988] See Chapter VI, 493–495.

and have manifested Shi'i communities' distinct confessional identity. They have been conceptualized as vehicles for keeping the community's attachment to their faith and each other.[1989]

The first ten days of the month of Muharram, and especially *'āshūrā*, had special significance among other special dates in Masjed-e Shah's ritual calendar. Masjed-e Shah housed *rawḍakhānī* ceremonies, a theatrical ritual mutually performed by the *rawḍakhān* and a group of audience, and centered on the rehearsal of a canonized text written in Persian, *Rawḍat al-Shuhadā*. The same phenomenon, the canonization of a religious text penned in the vernacular language, is also evident in the contemporary Ottoman capital. Similar to *rawḍakhānī* rituals performed in Masjed-e Shah, *mevlid* celebrations centered on the rehearsal of a canonized text and displayed a theatrical character. *Mevlid* was performed inside the mosque with the participation of the sultan, members of his court, ulama, sayyids, sheikhs, and ordinary people. They sat according to a hierarchical order and were obliged to perform according to a particular choreography.[1990]

These commemorative rituals, *'āshūrā* and *mevlid*, designate the centrality of the memory of specific religious figures for the formation and performance of the Safavid and Ottoman confessional identities. Both ceremonies revealed and reinforced the confessional attachments of the patrons and audiences of Masjed-e Shah and Sultan Ahmed Mosque. *'Āshūrā* was instrumental in evoking the tragedy of Imam Husein, the heroic martyr and the third Imam of Shi'a, and the political, ethical, and religious values associated with him and his martyrdom, while *mevlid* endorsed the centrality and unique authority of the Prophet Muhammed and his

[1989] See Chapter V, 367–369, and Chapter VI, 496–498.
[1990] For *mevlid* ceremonies in the Sultan Ahmed Mosque, see Chapter V, 350–362. For *'āshūrā* rituals, see Chapter VI, 497–503.

sunnah in the Sunni creed. The preeminence of these ceremonies in the two royal mosques' ritual calendars speaks for their patrons' intention to mark their distinct confessional identities and to instruct their mosques' audiences through commemorative rituals. The configuration of both rituals as theatrical performances centered on texts in the vernacular languages bespeaks the predominance of drama and popular texts as prevailing means of performing and instructing the official faith in the early–seventeenth century Safavid and Ottoman capitals.

Besides revealing the confessional attachments and religious devotion of Shah Abbas and Sultan Ahmed, *ʻāshūrā* and *mevlid* ceremonies allowed these patrons to advertise their benevolence by serving food. Masjed-e Shah's endowment deed stipulates that porridge (*ḥalīm*) has to be offered to the visitors on the tenth of Muharram.[1991] Offering food and beverages to the invitees was an essential part of *mevlid* celebrations in the Sultan Ahmed Mosque. Offerings of food and beverages to *mevlid*'s participants were indeed luxury banquets and converged the mosque with palatial settings, which often served as the main venues of such banquets. Despite the lack of information regarding the presence or absence of courtly members or royal guests in *ʻāshūrā* in Masjed-e Shah, contemporary sources reveal that the sanctuary housed royal banquets served to Isfahan's elites, commemorating Shah Abbas after his passing away.[1992]

Whereas serving food was peculiar to *mevlid* rituals in Sultan Ahmed Mosque, Masjed-e Shah housed such activities on several occasions, including Ramadan nights and special days and nights. The presence of water basins in different parts of the Masjed-e Shah complex and the inclusion of waterbags into its

[1991] Sipanta, *Tārīkhce-ye Awqāf*, 57–58.
[1992] For banquets in these ceremonies, see Chapter V, 353–355, and Chapter VI, 504–505.

provisions show that offering drinking water was a daily practice in the sanctuary.[1993] In this sense, Masjed-e Shah acted like a public kitchen, offering food and water to its visitors on certain occasions. Sultan Ahmed established a separate edifice as a part of his complex for this function, and it was his public kitchen, where he served food and beverages daily and on special days and nights. Besides, his public fountains on different façades of the complex provided drinking water to visitors and those in and around the maydan. Like its architectural design featuring transitivity and transparency between its different components, Masjed-e Shah did not allocate completely separate spatial units to its diverse functions, unlike the Sultan Ahmed complex. Still, exhibiting their patrons' benevolence was among the main tasks of both architectural ensembles.

Housing scholarly activities, discussions, and public lecturing was another essential function of the Masjed-e Shah and Sultan Ahmed complexes. Shah Abbas and Sultan Ahmed supported ulama and their students and attached significance to public religious instruction. Besides functioning as boarding colleges for specialized students of religion, both complexes housed public sermons delivered regularly on particular days and some single occasions. However, the configuration of educational spaces displayed a difference in the Masjed-e Shah and Sultan Ahmed complexes. While Masjed-e Shah's madrasas and the mosque were not separated via gates or walls, the Sultan Ahmed complex allocated different edifices for its diverse educational activities. Sultan Ahmed built a hadith college for advanced religious studies, a Quran recitation school, and a primary school for needy children. Besides, the mosque housed sermons delivered on Fridays and Mondays. The evidence suggests that at least the education offered to advanced students in the madrasas of

[1993] See Chapter VI, 432, 474.

Shah Abbas and Sultan Ahmed had a primarily confessional character. Masjed-e Shah's collection of religious manuscripts contained some canonical Shi'i texts,[1994] and Sultan Ahmed's madrasa was conceived as a hadith college for the study of canonical Sunni hadith compilations.[1995]

7.5 Back to the initial question

Was there a specific connection between the establishments of these mosque complexes that were erected in the early seventeenth century? The chronological correspondence in the construction of the Masjed-e Shah and Sultan Ahmed complexes, simultaneous with the formation of the Naqsh-e Jahan Square and the reconfiguration of Atmeydanı, suggests the dialogical formation of the two royal urban squares and Friday mosque complexes. The urbanistic, architectural, and ritualistic parallelisms between the mosque complexes of Shah Abbas and Sultan Ahmed and their loci also reinforce the suggestion concerning their dialogical shaping.

The contextual evidence suggests that both patrons knew each other's architectural and urban ventures and that their rivalry had indirectly influenced the constructions and some aspects of their mosque complexes. Considering the traffic of people and objects between early-seventeenth century Istanbul and Isfahan, it seems impossible that Shah Abbas and Sultan Ahmed remained ignorant of each other's architectural and urban undertakings. As discussed in the second chapter, both rulers had spies in the rival capital or realms, and several ambassadors came and went between the Ottoman and Safavid courts in this era. Further, artists, merchants, soldiers, scholars, and intellectuals were constantly moving across the borders of the

[1994] Jafarian and Jaziri, *Waqfnāmahā-ye Ketāb-e Ṣafavī*, 159, 161.
[1995] TIEM 2184, 22b.

two empires,[1996] reflecting the increasing human mobility of the early modern period.[1997] These itinerant people must have reported to the monarchs about the developments in each other's capital and court. An interest in the culture and arts of the rival empire, which is evident in both the courts and retinues of Ahmed I and Abbas I, is also worth mentioning in this context. As shown by Fetvacı, Sultan Ahmed's album of painting and calligraphy, which included numerous pieces of Safavid artworks, testifies to the interest of the sultan and his favorite Kalender, for Safavid culture and their attempts to collect and follow the artistic and cultural production in Iran.[1998] Similarly, the engineers who were brought to Iran for the design and construction of Shah Abbas' summer capital in Farahabad, and Sheikh Bahai's knowledge of Istanbul's Friday mosques attest to the attention of Shah Abbas and his retinue toward Ottoman architectural culture.[1999]

The ongoing religious and political rivalry between the Ottoman and Safavid rulers constitutes a backdrop for interpreting the construction of the Masjed-e Shah and Sultan Ahmed complexes. The early seventeenth century was a period of prolonged warfare between the Ottomans and the Safavids for eastern Anatolia, Caucasus, and Azerbaijan. Fighting against the Safavids had a special significance for Sultan Ahmed, who insisted on confronting the Safavids on the military front until the end of his reign. Besides a quest to regain the lost territories, continuing the war against the Shi'i Safavids would foster the sultan's image as the protector of "the true religion", as expressed by Cafer Çelebi in his treatise as follows: "If the heretic shah accepts not the True Religion (Sunni Islam)/ If he asks not forgiveness for his crime and mutiny/ Our hope is that with the help of God, severing his head/ With the

[1996] See Chapter II, 104–106.
[1997] Subrahmanyam, "Connected Histories", 738–739
[1998] See Fetvacı, *Album*, Chapter III.
[1999] Junabadi, *Rawḍat al-Ṣafavīya*, 840; Sheikh Bahai, *Kashkul-e Bahā'ī*, 76.

blow of a sword, the Commander (Sultan Ahmed) causes to prostrate himself in worship."[2000] More importantly, gaining a military victory against the Safavids would legitimize Sultan Ahmed's Friday mosque project. Besides the military competition, the ongoing confessional debates, and the Ottoman accusations regarding Safavid rituals such as the cursing of the three Sunni Caliphs and the Prophet's companions, continued in the early seventeenth century. The military, political and religious tension between Shah Abbas and Sultan Ahmed impelled both rulers to establish and prove their military strength, religious devotion, and economic wealth to each other. This endeavor was more apparent in the case of Shah Abbas, who in contemporary diplomatic correspondences constantly tried to fashion himself as a ghazi warrior conquering lands and converting churches into mosques in the Caucasus.

Indeed, as several contemporary and modern historians indicated, Shah Abbas' attempts meant more than proving himself to the Ottoman ruler. He imitated the Ottoman political, administrative, and military system through several reforms in order to reach his main rival's military and political power.[2001] His architectural and religious enterprises can be assessed as a part of the same agenda. The construction of a Shi'ite congregational mosque complex with accompanying madrasas can be interpreted as another strategy for emulating the Ottoman rulers, who had adhered to the custom of erecting congregational mosque complexes with madrasas since the middle decades of the fifteenth century.

The date of Masjed-e Shah's construction raises the possibility that Shah Abbas initiated the Masjed-e Shah complex in response to Sultan Ahmed's mosque project. Masjed-e Shah's construction began in 1612, a few years after the initiation

[2000] Cafer Efendi, *Risale-i Mi'mariyye*, 67.
[2001] Sadiqi, *Tārīkh-e Irān*, 100; Blow, *Shah Abbas*, 37; Erdoğan, *Safevi Devleti'nin Askeri*, 91.

of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque's construction in 1609. Although the Naqsh-e Jahan Square was designed as a religious, commercial, and political center, there is no specific evidence considering that a congregational mosque complex was included in the original plan of the maydan.[2002] Still, this suggestion remains a hypothesis until clear evidence supports the suggestion that Shah Abbas decided to build the Masjed-e Shah complex after getting informed of Sultan Ahmed's project. In the same vein, one might also ask whether Ahmed's decision to build his mosque on the Atmeydanı and hence reinforce its royal characteristics was, among other things, a response to the creation of a new royal square in Isfahan through the preceding decade.

Whether they were erected as their patrons' response to each other or not, Sultan Ahmed and Masjed-e Shah complexes acted as sites where the dispute between Sultan Ahmed and Shah Abbas was reflected in different ways, including the epigraphic references or ambassadorial visits. As captured by Necipoğlu, the inscription on Masjed-e Shah's monumental dome, cursing the shah's enemies and the followers of the Umayyads, implicitly damned the Ottomans, and associated them with the Umayyads. On the other side, a contemporary Ottoman treatise on the Sultan Ahmed Mosque, Cafer Çelebi's *Risale-yi Mi'māriyye*, wished Ahmed I to defeat Shah Abbas[2003], and presented his war against the 'heretic' Safavids as a legitimizer of the sultan's mosque project.[2004] The Safavid ambassadors, who were brought to the construction site of the Sultan Ahmed complex and partook in this mosque's dome closing ceremony, and the Ottoman envoys, who were taken to Masjed-e Shah for performing the Friday ritual, attest each side's concern for displaying their monumental Friday mosque complexes to one another.

[2002] See, Chapter IV, 187–189.
[2003] Necipoğlu, "Transregional Connections", 269.
[2004] Crane, *Risale-i Mi'mariyye*, 67.

As the first comprehensive comparative, connected, and contextual analysis of the Friday mosque complexes of Ahmed I and Abbas I, this dissertation has offered contributions to the studies on the architectural, religious, and urban histories of the early modern Ottoman and Safavid worlds. It has sought to interpret the configuration and the construction of the Masjed-e Shah and Sultan Ahmed complexes within the underlying political and religious framework of early modernity and the seventeenth century. Besides scrutinizing the political and religious motives of the two patrons, it has investigated the urban contexts, the spatial-architectural and decorative configurations, and the functional-ceremonial formations of the two complexes under consideration. It has displayed that the parallelisms in the urbanistic, architectural-spatial, and ritualistic aspects of these two complexes disclose comparable architectural, urban, aesthetic, and religio-political sensibilities of their patrons and audiences, whereas differences in their ritualistic and architectural configurations reveal different trajectories and particularities of the Ottoman and Safavid religious and architectural cultures within the context of the early seventeenth century. In this study, it was mainly argued that there was a tight connection between the mosque patronage and religio-political agendas of the two patrons, and their architectural complexes emerged and took shape under the influence of the Safavid and Ottoman policies of Shi'itization and Sunnitization, as well as representation and consolidation of imperial identities of their patrons. Besides, it has been proposed that the political and religious rivalry between Shah Abbas and Sultan Ahmed affected their making of urban spaces and religious monuments.

This inquiry has presented an interdisciplinary approach and combined the methods of architectural and urban history and the social history of religion. Using

various sources, including court chronicles, archival materials, endowment deeds, treaties of contemporary court intellectuals and clerics, and travelogues of foreign and local travelers, it has merged the evidence provided in contemporary narrative and visual sources and the buildings (or their remnants). It has used of the conventional methods of architectural history depicting the monuments' configurations, plans, and materialities, but it eschews the descriptive and stylistic art historical interpretations that have dominated the field. The subject has instead been investigated through the lenses of a historian, who attempts to understand the architectural entities in relation to the religio-political, social-cultural and urban dynamics of the period, and within their historical contexts. In terms of its approach and methodology, it is deeply indebted to the methodological and theoretical developments in the architectural history of the Safavid and Ottoman empires. Similar to a series of scholars who analyzed the Safavid and Ottoman architectural cultures in relation with the religious policies of these empires' elites, I have attempted to demonstrate that the study of royal architectural monuments with an historical and interdisciplinary approach offers insights on the political, religious, and cultural dynamics of the periods in which they were built, along with the architectural-spatial aspects of the buildings. This study on the two early-seventeenth-century Friday mosque complexes built in the Safavid and Ottoman capitals has displayed the integrity of the monuments' urbanistic, architectural, and ritualistic aspects, and the interconnectedness between the royal buildings and their patrons' religio-political agendas and rivalry.

APPENDIX A

THE LIST OF OBJECTS DECORATING THE SULTAN AHMED MOSQUE[2005]

Object	Number	Object	Number
Silver oil lantern with 7 lamps (*gümüş fener, yedī ḳandīlli*)	1	Small mother of pearl oil lamp (*sedefkārī küçük ḳandīl*)	1
White and green cyristal glass (*beyāḍ ve yeşīl billūr bardāḳ, gevherī*)	1	Simple gilded porcelain oil lamp (*ḳapāḳ-ı sāde, faǧfūrī*)	2
Big silver hexagonal ball (*büyük gümüş top, şeşḥāne*)	1	Jasper glass (*su yeşīmī bardāḳ*)	3
Big silver circular ball (*gümüş top, müdevver, büyük*)	1	Fringed mother of pearl ball (*top-ı sedefkārī, saçāḳlī*)	2
Middle-sized hexagonal ball (*gümüş top, şeşḥāne, orta*)	4	Middle-sized jasper Jar (*ṣū yeşīmī ḳavanoz, orta*)	2
Big hexagonal mother of pearl ball (*sedefkārī top, şeşḥāne, büyük*)	4	Latticed stamp of Suleiman, work of a bookbinder (*mühr-i Süleymānī, müşebbek, mücellid işī*)	1
Latticed silver oil lamp (*ḳandīl-i gümüş, müşebbek*)	2	Golden-painted peanut (*zer-mühre fıstīḳ*)	1
Pistachio-green silver ball (*fıstīḳī gümüş top*)	1	Bucket of porcelain lamp (*bāḳrāc-ı faǧfūrī ḳandīl*)	2
Caledon jar with 2 handles (*mertebānī ḳavanoz, iki ḳūlplū*)	2	Fringed mother of pearl mirror (*sedefkārī āyine, saçāḳlī*)	2
Porcelain jug (*faǧfūrī sürāḥī*)	4	Latticed ball, work of a Bookbinder (*top-ı müşebbek, mücellid işī*)	1

[2005] TMSA, 8021,1; Barkan, *Süleymaniye Camii*, II, 289–290.

Mother of pearl ostrich egg (*sedefkārī deve ḳuşū ʻardesī*)	2	Latticed and golden-painted hexagonal ball (*top-ı şeşḥāne, zer-mühre, müşebbek*)	1
Big caledon Jar with 9 fringes (*büyük ḳavanoz, mertebānī, ṭoḳūz saçāḳlī*)	1	Jasper begging-bowl (*keşkül, balgamī*)	1
Hexagonal ball with mirrors and 7 fringes (*top-ı şeşḥāne, ʻirengī āyinelī, yedi saçāḳlī*)	1	Medium size porcelain jug (*faǧfūrī sürāḥī, orta*)	5
Quadrangular ball with kufic inscription (*top-ı dört köşeli, Kūfī ḥaṭlī*)	1	Hand-made jug of antidote (*ḳavanoz-u panzehīr, ʻamelī*)	1
Work of a bookbinder, signed as "Ya Ferd" (*mücellid işī, "Yā Ferd" isimli yazı*)	1	Green crystal cover (*ḳapāḳ-ı billūr, yeşīl*)	1
Depiction of the Eger Castle, with 9 Balls (*taṣvīr-i ḳal'a-yı Eğrī, ṭoḳūz toplū*)	1	Caledon glass (*bardāḳ-ı mertebānī*)	1
Painted ostrich egg (*deve ḳuşū ʻardesī, naḳışlı*)	175	Silver lamp, diversified with black (*ḳandīl, gümüş ṣavadlī*)	1
Green ostrich egg (*yeşīl deve ḳuşū ʻardesī*)	4	Plain porcelain cover (*ḳapāḳ-ı sāde, faǧfūrī*)	1
Big latticed ball, work of a bookbinder (*top-ı müşebbek, mücellid işī, büyük*)	1	Lamp, adorned with kufic inscriptions (*ḳandīl, Kūfī ḥaṭla mücellidī*)	1
Gilded circular ball (*yāldızlū müdevver top*)	1	Painted coconut glass (*bardāḳ -ı cevz-i Hindī, naḳışlı*)	2
Crystal ball (*top-ı gevherī, billūr*)	1	Ivory mirror (*fildişīnden āyine*)	1

Circular Gilded Ball (*yāldızlū top, müdevver*)	8	Green crystal bowl (*yeşīl billūr kāse*)	1
Censer made of pied stone (*buḥūrdān-ı alacaṭāşī*)	1	Porcelain cover of jug (*ḳapāḳ-ı sürāḥī, faǧfūrī*)	1
Crystal white bucket (*beyāḍ billūr ṣaṭıl*)	6	White marble glass (*beyāḍ mermer bardāḳ*)	1
Big gilded ball (*zer-mühre top, büyük*)	4	Blue and yellow crystal glass (*billūr bardāḳ, mavi ve sarı*)	1
Painted crystal glass and jug (*billūr şīşe ve bardāḳ, naḳışlı*)	15	Circular porcelain lamp (*faǧfūrī müdevver ḳandīl*)	1
Latticed oil lamp, work of a bookbinder (*ḳandīl -i müşebbek, kār-ı mücellid*)	1	White and golden-painted glass (*bardāḳ -ı zer-mühre, beyāḍ*)	2
Silver glass with flower motifs (*gümüş bardāḳ, şükūfelī*)	2	Crystal jug (*billūr şīşe sürāḥī*)	1
Crystal red glass (*billūr bardāḳ, kırmızı*)	2	Ball of *Ḥakkārī* with crescents (*top-ı Ḥakkārī ī, ʻalemlū*)	12
Green crystal oil lamp (*ḳandīl, yeşīl sırça*)	1	Circular ball of mirror (*top-ı āyine, müdevver*)	48
Big Hexagonal Ball with Lamps (*fenerlī büyük şeşḥāne top*)	2	Big *Ḥakkārī* (*Ḥakkārī, büyük*)	8
Latticed ball with lamps, work of a bookbinder (*fenerlī müşebbek top, mücellid işī*)	2	Medium size lamp of *Ḥakkārī*	72
Latticed ostrich egg (*deve ḳuşū ʻardesī, müşebbek*)	16	Medium size golden-painted lamp (*zer-mühre ḳandīl, orta*)	120
Big gilded oil lamp (*ḳandīl-i zer-mühre, büyük*)	11	Small lamp of *Ḥakkārī*	46

Coconut glass (*Hind cevizinden bardāḳ*)	1	Small golden-painted lamp (*ḳandīl -i zer-mühre, küçük*)	95
Ostrich egg bearing the inscription of "Allāh" (*deve ḳuşū ʻardesī Lafzatullāh yazılı*)	1	Golden-painted chicken egg (*zer-mühre ṭavūḳ ʻardesī*)	85
Oil lamp from the realms of Imam Husein (*Hz. İmām Hüseyīn türābından ḳandīl*)	1	Golden-painted goose egg (*ḳāz ʻardesī, zer-mühre*)	153
Painted coconut (*cevz-i Hindī, naḳışlī*)	60	Golden-painted pine cone (*zer-mühre ḳozalāḳ*)	260
White and golden-painted *mahyā* (string of lamps) *mahyā* (string of lamps)	2	Golden-painted head of chain (*zer-mühre zincīr bāşı*)	165
Yellow and golden-painted *mahyā*s	4	Big head of chain with crescents (*zincīr bāşı, ʻalemlū, büyük*)	1
Gilded glass with three handles (*bardāḳ üçer ḳūlplū, zer-mühre*)	2	Golden-painted goose egg (*ḳāz ʻardesī, zer-mühre*)	15
Mother of pearl ball with mirrors (*sedefkārī top, āyinelī*)	2	Golden-painted chicken egg (*zer-mühre ṭavūḳ ʻardesī*)	36
Mother of pearl circular ball (*sedefkārī top, müdevver*)	2	Bejeweled lamp adorned with turquoise and chrysotile (*gümüş ḳandīl -i murassa', pirūze ve zeberced ṭāşlı*)	1
Porcelain oil lamp with six handles (*ḳandīl l-i faǧfūrī, altı ḳūlplū*)	2	Mother of pearl crystal lamp (*sedefkārī billūr ḳandīl*)	1
Wire-woven ostrich egg (*tel örülmüş deve ḳuşū ʻardesī*)	1	Mother of pearl pitcher (*sedefkārī maşrapa*)	1

Round egg made of the stone of Arafat (*ʿArafat ṭāşı yumurta, müdevver*)	1	Painted crystal oil lamp (*billūr ḳandīl, naḳışlı*)	4
Total Number		1558	

APPENDIX B

THE LIST OF PROPERTIES AND REVENUES OF MASJED-E SHAH'S WAQF[2006]

Property	Income	Donator
A farmland (*mazra'a*) in Lanjan	• 1000 *man*s/ 3000 kg grain (*gollah*), • 150 *man*s/ 450 kg wheat (*gandom*), • 150 *man*s/ 450 kg barley (*jū*), • 1000 *man*s/ 3000 kg straw (*kāh*)	Shah Abbas
The village (*qarya*) of Saldai in Lanjan	¼ of that amounts to: • 870 *man*s/ 2610 kg wheat, • 1044 *man*s/ 3132 kg barley, • 1044 *man*s/ 3132 kg rice (*shaltūk*), • 88 *man*s/ 264 kg oil (*zahan*), • 87 *man*s/ 261 kg grape (*'anab*), • 121 *man*s/ 363 kg date (*akhmar*), • 4050 *man*s/ 12,150 kg opium (*afyūn*), • 48 *man*s/ 144 kg straw	Lala Beg
The farmland of Dashtchi in Lanjan	¼ of that amounts to: • 800 *man*s/ 2400 kg grain, • 300 *man*s/ 900 kg wheat, • 300 *man*s/900 kg barley, • 15 *man*s/ 45 kg straw	Shah Abbas
The village of Gulshad in Lanjan	• 250 *man*s/ 750 kg wheat, • 250 *man*s/ 750 kg barley,	Lala Beg

[2006] Sipanta, *Tārīkhce-ye Awqāf*, 51–55.

	• 720 *man*s/ 2160 kg rice, • 62,5 *man*s/ 187,5 kg cotton (*jūzaq*), • 62 *man*s/186 kg date, • 62 *man*s/ 186 kg corn (*dakhan*), • 62,5 *man*s/187, 5 kg grape, • 12 mans/ 36 kg straw	
The village of Harandan in Baraan	¼ of that amounts to: • 2000 *man*s/ 6000 kg grain	Shah Abbas
The village of Azvar in Baraan	• 76 *man*s/ 228 kg straw, • 1500 *man*s/ 4500 kg wheat, • 1571 *man*s/ 4713 kg barley	Shah Abbas
The farmland of Babakrai in Barkhar	¼ of that amounts to: • 5000 *man*s/ 15,000 kg wheat, • 10 *tūmān*s cash, • 5000 *man*s/ 15,000 kg barley, • 250 *man*s/ 750 kg straw	Shah Abbas
The farmland of Ghiyath-Abad in Barkhar	¼ of that amounts to: • 1700 *man*s/ 5100 kg grain, • 800 *man*s/ 2400 kg wheat, • 1000 *man*s/ 3000 kg barley, • 23 *man*s/ 69 kg straw, • 867 *man*s/ 2601 kg wheat, • 866 *man*s/ 2598 kg barley, • 41,5 *man*s/ 124,5 kg cotton	Lala Beg
The village of Mulk-Abad in Barkhar	¼ of that amounts to: • 6250 *man*s/18,750 kg wheat, • 12 *tūmān*s cash,	Lala Beg

	• 250 *man*s/ 750 kg straw	
The village of Abhar in Cay	¼ of that amounts to: • 234 *man*s/702 kg grain	Lala Beg
The village of Dastjardqani in Cay	¼ of that amounts to • 677 *man*s/2031 kg grain	Shah Abbas
The farmland of Jalmarz in Qahab	¼ of that amounts to: • 86 *man*s/ 258 kg cotton • 70 *man*s/ 210 kg straw	Lala Beg
The village of Asfarir in Marbayn	1/8 of that amounts to: • 7084 *man*s/ 21,252 kg water • 1480 *man*s/ 4440 kg cotton • 150 *khirwār*s/ 450 kg straw	Shah Abbas
The village of Jushtan in Lanjan	¼ of that amounts to: • 13,257 *man*s/ 39,771 kg grain • 800 *man*s/ 2400 kg rice • 390 *man*s/ 1170 kg cotton • 1250 *man*s/ 3750 kg date • 397 *man*s/ 1191 kg oil	Shah Abbas
The village of Dasta/ Khusrawiyah in Lanjan	¼ of that amounts to: • 2130 *man*s/ 6390 kg grain • 150 *man*s/ 450 kg oil • 180 *man*s/ 540 kg date • 14 *khirwār*s/ 420 kg straw	Shah Abbas
The farmland of Danarat in Kararaj	1/8 of that amounts to: • 500 *man*s/ 1500 kg cotton • 64 *khirwār*s/ 192 kg straw	Shah Abbas
A farmland to the south of the river in Kararaj	¼ of that amounts to: • 50 *man*s/ 150 kg cotton	Shah Abbas

	• 16 *khirwār*s/ 48 kg straw	
The village of Adaryan in Marbayn	1/8 of that amounts to: • 5750 *dīnār-e Tabrīzī* • 1200 *man*s/ 3600 kg grain • 30 *khirwār*s/ 90 kg straw	Shah Abbas
The farmland of Champir in Lanjan	¼ of that amounts to: • 750 *man*s/ 2250 kg grain • 300 *man*s/ 900 kg rice • 100 *man*s/ 300 kg black grape (*'anab-e seyāh*) • 30 *khirwār*s/ 90 kg straw	Lala Beg
The village of Dizjan in Lanjan	¼ of that amounts to: • 2300 *man*s/ 6900 kg grain • 57 *khirwār*s/ 171 kg straw	Shah Abbas
The village of Sanganchi in Lanjan	¼ of that amounts to: • 7000 *man*s/ 21,000 kg grain • 2700 *man*s/ 8100 kg black mulberry • 900 *man*s/ 2700 kg colorful grape (*'anab-e alvān*) • 135 *khirwār*s/ 405 kg straw	Lala Beg
The village of Kutancha in Lanjan	• 1000 *man*s/ 3000 kg grain • 10 *khirwār*s/ 30 kg straw	Shah Abbas
A garden with single entrance (*bāgh-e yakdarb*) in Murtakan-e Ardistan	The rental revenue of 1 *tūmān* and 4000 *dīnār*s cash	Shah Abbas
The village of Runamakhvast in Lanjan	¼ of that amounts to: • 4000 *man*s/ 12,000 kg grain • 1800 *man*s/ 5400 kg rice • 67 *khirwār*s/ 201 kg straw	Lala Beg

The farmland of Rangan in Ardistan	¼ of that amounts to: • 4600 *man*s/ 13,800 kg grain • 8 *khirwâr*s/ 24 kg straw	Shah Abbas
The village of Rudan in Lanjan	1/8 of that amounts to: • 700 *man*s/ 2100 kg grain • 300 *man*s/ 900 kg rice • 10 *khirwār*s/ 30 kg straw	Shah Abbas
The pavilion (*qasr*) of Jakru in Lanjan	¼ of that amounts to: • 2100 *man*s/ 6300 kg grain • 20 *khirwār*s/ 60 kg straw	Lala Beg
A garden with single entrance in Khusrawiyyah, Lanjan	The rental revenue of 1 *tūmān* and 3000 *dīnār*s	Shah Abbas
A garden with single entrance in Dastjard-e Qaban	The rental revenue of 1 *tūmān* and 7000 *dīnār*s	Shah Abbas
The village of Vanan in Lanjan	¼ of that amounts to: • 5500 *man*s/ 11,500 kg grain • 50 *khirwār*s/ 150 kg straw	Lala Beg
The farmland of Larmardaj/ Jalkard	600 *man*s/ 1800 kg grain	Lala Beg
A duct (*qanāt-e āb*) in Atashgah	¼ of that amounts to: • 900 *man*s/ 2700 kg grain	Shah Abbas
A land (*arāḍī*) in Jushan	¼ of that amounts to: 62 *man*s/ 186 kg black mulberry	Shah Abbas
The mansion (*mālikāna*) Asfariz dar Marbayn	3 *tūmān*s and 1725 *dīnār-e Tabrīzī* cash	Shah Abbas
The White Inn (*Khān-e Safīd*) to the south of the mosque	The rental revenue of 10 *tūmān-e Tabrīzī* cash	Shah Abbas
A warehouse (*tīmcha*) to the south of the mosque	The rental revenue of 5 *tūmān-e Tabrīzī* cash	Shah Abbas
The farmland of Afjan	¼ of that amounts to: • 1939 *man*s/ 5817 kg grain • 7 *khirwār*s/ 21 kg straw	Lala Beg

The farmland of Fasharak in Qahparah	¼ of that amounts to: 3 *tūmān*s and 4787 *dīnār*s	Shah Abbas
A land named Kurhai in Darb-e Dowlat	Its land right (*khaqq al-arāḍī*)	Shah Abbas
An Ice-House (*yakhchāl*) in Darb-e Dowlat	60 module (*vaqr*) ice	Shah Abbas
A Kitchen (*karkhāna-ye tabbākhī*) to the south of the old well (*chākh*)	The rental revenue for 3650 *dīnār-e Tabrīzī*	Shah Abbas
Walled houses (*khānahā-ye mukhūta*) to the south of the madrasa	The rental revenue for 6000 *dīnār*s cash	Shah Abbas
A shop of a second-hand bookseller (*dukkān-e saḥāfī*) on the flanks of the mosque's portal	The rental revenue for 3 *tūmān*s	Shah Abbas
Two shops of herbalist (*dū-bāb dukkān-e 'aṭṭārī*) on the mosque's entrance	The rental revenue for 6 *tūmān*s	Shah Abbas
The Inn of the Chief Goldsmith (*Khān-e Zargarbashī*) beside the Qaysariyya	?	Shah Abbas
The Inn of the Chief of the Imperial Heralds (*Khān-e Charshibashī*) with two flanking shops	The rental revenue for 90 *tūmān-e Tabrīzī,* assigned for the mosque's illumination (*rūshanāī*)	Lala Beg
Two shops of second-hand bookseller on the mosque's entrance	The rental revenue for 3 *tūmān*s and 6000 *dīnār*s	Shah Abbas

APPENDIX C

FIGURES



Figure C1. The portrait of Shah Abbas I, 1613–1619.
(Retrieved from: https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/W_1920-0917-0-13-2, accessed on 22 March 2022)



Figure C2. Portrait of Shah Abbas I by Italian artist, Giacomo Franco.
(Retrieved from: https://i.redd.it/webui3adi3b61.jpg, accessed on 31 August 2022)



Figure C3. Frontispiece, Sultan Ahmed enthroned. *Miftāḥ-i cifrü'l-cāmi'*, Istanbul, ca. 1603–17.
(İstanbul Üniversitesi Nadir Eserler Kütüphanesi, Istanbul. T 6624, 1b–2a)



Figure C4. Sultan Ahmed in Edirne.
(*Divān* of Nadiri. Istanbul,
ca. 1603–17. Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, Istanbul, H 889, 10a)



Figure C5. A throne of Ahmed I.
(Reproduced from: Atasoy, *Garden*, 34.)

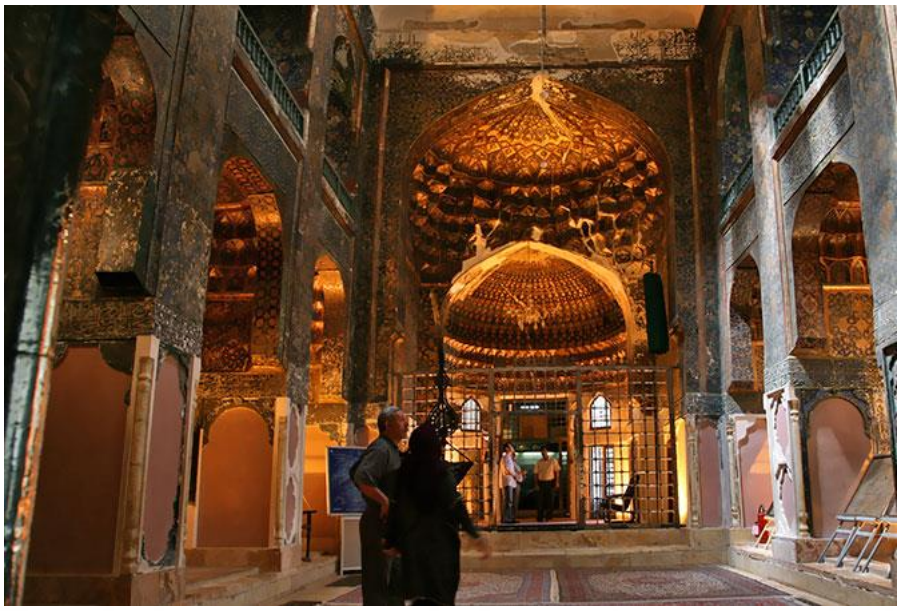

Figure C6. The *shāhnishīn* in the Ardabil Shrine.
(Photo Credit: Muhammad Tajik. Retrieved from: https://www.tasteiran.net/stories/9036/sheikh-safi-shrine-ardabil, accessed on 15 June 2021)

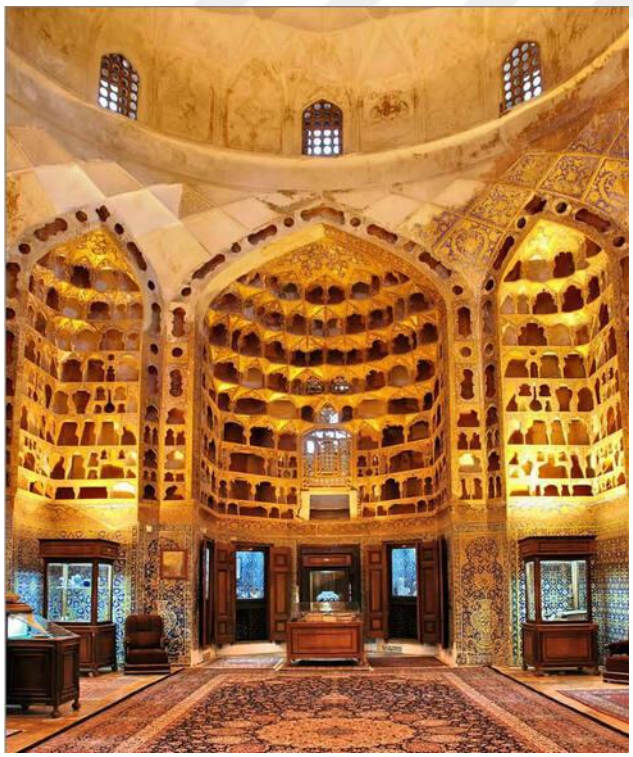

Figure C7. The *chinikhāna* in the Ardabil Shrine.
(Photo Credit: SHSEA. Retrieved from: https://whc.unesco.org/en/documents/115031 , accessed on 15 June 2021)



Figure C8. An 18th century portrait of Robert Sherley in Persian dress, after Van Dyck.
(Retrieved from: https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_1860-0414-5, accessed on 31 August 2022)



Figure C9. The mosque of Mehmed II in Istanbul.
(Photo Credit: Walter B. Denny. Retrieved from: https://www.archnet.org/sites/1982?media_content_id=7659, accessed on 22 March 2022)

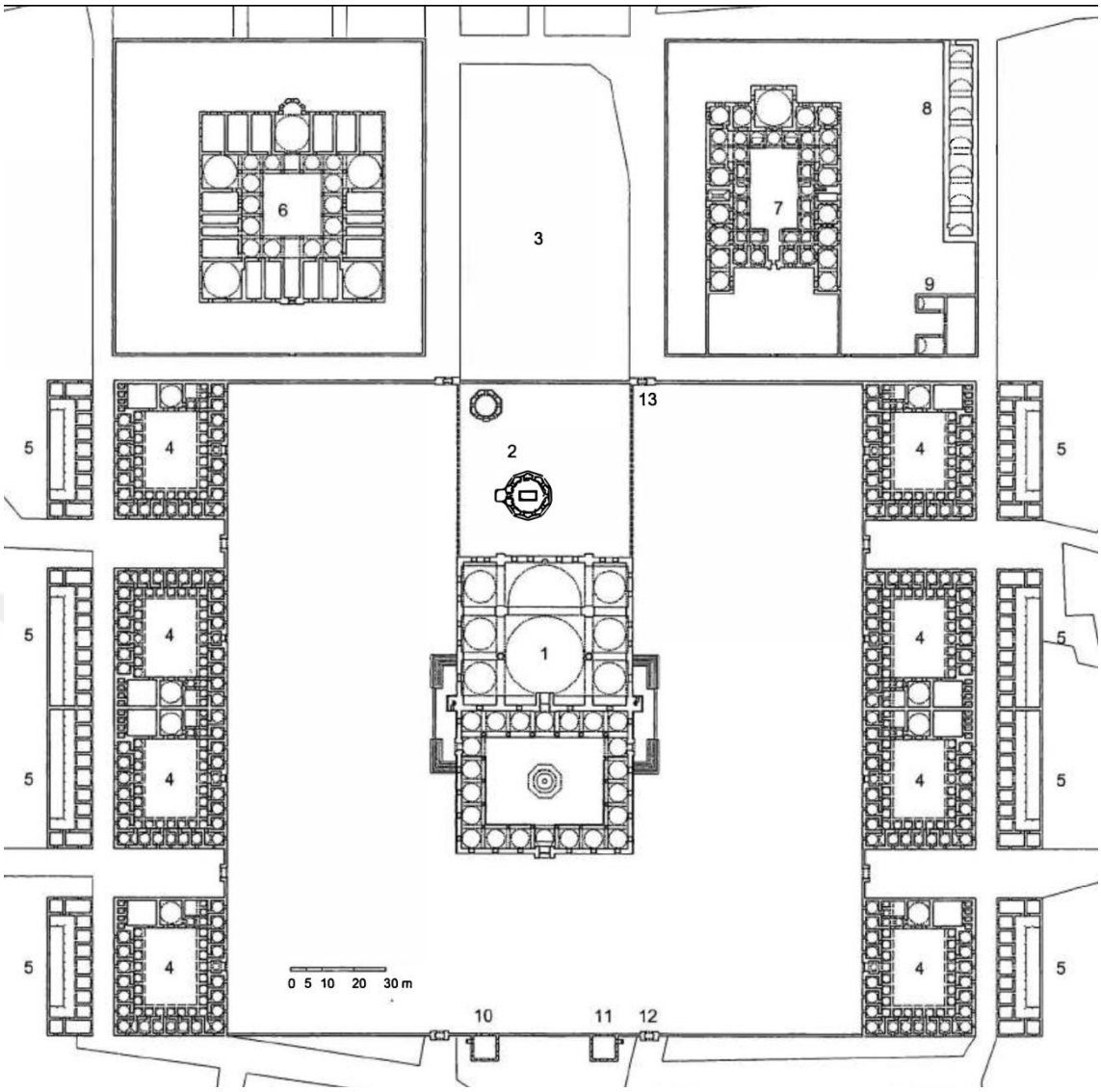

Figure C10. The plan of Mehmed II's complex.
(It shows: 1. Friday Mosque; 2. The mausolea of Mehmed II and Gülbahar Hatun; 3. Garden; 4. Madrasas; 5. Prepatory Madrasas; 6. Hospital; 7. Hospice; 8. Stable; 9. Kitchen; 10. Elementary School; 11. Library; 12. Börekçi Gate; 13. Çorba Gate. Reproduced from: Kafescioğlu, *Constantinopolis/Istanbul*, 69)



