

**The Ottoman-Safavid War of 1578-1590 in Narrative Sources: An
Evaluation of Hungarian Academy of Sciences Manuscript Ms Török
O. 176**

By

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A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School of Social Sciences and Humanities in
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts
in
Comparative Studies in History and Society



KOÇ ÜNİVERSİTESİ

July 12, 2023

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ABSTRACT

The Ottoman-Safavid War of 1578-1590 in Narrative Sources: An Evaluation of Hungarian Academy of Sciences Manuscript Ms Török O. 176

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This thesis evaluates a hitherto unstudied, anonymously authored Ottoman Turkish manuscript titled *Tevarih-i Futuh-i Şirvan* that describes the 1578 Ottoman military campaign in Georgia and Azerbaijan against the forces of the Safavid Empire. The manuscript consists of approximately thirty folios of about twenty-one lines of text each. The copy under study, and the only known version, was created in 1721-1722. The text is a prose narrative in the genre of *gazavatname*, or a description of military actions with emphasis on the heroic actions of individuals. This thesis evaluates the *Tevarih* by close reading the text to understand Ottoman warfare, borderlands, and the internal dynamics of the imperial government during the reign of Sultan Murad III (1574-1595).

ÖZETÇE

El Yazmalarında 1578-1590 Osmanlı-Safevi Savaşı: Macar Bilimler Akademisinin “Ms Török O. 176” El Yazmasının Değerlendirmesi

Samuel Stevens

Yüksek Lisans Comparative Studies in History and Society

Haziran 12, 2023

Bu tezde, 1578 yılında Safevi İmparatorluğu kuvvetlerine karşı Gürcistan ve Azerbaycan'da düzenlenen Osmanlı askeri seferini anlatan Tevarih-i Fütuh-ı Şirvan başlıklı, şimdiye kadar üzerinde çalışılmamış, anonim olarak yazılmış bir Osmanlı Türkçesi el yazması değerlendirilmektedir. El yazması, her biri yaklaşık yirmi bir satırlık yaklaşık otuz yapraktan oluşmaktadır. İncelenen nüsha ve bilinen tek versiyon 1721-1722 yıllarında oluşturulmuştur. Metin, *gazavatname* türünde düzyazı bir anlatı veya bireylerin kahramanca eylemlerine vurgu yapan askeri eylemlerin bir tasviridir. Bu tez, Sultan III. Murad (1574-1595) döneminde Osmanlı savaşlarını, sınır bölgelerini ve imparatorluk yönetiminin iç dinamiklerini anlamak için Tevarih'i yakın okumaya tabi tutarak değerlendirmektedir.

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Chapter 1:

INTRODUCTION

Historical writing in the Ottoman Empire took on different forms and subjects, most notably the comprehensive general chronicles of historians aligned with the court. Warfare was a principal subject of these general histories, but Ottoman writers also wrote more focused narratives on imperial military campaigns and battles. The work under consideration, the *Tevarih-i Futuh-i Şirvan* (“*History of the Conquest of Şirvan*”), which describes the Caucasus and Azerbaijan campaign of 1578-1579 during the reign of Sultan Murad III (r. 1574-1595), is an example of such a text from around the late sixteenth century.¹ The campaign, that led to a protracted war until 1590, was an attempt by the Ottoman Empire to dislodge their geopolitical and religious rival, the Safavid Empire of Iran, from Transcaucasia. The war caused decades of political and economic instability for the empire and resulted in intense palace factionalism and strife. The *Tevarih* is an example of a text composed in this period of military and political uncertainty and subtly illustrates the intersection of warfare and inter-elite struggles. This thesis assesses both the military affairs of the Ottoman army and the milieu of the late sixteenth Ottoman century elite by closely reading the *Tevarih-i Futuh-i Şirvan*.

The manuscript is in the library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in Budapest, and is part of the Ármin Vámbéry collection. Vámbéry (1832-1913) was a Hungarian orientalist that collected this text along with other manuscripts that are now in the collection that bears his name. A notable figure in late-nineteenth century Orientalist scholarship, he was a professor of Turcology and member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and collected manuscripts during travels in the Middle East, Central Asia, and Iran.² The *Tevarih* is a manuscript of 30 folios of prose, the original author and date it was written are unknown, and the text provides only some clues as to his social and intellectual background. He appeared to have been familiar with the palace elite and senior military commanders. The Budapest manuscript is the only known extant copy, produced around 1722-1723 by a scribe

¹ Budapest, Hungarian Academy of Sciences Library, Vámbéry Collection, MS Török O. 176.

² See Jacob M. Landau, “Arminius Vámbéry: Traveller, Scholar, Politician,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 50, no. 6 (2014): 857–69; Arminius Vámbéry, *Arminius Vámbéry: His Life and Adventures* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1884).

named Mustafa Salim Abdullah.³ None of the catalogues of the Süleymaniye Library, the Istanbul Millet Yazma Eser Library, and Istanbul University Library manuscript collections show a copy of the work. Further searches in the catalogue of the Milli Library that cross-references multiple collections likewise do not show a matching title. Another copy of the manuscript was not found despite locating other texts that discuss the same events as the *Tevarih*. A copy of the text may also be in a *mecmua* (compilation manuscript).

This study is divided into four chapters based on the chronology of the 1578 campaign and the structure of the chronicle. The introduction addresses the context of Ottoman military history, the Ottoman rivalry with the Safavids, and the military chronicle genre. Chapter One analyzes the departure of the Ottoman army from Istanbul and its march to the staging area of Erzurum in Eastern Anatolia. Chapter Two studies the *Tevarih* author's account of the Battle of Çıldır and the attempted pacification of the princes of Georgia, where the imperial army defeated a Safavid army and then faced difficulties occupying the Georgian states. Chapter Three focuses on the hard winter operations in Azerbaijan and drive of the Ottoman army further into Safavid territory. Chapter Four studies the efforts of imperial forces in Transcaucasia during the winter of 1578-79 in which joint Ottoman and Crimean Tatar forces struggled against the Safavids on a distant front. The chronicle provides both a description of the military events and illustrates how Ottoman commanders enacted conquest and occupation of new subjects, as well as the problems the imperial military encountered undertaking the campaign. The chronicle also depicts the human limits of the Ottoman army and the difficulties motivating troops for sustained operations.

The Changing Nature of Ottoman Warfare in the Late Sixteenth Century

The Ottoman Empire of the late sixteenth century faced nearly continuous in both the Habsburg Monarchy and Safavid Iran from 1578 to 1639 that tested the state's ability to grapple with fiscal crisis, changes in the social structure, and strategic military issues. The scope and scale of war was more significant than the generally single season campaigns of Selim I (r. 1512-1520) and Süleyman (r. 1520-1566). With the accession of Selim I (r. 1566-1574), warfare became more protracted, starting with the Cyprus War from 1570 to 1573. With the reign of Murad III starting in 1574 until his death in 1595, the Ottoman Empire experienced escalation of military commitments until 1639, when Murad IV defeated Shah

³ Budapest, Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Vámbéry Collection, MS Török O. 176; Ismail Parlatur, György Hazai, and Barbara Kellner Heinkele, *Catalogue of the Turkish Manuscripts in the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences* (Budapest: Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, 2007), 440 .

Safi I (r. 1629-1642) and settled the eastern frontier with the Safavids. In the west after 1606, the Ottomans did not face another long-term conflict until the 1645 Candia War. The wars of the 1578-1639 period were also significantly different from those fought by Selim I or Süleyman, which contributed to their fiscal and social implications.⁴ These sultans had generally fought single-season operations that culminated in the capture of a critical city and its fortifications. Field battles had also been decisive for Selim and Süleyman: Chaldiran (1514), Marj Dabiq (1516), Ridaniya (1517), and Mohacs (1526) resulted in clear Ottoman victories and territorial gains. Süleyman's campaign of the Two Iraqs was a more protracted conflict but gave the Ottomans control over Mesopotamia. Selim and Süleyman pursued aggressive expansion that benefitted the standing of the empire as a great power in the early modern world.

Selim and Süleyman had eliminated two major powers of the late-medieval world through their victories: the Mamluk Sultanate in 1517 and the Kingdom of Hungary in 1526. The Ottoman Empire restructured the geopolitical order of Europe and the Middle East in the early modern world through its conquests. It was these military operations specifically that changed international power relations, in addition to institutional and sociological factors.⁵ Their successors faced more complex military challenges that tested the capabilities of the Ottoman state, especially in Europe against the Habsburg Monarchy. After the Peace of Augsburg of 1555 reduced religious tensions in the Holy Roman Empire, the Habsburg archdukes increased military investment and more closely matched the capabilities of the Ottoman Empire.⁶ Both sides were now able to wage sustained, multi-year wars that surpassed the scale and intensity of fifteenth and earlier sixteenth centuries. The Ottomans also began to campaign much further afield, such as the Astrakhan campaign in 1566 where the imperial army faced Muscovy in the North Caucasus. Rebellion against Ottoman rule in Yemen from 1569-1571 was another distant, difficult operation. In the Cyprus War of 1571-1574, the empire had to coordinate both land and sea operations against a large European coalition.⁷ The Long War in Hungary (1591-1606) caused another increase in the intensity of the Ottoman-Habsburg conflict, as the Habsburg military was able to deploy their reformed

⁴ Gábor Ágoston, "The Ottoman Empire and Europe," in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern European History, 1350-1750*, ed. Hamish Scott, vol. 2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 629-630; Gábor Ágoston, *The Last Muslim Conquest: The Ottoman Empire and Its Wars in Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2021), 318-319.

⁵ Ágoston, *Last Muslim Conquest*, 9.

⁶ David Parrott, *The Business of War: Military Enterprise and Military Revolution in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 79.

⁷ Ágoston, *The Last Muslim Conquest*, 239-241.

military. No longer in a defensive posture, the Habsburg-led coalition army was able to coordinate offensive campaigns on multiple fronts. The Long War did not end Ottoman military dominance but proved that the Habsburg army was far stronger than it had been previously.

The Ottoman-Safavid War of 1578-90 and the Long War both increased the fiscal and administrative strains placed on the empire because of the demands for more troops and supplies. In 1527, the Janissaries levied for campaigning were 7886 plus an additional 3553 cadets. By 1597, the total number of Janissaries and cadets was 45000. Likewise, the Six Standing Cavalry Regiments went from about 5088 members in 1527 to 17000 seventy years later.⁸ The imperial treasury had to increase spending substantially, leading to long term economic problems. Provincial feudatory *timar* forces had long offset the costs of warfare on the central treasury as the holders of these fiefs financed their own retinues for the campaign. While the *timar* army never disappeared during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the fief-holders could not afford to send themselves and their retainers to fight. Higher levels of treasury expenditure forced the Ottoman state to change their fiscal system to raise the cash funds needed to pay the standing military forces. The transformative process took place from the 1580s to around the 1620s, during the most intense years of the multi-front wars.⁹ The increase in the professional army coincided with the rise in recruitment of *sekbān* (mercenary infantry) by provincial governors, which provided a new source of manpower independent of the *timar* system.

By the turn of the seventeenth century warfare between the Ottomans and their neighbors was waged on a much larger scale than it had been a century prior. The Ottomans, Habsburgs, and Safavids were able to mobilize greater resources and fought for extended periods of time, often across multiple simultaneous fronts. Gunpowder weapons made fielding larger infantry formations easier, and militaries were now less dominated by socially elite cavalymen that required specialized skills. The Ottoman military expanded to meet these strategic realities and because of this there was greater production of campaign narratives and chronicles. The “Mirror for Princes” (*nasihatname*) genre also dealt with military subjects, often criticizing practical changes to military recruitment. The Janissary corps were the main target of much of this criticism, with advice writers arguing that the older practice of a smaller force of purely *devşirme* conscripts of mainly Balkan Christian

⁸ Murphey, *Ottoman Warfare, 1500-1700*, 45.

⁹ See Pál Fodor, *The Business of State: Ottoman Finance Administration and Ruling Elites in Transition (1580s-1615)* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 2018).

origin was ideal. The *Kitab-i Müstetab* was one text that asserted this claim, with apparently little awareness of the changing scale of the empire's military commitments.¹⁰ The *Kanunname* of Aziz Efendi, written around 1632, had similar messages regarding “outsiders” (non-*devşirme*) entering the standing military. He also asserted rampant corruption and lack of effectiveness among the standing military units. Like the author of the *Kitab-i Müstetab*, Aziz Efendi seemed to not understand the need for more troops.¹¹ Mustafa Ali, who will be discussed later in this thesis, was another writer of *nasihatname* that addressed military subjects. Investigating the military narrative sources serves to balance the claims of these authors. Close reading of campaign chronicles tests the claims of these *nasihatname* writers about the apparent decline of the imperial military and lack of effectiveness.

The Ottoman-Safavid Rivalry

The Ottoman-Safavid War of 1578-1590 was part of a long contest in eastern Anatolia and Iraq for political and religious supremacy, with the dominant position of both empires changing over time. The early Safavid dynasty emerged from the movement around Shah Ismail I (1487-1524) and was able to unify many of the Turcoman tribal elements in western Iran and eastern Anatolia. The *Kızılbaş*, “red-heads” in Ottoman pejorative, formed the military-political core of the early Safavid system who adhered to the type of Shia Islam promoted by the Safavid dynasty. The Turcoman *Kızılbaş* movement caused a succession crisis in the Ottoman Empire in 1511, and this religious movement threatened to upset the Sunni consensus of the imperial religious established.¹² The *Kızılbaş* movement attracted disaffected, nomadic elements in the provinces that were hostile to the centralizing tendencies and creation of a state religious orthodoxy. Sultan Selim I (r. 1512-1520) launched an expedition in 1514 against Ismail's army, defeating it at the battle of Çaldıran. Under Shah Tahmasp I (r. 1524-1576), the Ottomans defeated the Safavids again in Iraq and the two states were able to conclude the peace of Amasya in 1555 that settled conflict between the two states until 1576. Through these defeats, the Safavid claims of religious supremacy were weakened as the successors to Shah Ismail could not legitimize their claims to more universal

¹⁰ Linda T. Darling, *The Janissaries of Damascus in the Sixteenth Century, or, How Conquering a Province Changed the Ottoman Empire* (Berlin: EB Verlag, 2019), 46-47.

¹¹ Aziz Efendi, *Kanûn-Nâme-i Sultânî Li 'Azîz Efendi: Aziz Efendi's Book of Sultanic Laws and Regulations: An Agenda for Reform by a Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Statesman*, trans. Rhoads Murphey (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), 6-10.

¹² Rıza Yıldırım, “Turkomans between Two Empires: The Origins of the Qizilbash Identity in Anatolia (1447-1514)” (PhD dissertation, Bilkent University, 2008)

Islamic leadership.¹³ It is also important to note that it took many decades for Shiism to be dominant in Iran itself, showing how both dynasties attempted to create a hegemonic religious program.¹⁴ Spiritual legitimacy and authority were central issues for both the Ottoman and Safavid dynasties wherein both states tried to impose state-driven religious structures and institutions with varying degrees of success. Trying to achieve the goal of religious consensus informed the internal and foreign policies of both empires.

The Safavids' main advantage in these recurrent conflicts was their use of space against the Ottoman Empire and the geography of Iran itself: difficult terrain and the need to maintain supply lines through it were able to cripple an invading army. Whereas the Ottomans had sophisticated logistics and centralized command and control, the Safavids were able to cut their enemy from their supply lines and draw Ottoman armies into battles far from their territorial center. Ottoman advantages from their use of combined arms (infantry, cavalry, and artillery) were blunted by the Safavid Turcoman army's use of maneuver and control of space. Both empires shared some cultural and political characteristics, but their approaches to warfare in the sixteenth century were divergent. Unlike the Ottomans, the Safavids had little need to develop extensive fortification networks and while firearms were present and used in Iran from the early sixteenth century, the Turcoman military class did not adopt them in large numbers.¹⁵ Mounted archery remained the dominant tactical unit, even when Shah Abbas instituted a stronger system of *ghulams* (slave-soldiers akin to the Janissaries) in the early seventeenth century. The Safavid Empire was unable to break the dominance of tribal military arrangements and transition to an institutionalized army. Muskets did not displace traditional archery and melee weapons and artillery was not given the same level of state support as was the case in the Ottoman Empire.¹⁶ It is important to emphasize, however, that the lack of adoption of gunpowder weaponry did not consign the Safavids to military backwardness. The Safavid use of space and maneuver often nullified the Ottoman advantage in firepower. Military structures and tactics were heavily informed by the geographic factors of Iran, which meant that semi-autonomous tribal military power met the Safavids' military needs.

¹³ Tucker, Ernest. "Safavid Relations with Muslim Neighbors." In *The Safavid World*, edited by Rudi Matthee, 539–55. London: Routledge, 2022.

¹⁴ Rosemary Stanfield Johnson, "Sunni Survival in Safavid Iran: Anti-Sunni Activities during the Reign of Tahmasp I," *Iranian Studies* 27, no. 1/4 (1994): 123–33.

¹⁵ Rudi Matthee, "Unwalled Cities and Restless Nomads: Firearms and Artillery in Safavid Iran," in *Safavid Persia: The History and Politics of an Islamic Society*, ed. Charles Melville (London: I.B. Tauris, 2008), 393–394.

¹⁶ Matthee, "Unwalled Cities and Restless Nomads," 393–394.

The concept of the “gunpowder empire” created originally by Marshall G.S. Hodgson has been applied to both Ottoman and Safavid states, but these polities had very different trajectories that impacted their evolving rivalry.¹⁷ Safavid Iran lacked a consistent political center, had a low and more diffuse population, and did not possess the level of resources of their Ottoman and Mughal contemporaries.¹⁸ The Safavid Empire departed from the Ottoman example in several aspects: Iran was majority Muslim, unlike the Ottoman Empire that had a more mixed population. Shia Islam was not fully imposed for many decades after the foundation of the state.¹⁹ Unlike the Ottomans who over time developed an administrative structure and centralized institutions, the Safavids were not able to overcome the dominance of the *Kızılbaş* tribal military elites. Shah Abbas I’s efforts at doing so were strong but did not create a fundamental change.²⁰ The trajectories of Ottoman and Safavid state and society were quite different, despite their apparent similarities as Islamic “gunpowder empires.” The lack of Safavid state infrastructure in the provinces had bearing on the status of the Ottoman-Safavid borderland in the sixteenth century, as unlike the Ottomans their more distant provinces were less linked to the political center. Stephen F. Dale concurs with Rudi Mathee’s assessment of Safavid Iran in the wake of Çaldıran. Ismail’s successors had a territory with low economic output and persistently had to negotiate with the Turkoman tribes, making Iran governed by feudal loyalties and tribal elites instead of a bureaucratic-administrative state.²¹ Ottoman and Safavid experiences resulted in two states with differing approaches to warfare based on their strategic goals and resources.

Ottoman Borderlands and Frontiers in the Sixteenth Century

Establishing dominance over the eastern frontier zone was an important objective for the Ottoman Empire in the late sixteenth century. The border region was characterized by the work of Sabrı Ateş as a loose frontier zone, not a boundary, where neither dynasty exerted a true claim.²² Instead, Ateş maintains, that the eastern frontier was defined by negotiation with

¹⁷ Marshall G.S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, vol. 3: *The Gunpowder Empires and Modern Times* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1977); Douglas Streusand, *Islamic Gunpowder Empires: Ottomans, Safavids, and Mughals* (New York: Routledge, 2011).

¹⁸ Mathee, Rudi. “Was Safavid Iran an Empire?” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 53, no. 1–2 (2009): 233–65.

¹⁹ Mathee, “Was Safavid Iran an Empire?”, 240–241.

²⁰ Rudi Mathee, *Persia in Crisis: Safavid Decline and the Fall of Isfahan*, International Library of Iranian Studies 17 (London New York New York: I.B. Tauris, 2012), 2–3.

²¹ Stephen F. Dale, *The Muslim Empires of the Ottomans, Safavids, and Mughals* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 87–88.

²² Sabrı Ateş, *Ottoman-Iranian Borderlands: Making a Boundary, 1843–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 3–4.

local Kurdish and Arab emirs and not defined by the pattern of fortification, settlement, and direct Ottoman rule. Eastern Anatolia formed a loosely defined buffer zone between the two states that did not constitute a clear border.²³ In the seventeenth century Ateş argues that the “Westphalian” system of territorial sovereignty came to define the Ottoman-Safavid borderland.²⁴ This argument focuses on the development of boundary-making as understood through more modern map-based border construction, which was not how the empire created borders in the sixteenth century. Border definition and defense did take place and was a key area of attention for Ottoman military planning in the early modern period through the creation of provincial infrastructure and treaties. The presence of nomads and local notables in the east complicated the creation of a border between the Ottoman and Safavid Empires, but this did not mean that there was no concept of a firm delineation of the boundary.

