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The King's Two Lineages: Esau, Jacob, and the Ottoman Mythical Imagination in the *Subhatu'l-Ahbar*

for Stefanos Yerasimos

Abstract: It is well known among historians of the Ottoman Empire that an important component of Ottoman political discourse was the genealogical fiction connecting the Ottoman dynasty with a mythical figure called Oghuz Khan. In this genealogical fiction, the figure of Oghuz Khan connected the Ottoman dynasty with Japheth, son of Noah, hence locating the dynasty in the ranks of those 'Japhetic lineages' that represented the nomadic northern peoples in the Islamic mythology. The prominence of the Japhetic lineage in the sixteenth century was often explained as a manifestation of the Ottomans' dire need to legitimize their authority in the eyes of their subjects. However, what is less known is that there was actually another genealogical fiction that replaced the ancestral figure of Oghuz Khan with Esau, son of Isaac, hence giving the Ottoman dynasty a 'prophetic lineage'. This paper attempts to explain why there were two parallel genealogies in the Ottoman political discourse and discusses how Ottoman genealogists used visual strategies to depict this genealogical duality.

1 Introduction

The *Subhatu'l-Ahbar*, or *Rosary of Times*, is a splendidly executed example of the Ottoman art of painting.[1] In just seventeen folios, it depicts the genealogy of the Ottoman dynasty in tree format from Adam to the Ottoman sultan Mehmed IV (r. 1648–1687), in a visual repertoire that includes 102 portraits in roundels accompanied by concise historical and biographical information. It is one of numerous genealogical codices or scrolls composed during a noticeable upsurge of such works in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. There are about seventy-five of these texts, composed from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century, in various manuscript collections in the world. Some of them are lavishly illustrated, as in the

1 Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Ms. A.F. 50. The *Subhat* includes 102 portraits painted by Hüseyin al-Musavvir al-Istanbuli. On this painter, see Majer 1999, 462–467.

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case of the *Subhatu'l-Ahbar* (henceforth *Subhat*), and some of them are beautifully illuminated in very large scale, as in the case of the *Tomar-ı Hümayun*.[2] Others are quite humble, even sparse, in terms of their visual characteristics, as they consist only of circles and lines drawn in a very crude manner, without any illustrations or illuminations.[3] Nevertheless, one thing is common to most of these manuscripts: they visually depict world history from the viewpoint of the Ottomans with diagrammatic and pictorial-visual devices.[4]

Similar to other examples of the same genre produced in the early modern period, the *Subhat* traces the genealogy of the Ottoman dynasty back to Adam. Human history begins with Adam and proceeds via prophets, kings, and caliphs, culminating first in the Mongol and then in the Ottoman dynasty.[5] The intended message of this sequence is quite straightforward: the Ottoman Empire is the indisputable sovereign of the world. The seemingly understated and simple organizational style of the majority of genealogies has created the impression among scholars that all these works are mere copies of each other, and have very little to tell us about history. Hence, it is not surprising that these genealogical codices and rolls have been studied mainly for their aesthetic qualities – insofar as they have any – and that art historians have been the pioneers in exploring this complex genre.

The main objective of this article is to contribute to our understanding of the content of genealogical trees by looking at issues beyond aesthetics and textual content, and to highlight the importance of the structure of genealogical trees. I will argue that the colour schemes used in their compositions are, in most cases, not arbitrary. They may contribute significantly to our knowledge about the articulation of historical and political ideas in genealogical trees. To this end, I will focus on a specific artefact, the *Subhat* (Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek,

2 *Tomar-ı Hümayun* is a large scroll, 31.16 meters in length and 79 centimetres in width. It is lavishly illuminated and includes many sections written in gold. It starts with a geographical and astrological introduction and continues with a world history in tree format from Adam to the sultan Meḥmed III (r. 1566–1603). See Istanbul, Topkapı Palace Library, Ms. A. 3599, 'Tomar-ı Hümayun'. For an analysis of its contents and structure, see Eryılmaz Arenas-Vives 2010, 229–256. See also Eryılmaz 2013, 114–115.

3 Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Ms. Lala İsmail 347.