Figure C11. The mosque of Bayezid II in Istanbul.
(Photo credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)

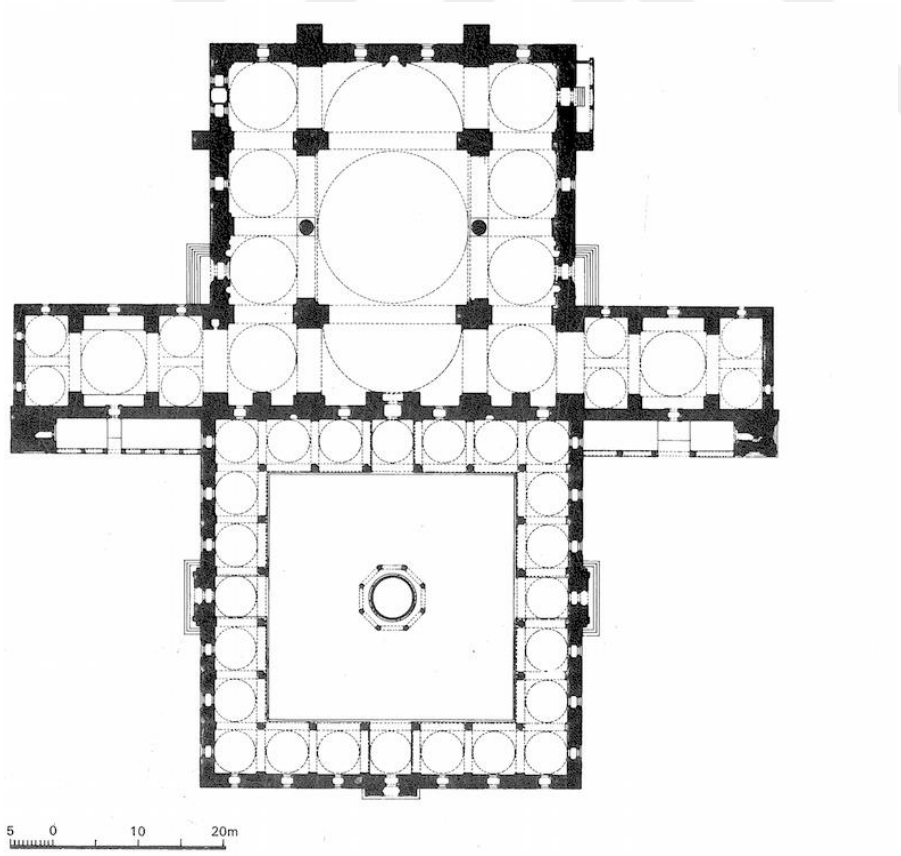

Figure C12. The plan of Bayezid II's mosque in Istanbul.
(Reproduced from: Goodwin, *Ottoman Architecture*, 169)



Figure C13. The mosque of Selim I in Istanbul.
(Photo Credit: Fine Arts Library, Harvard College Library. Retrieved from: https://www.archnet.org/sites/2027?media_content_id=35046, accessed on 22 March 2022)

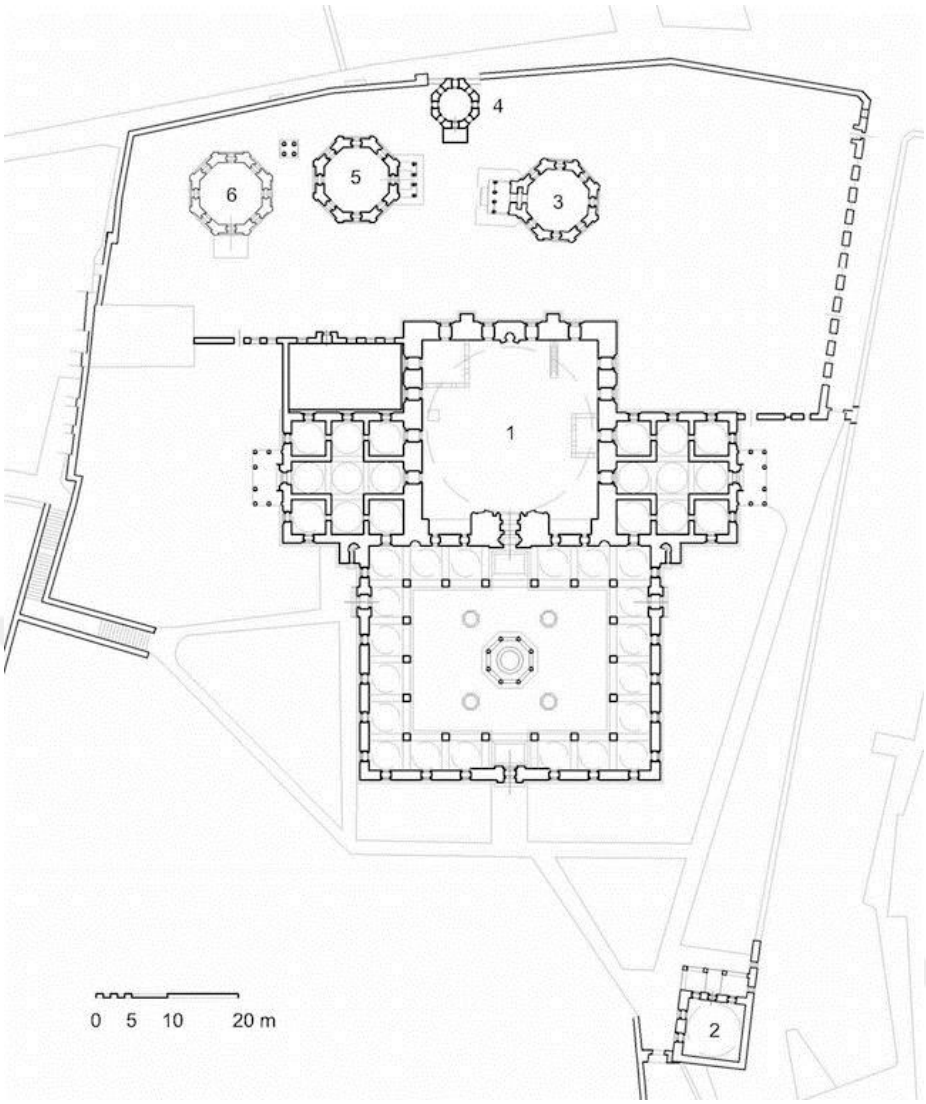

Figure C14. The plan of Selim I complex in Istanbul.
(The floor plan of the complex showing; 1. Mosque; 2. Elementary school; 3. Mausoleum of Selim I; 4. Mausoleum of Hafsa Sultan (demolished); 5. Mausoleum of Sultan Süleyman's children; 6. Mausoleum of Sultan Abdülmecid. Drawing: Arben N. Arapi. Retrieved from: https://www.archnet.org/publications/1437, accessed on 28 March 2022)



Figure C15. The Şehzade Mosque.
(Photo Credit: Walter B. Denny. Retrieved from: https://www.archnet.org/sites/2018?media_content_id=74414, accessed on 22 March 2022)

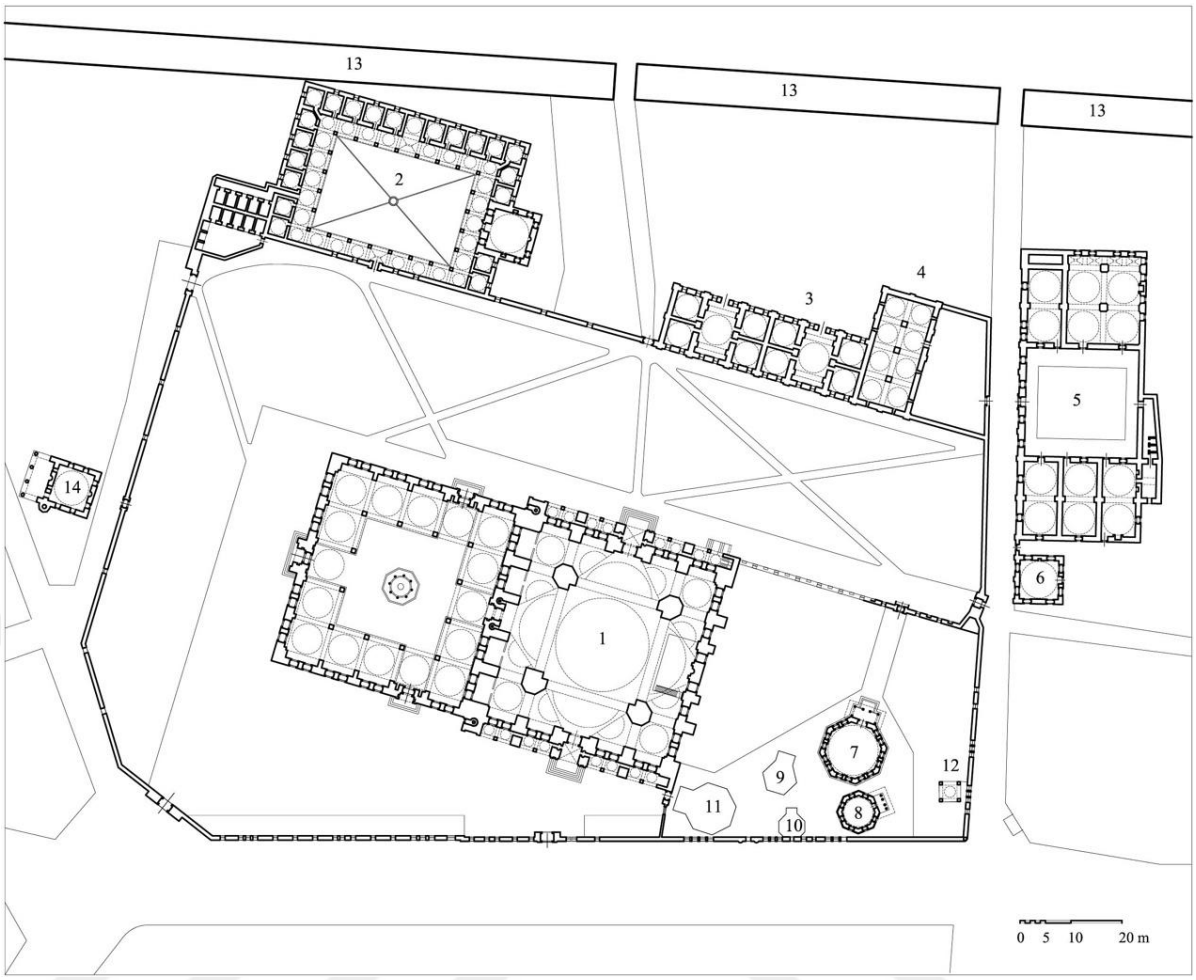

Figure C16. The plan of the Şehzade complex.
(It shows: 1. Mosque; 2. Madrasa; 3. Guestrooms; 4. Caravanserai with stables; 5. Hospice; 6. Elementary school; 7. Mausoleum of Sehzade Mehmed; 8. Mausoleum of Rüstem Pasa; 9. Mausoleum of Sehzade Mahmud; 10. Mausoleum of Seyhülislam Bostanzade Mehmed; 11. Mausoleum of Ibrahim Pasa; 12. Baldachin tomb of Sehzade Mehmed's granddaughter Fatma Sultan; 13. Foundations of the Valens Aqueduct; 14. Pre-existing Burmali Minare Masjid. Reproduced from: Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 192)



Figure C17. The view of the Süleymaniye Mosque from the southwest.
(Photo Credit: Reha Günay. Retrieved from:
https://www.archnet.org/sites/2024?media_content_id=42811 accessed on 22 March 2022)

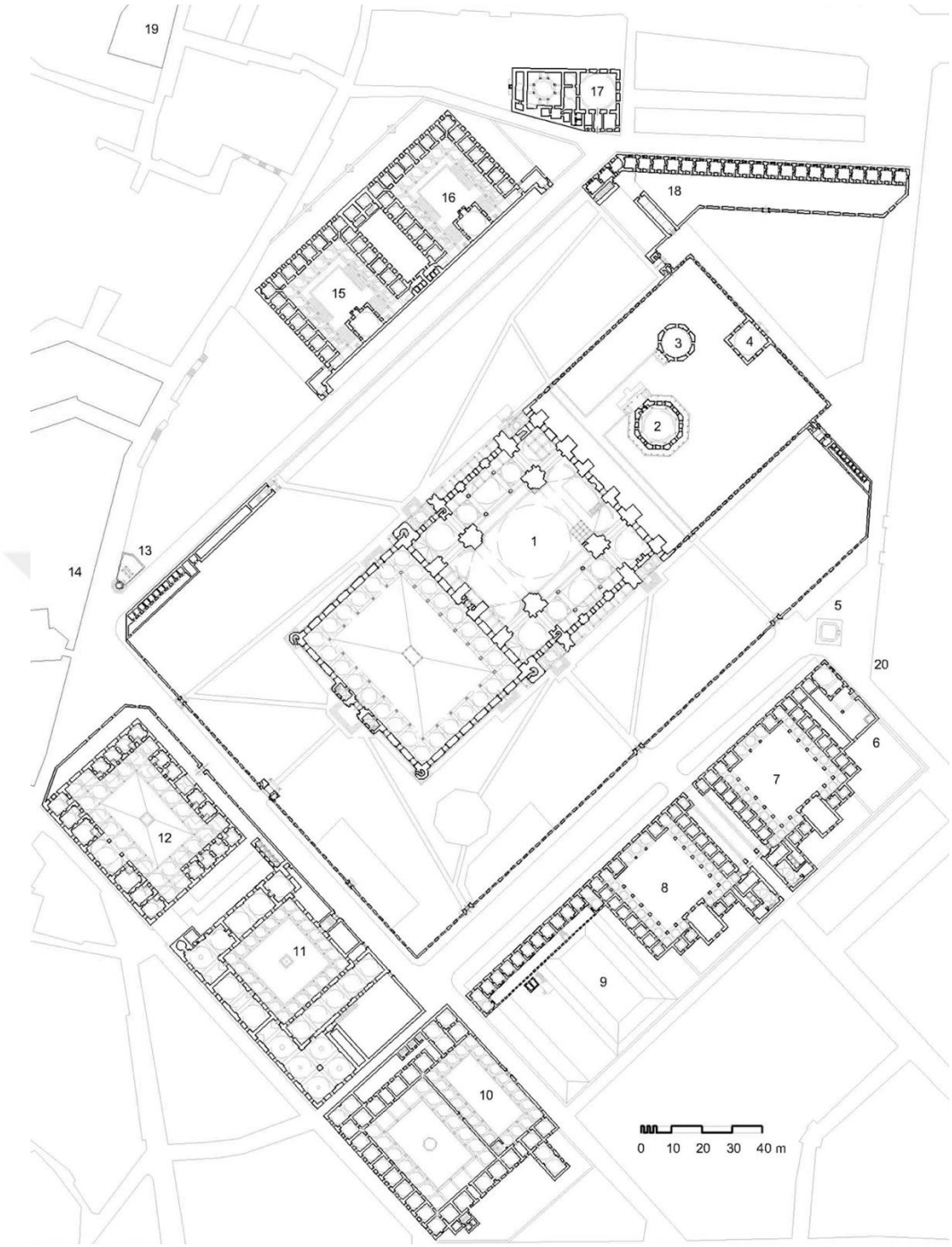

Figure C18. The plan of the Süleymaniye complex.
(It shows: 1. Mosque; 2. Mausoleum of Süleyman; 3. Mausoleum of Hürrem; 4. Quran recitation school; 5. Public fountain; 6. Elementary school; 7. First madrasa; 8. Second madrasa; 9. Remains of medical school; 10. Hospital; 11. Hospice; 12. Guesthouse; 13. Sinan's tomb; 14. the janissary agha's residence; 15. Third madrasa; 16. Fourth madrasa; 17. Bathhouse; 18. Hadith college; 19. Madrasa near the palace of Fatma Sultan and Siyavuş Pasha. Reproduced from: Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 205)

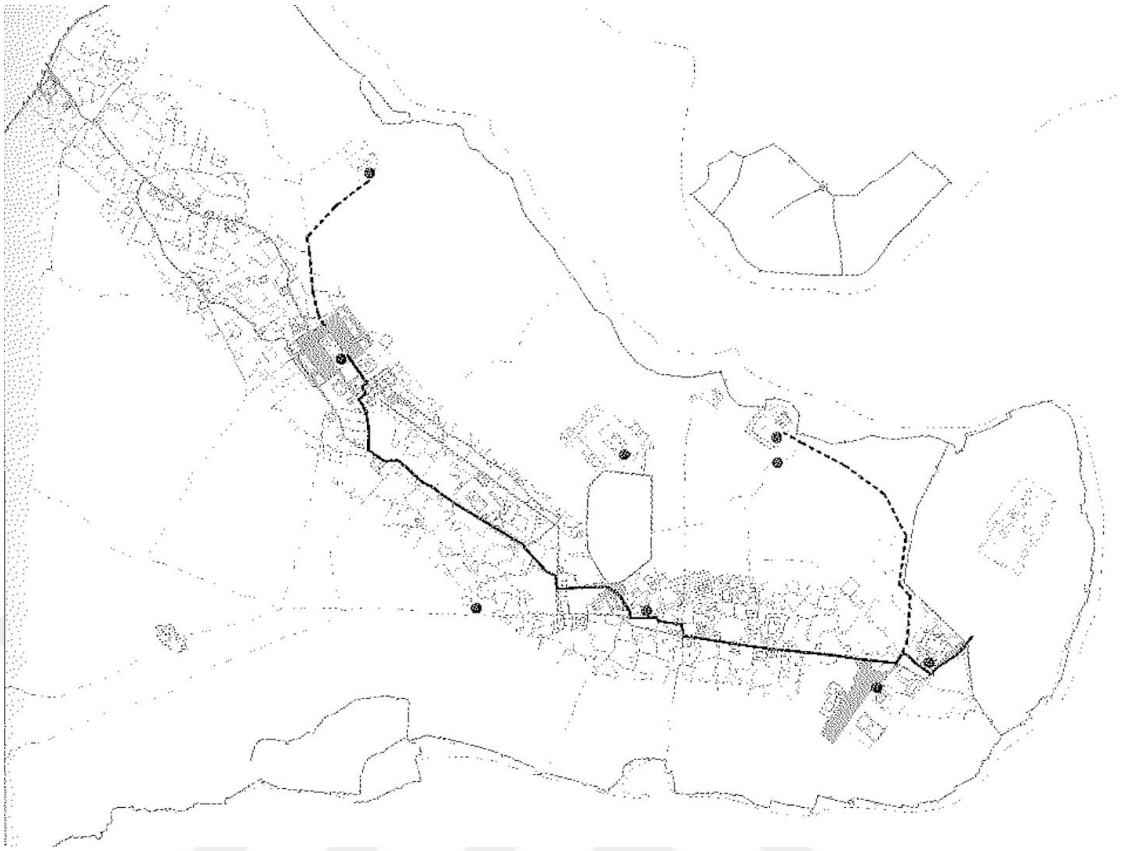

Figure C19. Divanyolu, the processional route of the sultans.
(Reproduced from: Cerasi, *Divanyolu*, 57)



Figure C20. Zacharias Wehme, Selim II's Friday procession to the Süleymaniye Mosque.
(Reproduced from: *Necipoğlu, Age of Sinan*, 45)

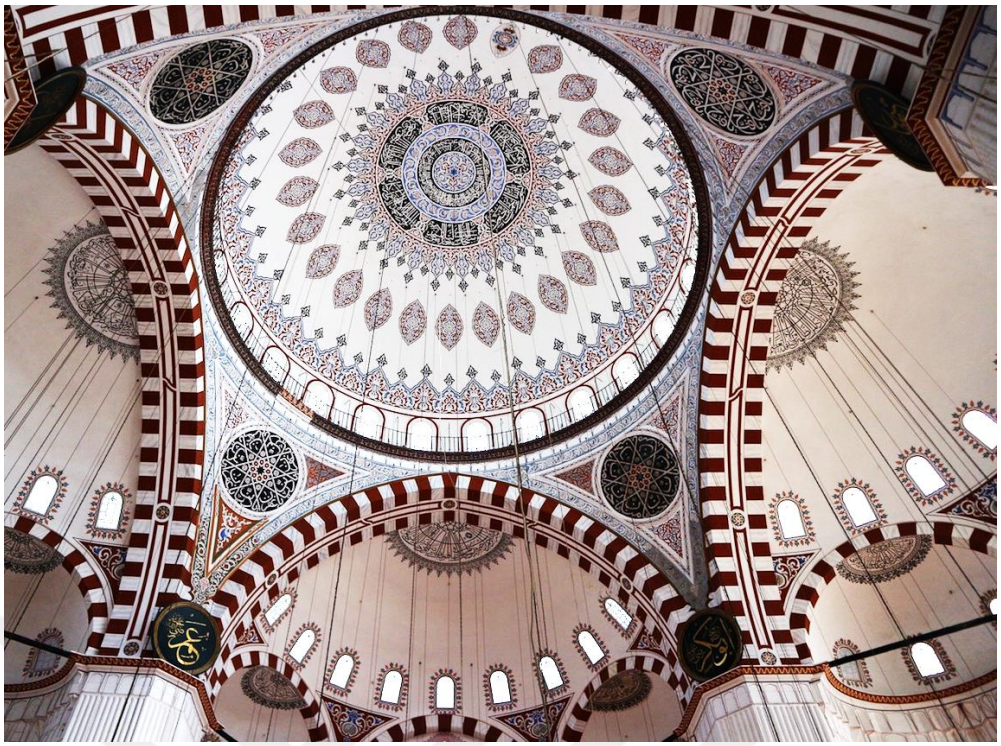

Figure C21. The hemispherical dome of the Şehzade Mosque.
(Photo credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)



Figure C22. The arcaded courtyard of the Süleymaniye Mosque with its marble fountain at the center.
(Photo credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)



Figure C23. The domes, half-domes, and turrets of the Şehzade Mosque. (Photo Credit: Walter B. Denny. Retrieved from: https://www.archnet.org/sites/2018?media_content_id=74414 , accessed on 31 August 2022)



Figure C24. Bayezid Mosque's hemispherical dome, half-domes, and turrets. (Photo Credit: Walter B. Denny. Retrieved from: https://www.archnet.org/sites/3643?media_content_id=8649, accessed on 31 August 2022)



Figure C25. The inscriptional panel on the under-glazed painted İznik tiles, the Süleymaniye Mosque.
(Photo credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)



Figure C26. The southern iwan of Isfahan's old Friday mosque, whose tiles were renovated by Tahmasb.
(Photo Credit: Daniel C. Waugh. Retrieved from: https://www.archnet.org/sites/1621?media_content_id=120608, accessed on 31 August 2022)

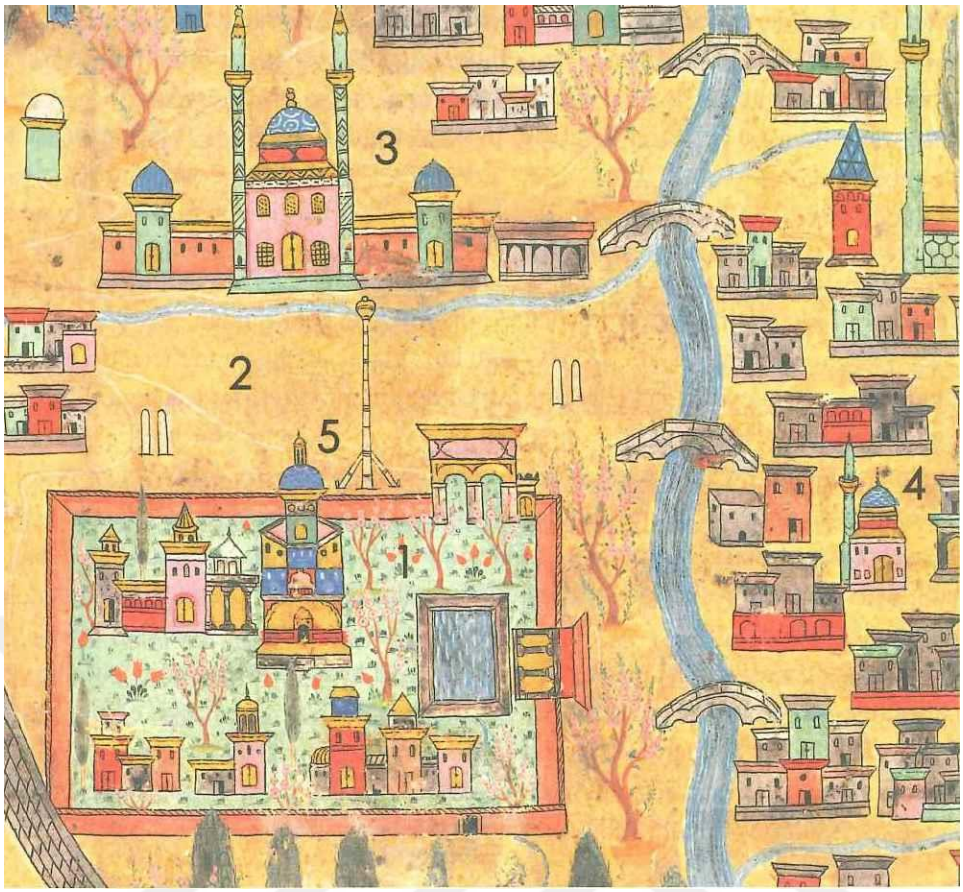

Figure C27. The Sahibabad Square and its environs in a drawing in Matrakçı Nasuh's *Beyān-ı Menāzīl*.
(It shows: 1. Hesht Behesht Palace; 2. Maydan; 3. Nasiriya complex; 4. Maqsudiya Mosque. Reproduced from: Yıldız, *Safevi Döneminde Tebriz*, 410)

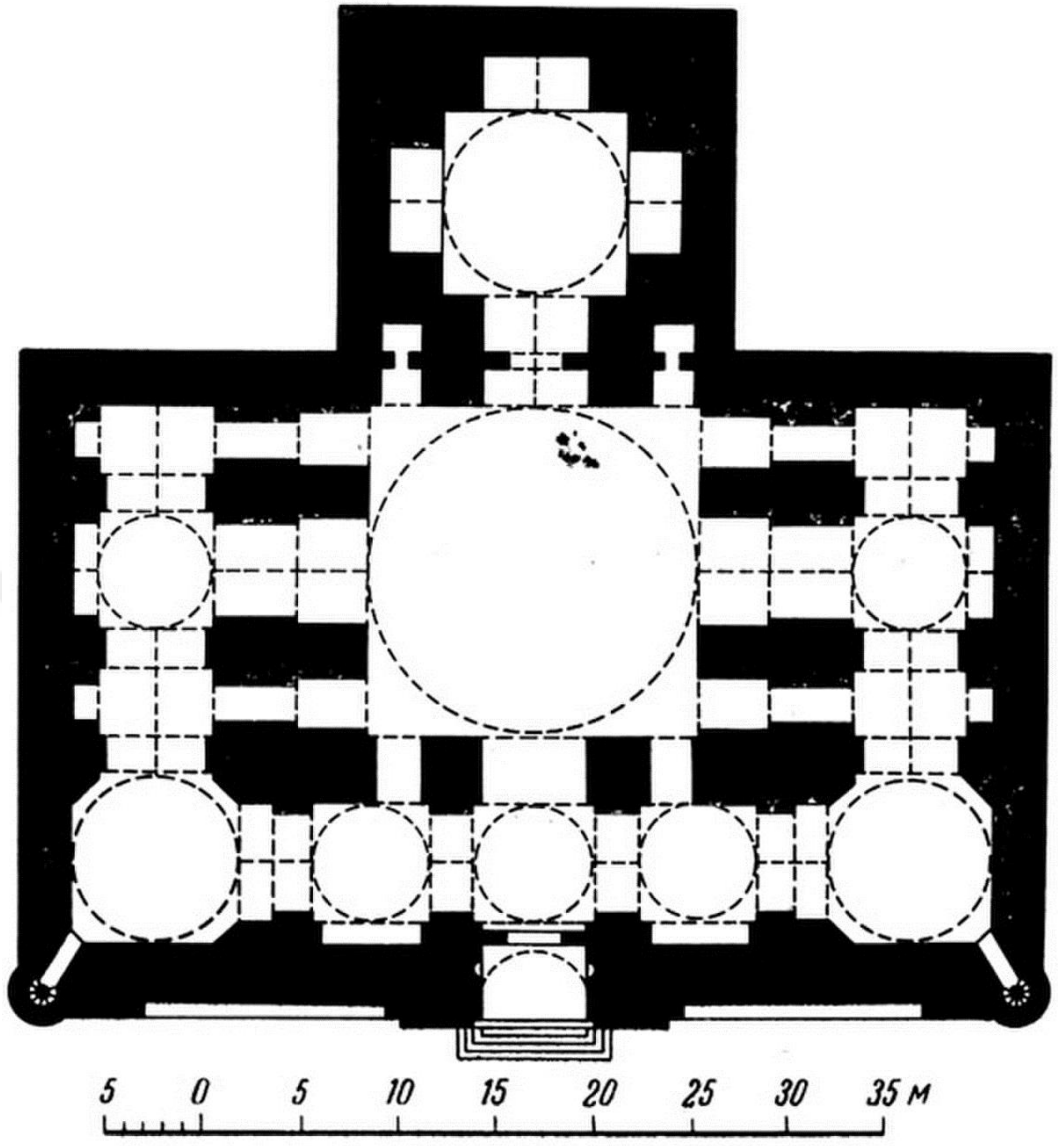

Figure C28. The plan of the Blue Mosque.
(Reproduced from: Sarre, *Denkmaeler Persischer Baukunst*, 28)

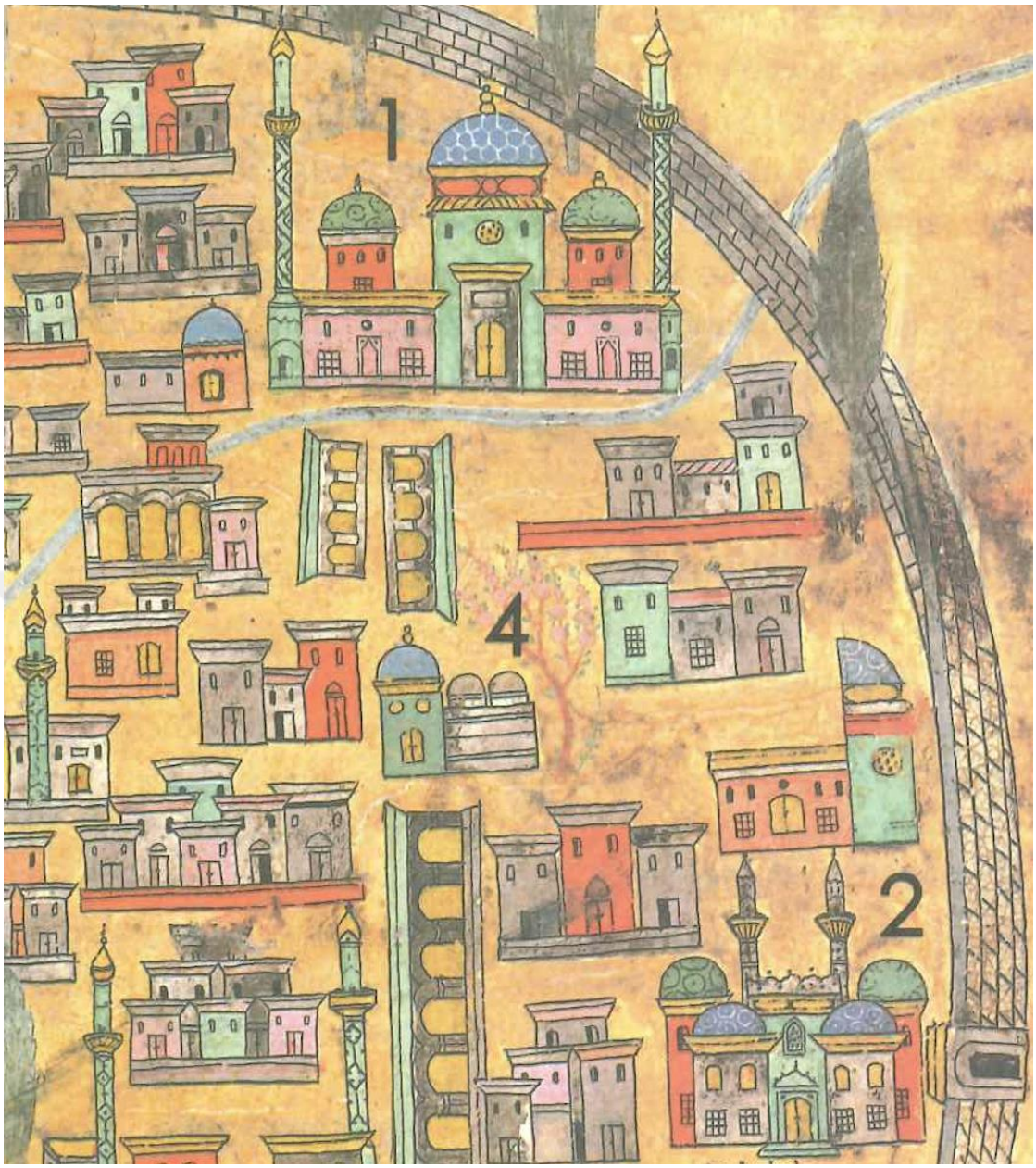

Figure C29. Detail from the depiction of Tabriz in *Beyān-ı Menāzi*l.
(It shows: 1. The Blue Mosque; 2. The Friday mosque of Ali Shah. Reproduced from: Yıldız, *Safevi Döneminde Tebriz*, 392)



Figure C30. The contemporary structure of the Sahib al-Amr Mosque in Tabriz. (Photo Credit: Muhammad Reza Ghaffari. Retrieved from: https://www.itto.org/iran/attraction/sahebol-amr-mosque-tabriz/#&gid=1&pid=211007024910m7ef4rqa48, accessed on 31 August 2022)

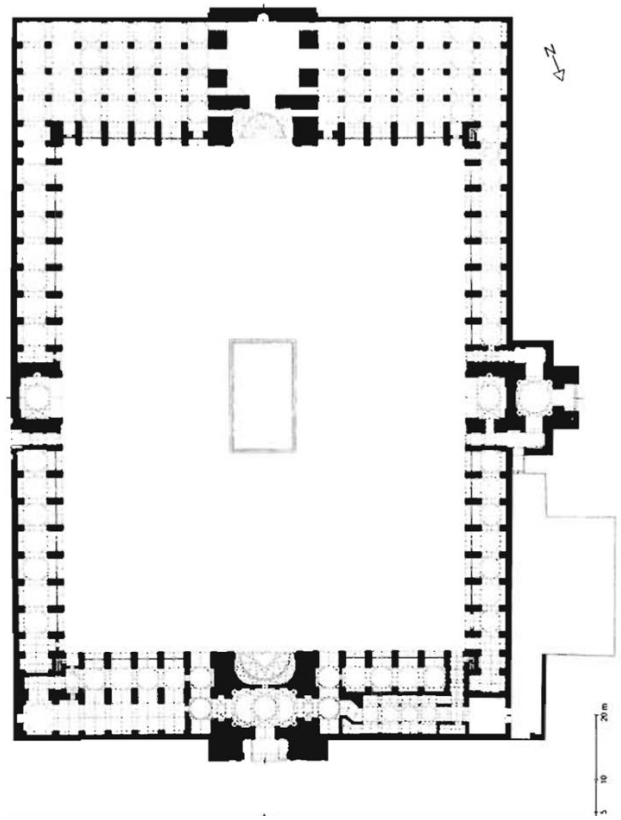

Figure C31. The plan of the Nabi Mosque in Qazvin.
(Reproduced from: Ritter, *Moscheen und madrasabauten*, pl. 183)

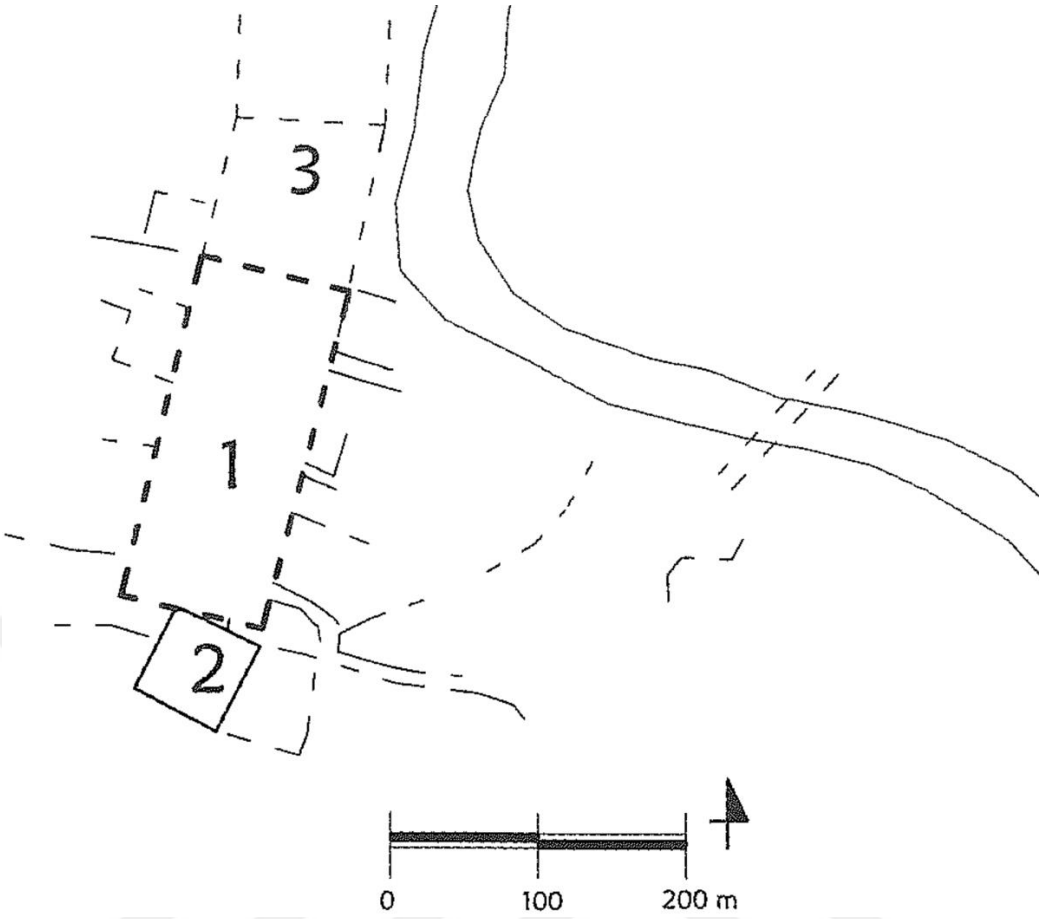

Figure C32. Sketch plan of the complex in Farahabad.
(It shows: 1. Maydan; 2. Shah Abbas' mosque; 3. Palatial precinct. Reproduced from: Babaie, "Sacred Sites", 190)