The entrance of Muscovy into the Ottoman-Safavid frontier and Black Sea regions in the late sixteenth century added new complexity to these regions for the Ottoman Empire. The Grand Dukes of Moscovy sought to establish greater influence over the Caucasus and at the same time the Ottomans attempted to integrate Georgia into the provincial administrative system.²⁵ Muscovy’s conquests of the Kazan Khanate (1552) and Khanate of Astrakhan (1556) marked the beginning of Muscovy as a serious threat to Ottoman power in the north. Some North Caucasus chieftains viewed this as a much better alternative to the Crimean Khanate who had interfered in their affairs.²⁶ During the reign of Ottoman Sultan Selim II (1566-1574) Muscovy fortified sectors of the Volga River and began impeding the movement of Nogays and other Turkic groups on the steppe. The Ottomans then planned to build a Don-Volga canal and launched a failed expedition against Astrakhan in 1569.²⁷ The Ottomans set out from Kefe to Astrakhan in the fall of 1569 but lacked heavy artillery for such an undertaking. Unable to carry out their mission they retreated through the North Caucasus with heavy losses, and the Don-Volga canal project proved impossible to achieve.²⁸ Muscovy avoided direct military confrontation with the Ottomans and exploited the discrepancies between Ottoman and Crimean approaches toward the region which were not unified as one

²³ Ateş, *Ottoman-Iranian Borderlands*, 15-16.

²⁴ Ateş, *Ottoman-Iranian Borderlands*, 20-24.

²⁵ Carl Max Kortepeter, “5 Complex Goals of the Ottomans, Persians, and Muscovites in the Caucasus, 1578–1640,” in *New Perspectives on Safavid Iran: Empire and Society*, ed. Colin P. Mitchell (Routledge, 2014), 59-60.

²⁶ Murat Yasar, “The North Caucasus between the Ottoman Empire and the Tsardom of Muscovy: The Beginnings, 1552-1570,” *Iran & the Caucasus* 20, no. 1 (2016): 106-107.

²⁷ Kortepeter, “5 Complex Goals of the Ottomans, Persians, and Muscovites in the Caucasus, 1578–1640,” 61-62.

²⁸ Yasar, “North Caucasus between the Ottoman Empire and Tsardom of Muscovy,” 115-118.

might assume.²⁹ Muscovy also pursued goals in the 1580s and 1590s further south by trying to court Georgian clients. The tsardom's efforts meant that three powers now faced each other for control of the region.³⁰ The period of tripartite struggle in the region slowly ended, however, as Shah Abbas increased Safavid power in the region, Muscovy's robust policy subsided until the mid-seventeenth century, and the Ottomans were pushed out of the region due to losses against Iran under Abbas.³¹ Muscovy's activity in the Caucasus focused on building vassal relationships with the political entities of the region without establishing substantial military presence.³² The Ottoman Empire followed a mixed approach of vassalage and garrisoning troops so that desirable parts of the region could be integrated into the provincial system.

Examining the Ottoman western front, the literature demonstrates that imperial officials tried to create a hardened military frontier with the Habsburg Monarchy through fortresses and recruitment of local forces.³³ Managing and defining the boundary between the two states was a consistent issue of both the Paşas in Buda and the Habsburg archdukes in Vienna.³⁴ Closer study of provincial administration in sixteenth century eastern Anatolia reveals that the Ottoman state attempted a similar strategy as they used in Central Europe, although with the added complication of dealing with tribes or local dynasties.³⁵ The Ottoman government treated Raqqa on the Euphrates in a similar way to Van, as it was a strategic location in Mesopotamia.³⁶ The local notables of the Caucasus were also a point of contention between the Ottomans and Safavids, as the region was an important nexus for

²⁹ Yasar, "North Caucasus between the Ottoman Empire and Tsardom of Muscovy," 119-120.

³⁰ W. E. D. Allen, *Russian Embassies to the Georgian Kings, 1589-1605* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2010).

³¹ Kortepeter, "5 Complex Goals of the Ottomans, Persians, and Muscovites in the Caucasus, 1578-1640," 62-63.

³² Michael Khodarkovsky, "From Frontier to Empire: The Concept of the Frontier in Russia, Sixteenth-Eighteenth Centuries," *Russian History* 19, no. 1/4 (1992): 118-119.

³³ Klára Hegyi, *The Ottoman Military Organization in Hungary: Fortresses, Fortress Garrisons, and Finances* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 2018); Gábor Ágoston, *Guns for the Sultan: Military Power and the Weapons Industry in the Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Gábor Ágoston, "Defending and Administering the Frontier: The Case of Ottoman Hungary," in *The Ottoman World*, ed. Christine Woodhead (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), 220-36; Ágoston, *The Last Muslim Conquest*; Pál Fodor, "Ottoman Policy Towards Hungary, 1520-1541," *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 45, no. 2-3 (1991): 271-345.

³⁴ Gustav Bayerle, *Ottoman Diplomacy in Hungary: Letters from the Paşas of Buda, 1590-1593* (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1972).

³⁵ Sinclair, Tom. "Administration and Fortification in the Van Region under Ottoman Rule in the Sixteenth Century." In *Frontiers of the Ottoman World*, edited by Andrew Peacock, 210-24. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

³⁶ S. H. Winter, "The Province of Raqqa under Ottoman Rule, 1535-1800: A Preliminary Study," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 68, no. 4 (2009): 254-257.

trade and communications.³⁷ In the lead up to the 1578-1590 Ottoman-Safavid war, the imperial divan discussed the matter of building fortifications to maintain an occupation, indicating the longer term strategy of the Ottoman military.³⁸ Creating a defined border depended on the creation of a network of fortified garrisons where the empire physically asserted its control over the frontier. Defending and maintaining these military frontier zones preoccupied the sultans and Ottoman officials on the empire's western and eastern borders. Warfare and defense of the Sultan's "protected abode" were central aspects of the Ottoman state and the educated elites naturally devoted time to writing about battles and campaigns.

Ottoman Military Chronicles and the Context of the Tevarih-i Futuh-ı Şirvan

Within this era of constant warfare from 1578-1639, the Ottomans produced a large number of chronicles about specific military campaigns distinct from the general histories of the state and dynasty. These texts were known by several names, such as *gazavatname*, *fethname*, or *zafername*, meaning respectively "campaign book," "conquest book," and "victory-book." While works within the genre carry these different appellations, they have similar structure and content and are written in prose, verse, or a combination of the two. Each text recounts the actions of a particular military campaign or notable conquest, often with emphasis on a particular commander or individual. The identity of authors varied within this genre, as some were soldiers themselves whereas others were secretaries attached to a campaign who wrote a history afterward or were commissioned to write a chronicle by one of the commanders. These texts are valuable both for giving narratives of Ottoman warfare and insights into how the Ottomans themselves understood and recorded it.

The different names of Ottoman military chronicles use denote variations on the main theme of warfare against the enemy of the dynasty and faith. *Fethname* is the description of a conquest, *gazaname* focuses on a particular battle or engagement, and *gazavatname* is the account of several battles or campaigns. *Fethname* also carries with it the connotation of being an official report. These sources are often classified as highly unreliable and lacking in detail, particularly the *fethname* that were sent to other rulers as demonstrations of Ottoman

³⁷ Murat Yasar, "The North Caucasus in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century: Imperial Entanglements and Shifting Loyalties," (PhD dissertation, University of Toronto, 2011).

³⁸ Rudi Matthee, "The Ottoman-Safavid War of 986-998/1578-1590: Motives and Causes," *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 20, no. 1-2 (Fall 2014): 13-15.

military power, serving as a panegyric.³⁹ For purposes of clarity, this thesis uses *gazavatname* as a shorthand for Ottoman military chronicles overall, despite the variations in theme and tone implied by the other naming conventions. *Gazavatname* texts are likewise treated with caution, characterized as works of literature meant primarily for entertainment and edification, where “exaggerations, halftruths, and even inventions are scarcely avoidable in such pieces.”⁴⁰ Nevertheless, unlike impersonal and formal administrative documents, these narratives were written by participants in these military operations and include personal insights into the events they depict. They also reveal the literary and intellectual climate of the Ottoman elites from the time in which they were written.⁴¹ Cemal Kafadar and Gabriel Piterberg, writing on the early Ottoman period and early seventeenth century respectively, follow a middle ground approach to general Ottoman historical texts. They argue that histories can reflect the reality of the world they live in, while also being works of literature composed for their courtly audience.⁴² This is the most sensible approach to Ottoman historical writing and military chronicles in particular. The positive historical content and narrative of events constitute one dimension of these texts, while the literary allusions and narrative choices provide insight into the intent and milieu of the authors.

The 1578 campaign of the Ottoman army against the Safavids in Transcaucasia may be unique in that there are multiple surviving chronicles, and their context shows the connection between military men and writers whom they patronized. The *Tevarih-i Futuh-ı Şirvan* is one text of out several about the 1578 offensive. The most notable of the chroniclers was the bureaucrat, poet, and historian Gelibolu Mustafa Ali who composed several works that dealt with the Caucasus campaign. His *Nusretname* (“Victory-book”) is a rendition in prose and verse of the operations, and the most well-known of the texts about the fighting in contemporary historical literature.⁴³ His other work, the *Council for Sultans* used the events of 1578-79 as material for his critical advice about commander Lala Mustafa Paşa’s

³⁹ G.L. Lewis, “The Utility of Ottoman Fethnames,” in *Historians of the Middle East*, ed. Bernard Lewis and P.M. Holt (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 192–96; see also Erhan Afyoncu, “Osmanlı Siyasî Tarihinin Ana Kaynakları: Kronikler,” *Türkiye Araştırmaları Literatür Dergisi* 1, no. 2 (2003): 101–72.

⁴⁰ Victor Ostapchuk, “An Ottoman Gazânâme on Jalil Paşa’s Naval Campaign against the Cossacks (1621),” *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 14, no. 3/4 (1990): 484.

⁴¹ Ostapchuk, “An Ottoman Gazânâme on Jalil Paşa’s Naval Campaign against the Cossacks (1621),” 484–485.

⁴² Gabriel Piterberg, *An Ottoman Tragedy: History and Historiography at Play* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 4–5.

⁴³ Gelibolu Mustafa Âli, *Nusret-name*, H. Mustafa Eravacı, ed. (Ankara: Türk Tarihi Kurumu, 2014); H. Mustafa Eravacı, “Mustafa Ali’s Nusret-name with the Exception of the Section dealing with the Rebuilding of the Fortress of Kars: Edition and Study on the History of the Persian Campaign under Lala Mustafa Paşa,” PhD diss., University of Edinburgh, 1998..

decisions.⁴⁴ A companion of Ali and fellow participant on the campaign, Asafi Dal Mehmed Çelebi, composed his own account of the operation titled *Şeca'atname* (“*Book of Valor*”).⁴⁵ The case of Mustafa Ali and Asafi highlight an important, although not integral feature of the *gazavatname*, the glorification of a specific individual for reasons of patronage. Mustafa Ali was supported by Lala Mustafa Paşa and Asafi by Özdemiroğlu Osman Paşa. The *Nusretname* of Ali and the *Şeca'atname* of Dal Mehmed Çelebi logically support their respective patrons. In the case of the latter, Özdemiroğlu Osman Paşa awarded the author later with governorships in the Crimea and Shirvan.⁴⁶ There are other texts about the Caucasian campaign. A verse work, titled *Manzume-yi Feth-i Şirvan ve Timur Kapı ve Osman Paşa'nın Cenk ittüğüdür* (“*Verses of the Conquest of Shirvan and the Iron Gate and the Battles of Osman Paşa*”) is extant but does not have a clear author nor is there mention of this manuscript in contemporary academic literature.⁴⁷ Another important text from the perspective of a soldier is the *Şark Seferleri* (“*Eastern Campaigns*”) of Ebubakir bin Abdullah, a more vernacular work compared to those of Mustafa Ali and Dal Mehmed Çelebi.⁴⁸

The copy date of the *Tevarih* of 1722-23 may point to a trend in copying and reexamining older military histories based on several other manuscript copies that date from the 1720s and 1730s. In this period, the Ottoman Empire lost a war to the Habsburg Monarchy in 1718 and fought Russia in the Pruth River Campaign in 1711. In 1722, the Safavid dynasty collapsed and Nadir Shah's regime took power in Iran. In the 1730s, the empire fought both Iran and a Russo-Austrian alliance. Elite Ottoman readers may have found reason to reread older texts and commission copies due to these events. While not systematic, the following examples may indicate a trend during the early eighteenth century. The *Tarih-i Belgrad* was an anonymous text written about Serbia from 1521 to 1686 that served as both a historical narrative and a geographical guide to the region, with the extant

⁴⁴ Gelibolu Mustafa Âli and Andreas Tietze, *Mustafâ Ali's Counsel for sultans of 1581: edition, translation, notes*, 2 vols. (Wien: Verl. d. Österr. Akad. d. Wiss, 1979, 1982).

⁴⁵ Cornell H. Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire: The Historian Mustafa Âli (1541-1600)*, Princeton Studies on the Near East (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1986), 81; Istanbul, Istanbul University Library MS NEKTY-06043; H. Mustafa Eravacı, *Asafi Dal Mehmed Çelebi ve Şecaatname* (Istanbul: MVT Yayınları, 2009).

⁴⁶ Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire*, 82.

⁴⁷ Ankara, Milli Kütüphane Yazmalar Koleksiyonu, MS 06 Mil Yz FB 179.

⁴⁸ Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des manuscrits, Turc 123; Ebubekir bin Abdullah, *Şark Seferleri*, ed. Süleyman Lokmacı (Istanbul: Akıl Fikir, 2018); also published in Yunus Zeyrek, *Tarih-i Osman Paşa: Özdemiroğlu Osman Paşa Kafkasya Fetihleri (H.986-988/M.1578-1580) ve Tebriz'in Fethi (H. 993/M. 1585)* (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 2001).

copy dating from 1731-32.⁴⁹ One copy of a manuscript describing the 1683 Siege of Vienna from 1730-31 exists, titled *Tarih-i Sefer-i Peç der Zaman-i Sultan Mehmed Han b. Ibrahim Han*.⁵⁰ A 1730 copy of the text *Fetih-name-i Cezire-i Sakiz* describing the 1566 conquest of Chios in the Aegean is in the Topkapı Palace archives.⁵¹ The Hungarian Academy of Sciences collection has a copy of Mustafa Ali's chronicle *Künhü'l-Ahbar (The Essence of History)* dating from 1725.⁵² While not a strictly military work, Mustafa Ali incorporated material from his *Nusretname* into *Essence of History*. A copy of the chronicle *Vak'a-i Ca'fer Paşa ve Sefer-i Temeşvar* dating from 1722 also exists in the Academy of Sciences library. It is an account of the seventeenth century Ottoman campaign in Temesvár.⁵³ This suggests that the *Tevarih* may have been read in the eighteenth century as a work of exemplar history, a guide to the Caucasus region, or a combination of these and other factors. Studying the *Tevarih* from the perspective of the eighteenth century is another important approach to the text, although it is beyond the scope of this thesis.

The *Tevarih* provides insight into the experience of the Ottoman army during a campaign and the intellectual milieu of the time in which it was composed. As a work that survived into the eighteenth century, it may illustrate how elite Ottoman readership learned from these *gazavatname* texts and how eighteenth-century readers looked to earlier periods for knowledge about military affairs and peripheral regions. Ottoman military chronicles, like other historiographical works, had a use both in the times in which they were written and long after among the Ottoman readership which was primarily the political and military elite. By reading the text closely, this study will assess the events of the campaign as depicted by the *Tevarih* author. Through this reading, the text reveals the factional struggles in the court of Sultan Murad III and the difficulties faced by the Ottoman Empire in controlling its periphery in the late sixteenth century. As a narrative source, the *Tevarih* offers insight into how Ottoman commanders and soldiers personally tried to conduct warfare and conquest for the empire and how elite rivalries had tangible effects on this effort.

⁴⁹ Princeton, Princeton University Library, Islamic Manuscripts, Third Series MS no. 443.

⁵⁰ Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des manuscrits, MS Turc 870.

⁵¹ Istanbul, Topkapı Palace Museum, MS H.1427.

⁵² Budapest, Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, MS Török Qu. 20; Parlatır et al., *Catalogue*, 392-393.

⁵³ Budapest, Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, MS Török F. 60; Parlatır et al., *Catalogue*, 443.

Chapter 2:

APPOINTMENT OF THE SERDAR LALA MUSTAFA PAŞA AND THE MARCH FROM ISTANBUL TO ERZURUM

The *Tevarih*'s title idealizes two significant commanders who took part in the 1578 Caucasus expedition, Lala Mustafa Paşa and Özdemiroğlu Osman Paşa who led the Ottoman army and were members of the palace's anti-Sokullu faction. The introductory section of the work describes the appointment of Lala Mustafa Paşa as commander (*serdar*) for the campaign and his dialogue with Sultan Murad III and concludes with the gathering of Ottoman forces at Erzurum. The *Tevarih* author wrote of this expedition against the Shia Safavids and their allies in Anatolia explicitly as a *cihad* of the Ottoman army against their heretical enemy, a recurring theme in the text. The Ottomans are depicted as the rightly guided Army of Islam in opposition to the Shias of Anatolia and Iran, who are viewed as heretics and schismatics. The image of Lala Mustafa's appointment is depicted as a cause for celebration and excitement, but absent are the deeper issues within the court of Murad III depicted in other sources. Lala Mustafa Paşa in this text is described as swiftly mounting to horseback upon the announcement of his command and going to meet the sultan for advice and counsel. Emphasis in the text is placed on the relationship between Murad III and Lala Mustafa Paşa, presenting a simplified version of the contentious events that led up to the Shirvan campaign.⁵⁴

During the late sixteenth century, intense factional struggle and inter-elite rivalries proliferated among the ruling notables.⁵⁵ The feud narrative present in the chronicle of Ibrahim Peçevi (d. 1649) is absent in the *Tevarih*. The latter mentions by name only Grand Vizier Sokullu Mehmed Paşa (1506-1579). Peçevi became an Ottoman official with extensive documentary or personal access to the events he described. One of the chief participants and perhaps prime instigators of the late century strife was the Albanian-born Koca Sinan Paşa (c.1506-1596), who was grand vizier five times starting in 1580. Sinan Paşa and Lala Mustafa Paşa had a long-standing factional rivalry that the incumbent grand vizier, Sokullu Mehmed Paşa, exploited to maintain their own power. Peçevi described in greater detail the difficulties between the two viziers, as initially there was a plan to appoint Koca Sinan Paşa

⁵⁴ MS Török O. 176, 1a.

⁵⁵ For a treatment of this in greater detail, see: Günhan Börekçi, "Factions and Favorites at the Courts of Sultan Ahmed I (r. 1603–1617) and His Immediate Predecessors" (Ph.D. diss., The Ohio State University, 2010).

to lead an army in Mesopotamia while Lala Mustafa Paşa marched in the Caucasus. His history also goes into detail describing the warnings by Sokullu Mehmed Paşa against this campaign to the sultan, saying that the rewards outweighed the risks and not even Süleyman had been able to achieve this objective.⁵⁶ Mustafa Ali also wrote in his *Nushatü's-Selatin* (*Counsel for Sultans*) that simultaneous invasions from Lala Mustafa Paşa in the Caucasus and from Koca Sinan Paşa in Iraq would have been a certain success, but this was not possible because of the infighting.⁵⁷ The new campaign created an opportunity for Lala Mustafa Paşa and an anti-Sokullu faction in the palace to gain influence through a military victory, despite the fact that Lala Mustafa was related to Sokullu. The grand vizier appeared to oppose the war yet had favored expansion into the Caucasus and Caspian region in the past. The grand vizier was aware of the nature of this war faction and undermined it as he saw it was a threat to his power.⁵⁸ Osman Paşa and Mehmed Sokullu had a more complex relationship and to the war, however. By 1579 the two corresponded about the creation of a Caspian Sea fleet.⁵⁹ The literary trope of the *gazavatname* wherein a hero rises to the occasion did reflect the factional situation at the court of Murad III. Lala Mustafa Paşa was intended to become a champion that defeated enemies of the Ottoman dynasty and push the Sokullu group out of power. In this way, the *gazavatname* literature of the 1580s had a new literary context where the protagonists were not frontier warriors striving to do battle with the enemies of faith or establish a dynasty but to renew the existing political structure through military victories.

There were also concrete foreign policy objectives that justified the campaign for Murad III and the other grandees, with conditions in the frontier and the desire to control overland trade routes and encircle Safavid Persia being critical aspects. The emerging conflict with Muscovy mentioned previously was also part of this eastern and northern thrust by the Ottoman Empire. Murad III and his men of state sought to take advantage of the dynastic instability in Iran, as Shah Tahmasp died in 1576, followed by the brief reign of Ismail II until the accession of Mohammad Kodabanda in 1578. The Ottoman governor of Van, Hüsrev Paşa, monitored this situation and reported the intelligence to the Sultan. Murad III also personally wanted a victory and believed that it was easier to achieve over the Safavids in more open battle and against unfortified cities. Yet, the Ottomans did not communicate an official declaration of war against the Safavids and the stated intention of the 1578 campaign

⁵⁶ İbrahim Peçevi, *Peçevi Tarihi*, ed. Murat Uraz, vol. 2 (Istanbul: Neşriyat Yurdu, 1969), 293.

⁵⁷ Âlî, *Counsel for Sultans*, vol. 1, 32.

⁵⁸ Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire*, 46, 76.