4 I have discussed the origins and the pre-1500 history of genealogical trees in Islamicate historiography in the following article: Binbaş 2011, 465–544. See also, in this volume, the paper by Kazuo Morimoto, pp. 39–48.

5 So far, I have noticed just two exceptions to this generalizing observation. The first one is a genealogical codex titled *Jamʿi tarikh* ('Collection of History') at the Ethnography Museum of Ankara (Ms. 8457), and the second is a scroll at the Free Library of Philadelphia (Lewis Collection Ms. O 37). To compare, see the following manuscript in which the genealogical tree culminates in the Safavid dynasty: Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Ms. Hasan Hüsnü Paşa 1289-2.

Ms. A.F. 50). The distinct colour scheme of this manuscript allows us to study the use of different colours in the design of genealogical diagrams in a detailed manner.[6]

Although the text itself gives no clue about the identity of its author, Ottoman historiographical tradition attributes authorship of the *Subhatu'l-Ahbar* to a certain Derviş Mehmed b. Ramazan. The roots of this assumption go back to a reference in the famous bibliographer Katib Çelebi's (d. 1657) *Kashf al-Zunun*. According to Katib Çelebi, Derviş Mehmed b. Ramazan composed a 'long genealogical roll' (*tumar-i tawil*) entitled *Subhatu'l-Ahbar ve Tuhfatu'l-Ahyar*. He adds that the *Subhatu'l-Ahbar* includes kings, sultans, prophets, and viceroys arranged according to their lineage, from the time of Adam to that of Süleyman the Lawgiver.[7] Another Ottoman genealogical work, this time a scroll in Persian kept in Vienna, suggests that a person called Sharif-i Shafi'i also composed (or translated from Persian) an Ottoman genealogy. The translator's name is sometimes mentioned as Yusuf b. ʿAbd al-Latif; both author and translator lived during the reign of Süleyman the Lawgiver.[8] This view is supported by a manuscript in Istanbul that was translated into Turkish by Yusuf ʿAbd al-Latif in 1546 and dedicated to the reigning sultan Süleyman the Lawgiver.[9]

6 Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Ms. A.F. 50 has twice been published in facsimile. See *Rosary of Times. Subhatu'l-ahbâr*, ed. Rado 1968 and reprint of the 1968 edition *Rosenkranz der Weltgeschichte*, ed. Holter 1981. The manuscript is also available online at the library's website. See http://data.onb.ac.at/rec/baa18848669 (accessed on 25 January 2021). In this article, I will refer to folio numbers, which can easily be located in both editions as well as in the digital edition. The *Subhat* was not the first Ottoman genealogical tree to be published; a much earlier lithograph was published in 1873. See *Subhatü'l-ahbar min zübdati'l-asar*, ed. Ahmed Kemal, 1289 AH / 1873 CE. Two other Ottoman genealogical trees have been published in facsimile. The first one is Ankara Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Ms. 1872, which includes the Ottoman genealogy from Adam to Mehmed IV (r. 1648–1687). This manuscript, dated to 1094/1682, was illustrated by Musavvir Hüseyin, and it has already been published by Sadi Bayram in much inferior print quality as part of his article on this manuscript. See *Silsile-nâme*, 2000; Bayram 1981, 253–338. Sadi Bayram has also published another Ottoman genealogical codex, this one titled *Zübdetü't-tevarih* (Bayram 1994, 51–116). This manuscript is at the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin (Ms. T. 423); it was composed in Baghdad in 1006 AH / 1598 CE and illustrated by Abu Talib Isfahani.

7 Katib Çelebi, *Kashf al-Zunun*, ed. Yaltkaya and Rifat 1943, vol. 2, 975. Gustav Flügel, the renowned cataloguer of the National Library in Vienna, was aware of this fact, for he said: 'According to the contents Derviş Mehmed b. Ramazan is the author of the work, but the text itself provides no indication' (Flügel 1865–1867, vol. 2, 99; my translation).

8 Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Ms. H. O. 11 and Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Ms. Mxt 487. See also Flügel 1865–1867, vol. 2, 75–76, 97–98. Franz Babinger and Yuri Bregel have repeated this information almost verbatim: Babinger 1927, 71; Stori and Bregel 1972, 504. For further discussion on this topic, see Taner 2018, 147–151.