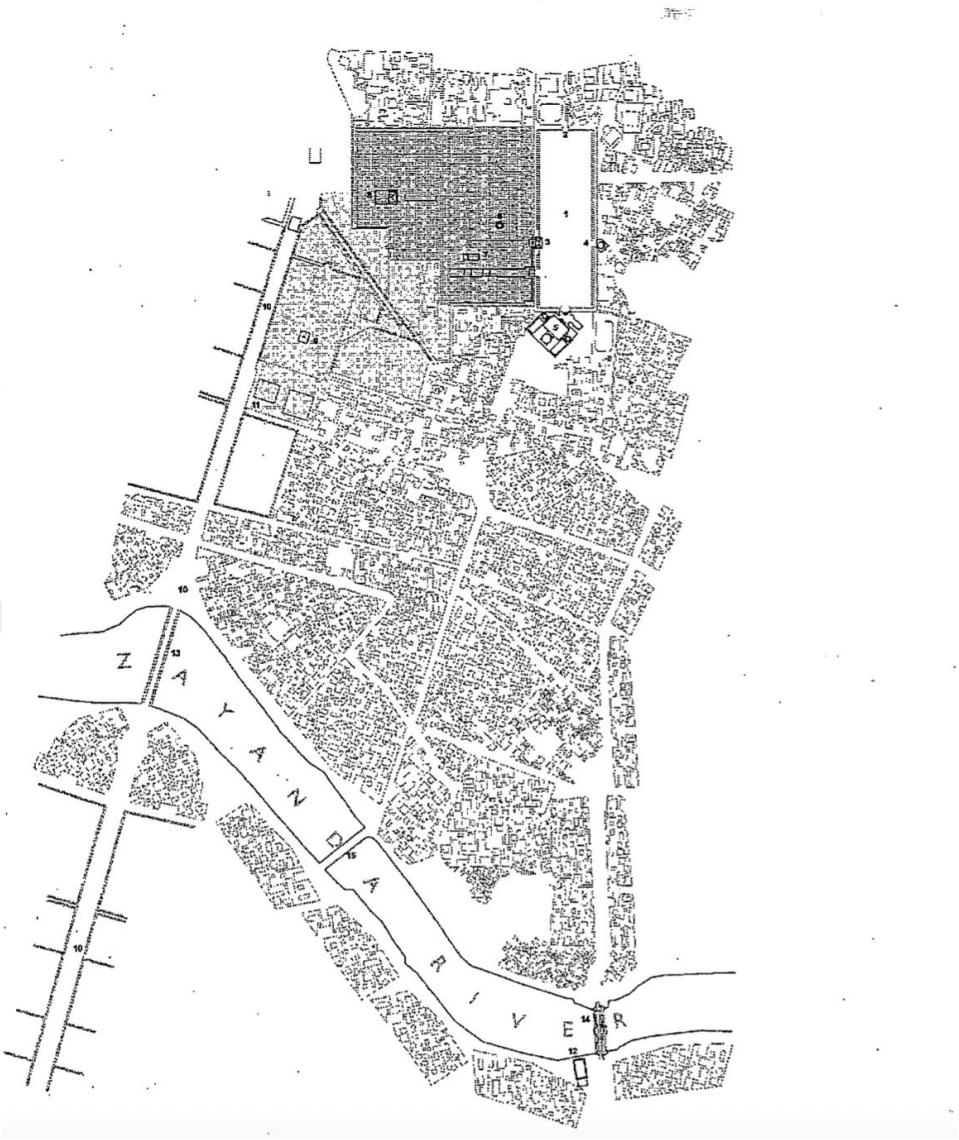

Figure C33. Map of Safavid Isfahan during the age of Shah Abbas.
(It shows: 1. Naqsh-e Jahan Square; 10. Chahar Bagh Avenue. (Reproduced from: Babaie, *Isfahan*, 77)

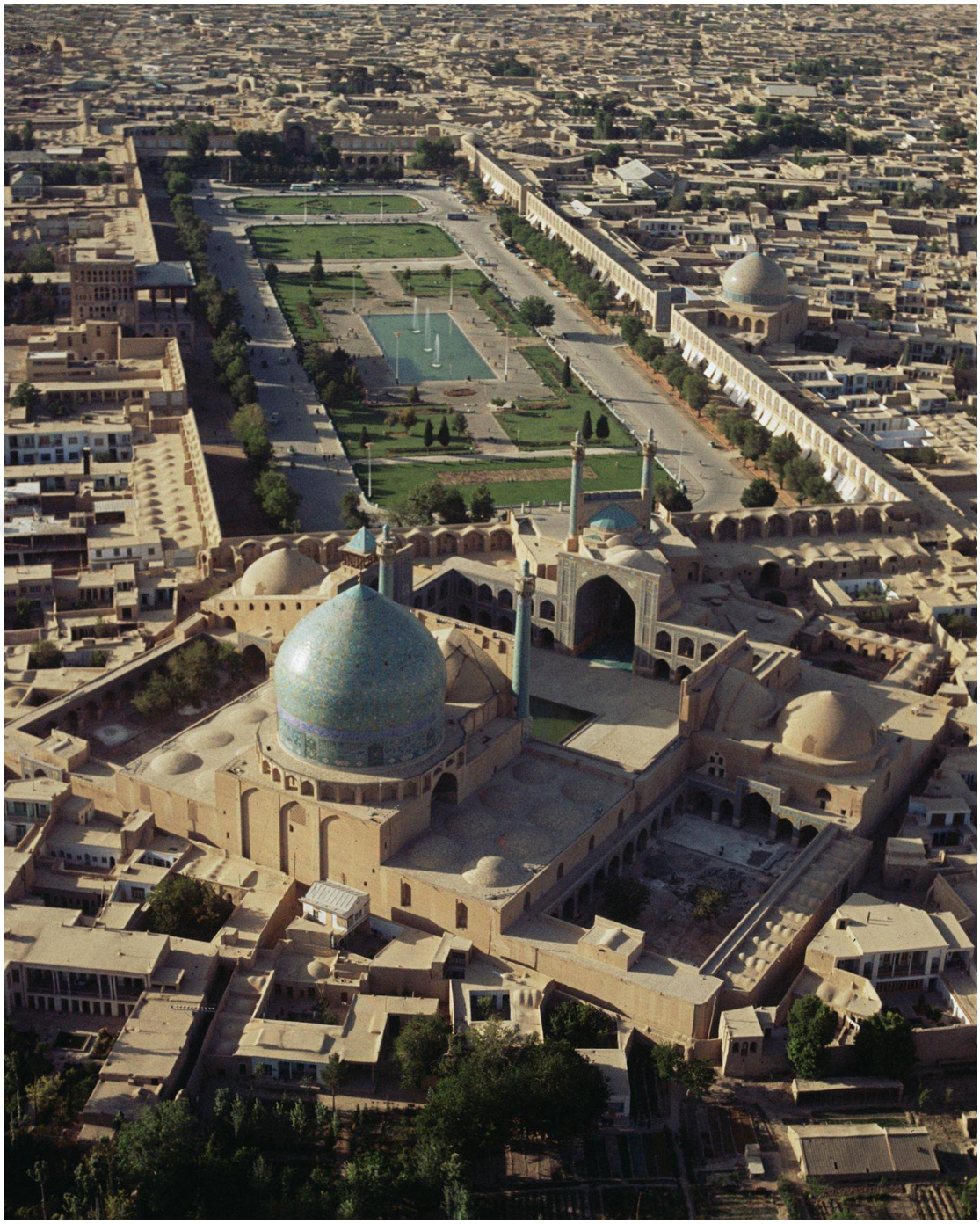

Figure C34. Aerial view of the Naqsh-e Jahan Square.
(Photo Credit: Roger Wood. Retrieved from: https://www.gettyimages.com/photos/roger-wood-isfahan?family=editorial&phrase=roger%20wood%20isfahan&recency=anydate&sort=mostpopular&page=1&suppressfamilycorrection=true, accessed on 09 June 2019)

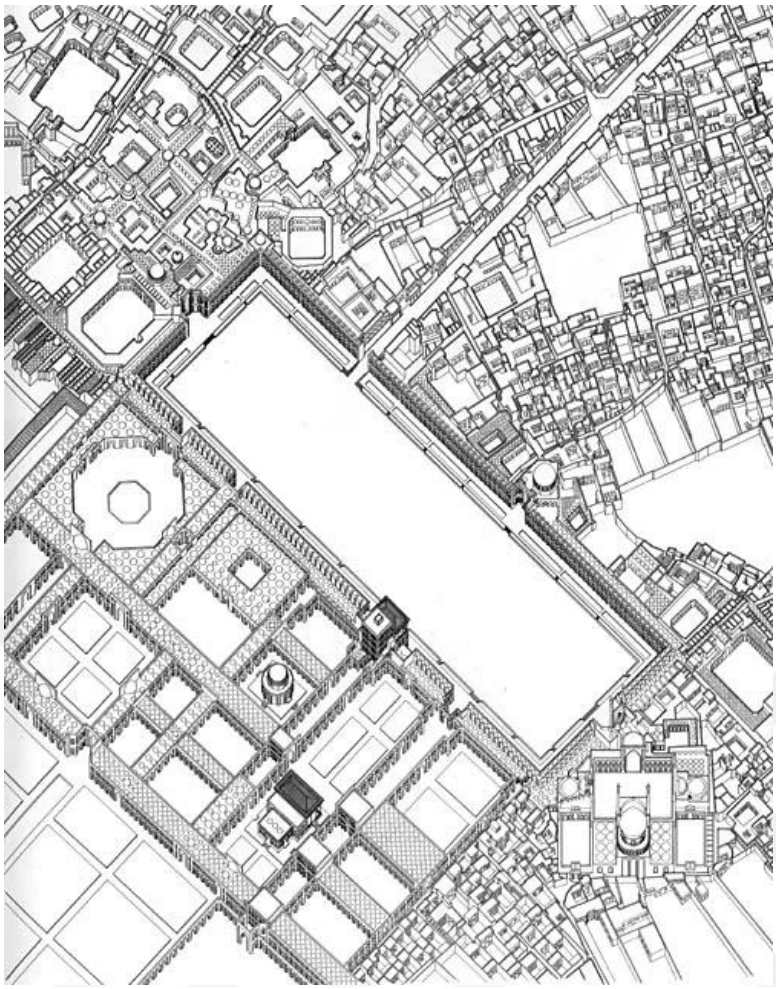

Figure C35. Axonometric reconstruction of the Naqsh-e Jahan Square and the surrounding buildings.
(Credit: Rizzoli International Publications. Retrieved from: https://www.archnet.org/sites/2717?media_content_id=40364, accessed on 31 August 2022)



Figure C36. Two-storied shops surrounding the Naqsh-e Jahan Square.
(Photo credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)

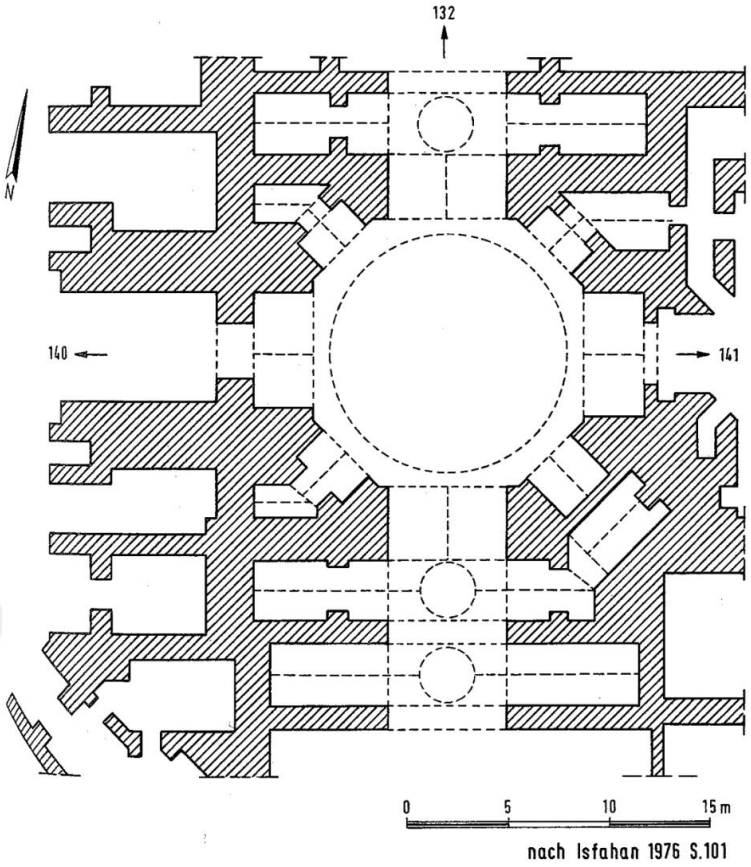

Figure C37. The *chahār sū* of Isfahan's Qaysariyya Bazaar.
(Reproduced from: Gaube and Wirth, *Bazaar von Isfahan*, I, 69)

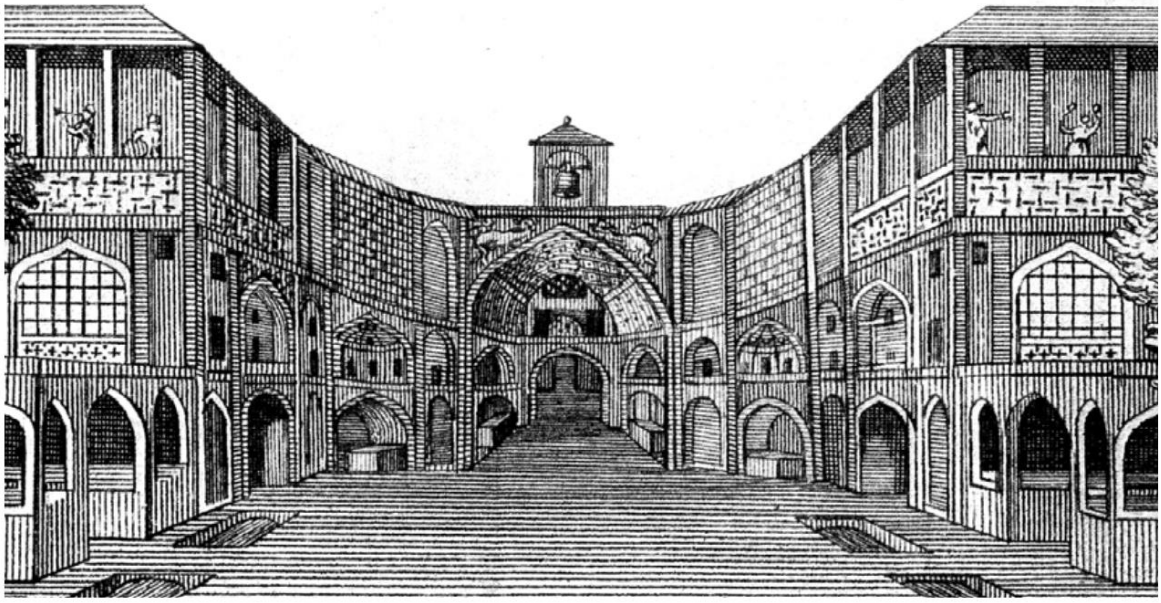

Figure C38. Drawing of the portal of the Qaysariyya Bazaar by Chardin.
(Reproduced from: Ritter, "Der herrscherliche Portal", 368)



Figure C39. Mural showing a hunting scene on the Portal of the Qaysariyya Bazaar. (Photo Credit: Royal Ontario Museum. Retrieved from: https://archnet.org/media_contents/106211, accessed on 09 June 2019)



Figure C40. The Ali Qapu Palace on the right.
(Photo credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)



Figure C41. The Sheikh Lutfullah Mosque.
(Photo credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)

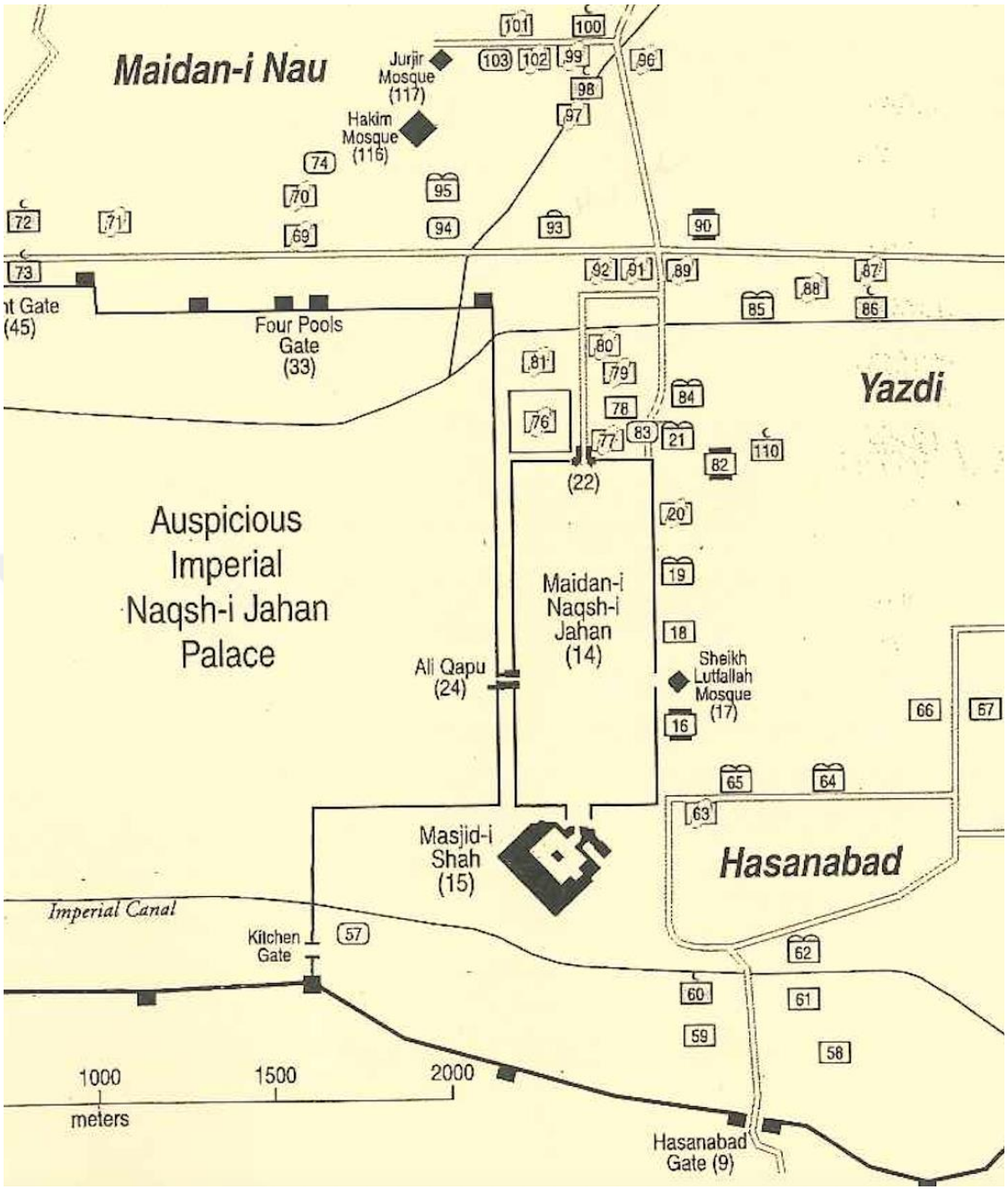

Figure C42. The map of the Naqsh-e Jahan Square and its environs.
(It shows: 15. Masjed-e Shah; 17. Sheikh Lutfullah Mosque; 18. Mansion of Imamqulu Khan; 20. Caravanserai of Aliqulu Khan; 21. Madrasa of Molla Abdulah; 22. Qaysariyya Gateway; 24. Ali Qapu; 63. Caravanserai of Maqsud Assar ; 76. Caravanserai of Shah; 78. Imerial Mint; 83. The royal bath. Reproduced from: Blake, *Half the World*, 103)

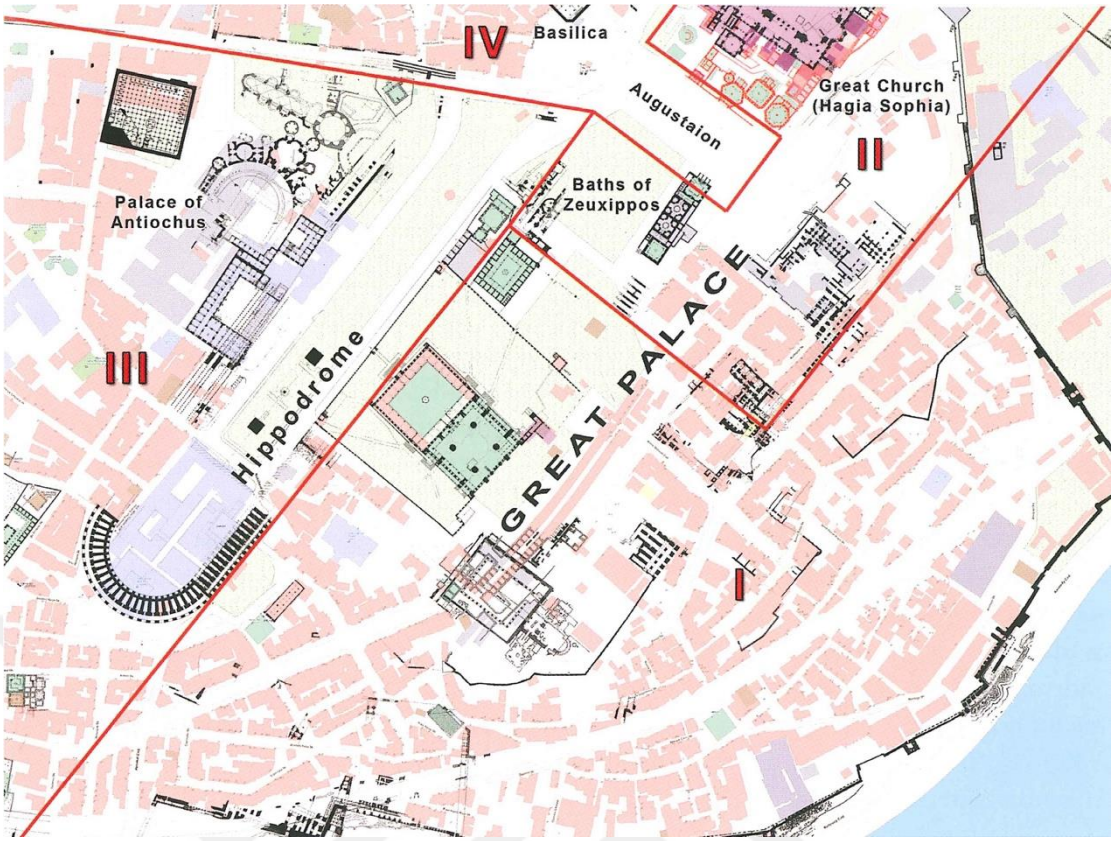

Figure C43. The plan of the Hippodrome.
(Reproduced from: *Hippodrome/ Atmeydanı*, I, 93)



Figure C44. Hypothetical reconstruction of Kathisma.
(Reproduced from: *Hippodrome/ Atmeydanı*, I, 142)



Figure C45. The panaroma of Constantinople by Vetenian cartographer A. Vavassore.
(Reproduced from: *Hippodrome/ Atmeydanı*, I, 273)

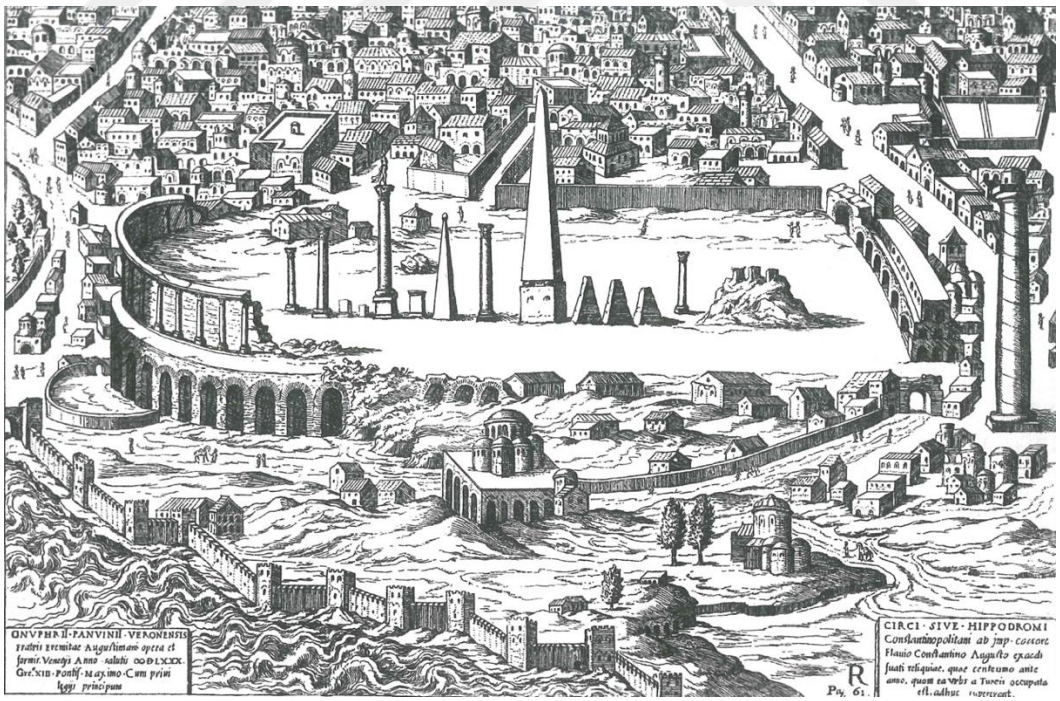

Figure C46. View of the Hippodrome in the 15th century, Panvinio, ca. 1600.
(Reproduced from: *Hippodrome/ Atmeydanı*, I, 19)



Figure C47. Atmeydanı in 1533, Van Aalst.
(Reproduced from: *Hippodrome/ Atmeydanı*, II, 172–173)



Figure C48. The depiction of Atmeydanı in *Beyān-ı Menāzīl*. (Reproduced from: Matrakçı Nasuh, *Beyan-ı Menazil*, 8b)



Figure C49. The Sunken Fountains (Çukur Çeşmeler) in Atmeydanı.
(Photo Credit: Caner Cangül, Engin Mutlu. Retrieved from: https://kulturenvanteri.com/yer/cukur-cesme-sultanahmet/#16/41.00568/28.974583, accessed on 31 August 2022)

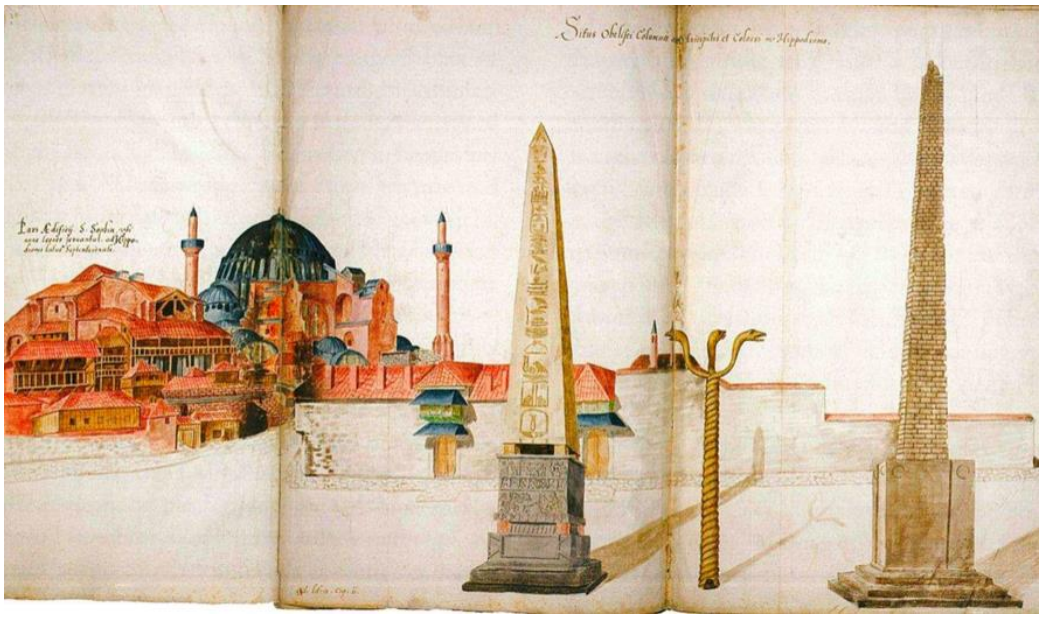

Figure C50. The columns in Atmeydanı.
(Freshfield Album, fol. 20, 1574)



Figure C51. Mehmed II throwing an arrow to the Serpent column.
(Reproduced from: *Hünername Minyatürleri*, 28.)

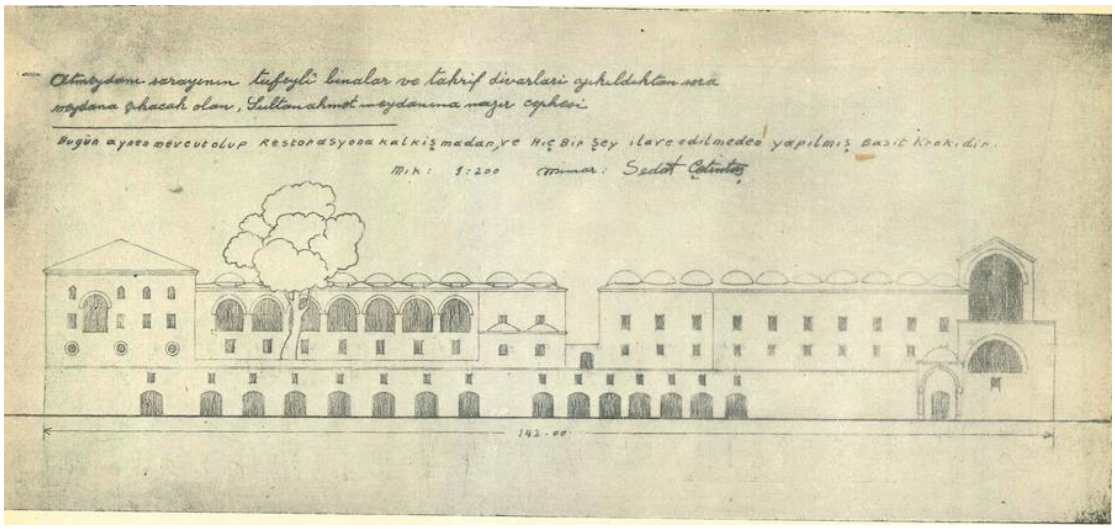

Figure C52. The façade of İbrahim Pasha Palace. (Reproduced from: Çetintaş, *Saray ve Kervansaraylarımız*, 25)

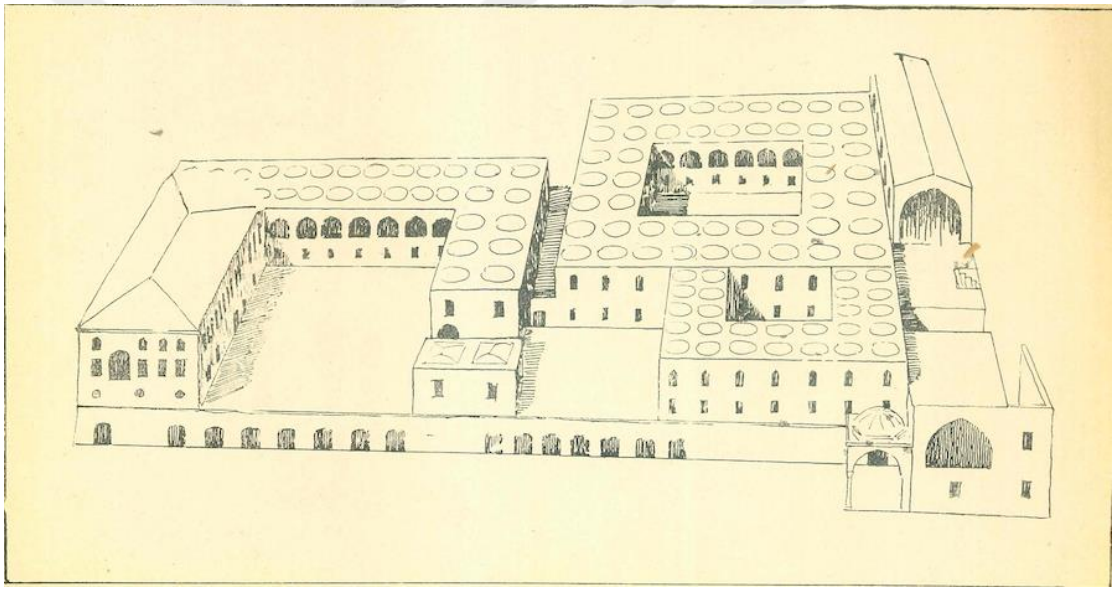

Figure C53. The reconstruction of the İbrahim Pasha Palace.
(Reproduced from: Çetintaş, *Kervansaraylarımız*, 26)



Figure C54. The entrance facade of Sokullu Mehmed Paşa's Palace by Zacharias Wehme.
(Reproduced from: Artan, "Politics of Ottoman", 384)



Figure C55. The Hagia Sophia mausoleums.
(Photo credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)

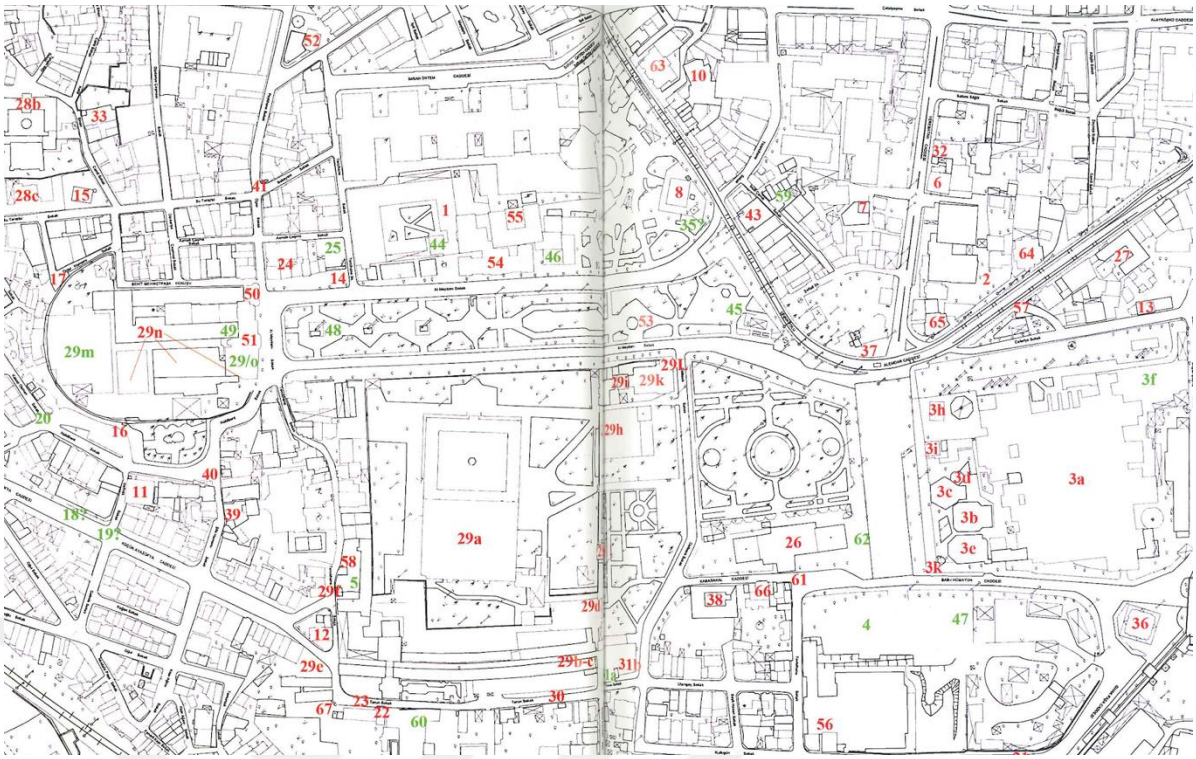

Figure C56. The map showing the Ottoman monuments around Atmeydanı (ca 1450–ca 1650.
(It shows: 1. İbrahim Pasha Palace 3a. Hagia Sophia; 3b–c–d–e. Hagia Sophia mausoleums; 3f. '*imāret* of the Hagia Sophia complex; 3g. the primary school of the Hagia Sophia complex; 4. *arslānhāne*; 5. Güngörmez Mosque; 6. İbrahim Agha Mosque; 7. Muhterem Taşkendi Mausoleum; 8. Firuz Agha Mosque; 9a–b. İshak Pasha Mosque and Bath; 10. Acı Bath; 11. Nahılbend Mosque; 12. İskender Pasha Primary school and mausoleum; 13. Sinan Erdebili Convent; 14. The Sunken Fountains; 15. Helvacıbaşı Mosque; 16. Rüstem Pasha Fountain; 24. The Mashhad of Oğlan Sheikh; 25. Üçler Mosque; 26. Haseki Bath; 27. Cafer Agha Madrasa; 28a–b–c. The mosque, madrasa, and convent of Sokollu Mehmed Pasha; 29a. The Sultan Ahmed Mosque; 29b–d–f. Public fountains of the Sultan Ahmed complex; 29c. Shops of the Sultan Ahmed complex; 29e. The public bath of the Sultan Ahmed complex; 29g. The primary school of the Sultan Ahmed complex; 29h) The hadith college of Sultan Ahmed; 29i. Quran recitation school of Sultan Ahmed; 29k. Sultan Ahmed's mausoleum; 29m. *'imāret* of Sultan Ahmed; 29k. Hospital of Sultan Ahmed. Reproduced from: *Hippodrome/ Atmeydanı*, II, 48-49)



Figure C57. Sport games in Atmeydanı, 16th century, Freshfield Album. (Reproduced from: And, *16. Yüzyılda*, 60)

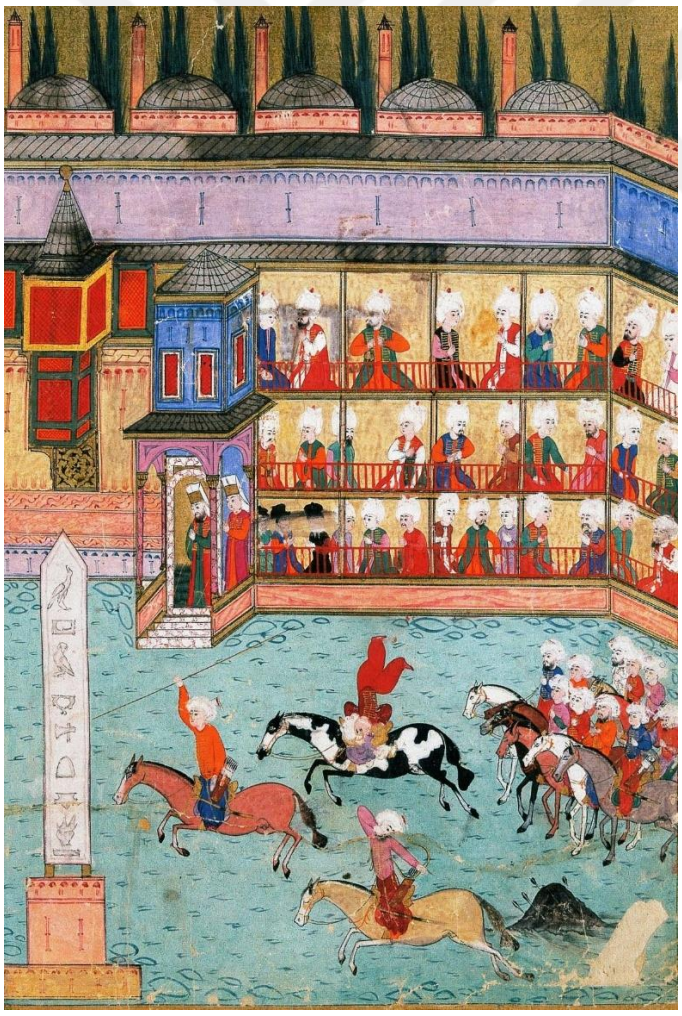

Figure C58. Performances of horsemen in 1582 festivity. (*Surnāme-i Hümayun*, Topkapı Palace Library, H. 1344, 43a)



Figure C59. *Nahıl*s Österrichische Nationalbibliothek-Vienna Codex Vindobonensis, ca. 1586.
(Reproduced from: And, *16. Yüzyılda*, 141)

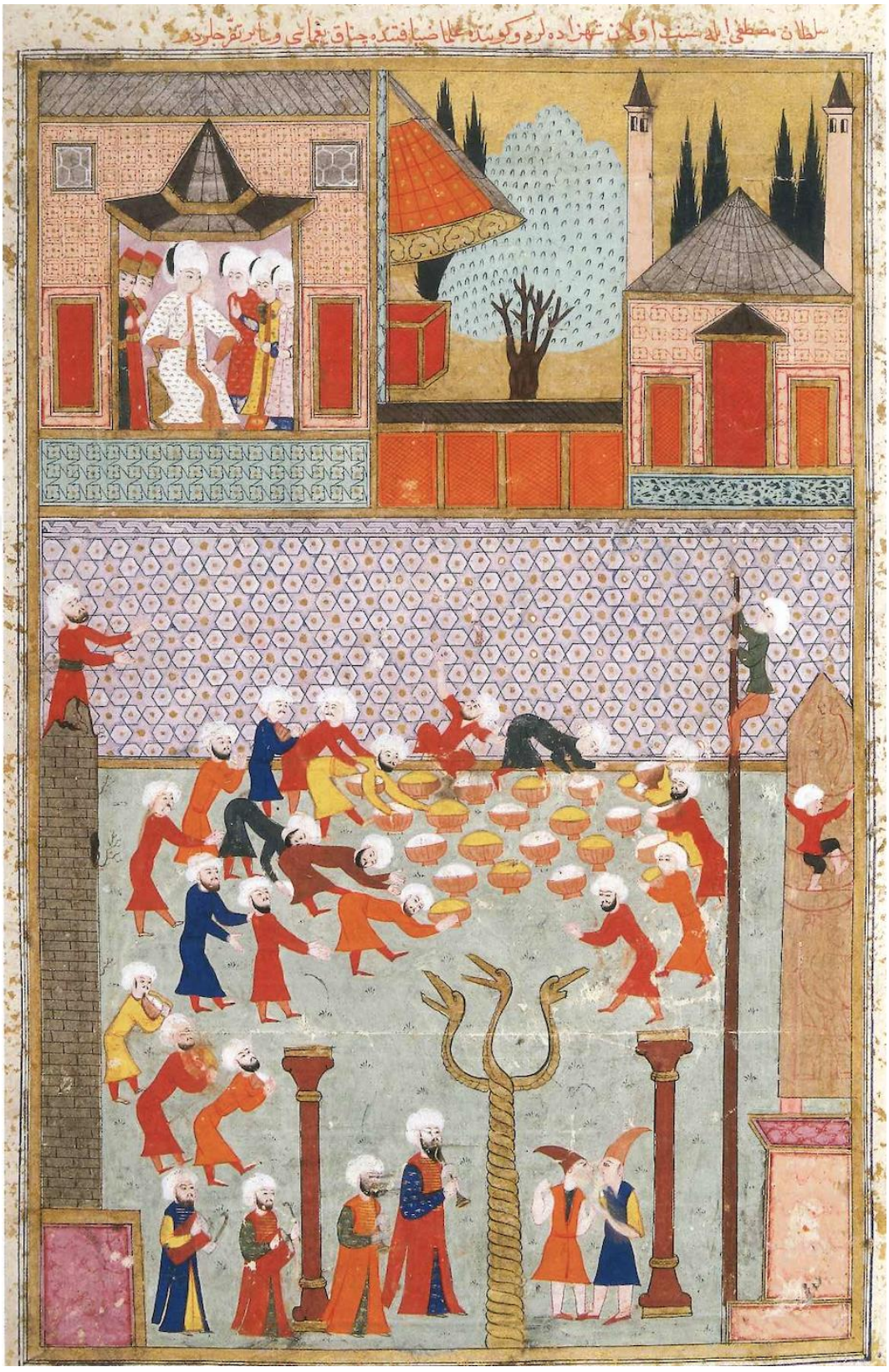

Figure C60. *Çanaḳ yağması* in 1530 circumcision festival in Atmeydanı. (*Hünernāme,* II. T.S.M.K., H. 1524)