⁵⁹ Yaşar, *The North Caucasus Borderland*, 120.

was to punish the Georgians.⁶⁰ The Ottomans also wished to check Muscovite expansion into the North Caucasus, evidenced by the routes later taken by the army and the diplomatic communications prior to the war. The northern frontier added a new strategic dimension to the long running Ottoman-Safavid rivalry and introduced a new power the Ottomans had to confront. Ottoman strategy transitioned from an indirect, tribute and vassal arrangement in the North Caucasus to trying to integrate the area into direct imperial administration. The empire sought to create a Caspian Sea fleet that could encircle the Safavids and help protect the north from Muscovite designs. Sokullu Mehmed Pasha after the war was underway considered the feasibility of shipbuilding in Tbilisi and then transferring them via rivers and the Caspian up to Derbent in the North Caucasus.⁶¹

The author of the *Tevarih* does not dwell on factional details and instead crafts a celebratory image of Lala Mustafa Paşa as conqueror of Cyprus being appointed commander to the campaign.⁶² While the author of the *Tevarih* was more ornate, Ebubakir bin Abdullah was more direct and simpler in his writing than the *Tevarih* chronicler. He recounted that an order issued from the sultan “To the country of Iran and the provinces of Shirvan and Georgia there is an expedition.”⁶³ Mustafa Ali’s *Nusretname* begins with a long description of the events that had taken place in the Safavid dynasty from Shah Tahmasp to the brief, tumultuous reign of Ismail II (1576-1577).⁶⁴ Between the *Tevarih* and *Şark Seferleri* there are two different registers of language, possibly indicating the relative point of view of the authors. The *Tevarih* author may have been closer to the military personally, or had access to the source documents, and wrote in a formal *inşa* style. Ebubakir bin Abdullah, being a lower-ranking soldier, wrote as a more direct vernacular account based on what he most likely knew about at the time and was not privy to the decisions of the senior officials. Giovanni Tommaso Minadoi, Venetian consul in Aleppo, was also aware of the

⁶⁰ Rudi Matthee, “The Ottoman-Safavid War of 986-998/1578-1590: Motives and Causes,” *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 20, no. 1–2 (2014): 12-15.

⁶¹ Murat Yaşar, *The North Caucasus Borderland: Between Muscovy and the Ottoman Empire 1555-1605* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2022), 118-120.

⁶² “ser-asker zafer-şi’arlığa nam-zed olan fatih-i Kıbrıs vezir-i dilir Mustafa Paşa salat-ı fecri edadan sonra selb-i puş u mela zaman-ı rikabi pür-çuş niyyet-i gaza ile ber-esb-kuh-peyker bad-paye sivar olub,” MS Török O. 176, 1a.

⁶³ “Es-Sultan Murad Han bin Selim Han Hazretleri dilediler ki Diyar-ı Acem’e ve Vilayet-i Şirvan’a ve Gürcistan’a sefer olsun diyü emr edüp ve vüzera-i izamlarından fahrü’l-enam Mustafa Paşa Hazretlerin ihtiyar edüp,” Ebubekir bin Abdullah, *Şark Seferleri*, 32.

⁶⁴ Gelibolu Mustafa Âli, *Nusret-Name* (Ankara: Türk Tarihi Kurumu, 2014), 10-14.

disagreements in the Porte about the undertaking of the campaign, devoting considerable attention to this in his *Warre between the Turks and the Persians*.⁶⁵

The author of the *Tevarih* did not use or mention the letters Lala Mustafa Paşa sent to Turkic notables in Eastern Anatolia, the Crimean khan, and the Georgian rulers. These letters appear in the *Nusretname*, as Mustafa Ali wrote them on behalf of his patron. The dispatch to the Crimean Khanate discussed a proposed expedition to Azerbaijan under Selim II that had not taken place, but now the empire had the means to do so. An additional incentive was to support the Sunni Yaka Turks in the region who resisted the Shia Safavids. The next letter was addressed to the ruler of Shirvan, Ebubakir Mirza, and was given promises that if the Ottomans succeeded in conquering the province, they would grant him a high rank. The third letter sent with an envoy to Shahrukh Mirza, a descendent of the rulers of Azerbaijan; to the *shamkhal* lord of Dagestan, the ruler of southern Dagestan, Gazi Salih; and to Toclav Bey ruler of the Caucasian Avars. Lala Mustafa Paşa regarded these groups as fellow Sunni Muslims allied to the Ottoman cause. The letter gave them orders to deal with certain Georgian princes and a group near Mount Elbrus and in exchange they were to be rewarded. Two letters were sent to the Georgian princes enticing them to the Ottoman side.⁶⁶ The letters to these rulers indicated the additional priorities of the campaign in securing the North Caucasus through a war with the Safavids. Previous Ottoman campaigns in the east also did not venture to the Caspian steppe and the empire did not seek out the support of local elites in the region, showing the change in Ottoman strategic priorities.⁶⁷ The author of the *Tevarih* either did not include this information or was not aware of it, whereas Mustafa Ali's position as a secretary to the *serdar* gave him access to this information. With fewer details like these the *Tevarih* is a more literary work, as including such information was not necessarily relevant to crafting the narrative of a properly guided *serdar* achieving victory over the enemy.

The mustering of the Ottoman army took some time, and the *Tevarih* author recounts some details of the commander and aspects of camp life. The three weeks Lala Mustafa Paşa spent in Üsküdar appeared to have been interpreted as lingering by Murad III, based on an incident written by the *Tevarih* author. The chronicle depicts the Ottoman army camped on the Anatolian side of the Bosphorus for twenty-four days. The sultan had to order the

⁶⁵ Giovanni-Tommaso Minadoi, *The War between the Turks and the Persians: Conflict and Religion in the Ottoman and Safavid Worlds*, trans. Abraham Hartwell (1595; London: I.B. Tauris, 2019), 13-15.

⁶⁶ Eravcı, "Mustafa Ali's Nusret-Name," 88-92.

⁶⁷ Yaşar, *The North Caucasus Borderland*, 125-126.

commander to begin the march east with a gift of finely made clothes.⁶⁸ Mustafa Ali obliquely complained of such gifts as onerous expenditure by the army. Gold and silver thread were a considerable expense and were used for fine brocaded clothes like those given to the commander by the sultan.⁶⁹ Another feature of military camp life was feasting, prayer, and recitation of the Quran: one day in the camp, “more than one hundred meals of regal food were prepared, and afterward reciters read the glorious Koran with pleasant voices like musical nightingales and there was prayer for the continuation of the state and the Sultan of Islam.”⁷⁰ In the *Şark Seferleri* this exchange between the commander and the sultan was not discussed, but instead this period was treated as standard mustering time for the troops of Istanbul to gather in Üsküdar before setting out to the east. Ebubakir bin Abdullah paid little attention to the precise details of the journey, as the halting places before Erzurum are only mentioned as names with few details.⁷¹ The writer of the *Tevarih* illustrated the apparent reticence of the commander to move forward in time with the Murad III’s wishes, and some aspects of what took place within an Ottoman military camp during mobilization. The feasting and reciting of the Koran also provide an example of proper behavior for a military commander by offering meals and conducting religious services.

The chronicle author then resumed with the movement of the army after it set out from Üsküdar. The size of the army was so great according to the chronicle that the commander ordered the Janissaries detached from the main force. They were ordered to take a separate route so that the roads would not be overcrowded.⁷² This may have been one of the incidents Mustafa Ali identified later in his *Council for Sultans* as a shortcoming of the campaign because Lala Mustafa Paşa departed from the main route east.⁷³ As the army moved into Anatolia, they met the *timar* forces and regional governors-general where there was the giving of *piş keş* (gifts for a superior) from the regional commanders to Lala Mustafa Paşa. The officers also took part in a great feast at Kütahya after there had been a tremendous rainstorm. Here the author of the *Tevarih* also introduces another important

⁶⁸ “yiğirmi dört gün oturub ba’dehu taraf-ı padişah-ı dil-agah bir nim-ten-i ziba ve bir şalvar-ı diba ile ve bi-tereddüd canib-i a’daya müteveccih olasın deyü tezkire-yi hümayun vasıl olub,” MS Török O. 176, 2a.

⁶⁹ Mustafa Âlî, *Mustafâ Ali’s Counsel for Sultans of 1581: Edition, Translation, Notes*, trans. Andreas Tietze, vol. 2 (Wien: Verl. d. Österr. Akad. d. Wiss, 1979), 41.

⁷⁰ “mahalde simat çekilüb yüz sefereden ziyade at’ime-i şehiyye bezl olunub ba’dü’t-ta’am huffaz kelim-i kadim bulbûlan-ı hoş lehçe gibi elhan-ı Davudi ile kıra’at-ı Kor’an-ı Azim itdükden sonra du’a-yı devam-ı devlet-i padişah-ı İslam-ı kıyam olunub,” MS Török O. 176, 2a.

⁷¹ Ebubekir bin Abdullah, *Şark Seferleri*, 32-33.

⁷² “sekizince gün ki menzil semandır az İnikmid’de nüzul olundu onda asker çoğulub yollarda bunca askere ittisa olmamğla Yeniçeri taifesi Bolu semtinden Sivas yolına gönderilmek münasib görölüb,” MS Török O. 176, 2b.

⁷³ Mustafa Âlî, *Counsel for Sultans*, 10.

figure at this point in the narrative, *emirü'l-ümerası* (emir-of-emirs, a provincial military commander) of Anatolia, Cafer Paşa. He is named explicitly, whereas the lower ranking *sancakbey* of Bursa is not named.⁷⁴ This section of the narrative describes important logistical aspects of mobilizing the Ottoman army of giving gifts, cash bonuses to subordinates, and entertaining the commanding officers. Such amenities which contributed to the relatively comfortable conditions of Ottoman camp life were an important factor in military motivation, especially compared to the difficulties faced by European soldiers at the time.⁷⁵ The text shows how care for soldiers and notables was important to mobilizing the Ottoman army and contributes to building the image of Lala Mustafa Paşa as a leader attentive to the needs of his troops.

The religious features of the *Tevarih* provide some insight into the motivations for the campaign against the Shias of Safavid Iran, yet the author of the *Tevarih* did not appear to dwell on religious matters. Nine days after Kütahya the army camped at Konya where Lala Mustafa Paşa met the *emirü'l-ümerası* of Karaman, Mehmed Paşa and visited the shrine of Sufi saint Celaldin Rumi. The *Tevarih* describes the prayer at the Rumi shrine briefly, and how Lala Mustafa Paşa asked for the saint's intercession in the campaign. The description of the Rumi shrine is relatively brief and the author did not appear overly focused on religious matters, aside from fairly standard pejorative descriptions of the Shia enemy.⁷⁶ The author's emphasis in the *Tevarih* uses the Safavid aligned Shias as the antagonist to the *serdar* and the other notable commanders. These Shias are clearly defined as outside proper Islam, rather than being a different sect of the same religion. This was the trajectory of Ottoman Sunni thought through the sixteenth century, where imperial religious officials resurrected the dormant Islamic genre of heresiology.⁷⁷ Religious juridical rulings (*fetvas*) on the *Kızılbaş* Shias also became more exclusionary by the mid-sixteenth century, classifying them as being outside Islam instead of a deviant sect of Muslims.⁷⁸ In the *Tevarih* the Sunni-Shia struggle is

⁷⁴ "Saka nam mevzi'ye nüzul olundukda Anatoli emirü'l-ümerası Cafer Paşa a'yan-ı vilayet ile gelüb piş-keş ve istikbal-i merasimin ber-cay kıldı...serdar-ı sa'adet-mend dahi ta'zir bi'l-ihsan renkinde Kütahya a'yanı ile Cafer Paşa'ya ali ziyafet idüb ol kadar tekellüf buyurdılar ki İstanbul'da olsalar ancak olurdu" MS Török O. 176, 2b.

⁷⁵ Rhoads Murphey, *Ottoman Warfare, 1500-1700* (London: UCL Press, 1999), 30.

⁷⁶ "dokuzuncu gün Konya şehrine nüzul-ı hümayun buyurdılar anda Karaman emirü'l-ümerası Mehmed Paşa a'yan-ı vilayet ile piş-keş ve istikbal mühimmene kıyam göstürüb mazhar-i iltifat oldılar andan serdar-ı ekrem Mevlana Hüdavendigâr Celaleddin Rumi kaddese sırrahu hazretlerin ziyaret ve ruh-per fütuhlarına berekatından istimdad idüb ol merkad-ı pak fukarasına bezl-i salat idüb tezkiyye-i karabin eylediler," MS Török O. 176, 3a.

⁷⁷ Nir Shafir, "How to Read Heresy in the Ottoman World," in *Historicizing Sunni Islam in the Ottoman Empire, c. 1450-1750*, ed. Tijana Krstić and Derin Terzioğlu (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 206-208.

⁷⁸ Abdurrahman Atçıl, "The Safavid Threat and Juristic Authority in the Ottoman Empire During the 16th Century," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 49, no. 2 (2017): 306-308.

emphasized as part of the narrative trajectory of Lala Mustafa Paşa defending properly guided Ottoman Islam against such heresy through warfare. At the same time, the author did not appear to be invested in religious details beyond the events described in the chronicle.

The *pişkeş* procedure also took place in Konya, as it did in almost every halting place before Erzurum. Also at this stage in the narrative the author provides enough information regarding the amount of time it took the Ottoman army to march from one halting station to the next. From Iznikmid to Yenişehir it was a five-day march; after reaching Kütahya following an unclear amount of time the march to Karahisar-ı Sahib (Afyonkarahisar) was three days; and finally, they reached Konya after eight days.⁷⁹ The author of the *Tevarih* noted the days at regular intervals in the narrative or gave a number to the *menzil* (halting station). Information about halting stations and travel times are important features of the *Tevarih* and texts like it, as the knowledge was relevant to both sixteenth- and eighteenth-century audiences. The time travelled by an army was relevant for preparing supplies and also determining the most efficient route to reach the eastern frontier.

The description of the Ottoman forces arrayed in Erzurum before departing to the frontier demonstrates a weakness of the *Tevarih* as a source for historical military information, as the text focuses on individual commanders. The commanders are named but there are few details about the formations they commanded. The chronicler emphasized the procedure, or what one might call ritual, or paying respect to the commander:

From there at the sixth station they alighted at the plain named Cinsler in the area of Erzurum.

There Özdemir-zade Osman Paşa, formerly emir-of-emirs of Diyarbekir, who is in the

legendary Rostam-like thick of tumult, came and was commissioned and he kissed the hand.⁸⁰

The author of the text is focused on who is paying homage to the commander and honoring his presence while also giving a short complimentary appellation to Özdemiroğlu Osman Paşa by focusing on his eagerness to serve Lala Mustafa Paşa. The other commanders present in this passage do not receive this treatment and are instead referred to simply by their name and title.⁸¹ This shows in a limited way the rhetorical conventions of the *gazavatname* genre, where the heroes of the narrative are honored. In this case, the most notable figures of the expedition were Lala Mustafa Paşa the *serdar* and Osman Paşa Özdemiroğlu who later

⁷⁹ MS Török O. 176, 2b-3a.

⁸⁰ “*andan altıncı konakda Erzenü’r-rum kurbinde Pasinler nam mevzi’ye nüzul olunub anda sabıka Diyarbekir emirü’l-ümerası olan Özdemir-zade Osman Paşa ki Rüstem-i destan-i havme-i heyecandır gelüb mülhak olub dest-bus eyledi,*” MS Török O. 176, 3a.

⁸¹ “*günde bi’l-fi’il Diyarbekir emirü’l-ümerası Derviş Paşa ve Sivas beglerbegisi Mahmud Paşa ve Maraş beglerbegisi Mu’tab-zade Ahmed Paşa her biri askerleri ile istikbal idüb ol gün nüzul olundukda vezir-i ser-asker-i ali ziyafet ve her birine iltifat u izzet idüb,*” MS Török O. 176, 3b.

distinguished himself in a desperate engagement with the Safavids. The mass of the army according to these textual conventions was less important compared to the heroics of elite *gazi*. These notables do not command particular divisions or specific bodies of troops based on the structure and style of the text but are instead leading the mass of the Soldiers of Islam (*asker-i İslam*).

In contrast to the account of the *Tevarih*, the depiction in the *Şark Seferleri* of Ebubakir bin Abdullah provides a more colorful depiction of the muster, but in a more vernacular style: “But when we arrived at Erzurum, there were no soldiers gathered. At once, the Palace Cavalry and Janissaries arrived, and since the soldiers were appointed to the victory-marked campaign, all gathered as was required.”⁸² In contrast to the *Tevarih* with special attention on the commanders, this author summarized the gathering of the different notables and officers in brief. In this portion of his narrative, Ebubakir bin Abdullah did not draw special attention to certain characters and instead gave more direct imagery to the camp at Erzurum. He wrote:

From the tents of a colorful sort and ornamented canopies and from the large and small tents the plains of Erzurum were embellished like this, so much that in the spring the desert wilderness and endless valley were embellished with the kind of color of a flower in bloom.⁸³

He also provided some details about camp life for Ottoman soldiers, describing afternoon military games of horsemanship, wrestling, and archery.⁸⁴ The cavalryman’s rendition of events provides more context for the profile of the author of the *Tevarih*. Ebubakir bin Abdullah was a lower ranking soldier in the cavalry and his chronicle contains the kind of information one may expect from such an author like the description of camp life above. The camp life of the common soldiers contrasts with the lavish meals given in Üsküdar and gifts depicted in the *Tevarih*, which focus on the senior commanders and other notables. The more stylized, notable-centered *Tevarih* does not venture into the affairs of regular soldiers at Erzurum and instead focuses on its grandee protagonists.

Other Ottomans and Europeans narrating the muster at Erzurum do account for the technical details of the campaign, showing that the literary presentation of the *Tevarih* was one depiction among several. Ebubakir bin Abdullah provides a more technical account of the forces arrayed at Erzurum. Palace troops, according to him, came from the *Ulufeciyan-i Yesar*

⁸² “*Amma Erzurum’a vardığımız çok asker yok idi. Hemân kapukulu ve yeniçeri var idi. Zîrâ sefer-i nusret-âsâra me’mur olan asker bi-l-cümle anda cem’ olsa gerek idi,*” Ebubekir bin Abdullah, *Şark Seferleri*. 33.

⁸³ “*Erzurum’un ovası ol envâ’-i renk otâklardan ve türlü münakkaş sayebanlardan ve irili ufaklı çadırlardan şöyle müzeyyen olmuşdu ki nev-baharda deşt-i beyâbanlar ve vâdi-i bî-pâyânlar envâ’-i reng-i şükûfe ile müzeyyen olmuşdur,*” Ebubekir bin Abdullah, *Şark Seferleri*. 34.

⁸⁴ Ebubekir bin Abdullah, *Şark Seferleri*. 34.

(second of two cavalry corps) and gives the number of janissaries as three thousand. He also describes five hundred light field guns.⁸⁵ Peçevi's chronicle describes the army as organized in Istanbul corroborates some of the description found in Ebubakir bin Abdullah but gives five thousand Janissaries and also mentions the *cebeci* of the artillery corps.⁸⁶ Minadoi's account of the order of battle was similar. The army included Mesopotamian archers "not of any courage,"⁸⁷ Iraqi troops armed with swords and javelins, Anatolian horse archers, infantry equipped with muskets and swords from Rumelia, and a detachment of janissaries. At Erzurum the army mustered Karaman cavalry equipped with bows and more horseback peltasts as well. Lala Mustafa Paşa also assembled about 500 pieces of light artillery, easier to transport in mountainous terrain.⁸⁸ Another Venetian report listed much the same.⁸⁹ The writer of the *Tevarih* was less concerned with these details based on the stylistic conventions of his narrative, based on heroic actions of notable men.

While the details of what kinds of troops and equipment are thin in the *Tevarih*, special attention is placed on establishing a cast of notable characters that will achieve heroic goals like earlier Ottoman campaigns. The author made mention of earlier, heroic Ottoman action against the Safavids. Describing the size and scope of the Ottoman Army at Erzurum, he drew a parallel to the 1532-1535 operations of Süleyman in Mesopotamia: "it was said that we had seen such a gathering for the Campaign of the Two Iraqs."⁹⁰ The passing mention of the earlier campaign illustrates a nostalgic connection to the success of the earlier ruler. This allusion in the *Tevarih* has echoes to some of the religious and ideological motivations behind the Two Iraqs, namely that Süleyman and his advisers sought to reaffirm Ottoman claims of universality and make war to establish their vision of Sunni Islam.⁹¹ The success of that campaign in Baghdad resulted in the imposition of Sunnism onto Shia mosques and institutions of the city.⁹² The chronicler's connection between the 1578 campaign and

⁸⁵ "Ve Kapu Halkından Ebna-yı Sipahiyan, 'umumen ve Ulufeciyan-ı Yesar 'umumen ve üç bin Yeniçeri ve dört yüz 'aded darbuzan bile emr olup. Ve Rum Eli'nden ve İslambol'dan me'mur olan asker, cümle Üsküdar'da ve Maldepe'de me'mur olan asker oturup." Zeyrek, *Târîh-i Osman Paşa*, 16.

⁸⁶ Peçevi, *Tarih*, 294.

⁸⁷ Minadoi, *War between the Turks and Persians*, 17-18.

⁸⁸ Minadoi, *War between the Turks and Persians*, 17-18.

⁸⁹ "Così si condussero in detta terra le genti della Soria al numero di quattromila; di Caramania parimente quattromila; di Mesopotamia dodicimila; di Babilonia e Curdi ventimila; di Natolia dodicimila; giannizzeri di Costantinopoli tremila; spahi-oglanı, ed altra simil gente quattromila; che in tutto ascendono al numero di circa sessantemila, totta gente stipendiata, ed altrettanti vennero venturieri. Condusse Mustafa da Constantinopoli molti pezzi d'artiglieria minuta, molte some d'aspri, con ordine di potersi valere della camera d'Aleppo in caso di bisogno," Eugenio Albèri, ed., *Relazioni degli Ambasciatori Veneti al Senato*, vol. 6 (Florence: 1844), 262.

