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CRITICAL REVIEW OF HISTORIOGRAPHICAL LITERATURE OF SAFAVID STUDIES

Azerbaijani scholars for a long time lived under a Soviet Russian colonial pressure and as a result did not have chance to observe closely their western colleagues. As we became independent the cross-examination of research related to Azerbaijan became mandatory. That these attempts might lay a new foundation for close cooperation with western scholars. A number of foreign authors have researched the Safavid heritage, studied the Safavid history, culture, and religion in their research works. The origin of the Safavids has been one of the most important issues that have occupied Western Safavid scholars for many years. Despite the fact that many prominent scholars have addressed this significant historiographical issue, conventional thoughts remain unchallenged, and are accepted de facto.

This article argues that the west-centric approach that we observe in western Safavid historiography continues to cause the problems in this field which eventually creates obstacles for cross-cultural understanding and collaborations. As a result, forced arbitrary decisions and baseless assumptions that normally should be avoided in modern times research world, continue to disappoint us. Particularly we observe this attitude in the analyses related to origin and ideology of Safavid family. One might ask why this article seeks to pinpoint and review some of these conventional thoughts. After all, an understanding of the ideology of the dynasty, that already had extensive and substantial ideological influence 200 years prior to the beginning of their reign, and for 250 years after, is essential to truly understand the matters of the region and its surroundings. It would be an understatement to say that misunderstanding the Safavid origins and ideology prevents the understanding of the history of the region as a whole. Needless to say, the choice of historians and their research studied in this article represents those that have had the most influence in the modern western understanding of Safavid and Iranian history. In light of all this, it becomes clear that the new approach to the problems is inevitable. To the mentioned list includes prominent and extensively referenced historians such as E. Browne (1920), M. Mazzaoui (1972), R. Savory (1980), H.R. Roemer (1986), Andrew J Newman (2006). Considering the approach of Western scholars to these issues, it is impossible not to refer to Edward Said after what has been mentioned. This article aims to analyze the more recent historiographic specimens, with an inclusion of E. Browne to represent an example of conventional thinking that has not changed for almost a century. Obviously, it is impossible to address all the current issues in these studies, but it can be a start. Although a lot of work has been done in this field over the years, new approaches are always needed. Thus, when we say East and West, we must understand that these are parts of a whole. Although they are separate and distinct from each other, one never exists apart from the other and cannot exist apart from the other. Understanding this fact can be the solution to many problems.

Key words: *Safavids, history, Safavid literature, ethnics, orientalism, Iran, sufism, qizilbash, ulema.*

Problem statement. It is no revelation that Western historiography is accompanied with historical biases of its own. These traditions are born with western neocolonial approach to East and remains to be so. The geopolitical location of Azerbaijan attracted the attention of researchers throughout the history, but the crystallized stereotypes and biased opinions still repeat itself. As the world changes in 21st century these problems arise with the new strength and demand new approach and new methods of solution. The researchers are trying now to find the way of

drawing new paths in this field lately and to attract the attention to these complications.

Analysis of recent research and publications. Edward Said explored the specific matter in the writing of near-Eastern history through his theory of “Orientalism” (1978), opening the pathway to the further exploration of the matter of ethics in history-writing. Alan Tapper, in turn, delves deeper into the general ethics of it all by asking the question “Is there ethics for historians?” (2009), with a focus on aboriginal history and the biases that helped

nazis in their attempt to rationalize and legitimize Hitler's abhorrent policies and attitudes towards non-Aryans, highlighting the extent to which historical biases influence society and our understanding of others. With these examples, Tapper reminds us of how much of a role justice and the historian's personal ethical approach plays in historiography. He insists that "justice must prevail over feelings and compassion" and the historian must seek the "truth of the matter." These issues are exactly what play a pivotal role in the western historical accounts of Safavids and their origins. As will be explored in this article, having reviewed renowned authors, it does not go unnoticed that conventional west-centric outlooks of the region in which the Safavids reigned, cloud the ability to reach the "truth of the matter" regarding the dynasty's ideologies and origins. Eileen Ka-mea Cheng explains this phenomenon in terms of globalization and the national perspective in her research "Historiography; an Introductory Guide" (2012). She draws attention to historical accounts in the globalized world and highlights that contemporary historiography is far from objective and is driven by aspects such as political and social interests. From the political perspective, she finds that "reflecting contemporary concerns about the effects of globalization and nationalism" [3, p. 133] precedes the importance of finding the "truth of the matter," as Tapper would say. One cannot help but observe this phenomenon when analyzing Safavid historiography. Therefore the revisionist and critical perspective here would be inevitable in reaching the "truth of the matter". Cheng rightly states, "When they (earlier exponents westerners) did examine cultures outside of Europe, they assessed those cultures in terms of European standards". [3, p. 134] Researchers who lead the global perspective on historical accounts of the Safavids confirm each other's points of view, with this, monopolize western standards of historiography. They represent the nations and peoples of the region, which Safavid history covers, in terms of their own western standards, and not through the lens of "the truth of the matter" with regards to local culture, traditions, and ideologies. As will be explored further on, defining and explaining historical events, ideologies, and origins through the modern western sense of state, politics and society would be a grave obstacle in reaching a well-rounded understanding.