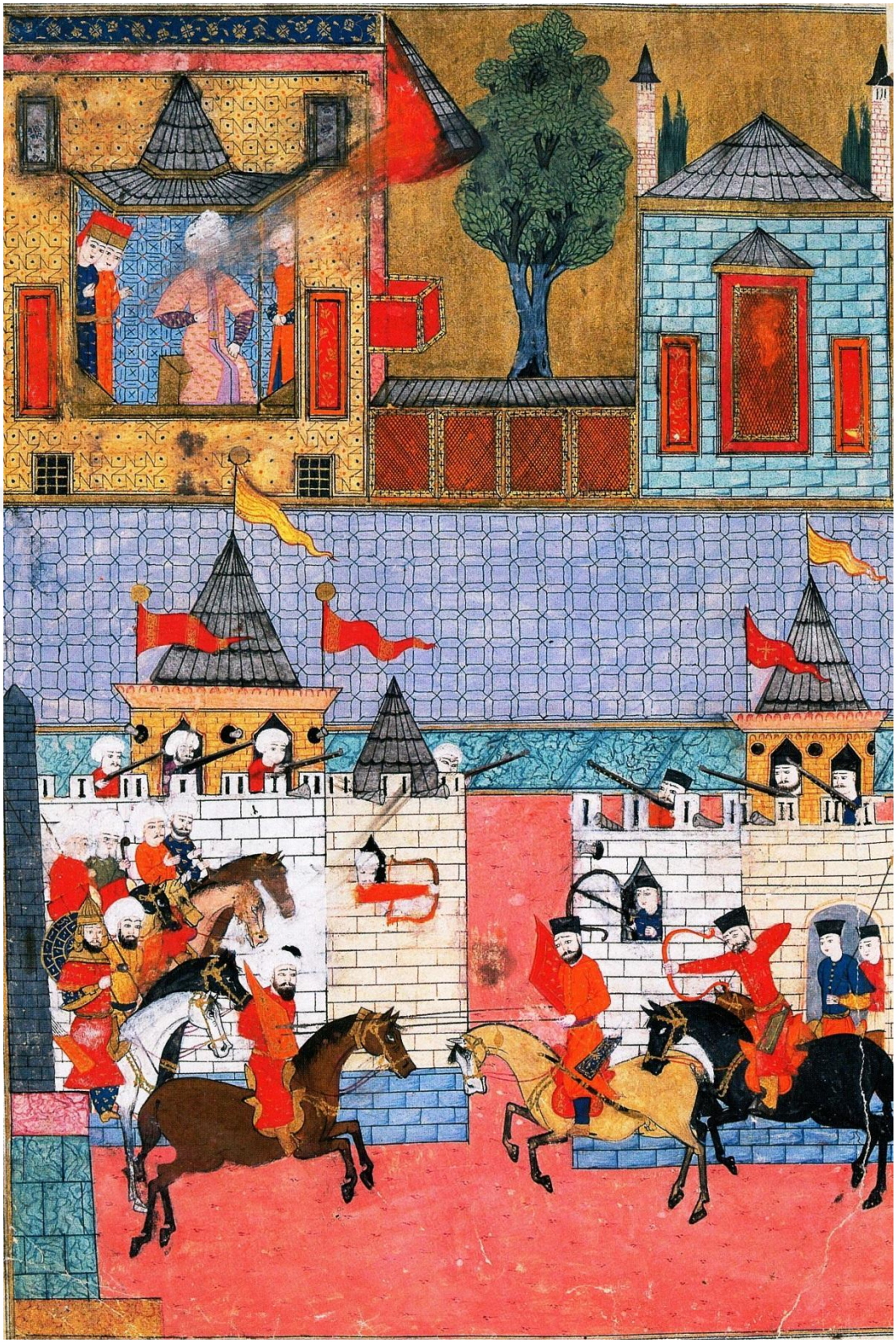

Figure C61. Battle simulation with two castles in 1582 festivity.
(*Surnāme-i Hümāyun*, Topkapı Palace Library, H. 1344, 289a)

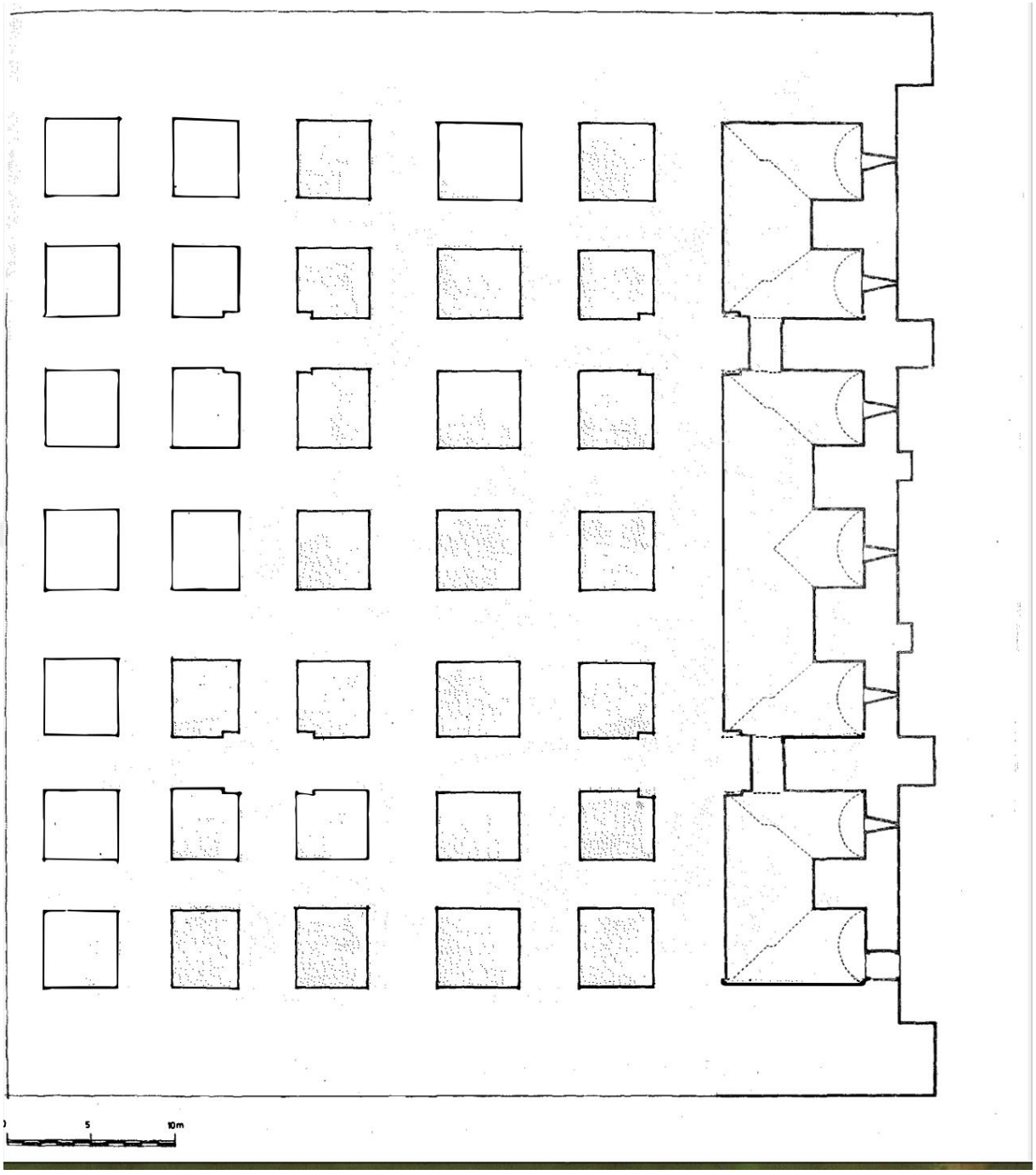

Figure C62. The plan of Sultan Ahmed Mosque's foundations.
(Reproduced from: Nayır, "Osmanlı Mimarisinde", fig. 41)



Figure C63. An iron ring on a column in the courtyard of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque. (Photo credit: Damla Gürkan Anar)



Figure C64. Iron beams in the Sultan Ahmed Mosque.
(Photo credit: Damla Gürkan Anar)

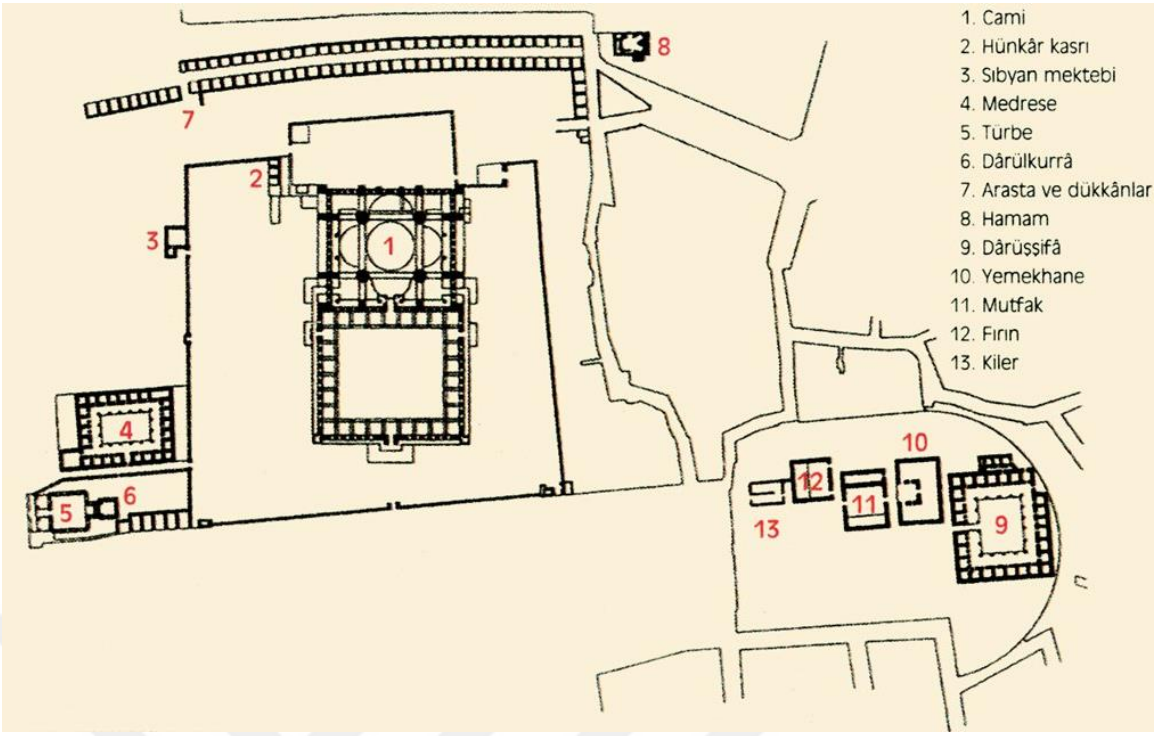

Figure C65. The plan of the Sultan Ahmed complex.
(It shows: 1. Mosque; 2. Sultan's pavilion; 3. Primary school; 4. Madrasa; 5. Mausoleum; 6. Quran recitation school; 7. Arasta and shops; 8. Public bath; 9. Hospital; 10. Eating hall; 11. Kitchen; 12. Bakery; 13. Storehouse. Reproduced from: Çobanoğlu, "Sultan Ahmed Camii", 500)

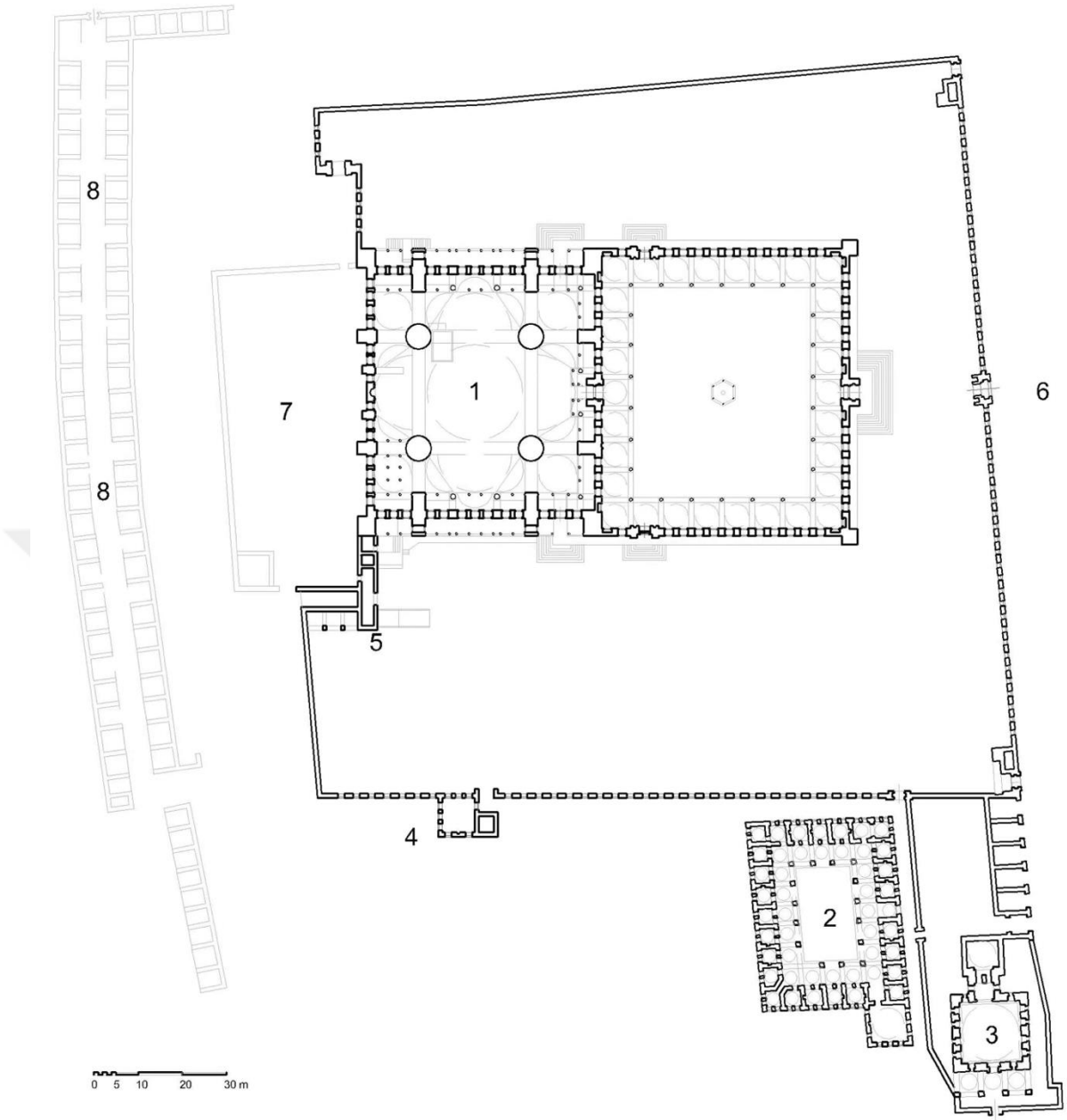

Figure C66. The plan of the surviving elements of the Sultan Ahmed complex. (It shows: 1 Mosque; 2. Madrasa; 3. Mausoleum; 4. Primary school; 5. Royal pavilion; 6. Hippodrome; 7. Garden platform; 8. Marketplace (arasta). Drawing: Arben N. Arapi. Reproduced from: Rüstem, "Spectacle of Legitimacy", 259)

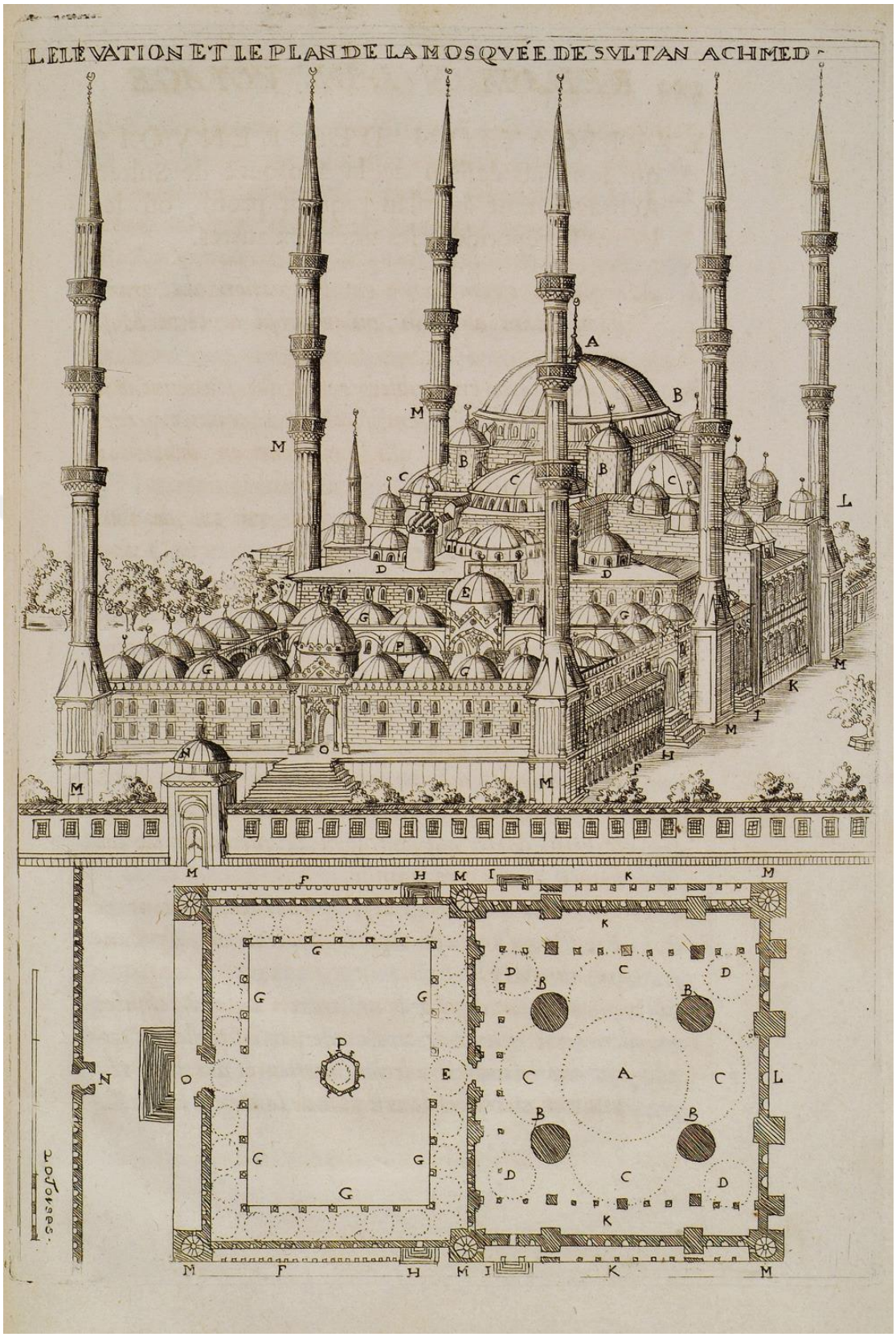

Figure C67. The drawing and elevation of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque by Grelot. (Reproduced from: Grelot, *İstanbul Seyahatnamesi*, 213)



Figure C68. An 18th century picture depicting the Sultan Ahmed Mosque from Atmeydanı, painted by Luigi Mayer (d. 1803). (Reproduced from: *Hippodrome/Atmeydanı*, II, 246–247)

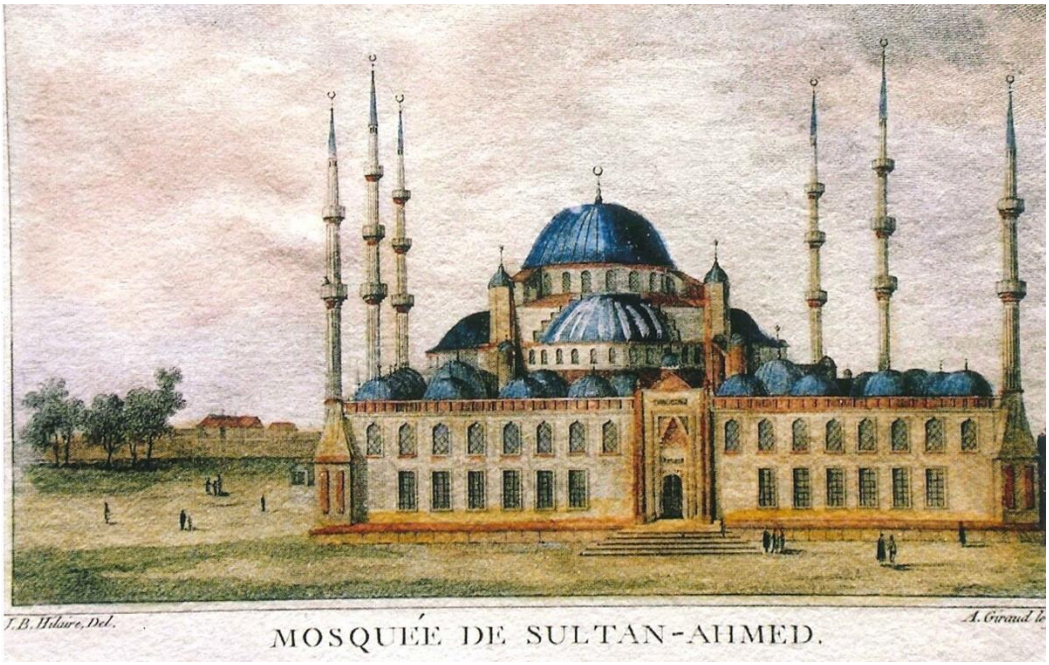

Figure C69. A drawing of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque by Jean Baptiste Hilaire (d. 1822).
(Reproduced from: *Hippodrome/ Atmeydanı*, II, 210–211)



Figure C70. The grilled windows of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque's enclosure wall overlooking Atmeydanı.
(Photo credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)

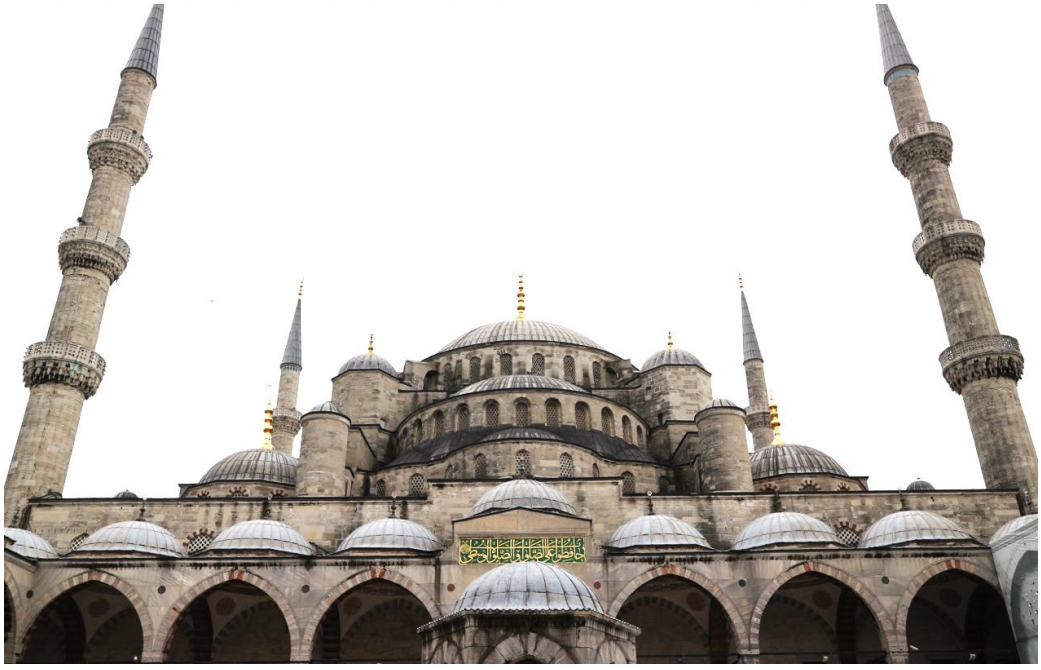

Figure C71. The fountain and the arcades of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque's inner courtyard.
(Photo credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)



Figure C72. Identical domical units of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque's forecourt.
(Photo credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)



Figure C73. The view of the six minarets of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque from Atmeydanı.
(Photo Credit: Walter B. Denny. Retrieved from: https://archnet.org/media_contents/7784, accessed on 28 May 2020)



Figure C74. The aerial view of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque, showing its domical elements.
(Photo Credit: Nico Soica. Retrieved from: https://tr.pinterest.com/pin/289497082292540361/, accessed on 1 September 2022)



Figure C75. The Sultan Ahmed Mosque's central dome and turrets.
(Photo Credit: K. A. C. Creswll. Retrieved from: https://www.archnet.org/sites/2026?media_content_id=34940, accessed on 1 September 2022)

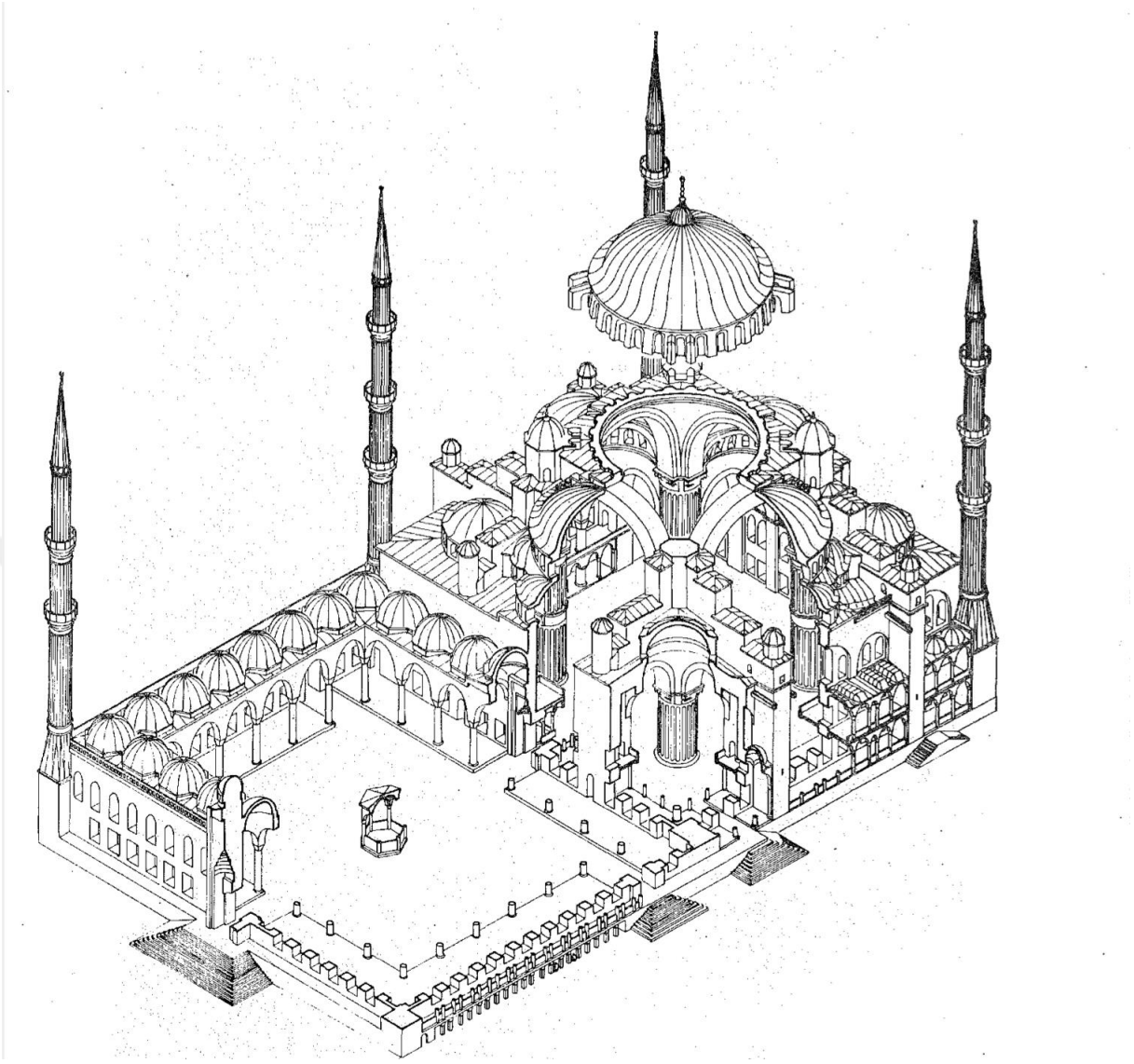

Figure C76. The axonometric plan of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque.
(Reproduced from: Nayır, "Osmanlı Mimarisinde", fig. 43)

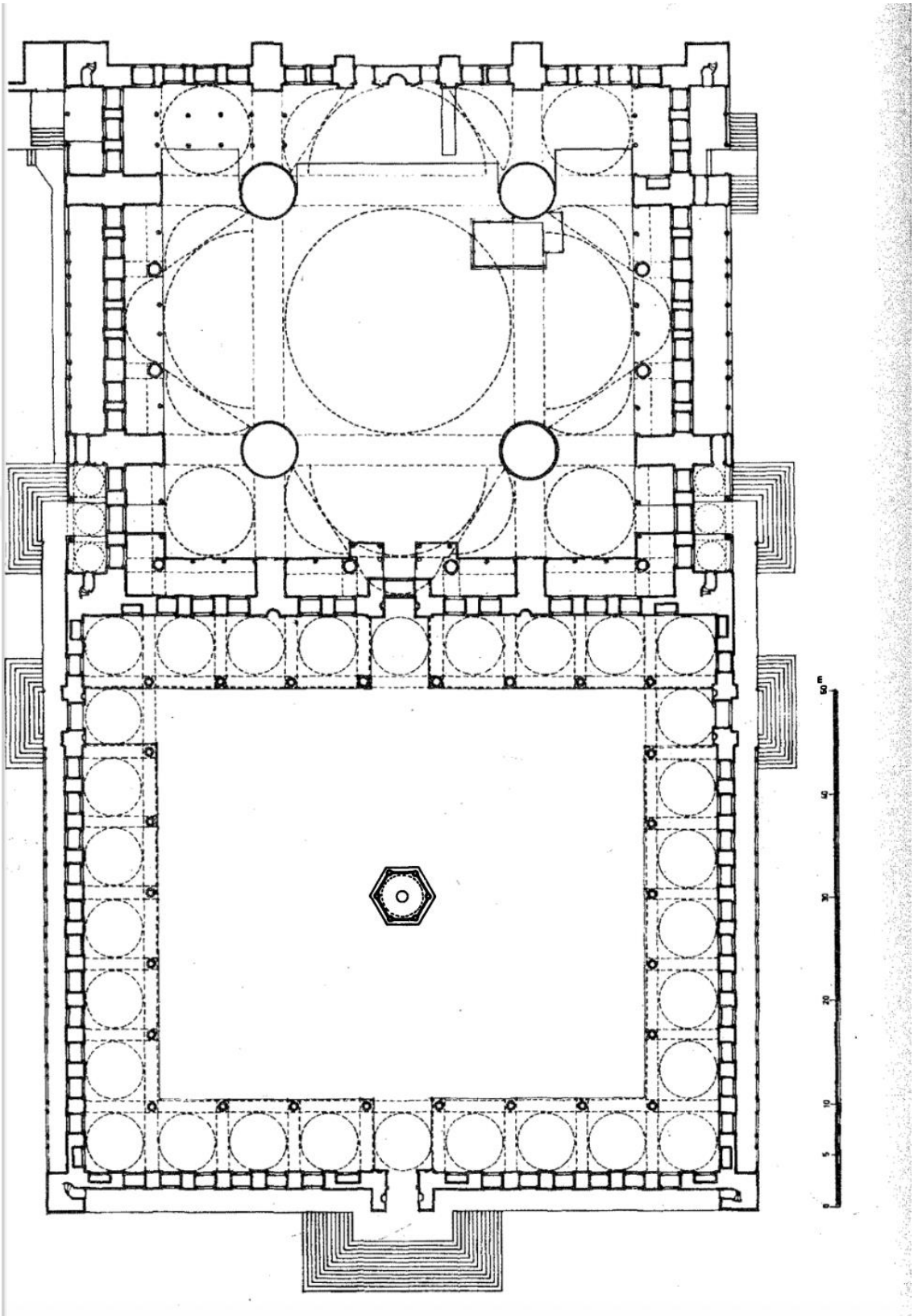

Figure C77. A modular plan of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque and its forecourt. (Reproduced from: Nayır, "Osmanlı Mimarisinde", fig. 26)

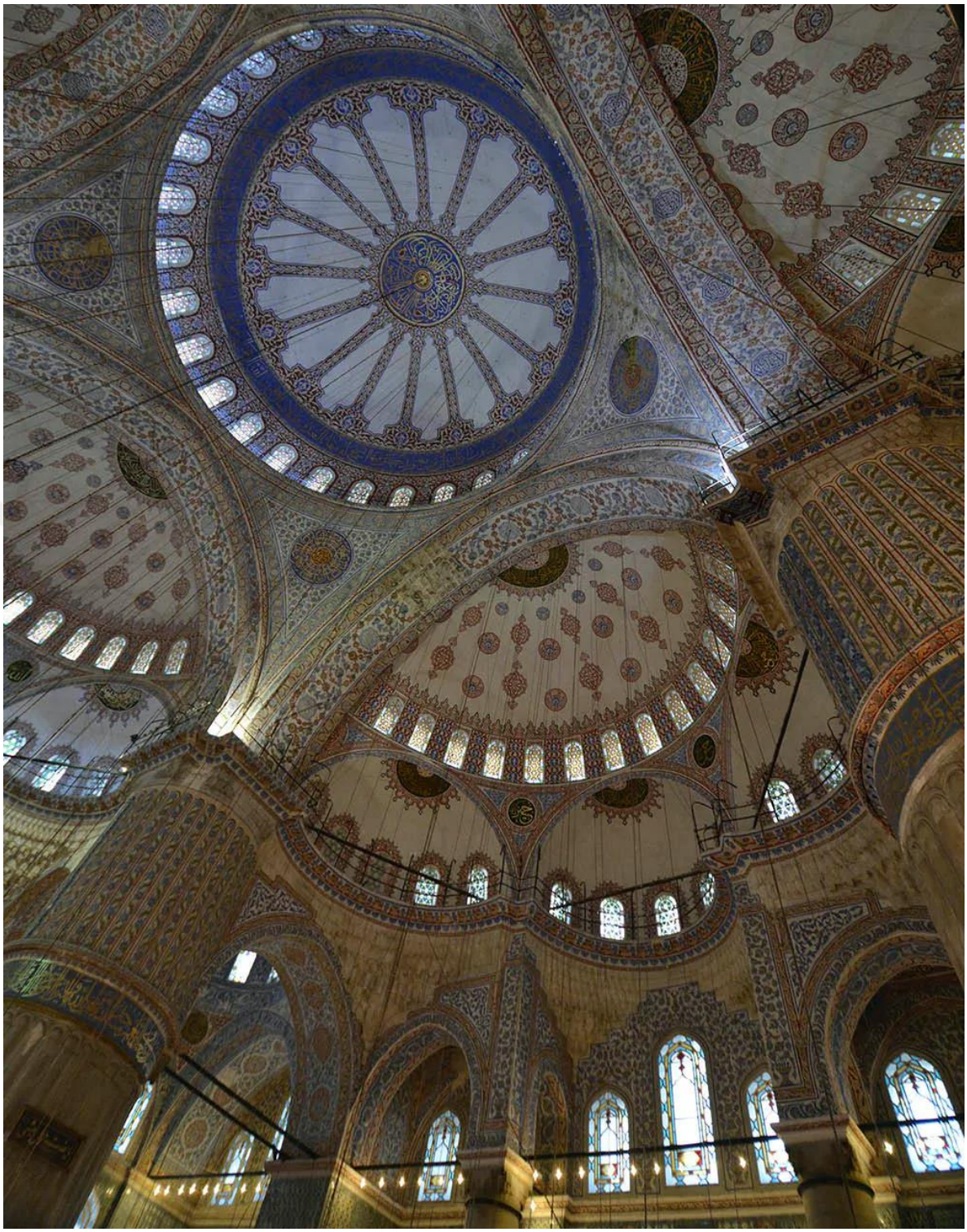

Figure C78. The Sultan Ahmed Mosque's domes and half domes rising on huge the columns and the walls.
(Photo Credit: B. J. Anello-Adnani. Retrieved from: https://www.archnet.org/sites/2026?media_content_id=115731, accessed on 1 September 2022)



Figure C79. The royal prayer lodge of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque.
(Reproduced from: Rüstem, "Spectacle of Legitimacy", 280)

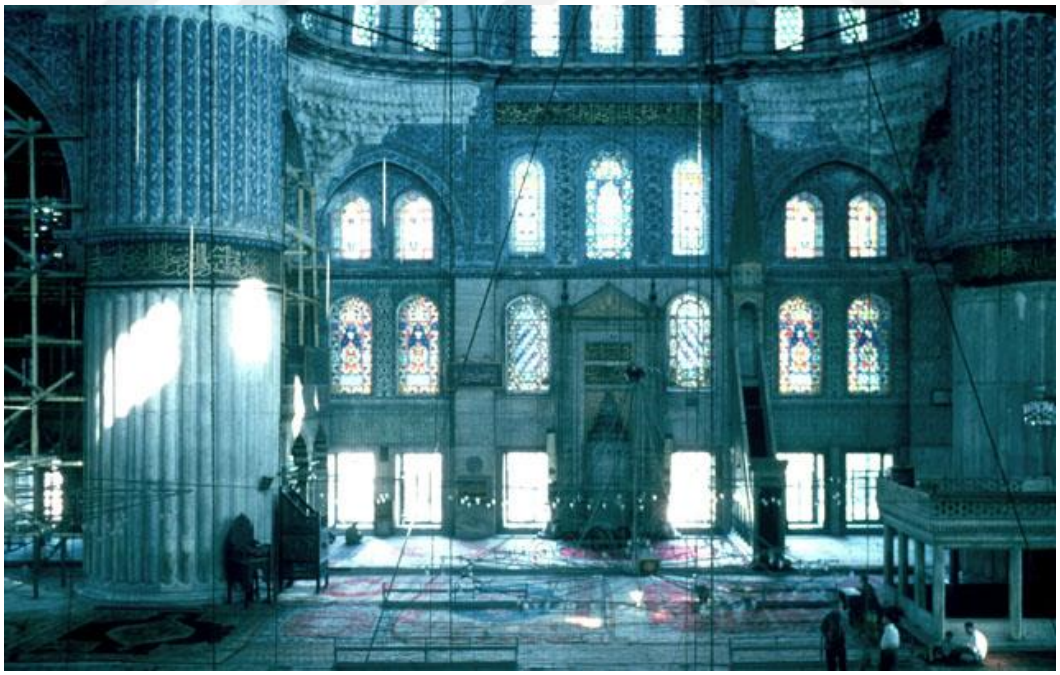

Figure C80. The Sultan Ahmed Mosque's interior, the muazzin's lodge on the right.
(Photo Credit: Walter B. Denny. Retrieved from:
https://archnet.org/media_contents/7800, accessed on 29 May 2020)