9 Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Ms. Ayasofya 3259, fols 2a and 64b. For a similar manuscript, see *Catalogue des manuscrits* 1852, 468–470. Ayasofya 3259 is one of the earliest Ottoman genealogical works.

2 Blue, red, black, and the significance of lines

The *Subhat* is divided into two main parts. The first part (fols 1b–4a) is an introduction to world history and includes a section on the calculation of time since Adam and a brief description of the lunar and solar calendars. Moreover, it gives a short description of Islamic dynasties, which are also depicted visually in the genealogical section of the book. The second part (fols 4b–17a) is a genealogical tree with short textual sections, and is the part that I will discuss in the following pages.

The first illustrated page of the *Subhat* includes a painting of Adam and Eve, surrounded by a narrative section radiating couneterclockwise from the central image (see Fig. 1).[10] Following the painting of Adam and Eve, the author divides the page into three vertical sections, respectively dedicated to three of Adam and Eve's four sons: from left to right, ʿAbd al-Haris, Seth, and Abel. The fourth son, Cain, is found under the painting of Abel. Among these four sons, only Seth and Cain are depicted with their progeny, for Abel was killed by Cain and God had caused ʿAbd al-Haris to die, as evil had been associated with him even before Eve's pregnancy.[11]

The first illustrated folio marks the beginning of three lineages. The colours black and red are used to connect the figures representing these lineages. The black line goes directly to Cain. One of the red lines goes to ʿAbd al-Haris, while another goes to Abel; neither of them has progeny. Seth, Cainan, and Enosh are not connected to each other by a line, but their medallions touch each other. A third red line connects the medallion of Cainan with that of Kayumars. Hence, in the third generation after Adam and Eve, the author establishes a tripartite structure of world history. The central lineage depicted in the middle of the page represents the pedigree of Seth, and subsequently reaches the antediluvian prophets. The left side of the page is reserved for mythical Iranian shahs, represented in red, while the right side of the page is for the descendants of Cain, the ancestor of Pharaoh – the quintessential evil person in Islamic mythology – represented in black.[12] Therefore, at the end of the first page, the author demonstrates that the tripartite structure of the book, based on the descendants of Kayumars, those of Seth, and those of

10 Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Ms. A.F. 50, fol. 4b.

11 The *Subhat* does not mention the story of ʿAbd al-Haris, the first child of Eve. During Eve's pregnancy, Satan comes and asks if she wants this baby to live. After Eve's affirmative answer, Satan asks her to name the baby ʿAbd al-Haris. Al-Haris literally means 'plowman' and was the original name of Satan. Thus, ʿAbd al-Haris means 'servant of Satan'. Later, an angel comes and asks why she did not name her child ʿAbd al-Rahman, the servant of God. Adam and Eve become extremely frightened, and God causes ʿAbd al-Haris to die. See al-Tabari, *The History of al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 1, tr. Rosenthal 1989, 320–324.

12 Pharaoh is the tyrant, the unjust despot par excellence in Islamic narratives. See the article 'Firʿawn', in *EI*², vol. 2, 917–918 (A. J. Wensinck).