⁹⁰ "bu cem'iyyeti Karakan seferinden berü görmüşsüzdür deyü," MS Török O. 176, 3b.

⁹¹ Kaya Şahin, *Empire and Power in the Reign of Süleyman: Narrating the Sixteenth-Century Ottoman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 94.

⁹² Şahin, *Empire and Power*, 98.

Süleyman's war against the Safavids is another feature that evokes the theme of renewal through heroic action.

One event not remarked upon in the *Tevarih* related to the dynastic and religious struggle is the exchange of letters between the Ottomans and the Safavid governor Tokmak Han before and around the time of the muster at Erzurum. Tokmak Han was the ruler of Safavid Yerevan and had served as an ambassador to the Ottomans during the reigns of Selim II and Murad III.⁹³ Peçevi's history mentions a letter written to this Safavid official, given to Tokmak Han at Ardahan, stating that he and Safavid forces were disrupting the peace.⁹⁴ Mustafa Ali also recorded this exchange of letters and described the letter issued by Tokmak Han. The dispatch praised the abilities of the *Kızılbaş* soldiers, denigrated the Ottoman's efforts to campaign in the east, and described the Safavid shahs' claim to legitimacy. Mustafa Ali's account also describes the Ottoman response mentioned by Peçevi.⁹⁵ Ebubakir bin Abdullah also wrote about this diplomatic communication.⁹⁶ The *Tevarih* does not include this episode in the narrative, as the position of any Safavid characters is minimized and they are given little description or attention. The text's focus is on the portrayal of heroism and military prowess on the part of the chronicle author's favored commanders, discussions of the finer points of the Ottoman-Safavid conflict such as these letters appeared to have not been relevant.

The narrative of the *Tevarih* emphasizes the beneficence and positive works of the commander Lala Mustafa Paşa as the army moved to Erzurum for further campaign preparations. Leading notables that played a role in developing the campaign such as the Grand Vizier Mehmed Paşa Sokullu and Koca Sinan Paşa get either only a passing mention or are absent from the narrative. By comparing the *Tevarih* with the more vernacular chronicle of Ebubekir bin Abdullah, it shows that the text has a court centered focus and literary style. The *Şark Seferleri* has more similarities with the fourteenth and fifteenth century approach to chronicle composition with a simpler syntax, vocabulary, and use of direct speech or quotations. The *Tevarih* creates an image of a properly ordered commander flanked by his notables, in particular Osman Paşa Özdemiroğlu, who will pursue holy war against the Shias. In this way, the chronicle is consistent with other examples of elevated courtly historical of the late sixteenth century. It is possible that the original author of the text was a scribe employed by Osman Pasha or Lala Mustafa Pasha, based on what events he

⁹³ Minadoi, *War between the Turks and the Persians*, 20.

⁹⁴ Peçevi, *Peçevi Tarihi*, 294.

⁹⁵ Eravcı, "Mustafa Ali's Nusret-Name," 110-111.

⁹⁶ Ebubekir bin Abdullah, *Şark Seferleri*, 35-36.

chose to portray and his level of education, although his writing style does not have same level of sophistication as Mustafa Ali or Dal Çelebi.



Chapter 3:

THE BATTLE OF ÇILDIR AND THE GEORGIAN PRINCES

The *Tevarih* begins a new chapter after the stay of the army in Erzurum for final preparations and describes the march of the army to the plains near Lake Çıldır, near the border of the Georgian kingdoms in eastern Anatolia. The Ottomans met the Safavids in combat by chance and with successful leadership from the Kurdish emirs and the other notables defeated the Persian force through superior firepower and aggression. The Battle of Çıldır established a pattern that continued throughout the campaign of the Ottomans beating the Safavid forces in pitched battles and creating fortified positions, but often the Safavid army was able to use space and maneuverability to cut Ottoman supply lines and prevent them from consolidating gained territory. Technical military details are emphasized less in the *Tevarih* and instead the chronicler wrote about Lala Mustafa Paşa as a commander and the heroic actions of the other grandees fighting against the heretical Safavid enemy. The title of this portion of the text demonstrates the Ottoman perception of conquest: “the defeat of Imam Kulli Han and Tokmak Sultan and the submission of the rulers of Georgia.”⁹⁷ The proper action for an Ottoman general was to defeat the enemies of the state and bring order to potential vassals, as had been the case in the earlier centuries of the empire. The *Tevarih* chronicler used the rhetoric that had been used to glorify sultans in the past and applied it to Lala Mustafa Paşa and his subordinate officers.

Factional politics are alluded to in the *Tevarih* while the army was underway to Georgia and Azerbaijan. After departing from the plains near Erzurum, the imperial army camped at a “Hasan castle.” The military commanders decided to station some of the troops of the *beylerbey* of Sivas, Mehmed Paşa, here to protect the area. The chronicler also notes that this Mehmed Paşa was the older brother of the Fourth Vizier, Sinan Paşa.⁹⁸ The remark is the first mention of Lala Mustafa Paşa’s chief rival Koca Sinan Paşa in the text. Lala Mustafa and Koca Sinan’s rivalry had existed for decades, dating back to the struggle between the future Sultan Selim II and his brother Bayezid and continuing through disputes over command during the Yemen revolt of 1569-71.⁹⁹ By drawing some of the soldiers from this

⁹⁷ “hezimet-i İmam Kuli Han ve Tokmak Sultan ve ita’at-ı müluk-ı Gürcistan,” MS Török O. 176, 4a.

⁹⁸ “Erzenü’r-rum’dan Pasın ovası demekle meşhur sahrada Hasan Kalesi civarında nüzul olunub anda Sivas Beylerbeyisi Mehmed Paşa Atebe-i Aliyye’de bi’l-fi’il vezir-i rabi olan Sinan Paşa’nın ulu karındaşı olub her veçhile ehil-i vukuf ve vacibü’l-re’aya ve lazımu’l-hamiye olmağın Sivas asker ile Erzurum serhaddin muhafazaya tayin olunub,” MS Török O. 176, 4a.

⁹⁹ Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire*, 49-50.

Mehmed Paşa's division to a lesser border fort, it may have been a way for Lala Mustafa Paşa to limit the ability of a member of Koca Sinan Paşa's network from attaining higher glory or wealth as a result of the campaign.

The *Tevarih* illustrates the importance of the Ottoman army pacifying local authorities but at the same time also the ambivalence or hostility they had toward them. The approach of the Ottoman army prompted an embassy from one of the Georgian kings:

Upon their movement, at the fifth halting station a ruler of Georgia [made an oath]. Kubrik, who was deputy of the king of the country known as *Baş-Açık* came with an embassy and himself; even the dogs of hell kissed the hands of the renowned beys and presented gifts of bold hunting falcons.¹⁰⁰

Reference to the Georgians as “dogs” is a recurring pattern in the text of the chronicle. The Ottomans sought loyalty and gifts from the local Georgian princes or kings yet distrusted them and derided them as untrustworthy. These small states were hostile and often duplicitous to the Safavid dynasty, and later the Ottomans. Georgian notables had learned to be flexible with political alliances and religious identification to maintain power. In one case, the Jaqeli dynasty of Georgia immediately allied with Timur in 1400 and possibly adopted Islam for a period of time as a survival strategy.¹⁰¹ The chronicler had a low opinion of the Georgians, even if they were declared loyalty to the Ottoman Sultan or presented gifts of friendship. Despite the disdain by the *Tevarih* author for the Georgians, this episode serves the panegyric function of the text. The chronicle relates how these local notables engaged with the Ottoman army:

First they came to meet and said with all of our sons and followers, and said, “with all ability, with compassion, with bound necks ready to die, we are slaves of the Padishah Refuge of the World.” And upon declaring unanimous submission of fealty his eminence the Vizier also made the teeth of dogs heavy [i.e. made them stand down], and all of the aforementioned ones were made subjects.¹⁰²

The passage shows how Lala Mustafa Paşa bringing the Georgians to submission. Integrating these kingdoms into the empire was part of the consistent Ottoman strategy of coopting local rulers and making them a part of the imperial system. The *serdar* served as a positive example of how to bring about the fealty of non-Muslim subjects. Gift-giving exemplified

¹⁰⁰ “revane olduklarında beşince menzilde müluk-ı Gürcistan and olub Baş-Açık nam ülke padişahı olan Kubrik kethüdası elçilik ile gelüb ve kendü ile nam-dar beyleri duzah segler ile bile dest-bus idüb birkaç cür’et baz şıkar hediye göndermişdi.” MS Török O. 176, 4a.

¹⁰¹ Andrew Peacock, “Between Georgia and the Islamic World: The Atabegs of Samc’xe and the Turks,” in *At the Crossroads of Empires: 14th-15th Century Eastern Anatolia Proceedings of the International Symposium Held in Istanbul, 4th-6th May 2007*, ed. Deniz Beyazıt, *Varia Anatolica* 25 (Istanbul, Paris: Institut Français d’Études Anatoliennes, 2012), 63.

¹⁰² “cemi-yi evlad ve ittiba’ mızla şevketlü ve muhabbetlü Padişah-ı Alem-Penah’ın boyunu bağli külliyyüz deyi kulluk ve yet-cihetlik ma’nisi ilan itdükde Vezir Hazretleri dahi asniye ağırlayan köpekine [tevk/ten] atar mazmunla amal idüb mezburlara külli raiyet idüb,” MS Török O. 176, 4a-4b.

both the Ottoman ability to secure vassals and display their legitimacy in the eyes of the Georgian kingdoms. Understanding what local populations existed on the frontier and how best to deal with them suggests how the *Tevarih* was read in the sixteenth century and long after and the ways in which Ottomans conceived of people living on the borderlands.

After this meeting, the army broke camp and settled four days later at Ardhan castle where the steward of the Van *beylerbey* Hüsrev Paşa came and said that the province had been occupied by the enemy and the commander sent troops for its relief. Afterward, other Georgian envoys arrived at the army and made offers of submission to the Ottomans, and they became subjects of the empire.¹⁰³ Peçevi's history provides more details about the situation at Van. The steward of Hüsrev Paşa presented three hundred *Kızılbaş* heads to the commander from the action led by Hüsrev Paşa and a tribal commander named Mahmudi Hasan Bey to relieve the fortress.¹⁰⁴ The *Tevarih* author did not go into detail about this incident, as the focus of the text is on the proper action of the commander accepting the submission of the Georgian rulers and incorporating the territory into the empire.

The Ottomans next confronted the Safavids at Lake Çıldır and the chronicler used the battle to give examples of effective military leadership. The army arrived at the sixth halting station on the plains near the lake, set up camp, and without stopping they drew up the artillery and put the castle there under siege. While the castle was besieged by the Ottomans, Dervish Paşa of Diyarbekir was nominated to be the advanced guard. Nearby the Safavid commanders of Ganja and Yerevan gathered and while they approached with fifty thousand troops, they struck the scouting party led by Dervish Paşa.¹⁰⁵ Upon this encounter, the commander impulsively launched into battle with the Safavid force on his own initiative, accompanied by the Kurdish emirs. Dervish Paşa set off foolishly according to the chronicler, and recklessly wasted the lives of his men:

Upon entering into combat together with the soldiers of Diyarbekir and emirs of the Kurds, Dervish Paşa, having a flash of being the solitary vanquisher on the battlefield, followed his own opinions and without informing or asking the opinion of the commander of the army of Islam prepared and arranged the soldiers in battle lines immediately. Upon attacking the group of *Kızılbaş* and opening battle, the

¹⁰³ “dahi dördüncü gün Ardhan nam kala önüne konulub ol gün Van Beylerbeyisi beğisi Hüsrev Paşa tarafından kethüdasıya ve [blank space in MS] idüib Kızılbaş'dan tutulmuş yara merdiler getirmekin ibtida sancak ihsan olunub ve Gürcistan meliklerinden ekserinin elçileri ile hediyesi gelüb izhar abüdiyyet eylediler her birine ahd u emanı müştemel şerife inayet olunub bu minval üzre adanın ekseri ita 'at,” MS Török O. 176, 4b.

¹⁰⁴ Peçevi, *Peçevi Tarihi*, 294.

¹⁰⁵ “andan altıncı menzilde Çıldır ovası demekle meşhur sahraya gelindükde nüzul olunub bi-tevakuf Çıldır kalası top çekilüb muhasaraya şüru olundukda fethi sadedinde iken Diyarbekir emirü'l-ümerası Derviş Paşa ki kararla tayin olunmuşdu ittifaq ol tarafda şah gum-rah tarafından leşker Kızılbaş Gence hakimi İmam Kulli Han serdar tayin Erevan hakimi Tokmak Sultan ve dahi nice ümera-yı bad-rayı mirayı Acam ile elli bin kadar Kızılbaş gelirlerken karavolları karavol erise uğrayub,” MS Török O. 176, 4b.

Kızılbaş too came to encounter them, and with their scouts being more numerous than the Ottomans, they were emboldened by the greatness of their numbers. The majority of the famous Kurdistan beys, the lords of the country, with the striking of the sword they [the *Kızılbaş*] made them fall martyr.¹⁰⁶

The introduction of the Kurdish emirs indicates the position and focus of the author as connected to the palace milieu. The Kurdish emirs went unnamed, compared to the celebrated Dervish Paşa who assaulted the Safavid army. The author of the *Tevarih* may not have known the names of the Kurdish lords, or it may not have been relevant to his presenting a story that celebrated select notables. At the same time, the chronicler commended the Kurdish emirs for their service and sacrifice on the battlefield. The death of the Kurdish emirs was further commemorated in colorful prose by the *Tevarih* author: “From amongst the fief holders and *timar* possessors and other heroic men all drank from the sherbet of martyrdom.”¹⁰⁷ Peçevi’s account makes no mention of them.¹⁰⁸ Ebubekir bin Abdullah, presumably closer to the events, does mention this engagement in depth and the deaths of the Kurdish lords.¹⁰⁹ The Kurdish *Şarafname* gives only a brief account of the entire Caucasus expedition.¹¹⁰ The Kurdish lords in these narratives are on the periphery of the Ottoman military elite, and are given less personal attention than the named characters present in the *Tevarih*.

The portrayal of Dervish Paşa in this engagement is another example of the way the *Tevarih* author used these individuals as examples of effective or ineffective military leadership. Although Dervish Paşa is nominated to be the advance guard, the chronicler noted that he did not seek the permission of Lala Mustafa Paşa for his attack, and it resulted in the needless loss of the Kurdish commanders. Dervish Paşa was part of the Sokullu family, younger brother of Sokullu Ferhad Paşa who was the *sancakbey* of Bosnia. Peçevi’s chronicle relates that he was famous for his courage and riding skills and he trained capable riders.¹¹¹ The *Tevarih* author demonstrated his anti-Sokullu standpoint with this passage, as he portrayed Dervish Paşa’s action as reckless and without gain. He also included the detail that the Diyarbekir commander fell from his horse, suggesting that the chronicler may have

¹⁰⁶ “leşker-i Diyarbekir ve umera-ı Ekrad ile münaveşe-ye ağaz itdüklerinde Derviş Paşa dahi husus-ı zaferde müstebid bi-müsarik olmak lemayıla her hoddaralık idüb Ser-Asker-i İslamaya i’lam ve isticaz itmeksizin hemen leşkerin ta’biyye ve tezbin idüp Kızılbaşın cemiyetine hücum ve ağaz-ı harb itdükde Kızılbaş dahi bunları karşılayub karavol Osmanlı’nın ızaf olmaları ile kesret [5a] kuvvetle ziyade cüret idüb eyalet sahib nam-dar Kürdistan beglerinden ekserin zarb tığ ile arsa-ı şehadete düşürüb,” MS Török O. 176, 4b-5a.

¹⁰⁷ “zu’ama ve erbap-ı timar ve sair merdan kar-zardan cemi kesir şerbet-i şehadet içüb,” MS Török O. 176, 5a.

¹⁰⁸ Peçevi, *Peçevi Tarihi*, 294-295.

¹⁰⁹ “Hemân kendülerin ayân edüp Derviş Paşa üzerine bir uğurdan guluuv edüp cenge âgâz etdiler. Ammâ Derviş Paşa üzerinde asker az bulundu...Diyarbekir’in yarar ekrâd beğleri menem diğer nîst diyenlerdir. Ammâ kızılbaş Rum askerine galebe edüp ol mahalde yedi tane yarar ekrâd beği şehîd olmuştur,” Ebubekir bin Abdullah, *Şark Seferleri*, 38-39.

¹¹⁰ Şerefhan Bitlisi, *Şerefname: Kürt Tarihi*, trans. Abdullah Yegin, vol. 2. (Istanbul: Nubihar, 2013), 221-223.

¹¹¹ Peçevi, *Peçevi Tarihi*, 296.

known Dervish Paşa's reputation and wanted to highlight his incompetence on horseback during this engagement.¹¹² The author may have been insinuating that those commanders aligned with Sokullu Mehmed Paşa were not as effective as their reputations may have suggested, as Dervish Paşa was related to the governor of Bosnia Ferhad Paşa who had made a name for himself as a *gazi* on the Habsburg frontier.¹¹³

The next phase of the battle as portrayed in the chronicle shifts to the relief of the remains of the scouting force by Özdemiroğlu Osman Paşa. A messenger arrived before Lala Mustafa Paşa and reported about the rout of the vanguard force. Here the *Tevarih* author portrayed the commander as disciplined and focused: "upon the conditions being made known to the victory-marked commander, his eminence the commander did not move and did not at appear moved."¹¹⁴ The chronicler depicted Lala Mustafa Paşa as a leader not given to irrational, hasty responses to enemy activity, a theme that recurs later in the chronicle. The focused, unemotional reaction to the enemy was an apparent virtue for Ottoman commanders in this period, in contrast to the wild and undisciplined *Kızılbaş* troops. The chronicler depicted Lala Mustafa Paşa as a calculating leader in the face of the uncertainties of the campaign. Osman Paşa gathered men and moved to contact with the Safavid army to deal with this threat. The narrative depicts him as a brave hunting lion plunging into battle, riding against the Safavids and breaking through their lines. Once this phase of the battle began, rain also started that made firing muskets impossible. The battle became a close-quarter struggle with swords and spears (*seyf ü sinan*).¹¹⁵ The Persian chronicler Eskander Beg Monshi writes that the reason for the successful Ottoman counterattack was disunity among the *Kızılbaş* forces and insufficient troops.¹¹⁶ This passage gives some insight into Ottoman military tactics. Mounted *sipahis* provided strong offensive capability, but the lack of supporting fire from musketeers was notable enough for the chronicler to mention it. Peçevi likewise commented on this aspect of the battle in his chronicle, stating that neither muskets nor artillery worked in the rain that day.¹¹⁷ Ottoman firearms and their experience coordinating them on the battlefield gave them an advantage over their enemies. The Safavids made use of

¹¹² MS Török O. 176, 5a.

¹¹³ Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire*, 60-65.

¹¹⁴ "Serdar nusret-şiar'a feryadçı yetişüb ilam avval itüdkde serdar hazretleri hiç hareket itmeyüb ve asla tağir göstermeyüb," MS Török O. 176, 5a.

¹¹⁵ "Osman Paşa dahi şikare atılır arslan gibi nehzat şirane birle süvar olub ansar ile at boyınına düşüb harb-kah arışdukda avn Rabbu'l-Amin ile bi-aman hamle idüb sufuf düşmana tefarik bırağub ol gün gazat ve şüheda üzüre rahmet-i rahman katarat baran şeklinde nüzul itmekle fitil eşlemeyüb tüfenk atılmak mümtene olmağın merd na-merd mümtaz olacak bir melhame olub seyf ve sinan ve dest giriban cenk olub," MS Török O. 176, 5a.

¹¹⁶ Eskander Beg Monshi, *History of Shah Abbas the Great*, trans. Roger Savory, vol. 1 (Boulder: Westview Press, 1930), 351.

¹¹⁷ Peçevi, *Peçevi Tarihi*, 295.

artillery and firearms as well, but with less centralized organization and deployment compared to their focus on the use of mounted *Kızılbaş* troops.¹¹⁸

The victory of the Ottoman forces over the Safavids at Çıldır made the Georgian notable Manuchar II Jaqeli of the Georgian kingdom of Samtskhe submit to imperial authority. In the presence of cut *Kızılbaş* heads, the emissaries of Manuchar and his brother Qvarqvare IV Jaqeli (Ott. Turkish: *Görgör*) came to Lala Mustafa Paşa's camp. They had an audience with the commander and pledged loyalty to the Ottomans after rout of the Safavids.¹¹⁹ That same day the two princes themselves came to the tent of Lala Mustafa Paşa and met with him to finish settling affairs with the Ottomans. The *Tevarih* author wrote:

On the right- and left-hand sides with the aforementioned Prince Qvarqvare and Prince Manuchar the Georgian grandees made settlement, and the remaining grandees of repute and the soldiers and military officers also in the way of having good manners stopped at the divan wave by wave, decorated with arms, and at that place firstly Dervish Paşa, secondly Osman Paşa, thirdly Behram Paşa, and fourthly Ahmed Paşa came each with their separate regiments with the captives and heads taken from the enemy and with drums and upon kissing the hands of the Commander of Lofty Address...he affixed to their heads bejeweled plumes, to their shoulders robes of honor, and to their waists swords set with jewels.¹²⁰

In the *Tevarih* this scene demonstrates the good action of Lala Mustafa Paşa gaining a vassal for the Ottoman state, and the gift ceremony in the presence of the Georgians was a way to demonstrate the wealth and generosity of the commander. The positions and possessions of the Kurdish emirs killed in action were granted to their surviving relatives.¹²¹ There was continuity from earlier Ottoman methods of conquest to those used by Lala Mustafa Paşa in the Caucasus. While the region was more remote, the strategy of the campaign involved building local military garrisons and pacifying local notables. Attempting to implement direct rule through a combination of vassalage and provincial military presence was a priority for the Ottoman army as it would enable expansion and security of both the Black Sea and Caspian steppes.