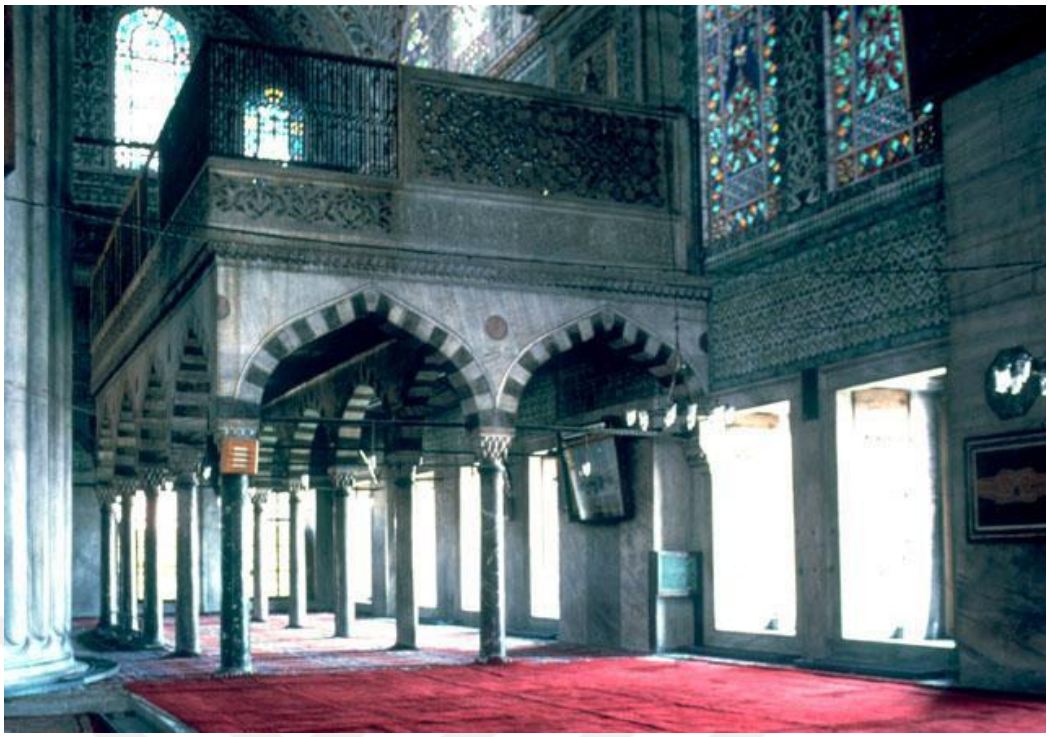

Figure 81. The royal lodge of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque.
(Photo Credit: Walter B. Denny. Retrieved from:
https://archnet.org/media_contents/7800, accessed on 29 May 2020)

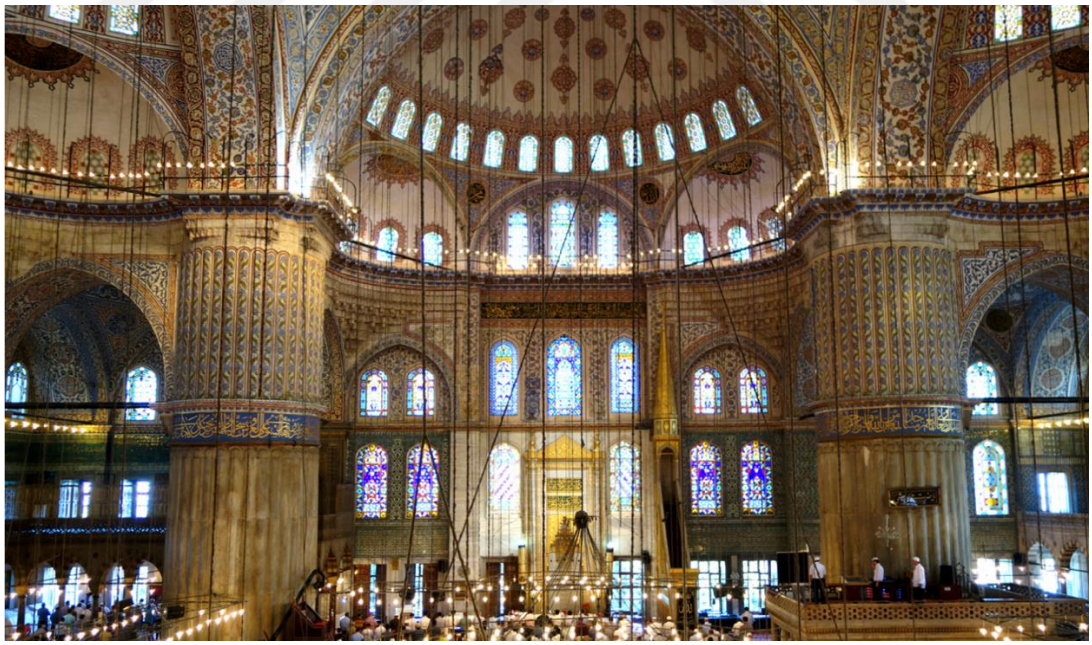

Figure C82. The Sultan Ahmed Mosque, interior toward the qibla (southeast) wall, showing the fenestrations.
(Reproduced from: Rüstem, "Spectacle of Legitimacy", 264)



Figure C83. The side gallery on the Sultan Ahmed Mosque's northern outer façade. (Photo credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)



Figure C84. The side galleries in the Şehzade Mosque. (Photo Credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)



Figure C85. The double arcade of the Süleymaniye Mosque.
(Photo credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)

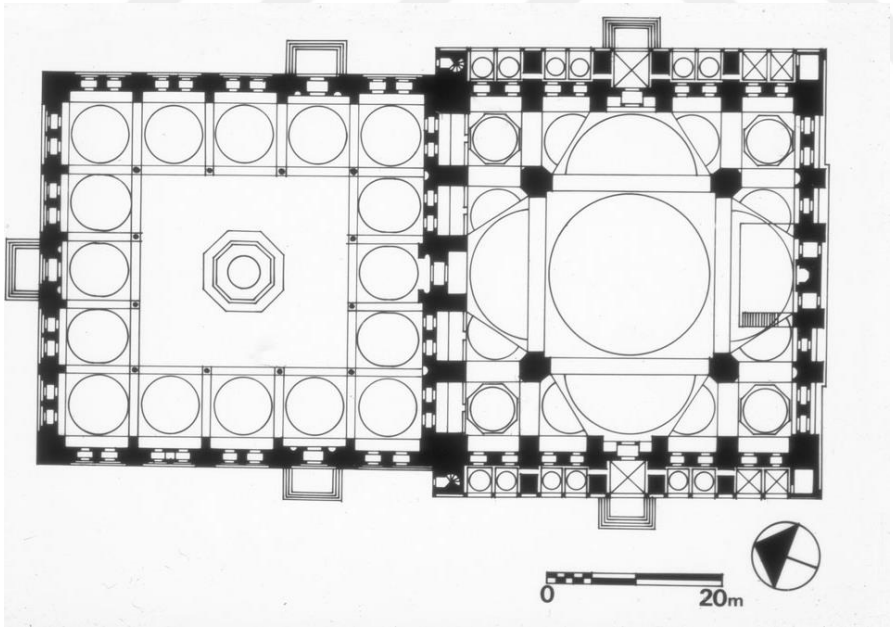

Figure C86. The plan of the Şehzade Mosque.
(Credit: Keith Turner. Retrieved from:
https://dome.mit.edu/bitstream/handle/1721.3/50306/142170_cp.jpg?sequence=1&isAllowed=y, accessed on 4 September 2022)



Figure C87. The Yeni Valide Mosque in Eminönü.
(Photo Credit: B. J. Anello-Adnani. Retrieved from: https://www.archnet.org/sites/2030?media_content_id=127581, accessed on 1 September 2022)



Figure C88. The Sultan Ahmed Mosque's view from the Marmara Sea.
(Photo Credit: Özgür Başak Alkan. Retrieved from: https://www.archnet.org/sites/2026?media_content_id=119561, accessed on 1 September 2022)



Figure C89. The Sultan Ahmed Mosque's view from the north, near Hagia Sophia. (Photo Credit: Muhammad al-Asad. Retrieved from: https://www.archnet.org/sites/2026?media_content_id=132817, accessed on 1 September 2022)



Figure C90. The Inscriptions on the Sultan Ahmed Mosque's primary entrance to the forecourt.
(Photo credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)



Figure C91. The inscription on the pediment of the portico facing the inner forecourt, the 238th verse of the surah of the Cow.
(Photo Credit: Sultan Ahmed Camii Koruma ve İhya Derneği. Retrieved from: https://sultanahmetcami.org/resimler/files/Sultanahmet%20Camii%20Kitabe%20Kusak%20Levha%20Yazilari.pdf, accessed on 1 September 2022)

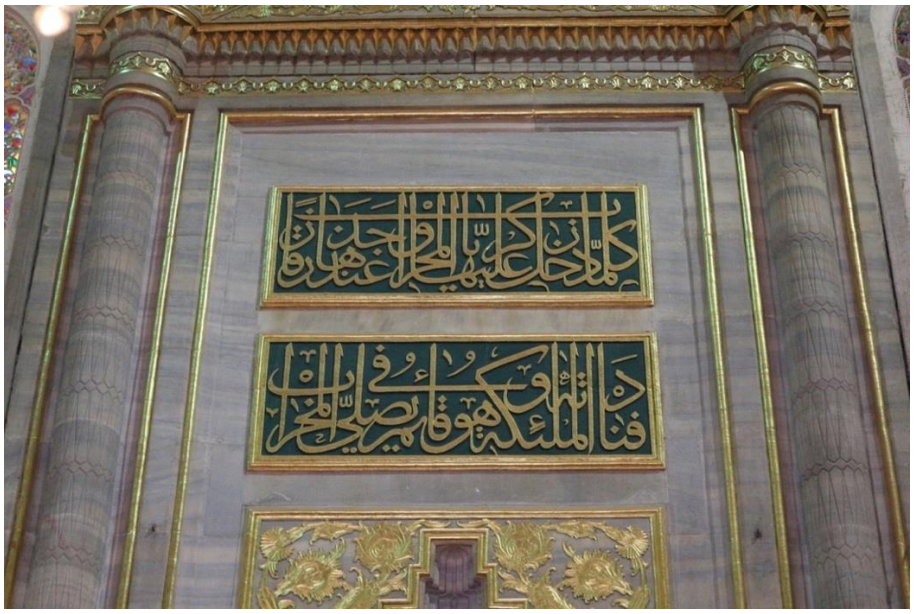

Figure C92. The inscriptions on the Sultan Ahmed Mosque's mihrab, the Surah the House of Imran, verses 37 and 39.
(Photo Credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)

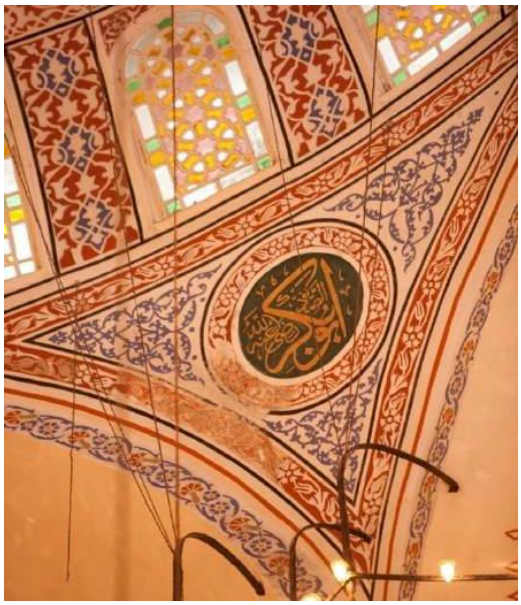

Figure C93. The name on Ebubekir inscribed in the roundel on central dome'a pendentive. (Photo Credit: Sultan Ahmed Camii Koruma ve İhya Derneği. Retrieved from: https://sultanahmetcami.org/resimler/files/Sultanahmet%20Camii%20Kitabe%20Kusak%20Levha%20Yazilari.pdf, accessed on 1 September 2022)



Figure C94. The name of Ömer inscribed in the roundel on central dome'a pendentive.
(Photo Credit: Sultan Ahmed Camii Koruma ve İhya Derneği. Retrieved from: https://sultanahmetcami.org/resimler/files/Sultanahmet%20Camii%20Kitabe%20Kusak%20Levha%20Yazilari.pdf, accessed on 1 September 2022)

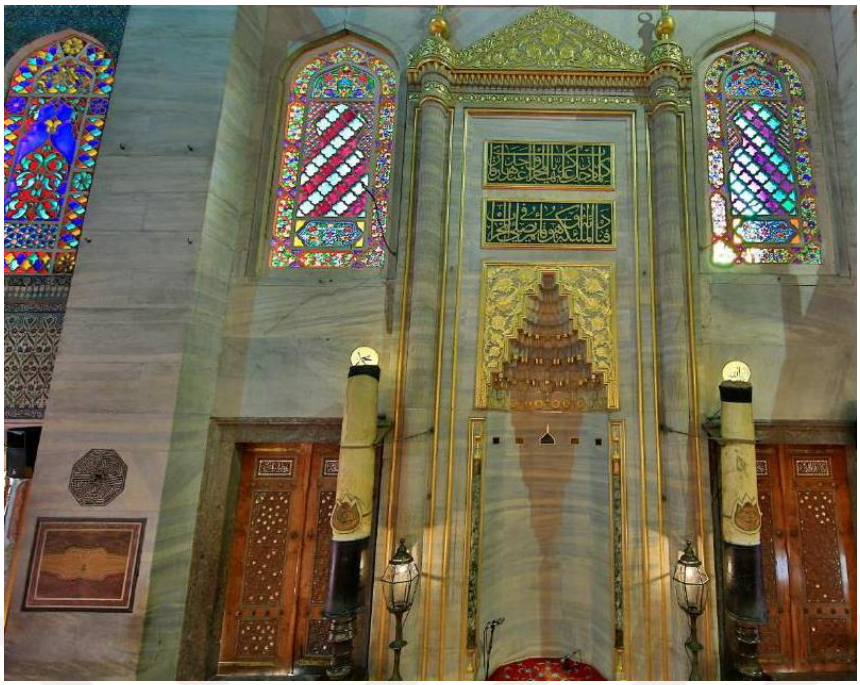

Figure C95. The names of the Prophet's ten blessed Companions on the left of the mihrab.
(Photo Credit: Sultan Ahmed Camii Koruma ve İhya Derneği. Retrieved from: https://sultanahmetcami.org/resimler/files/Sultanahmet%20Camii%20Kitabe%20Kusak%20Levha%20Yazilari.pdf, accessed on 1 September 2022)

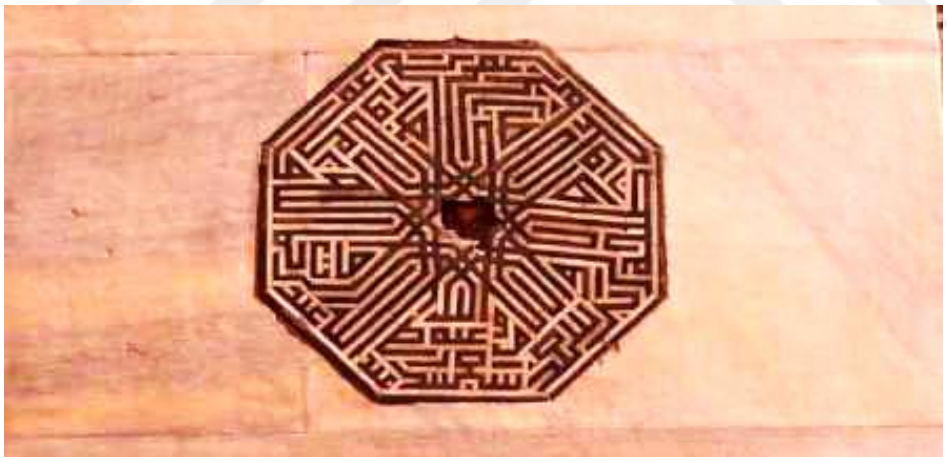

Figure C96. The names of the Prophet's ten blessed Companions.
(Photo Credit: Sultan Ahmed Camii Koruma ve İhya Derneği. Retrieved from: https://sultanahmetcami.org/resimler/files/Sultanahmet%20Camii%20Kitabe%20Kusak%20Levha%20Yazilari.pdf, accessed on 1 September 2022)



Figure C97. The names of Sultan Ahmed's ancestors appearing on the Sultan Ahmed Mosque's foundation inscription.
(Photo Credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)



Figure C98. The Turkish inscription on the Sultan Ahmed Mosque's outer enclosure wall overlooking Atmeydanı.
(Photo credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)

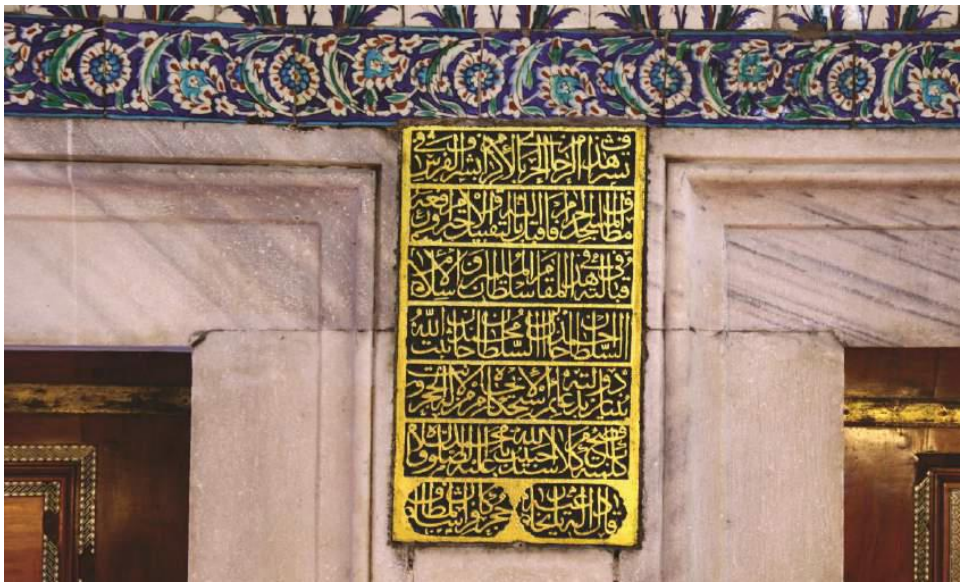

Figure C99. The inscriptional panel located near the mihrab, mentioning the precious piece of marble from the holy Kaba.
(Photo Credit: Sultan Ahmed Camii Koruma ve İhya Derneği. Retrieved from: https://sultanahmetcami.org/resimler/files/Sultanahmet%20Camii%20Kitabe%20Kusak%20Levha%20Yazilari.pdf, accessed on 1 September 2022)

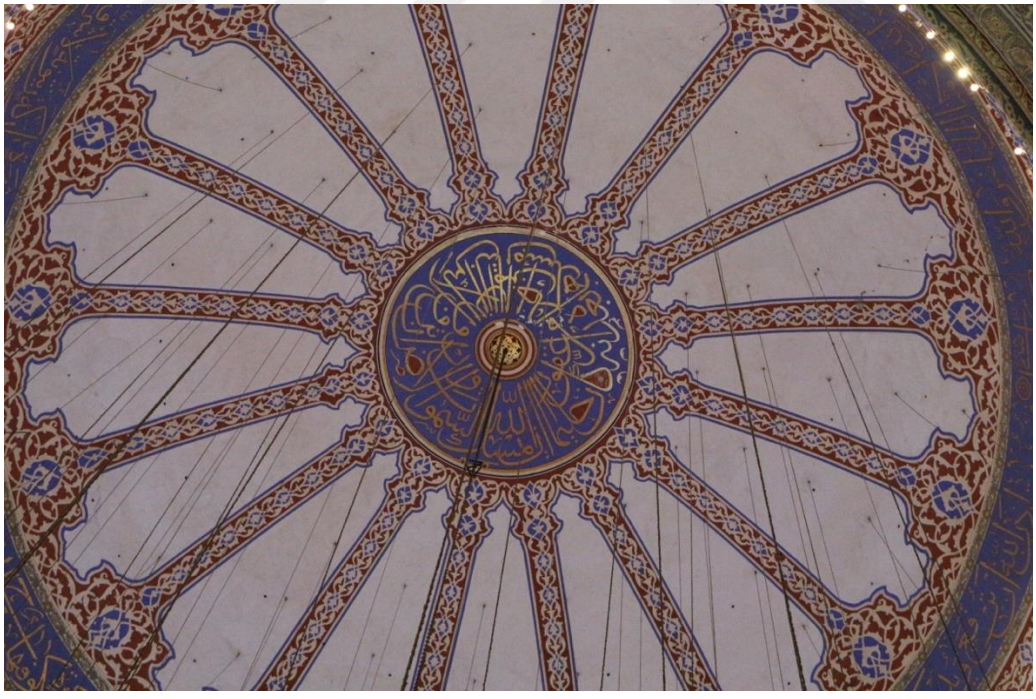

Figure C100. The inscription on the Sultan Ahmed Mosque's central dome.
(Photo Credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)



Figure C101. The 35th verse of the Surah of Light, encircling the periphery of the hemispherical dome of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque. (Photo Credit: Sultan Ahmed Camii Koruma ve İhya Derneği. Retrieved from: https://sultanahmetcami.org/resimler/files/Sultanahmet%20Camii%20Kitabe%20Kusak%20Levha%20Yazilari.pdf, accessed on 1 September 2022)



Figure C102. The Quranic inscription (6: 79) on the eastern half-dome of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque.
(Photo Credit: Sultan Ahmed Camii Koruma ve İhya Derneği. Retrieved from: https://sultanahmetcami.org/resimler/files/Sultanahmet%20Camii%20Kitabe%20Kusak%20Levha%20Yazilari.pdf, accessed on 1 September 2022)



Figure C103. The paired epigraphic panel with an Arabic prayer.
(Photo Credit: Sultan Ahmed Camii Koruma ve İhya Derneği. Retrieved from: https://sultanahmetcami.org/resimler/files/Sultanahmet%20Camii%20Kitabe%20Kusak%20Levha%20Yazilari.pdf, accessed on 1 September 2022)



Figure C104. İznik tiles in the Sultan Ahmed Mosque's upper gallery.
(Reproduced from: Rüstem, "Spectacle of Legitimacy", 265)



Figure C105. İznik tiles covering the walls between the fenestrations, the western wall of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque.
(Reproduced from: Arlı, "İstanbul Sultan Ahmet", 62)



Figure C106. Ceramic tiles from the Sultan Ahmed Mosque's side galleries.
(Photo credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)

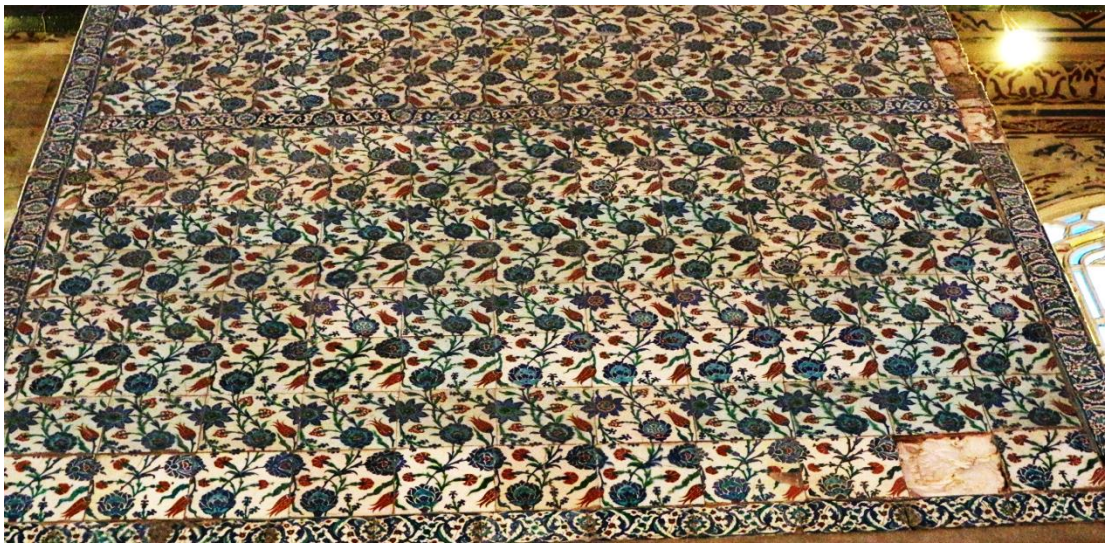

Figure C107. Ceramic tiles from the Sultan Ahmed Mosque's mihrab wall.
(Photo credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)



Figure C108. The stone carving featuring a leaf design on the outer enclosure of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque.
(Photo credit: Damla Gürkan Anar)



Figure C109. The marble engravings of carnations and interwoven leaves decorating the drinking fountain in the Sultan Ahmed Mosque's forecourt.
(Photo credit: Damla Gürkan Anar)

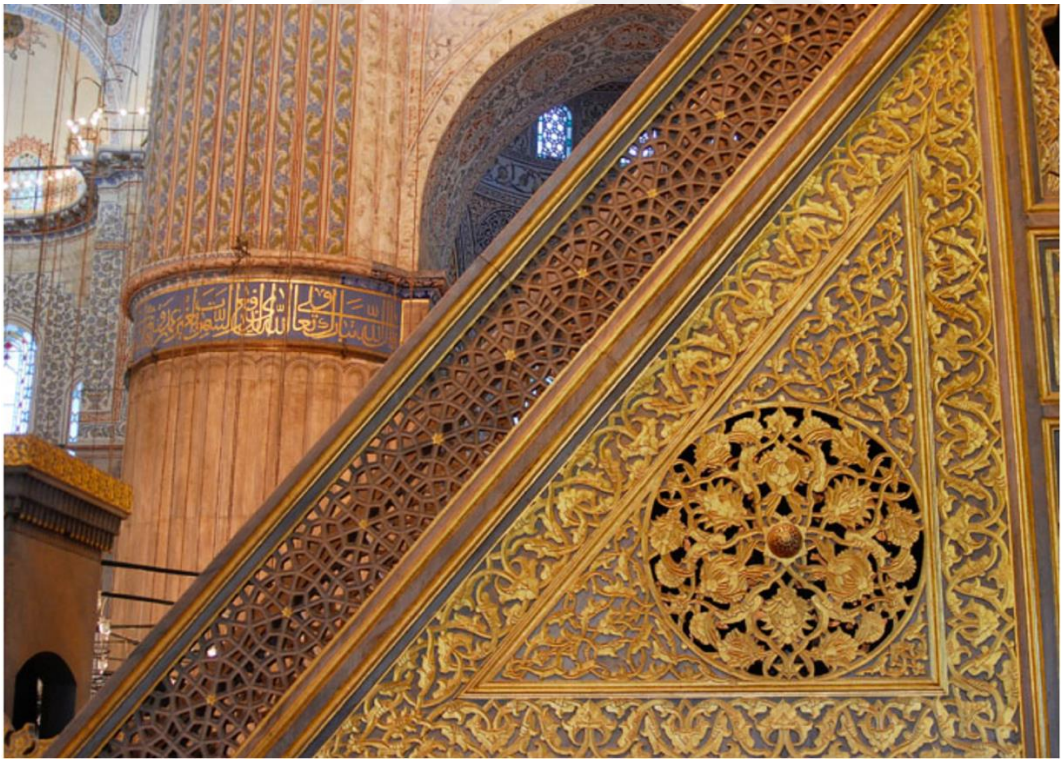

Figure C110. The golden-painted stone carvings on the minbar of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque.
(Reproduced from: Arlı, "İstanbul Sultan Ahmet", 54)



Figure C111. A wooden panel on the Sultan Ahmed Mosque's entrance adorned with geometrical designs and inscriptions.
(Photo Credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)

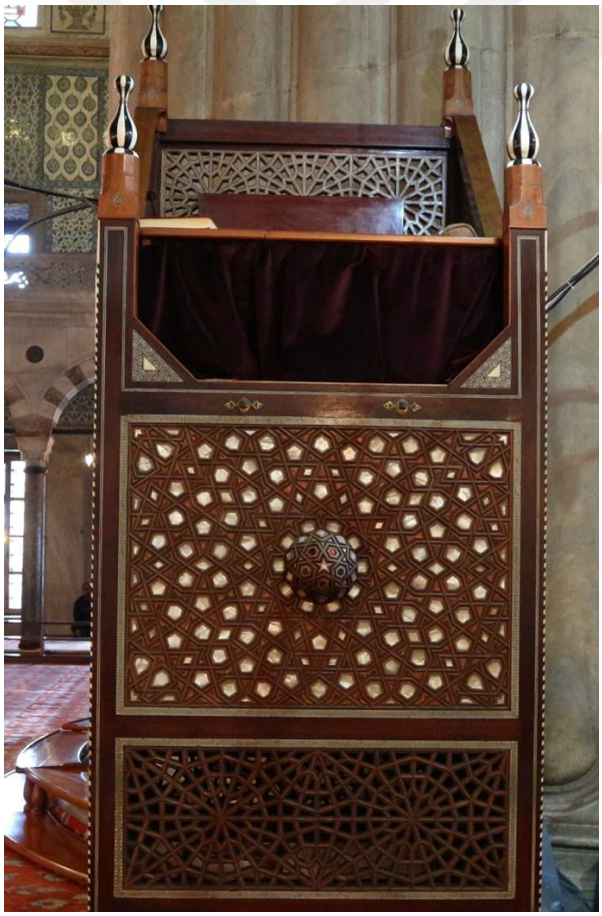

Figure C112. A wooden pulpit with mother-of-pearl decoration in the Sultan Ahmed Mosque.
(Photo credit: Damla Gürkan Anar)



Figure C113. The bronze door opening to the Sultan Ahmed Mosque's courtyard. (Photo credit: Damla Gürkan Anar)



Figure C114. The cover of a Quran manuscript, which is recorded as a donation of Sultan Ahmed to the Sultan Aḥmad Mosque.
(TIEM 367.001. It is brought from the Sultan Ahmed Mosque to the Turkish and Islamic Arts Museum on 6 April 1914.)



Figure C115. Double Page from a Ouran Manuscript, bearing Sultan Ahmed's seal. (TIEM 403.005. It is brought from Sultan Ahmed Mosque to the Turkish and Islamic Arts Museum on 5 April 1914.)

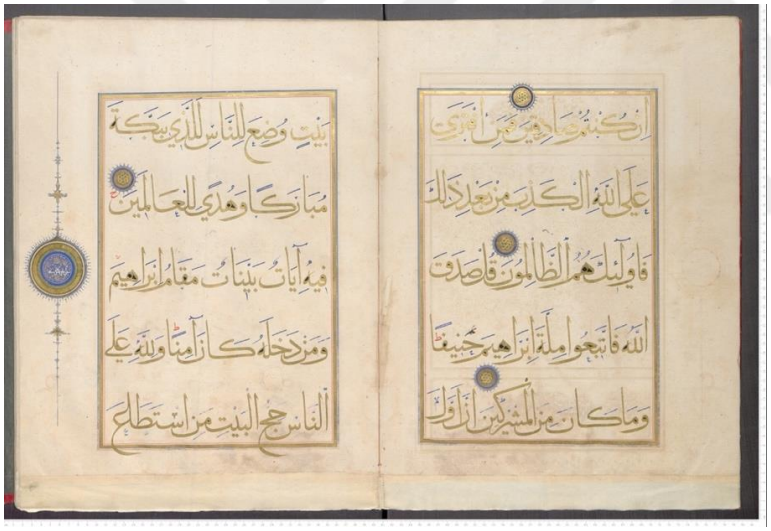

Figure C116. Double Page from a cüz, bearing Sultan Ahmed's seal. (TIEM 564.007. It was transferred from the Sultan Ahmed Mosque to the Turkish and Islamic Arts Museum on 6 April 1914.)

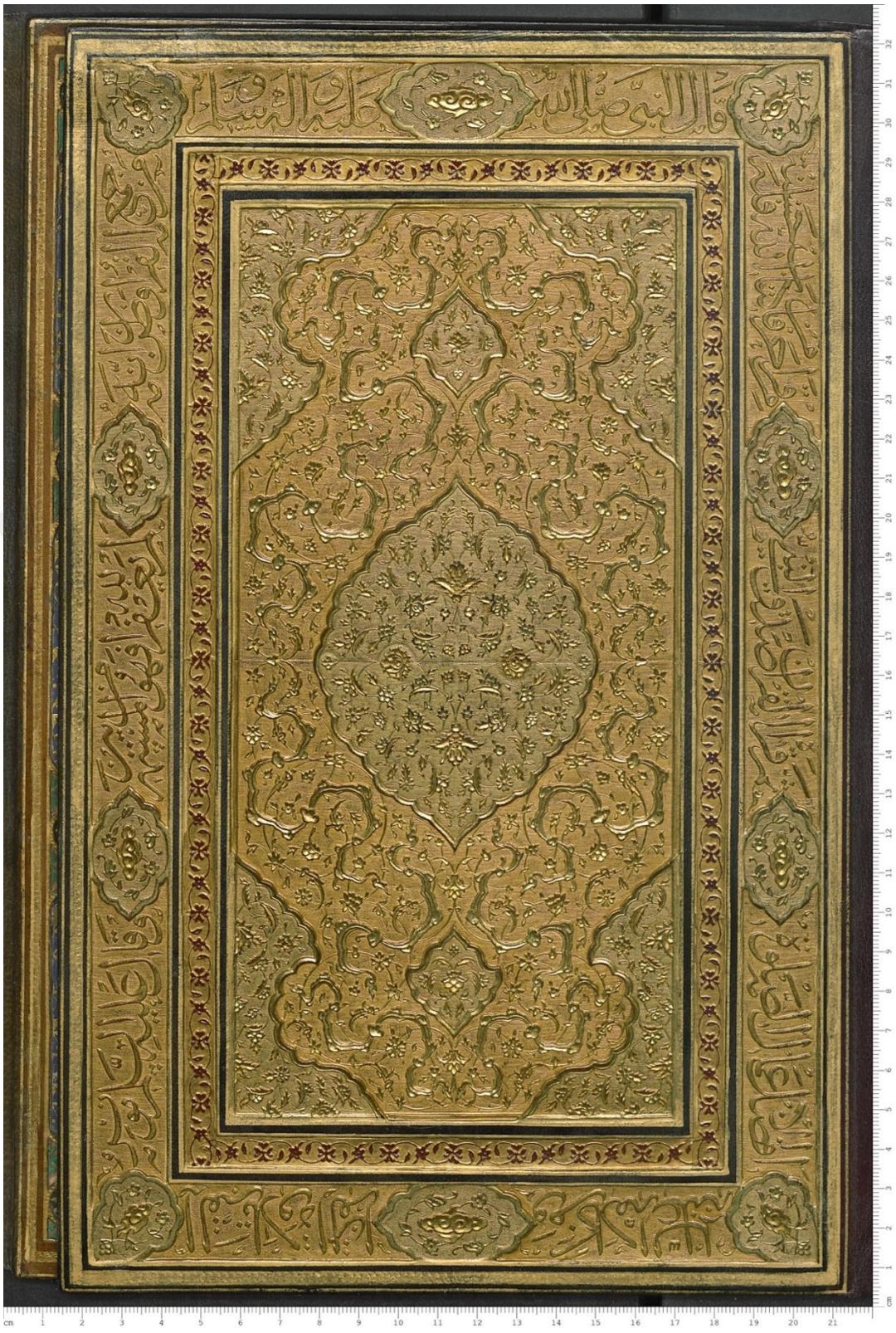

Figure C117. A Quran cover produced in Safavid Iran, probably Herat, ca. 1580 (TIEM 2665.01-02. It was ransferred from the Sultan Ahmed Mosque to the Turkish and Islamic Arts Museum in 1914.)