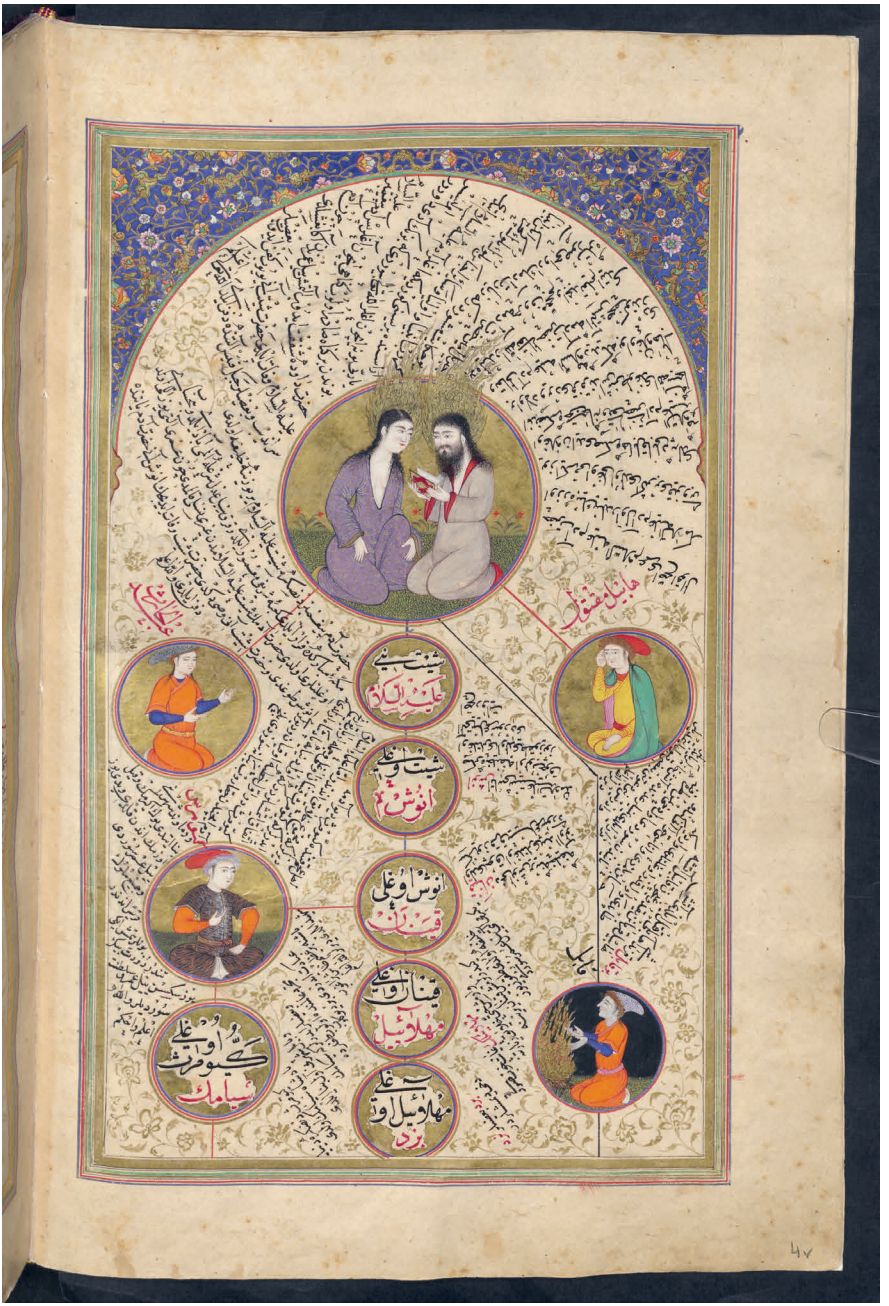

Fig. 1: *Subhatu'l-Ahbar*. Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Ms. A.F. 50, fol. 4b; © Österreichische Nationalbibliothek.

Cain, can be followed by the colours of the lines that connect the mythico-historical figures in each category, and by the positioning of the medallions on the page. The following table shows the political underpinnings of this intricate organization:

Table 1: The tripartite division of the lineages on fol. 5a.

Position on the page	Left	Centre	Right
Progenitor of the line	Kayumars	Seth	Cain
Description	The first man and first king in Iranian mythology, son of Cainan in Islamic narratives	Son and heir of Adam and the beginning of the prophetic lineage	Murderer of his brother Abel, inventor of fire-worshipping
Colour of the connecting lines	Red	Blue (starting on 5a)	Black
	Kingly Lineage (Red line)	**Prophetic Lineage (Blue line)**	**Pharaonic Lineage (Black line)**

The author puts three half circles at the top of folio 5a, each associated with one colour and one lineage (see Table 1). In so doing, the author establishes the political taxonomy of the work on the first two pages of the manuscript in so far as the division of political authority in subsequent generations. Both the centre of the book and the colour blue, are associated with prophets and prophethood. The left side of the page is associated with kings, and the right side with ultimate evil, which culminates and ends in the person of Pharaoh on fol. 7a.

The black line ends abruptly in the middle of fol. 7a with Pharaoh. The internal logic of the black line is not as complex as that of the other two lines. For example, there is a single painting, that of Cain, on this line, and it continues from the beginning to the end without branching out.