When it comes to the genealogy and ethnic identity of the Safavids, the historians that laid the foundations of western Safavid historical account, including Browne, Savory, Minorski, Mazzaoui, and their "successors" Newman, Morton, and Mitchell,

are, possibly, the brightest examples of Cheng's theory. In attempting to research Safavid genealogy and having read highly regarded historians in this matter, one is left with more questions than answers. Moreover, these questions were not to do with the Safavid origins in particular as much as they had to do with the methodology and the western traditional practices of Safavid research; One finds the arguments incongruent with the facts, and the authorship clouded with arbitrary thinking. Those themes that are the most popular in the research of Safavid origins are also the ones that cause most confusion in the research of renowned scholars. As opposed to clearing up these confusions, the research is further blurred because of misinterpretations and discrepancies, becoming thickly layered over time, dimming the ability to get to the "truth of the matter".

The purpose of the article. Although this article is written with the acknowledgement that not all existing western historical accounts have been explored for the purpose of this article, it does attempt to bring to light the more significant historiographical matters with regards to Safavid origins and ideology.

When E. Browne discusses the Imam origins of the Safavid Dynasty, he sets a good example of the discrepancy of research regarding this matter. After initially doubting the legitimacy of the claim that the Safavid dynasty is of Ahlibeyt origin (of the prophet Mohammed's family) without arguments, he later points to facts that would suggest otherwise.

The central question for the purpose of this article is a central problem that leads to a string of further perplexities in the research of Safavid origins is the vague and undefined terms, "Persia" and "Persian". It is imperative for the purpose of the research of origins to understand that these terms cannot be determined as belonging to an ethnicity, as it does not reflect any ethnic identity. By consistently categorizing and speaking of the 'Persian' identity in the region at the time, authors engage in stereotype bias, and thus lose sight of the truth of the matter when trying to understand the dynamics of the region. This is particularly true when they set out to explain the relations between the Ottomans, the Qizilbash and the Safavids, as we will see later in the article.

Main discussion. It is a common historiographical debate as to whether to refer to historical Iran, and nearby regions, as "Persia" or "Iran". Not only does this reduce the region to borders in the strict and modern sense of the word, but it also raises another historical dispute by dividing the population between that of "Persians" and of "the other", referring to them as being of contradictory and distinct ethnicities.

However, although a number of ethnicities are attributed to cultural and traditional identities, the Persian identity is vague, as it is a geographic attribute of the region, and cannot be coined as a separate identity. In 1945, a new historiographical era began for the subject of historical Iran – “Iranology”. In 1951, Henry Corbin carries out an in-depth analysis of the significance of terminology in this specific area of study, and analyses the term “Iranology” to reveal the imprecision of the term “Persian”. He justifies his research with the recognition that the term “Persia” is a politically loaded term, and even goes so far as to claim that this term could be interpreted as inaccurate and unjust to the Iranian nation. He writes, “The free use of both Iran and Persia has been officially approved. If we only use the latter, we risk losing a sense of connection with the Iranian universe. And if we always use “Iran” we risk an implicit suggestion that this is somehow identified with the borders and characteristics of a political entity—whereas the philosopher must look to a different realm of meaning” [4, p. 34]. In fact, Corbin correctly points out that one must adopt a philosophical point of view in order to grasp the history, culture, language, and politics of this region, without limiting oneself to borders. To sum up, the attributes and history of this region of the East is often cluttered up into simplistic terms, without distinguishing the variety within the region, and without understanding the region fully. Speaking of ethnic backgrounds and stereotypical definitions concerning this region, Corbin writes, “...The very origin of the usage testifies to an understanding of the word “Arab” as essentially designating a certain religious and spiritual grandeur irrespective of political, national, or racial implications” [4, p. 38]. His findings regarding the word “Arab” in this quote can also be applied to the word “Persia”. Despite Corbin’s findings, this approach to the meanings of these terms has not changed since, for as we can see, the Safavid era of Iran continues to be addressed as such. In this context, Edward Said’s theory of Orientalism has significant relevance. This approach has particular relevance when it comes to explaining the ethnic backgrounds of Safavid disciples, the Qizilbash Turks.

When reading E. Browne, it is easy to notice what Corbin refers to. When exploring the identity of – what he calls – ‘Persian Safavids’, E. Browne makes a distinction between the earlier Turkic dynasties ruling in Persia and the “truly Persian Safavids”. He states,

“The rise of the Safavid Dynasty in Persia at the beginning of the 16th Century of the Christian Era was an event of greatest historical importance – not only

to Persia itself and her immediate neighbors, but to also to Europe. It marks not only the restoration of the Persian Empire, and the recreation of the Persian nationality after an eclipse of more than 8 and a half centuries, but the entrance of Persia into the committee of nations and the genesis of political relations which still, to a considerable extent, hold good [2, p. 3].

In fact, what Browne calls the ‘recreation of the “great Persian empire” after the 8 and a half centuries, is the creation of another Turkic Empire in Iran, although he refrains from defining it as such. First, he writes, that the rise of the Safavid Dynasty represents the restoration of the “Persian nationality.” After concluding as such, Browne then negates himself by stating that there were ‘independent or quasi-independent dynasties ruling in Persia of Turkish or Tartar origin’ [2, s. 12]. Browne specifically makes a distinction between “non-Turkic” – Persian Safavids and Turkic dynasties ruling previously even though Safavids are of Azerbaijani-Turkic origin, as will be discussed further on. Furthermore, Browne continues to dig deeper into his chaos of “national identity”. He describes the confrontation between the Ottoman Sultan Salim ‘the Grim’ with Shah Ismail, saying, “At no time was the mutual hatred of Turks and Persians more violent and bitter than during the 8 years (1512–1520) when sultan Salim “The Grim” and Shah Ismail, the founder of the Safavid power, were the respective protagonists of the two nations” [2, p. 12]. Browne also attempts to explain this supposedly-ethnic distinction by giving an example of the various languages used by the ruling class of the two Empires, stating that this is an indication of two hostile nations. It is unclear what he is referring to as a nation: national identity? Or two separate Turkic Empires? He does not clarify this, furthering his chaotic explanation of their origins and leaving the question of ethnicity up in the air. Regarding the ancient culture of this geography, and the tradition of the usage of liturgic languages in the region, Browne writes, “...Sultan Salim wrote only exclusively in Persian, and the latter (Shah Ismayil) under the pen name of Hatai, almost exclusively in Turkish” [2, p. 13]. It must be noted that the use of different languages in these two empires and their geographical borders does not indicate the origins of ruling dynasties.