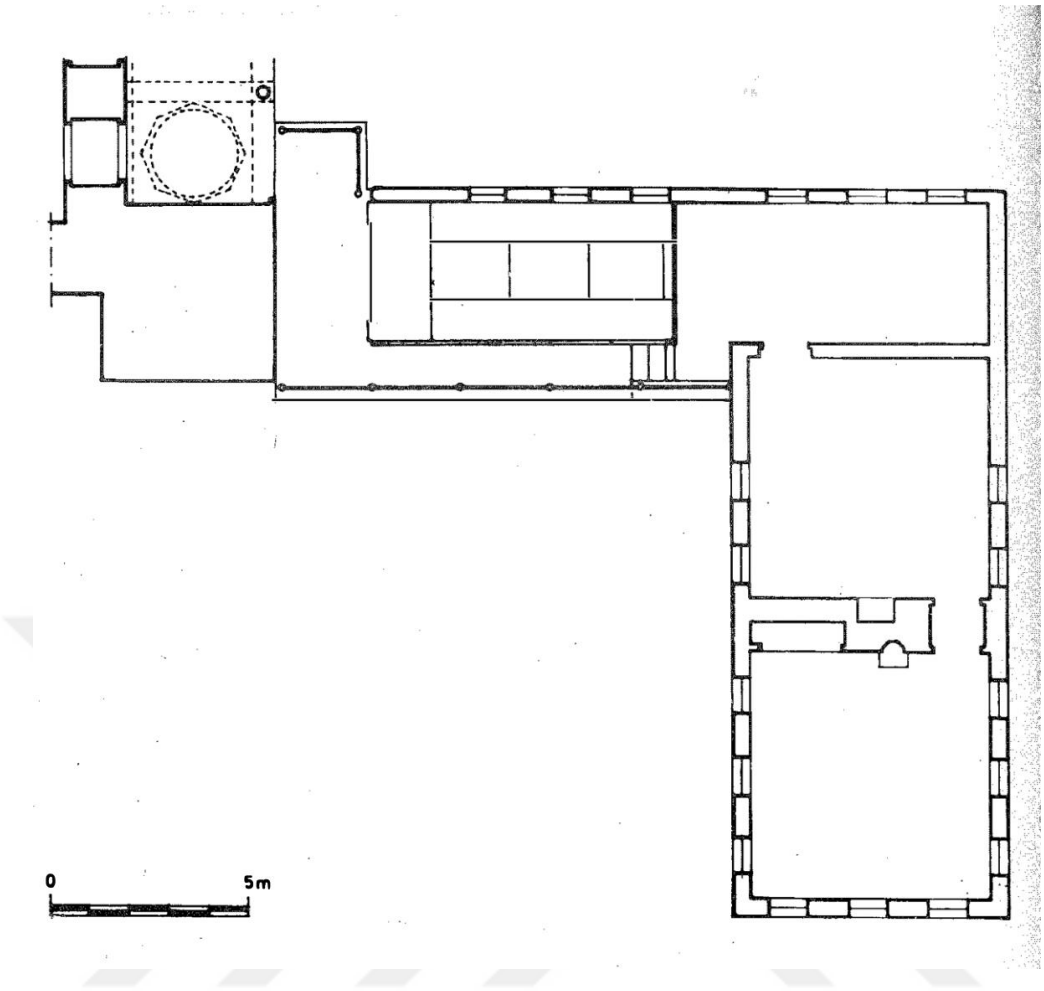

Figure C118. The plan of the royal pavilion of the Sultan Ahmed complex.
(Reproduced from: Nayır, "Osmanlı Mimarisinde", fig. 64)



Figure C119. The royal pavilion attached to the Sultan Ahmed Mosque's northeastern edge.
(Photo credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)

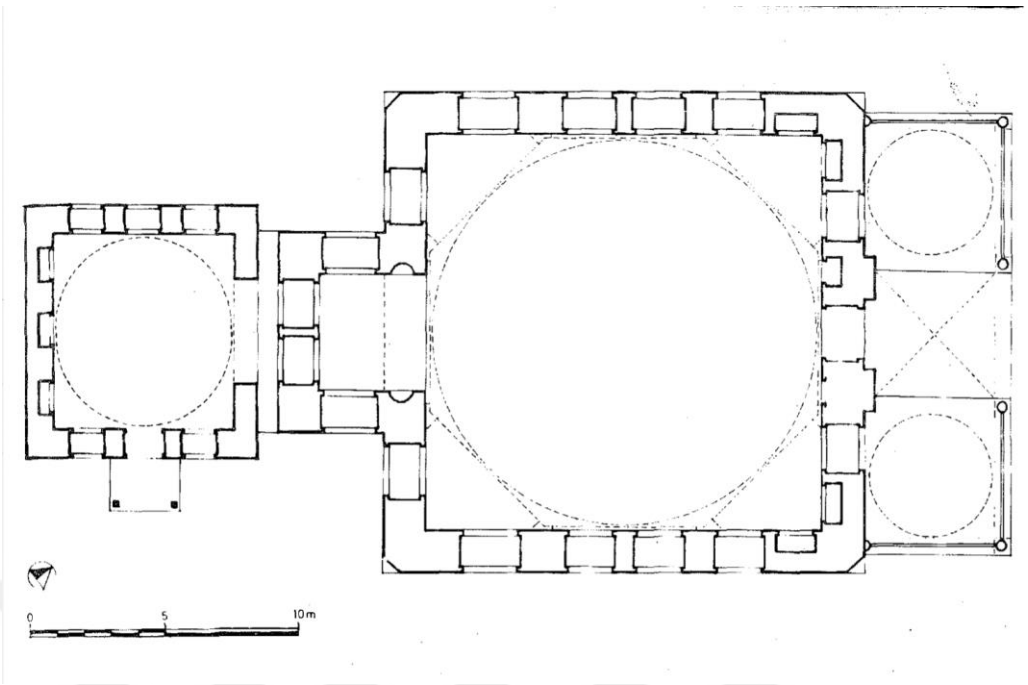

Figure C120. The plan of Sultan Ahmed's tomb.
(Reproduced from: Nayır, "Osmanlı Mimarisinde", fig. 80)



Figure C121. The interior of Sultan Ahmed's mausoleum.
(Photo Credit: Mustafa Cambaz. Retrieved from: https://www.mustafacambaz.com/details.php?image_id=18458, accessed on 1 September 2022)



Figure C122. Tiles decorating Sultan Ahmed's mausoleum.
(Photo Credit: Okur Yazarım. Retrieved from: https://okuryazarim.com/sultan-ahmet-turbesi/, accessed on 1 September 2022)

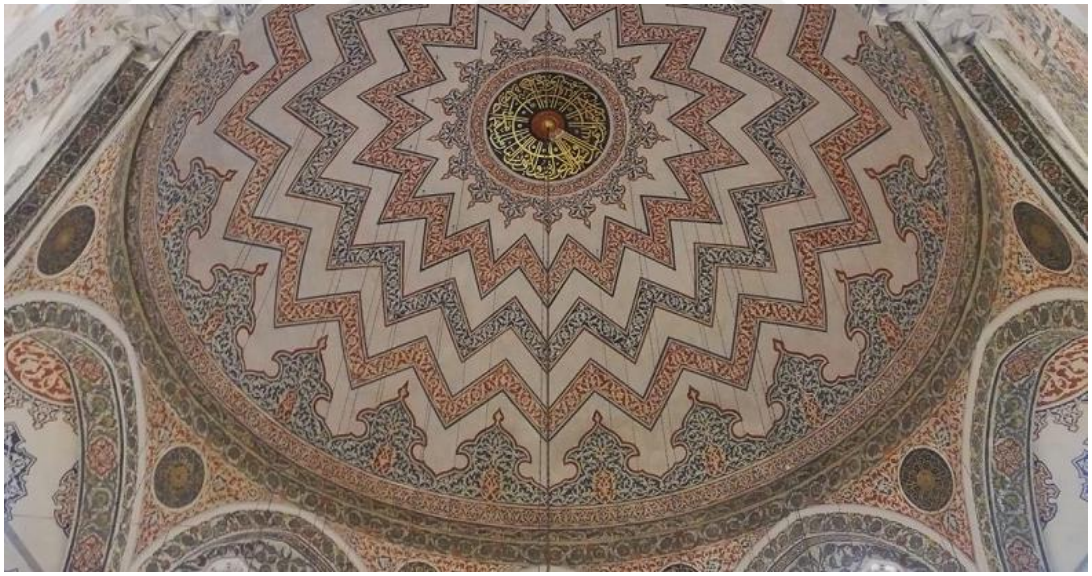

Figure C123. The pattern of interwoven zigzags embellishing the dome of Sultan Ahmed's mausoleum.
(Photo Credit: Okur Yazarım. Retrieved from: https://okuryazarim.com/sultan-ahmet-turbesi/, accessed on 1 September 2022)



Figure C124. A silver censer from the mausoleum of Ahmed I, dated to 1624. (Reproduced from: Ölçer, *Türk ve İslam Eserleri*, 302)



Figure C125. A pair of bejewelled candelabras from Sultan Ahmed's mausoleum, the early 17th century.
(Reproduced from: *Hippodrome/Atmeydanı*, I, 220)



Figure C126. A Quran stand from the mausoleum of Ahmed I, early 17th century.
(Reproduced from: Ölçer, *Türk ve İslam Eserleri*, 206)

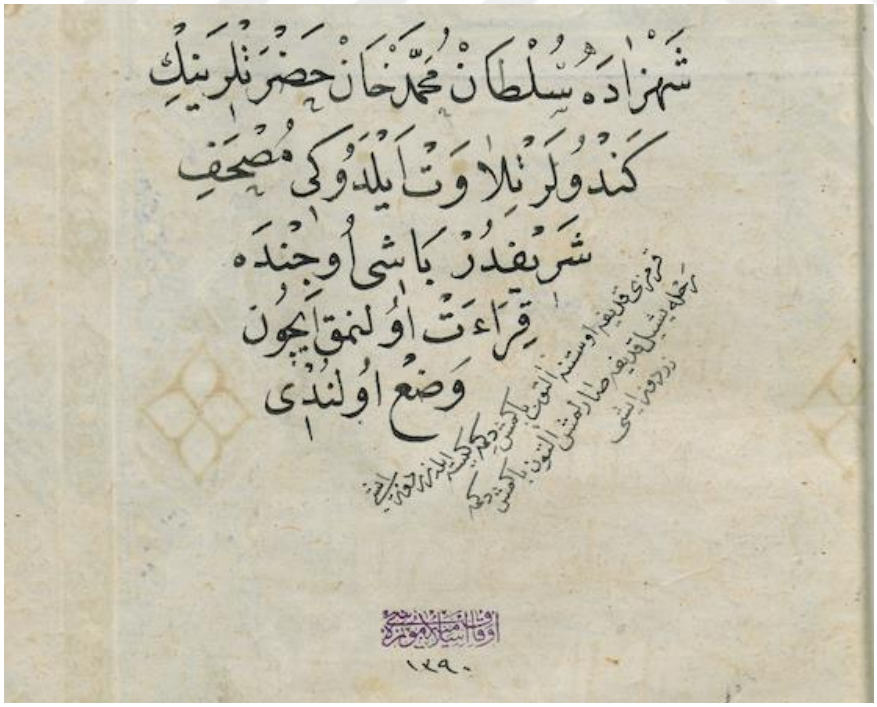

Figure C127. A Quran manuscript belonging to Şehzade Mehmed, who is buried in the mausoleum of Ahmed I.
(TIEM 521, 4a)

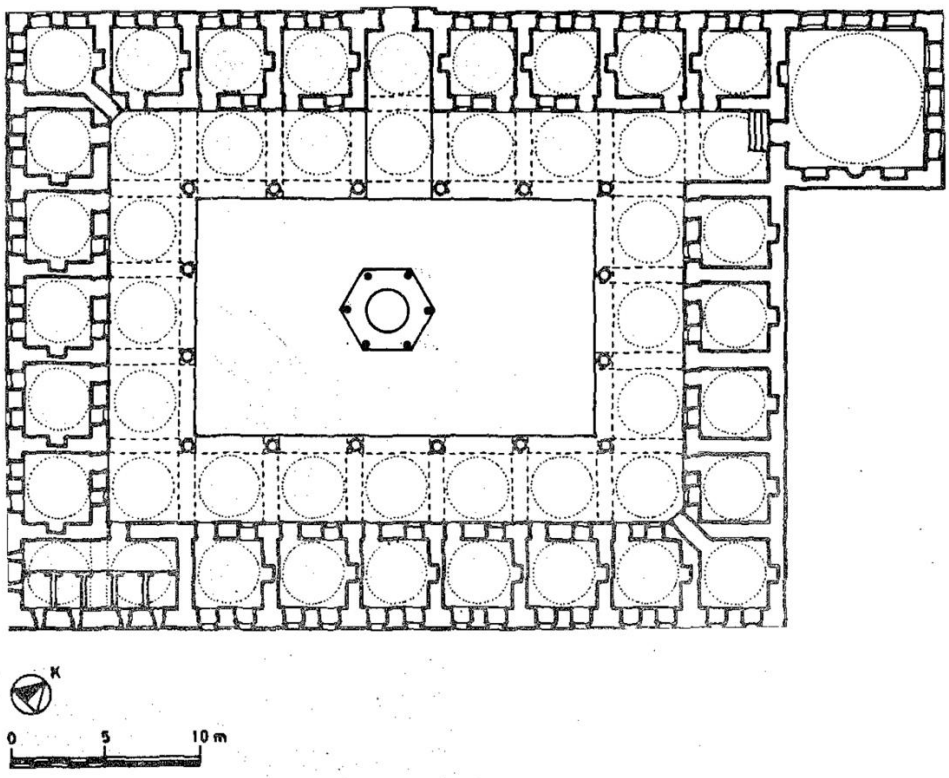

Figure C128. The plan of the madrasa of Sultan Ahmed.
(Reproduced from: Nayır, "Osmanlı Mimarisinde", fig. 65)



Figure C129. The madrasa's façade overlooking Sultan Ahmed Mosque's entrance facing Hagia Sophia.
(Photo credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)

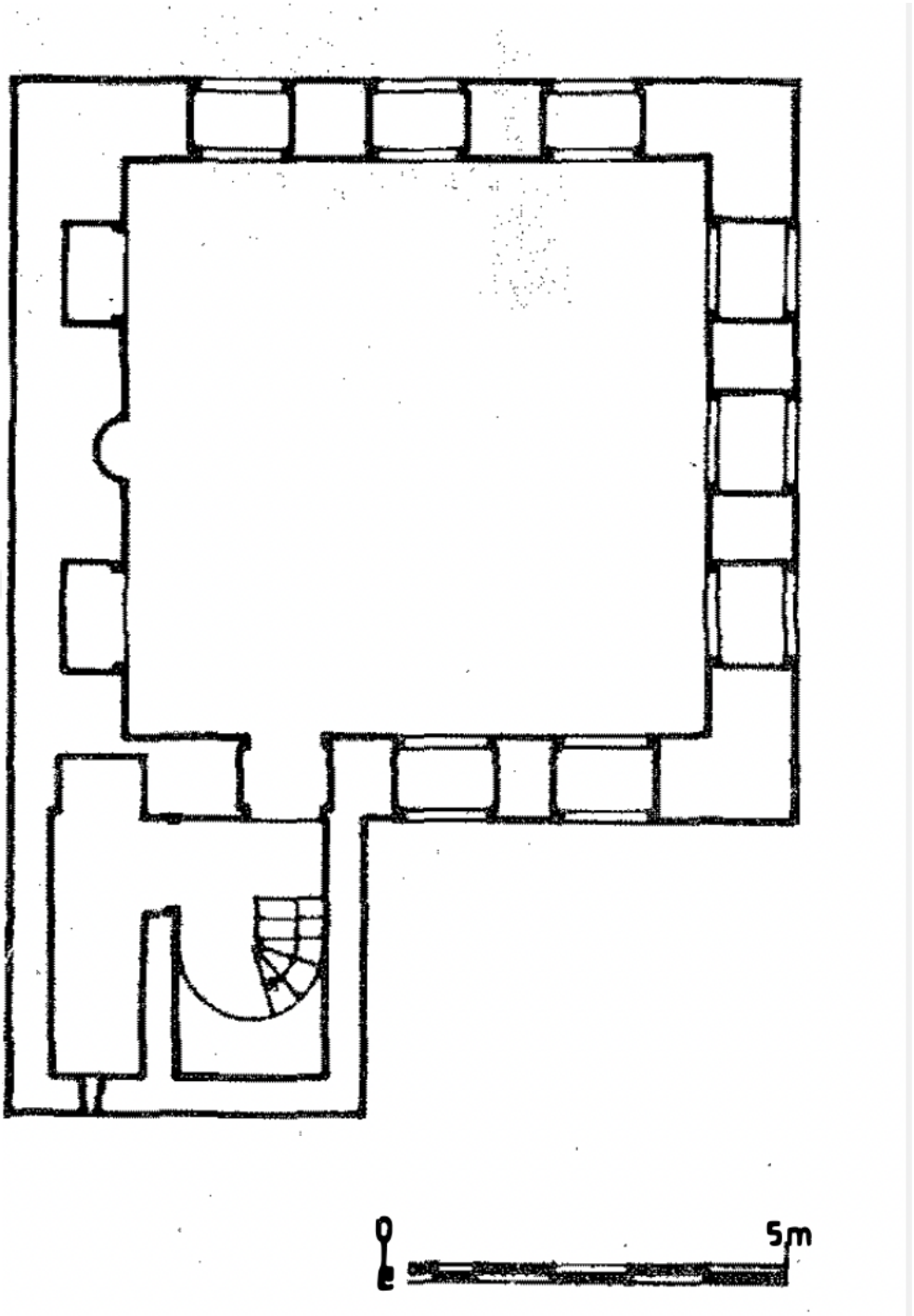

Figure C130. The plan of Sultan Ahmed's primary school.
(Reproduced from: Nayır, "Osmanlı Mimarisinde", fig. 68)

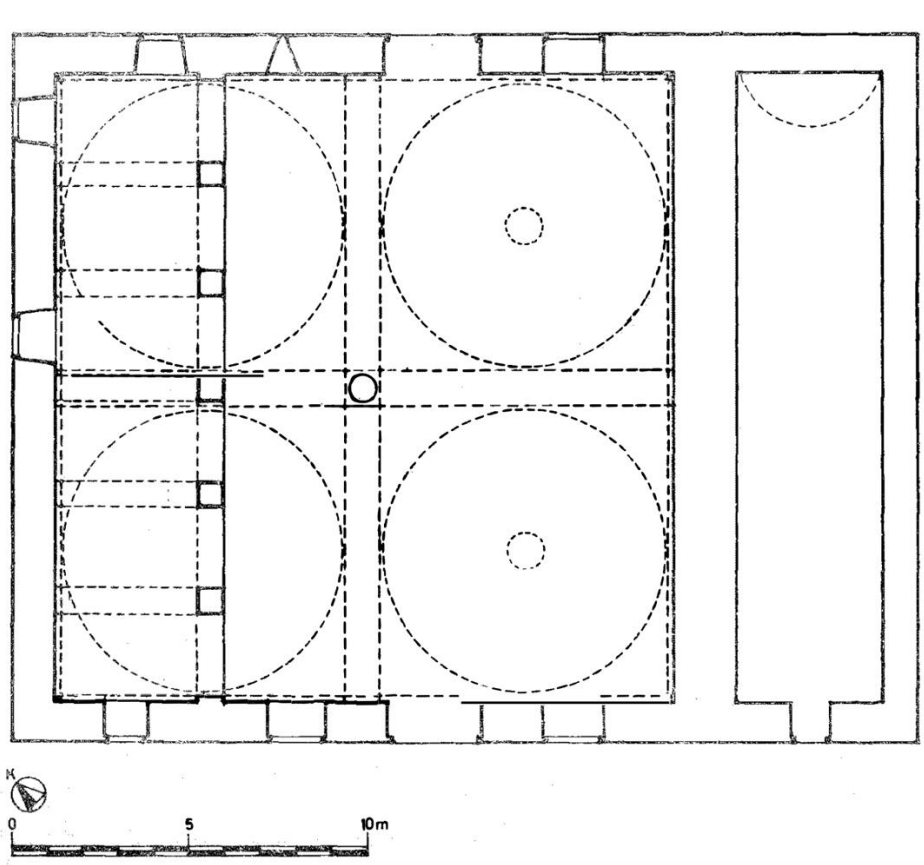

Figure C131. The plan of *'imāret*'s kitchen. (Reproduced from: Nayır, "Osmanlı Mimarisinde", fig. 74)

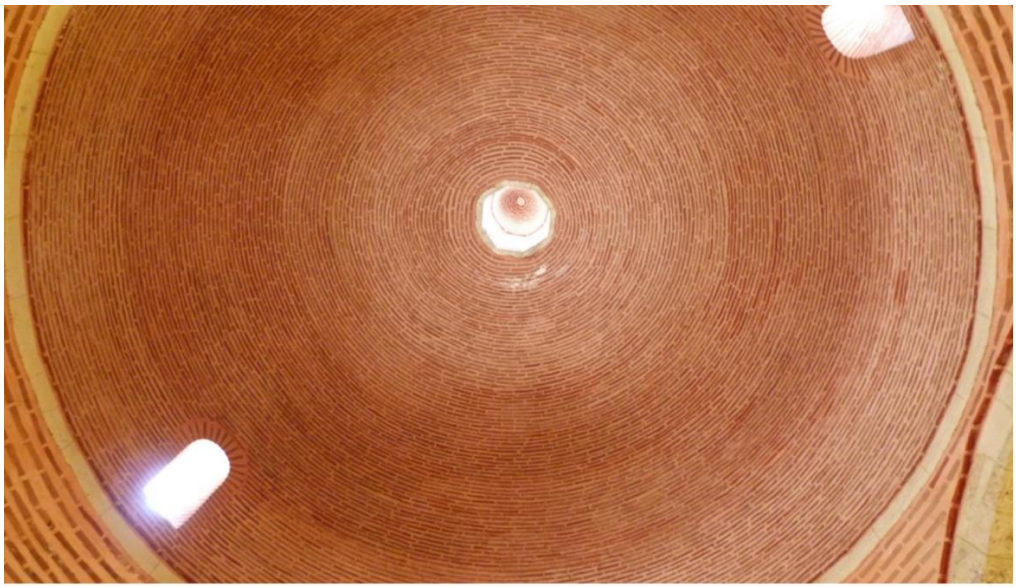

Figure C132. The dome of *'imāret'*s kitchen.
(Reproduced from: Öten, "Arşiv Belgelerine Göre", 180)



Figure C133. The chimneys of *'imāret'*s kitchen.
(Reproduced from: Öten, "Arşiv Belgelerine Göre", 181)

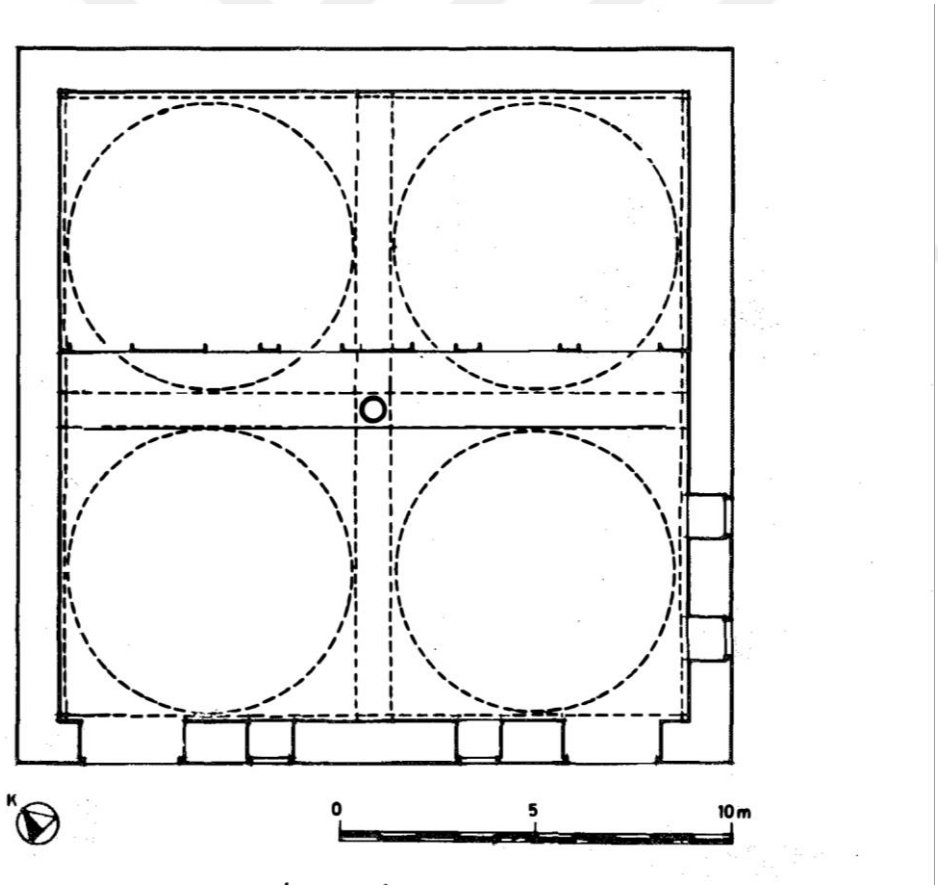

Figure C134. The plan of '*imāret*'s bakery.
(Reproduced from: Nayır, "Osmanlı Mimarisinde", fig. 72)

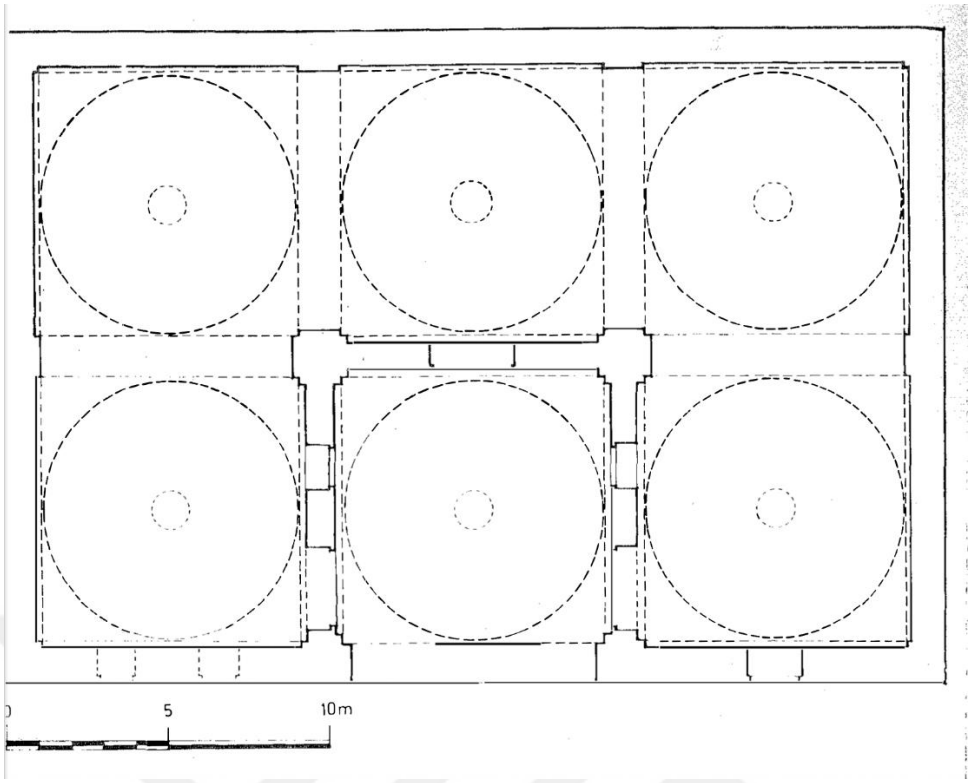

Figure C135. The plan of *'imāret'*s storehouse.
(Reproduced from: Nayır, "Osmanlı Mimarisinde", fig. 78)

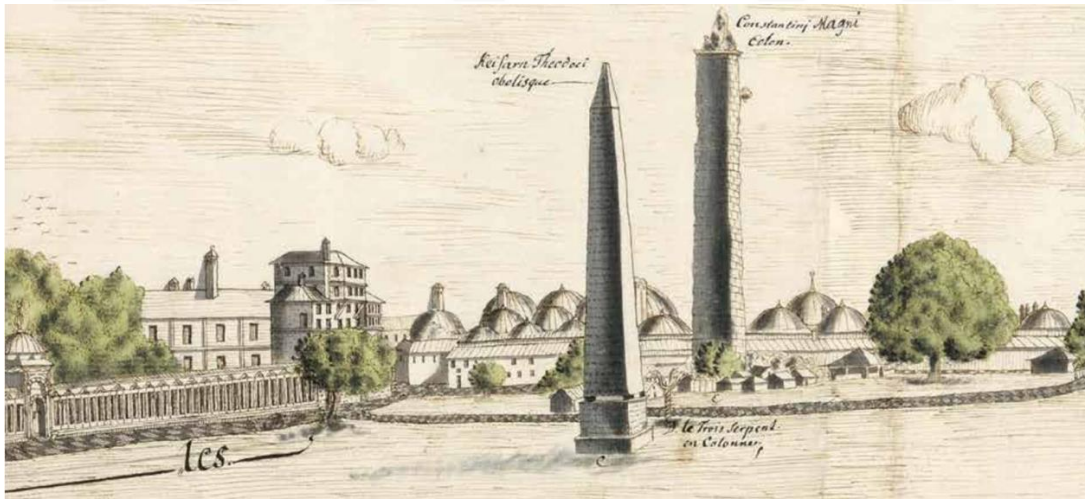

Figure C136. Detail of the painting of Atmeydanı by Cornelius Loos, showing the *'imāret* buildings.
(Reproduced from: Kafescioğlu, "New Look", 135)

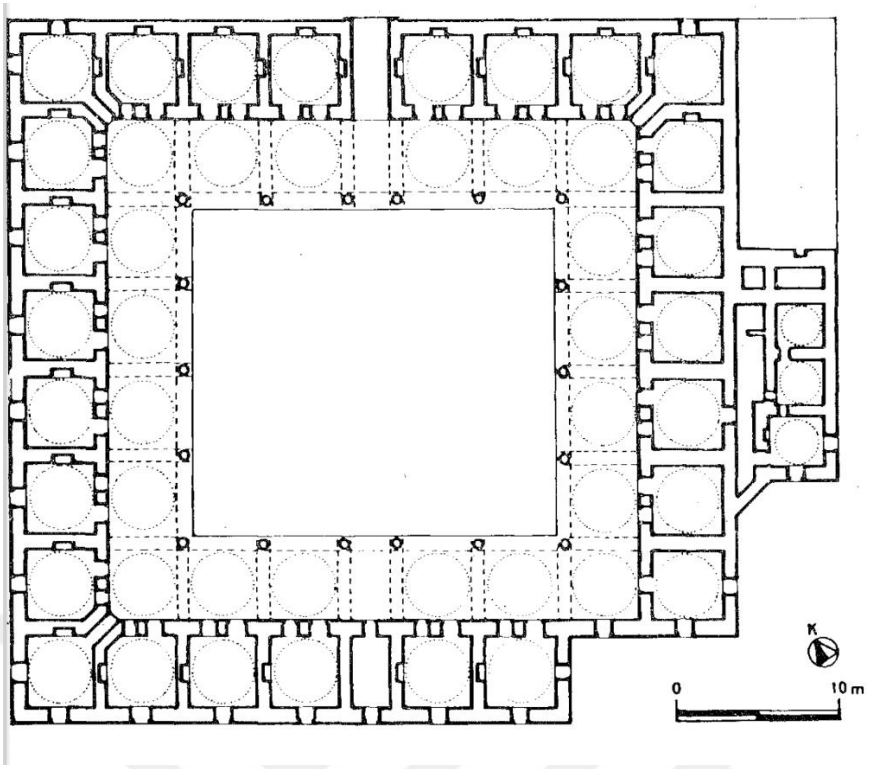

Figure C137. The plan of Sultan Ahmed's hospital.
(Reproduced from: Nayır, "Osmanlı Mimarisinde", fig. 79)

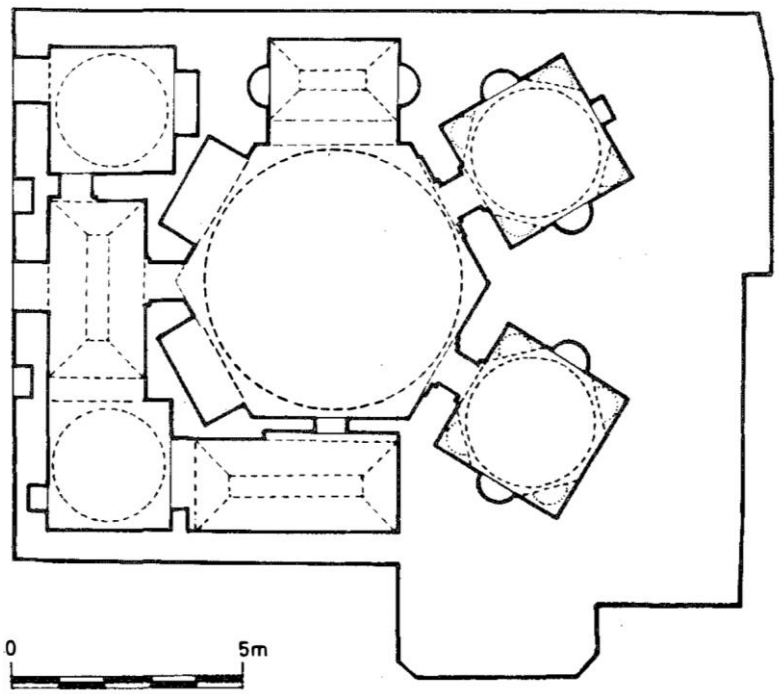

Figure C138. The plan of Sultan Ahmed's public bath.
(Reproduced from: Nayır, Osmanlı Mimarisinde", fig. 71)

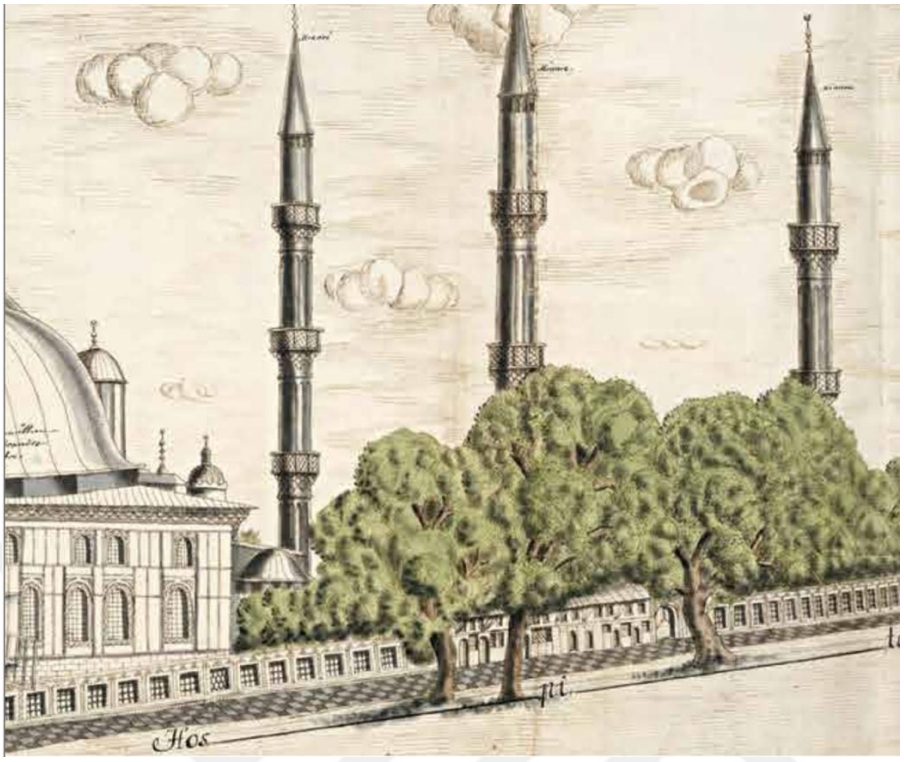

Figure C139. Detail of C. Loos' drawing of Atmeydanı, showing a group of houses. (Reproduced from: Kafescioğlu, "New Look", 126)



Figure C140. Atmeydani by E. Flandin (d. 1876), 1853.
(Reproduced from: *Hippodrome/Atmeydanı*, I, 258)



Figure C141. The frontpage of Sultan Ahmed's endowment deed.
(TIEM 2184)

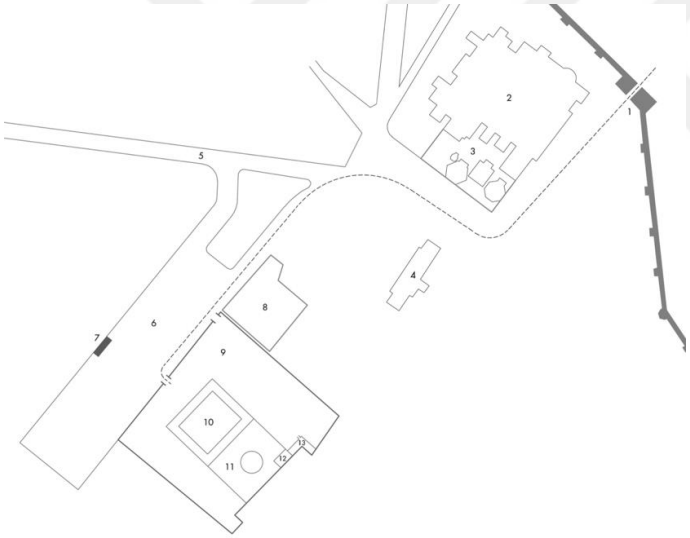

Figure C142. Diagram of the site of the dome-closing ceremony and its surroundings.
(It has a dashed line representing the hypothetical route of the procession as it left the Topkapı Palace. 1. Outer gate (Imperial Gate) of the Topkapı Palace; 2. Hagia Sophia; 3. Mausolea of the Hagia Sophia; 4. Bathhouse of Hürrem Sultan; 5. Divanyolu (the main processional route into the city); 6. Hippodrome; 7. Hypothetical location of the European ambassadors' loggia. Within the Sultan Ahmed Complex: 8. Site of the madrasa and mausoleum (then under construction); 9. Outer courtyard, the probable site of the tents; 10. Inner courtyard; 11. Prayer hall; 12. Royal prayer loge; 13. Royal pavilion, Drawing: Güven Erten. Reproduced from: Rüstem, "Spectacle of Legitimacy", 275)

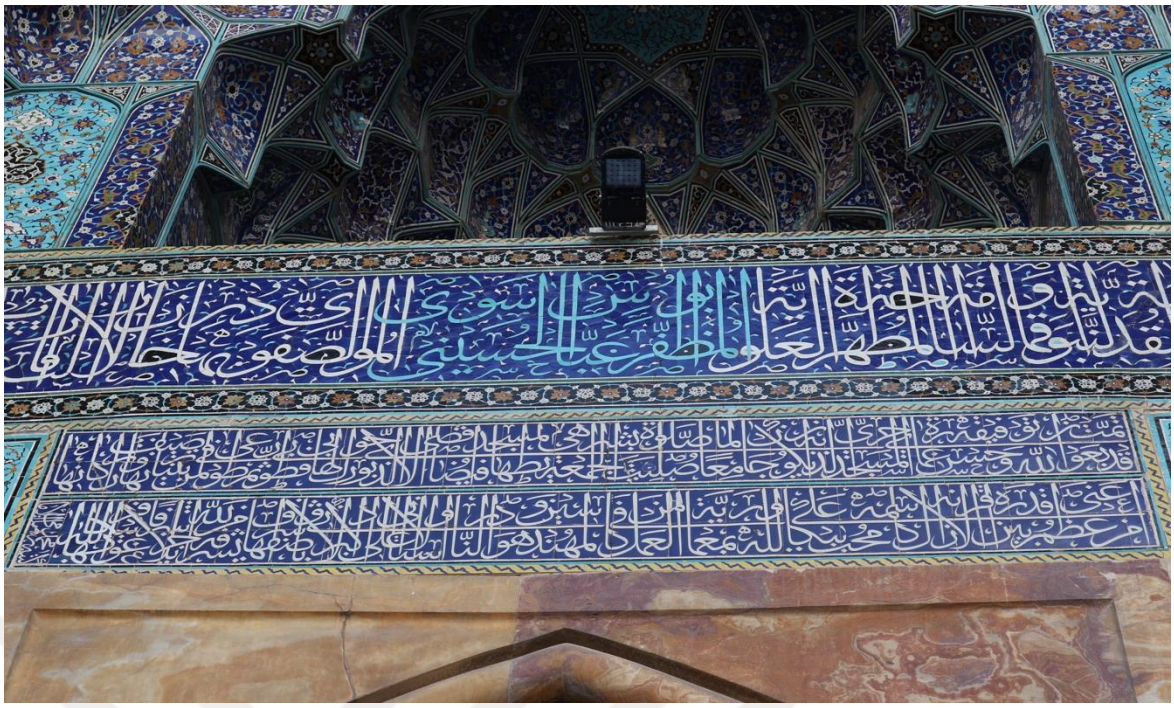

Figure C143. Detail from the inscription on Masjed-e Shah's portal. (The names of Ali Akbar Isfahani and Muhib Ali Beg Lala are visible just below the name of the shah written in blue. Photo credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)



Figure C144. The tile panel on Masjed-e Shah's pishtaq bearing the names of Nasrullah the designer and Ghuffar al-Isfahani, the tile maker.
(Photo Credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)

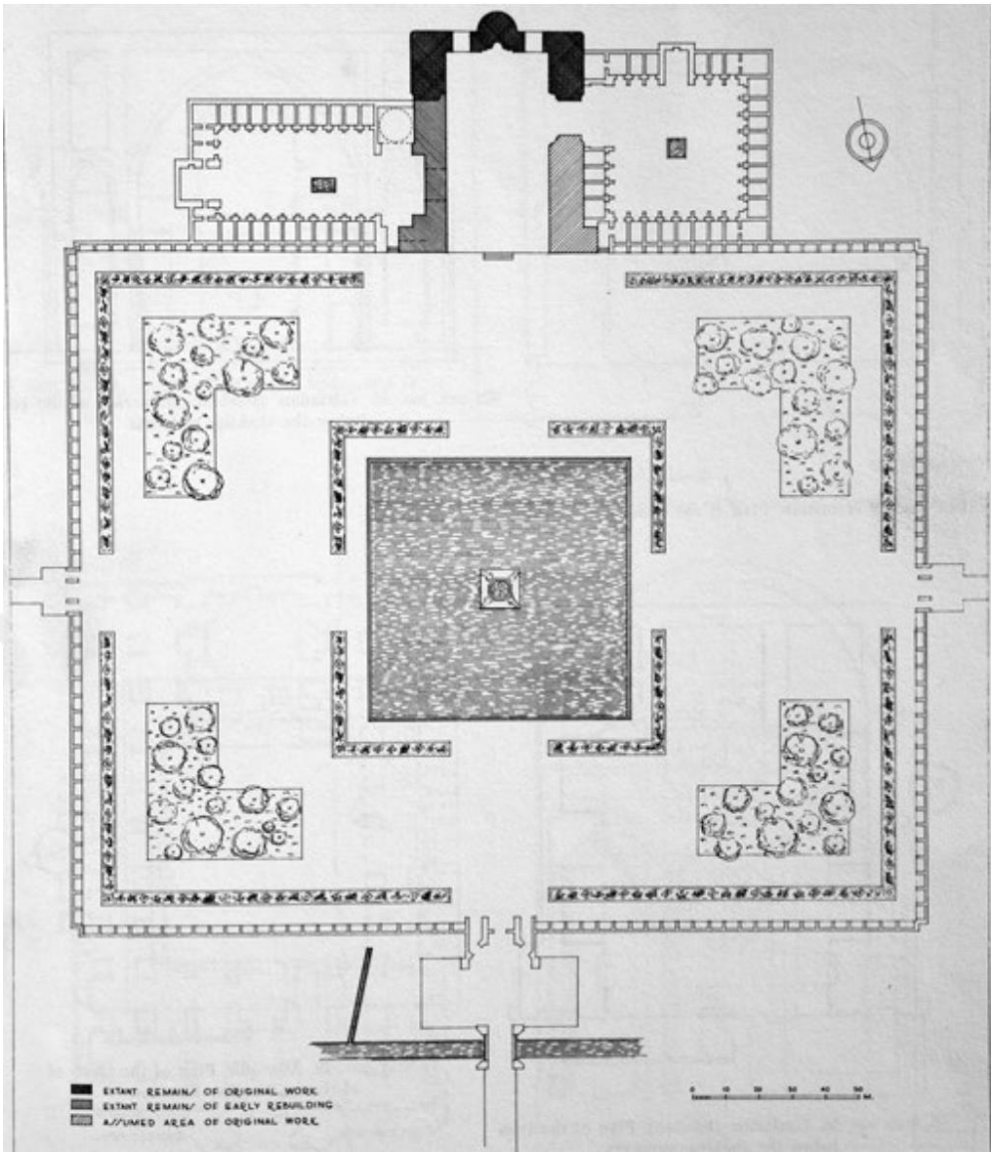

Figure C145. The complex of Ali Shah, the restoration of original plan. (Reproduced from: Wilber, *Architecture of Islamic*, fig. 30)

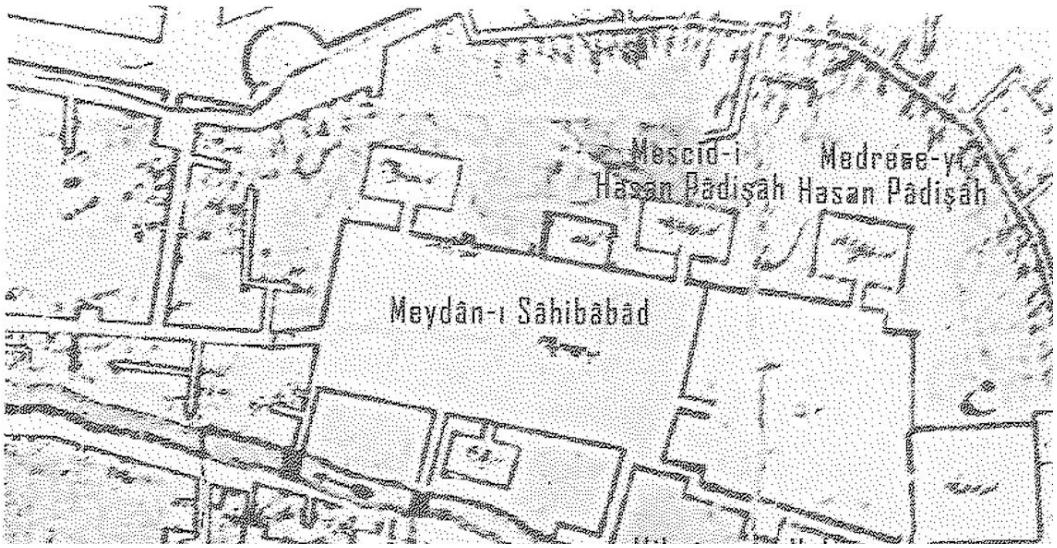

Figure C146. Trezel's map (1807–1808) showing the mosque and madrasa of the Nasiriya complex.
(Reproduced from: Yıldız, *Safevi Döneminde Tebriz*, 205).