The blue line, the prophetic lineage, starts with the Prophet Enoch (Idris) on fol. 5a, and continues straightforwardly, one generation after another, without interruption until folio 6a: Adam, Seth, Enosh, Cainan, Mahalaleel, Jared,[13] Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, Noah, Shem, Arphaxad, Sadar, Shayikh, Hud.

13 This name is written in two different ways on folios 4b and 5a: BZD, BRD. The inscription near the circle of Jared also says that some people call him Narid. Al-Tabari gives two different versions: Jared and Yarid. al-Tabari, *The History of al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 1, tr. Rosenthal 1989, 336. The *Subhat* gives this name in three different orthographies: BZD (in the circle) and BRD or NRD (in the inscription) on folio 4b. Although it does not match the orthography of the *Subhat*, I have preferred to use 'Jared' for the sake of convenience.

The *Subhat* initially uses the red line for two purposes: two sons of Adam and Eve, Abel and ʿAbd al-Haris, are connected to their parents by a red line, but the real emphasis on the red line starts with Kayumars, who is connected to Cainan, grandson of Seth, by a red line.

After Kayumars, the red line follows Persian mythology; Siyamak follows Kayumars, and then Hushang, Tahmurath, and Jamshid in sequence. However, by the beginning of folio 5b, where the story of Noah's three sons is introduced, the red line begins to branch out. Japheth and Ham, two sons of Noah, are connected to their father and to their own sons by a red line. Until folio 8b, where the Prophet Muhammad appears, any non-prophetic and non-Pharaonic connection is depicted with a red line: these are the descendants of Japheth and Iranian mythical figures. The reason for this complexity in the use of the colour red is the adoption of two mythical redistributive models in the same genealogical tree on folio 5b, the Iranian model and the Semitic model.[14] According to the Semitic model, the world is divided among the three sons of Noah: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. The Iranian model, on the other hand, divides the world between the two sons of Faridun (Afridun), Tur (who bears the title *faghfur*) and Iraj (who bears the title *shah*). Each son of Noah and Faridun is also the ancestor of a group of people (see Table 2).

Table 2: Semitic and Iranian models of redistribution.

Semitic model of redistribution	
Shem	The prophets of the Arabs and Iranians, saints (*ak çehreler*, lit. 'people with white faces'), good people (*eyü kişiler*)
Ham	Blacks, Ethiopians, Zangis (slaves), tyrants, unjust rulers
Japheth	Turks, Chinese, Slavs, Gog and Magog (*Ya'juj wa Ma'juj*)

Iranian model of redistribution	
Tur (*faghfur*)	Turkistan, Chin, Khitay
Iraj (*shah*)	Iran (ʿIraq, Basra, Baghdad, Hijaz, Khurasan, Gilan, Tabaristan)

Since the blue line is assigned only to the prophetic lineage, i.e. the lineage of Shem, the *Subhat* uses the red line for the descendants of Japheth and Ham, as well as

14 I am following Barbara Flemming's terminology, which uses the term 'Semitic model' for lineages going back to Shem, and 'Japhetic model' for genealogies going back to Japheth. See Flemming 1988, 123–137.

figures from Persian mythology. This diversity of mythical references makes the red line very difficult to follow on subsequent folios.

Japheth has three sons: Abu al-Haris, Gog, and Magog (*Ya'juj* and *Ma'juj*). The latter two do not have any descendants, and Abu al-Haris's lineage is eventually connected to the Ottoman lineage. At the top of fol. 6a, red lines spring from six circles. One of these circles leads to the descendants of Abu al-Haris, son of Japheth. Abu al-Haris has just one son, Machin. The design of the blue line on this folio is rather complicated, because the inscription in the top circle reads: 'This is the lineage of Ham; this circle represents the descendants of Hud.'[15] However, on folio 5b, the Prophet Hud is shown as part of the lineage of Shem. The author of the *Subhat* appears to be combining different textual traditions here. Hud is considered to be a member of the tribe of ʿAd, a tradition also repeated in the inscription written near the painting of the Prophet Hud (*ʿAd kavmine geldi*, lit. 'he came to the ʿAd tribe'). Thus, one would logically expect the painting of Hud to be placed in the lineage of ʿAd, grandson of Ham, in the *Subhat*.[16]