Another feature of western historiography, the misrepresentation of the Sufi ideology of the Safavid Order that are in fact inseparable from each other, is seen in M. Mazzaoui’s acclaimed, ‘The Origins of Safavids’ [6, p. 72]. Mazzaoui doubts both their Azeri-Turkic origins and their Ahli-Beyt descendance. He misrepresents the Sufi ideology of Sheikh Safi’s

order, by first presenting the religion as Orthodox Sunni, and later searches for signs of “extremist Shiism within its ideology. He goes on a quest to find evidence of Sheikh Safiaddin’s extremist Shiism but is evidently unable to do so. After having “travelled” through these elaborate thought labyrinths, Mazzaoui admits ‘there was not enough evidence’ for him to conclude as such [6, p. 46]. In fact, it is evident from his writing that Mazzaoui mistakes early Shiism with the post-18th Century Shiism, whereas early Shiism (or Imamism) is an ideology overlapping with Sufism while the latter following an orthodoxy that emerged only in the 18th Century. For this reason alone, Mazzaoui creates confusion. The author should have been aware that Sheikh Safiaddin was following the religious philosophy as directed by the Prophet Mohammed, and in fact all of Safavid missions lay in preserving the foundations of Islam as they believed was assigned by the Prophet, himself. Safavids believed that the Umayyad dynasty transformed the teachings of Mohammed and adjusted it to fit their political agenda. In his research “Muawiya ibn Abi Sufyan. From Arabia to Empire” [10, p. 26] R. Stephen Humphreys details out the process of the transformation of Islam towards Sharia after the death of the Prophet Muhammed. When Shah Ismayil came to power in 1501, he fulfilled his profound mission to reestablish Ithna-ashari Shiism (Early Shiism) in Iran, which was his mission in the first place. Mazzaoui is not ignorant of this, as he mentions himself that when Ismail claims the throne, the prayer heard from the minarets of Iran included the sentence “I profess that there is no God but Allah, that Mohammed is the Prophet of Allah, and that Ali is the Vali of Allah,’ 528 years after it had stopped being heard, declaring the divinity of Ali – direct proof of their Shiism” [10, p. 8]. While it is common practice in historical research to be cautious of using an enemy’s account, Mazzaoui does not refrain from doing so and uses an rival’s interpretations of Sheikh Juneyd and Heydar’s religious beliefs to make a judgment of their intentions and policies. He sites Rusbihan Khunji, a well-known enemy of Early Shiism, and known for waving the flag, so to speak, of Orthodox Shiism. There is evident bias here that Massaoi fails to acknowledge extensively, and therefore does not reflect objective opinion of contemporaries. For example, he writes that Sheikh Haydar preferred to read traditional “folk stories” as opposed to fulfilling his mission as Shii Sheikh, indicating his negative attitude towards Shiism and even goes so far as to describe this behavior as ‘miserable ways of Heydar’, a quote taken from Khunji. He claims that Heydar and Juneyd

frequently planned “qaza” against infidels together with their Qizilbash disciples. This goes against the logic under which Empires are built, considering that if any military elite wished to get rid of ‘infidel’ Christians, they would have taken extreme measures to obliterate this group. Moreover, Shah Ismayil’s grandmother, Despina Hatun, was a Christian, and had her own chapel to pray in her place of living. Clearly, they were born into a tolerant family. Even though he had his own ideology, Shah Ismail could not have seen any Christian as “infidels”. Christians thrived in this Empire, and freely practiced their own culture and religion, built Christian Churches, and Christian women in the Harem were not obliged to convert to Islam. Therefore, the claim that they planned holy wars against Christians seems unfounded. Here, Mazzaoui paints a picture of Ottoman and Safavid rulers as seekers of holy War, and writes, “Bands of Warriors of Faith were fighting the unbelievers along the frontiers of Islam and carving out states for themselves and their followers” [6, p. 76]. However, the qaza of Safavids is highly unlikely to have been against any other religion, but instead to secure the continuation of Early Shiism. Their Holy War was not against Christians, but rather against those among themselves, who were after the spread of Orthodox Shiism. Their purpose was to obliterate the laws of the Muaviyye, and not to Islamize the “infidel Christians.” If the Qizilbash were truly the “military elite,” in western historiographers’ own words, and if they had such military prowess and willingness to obliterate and wage war against minority religious groups within their Empire, considering the population of those groups, they must have been obliterated and effectively non-existent in a short period, or would have been assimilated completely. This odd attitude of Mazzaoui is also reflected in his description of the Qizilbash; he retracts from his idea of a planned holy war, and then writes that the Qizilbash considered going to Gaza as an ‘attractive pastime’ [10, p. 77]. The impression created here of the Qizilbash, contrary to their philosophy and high morality and mission to create the ideal society according to the ideology of the Prophet Mohammed, is that of petty military men. In continuation of Western historiographical practices, Mazzaoui declares the Ardabil Sufis-the Qizilbash-as “nomadic military men”. He refers to Ahmad Kasravi who is known for denying the Turkic-Azeri Ahli-Beyt origins of Safavid dynasty without evidence, and even putting forth baseless theories regarding their origins, concludes that the genealogy of the Safavids as that of Hazrati Ali’s is fiction. Researchers after Mazzaoui are more cautious of following in these footsteps because