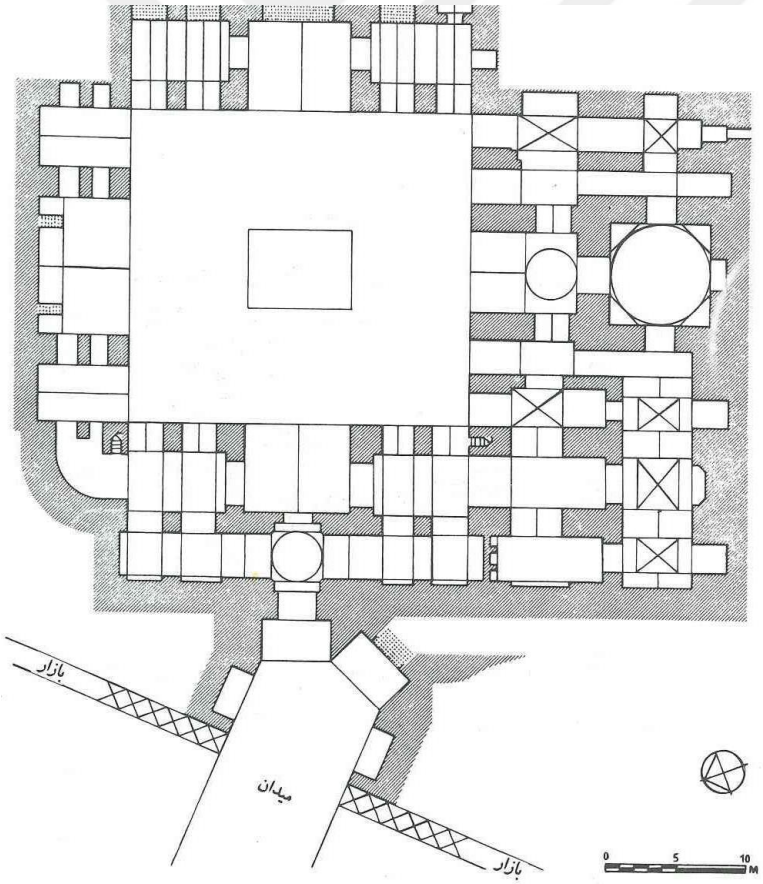

Figure C147. Masjed-e Maydan-e Sang (north) and Maydan-e Sang in Kashan (south).
(Reproduced from: Keyani, *Tārīkh-e Hunar-e Mi'mārī*, fig. 3/15)

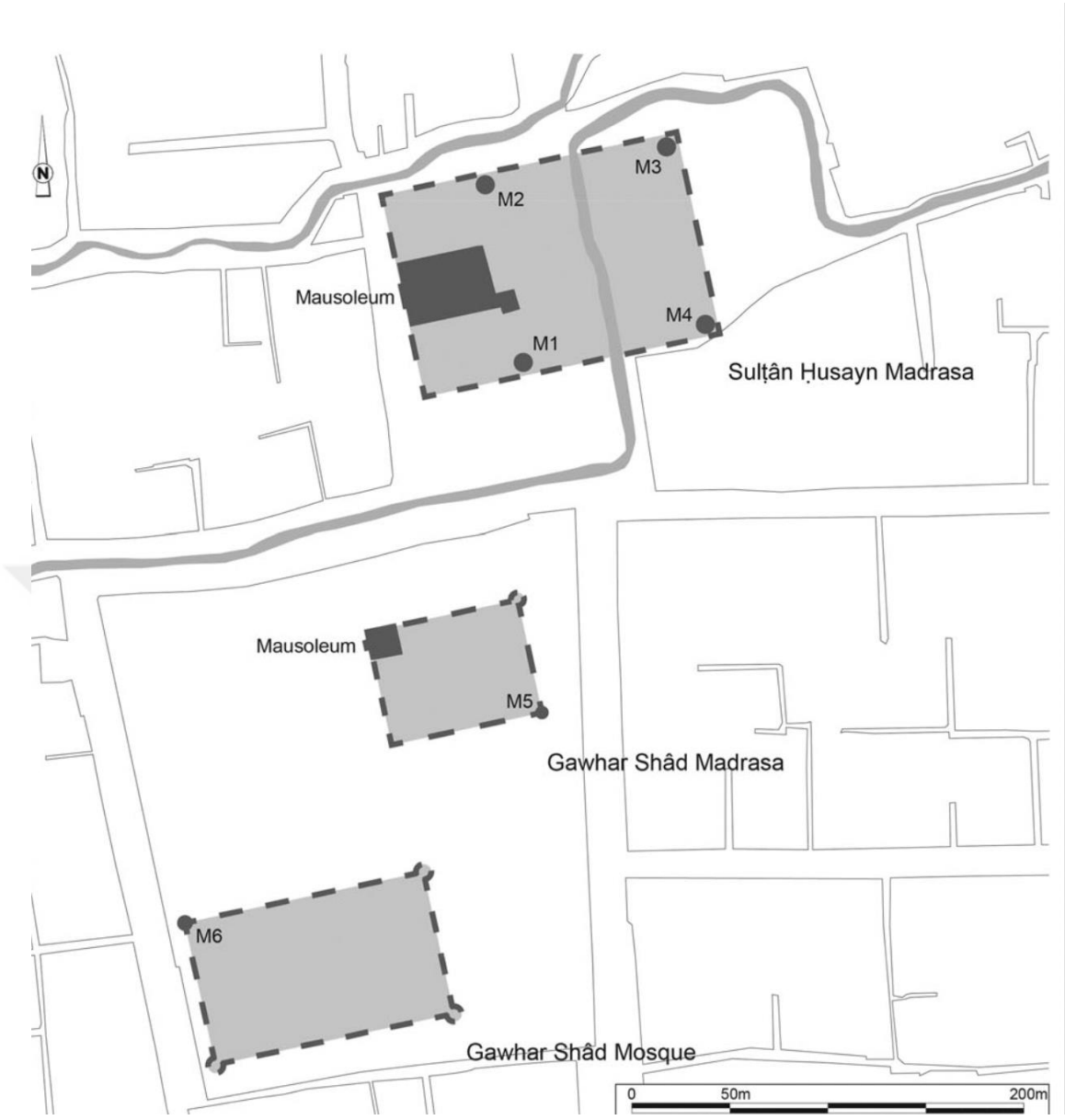

Figure C148. Gawhar Shad's complex in Herat.
(Reproduced from: Aube, Lorain and Bendezu-Sarmiento, "Complex of Gawhar", 63)

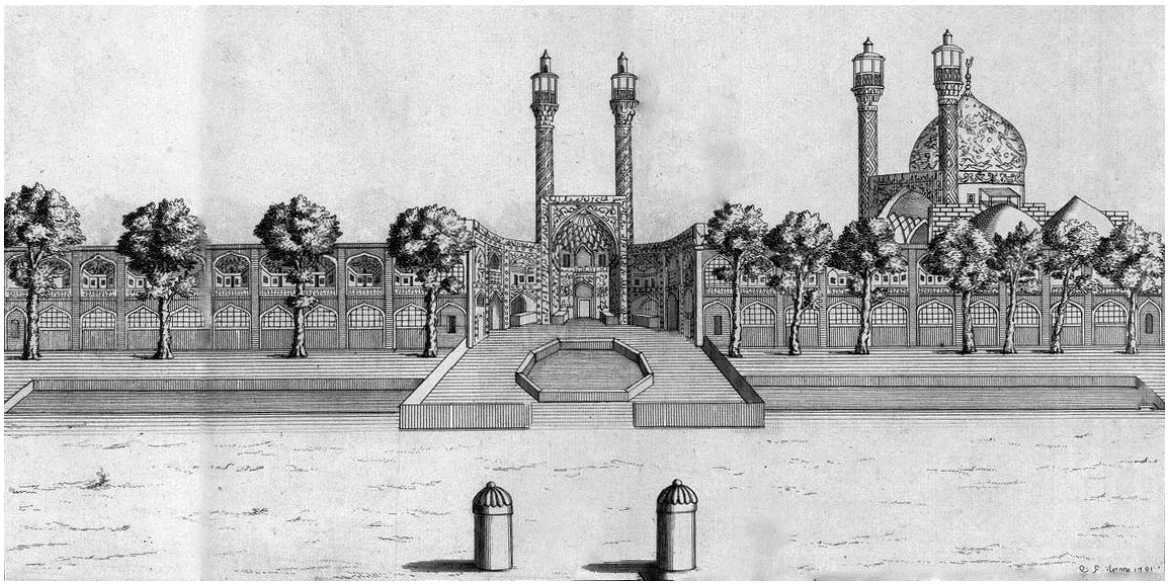

Figure C149. Masjed-e Shah's portal, drawn by Chardin. (Retrieved from: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:36_Chardin_Masjed_Shah_1705.jpg, accessed on 17 June 2021)



Figure C150. The portal of Masjed-e Shah.
(Photo Credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)

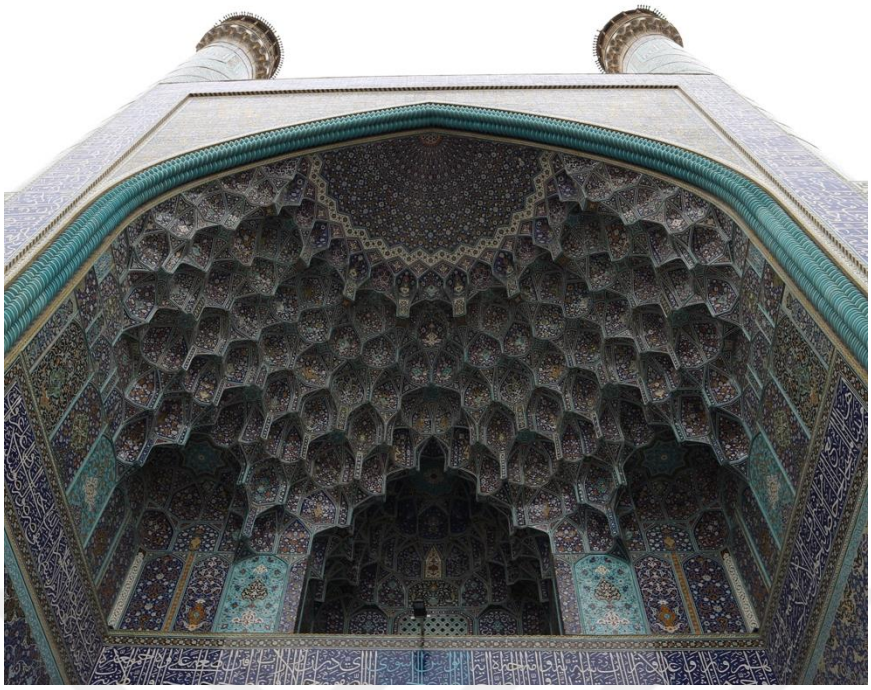

Figure C151. Detail from the stalactites on Masjed-e Shah's portal. (Photo Credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)

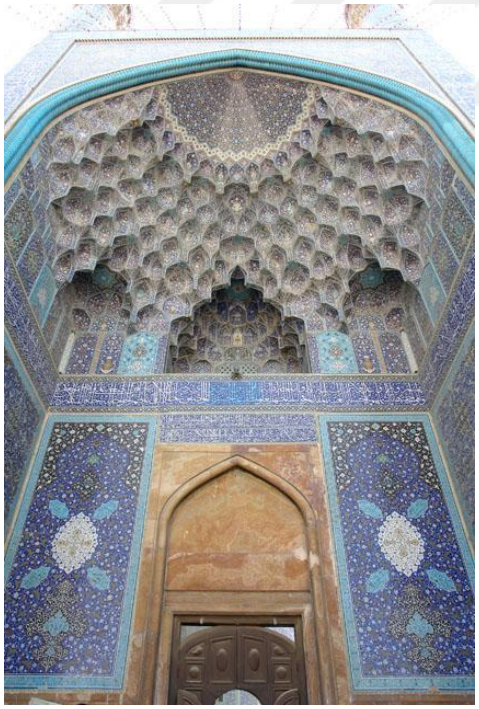

Figure C152. Interbedded rectangles framing Masjed-e Shah's silver-faced gate. (Photo Credit: Bahzat Ayati. Retrieved from: https://archnet.org/sites/1622/media_contents/63226, accessed on 21 June 2021)



Figure C153. The two-tiered arcaded wall to the right of Masjed-e Shah's pishtaq. (Photo Credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)



Figure C154. View of chamber behind Masjed-e Shah's main portal. (Photo Credit: Daniel C. Waugh. Retrieved from: https://archnet.org/media_contents/119816, accessed on 17 June 2021)



Figure C155. The eastern corridor leading to Masjed-e Shah's courtyard, with a view of the southern iwan.
(Photo Credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)

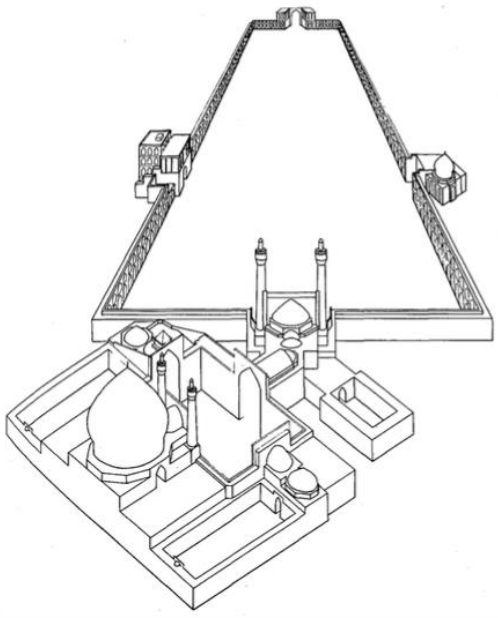

Figure C156. Masjed-e Shah's isometric plan, displaying the difference between the directions of the square and the mosque.
(Reproduced from: Hillenbrand, "Safavid Architecture", 781)

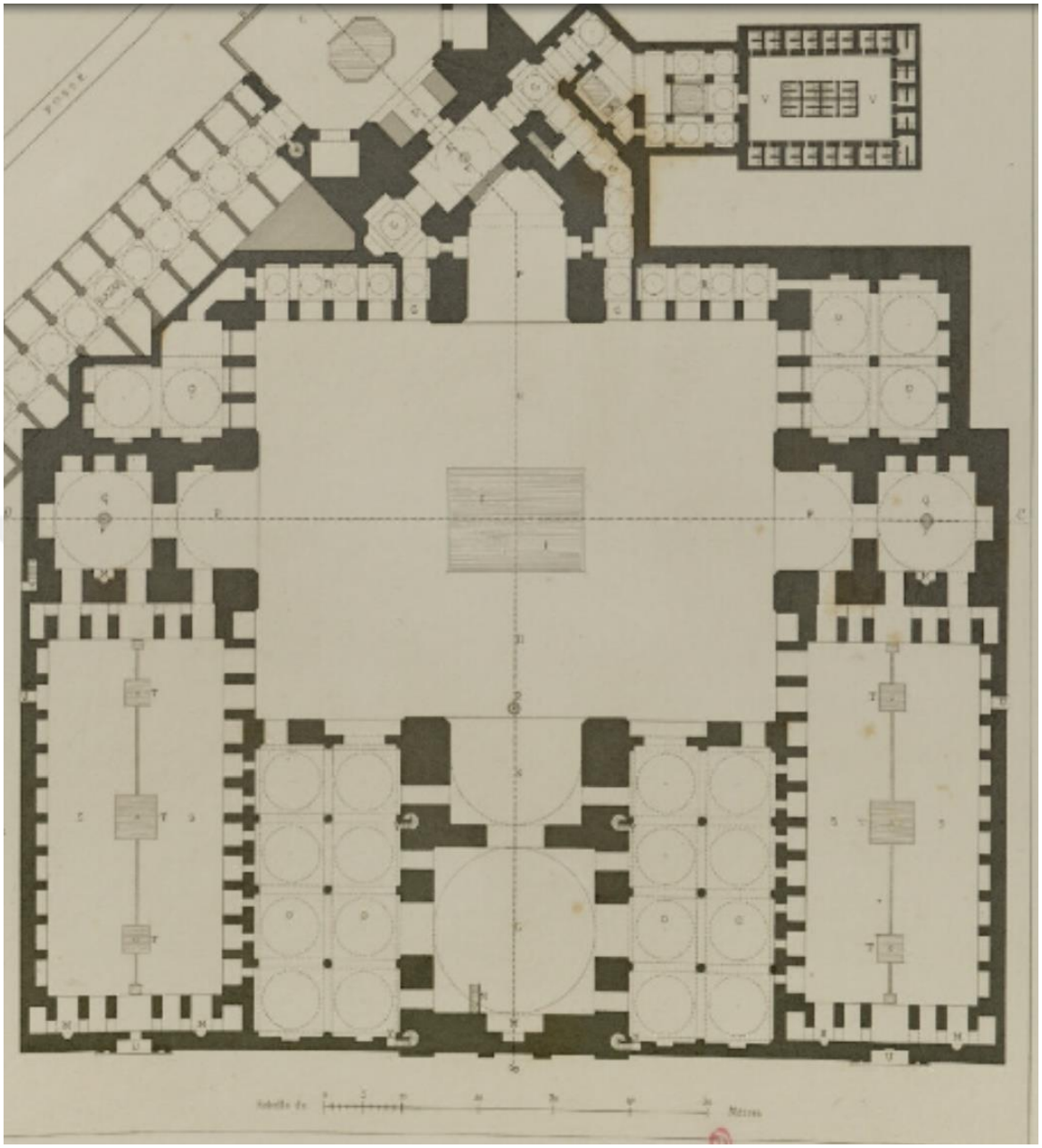

Figure C157. The modular plan of the Masjed-e Shah complex.
(Reproduced from: Coste, *Monuments Moderne*, Pl. viii.)

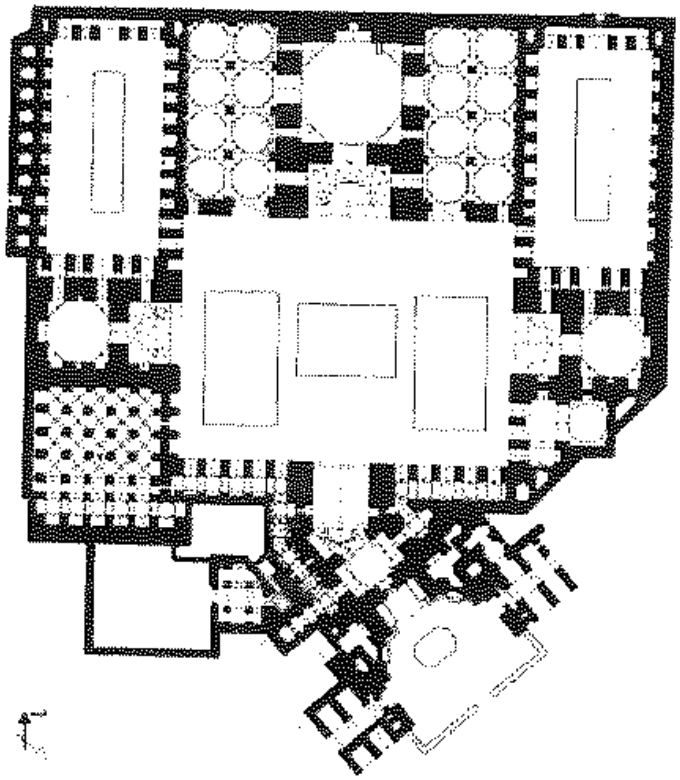

Figure C158. The floor plan of the Masjed-e Shah by Pirnia.
(Reproduced from: Pirnia, *Mi'mārī-ye Irānī*, 273)

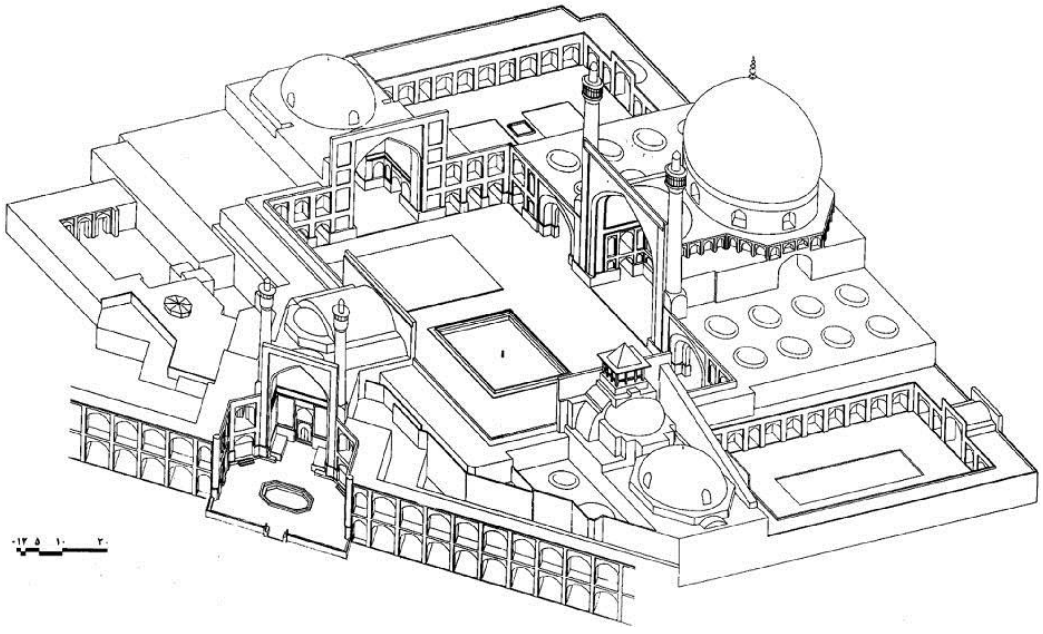

Figure C159. The isometric projection of Masjed-e Shah.
(Reproduced from: *Ganjnāma*, II, 23)



Figure C160. The courtyard and the side iwans of Masjed-e Shah. (Photo Credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)



Figure C161. The western (on the east) and the southern (on the west) iwans of Masjed-e Shah.
(Photo Credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)



Figure C162. Double storey arcades surrounding Masjed-e Shah's courtyard. (Photo Credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)



Figure C163. The pool at the center of Masjed-e Shah's courtyard. (Photo Credit: M. T. Ullens de Shooten. Retrieved from: https://archnet.org/media_contents/63237, accessed on 17 June 2021)

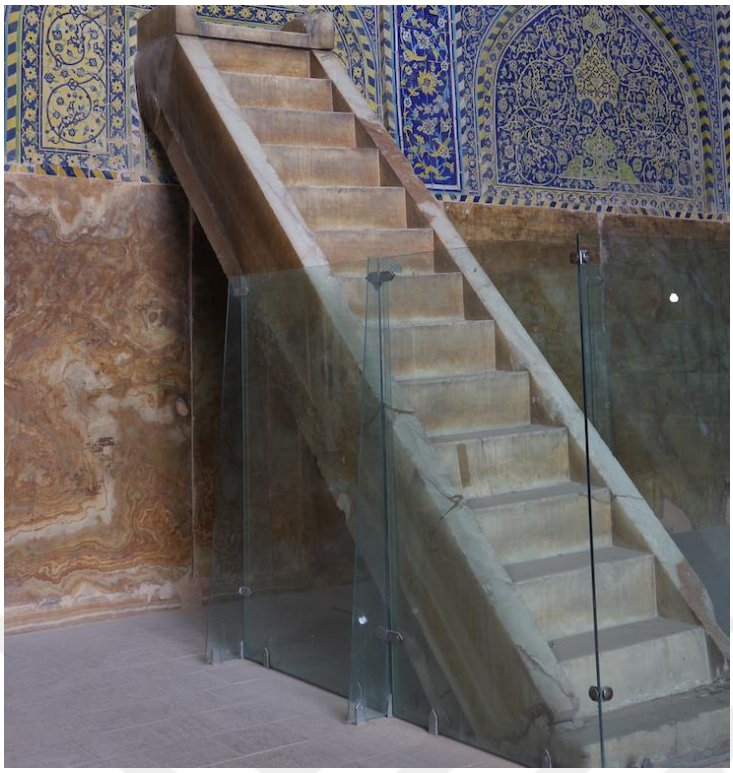

Figure C164. The marble pulpit inside Masjed-e Shah's main prayer hall. (Photo Credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)



Figure C165. The hallow in front of Masjed-e Shah's praying niche. (Photo credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)



Figure C166. The dome covering Masjed-e Shah's main prayer hall.
(Photo Credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)

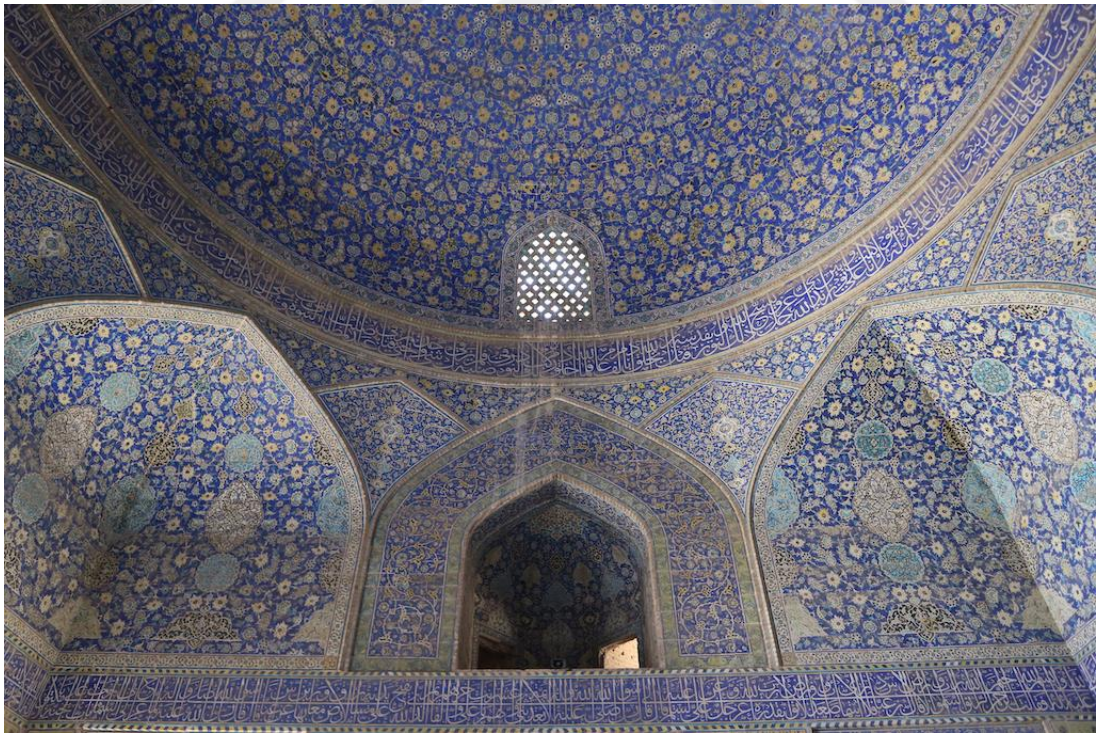

Figure C167. The pointed arches recessed on the edges and sides of Masjed-e Shah's prayer hall.
(Photo credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)

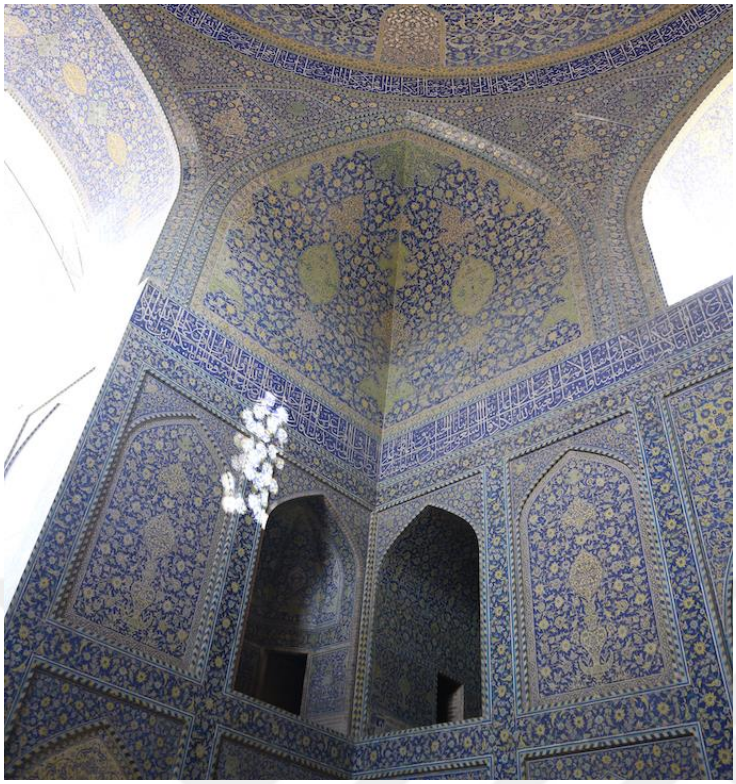

Figure C168. The network of arches descending from Masjed-e Shah's dome.
(Photo Credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)

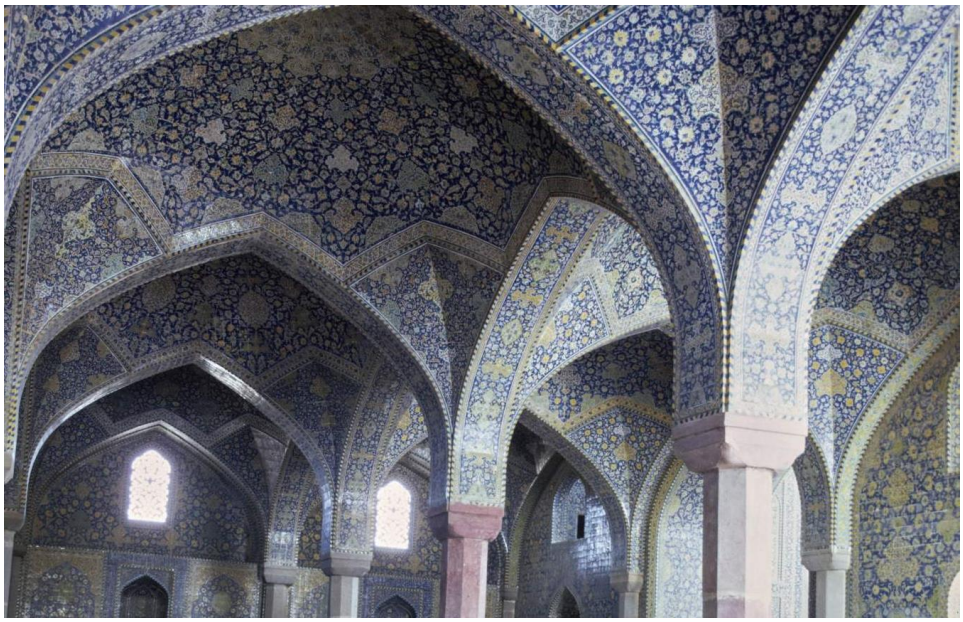

Figure C169. Vaulted prayer halls adjoining Masjed-e Shah's domed chamber on qibla side.
(Photo Credit: Lisa Golombek. Retrieved from: https://archnet.org/media_contents/106248, accessed on 17 June 2021)



Figure C170. View of the vaulted bay in Masjed-e Shah's cloister.
(Photo Credit: Daniel C. Waugh. Retrieved from:
https://archnet.org/media_contents/119839, accessed on 17 June 2021)

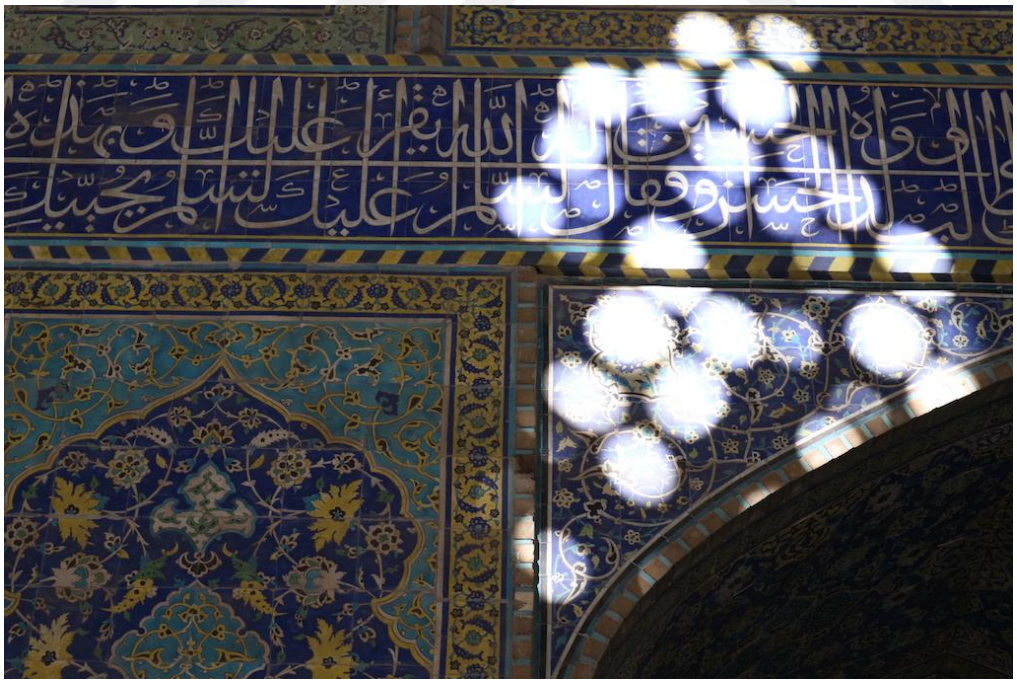

Figure C171. Reflections inside Masjed-e Shah's cloister.
(Photo Credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)



Figure C172. View of domed chamber behind Masjed-e Shah's western iwan. (Photo Credit: Daniel C. Waugh. Retrieved from: https://archnet.org/media_contents/119858, accessed on 17 June 2022)

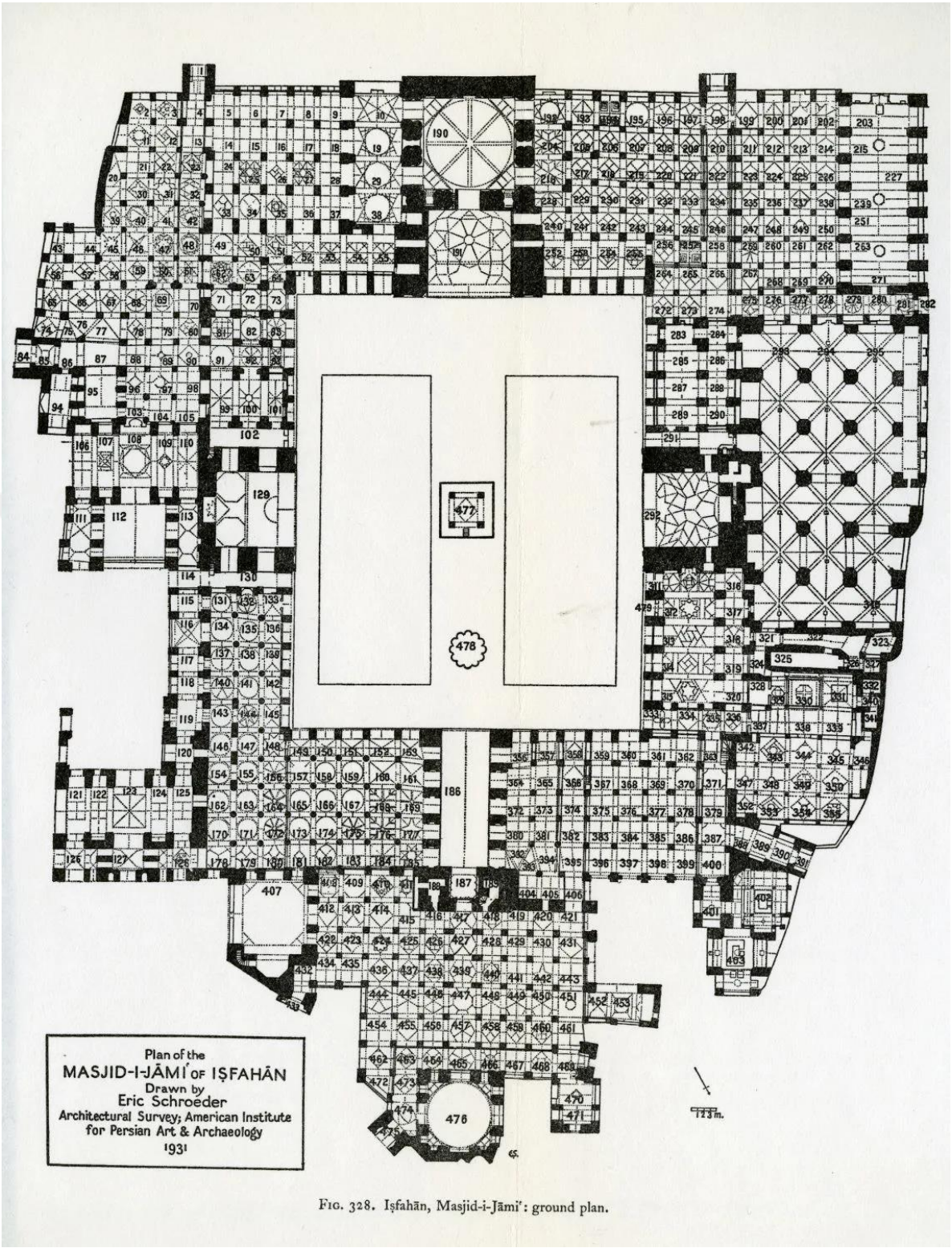

FIG. 328. Iṣfahān, Masjid-i-Jāmi': ground plan.