¹¹⁸ Rudi Matthee, "Unwalled Cities," 390-393.

¹¹⁹ "oldukda dört bin mektuf zinde Kızılbaş ve aded ihsadan birün kesilmiş baş ki sekiler üzüre tabiye etmişler idi. Giriftarların ellerine verüb ve ön üç çift kus ve nakarelerin ki almışlar idi onunlarına tutub Alem-i İslam onunca çale çale şadman muavedet idüb serdar-ı ali ve karın otağına doğru müteveccih olduklarında meğer Vilayet-i Gürcistan padişahi olub Ke-Hushu neslinden olmak davasla abruye müluk Gürcü melik Minüçihir ve Kala-ı Altun hakimiye melik Görgör ikisi dahi bundan akdem elçi gönderüp icazet-i destbus hasıl itdüklerinde bu defa nam-dar Gürcü dahi ez nadirler ve ümera ve avanılar ile gelüb," MS Török O. 176, 5b.

¹²⁰ MS Török O. 176, 5b.

¹²¹ "şahadet olan Kürdistan beylerinin dirlik ve emaretlerin evlad ve akrabalarına [6a] verüb," MS Török O. 176, 5b-6a.

Following this victory and making Samtskhe a vassal, the *Tevarih* describes a letter sent by Lala Mustafa Paşa to Tokmak Han. Unlike Mustafa Ali's chronicle of the campaign that is largely told through letters,¹²² the *Tevarih* author was more selective with the inclusion of direct speech or quotations from communications. The chronicler quoted the letter extensively, and it described the threat made to Tokmak Han if the Safavid side disturbed the peace. The communique discussed how the Ottomans brought peace to the Georgian land such that there was no threat of disruption. If the Safavids continued to violate the Ottomans' gains, Lala Mustafa Paşa's letter warned "Let there be no doubt, if it pleases God most high there will be conquest of Shirvan and devastation of Iran and plunder of Khorasan."¹²³ The *Tevarih* author did not include or was not aware of another aspect of this communication described by Mustafa Ali. The *Nusretname* mentions a coded message to Tokmak Han trying to lure his border forces to the Ottoman side in exchange for a governorship over Azerbaijan.¹²⁴ The author of the *Tevarih* may not have been of high enough rank to be aware of this offer or chose not to include it in the narrative. Trying to win over a Safavid governor was another aspect to Ottoman strategy, and showed the disunity among the elite of Iran whereby it was plausible that Lala Mustafa Paşa could gain a defector.

Following the meeting with Manuchar and Qvarqvare IV, the Ottoman army prepared to enter Tbilisi. Manuchar possessed a force of "ten thousand warlike Georgians"¹²⁵ that he offered as troops for the sultan. Manuchar and his troops served as guides for the army to get through the mountains. While the Ottoman army was approaching Tbilisi, the local notables decided to submit and pay the *cizye* (poll tax) to the empire.¹²⁶ The next stage of the Ottoman journey was the arduous march and climb to the Georgian city, which the chronicler wrote was a difficult journey:

Indeed, the hardship and difficulty of this path cannot be described. There were mountains and thorny jungles and horse and man at the time of marching suffered great difficulty, like rain drops passing a Serbian valley and there were deep footprints in the earth and like wafts of smoke they climbed the mountains, and they lost their senses until they arrived at Tbilisi.¹²⁷

¹²² Eravcı, "Mustafa Ali's Nusret-Name," 126.

¹²³ "inşallah ta'ala feth-i Şirvan ve harab-ı İran ve talan-ı Horasan olmasında şübhe yokdur," MS Török O. 176, 6a.

¹²⁴ Eravcı, "Mustafa Ali's Nusret-Name," 120.

¹²⁵ "zikir olunan Minüçihir on bin cengi aznavura melik," MS Török O. 176, 6b.

¹²⁶ "onların dahi ita'at ve Hazine-i Amire'ye cizye maktularda mukarrer kılındukdan sonra onuncu konakda Kala-ı Tiflis üzre varmak tasmin ve tahkik olunub," MS Török O. 176, 6b.

¹²⁷ "amma ol memerün vu'uret u şu'adeti dillerle vasıf olunmazdı kühistan ve çengelistan olub at ve adam isna-ı seyirde ziyade usret çıkarları Sirp vadilere uğrayub katarat baran gibi ka'r zemine izlerdi ve gah şerare-i duhan gibi kuhistanlara tırmanub [cevasımana] çıkarlardı ta-ki Tiflis'e vasıl oldular," MS Török O. 176, 6b.

The mention of the valleys of Serbia gives an indication that the author of the chronicle was familiar with that region or had traveled through it, as later in the text he made similar comparisons to other locations in the empire. The author may have been a scribe that accompanied a previous army or a soldier himself with a higher level of education. This passage also illustrates the difficulties faced by Ottoman armies campaigning in the east. Lacking an established military presence, the army depended on local notables for support in the remote mountain regions of Georgia. The landscape and poor supply lines added another level of complexity to campaigning against the Safavids that was not present compared to the better controlled provinces in the Balkans or Hungary.

The Ottoman army arrived at Tbilisi on the 24th of August 1578 and captured the city because the Safavid governor had fled and offered no resistance.¹²⁸ The governor, a Georgian named Davud Han, fled into the mountains because the neighboring Georgian princes supported the Ottomans, thus cutting him off from potential support.¹²⁹ Although the city was taken without battle, the Ottoman army pursued Safavid and Georgian troops fleeing the city:

And not fleeing that ill-fated night, from amongst the groups of soldiers many brave men were inside the forest and hurried to pursuit, and they found Georgians and Kızılbaş of those fleeing Tbilisi and they killed and captured and plundered them. Consequently, they found success...and tranquility the scattered subjects of the province returned to their homes. From among them appointed chiefs were granted robes of honor and gifts and favors from the commander.¹³⁰

The *Tevarih* author may have been closer to actual fighting at this time, as Mustafa Ali does not mention this assault on the escaping enemy.¹³¹ The passage is true to the features of the *gazavatname* genre and illustrates the mentality of Ottoman conquest. The army defeated those outside the properly ordered domain of the sultan, and restored peace for the subjects of Tbilisi and its surrounding region. Connecting with the local population and trying to bring them to the side of the Ottomans was a critical feature of their military occupation and conquest strategy. Tbilisi was a strategic location worth long-term control as it was a mid-point between the Ottoman controlled Black Sea coast and Azerbaijan along the Caspian. Capture of the city was another indication of Ottoman ambitions to control both inner seas and the surrounding steppes.

The *Tevarih* next describes the features of Tbilisi, drawing comparisons with other parts of the empire as he had done during the mountain journey. The castle is said to be

¹²⁸ “hakimi olan Davud Han Çıldır vakisinden gayret olub gürbüzün olmağla hali bulub,” MS Török O. 176, 6b.

¹²⁹ Eskander Beg Monshi, *History of Shah Abbas the Great*, 351-352.

¹³⁰ MS Török O. 176, 6b-7a.

¹³¹ Eravcı, “Mustafa Ali’s Nusret-Name,” 124.

beautiful and seasoned travelers liken it to the fortress of Aleppo. The Kura River that flows through the city is described as large and billowing.¹³² The author further compared the city to Buda and Pest in Hungary, and uses the Hungarian term *város* (town or suburbs) in the passage:

Its city-center crossed with *varos* is in line with the castle and situated on the edge of the aforementioned river and it resembled the country of Hungary's Buda with its Pest in as much as they are situated on the banks of the Danube River, especially in the environs of the fortress of Tbilisi there are hot springs that are numerous.¹³³

This section shows that the *Tevarih* author had knowledge or direct experience of Hungary and possibly Aleppo. Ebubakir bin Abdullah wrote a similarly positive rendition of the city, describing its moderate climate, several hot springs, and its role in the silk trade. He also mentioned the toll revenue generated from crossing the city's bridge. Before leaving the city, Lala Mustafa Paşa established a garrison of Janissaries and set aside muskets and cannon for the castle. The army was also able to collect provisions.¹³⁴ Both of these chronicles portray Tbilisi as a desirable location for Ottoman rule with resources that could be used by the state and that it had an appealing geography. The conquest of Georgia also hindered Safavid ambitions, as Shah Tahmasp had tried to integrate the princes into the Safavid political system, with Shah Abbas continuing this policy.¹³⁵ Both empires sought to control local intermediaries, with the Ottomans implementing more aspects of direct rule. Stationing artillery and troops signaled the Ottoman desire for long term provincial investment. The description of Tbilisi is another example of the utility of the text for readers both in the late sixteenth century and in the eighteenth century when the manuscript was copied, as the Ottomans had renewed interest in the Caucasus borderlands.

Settling in Tbilisi provided the Ottoman army time for worship and reflection on the spiritual aspect of the campaign. They set up a mosque in the city, possibly in a church, on the 19th of August 1578, which was a Friday time of worship and the chronicle emphasizes Ottoman-Sunni aspects of the worship held there:

In short, on the day which was the twenty-fifth day of the aforementioned month an ornamented noble mosque was produced, and the Friday prayer was performed. The names of the four caliphs and padishah were invoked in the sermon of the and there was prayer...and the excellence of struggle and

¹³² MS Török O. 176, 7a.

¹³³ MS Török O. 176, 7a.

¹³⁴ Ebubekir bin Abdullah, *Şark Seferleri*, 42.

¹³⁵ Hirotake Maeda, "Against All Odds: The Safavids and the Georgians," in *The Safavid World*, ed. Rudi Matthee (London: Routledge, 2022), 129-131.

the merit of holy war against the heretical Shias accustomed to apostasy. Upon the hearing of this by the Armies of Islam were full of inner effervescence.¹³⁶

The chronicle uses the rhetoric of the Ottoman religious conflict with the Safavids. The sermon at Tbilisi emphasized both the apostasy of the Shia Safavids and invoked of the four Rightly Guided Caliphs as a clear statement against the Safavid practice cursing them. The sermon was also a source of motivation for the Ottoman soldiers according to the description in the chronicle. During the 1560s and 1570s, Ottoman regional governors actively suppressed Shiism in their provinces and punished those engaged with Safavid Islam. Anatolian Kızılbaş tried to maintain their connections to Iran, which posed both a spiritual and military threat to the Ottoman state.¹³⁷ The chronicler reflected this atmosphere of increased Ottoman fervor against the Safavids and illustrated how the defense of Ottoman Islam was an important part of motivating troops.

After the Tbilisi, the army departed and at the third campsite from the city they halted on the banks of the Khabur River, “flowing from Armenia.”¹³⁸ It is not clear which river this actually was, as the Khabur River is a tributary of the Euphrates in Syria. Nevertheless, the chronicle describes in some detail the Georgian brother-in-law of Shah Tahmasp and his son Aleksandre. The chronicler was informed about the relationships between the Georgian princes and the Safavid political elite.¹³⁹ Georgian nobility was tightly linked to the Safavid dynasty and Georgian elite families exerted control over the court and political establishment of Iran. Georgians were also part of the Safavid military elite.¹⁴⁰ Aleksandre Han’s domain lay between Tbilisi and Yerevan and had earlier been within the Safavid sphere of influence. He also tried to court the favor of the Ottomans.¹⁴¹ With the approach of the Ottoman army, Mustafa Ali wrote in his chronicle that the Georgian prince declared submission to Lala Mustafa Paşa. Aleksandre Han received a formal agreement, which Ali described as being finely written.¹⁴² The *Tevarih* chronicles the same events, but without the documentary focus of Mustafa Ali. This is the consistent difference between the chronicle of Mustafa Ali and the anonymous author of the *Tevarih*. They both demonstrated familiarity with the elite officers

¹³⁶ MS Török O. 176, 7a.

¹³⁷ Rıza Yıldırım, “The Safavid-Qizilbash Ecumene and the Formation of the Qizilbash-Alevi Community in the Ottoman Empire, c. 1500–c. 1700,” *Iranian Studies* 52, no. 3–4 (2019): 459–460.

¹³⁸ “üçüncü menzilde enhar-ı Ermeniyeden ab-ı Habur,” MS Török O. 176, 7b.

¹³⁹ “ol diyarlarda şah-ı hüküm-ran ve şah-ı Acem-i sabık Tahmasb Bahadırın kayını olan Levend Han oğlu Eleksandre Han ki mezburun hemşiresi Şah Tahmasbun hemşiresi idi,” MS Török O. 176, 7b.

¹⁴⁰ Hirotake Maeda, “Against All Odds: The Safavids and the Georgians,” in *The Safavid World*, ed. Rudi Matthee (London: Routledge, 2022), 125–43; Matthee, *Persia in Crisis*, 29–31.

¹⁴¹ Minadoi, *War between the Turks and the Persians*, 40.

¹⁴² Eravcı, “Mustafa Ali’s Nusret-Name,” 127–128.

of the imperial army, but Ali's position as a secretary made his account mainly a compilation of letters. The information about the relationship between Aleksandre Han and the Safavid ruling house suggests that the *Tevarih* author had access to similar information as Mustafa Ali, indicating his status in the elite.

After subduing the kingdom of Aleksander Han, the Ottoman army was finally poised to enter Azerbaijan. The *Tevarih* author described both the combat successes of the army and the often-difficult task of negotiating with local Georgian notables. The anonymous author gave great attention to describing both the land and people of Georgia with notable comparisons to both Hungary and Syria. He possessed knowledge of the internal affairs of these small kingdoms and their dealings with the Safavids. The chronicle also shows the consistent strategy of the Ottomans in the region of occupying strategic locations, building fortifications and garrisoning troops. This aspect of the text gives some insight into imperial military strategy. The Ottomans attempted to directly rule these territories through garrisons they established. In this way, the Ottoman campaign of 1578 did not diverge significantly from military practices in the West despite the different operational constraints of the East. Lala Mustafa Paşa concentrated his attention on cities that were strategically important for collecting local resources and protecting supply routes. The chronicler viewed his leadership as capable in the face of the difficult circumstances of the campaign and that the officers beneath him were also effective front-line fighters. The text served as a work of exemplar military literature by describing the qualities of effective military leadership at the lower level of leading men in battle and the higher level of how to conduct an occupation of newly acquired territory. The *Tevarih* thus in a sense served as a work of advice literature by indirectly illustrating commendable leadership rather than didactic instruction as seen in the *Mirrors for Princes* works also popular in the late sixteenth century.

Chapter 4:

THE IMPERIAL ARMY IN AZERBAIJAN

The chronicler introduces a new section after the submission of Georgia describing the Ottoman march into Azerbaijan, of which Shirvan was one region. Shirvan was a desirable strategic location for the Ottomans and a legitimate military objective. The agricultural and pasture lands were an important asset for whomever controlled the region, especially the Safavids who suffered from a dearth of arable land in the interior of Iran. Azerbaijan was capable of producing large amounts of revenue and resources, although in the 1580s and 1590s the Ottoman administration became burdensome on the population.¹⁴³ Control of Shirvan also secured both the local silk production and the trade routes overland and through the Caspian Sea. With this territory in hand the Ottomans could have firmer control over the silk trade coming from Iran and add to their dominance of the Black Sea and overland trade routes that terminated in Syria.¹⁴⁴ According to the *Tevarih* the Ottoman army entered Azerbaijan on September 5th, 1578.¹⁴⁵ The descriptions of Shirvan and the North Caucasus in this section of the narrative provide detailed information about the resources, cities, and geographic features in these regions. The author also provided some descriptions of Caucasian and Turkic groups, offering examples for an elite reader of how best to negotiate or fight them on future campaigns.

The Battle of Köyün Geçidi is one of the prominent chapters of the manuscript and was the first engagement of the Ottoman army before they entered Azerbaijan proper. The *Tevarih* describes the state of the province as the army progressed and found that they could not yet enter Shirvan. They camped on the banks of the deep Kur River and rested until a Safavid army approached them.¹⁴⁶ At this stage of the campaign, the Safavids demonstrated their ability to use space and maneuver tactics against the Ottoman army. The Ottoman army arrived at this campsite with little food and according to Ebubakir bin Abdullah, “even the Istanbul bushel of barley was three hundred *akçe*.”¹⁴⁷ The imperial army’s animals and their handlers were scattered, which the *Kızılbaş* exploited: “Upon their [the Kizilbash] approach that area, they drove off the beasts of burden such as camels, mules, and horses that were

¹⁴³ Fariba Zarinebaf, “Azerbaijan between Two Empires: A Contested Borderland in the Early Modern Period (Sixteenth-Eighteenth Centuries),” *Iranian Studies* 52, no. 3–4 (2019): 326–327.

¹⁴⁴ Kortepeter, “5 Complex Goals of the Ottomans, Persians, and Muscovites in the Caucasus, 1578–1640,” 71–72.

¹⁴⁵ MS Török O. 176, 8b.

¹⁴⁶ MS Török O. 176, 8b–9a.

¹⁴⁷ Ebubekir bin Abdullah, *Şark Seferleri*, 44.

scattered and they killed some of the dispersed stable-boys roaming about heedlessly, to the degree that their [the Ottomans'] hearts burned with grief and with unspeakable conceit they arranged three regiments."¹⁴⁸ Ebubakir bin Abdullah noted in his chronicle that the Safavids were also able to conceal their numbers before attacking, and it was another successful tactic they used against the Ottomans.¹⁴⁹ The size of the Ottoman army with its attendant animals and support staff made it vulnerable to the fast-moving Safavid army, who relied on shock and movement to wear down the Ottoman expedition.

The *Tevarih* author described Lala Mustafa Paşa as a responsible and sober commander when the Safavids sprung this ambush, in keeping with the positive depiction of him throughout the narrative. The wild and undisciplined Safavid horsemen are contrasted against the focused and capable leadership of Lala Mustafa Paşa:

With the playing of drums and sometimes flutes, they attacked the camp of the army of Islam where they were camped at the edge of the Kura River a place known as Sheep's Pass...when they showed this clamor and excitement, the victory-marked commander possessing sure-footedness did not move out from the camp. He said, let the *beylerbeys* come and confront the enemy. Upon this command, the provincial commanders rode out.¹⁵⁰

The narration of this engagement reinforces one of the anti-Sokullu objectives of the *Tevarih* author, emphasizing Lala Mustafa Paşa's role in directing the battle that resulted in an Ottoman victory. In contrast, Ebubakir bin Abdullah's account includes the names of the commanders that led the counterattack. Derviş Paşa of Diyarbekir, Erzurum *beylerbey* Bahram Paşa, Özdemiroğlu Osman Paşa, and Mehmed Paşa pressed an attack and routed the enemy.¹⁵¹ The two authors approached the narration of this battle differently, with the *Tevarih* focusing on giving honor to Lala Mustafa Paşa for his qualities as a leader.

The author of the chronicle tempered this with criticism shortly after in the narrative of the difficult march further on into Azerbaijan. The army needed to reach the city of Eres and had to undertake a river crossing, where the current was so strong that many men died and "that river spilled over without end."¹⁵² The *Tevarih* author was apparently critical of this decision by Lala Mustafa Paşa, writing how only some of the men could swim and that the

¹⁴⁸ "yaklaşduklarında [9a] muasker-i İslam'dan otak için etrafa perakende olan deve katır ve bargir emsali devabdan buldukların surub müteferrika gaflet üzere gezen ba'zı at-oğlanların kurub bu mertebe ile ziyade dil kerim olub dahi gurur mellakalamla üç alay düzüb," MS Török O. 176, 8b-9a.

¹⁴⁹ Ebubekir bin Abdullah, *Şark Seferleri*, 44-45.

¹⁵⁰ "dahi kös ve kere-i nayın çalarak kenarında kondukları Kor suyunı koyun geçidi demekle muarefe muaberden maberden geçüb asker-i İslam üzerine dağ dokuzları gibi hücum idüb cuş huruş gösterdiklerinde serdar zaferşiar hazretleri kemal mertebe sebat kadim sahib olmağın mukarrerinden merkat itmeyüb beglerbegler düşmene karşı varsunlar deyü buyurduklarında asker cerrar ile amirü'l-ümeralar süvar olub," MS Török O. 176, 9a.

¹⁵¹ Ebubekir bin Abdullah, *Şark Seferleri*, 44-45.