it is difficult to deny Sheikh Safiaddin's genealogy as that of Hazrati Ali's, for even the enemies at his time, Ruzbihan Khunji, as cited by Mazzaoui says, "The first who raised the ensign of excellence in this family, was the unique of the world Sheikh Safiaddin Ishak... who finished his days in Ardabil where he was directing his followers"-as evident, even his enemy refers to Sheikh Safiaddin as of "unique origins". Even though Mazzaoui insists on making efforts to deny and to imply suspicion of Sheikh Safiaddin's Seyyid origins, he also retracts and is obliged to acknowledge his roots. After writing "...From Firuz to Sheikh Safi... genealogy appears to be fairly well established and generally accepted as authentic. The 14 generations, which relate FiruzShah to the 7th imam Mussa Al-Kazim, is recognized as spurious as the work of later Safavid authors" [10, s. 65]. Mazzaoui then writes, "It sounds like Golden Age. Even tempestuous Sunni authors like Fazlallah Ibn Ruzbihan Khunji, have only good words to say about the unique of the world Sheikh Safiaddin Ishak and his immediate successors" [6, p. 70]. As seen, Sheikh Safiaddin was respected not only by his own disciples and followers, but also by Mughal Shaikhs, Jalayirids, and Ilkhanids, meaning that no one of his time denied his Seyyidism. Mazzaoui, himself, writes that Sheikh Safiaddin also had a deep knowledge of worldly sciences. He points out that even the Mughal Princes of his time travelled to pay tribute to Safavid Sheikhs. However, Mazzaoui doesn't accept that the Safavid Order was the quintessence of Ithna-Ashari Shiism. He explains it oddly, saying that the love for Hazrati Ali of this dynasty comes from traditions of mystical imagination. But, how could it be that the representatives of High Islam, Sufism, containing so much knowledge of worldly sciences and strong religious principles, would have followed a mere common popular mystical imagination?

Moreover, Mazzaoui claims that the religious structure in Anatolia and Azerbaijan was chaotic. He describes Sufism unexpectedly as an 'experiment which was going on in Azerbaijan, and which was attracting followers from far and wide, most of all among the Turkish tribes from Anatolia itself [10, p. 75]. The author does not clarify what he means by 'experiment'-who the experiment was for, and why it was carried out-creating a thought gap. Mazzaoui applies the same approach to the Qizilbash; One cannot decipher the history of Safavid origins without exploring the origins of Qizilbash, as the Safavid Empire is also referred to as "Dovlet-I Qizilbash" (Qizilbash state) with Shahs referred to as Padishahi-Qizilbash (King of Qizilbash). Western historiography

refers to Qizilbash as nomadic or tribal groups, without a clarification of these definitions, and without a clear indication of their supposedly nomadic route. The foundation of this referral is basically non-existent and is taken at face-value in most western historiographical studies, without questioning. Mazzaoui describes the nomadic Turkic tribes as settlers among the indigenous Christian populations.

Shortly after Mazzaoui's publication, Roger Savory (1980), publishes a fundamental piece of research, "Iran under the Safavids". Even though he introduces new details in his research, when it comes to the origins of the Safavids, like his counterparts, he accepts Safavid genealogy that only comes after FiruzShah ZerrinKulah, but yet again expresses suspicion of Azeri-Turkic and Ahli-Beyt origins. It is interesting that despite the doubts of western historiographers, the genealogy of Safavids has been confirmed by prominent chroniclers such as Iskandar Munshi. Therefore, it is not a question of absence of information when it comes to the genealogy of the Safavids, but it is rather a question of its acceptance by western Safavid historians. Savory first refers to German researcher Hinz, who made the assumption that FiruzShah migrated from Yemen to Iran, and is that of Arab descent. Later, he cites Israeli Egyptologist, David Ayalon's, research when noting that Safavids are of Turkish Descent. Finally, Savory turns to Ahmad Kasravi, stating that Safavids are Arians, but that their native language is Azeri-Turkish. He writes, "Kasravi, after careful examination of the evidence, came to the conclusion, that Safavids were indigenous and of pure Arian stock, yet they spoke Azeri, a form of Turkish, which was the native language of Azerbaijan. The only point for Kasravi at issue was whether the Safavid family had been for long resident in Azerbaijan, or had migrated from Kurdistan" [11, p. 2] without specifying his sources for the remark about Kurdistan. This idea is widespread in western historiography, without any citation or sources that would clear this confusion. It is commonly accepted that the scientific method requires strict citations and legitimation of claims. However, this seems to be forgotten when it comes to researching Safavid origins. Savory continues his thoughts, "...Why is there such confusion about the origins of this important dynasty, which reasserted Iranian identity and established an independent Iranian State after 8 and a half Centuries of rule by foreign dynasties? The reason is that the Safavids, having been brought to power by the dynamic force of a certain ideology, deliberately set out to obliterate any evidence of their own origins, which would

weaken thrust of this ideology and call in question the premises on which it was based. In order to understand how and why the Safavids falsified the evidence of their origins, one must first be clear about the nature of the Safavid Dava (propaganda or ideological appeal) and about the bases on which the power of the Safavid Shahs rested" [11, p. 3]. Even though we consider the possibility that the Safavids may have obliterated evidence of their own genealogy, further questions arise if one wants to clear up this matter: What would be the motive of Safavids to falsify their own origins? And what compelled them to do so? How easy was it during those times to claim to be of Prophet Mohammed's genealogy? Were the Aggoyunlu Shahs, Garagoyunlu Shahs, Ottoman Shahs, Emir Teymur, and Mughal Emperors that followed, as in Shahs who ruled vast empires in vast areas, Anatolian and Iranian Sufis, so ignorant and "primitive" as to worship fake Imams? If you look at the overall law and order of things at the time, it seems unlikely.