Figure C173. The plan of Isfahan's old Friday mosque.
(It shows: 129. The west iwan; 186. The north iwan;190. The dome of of Malek al-Mulk; 191. The south iwan; 292. The east iwan; 476. The dome of Taj al-Mulk. Reproduced from: Pope, *Survey of Persian*, III, fig. 328)

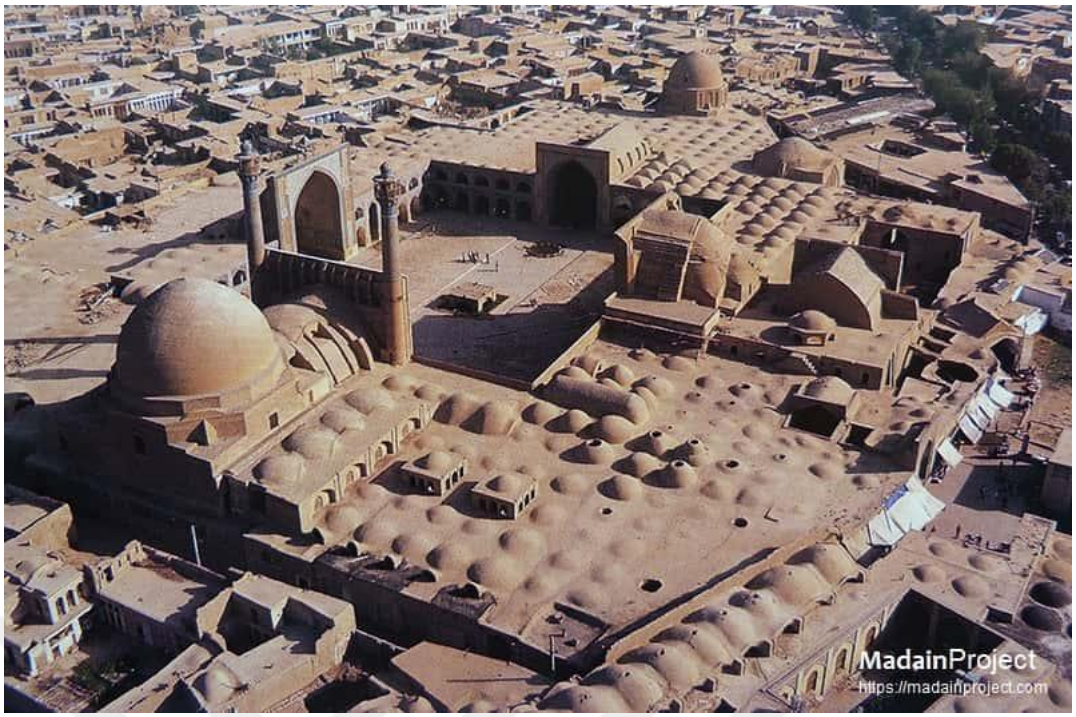

Figure C174. The aerial view of Isfahan's old Friday mosque. (Photo Credit: Madain Project. Retrieved from: https://madainproject.com/jameh_masjid_isfahan#gallery-13, accessed on 4 September 2022)



Figure C175. Double arcades in the courtyard of the Gawhar Shad Mosque in the Shrine of Imam Reza in Mashhad.
(Photo Credit: May Farhat. Retrieved from: https://www.archnet.org/sites/4745?media_content_id=615, accessed on 4 September 2022)



Figure C176. Masjed-e Shah's monumental dome.
(Photo Credit: Daniel C. Waugh. Retrieved from: https://www.archnet.org/sites/1622?media_content_id=119957, accessed on 4 September 2022)

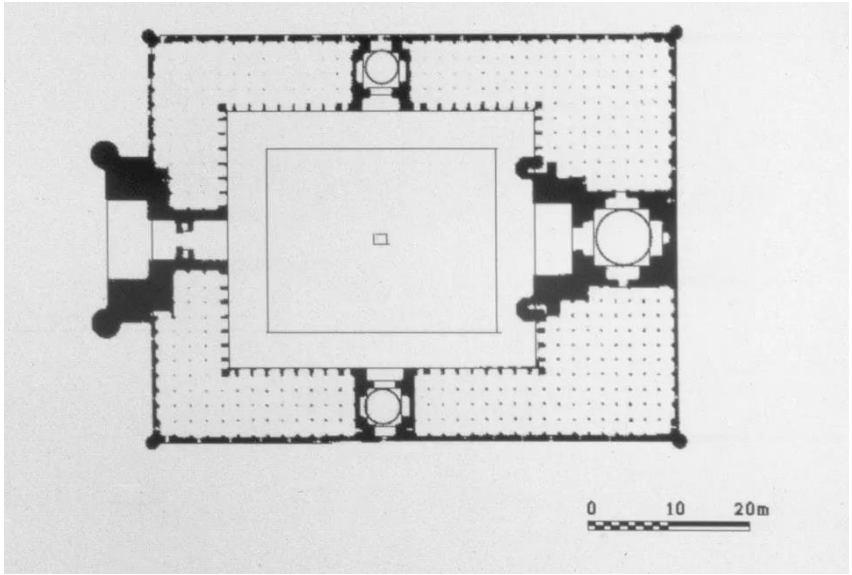

Figure C177. The domes behind the lateral iwans of the Bibi Khanum Mosque in Samarqand.
(Credit: Keith Turner. Retrieved from: https://www.archnet.org/sites/2464?media_content_id=49338, accessed on 4 September 2022)

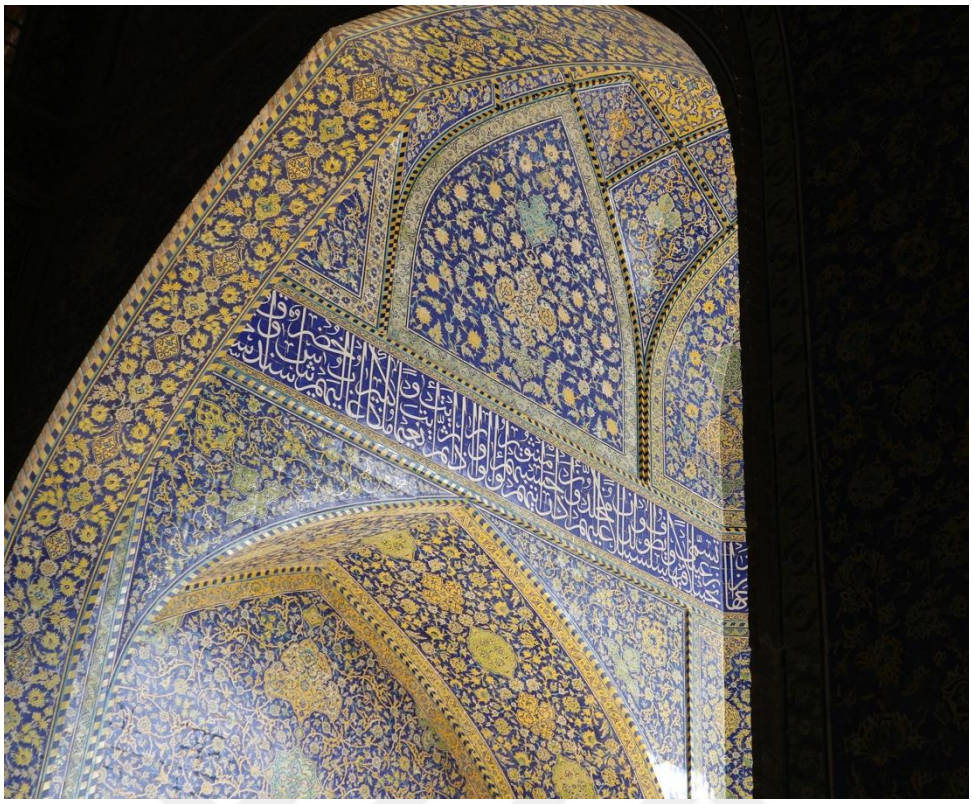

Figure C178. Angles created by an arch in the western corridor leading to Masjed-e Shah's courtyard. (Photo Credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)



Figure C179. View of Masjed-e Shah's courtyard from the western corridor. (Photo Credit: Damla Gürkan Anar)



Figure C180. View of Masjed-e Shah's southern iwan from the western iwan.
(Photo Credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)

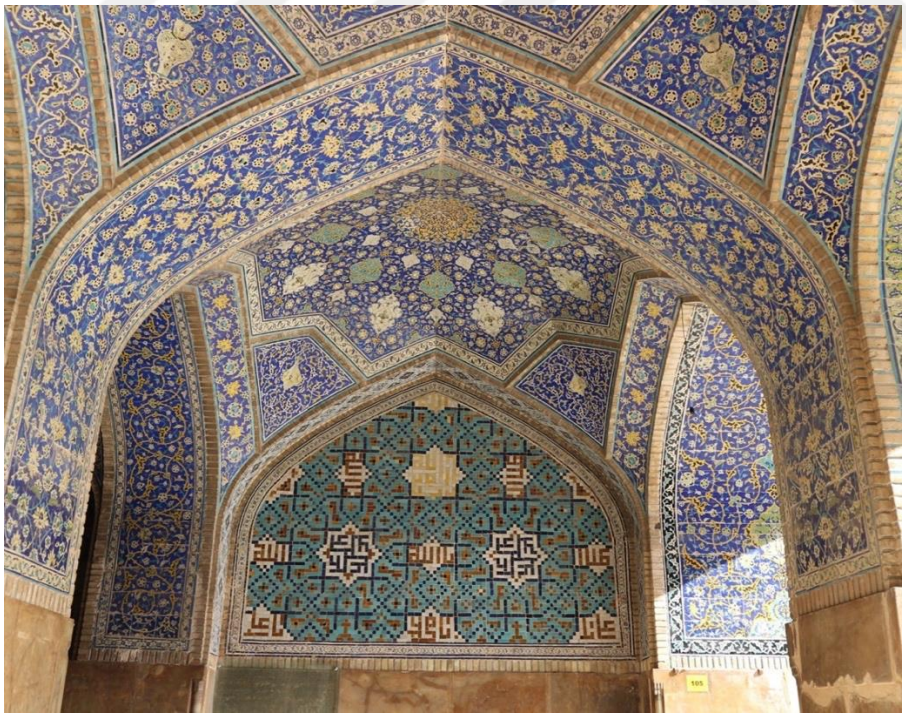

Figure C181. The crescendo of pointed arches appearing on the sideways flanking Masjed-e Shah's northern iwan.
(Photo Credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)



Figure C182. The changing views of the portal minarets of Masjed-e Shah. (Photo Credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)



Figure C183. The changing views of the portal minarets of Masjed-e Shah. (Photo Credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)



Figure C184. Masjed-e Shah's view from the eastern edge of the square.
(Photo Credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)



Figure C185. Masjed-e Shah's view from the talar of the Ali Qapu.
(Photo Credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)



Figure C186. Masjed-e Shah's view from the *tamāshāgāh* on the entrance complex of the Qaysariya Bazaar.
(Photo Credit: Melanie Michailidis. Retrieved from: https://archnet.org/sites/1622/media_contents/63214, accessed on 21 June 2021)



Figure C187. An *absāng* in the domed hall behind Masjed-e Shah's western iwan.
(Photo credit: Damla Gürkan Anar)



Figure C188. *Goldasta* minaret of Masjed-e Shah.
(Photo credit: Damla Gürkan Anar)



Figure C189. The courtyard of the western madrasa of the Masjed-e Shah complex.
(Photo credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)



Figure C190. The southern iwan of the eastern madrasa of the Masjed-e Shah complex.
(Photo Credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)



Figure C191. A *haft rang* panel in Masjed-e Shah with repetitive scrolls, leaves, flowers, and arabesques.
(Photo Credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)



Figure C192. Detail from a mosaic faience panel with floral motifs and arabesque designs adorning Masjed-e Shah's eastern corridor.
(Photo Credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)

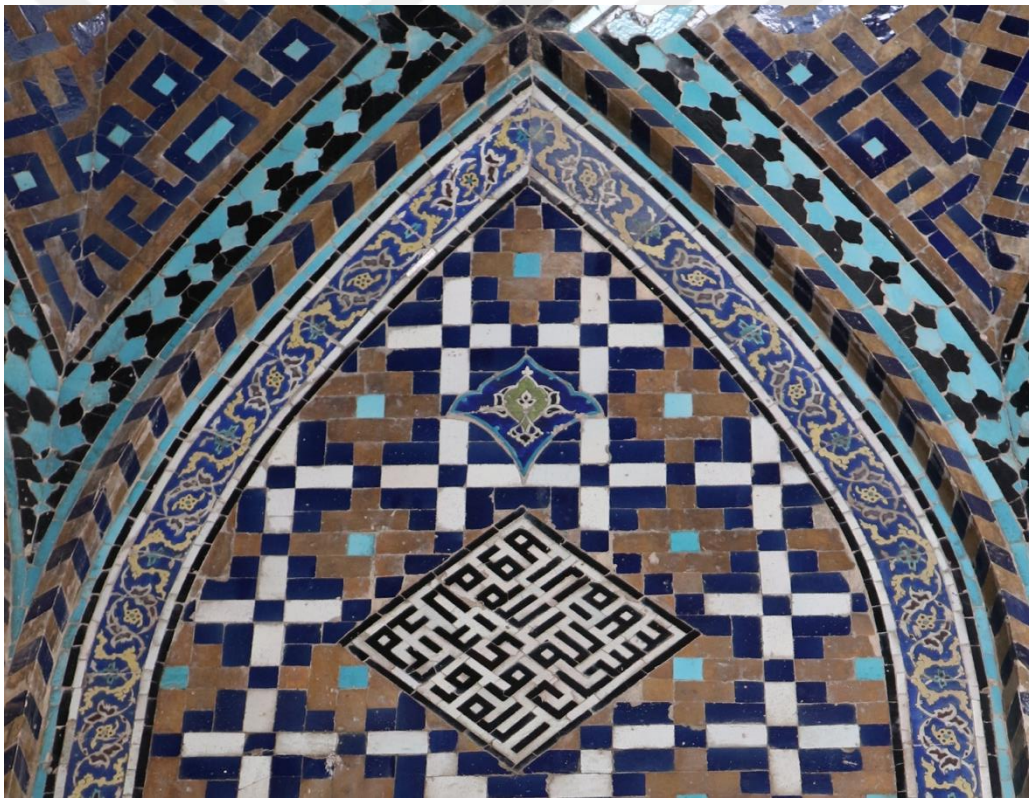

Figure C193. Detail from a glazed brick panel with geometric designs and inscriptions on Masjed-e Shah's eastern corridor.
(Photo Credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)



Figure C194. Stone carving adornment with floral designs, decorating the inscription reading basmalah on Masjed-e Shah's portal screen.
(Photo Credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)



Figure C195. A *haft rang* tile panel on Masjed-e Shah's portal.
(Photo Credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)



Figure C196. Detail of a vase design on a tile panel in Masjed-e Shah's vestibule. (Photo Credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)



Figure C197. Marble corner carved in the mould of a vase in Masjed-e Shah. (Photo Credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)

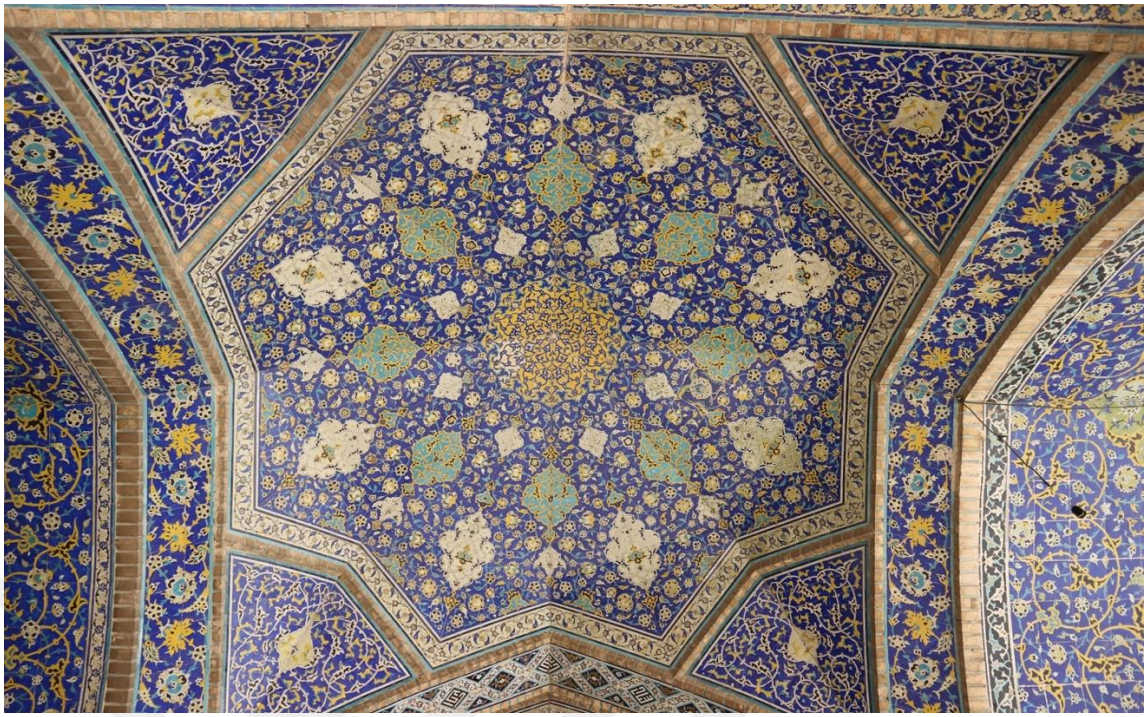

Figure C198. A medallion spreading like sunburst painted in yellow adorning a dome on Masjed-e Shah's eastern corridor.
(Photo Credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)



Figure C199. The paired peacock on the portal of Masjed-e Shah.
(Photo Credit: B. O'Kane. Retrieved from: https://www.alamy.com/detail-of-tile-work-entrance-portal-of-the-masjid-i-shah-isfahan-iran-image62671142.html, accessed on 22 June 2021)

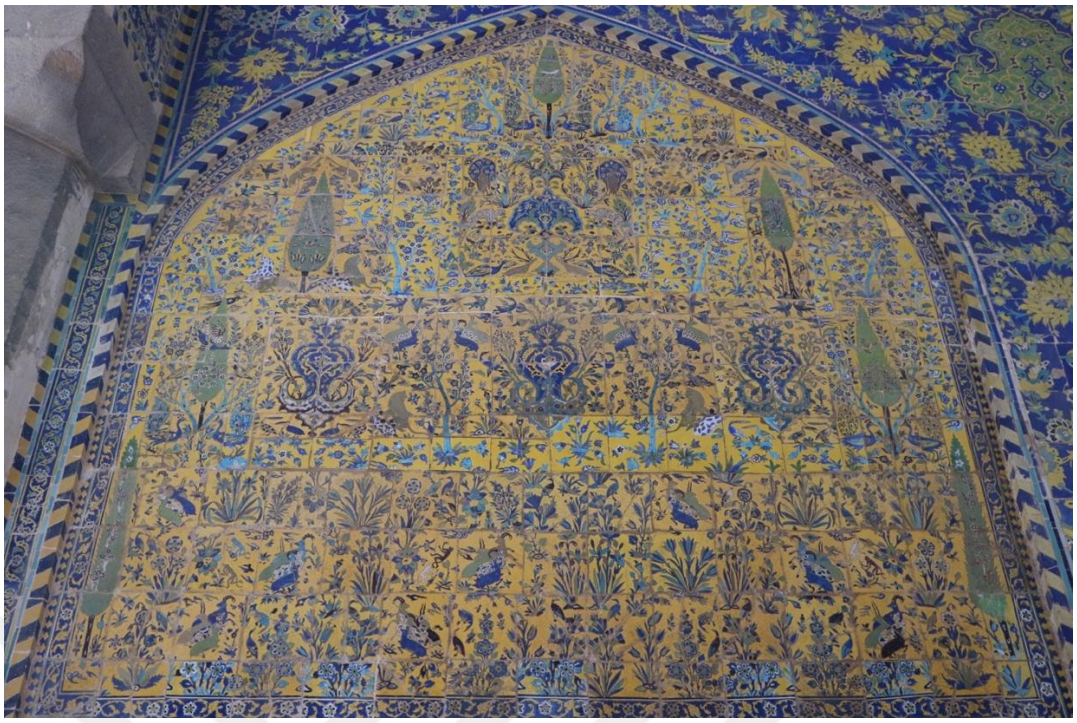

Figure C200. Masjed-e Shah's tile panel depicting an image of a garden.
(Photo Credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)



Figure C201. Detail from Paradise Garden Carpet, or Tapis de Mantes displaying the paired peacock, trees, and animals.
(North Iran, second half of the sixteenth century. Musee du Louvre, DAI, acquired in 1912. Reproduced from: *İstanbul, Isfahan, Delhi*, 200)



Figure C202. A peacock image on a tile panel decorating one of the outer walls of the *Hasht Behesht* Palace.
(Photo Credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)

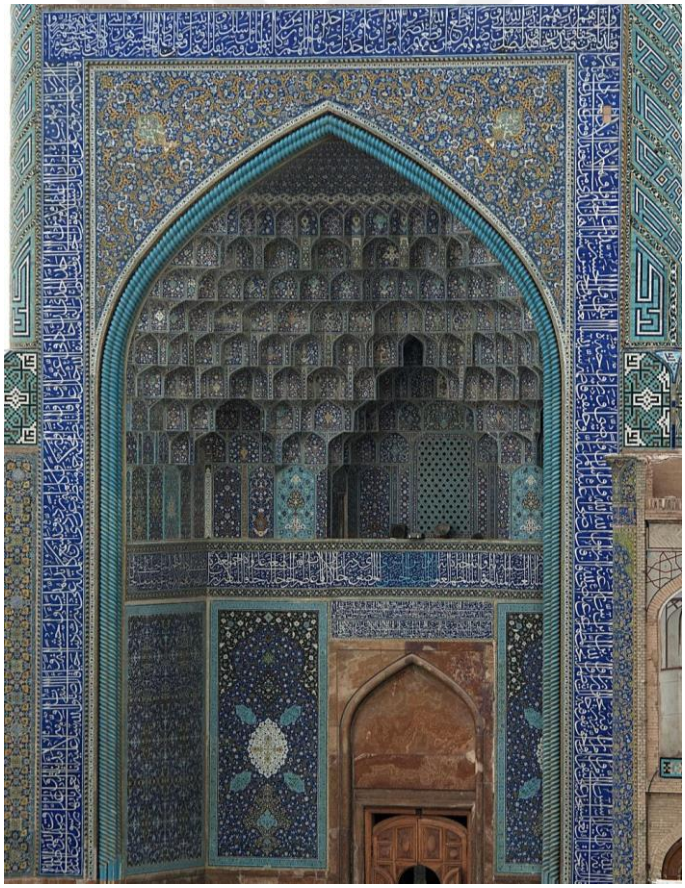

Figure C203. The two-lined inscriptions framing Masjed-e Shah's portal and running around the three sides of the iwan.
(Photo Credit: Daniel C. Waugh. Retrieved from: https://www.archnet.org/sites/1622?media_content_id=119941, accessed on 20 December 2021)



Figure C204. Detail from the inscription framing Masjed-e Shah's portal. (Its two-lines are seperated by the elongated riser of *yā*. Photo Credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)



Figure C205. The four cut-tile epigraphic medallions on the portal. (Photo Credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)



Figure C206. The quadrangular kufic inscription composed of the words “Allah”, “Muhammad” and “Ali”.
(Photo Credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)

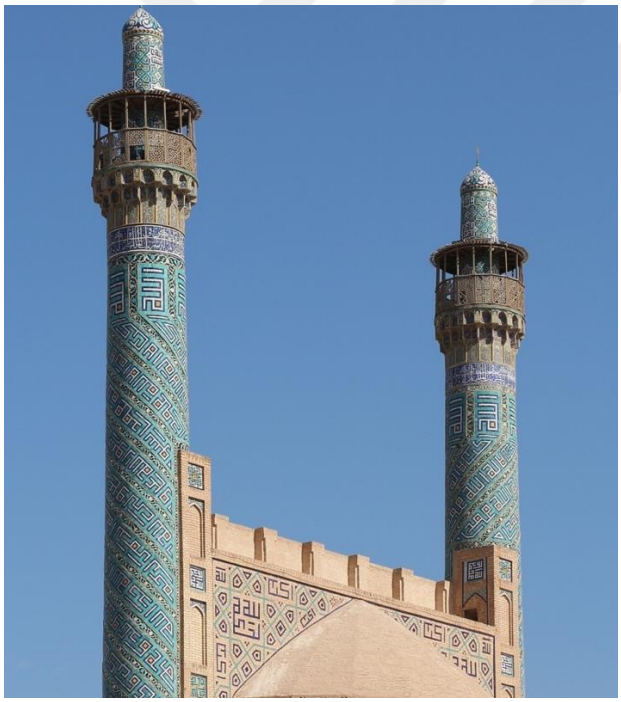

Figure C207. View of the two identical minarets flanking the portal from Masjed-e Shah’s courtyard.
(Photo Credit: Bernard Gagnon. Retrieved from: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Shah_Mosque,_Isfahan_-_Minarets.jpg, accessed on 20 December 2021)



Figure C208. Kufic inscriptions on the wall in the western corridor of Masjed-e Shah's vestibule, repeating the words "Allah", "Muhammad", "Ali", "Ya Allah", "Ya Ali".
(Photo Credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)

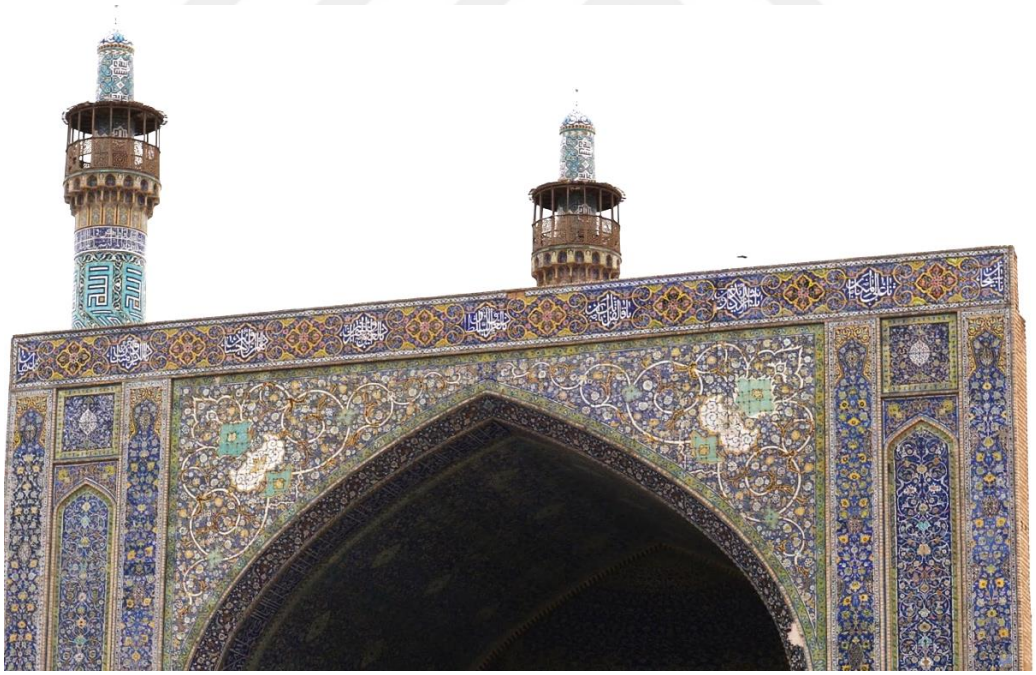

Figure C209. Thuluth inscriptions on the northern portal facing Masjed-e Shah's courtyard, which read some invocations repeated in the Jawshan Prayer.
(Photo Credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)

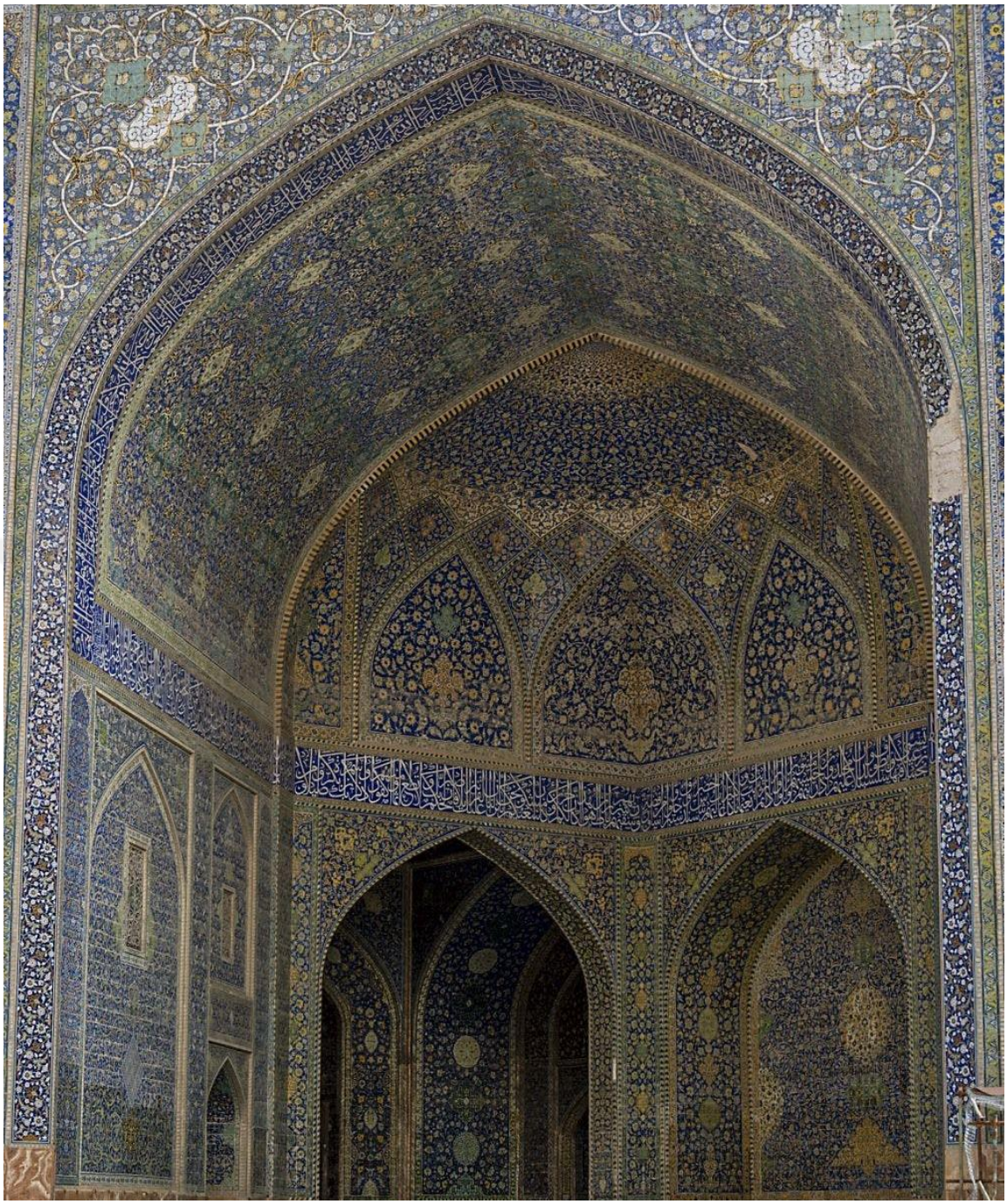

Figure C210. The two-lined thuluth inscription framing Masjed-e Shah's northern iwan and running inside its three sides.
(Photo Credit: Daniel C. Waugh. Retrieved from: https://www.archnet.org/sites/1622?media_content_id=119872, accessed on 20 December 2021)



Figure C211. Inscriptional medallions on Masjed-e Shah's western iwan facing the courtyard, which read some invocations repeated in the Jawshan Prayer.
(Photo Credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)

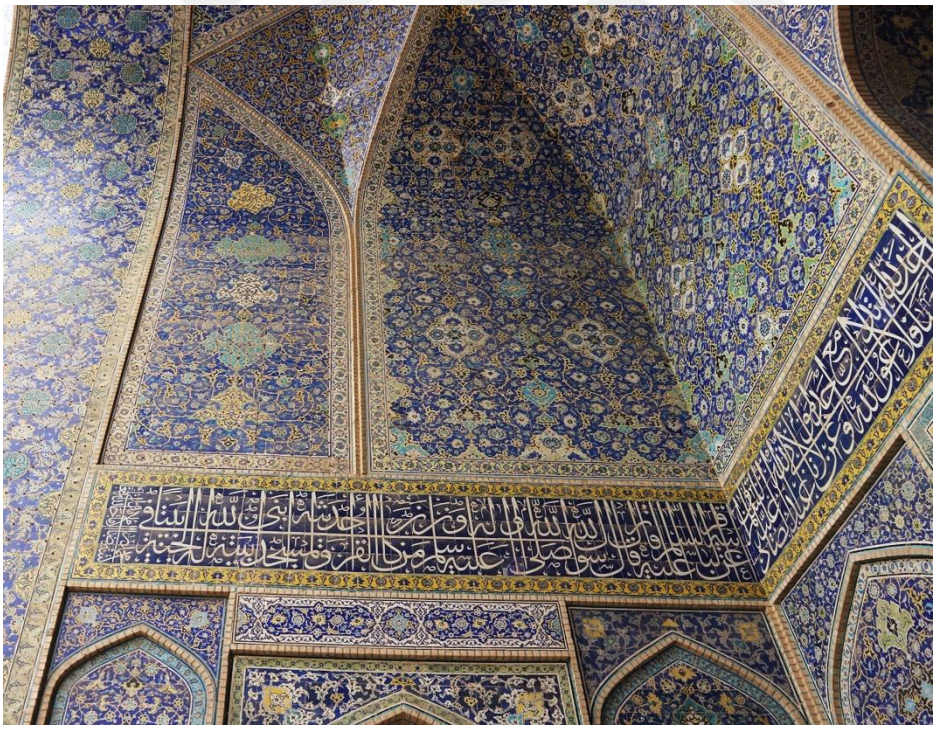

Figure C212. The thuluth inscription running on each side of Masjed-e Shah's western iwan.
(It reads a Shi'i hadith on prayers narrated by Abdullah al-Sadiq and his father Imam Baqir. Photo Credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)



Figure C213. Two-lined inscriptional bands surrounding the domed prayer hall behind Masjed-e Shah's western iwan.
(Photo Credit: Daniel C. Waugh. Retrieved from: https://www.archnet.org/sites/1622?media_content_id=119864, accessed on 20 December 2021)



Figure C214. The two-lined thuluth inscription running on the eastern iwan's eastern side.
(It reads a hadith concerning Imam Ali's deputyship, narrated by Abu Naim al-Muhdis. Photo Credit: Daniel C. Waugh. Retrieved from: https://www.archnet.org/sites/1622?media_content_id=119877, accessed on 20 December 2021)

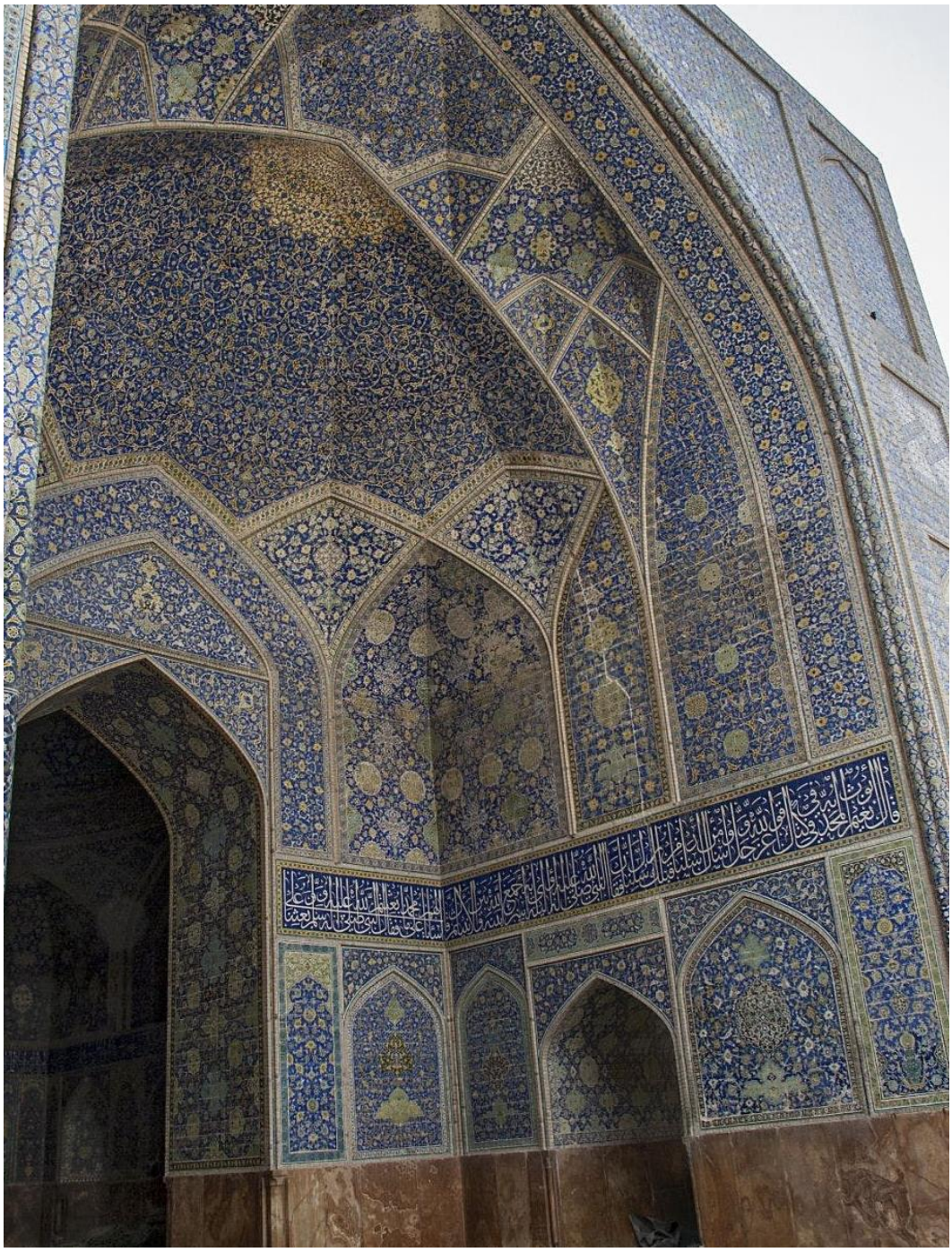

Figure C215. Another view of the two-lined thuluth inscription running on the eastern iwan's eastern side, showing its placement in the iwan.
(Photo Credit: Daniel C. Waugh. Retrieved from: https://www.archnet.org/sites/1622?media_content_id=119874, accessed on 20 December 2021)



Figure C216. Detail from the inscriptional panel running on the dome's base in the hall behind Masjed-e Shah's eastern iwan.
(Photo Credit: Daniel C. Waugh. Retrieved from: https://www.archnet.org/sites/1622?media_content_id=119891, accessed on 20 December 2021)



Figure C217. The two-lined inscriptional band on Masjed-e Shah's qibla iwan and running around the domed prayer hall.
(Photo Credit: Daniel C. Waugh. Retrieved from: https://www.archnet.org/sites/1622?media_content_id=119832, accessed on 20 December 2021)



Figure C218. View through Masjed-e Shah's qibla iwan toward domed chamber. (The long inscriptional band runs on the walls of the iwan and the domed prayer hall. Photo Credit: Yaser Tabba. Retrieved from: https://www.archnet.org/sites/1622?media_content_id=105845, accessed on 20 December 2021)



Figure C219. Detail of the long inscriptional panel running around Masjed-e Shah's domed chamber.
(Photo Credit: Daniel C. Waugh. Retrieved from: https://www.archnet.org/sites/1622?media_content_id=119909, accessed on 20 December 2021)



Figure C220. The rectangular inscriptional panel upon the marble mihrab in Masjed-e Shah's main prayer hall, narrating a hadith.
(Photo Credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)



Figure C221. View of the exterior of Masjed-e Shah's dome.
(The Kufic inscriptional panels between the fenestrations and the thuluth epigraphic band enveloping the dome's base are visible. Photo Credit: Daniel C. Waugh. Retrieved from: https://www.archnet.org/sites/1622?media_content_id=119989, accessed on 21 December 2021)



Figure C222. Inscriptions on the exterior of Sheikh Lutfullah Mosque's dome. (Photo Credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)



Figure C223. Detail from the inscriptions of Masjed-e Shah's dome. (The kufic panel between the fenestrations reads "Sovereignty belongs to God" and "God is the greatest". Photo Credit: Daniel C. Waugh. Retrieved from: https://www.archnet.org/sites/1622?media_content_id=119995, accessed on 21 December 2021)

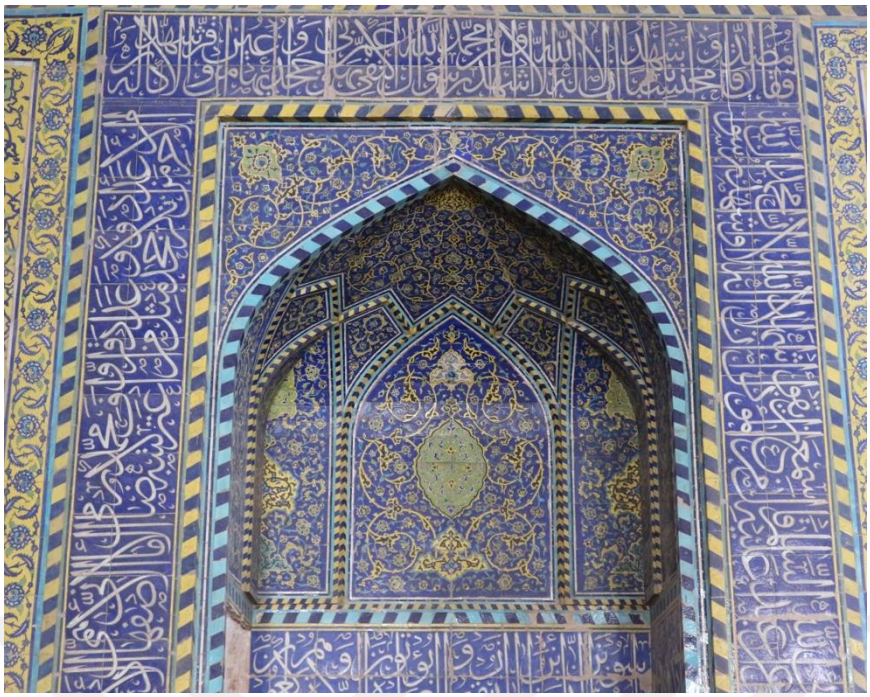

Figure C224. Thuluth inscriptions framing the mihrab in Masjed-e Shah's eastern oratory.
(Photo Credit: Damla Gürkan-Anar)



Figure C225. Kufic inscriptions on the arches around the eastern madrasa's courtyard, reading "Allah, "Muhammad", and "Ali".
(Photo Credit: Daniel C. Waugh. Retrieved from: https://www.archnet.org/sites/1622?media_content_id=119933, accessed on 21 December 2021)



Figure C226. Kufic inscriptions on the gate of the western madrasa.
(Photo Credit: Daniel C. Waugh. Retrieved from: https://www.archnet.org/sites/1622?media_content_id=119996, accessed on 21 December 2021)



Figure C227. Lamp stand from the Sheikh Safi Shrine, last quarter of the 16th century.
(Reproduced from: *Istanbul, Isfahan*, 85)



Figure C228. Prayer stone from Kerbala, clay.
(Syria, Damascus; 20th century. Diam: 7.3 cm. The David Collection, nv. no. D 1/2008. Retrieved from: http://www.davidmus.dk/en/collections/islamic/cultural-history-themes/five-pillars/art/d-1-2008, accessed on 28 March 2022)

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