¹⁵² "ol ab-ı bi-payana dökülüb," MS Török O. 176, 9b.

soldiers began to grumble and gossip about the decision to press forward. The chronicler also noted that it was nearly winter, and that the army needed to prepare for winter quarters.¹⁵³ Ebubakir bin Abdullah wrote a more prosaic account of this moment of decision. With the grumbling of the soldiers, Lala Mustafa Paşa personally ordered the soldiers to be quiet and brought order to the army. Later that night during a council of the leaders of the army the chronicle records an address given by Lala Mustafa Paşa. He stated to the council that essentially the Ottoman army had achieved most of its objectives, but what they had accomplished was still not sufficient, and they had to press forward. To motivate the soldiers, the pay of the Janissaries and Kapıkulu cavalry was increased. When the soldiers began to pass the river, Ebubakir bin Abdullah describes the scene as dangerous and many men and animals died because of the strong current.¹⁵⁴ The different presentations reflect the differing literary approaches of the two authors, with the *Tevarih* author's account more abstract, whereas the *Şark Seferleri* gives a more dramatic rendering of this tense moment. Both authors appear indirectly critical of Lala Mustafa Paşa, demonstrating that passing this river was difficult and marching further into hostile territory close to winter was imprudent. While the author of the *Tevarih* did appear to write the text to glorify anti-Sokullu members of the military elite, he still made critical remarks by way of illustration rather than direct statements.

The description of the river crossing also provided important geographical knowledge about the area for a military reader. The rivers that ran into Azerbaijan were difficult for the army to negotiate and would also impede more routine overland travel. The strength of the river currents also suggests that the plan to build ships in Tbilisi and send them down the Kura River, as Osman Paşa and Mehmed Paşa Sokullu later proposed, was possible. The Danube was a vital supply line on the Ottoman western frontier and having a similar riverine network in the Caucasus may have been appealing to imperial leadership, even with the danger posed by the river for troops and animals to cross.

The army was well beyond Ottoman territory and the closeness of winter and need for resupply preoccupied them. Now in Shirvan they found supplies and respite:

Having passed with exertion the aforementioned river, in form with royal endeavor the dominion of Shirvan was conquered with ease and sufficient grain and necessary provisions for winter were found

¹⁵³ MS Török O. 176, 10a.

¹⁵⁴ Ebubekir bin Abdullah, *Şark Seferleri*, 46-47.

for the soldiers and seizing the mentioned supplies, the soldiers of Islam's strength and power became [more] certain.¹⁵⁵

In the city of Eres they connected with the Sunni local notables, who met the Ottoman army as a liberating force from Safavid rule.¹⁵⁶ The Ottomans discovered Eres abandoned by the Safavid governor and much of the population gone. This gave the Ottoman army a new location to fortify and control, and Lala Mustafa Paşa spent twenty-two days there stationing artillery and men.¹⁵⁷ The description of Shrivani also served a purpose for readers of both the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries by showing that the region had rivers that were difficult to pass but also abundant supplies and grain. The lack of stable supply lines from Anatolia meant that this information was important to future Ottoman campaigns in Azerbaijan. The text shows how the region was difficult to reach but did have resources available for the army. Information such as this was valuable for a potential military reader who wanted to understand the eastern borderlands. With the capture of Eres, the *Tevarih* narrative shifts focus to Özdemiroğlu Osman Paşa, whom Lala Mustafa Paşa appointed to command the soldiers that would stay in the field while the main force departed back to Anatolia for the winter.

¹⁵⁵ “nehir-i mezbur sai ile ubur olunduğu suratda himmet Padişahi ile memleket Şirvan suhulet ile teshir olunub asakire müstevfi zahire ve levazım şita bulunur ve iğtinam mela kalam sebeple Asker-i İslam kuvvet ve kudretleri ziyade mukarrerdir,” MS Török O. 176, 10b.

¹⁵⁶ Ebubekir bin Abdullah, *Şark Seferleri*, 47.

¹⁵⁷ Minadoi, *War between the Turks and the Persians*, 65-66.

Chapter 5:

THE COMMAND OF ÖZDEMİROĞLU OSMAN PAŞA

Osman Paşa became the main focus of the chronicler after the departure of the Ottoman main force, continuing the author's intent to craft a heroic military story. The author of the *Tevarih* lauded Osman Paşa, describing him as a good candidate to protect Shirvan. The chronicler described his qualifications at great length, emphasizing his bravery and good service on the campaign that qualified him to serve as governor of Shirvan.¹⁵⁸ The lengthy description of Osman Paşa is another example of the possible intent of the *Tevarih*. The events and religious justifications for the war, while present, are less important compared to memorializing certain members of the military elite. The *Tevarih* is more focused on this kind of literary panegyric function whereas the works of Mustafa Ali and Ebubakir bin Abdullah use respectively a documentary approach or traditional Turkish chronicle genre conventions. The *Tevarih* author used long quotations from letters sparingly unlike Mustafa Ali and unlike the *Şark Seferleri* used extended direct speech only in certain cases. The sections about Osman Paşa's time as commander and his activities also provide explanation about the geography and ethnography of the North Caucasus. Knowledge of this territory was important for Ottoman readers as it was their main frontier with Muscovy. Pacifying that borderland was possibly more essential in the 1578 campaign than the immediate target of Safavid Iran.

Ebubakir bin Abdullah's account of the selection of Osman Paşa is more grounded and possibly realistic compared to the more artful depiction of the *Tevarih*. In Shirvan, Lala Mustafa Paşa had to negotiate carefully with the commanders, most of whom it appeared did not wish to remain on the frontier during the winter and face potential supply shortages and attacks from *Kızılbaş* forces.¹⁵⁹ The Ottomans were well aware of the possibility of losing hold of what they had come so far to gain: "After the going of Mustafa Paşa to Rum the *Kızılbaş* of ill-means are exposed...surely they come at once and make confrontation and they make battle."¹⁶⁰ By reading these narratives closely, a picture of an Ottoman army beset by lack of supplies and little incentive to push on emerges. At the same time, Ebubakir bin Abdullah's chronicle gives Lala Mustafa Paşa's justification for remaining in the field. The commander believed that if the Ottoman army were to fully withdraw to Erzurum the

¹⁵⁸ MS Török O. 176, 12a-12b.

¹⁵⁹ Ebubekir bin Abdullah, *Şark Seferleri*, 48-49.

¹⁶⁰ Ebubekir bin Abdullah, *Şark Seferleri*, 48.

surrounding region would be left undefended from Safavid incursions. The *Tevarih*'s narrative and style has less clarity on these issues given its more literary approach, whereas the vernacular, soldier's memoir depiction of the *Şark Seferleri* was written with greater attention to these details.

Osman Paşa in his command focused on subduing the North Caucasus frontier and establishing indirect Ottoman rule through local notables in that region. Lala Mustafa Paşa directed Osman Paşa to capture or negotiate for control of Shamakhi and Derbent on the western coast of the Caspian Sea. This was to give the Crimean Tatars a clear route to pass down into Shirvan from the north, while also building up the Ottoman zone of control in the region. He established good relations with the city of Shemahi and brought it under Ottoman rule.¹⁶¹ The *Tevarih* chronicles this phase of the campaign:

Upon the reply being given, word also passed to the emir-of-emirs of Maraş and it being necessary was formerly master of the horse, yet the Province of Erzurum was given to Kaytas Bey who was the *mir-livası* of Manisa and upon his remaining the emir also submitted, but the Erzurum servants were not satisfied and without permission, upon returning to their homes in fact the above mentioned Mehmed Paşa was needed for the defense of the Erzurum frontier also, and as it was he was established in the Province of Erzurum. To the aforementioned Kaytas Paşa, the son of the emir-of-emirs with five days one thousand *akçe* was granted and that also with the tent and necessities the army of the second commander Osman Paşa settled, and it was one group. With grand bravery it was decided, and the renowned gate famed with the name Iron Gate...in the solid fortress from the side of the Kızılbaş Chirgah Halife the castle warden, upon beholding that the abode of Shirvan was made dominion of the Ottomans was seen, with fealty, offering gifts and baths.¹⁶²

While not explicitly discussed in the *Tevarih*, the reason for this northward pivot by the Ottomans was to challenge the emerging power of Muscovy in the North Caucasus. In addition to the tsardom's direct actions in the region, they sent weapons to the Safavids to check Ottoman designs.¹⁶³ Derbent was strategically important so that the Ottomans could begin the process of controlling the region and integrate Dagestan into the empire and the Dagestanis as subjects.¹⁶⁴ Dagestan had several political units. The Shamkhalate of Tarku had a diverse population of Kumyks, Laks, Avars, and Kaytaks that lived in a confederation. There was also a Kaytak Principality and the Khanate of the Avars, making this region complex and difficult for outside powers to navigate.¹⁶⁵ The *Tevarih* chronicler did not emphasize higher-level diplomacy and negotiations, but instead narrated the events focusing

¹⁶¹ Minadoi, *War between the Turks and the Persians*, 66.

¹⁶² MS Török O. 176, 14a.

¹⁶³ Yaşar, "North Caucasus," 102-103.

¹⁶⁴ Yaşar, *The North Caucasus Borderland*, 129.

¹⁶⁵ Yaşar, *The North Caucasus Borderland*, 32-33.

on Osman Paşa's command and the positive reception of the Ottoman army. Mustafa Ali's chronicle does not pay close attention to the affairs of Osman Paşa in Shirvan, as he accompanied the army back to Anatolia. His friend and fellow chronicler Dal Çelebi remained with Osman Paşa on the frontier.¹⁶⁶

Osman Paşa had a long military career before his appointment to command in the Caucasus, starting when he was eighteen years old as a regimental commander in Egypt. Following this, he served during the Yemen revolt of 1570 where he became aligned with Lala Mustafa Paşa who commanded the first campaign until his replacement with Koca Sinan Paşa. Osman Paşa served as a provincial commander in Lahsa and Basra until his appointment to head the military forces of Diyarbekir shortly before the 1578 expedition.¹⁶⁷ The chronicle's focus on Osman Paşa is another indication that the author supported an anti-Sokullu and pro-Lala Mustafa Paşa perspective. Osman Paşa himself was part of this faction and his military record and conduct during the Shirvan campaign and those after made him an effective example in the effort to promote anti-Sokullu figures in literature. Yet, the Osman Paşa worked with Sokullu Mehmed to achieve his goals of expanding into the Caspian Sea region during the war complicating the relationship between the two broad factions.

The next chapter of the *Tevarih* narrates the return of the Ottoman main force to Erzurum and local Sunni Turkic groups falling under Ottoman protection. The chronicle describes the gathering of North Caucasus troops to the Ottoman side from the *shamkhal* of Dagestan and from the Circassians. The Dagestanis met with the Ottoman army while they were marching from Shirvan back to Anatolia. The *Tevarih* author praised the *shamkhal* of Dagestan, giving indication that the Ottomans sought to build up support of the Turkic and Caucasian groups in the region. Lala Mustafa Paşa gave the emir lavish gifts as a token of the new relationship.¹⁶⁸ The emir controlled a strategic position in the area of Mount Elbrus, near the Black Sea coast and on the land route to Azerbaijan.¹⁶⁹ The Circassians had also wanted to assist the Ottomans by joining with the planned raiding campaign of the Crimean Tatars when the war began.¹⁷⁰ Building these local alliances worked in tandem with the creation of fortifications and garrisons undertaken by Lala Mustafa Paşa. After these negotiation, Lala Mustafa Paşa returned to Erzurum at the conclusion of a long, twenty-eight day march, which

¹⁶⁶ Eravcı, "Mustafa Ali's Nusret-Name," 141-143.

¹⁶⁷ Peçevi, *Peçevi Tarihi*, 283.

¹⁶⁸ MS Török O. 176, 14b.

¹⁶⁹ Minadoi, *War between the Turks and the Persians*, 66-67.

¹⁷⁰ Yasar, "North Caucasus," 116.

the *Tevarih* author described as being difficult because of winter conditions.¹⁷¹ The *Tevarih* and the other sources show the contentious position of the Safavids in controlling Transcaucasia, especially the local rulers who were Sunni. The Sunni locals could appeal to the Ottomans as external protector, giving them protection from Safavid rule. The Ottomans were able to capitalize on this and establish vassals while also attempting to build up provincial military infrastructure.

The *Tevarih* then focuses back on Özdemiroğlu Osman Paşa in the Caucasus and his confrontation with the Kızılbaş:

The successful commander organized the country of Shirvan and its width and breadth were brought to submission. He saw to keeping the peace and upon their return to the direction of Erzurum the task of being the vizier of the captured city fell upon Osman Paşa.¹⁷²

Ebubakir bin Abdullah described the works done by the vizier in Shirvan after the departure of Lala Mustafa Paşa. Osman Paşa built a bridge across the difficult Kura River and sent raiding forces into the Safavid held provinces of Karabakh and Halu. During these raids, “the Red-Heads captured were killed and they seized endless provisions and grain.”¹⁷³ Osman Paşa’s role as a heroic figure is evoked, underlined in both the *Tevarih* and the *Şark Seferleri*, and the *Şeca’âtname* of Dal Çelebi is also focused on the endeavors of Osman Paşa. In the *Tevarih*, the author devotes considerable space to him and shows his forward-thinking strategy for maintaining Ottoman rule in the region. Osman Paşa also married the niece of the ruler of the Dagestanis, arranged by Lala Mustafa Paşa, and knew that Ottoman military forces had to cooperate with these local notables to establish permanent rule.¹⁷⁴ The focus on Osman Paşa is similar in both the *Tevarih* and in the *Şark Seferleri* but Ebubakir bin Abdullah’s writing is clear and direct compared to the *Tevarih* author’s more complex literary style.

In order to achieve the objective of expanding Ottoman power into the North Caucasus, Özdemiroğlu Osman Paşa and his forces moved to the city of Shamakhi on the Caspian coast, where the *Tevarih* informs there was also an engagement with the Safavid governor Eres Han.¹⁷⁵

The city of Shamakhi which was still the capital of Shirvan was reached and his eminence the commander...remaining in Eres with the soldiers of Kaytas Paşa, they moved upon Shamakhi. Firstly, they sent the stewards and astray ones ahead and following after they themselves

¹⁷¹ MS Török O. 176, 14b.

¹⁷² MS Török O. 176, 14b-15a.

¹⁷³ “Ebubekir bin Abdullah, *Şark Seferleri*, 50.

¹⁷⁴ Yasar, “North Caucasus,” 118-119.

¹⁷⁵ MS Török O. 176, 15b.

drew soldiers for the intent of Eres Han and the roads reached the place known with the name Razdar and the Demir-Kapı Fortress gate-keeper... was brought mounted and he was killed. Upon that province being full of enemy viziers, from this when arriving to the place of Eres Han's camp five or six tents were empty and the peasants were scarce.¹⁷⁶

The Safavid governor had planned after retreating from the Ottoman advance to counter-attack and exploit the absence of the Ottoman main force. Instead, Osman Paşa together with local allies that had come to Shirvan managed to locate this Safavid force, assault, and defeat it.¹⁷⁷ This section of the *Tevarih* leads to the introduction of the Crimean Tatar khan Gazi Giray and his brother Adil Giray, who receive a laudatory treatment like the Ottoman notables of the narrative. They were brothers of the reigning Crimean Khan Fetih I Giray. Unlike the local rulers of Shirvan and Georgia, the Crimean khan and prince are celebrated by the author. The *Tevarih* author does not appear to diminish their role or set them aside and included them as near equals with Osman Paşa and the other Ottoman commanders.¹⁷⁸ This was not a universal feature of Ottoman military chronicles describing campaigns in which Crimeans took part. For example, an account of the 1594 Siege of Győr in Hungary tries to diminish the role of the Tatars in favor of the commander Koca Sinan Paşa.¹⁷⁹ In the case of the Shirvan campaign, the *Tevarih* author understood the role the Crimeans, Dagestanis, and Circassian allies had in supporting Ottoman ambitions on the Safavid frontier.

Eskander Beg Monshi describes the context of the failed attack of Eres Han on the Ottomans. The Safavid prince Hamza Mirza was preparing an army to push the Ottomans out of Shirvan while the main force was away. The Shirvan Emirs, so as not to appear disloyal, decided to mount their own siege of Shamakhi, but before they could attack the city the Crimean Tatars stopped them and it resulted in a rout of the Safavids.¹⁸⁰ The Ottoman sources and the Persian history of Eskander Beg Monshi both show how important these local military forces were for both states, even if their military performance was not always effective. Organizing the main army took substantial time and resources, whereas the armies of these local elites were organized quickly and on a more ad-hoc basis.

¹⁷⁶ “Behr hal daru’l-melik Şirvan olan şehir-i Şemahi üzerine varılub defa adau’l-azim olmağın serdar hazretleri Kaytas Paşayı asker ile Ereş’de koyub kendüler Şemahi üzerine revane oldular evvela kethüdalari hasır ve kethüdayı illerü gönderüb derakap kendüler Eres Han kasidına leşker çeküb yolları razdar demekle maruf mevziye erdükde Kala-ı Demir Kapı hakimi cırak halife ma-süvar getirilüb katil olundu ol vilayet pürleri vezire mela ki olduklarında bundan Eres Han konduğu yere varınca beş altı konak yer yer beyaban olub re’aya na-yab olmışdur.” MS Török O. 176, 15b.

¹⁷⁷ Minadoi, *War between the Turks and the Persians*, 72-73.

¹⁷⁸ MS Török O. 176, 16a.

¹⁷⁹ See Christine Woodhead, *Ta’liki-Zade’s Şehname-i Hümayun: A History of the Ottoman Campaign into Hungary 1593-94* (Berlin: Klaus Schwartz Verlag, 1983).

¹⁸⁰ Eskander Beg Monshi, *History of Shah Abbas I*, 353-354.

The *Tevarih* gives a description of the Tatar forces and their arrival to Shirvan, giving some insight into their organization and conduct during the campaign:

It was decided to go upon the enemy camp. While at that place news came thus: the Tatar Khan Giray and son Adil Giray Sultan with five thousand Tatar troops and mounted Circassians and [?] Nogai braves arrived and from the exalted threshold also three hundred Janissaries accompanied them and ten light cannon and from the threshold *çavuş* [?] the renowned halberdier and with the troops of the Azak *sancakbey* Mehmed Bey they approached for the support of those who fight...praise and thanks were abundant.¹⁸¹

This description shows that the role of the Tatars along with the other mounted, fast-moving troops were an important part of the Ottoman military and its tactics. The chronicler also believed they were valuable additions to the army and gave extended praise for their joining with the troops in Shirvan. While the main force was away, these light cavalry units filled an important gap maintaining pressure on the enemy and launching raids. They were also part of a combined-arms strategy, as they were supported by a company of Janissaries, some light artillery, and provincial troops. Based on this, the Ottomans understood the need for both their “western” strategy of building up fortifications and provincial infrastructure while also using auxiliaries suited to steppe-style maneuver fighting.

The use of both Tatars and the *sancakbey* of Azak (Azov) indicated Ottoman strategies of how to assert control over the Caspian steppe. The Crimean Tatars and the regular garrison of Azov helped control the Black Sea steppes and using them as part of one thrust while Ottoman troops from the Caucasus were part of the other were part of the other. This effort also put the Ottomans at odds with Muscovy, who later attempted to control the Caspian steppe. This region had rich grazing land for animal husbandry and allowed access to the inner sea, making it an ideal target for Ottoman expansion. While this ambitious project was not a long-term success some Ottoman officials wanted to try and bridge both the Black Sea and Caspian Sea steppes. Throughout the 1580s the government in Istanbul actively supported Ottoman troops that protected the region from Derbent to Kefe on the Crimean Peninsula.¹⁸² Azov and Kefe were important sources of grain, animal fat, leather, fish, and other goods and were not provincial backwaters. The Ottomans had taken over the region from the Genoese in the fifteenth century, who had already developed vital infrastructure for trading and shipping goods. Disruptions to these cities tangibly impacted the supply of food

¹⁸¹ MS Török O. 176, 16a.

¹⁸² Yasar, “North Caucasus,” 121.

and other essentials for the capital.¹⁸³ Bridging the Caspian and Black Sea steppes was in the economic and military interests of the Ottomans.

The chronicler's focus on Osman Paşa is a clue that he was one of those remained in the field in the winter or that he had access to those who did as sources for the history. At this point in the campaign, Lala Mustafa Paşa was marching back to Erzurum for the winter and the dispatches about the victories of the imperial army reached Sultan Murad III. Mustafa Ali's *Nusretname* includes description of the route of the army back. Those chroniclers accompanying Özdemiroğlu Osman Paşa did not focus as closely on the return journey of the main force.¹⁸⁴ This is also true of the *Tevarih*. After Lala Mustafa Paşa turned back, the chronicler focused the rest of the narrative on the actions of Osman Paşa, Adil Giray, and Gazi Giray of the Crimean Tatars. Compared to the *Nusretname*, the *Tevarih* and the other sources focused on the winter of 1578-79 provide more information on what became a military debacle for the Ottomans despite the victories under Lala Mustafa Paşa earlier in the campaign. Despite this collapse that unfolded during the winter, the chronicle avoids overt criticism of the army. For the *gazavatname* writers like the *Tevarih* author, an important aspect of writing these chronicles was to use figures like Osman Paşa and the Crimeans as examples of brave warriors and commanders. The anti-Sokullu background of the narrative and promotion of Osman Paşa reveals that the chronicler did not seek to glorify only Lala Mustafa Paşa but also a lower ranking commander who shared similar qualities of effective military leadership.