H. R. Roemer addresses these exact questions in his research, "Background of the Safavids" [5, p. 199], stating that even the enemies of the Safavids addressed them as Ahli-Beyt Seyyids, "Given the numerous embittered enemies, it is not surprising that he has indeed been accused of deliberate deception-unjustly, as far as one can tell. For even the Shirvan-Shah Khalil-Allah addressed Junaid, Ismail's grandfather, in a letter the text of which has been preserved, as a descendant of the Sayyids; And the Turkish Sultan Bayezid II applied to Shaikh Haidar epithets such as are only used for a scion of Ali's family" [5, p. 199]. Considering that even the powerful enemies of the Safavids, who would have had interests in denying Safavid Ahli-Beyt origin, did not have reason enough to question Safavid genealogy, it is highly unlikely that the Safavids would have attempted to falsify their own genealogy. Given this sufficient evidence, how is it possible that the question of Safavid genealogy is such a controversial and doubted matter amongst scholars?

In his collection of articles, "Medieval Persia 1040-1797" David Morgan refers to the task of researching the origin of the Safavids as 'highly difficult.' Morgan raises the question, "How was it that an order of Sunni religious mystic became, two centuries later, a militantly Shia 'secular' dynasty? The stages in the process are not, by any means, clear as yet" [7, p. 107]. Evidently, one might find this process confusing or unclear only if one does not fully comprehend Early Shiism. In order to understand this, one must realize the extent to which pupils were engaged and tightly connected to the order. Morgan

continues, "Sheikh Safiaddin (1252-1334), after whom the order was named, was probably of Kurdish origin" [7, p. 107]. However, like his predecessors he also does not find proof for such a claim. When a great amount of evidence that is even present in his own research points to Turkish origins, why does he infer that the order was probably of Kurdish descent, and where does this idea come from? When it comes to Shah Ismail's accession to the throne, he contradicts himself, saying "...It may be that Ismail's expectation was that he would be able to set up an essentially Turkmen empire after the Aggoyunlu pattern, consisting of Eastern Anatolia, Azerbaijan, Western Persia, and Iraq" or "The direction of Ismayil's early campaigns certainly suggested that it was a Turkmen heritage he was primarily interested in" [7, p. 112]. After all, Shah Ismayil was of the Turkmen Aggoyunlu heritage from his mother's side, and of Sheikh Safiaddin's heritage from his father's side, both being of Turkic origin. Claiming otherwise would need a lot more evidence than what he presents given these facts. Like his colleagues, he does point out that Sheikh Safiaddin was Shii, but proceeds not to make the distinction between Early Shiism, close to Sufism and the stereotypical perception of orthodox Shiism, close to the practice of post-18th Century Shiism. He also calls attention to the fact that the Sheikh was previously a Sunni. However, one must also point out that if Sunnism was the practice of following Prophet Mohammed's lifestyle and laws, Early Shiism was not the opposite, but rather a continuation of this, with a symbiotic relationship to each other. According to Safavid ideology, in fact, the orthodox sunnism that existed at the time was false and opposed that of Early Sunnism and Early Shiism, and that is exactly what the Safavids were fighting against. According to Safavids, the orthodox sunnism that existed at the time was a reflection and expression of Osman and Muaviyye's politics, but not of the original legacy of the Prophet. Seemingly ignorant of this, Morgan writes, "it is tempting to call this Shiism, but several caveats need to be born in mind. First of all, as we saw...reverence for Ali and Shia Imams was not seen in the 15th Century as being incompatible with something approximating to orthodox Sunni belief. Secondly, the attributes granted to Juneyt by his followers would have been anathema to a respectable Twelver Shia, no less than to a Sunni. Thirdly, tracking down evidence of Shia belief is always a hazardous business because of the doctrine of Tagiyya..." [7, p. 109]. These ideas not only reflect Morgan's unfamiliarity to Sufism, and therefore Safavid, ideology, but also seem to be the norm of