The *Tevarih* author singled out Kaytas Paşa, provincial commander of Maras, as failing during the siege of Shamakhi by Safavid-allied emirs in Shirvan.¹⁸⁵ He described at some length that Kaytas Paşa, stationed in Eres, left his city to support Shamakhi which allowed the Safavids to move and take it back. It is a notable example of overt criticism by the *Tevarih* author, as Kaytas Paşa is described as foolish for abandoning his position and lacking intelligence. He was "unlucky and simple-minded out of his caution" and set off with two or three hundred men "by the reason of lack of intelligence." The narrative develops in tone from the early sections to these later parts where the Ottomans encountered greater difficulty in the campaign. Instead of a one-sided heroic depiction of Kaytas Paşa, the chronicler was critical of his actions in moving from Eres and allowed the *Kızılbaş* to exploit the situation.

¹⁸³ Alan W. Fisher, "Azov in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," *Jahrbücher Für Geschichte Osteuropas* 21, no. 2 (1973): 163-164.

¹⁸⁴ Eravcı, "Mustafa Ali's Nusret-Name," 147-148.

¹⁸⁵ MS Török O. 176, 16a.

The Safavid assault on Kaytas Paşa's men also reflected their continuing ability to exploit movement and use irregular tactics against the Ottoman army. Kaytas Paşa's company of men set out recklessly, seemingly to ride and cut down the enemy, but the Safavids took advantage of this action. The *Tevarih* author illustrated this clearly and openly stated that this was in the essential nature of the *Kızılbaş* to use such tactics:

in one or two places ambushes had been laid and because of Kaytas Paşa's boldness, he recognized the deceitful ones and they who habitually take flight acted in accordance with the nature of their race. The accursed ones that turned face, he thought they fled and with his comrades he fell upon their backs and upon passing the place of ambush, the godless enemy sprung the ambush in bands the enemy emerged from their hiding place and blocked their front and back and expended sword and spear and they attacked Kaytas Paşa and killed his companions. They rained down swords upon him and they made him attain martyrdom.¹⁸⁶

This ambush, combined with the impulsive action of Kaytas Paşa, gives some indication about the exhaustion faced by the elements of the Ottoman army who remained in the field. They had limited resources and access to supplies was uncertain. The Safavid troops turned their weaknesses of limited numbers and apparent lack of gunpowder weapons into an advantage. The chronicler also implied commentary on the sober, focused methods of Ottoman tactics and the wild, undisciplined actions of the *Kızılbaş*. The characterization had merit, as the Safavid dynasty did not manage to build up an organized, professional core for their army to the same degree as the Ottomans.¹⁸⁷

The description of the attacks on Eres and Shamakhi provide a way to assess the knowledge of the *Tevarih* author against that of the *Şark Seferleri*. While Ebubakir bin Abdullah also used conventions of the *gazavatname* genre, his account demonstrates a better understanding of ground-level military affairs. The *Tevarih* author was better suited to the issues among the senior officers, given the lengthy descriptions at the beginning of the chronicle regarding promotions, gifts, and payments. The *Tevarih* author also understood the diplomatic aspects of this Ottoman campaign, although perhaps not to the intimate degree that Mustafa Ali had as the secretary writing Lala Mustafa Paşa's dispatches to local rulers in Georgia and Azerbaijan. Ebubakir bin Abdullah wrote a more detailed, technical description of the Shamakhi siege in the *Şark Seferleri*:

¹⁸⁶ “meğer Kızılbaş evbaş meğer ve şeytanet tarikine gidüb bir iki yerde kiminleriz tertib itmişdi Kaytas Paşa'nın cöretinden görürin anlayub dahi surat-gürizde bunları bi-suya çekdiler Kaytas Paşa dahi meğer adadan gafil yüz çeviren melaini gürizan zan itmekle refakasla ardlarına düşüb,” MS Török O. 176, 17b.

¹⁸⁷ Willem Floor, “The Safavid Army: Continuity and Change,” in *The Safavid World*, ed. Rudi Matthee (London: Routledge, 2022), 225-227.

From that, in the year 986 in the month of Ramazan one dawn, instantly we saw that the accursed one called Orus with twenty thousand brave and vigorous *Kızılbaş* soldiers drew up here from west of Shamakhi and prepared lines. And onto the vicious ones of false belief, the men striking drums, small kettle drums, and large drums they suddenly appeared. And added to the sentries were some brave men from the soldiers of Rum. They were to come to blows with the *Kızılbaş* vanguard-skirmishers. The rough land in which battle of Shamakhi took place was where the *Kızılbaş* of bad repute set up their entire army and left the baggage. They arranged simply the cavalry and warriors and regiments in places, and they unfurled banners and drew up ranks and they came to the field. And at the hither direction his eminence Osman Paşa also embellished himself with the implements of battle and fell in at the front of the army of Islam. And at the front of the city of Shamakhi at the area of the tombs the regiments and lines drew up and there was battle with the regiment of the *Kızılbaş* of bad repute and they halted. And from two directions brave and bold skirmishers came out, and at the face of the field they took a quantity of lion-like and courageous men, and they delivered them. In this way, until the time of noon prayer, there was battle.¹⁸⁸

Ebubakir bin Abdullah detailed important factors about the opening of the battle of which a soldier would take note. He clearly identifies how the *Kızılbaş* formed their line of battle and also where they left their baggage train. He also mentioned the rough quality of the ground and the nearby terrain of the Shamakhi graves. While he used the conventional Ottoman language of heroism like the author of the *Tevarih*, he combined it with closer attention to detail on how the two armies fought each other.

During the siege of Shemahki, the Ottomans demonstrated their superior capabilities in defending an area with artillery against Safavid assault. Ebubakir bin Abdullah's chronicle continues with more description of the battle that suggests he later learned how the Safavids planned part of their attack. One of the Safavid commanders named Erdoğu Han hatched a plan of placing men in two opposite positions near Shamakhi to trap and destroy the Ottoman army, once again trying to exploit space and movement against the Ottomans. Osman Paşa's steward, Hüsrev Paşa, stopped this attack at the cost of his own life:

In fact, the two armies formed ranks and while making hostile battle with that accursed one thousand brave mounted *Kızılbaş* upon their defection to the city, the steward of his eminence Osman Paşa, Hüsrev *Kethüda* protected that space. At once, there was confrontation with those accursed ones. In that area there was a great amount of combat. From us and from them many men fell to the earth. And also, at that place Hüsrev *Kethüda* was made martyr. The accursed ones, while intending to settle in the city, muskets showered in the streets of the city and at the opening two light cannons were settled. They fired the cannons and the cannons hit the accursed one named Ali Kulu by the decree of God Lord of the Worlds [life according to Hell] they engaged. And the brave solid men that were mounted equipped with horses fled and came to the army of Rum. The accursed heretics, Ali Kulu the one who

¹⁸⁸ Ebubekir bin Abdullah, *Şark Seferleri*, 53-54.

was supposed to fall, and the others turned their faces and fled to the rear and they were defeated.

While making this kind of battle the *Kızılbaş* soldiers withdrew an amount and went to their rear, and they saw them defeated.¹⁸⁹

When the Ottomans faced the Safavids in open battle they had the advantage of fortified positions and coordinated artillery fire. The Safavids relied primarily on shock and movement, as Ebubakir bin Abdullah detailed in his chronicle. The *Kızılbaş* use of highly mobile cavalry and shock assaults was effective, yet they could not overcome the Ottoman army in battles. During the Shirvan campaign, however, battles were not entirely decisive as the Ottomans had the challenging task of holding the territory they gained. The asymmetrical warfare strategy of the Safavid army was deliberately cultivated and they used it to great advantage.¹⁹⁰

The *Tevarih* and *Şark Seferleri* have two contrasting depictions of warfare based on the intentions of the authors. Ebubakir bin Abdullah used the narrative conventions of the *gazavatname* to write his chronicle, but as seen in the passage about Shamakhi he demonstrated a first-hand understanding of how the armies organized themselves on the battlefield and the military tactics used by both the Ottomans and Safavids during the attempted siege of Shamakhi. Unlike the *Tevarih* author, certain military details are not submerged in higher-level Ottoman prose styling. The *Tevarih* author, while describing battle, focused on personalities and memorializing the struggle of the Ottoman army against the *Kızılbaş*. He focused on exemplary heroic characters in his rendition of the siege.¹⁹¹ Ebubakir bin Abdullah also used the conventions of great men in combat, but with a better grasp on the actual conduct of military operations. For this reason, the *Şark Seferleri* is a better vernacular source of the tactics and strategy of the Ottoman army but is less useful for trying to interpret the dynamics within the Ottoman elite as in the *Tevarih* or in the *Nusretname*. These works highlight the diversity within the *gazavatname* genre and the different ways in which Ottoman writers understood and produced knowledge about warfare.

The chronicle next describes the raids of Adil Giray against the Safavids and their attack on the enemy camp. The Crimeans plundered the belongings of Eres Han and then set out for raids against the *Kızılbaş*. The chronicle describes the initial success of the Crimeans until the capture of Adil Giray at the hands of the Safavids. The army of Tatars went out from Shamakhi and plundered the camp and baggage train of Eres Han. During this raid, “the wives and households and baggage and property of the [*Kızılbaş*] heretics were prey to the

¹⁸⁹ Ebubekir bin Abdullah, *Şark Seferleri*, 53-54.

¹⁹⁰ Willem Floor, “The Safavid Army: Continuity and Change,” 227.

¹⁹¹ MS Török O. 176, 18a-18b.

sword.”¹⁹² During this time the chronicle describes how Adil Giray did not pay attention to his duties and was busy drinking instead, another moment where the chronicler provides open criticism of a military leader. This afforded the Safavids an advantage to press their counter-offensive.¹⁹³ The conclusion of the chapter about the raid leads into the next section, “The coming of the *Kızılbaş* to Shamakhi and the opposition of Osman Paşa and the defeat of the Tatars and the taking captive of Adil Giray.”¹⁹⁴ The passage describing Adil Giray is another place in the text where the chronicler offers an open critique of a member of the military elite, but Adil Giray being a Tatar meant that the author was not criticizing a member of the Ottoman court-centered elite.

The Safavid army, led by the son of the shah, moved to attack the Ottomans in Shirvan and the two armies met in battle. The chronicler goes into some detail regarding the sack of Shamakhi. Osman Paşa was frustrated by the Crimean khan’s actions and unwillingness to listen to him, and then had to face the Safavid army descending onto the city. The Safavid force seemed to exploit the open space around Shamakhi and surrounded the fortress at the city, where the Osman Pasha directed the army and met the Safavids in battle. The chronicle alludes to the lack of fortification in the city, as the two armies seemingly fought in the streets of Shamakhi.¹⁹⁵ The *Tevarih* author provides a rich description of the second attack on Shamakhi by the Safavid army, where the Persians were able to overpower the Ottoman and Tatar troops. The author depicted Osman Paşa in a heroic light and casts him as a brave leader against the reckless Adil Giray. The attempted defense of Shamakhi was a difficult battle, with the Ottomans using their artillery and musketry against the *Kızılbaş* advance. The Tatars, despite the leadership of Adil Giray, rode out to meet the enemy.¹⁹⁶

In this loss of Shamakhi, the *Tevarih* author continued to emphasize the poor conduct of the Tatar troops, a change from the positive depiction earlier in the narrative. The commander sent soldiers several times to Adil Giray but they were not seen, and when a messenger came to the Tatars about making a cavalry raid on the Safavids, the chronicler wrote that Adil Giray did not stand from drinking, and after that there were only two

¹⁹² “tüme-i şimşir olan melahide’nin ehil ü ahyal ve mal u menalları,” MS Török O. 176, 19a.

¹⁹³ “ol han-zade azade gurur cevani ile iltifat itmeyüb Kızılbaş ne ıdır ki andan ve hem ve hazer cair öyle diyü refakasıla bile micveb ve mecube zevkinden vaz gelmeyüb mütecerri’-i ke’sat ergavani ile meşgul ‘işret ve tevani oldılar,” MS Török O. 176, 19b.

¹⁹⁴ “ameden-i leşker-i Kızılbaş Şemahi ve masaff-ı Osman Paşa ve şikeste şüden-i Tatar ve giriftar şüden-i Adil Giray,” MS Török O. 176, 19b.

¹⁹⁵ MS Török O. 176, 19b-20a.

¹⁹⁶ MS Török O. 176, 20a.

thousand Tatar soldiers left.¹⁹⁷ The *Kızılbaş* moved to the place where Adil Giray presumably had his camp, and he opened his eyes and was shortly captured by the enemy.¹⁹⁸ Without the Tatars, Osman Paşa and his army faced the Safavids alone at the city. Minadoi's account relates that Osman Paşa was unaware of the state of the Tatar force and tried to negotiate a surrender with the Safavids. This allowed him to leave the city covertly and retreat to Derbent. Osman Paşa escaped successfully after a three-day journey to the Iron Gates. The Safavid army entered Shamakhi and plundered it, also killing many of its inhabitants as a punitive action for their support of the Ottoman army.¹⁹⁹ The siege showed that the cities in the region had limited defenses and could be overrun by the fast and highly mobile Safavid army.

The *Tevarih* describes this sack of Shamakhi by the Safavids and the attempt of Özdemiroğlu Osman Paşa to make a bargain and then escape from the Safavids:

While that ominous killing was commanded, the notables of the army moreover with intercession had passed from amongst their men while also at this time also more than four hundred men were marked with shame. Secretly they moved to Erzurum and because of this in the soldiers their faces showed weakness. The Karahisar *mir-livası* Hayder Bey son of Ali Bey with seventy or eighty followers and being with Bahauldin Bey Tekelu who was protecting the limited castle did not bring illumination to the Kızılbaş strength of resistance. The Erzurumlu named Bekir...with one hundred followers and the Erzurum *çavuşes* brought forth the shouts of the steward and the *çavuşes* and with their followers and altogether gathering with this word...and the mounted provincial soldiers who were arranged and sent to join and the small beasts side by side and one by one were misdirected. With this taking flight, the the sword struck the soldiers and also they came to the commander, and with the taking flight from the army camp of three thousand people...they were overcome with weakness and five or ten each every day were not present because of their fleeing. In this city, there was also no acceptance of flight to the fortress such that preventing that whatever distress present arrived at one castle. Upon stating "five are necessary when passing the winter," to the commander said, "I do not come from here that many," and upon persisting made supplication to them...In fact at the Iron Gates that were conceived, decision was given to go to the Demir Kapi Fortress and from this advancing with cannon and musket and requisites one head stopped to one hundred persons and sent for the protection of the aforementioned castle.²⁰⁰

The events as depicted in the *Tevarih* demonstrate Ottoman disorganization and confusion in part from the Safavid counter-offensive and from the lack of support the frontier army possessed. The Ottomans had a significant challenge facing the Safavid armies without stable

¹⁹⁷ "Adil Giray sultana serdar-ı ali-vakar tarafından bil'defa'at adamlar gönderilüb mültefet olmamış idi bu defa dahi Kızılbaş ol savba ilgar itdüken ulağla ilam itdüklerinde gelüb işretiden baş kaldırmamış idi," MS Török O. 176, 20b.

¹⁹⁸ MS Török O. 176, 20b.

¹⁹⁹ Minadoi, *War between the Turks and the Persians*, 75-77.

²⁰⁰ MS Török O. 176, 21a.

supply lines or a network of stable border garrisons. The retreat to Derbent also shows how the imperial army relied on fortifications in the East, despite the assumption in some contemporary academic literature of maneuver-oriented steppe warfare in Azerbaijan and Iran proper. While the Ottomans had difficulty holding these remote outposts, there was a clear interest by members of the military in building and maintaining them to consolidate conquests.

Osman Paşa had a clear skill in managing to save the Ottoman army despite the defeat at Shamakhi. After the sack, the *Tevarih* chronicler wrote about Osman Paşa's journey to Derbent in Dagestan. The author noted the onset of winter and the arrival of the Ottoman commander to the fortress of Derbent. The ruler of Derbent received Osman Paşa well, as previously the ruler gave gifts and promised submission to Lala Mustafa Paşa. The Safavid army considered a siege of city, but the winter conditions and distance from Casbin made it impractical. The Ottoman army garrisoned at Iron Gate Fortress.²⁰¹ Osman Paşa is presented as the exemplary character of the narrative, making a bold escape from Safavid forces unlike Adil Giray who is portrayed as arrogant and a poor leader. This stage of the campaign also gives some insight into the limitations of the Safavid army. While the Safavid-Kızılbaş army exploited space and strained Ottoman logistics, they had only so much capacity to fight on front distant from Casbin during winter conditions. By holding Derbent, the Ottomans also controlled the main mountain pass for the trade route between Muscovy and Iran.²⁰²

While in Derbent, the army appeared to be well supplied while the inhabitants of the city were hungry and exchanged goods for food. The winter conditions in the region were also difficult for the commoners based on the description of the chronicler.

The fruits of this transitory world were non-existent and were not seen and they were struck at the light saying a bushel of barley that goes for one thousand akçe I took for three hundred...They became accustomed to the eyes and faces of the peasants that were inside Derbent. Five or ten at a time the hungry and naked started coming in order to eat and for a sword worth two or three thousand akçe they gave for a bushel of barley or two or two pieces of bread and for the price of one hundred gold one useful horse they gave and took three or four poğaça and because of the intensity of the winter how many of them went down for the night and when they rose in the morning they found their hands and feet fallen off.²⁰³

²⁰¹ MS Török O. 176, 21b-22a.

²⁰² Yasar, "North Caucasus," 33.

²⁰³ "inam cihan faniden gözüme yüb ma'dum olurlardı arpanın kilen bin akçeye alan üç yüz aldım deyü savıncından medhuş olurdu...birkaç gönderin sonra Derbent içinde olan reayanın yüzü gözü alışub aç ve çıplak taifenin oluncaların illerinden almak için tama ile kah beş ve kah on nefer yab yab gelmeğe başlayub iki üç bin akçe kimetli şimşire ber kile arpa veya iki etmek verüb ve yüz altın bahalı bir yarar ata üç dört poğaça virüb olurdu," MS Török O. 176, 22b.

The price of a *kile* (bushel) of grain in the late sixteenth century ranged from fifty-five to eighty *akçe* in the late sixteenth century under nominal conditions.²⁰⁴ The stop in Derbent is one of the few areas of the narrative where the chronicler went into greater detail about the prices of grain and logistical issues, giving some indication about the supply conditions for both the army and local population. The imperial army seemed to have food to give, but possibly a limited quantity based on the uneven exchanges the narrative describes. Other Ottoman military chroniclers paid closer attention to the prices and availability of supplies, such as the author of the 1596 *seferi ruzname* for the Eger campaign under Sultan Mehmed III. This daily journal notes the supply situation of the army at regular intervals.²⁰⁵ The *Tevarih* author did not report these details in a systematic fashion and instead focused on the actions of the army commanders, suggesting that he was not privy to those details or he did not choose to include this information in the narrative. The position and outlook of the chronicler shaped how he crafted the narrative and these factors affected how the chronicle may have been received by readers.

In late October 1579 the Gazi Giray I came to meet Osman Paşa in Shirvan, after the difficult winter and hard fighting against the Safavid counter-offensive. Most of the Tatars had departed after the capture of Adil Giray, but the reigning khan returned to the field. The Ottoman army under Özdemiroğlu Osman Paşa passed the winter and spring and appeared to survive according to the chronicler, who also makes a point of mentioning their loot of fine silks and other cloth. The next phase of the campaign opened with the Gazi Giray I coming to meet the army in Shirvan and preparing for continued raids against the *Kızılbaş*.²⁰⁶ The chronicler depicted Osman Paşa as having the same diplomatic skills as Lala Mustafa Paşa and emphasizes the importance of gift-giving for successful cooperation with an allied army:

In the year 987 in the last ten days of the month of Shaban, his eminence the Tatar khan came with eighty thousand Tatars to Derbent...and the renowned commander Osman Paşa set out with the army, there was enemy prey and upon hurrying to meet the khan. At the meeting his eminence the commander resolving from his horse a gift for honor and his eminence the khan did not give assent. From atop his horse, they shook hands and upon coming to the royal tent his eminence the vizier without offering entered a feast and...from the direction of the Padishah to his eminence the khan to his sons and to his brothers and to the renowned Tatar beys they gave each one suitable robes and bejeweled swords and daggers set with pearls and decorated horses. For the Tatar group also they

²⁰⁴ Murphey, *Ottoman Warfare, 1500-1700*, 54-55.

²⁰⁵ Günhan Börekçi, *Macaristan'da bir Osmanlı Padişah: Sultan III. Mehmed Eğri'nin Seferi Ruznamesi (1596)* (İstanbul: Okur Kitaplığı, 2017).

²⁰⁶ MS Török O. 176, 23a.

expended numerous luxuries and overwhelmed each one in happiness. However, the noble wish from his eminence the Han's coming was thus: that the commander put forward possession to his eminence Mustafa Paşa and they met... They alighted in winter time and the time of the journey passed and there was not an owned quantity with his eminence Osman Paşa and it was not facilitated.²⁰⁷

Osman Paşa's army received the Tatar notables with gifts and feasting, as was normal practice throughout the campaign.

The Tatars were used as a fast-moving raiding force that supplemented Ottoman strength. The news Osman Paşa learned showed that Lala Mustafa Paşa was unable to commit a relief force for the army still in Shirvan, and that the Tatars were to provide support for the Ottoman regulars. The Tatars used tactics similar to that of the Safavids, harassing and plundering their cities in support of the Ottoman army:

They ordered riding to the country of Shirvan and in truth, met with the second commander his eminence Osman Paşa. Also the Tatar soldiers with the act of plunder galloped to the paths of Ganja and Karabakh and found plundering. Without end, they seized riches and children and then they made their return to the path of their felicitous abode. And Gazi Giray with one group from the group of Tatars remained in Shirvan.²⁰⁸

The use of Crimean auxiliaries in this part of the campaign also demonstrated the way in which the Ottoman state tried to offset costs of deploying the main army on frontier regions by using the Crimeans. It was during this 1578-1590 war and after when the Crimean Khanate's orientation shifted from securing their own northern steppe frontier to increasing their military support for the Ottoman Empire.²⁰⁹

The next chapter of the *Tevarih* focuses on the relations between the Ottoman army under Osman Paşa's command and the different peoples that lived near Mount Elbrus. The chronicler depicted the groups that lived in this area as untrustworthy bandits who, like the Safavids, took advantage of the Ottoman army's need to forage for supplies. He described the killing and plunder of animal handlers in a dramatic way:

After this perhaps out of the clannishness of the people, there were many rebels in the area of that valley such that the valley was not free of corruption on account of the rebels and they did not bow their heads to anyone and they do not submit to the law and in the course of battle and besieging, they did not fail attacking the stable-boys who were dispersing to the surrounding area for the seeking of provisions. They imprisoned and robbed the Muslims who passed into their hands.²¹⁰

²⁰⁷ MS Török O. 176, 23b.

²⁰⁸ MS Török O. 176, 23b.

²⁰⁹ Carl Max Kortepeter, "Ġazî Ġiray II, Khan of the Crimea, and Ottoman Policy in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, 1588-94," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 44, no. 102 (January 1966): 141-142.

²¹⁰ "Bundan sonra meġer hibâl halkından ol derbend etrafında nice asahı var idi ki derbend daġatına isnad ile fesaddan hâlî olmayub kimiye bař eymek řer'e münkad olmayub dahi ceng ve muhasara esnalarında zahire

The Ottoman army had a severe weakness against these tribal groups, who used asymmetrical tactics to great effect. Lack of an established system of infrastructure on the eastern frontier handicapped the imperial army, which forced them to send men out in search of supplies. The Ottoman army could easily defeat these groups in open combat, but the groups living near Mount Elbrus understood that making quick raids and harassing attacks was more effective than a pitched battle. Ottoman weaponry and tactics were not effective if the men and animals were not supplied. If the Ottomans wanted to hold the Caucasus, they needed to concentrate their efforts on holding the territory by building up local presence as they had done during their conquests in the Balkans and Hungary.

Özdemiroğlu Osman Paşa with the Tatars and these new troops fought in another battle, moving to raid somewhere between Mount Elbrus and the region of Yerevan, although where precisely is not clear.²¹¹ Nevertheless, the Ottoman and Tatar army set out to make a raid on a mountain pass and nearby town. The army prepared itself, which the chronicler described in dramatic language:

Those mounted and on foot were embellished and they filled their quivers and their bows became strong. They were formed for battle and the soldiers victory-marked with the price of blood with the renowned commander also upon turning to the place, were to pass. They set out for the location of a mountain pass and from that consideration, from the choicest terror and dread they were fettered by melancholy, perhaps the demon came.²¹²

The chronicler mentioned bows and arrows, and this indicates how Ottoman and Tatar soldiers still used archery as a primary weapon even if the statement here is most probably intended for literary effect. Gunpowder weapons on this eastern front did not confer an automatic advantage, as archery on horseback was better suited to ambushes and fast maneuver warfare. After a difficult march through these mountains they engaged the enemy. The author's account provides more information on how the Ottoman regular troops coordinated with their Tatar allies:

On the opposite shore facing them, there was a great village and a group of enemies were ready and prepared at that place, firstly Gazi Giray Bey with a quantity of Tatars who remained in the service of the defense of Shirvan attacked the front, and behind them his eminence the great commander himself

talebe etrafa dağılın at oğlunlarına taarruzdan hali olmayub illerine girin Müslümanlara habs idüb ve şovub," MS Török O. 176, 24a.

²¹¹ "sabika Şah İsmail ve Şah Tamast yüz binden ziyade askerlerle bize kasd idüb tacın birağub çıkdı hala diyar-ı Rum nabkarları iki canibi küh-ı Alborz küllileri ki her biri külli-yi bize aheng idüb ne umarlar anlara bir iş idelim ki dillerde dastan olsun deyü," MS Török O. 176, 24a.

²¹² "süvar ve piyadeleri müzeyyin olub ter-keşlerin doldurub ve kemanların bazurlarına geçürüb cenge müheyya oldular. Serdar namdar ile leşker hun-hevar nusret-şiar dahi mahal [hiçaye (?)] teveccüh itdüklerinde gûzar olunacak yer bir derbend azim idi ki rivayetden [ine-yi] dehest ü heybetinden [akle] vaşet belki gula hiret gelürdi," MS Török O. 176, 24b.

drew up his shield and took the lighting marked sword in his hand together with five thousand musketeers and the remaining lance-carrying cavalry joined the Tatar troops. As the assault continued, they opened sharp eyes...they felled a thousand devilish ones from the enemy lines to fall like rotten trees into the field of perdition. In that lot, from the army of Islam two hundred martyrdom imbibed braves fell martyr. They sent them fleeing to Mount Elbrus.²¹³

It is not possible to reconstruct the engagement based on this account, which is highly impressionistic and is the case throughout the chronicle primarily concerned with individual heroes, personal qualities, and the sacrifice of the Muslim warriors. What can be gleaned from this are the general tactics of the Ottoman military in this engagement, making use of combined cavalry and musket-armed infantry. Here also the chronicler's depiction of the Tatars became more positive and Gazi Giray is shown to be a better leader than his brother Adil Giray. Around this time, the latter Tatar noble was imprisoned at Casbin fortress where the Safavids hoped to negotiate a truce between them and the Crimeans. Ultimately, a dispute and fight ensued while he was captured and the Kızılbaş killed Adil Giray.²¹⁴ The *Tevarih* author appeared to have been accompanying Osman Paşa in the field based on his account of events, and thus would not have been aware of this information unlike later authors writing retrospectively.

The chronicler reinforced the differences between the Ottoman and Caucasian way of fighting and noted their pride when it came to fighting the Ottomans. The groups that assembled against Osman Paşa's army were the Tabaristanis, an unknown group, and Kipchaks. This confederation gathered and according to the *Tevarih* author boasted that they could resist the Ottoman invasion:

In the mountains of that country, those known by these names and renowned as the groups of Tabaristan, Kiptak and Kipchak assembled group by group. They became gathered at the place known as Görgöre Boğazı and in the mentioned valley, if the former shah Ismail and Tahmasp were unable to achieve victory over the world-rebels with more than one hundred thousand soldiers and lost their crowns, the country of Rum good-for-nothings draw on us, let us do a thing that will remain a legend in the heart.²¹⁵

²¹³ “mukabelesinde karşı yakasında bir muazzam karye vaki olub güruh-i düşmen ol mahallde hazır ve müheyya olmağın evvela Şirvan'da muhafaza hizmet ile kalan Gazi Giray Beğ mikdarı Tatarla mukaddem hücum idüb ardlarınca serdar-ı ekrem hazretleri [bizzat] yüzine siper çeküb ve eline tig-i saika-i nişan alub dahi beş bin tüfenk-endaz ve bakı süvaran-i nize-i feraz ile leşker-i Tatar'a kafadar olub hamle kalduklarında göz-i biran açub bu menca saf düşmenden bin nefer Ahriman puside dirhatlar gibi meydan helake düşürüb sipah-yi İslam'dan dahi ol arsada iki yüz dilaver sirab şehd şahadet oldular düşmenin bakiyesi küh-ı Alborz penah getürüb,” MS Török O. 176, 24b.

²¹⁴ Eskander Beg Monshi, *History of Shah Abbas*, vol. I, 356-358.

²¹⁵ “ol diyar-ı dağlarında kavm Tabaristan ve Kiptak ve Kıpçakıyan demekle şöhet tutan tavaif güruh güruh cemiyet idüb gür güruh bu gazi dinlemekle muarriif mahalde mecma oldularsabıka Şah İsmail ve Şah Tamast yüz binden ziyade askerlerle bize kasıd idüb tacın birağub çıkdı hala diyar-ı Rum nabkarları iki canibi küh-ı

The description of these tribal groups served multiple functions in Ottoman historical consciousness. The empire had to confront difficult enemies that could not be easily coopted to their rule, as the Turcoman and Caucasian groups boasted that Shah Ismail and Shah Tahmasp could not pacify them. The author also illustrated by adopting the voice of these groups how the Ottomans could view themselves as “*Rum*” apart from Caucasian and Eastern Anatolian societies they encountered. Trying to bring these mountain peoples into submission presented a significant military challenge that made long term success in the region difficult for the empire.

After the raid and engagement against the enemy, the Ottoman army returned to the Iron Gates and where together with the Tatars they set out for another raid against the *Kızılbaş*. Another group of Tatars led by Murad Giray joined the army. The Safavids prepared for another attack on the Ottoman-Tatar army. After this combat with some of the Safavid notables, the chronicle notes the good service of the Tatars and their role in protecting the Ottoman frontier in Shirvan. Following this, the next chapter of the chronicle begins and focuses on the renovations of fortress of Kars undertaken by Lala Mustafa Paşa.²¹⁶ He described the renovations done on the fortress and the distance of it to various other points of interest.²¹⁷ There chronicle also includes a much older Arabic inscription found while rebuilding the fort.²¹⁸ The details of the battle between Osman Paşa and the *Kızılbaş* are similar in style to the other battles depicted in the text. The section describing the fortress of Kars is a significant stylistic change consisting mainly of simple statements about the work being done and plain list of the distances from Kars other important military locations. The chapter discussing the refurbishment of Kars is where the geographical information of the *Tevarih* is clearer, whereas the geography of the Caucasus presented in the text is often confusing.

After the rebuilding of Kars the chronicler narrated the situation of Ottoman occupied Tbilisi, where the garrison commander Hasan Paşa faced lack of supplies and harassing attacks by Safavid forces. The chronicle describes the difficulty in getting the grain to Tbilisi:

Soldiers settled in Tbilisi when the nation-conquering commander Vizier Mustafa Paşa had previously set out for an expedition to Shirvan...during the time of their guarding the grain became

Alborz küllileri ki her biri külli-yi bize aheng idüb ne umarlar anlara bir iş idelim ki dillerde dastan olsun diyü,”
MS Török O. 176, 24a.

²¹⁶ MS Török O. 176, 25a-25b.

²¹⁷ MS Török O. 176, 26a-26b.

²¹⁸ MS Török O. 176, 27a-27b.

exhausted...from the side of Imperial Army with the Maras *beylerbey* Mustafa Paşa grain was sent while again it not being sufficient it was necessary to send it again.²¹⁹

This proved to be challenging and the grain had to be sent multiple times, both because of the hard overland route and because of attacks by Georgian partisans who plundered the Ottoman grain shipments, and the chronicler referred to the bandits as “the vile Georgians.”²²⁰ The Ottoman officer sent to deliver the supplies “was wounded in one or two places and with strength saved life and there was total destruction.”²²¹ Behram Paşa of Diyarbekir also went out to resupply Tbilisi but there were difficulties with the Kurdish emirs under his command. The situation in the city grew more complicated. Several different *beylerbey* and emir-of-emirs became involved in the relief of Tbilisi and eventually the *beylerbey* of Damascus, Hasan Paşa, and Rizvan Paşa the *mirimiran* of Diyarbekir managed to deliver the supplies.²²² This section of the chronicle shows the clear problems of logistics and supply in the Ottoman occupation of the Caucasus. Lala Mustafa Paşa established garrisons in Georgia and Azerbaijan but supplying them proved difficult. In addition, the provincial army did not want to stay in the field during winter, compounding the occupation issue.

The last section of the narrative before the copyist’s remarks at the end concern another engagement between the Ottomans and Safavids. The news of supplies being delivered the Tbilisi and the repairs of Kars fortress became known in Iran and the shah sent an embassy. In response to the indignation of the Safavids for violating treaty agreements, the Ottomans prepared another expedition, this time targeting Yerevan. Cafer Paşa was the commander and led the troops of Sivas under Mehmed Paşa, the Karaman *beylerbey* also named Mehmed Paşa, and the men under the command of Behram Paşa. Janissaries and volunteers (*gönüllü*) also took part in the attack, stated to have taken place on October 4th, 1579. The *Tevarih* author writes that the expedition was a success and the Ottomans captured prisoners and the Safavid governor Tokmak Aga fled after heading about the approaching army.²²³ The raid on Yerevan was an apparent success despite significant Ottoman losses. After this action, Cafer Paşa received gifts and honors from Lala Mustafa Paşa, and after this story the chronicle ends.²²⁴ The campaign concluded with mixed results for the Ottoman

²¹⁹ “serdar-ı kişver-küşa vezir Mustafa Paşa mukaddema diyar-ı Şirvan’a gūzar itdüklerinde Tiflis’e asker koyub meh-ma emken zahire komışlar idi az zamanda muhafaza idenlerin zahireleri dökünüb,” MS Török O. 176, 28a.

²²⁰ MS Török O. 176, 28a.

²²¹ “mezbur Ahmed Paşa dahi bir iki yerde mecruh olub güçle can kutarub külli haşaret olmuş idi,” MS Török O. 176, 28a.

²²² MS Török O. 176, 28b-29b.

²²³ MS Török O. 176, 29b-30a.

²²⁴ MS Török O. 176, 30a-30b.

army because of the realities of operating in the Caucasus region, most notably logistics. Ottoman leadership had mixed qualities but the overall strategy of trying to coopt local rulers and establish frontier bases was sound. The Safavids had the ability to exploit space and extended Ottoman supply lines and they used asymmetrical tactics effectively. The Ottoman advantage in overall resources meant that they could escalate and continue the conflict, which was ultimate outcome. Both states continued fighting until 1590 with the Ottomans gaining a significant territory the Safavids, including the capture of Tabriz in 1585. Ultimately, operating at long distances from the imperial core without the time to build provincial infrastructure proved costly.

It is not apparent why the *Tevarih* was copied in the eighteenth century based on the manuscript itself. The copyist of the chronicle left a final note at the end in Arabic giving some clues about his identity but little else as to why he copied the manuscript:

The writing of was completed with the help of God the bountiful King. The completion of the writing occurred at the time of the mid-afternoon prayer on the twenty-ninth of the Blessed Month of Sheval of the year 1135 of the Hijrah of him to whom is glory and honor. May God forgive him and his two begetters and his master and his lord and to the entirety of the believing men and women and of Muslim men and women.²²⁵

The copyist produced the manuscript during the collapse of the Safavid dynasty and the time of a concurrent Russo-Persian war in 1722-1723. There may have been renewed interest in the early eighteenth century around this region and about military texts in general, as explored in the introduction to this study. The copyist appeared to have been reasonably educated, given that he could write a brief concluding note in Arabic at the end of the manuscript. His surname, Abdullah, suggests he may have been from a military convert family, but it cannot be ascertained from the manuscript. He was from the town of Çatalca near Istanbul, which when taken into consideration with his military family background made him most likely affiliated with the lower ranks of the *askeri* class. There are also copyist errors in the work in various places which could have been a sign that Mustafa Salim Abdullah was inexperienced, or that the extant manuscript was another copy of a lost or currently unknown alternate version. These points are speculative and cannot be substantiated based solely on the manuscript itself. Nevertheless, there was interest in having this sixteenth century anonymous work copied in the eighteenth century and it survived to the present day. The *Tevarih* transmitted military knowledge in the Ottoman world through a panegyric,

²²⁵ MS Török O. 176, 30b.

exemplar literature style and the chronicle were part of a larger landscape of *gazavatname* works that were read both at the time of their creation and long after.



Chapter 6:

CONCLUSION

The *Tevarih-i Futuh-i Şirvan* is an interesting narrative source that offers some insights into the factional conflict of the late sixteenth century Ottoman elite. It also shows how *gazavatname* functioned as both advice literature, commending good leadership and illustrating bad examples. It does not add significantly new information about the events of the campaign compared to the other sources, but there is a consensus among all the sources about the chain of events and individuals involved. While it is not clear without further information who the author may have been, some guesses can be made. The author was educated enough to write in a literary *inşa* style and his work is an example of the more elaborate *gazavatname* produced at the end of the sixteenth. However, his work was not as complex as that of Mustafa Ali or the verse chronicle of Asafi Dal Çelebi. The author made only some religious invocations and did not use quotations from poetry, as was the case in other Ottoman historical chronicles. It provides a general narrative of the events of the campaign, focusing mainly on the anti-Sokullu figures of the Ottoman elite at the time.

The identity of the author is not clear, but some guesses can be made about his background and possible intentions. The author appeared to have been affiliated with the military and grandees of the state but not himself a soldier, at least based on his understanding and depiction of warfare. He was well travelled or had frame of reference to major places in the empire, as he references Serbia, Buda in Hungary, and Aleppo. The first two indicate he may have been a *devşirme* or otherwise familiar with the Balkans and Central Europe. His familiarity with the military and level of education suggests that he was a scribe potentially playing a similar role on the campaign to that of Mustafa Ali or Asafi Dal Çelebi. The selection of events and presentation of them in the narrative make it likely that the chronicler was affiliated with Osman Paşa and part of a group of anti-Sokullu faction writers, although to what degree this author was engaged in that conflict is not discernable without more sources.

The copy of the text dating from the early 18th century during a Russian-Safavid War demonstrates that this text was copied and circulated from an uncertain time in the sixteenth century until the 1720s. The manuscript dates from a period of significant production of similar texts, and it is possible that Ottoman readers of the early eighteenth century were reexamining older military chronicles as sources of knowledge for the issues of their time.

The collection and dissemination of knowledge about warfare in the early modern Ottoman Empire is a topic worthy of further investigation. Narrative sources like the *Tevarih* can be read simultaneously as entertainment and guides for how a campaign ought to have been conducted for an Ottoman commander.

While the *Tevarih* does not contain substantial new insights about the 1578-79 campaign, its existence does add to the large body of sources about this operation. Several writers accompanied the army as secretaries or like Ebubakir bin Abdullah participated in it and left a memoir. For example, the notable 1596 Eger campaign led by Mehmed III himself does not have the same amount of extant narrative sources compared to the numerous authors who wrote about the Caucasus campaign. The 1578-1590 Ottoman-Safavid War became the first in a series of long, costly conflicts between the empire and its peers which increased the production of *gazavatname* texts. With the near constant occurrence of war Ottoman writers produced more texts related to warfare and campaigns and the *Tevarih* was one of many. These texts served a purpose of entertaining their elite-centered readers in the capital but some, as the case with the *Şark Seferleri*, offer more insights into the actual military aspects of Ottoman warfare. The *Tevarih*'s main value comes not from its tactical or strategic narration but giving some indication as to palace factions and the officers and grandees that were favored by the anti-Sokullu network. It does have some value in assessing Ottoman fighting against the Safavids, however, as it shows the preponderance of muskets and artillery on the Ottoman side. It also gives accounts of the difficulties of siege warfare on the eastern frontier. Some scholarship emphasizes the divergences between the Ottomans' east and west in warfare and by extension border control. The differences between frontier defense in the Caucasus and Hungary, a reading of this chronicle suggests, were not as many as one may believe.

The events shown in the chronicle give some understanding of the Ottoman strategy in the Caucasus and its implementation. The imperial army under Lala Mustafa Paşa tried to conduct the "traditional" strategy of using both force and vassalization of local elites to expand the empire. In the Caucasus both the Georgian principalities and local Muslim groups tried to exploit the Ottoman-Safavid conflict to their advantage, making a lasting Ottoman occupation difficult. The *Tevarih* also illustrates how Ottoman soldiers found eastern campaigns arduous and demoralizing from the lack of stable supplies and limited promise of loot. This also made maintaining a permanent Ottoman presence in the region a challenge. At the same time, the chronicle demonstrates how the actions of a dynamic leader like Osman Paşa can manage seemingly impossible situations and incredible odds. While *gazavatname*

texts heighten such qualities in their characters, in the case of Özdemiroğlu Osman Paşa the sources concur that his leadership was a decisive factor after the departure of main army under Lala Mustafa Paşa.

The sixteenth century content of the manuscript and Ottoman-Muscovite rivalry of the period gives some indication as to why the text was copied. Eighteenth century Ottoman military history was dominated by the confrontation with an expanding Russia in the Black Sea and North Caucasus, and the knowledge of borderlands would have served readers of that time. Based on the date of the *Tevarih*'s copying by a scribe possibly linked to the military, it seems that readers from the *askeri* class of the eighteenth century sought out knowledge of the region from earlier centuries. There is more to examine about Ottoman military knowledge production and strategizing toward the borderlands in this period. The *Tevarih* describes perennial military issues that later readers could learn from such as logistics, tactics, and even the importance of effective leadership. The chronicle also offers more general geographical knowledge about the regions the Ottoman army encountered later readers could find useful.

While the *Tevarih-i Futih-i Shirvan* does not overturn or give dramatically new information about a well-documented campaign, it is nevertheless another narrative source useful for establishing the events of the campaign in greater detail than the general Ottoman histories of Selaniki or Peçevi. Its dramatic style and focus on elite military commanders give useful windows into the factional interests and memorialization of Ottoman military figures by chroniclers. Comparative study of this text and others like it improve our understanding both of Ottoman military experience and the process by which it was memorialized in the late sixteenth century.

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