conventional, western Safavid historiography. David Morgan describes the Turkmens (Qizilbashs) worship of Sheikh Juneyd as 'extremist religious beliefs,' actually referred to as Qizilbash anthropomorphist cosmology, and goes further to say that their worship of Juneyd was equal to that of their worship to Prophet Mohammed. However, this could hardly be described as 'extremist' but rather as the reflection of their belief of humans as divine beings (anthropomorphism), particularly those of Mohammed's genealogy. Coining a genuine belief that has little to do with 'extremism' is a highly deceptive reflection of history and of this ideology. Morgan's conclusion of their worship as being 'extremist' leads to a chain of other wrong assumptions and implications. Even though he initially writes that Ismail was educated in Shii ways and doesn't describe him as being Sufi, he later admits "this is not to say that Ismail's own beliefs were of an orthodox Shii kind. To judge from the poetry he wrote in Turkish, under the pseudonym Khatai, he was the true grandson of Juneyt in regarding himself as, in some sense, divine, a view evidently shared by the Turkmen followers who put him on the throne of Persia" [7, p. 110]. When explaining Juneyt's grandson Shah Ismail's policies, Morgan once again makes claims of 'extremism' by stating that Juneyt declared himself divine and pushed "extremist" Shiism with his actions. In trying to explain Qizilbash love and worship of Shah Ismail, he in fact misinterprets the cosmogonic aspects (Pir, Murshidi-Kamil, Murid) of the way they see relationships in this religion and rather explains it on a level of power politics and political and economic struggles. The scholar states that, "To escape Ottoman heavy taxes and the bureaucratic ways of the Ottomans, they (Qizilbash) turned to Shah Ismail" [7, p. 116]. This claim has weak ground, considering that bureaucracy exists in any system of rule and government, and Shah Ismail was creating only another Empire that comes with a revised set of rules. From an economic point of view, as Maria Zuppe writes, the Qizilbash were creating a new empire with Shah Ismail [8, p. 123] his involved a lot of economic and physical loss, with huge losses for those taking this path. Describing this as extremist is a highly significant misinterpretation, since in Qizilbash Sufi cosmogony, divinity is regarded as the manifestation of God in Humans, and not only as a divine God (An-Al-Haqq). This is what Sheikh Juneyt and Shakh Ismayil, and all their disciples fought for, against the Ottomans. It is important to mention here, that the Ottomans saw this interpretation of religion as sinful and as a threat to Ottoman and khalifate order. With so many 'Gods' roaming on Earth, it

would be extremely difficult to ask for obedience and maintain control, as rulers. This is in fact the basis of the confrontation between the Qizilbash Turkmens and Ottomans; not of territory, economic gains, or power, but rather the correct ideological interpretation of Islam.

Simultaneously, while making such conclusions, Morgan admits that the loyalty of the Qizilbash to Shah Ismail was the main reason Safavids came to power. According to Morgan, the 'uncivilized nomadic tribesmen' had won the power struggle, and came to be the rulers of the empire. Morgan repeats the description of a Chinese bureaucrat commissioned by Mughal Ogedey Khan, saying, "...An Empire can be won on horseback, but cannot be ruled from horseback [7, p. 119]". Characteristically, Morgan states that Shah Ismail does not trust his Qizilbash disciples with bureaucratic affairs of the state and trusts the 'civilized Persians' for fulfilling these tasks. Here we come across the ambiguous and rightfully controversial term, 'Persian,' as was explained earlier. By repeating an ongoing historiographical ambiguity, Morgan makes a distinction between the 'Persians' and Qizilbash without acknowledging that these terms need not be divided as ethnic groups, and refuses to concede to the fact that Persians and Qizilbash are, most of the time, overlapping terms. At this point, when it should be widely accepted that the term 'Persian' is highly controversial, historians continue to ignore it, misrepresenting the region. Moreover, claiming that Shah Ismail chose 'clever Persians' over 'nomadic Qizilbash military men' can be met with scepticism, considering that he was Qizilbash himself (Padishah-I Qizilbash).

Morgan claims, "Everybody is now well-aware that late-20th century Iran is a Shii country and for this the religious policy of which Shah Ismail is directly responsible". Morgan does not acknowledge the shift from pre-18th Century Early Shiism to Orthodoxy, and does not factor it into his rationale. To claim that this was the continuation of Shah Ismail's religious policies is to be ignorant to the Twelver Shiism that Ismail ruled by. Morgan continues to accumulate the misunderstanding as such, "...The form of Shiism chosen by Shah Ismail was not the faith of his Qizilbash followers. Possibly, Ismail had been influenced by the Shii environment in which he had lived in Gilan before marching against the Aggoyunlu, or he may have felt that Twelver Shiism was at least nearer to Qizilbash belief than Sunnism was. It has sometimes been suggested that Ismail's motives were, in reality, in the modern western sense, "political", that he saw in Shiism a convenient source of identity, a means of

differentiating his kingdom from its Sunni neighbors, Ottoman and Uzbek” [7, p. 120]. This explanation is a misguided understanding of Shah Ismail’s political philosophy, as it represents a misconception of events and his policies of the time. In order to clear this fallacy, one must reassess the history of the Safavids and understand Sufism to its fullest. It is evident from his ideas and conclusions that Morgan is not familiar with the ‘Divan’ of Shah Ismail to the extent needed. For if he had analyzed and understood the Divan wholly, he would not have allowed for such misconception; the Divan is the rightful, accurate, and exact reflection of Shah Ismail’s Sufi ideology. Explaining Shah Ismail’s policies, events, and outcomes of the time in the modern western political sense, is a highly dangerous path to take if one is seeking to understand the true ideology of the time, precisely reminiscent of what Eileen Ka-Mea Cheng refers to in her exploration of west-centric historiographic account.

Moreover, Morgan states that before the Safavids came to power, Iran was a Sunni territory. Afterwards, he contradicts this, saying, “...It may be said, with some justice, that the ground had been prepared for the acceptance of Shiism during the previous two centuries, a period in which veneration of Ali and the other eleven Shii Imams had become popular and widespread, and was not thought incompatible with adherence to Sunnism” [9, p. 121]. With this phrase, Morgan makes an effort to fix his fallacy, but it would be more accurate to say that this fight does not fit into two centuries, as those who were fighting for Mohammad’s ‘true’ religious mandate, were those living in ancient Iran and Anatolia. These events span through 8 and a half centuries, and cannot fit into the two centuries as Morgan states.

Once again, when explaining the relationship between that of the Qizilbash and the “Persians”, Morgan engages in further misinterpretations. He explains Shah Tahmasip’s, Shah Ismayil’s son’s, decision to move the capital from Tabriz to Qazvin with the motive to ‘Persianise’ the Empire. Considering that Shah Tahmasip was only 10 years old at the time when he came to power and the prominent Qizilbash amirs were in actual fact managing affairs, the interpretation that they would try to ‘Persianise’ the Empire seems unlikely, as Morgan, himself, writes, “The move was no doubt dictated mainly by strategic considerations, but it perhaps serves also, as we have seen, to emphasize the increasingly ‘Persian’ as against the originally Turkmen character of the regime”. However, once again contradicting his previous thought the author writes, “Safavid politics cannot convincingly be explained in crude

racial terms” [7, p. 128]. Although this back and forth between opposing ideas exists throughout Morgan’s research, he does not accept his own confusion, but rather chooses to conclude in a way which does not reflect his indecisive nature of his research, “The principle difference from the past was perhaps that this time the ruling house itself-because of its beginnings in a religious order rather than a tribe, and possibly, also because of its non-Turkish origin (though this was very remote) was less closely identified than were its predecessors with the Turkish element” [7, p. 138]. In other words, Morgan says in this concluding sentence that the origins of the Safavids should not be assessed in terms of tribal beginnings, but should rather be analyzed as a religious order of non-Turkish origin without sound arguments throughout his research to conclude as such.

In 2006 Andrew J. Newman joins the ranks of Savory in his prominent publication “Safavid Iran; Rebirth of a Persian Empire”, where he sets out to challenge conventional thinking in Safavid research. In his pivotal publication, Newman attempts to write Safavid history without succumbing to the conventional norms of Western historiography, but is found to be repeating, and possibly even reaffirming, previous stereotypes. One can observe that Newman gives great weight to intra-ethnic relations, using it as a lens through which to analyze the region. Yet he provides no space in his research to the critical role of the syncretic nature of languages and culture, unique to this geographic region. Despite this, Newman does not refrain from deciding that “Persians” are “Tajiks”, repeating a common stereotype, and does not refrain from describing the Qizilbash as nomadic settlers and militants immigrant to the region, confirming the stereotypical perception of these groups. As such, he not only disappoints in his quest to challenge stereotypes, but in fact makes them stronger and politicizes the multi-ethnic nature of the region. Newman expresses, “In fact, to take but one example, Qizilbash tribal elements and the early Shahs especially were more comfortable in dialects of Turkish, native Iranians (Tajiks) spoke Persian and the primary language of the established faith was Arabic” [9, p. 6]. Considering the syncretic use of languages in the region, it is surprising that a historian would conclude that one’s ethnicity or affiliation is determined by their use of language; The Persian language is historically known to be used as a language of literature and the arts amongst several of the ethnic groups present in the larger geographic region including Mughals, Ottomans, and Central Asians. To give but one example, Mughal schools were taught in Persian, as a liturgic language. Another

example is Sultan Salim's, and other Ottoman Sultans', choice to write poetry in the Persian language despite their Turkic ethnicity. The paradigm of thought and rationale through which Newman conveys his findings of the region is comprised of the role intra-ethnic relations and intolerance played within the Empire. He analyzes events through the socio-political standpoint that Safavids and their disciples, the Qizilbash, were intolerant towards non-Turks, implying a social struggle. Rather than conveying the truth of the matter, he takes on the role of analyzing an intolerance that, by all evidence, did not play a significant role in Safavid policy or society. Newman does not provide enough of a justification to conclude as such. Moreover, by describing the configuration of the empire as made of "composite constituents," with an ethnic mixture of the Native Persians (Tajiks) holding administrative abilities and the 'militant' Turks, his framework of analysis is limited to the relationship between these ethnic groups. By doing so, he replaces the controversial term "Persian" with the term 'native Tajiks,' seemingly avoiding ambiguity of the term "Persian," but in fact opening up to another ambiguity, without giving evidence as to why native Persians would have been Tajiks. Newman often reminds us, 'Native tajiks' "... Administered their empire and adopted and patronized their distinctive cultural discourse, especially the traditional Tajik literally arts and crafts" [9, p. 13] painting a picture of a social struggle between that of 'militant' Turks, pitting one against the other, and implicating a clear distinction between their roles within the Empire. Instead of painting a full picture, he creates an image of 'civilized Tajiks' versus the 'uncivilized militant Turks.' One can observe that Newman does the same when describing the Safavid's maternal lineage, the Aggoyunlu Uzun Hasan, "...Uzun Hasan patronized religious structures, encouraged religious endowments and students including Tajik Sayyids, descendants of the profit Muhammad and patronized the Arts and Sciences" [4, p. 10]. Here, Newman casually and without evidence, delivers a never-seen before theory, of the possibility of "Tajik Sayyids". Even having confirmed Safavid prophetic lineage (that of Prophet Muhammad), the author goes so far as to suggest that even they were of Tajik origins, and uses the phrase "Shah Ismail as Turk and Tajik", creating a historiographic confusion, with no clear evidence. Considering all evidence of his lineage, it must be noted that Shah Ismail was both Turk and "Persian", but certainly not Tajik. When writing of Safavid ideology, he suggests several conflicting ideas-he claims, Shah Ismail and his entourage had no idea of the Twelver Shiism doctrine, and claims that it was Lahijan Sufis

who taught the teachings to the Shah as a child. As strange as it sounds, Newman writes, "he and his immediate retinue were in fact relatively unacquainted with the intricacies of Twelver Shii doctrine and practices. However his long-term residence in Zaidi Shii Lahijan endowed Ismail with some familiarity with Shii discourse, for example awareness that references to himself as the perfect, the just Imam (Al Imam Al Adil Al Kamil) or The Just Sultan (Al Sultan Al Adil) would allude both to his status as secular successor to his grandfather Uzun Hasan to whom similar terms had been applied, but also in Twelver tradition to himself as the now-returned Twelfth Imam" [9, p. 14]. He searches support and evidence for these theories in the accounts of a Safavid enemy, orthodox Ulema, Ruzbihan Hunji. It is commonly known and evident that Hunji was a staunch enemy of the Safavids, and any historian quoting him should be cautious of its credibility. Those who research Shah Ismail's dynasty's origins and ideologies should also be closely familiar with Shah Ismail's Divan. In search for the reasons for Ismail's Divan to have been written in Turkish, he finds it in Ismail's efforts to gain support amongst Uzun Hasan's "Turkish tribal contingency". However, those who can read the Divan in its own language (Turkish), would see that the use of language indicates emotional implications, and not that of mere declarations or efforts to mobilize, gain support, or influence contingencies. A historian who wishes to understand Ismail and his socio-political aims would have analyzed Divan on a deeper level, in order to understand Qizilbash ideology and what it meant to Ismail, himself. Finally, Newman's piece of research suggests a marginal, heterodox, ignorant (to the Twelver Shii Doctrine), and a Tajik Shah Ismail. Newman's Ismail pushes away and leaves no sign of Historical Qizilbash Pir, Twelver Imam Sufi, Sayyid and Sheikh, philosopher and military leader, Shah Ismail. As such the truth of the matter is obscured, and poses a danger to historical truth of the region.

Conclusions. Safavid historical studies have largely been dominated by western stereotypes, which have crystallized over time, due in large part to the political influence of strong lobbyists in this area. This article attempted to find the answer to how this can be reversed. Western scholars use the linguistic model to trace Safavid origins to Persian roots. In fact, this method is not the best to use in this case because Persian was the literary language of the East, used in literature and education at the time, regardless of the cultural or ethnic origins of its users. This article argued that Safavid lineage can actually be traced back to the Ahlibeyt family of Turkish origin, whose purpose was to spread and

establish the doctrine of Early Shiism. Using the Persian language for tracing origins in this area of the world only points to biases in the methodologies practiced among Western historical scholars. As shown in this article, Safavids were notoriously tolerant of other religions and ethnicities, and were influential rather than forceful when spreading their doctrine.

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Насібова А. М. КРИТИЧНИЙ ОГЛЯД ІСТОРИОГРАФІЧНОЇ ЛІТЕРАТУРИ З СЕФЕВІДОЗНАВСТВА

Азербайджанські вчені тривалий час жили під радянсько-російським колоніальним тиском і, як наслідок, не мали можливості уважно спостерігати за своїми західними колегами. Коли ми стали незалежними, перехресна перевірка досліджень, пов'язаних з Азербайджаном, стала обов'язковою, щоб ці дослідження заклали новий фундамент для тісної співпраці із західними вченими. Ряд іноземних авторів досліджували сефевідську спадщину, вивчали у своїх наукових працях історію, культуру та релігію Сефевідів. Походження Сефевідів було одним із найважливіших питань, які протягом багатьох років займали західних вчених Сефевідів. Незважаючи на те, що багато видатних вчених зверталися до цієї важливої історіографічної проблеми, загальноприйняті думки залишаються беззаперечними і приймаються де-факто.

У цій статті стверджується, що західноцентричний підхід, який ми спостерігаємо в західній сефевідській історіографії, продовжує спричиняти проблеми в цій галузі, що зрештою створює перешкоди для міжкультурного розуміння та співпраці. У результаті вимушені свавільні рішення та безпідставні припущення, яких зазвичай слід уникати в сучасному дослідницькому світі, продовжують нас розчаровувати. Особливо ми спостерігаємо таке ставлення в аналізі, пов'язаному з походженням та ідеологією родини Сефевідів. Можна запитати, чому ця стаття прагне визначити та переглянути деякі з цих загальноприйнятих думок. Зрештою, розуміння ідеології династії, яка вже мала великий і значний ідеологічний вплив за 200 років до початку їхнього правління та протягом 250 років після, є важливим для справжнього розуміння справ регіону та його околиць. Було б применшенням сказати, що неправильне розуміння походження та ідеології Сефевідів заважає зрозуміти історію регіону в цілому. Зайве говорити, що вибір істориків та їхні дослідження, розглянуті в цій статті, представляють тих, які мали найбільший вплив на сучасне західне розуміння історії Сефевідів та Ірану. У світлі всього цього стає зрозумілим, що новий підхід до проблем неминучий. До згаданого списку входять такі видатні історики, як Е. Браун (1920), М. Маїцаої (1972), Р. Сейворі (1980), Г. Р. Ремер (1986), Ендрю Ньюмен (2006). Зважаючи на підхід західних учених до цих питань, не можна не звернутися до Едварда Саїда. Ця стаття має на меті проаналізувати новітні історіографічні зразки, включаючи Е. Брауна, який представляє приклад традиційного мислення, яке не змінилося протягом майже століття. Очевидно, що в цих дослідженнях неможливо розглянути всі поточні проблеми, але це може бути початком. Незважаючи на те, що за ці роки було зроблено багато роботи в цій галузі, завжди потрібні нові підходи. Тому, коли ми говоримо про Схід і Захід, ми повинні розуміти, що це частини цілого. Хоча вони відокремлені та відмінні один від одного, один ніколи не існує окремо від іншого і не може існувати окремо від іншого. Розуміння цього факту може стати вирішенням багатьох проблем.

Ключові слова: Сефевіди, історія, Сефевідська література, етика, орієнталізм, Іран, суфізм, кизилбаш, улеми.