The Japhetic line, which is still depicted in red on folio 6b, continues with Numish Khan son of Koy Khan son of Machin. In this part of the genealogy, the Japhetic line for the first time starts including individuals with the title *khan*, a title in Turco-Mongol political vocabulary. Afrasiyab, a figure from Iranian mythology who was the king of Turan and an enemy of Iranians, also appears here, but his lineage dies out at the very beginning of the following folio. Afrasiyab's lineage goes back to Tur, son of Afridun, the possessor of Turkistan and China, as mentioned above on folio 5b. At the bottom of the folio, the two sons of Isaac, Jacob and Esau, are depicted side by side in two medallions.

The organization of folio 7a is of great significance for the main argument of this paper, which is why I will discuss it in detail in the following section. In brief, the red line includes the famous Iranian kings Sam, Zal, and Rustam, and the Japhetic line is parallel to it, with such names as Koy Khan. The blue prophetic line includes the Prophets Joseph, Job, Joshua, Dhu al-Kifl, and Bashir. At the top of folio 7b, the red and blue lines conflate in a very subtle way. Two Koy Khans appear at this place in the manuscript: Koy Khan from the line of Japheth and Koy Khan from the line of Shem. The descendants of the first Koy Khan continue with Baytemür, Kurluğa Khan, Kurcul Khan, Süleyman Khan, and Kara Oğlan Khan. According to the *Subhat*, the second Koy Khan is the predecessor of the Prophets Moses and Aaron. The left side of folio 7b is again occupied by pre Islamic Iranian figures, such as Siyavush and Bahman.

15 The name of Japheth's son Abu al-Haris is written twice as 'Abu al-Hash' on fol. 6a.

16 ʿAd is the symbol of a corrupt and unfaithful tribe in Islamic narrative traditions. See the article '"Ād.' in *EI*^{2}, vol. 1, 169 (F. Buhl).

Table 3: The organization of the *Subhat* is based on a dualism that corresponds to two different models of legitimization, one biblical/Islamic and the other Iranian/Turkic.

Folios	Red Line (Kings)		Blue Line (Prophets)	
Ancestors (fol. 4b)	Kayumars		Adam	
Antediluvian period (fol. 5a)	Iranian kings		Antediluvian prophets	
Redistributive Models (fol. 5b)	Afridun and his sons Tur and Iraj		Prophets and biblical figures	
Fragmentation in red Line (fol. 6a)	Descendants of Tur and Iraj	Descendants of Japheth	Prophets and biblical figures	
Fragmentation in blue line (fol. 6b)	Afrasyab and other descendants of Afridun	Emergence of Turco-Mongol themes (Numish Khan)	Descendants of Isaac, Esau and Jacob	Descendants of Abraham, Isma'il
Appearance of Ottoman lineage (fol. 7a)	Iranian heroes	Ottoman lineage	Descendants of Esau and Jacob	Descendants of Salaman
Conflation of red and blue lines (fol. 8a)	Ottoman lineage	Ashkaniyan and Greek figures	Sasanid kings, Alexander the Great	Descendants of 'Adnan
Blue line culminates in the Prophet (fol. 8b)	Ottoman lineage	Sasanids	The Prophet Muhammad and four caliphs	
fol. 9a	Ottoman lineage	Umayyads	The fourth caliph 'Ali and twelve imams	
fol. 9b	Ottoman lineage	Buyids	Abbasids	
fol. 10a	Ottoman lineage	Ghaznawids and Khwarazmshahids	Abbasids	
fol. 10b	Ottoman lineage	Seljukids and Ismailis	Abbasids	
fol. 11a	Ottoman lineage		Chinggisids	Abbasids
fols 11b–12a	Ottoman lineage		Chinggisids	
fols 12b–13a	Ottoman lineage		x	
fols 13b–16a	–		Ottoman lineage	

Folio 8a includes many minor figures whose names are written in blue and red circles. The usage of colours becomes more intricate on this folio, as the blue circles on the left side represent the Sasanian kings and the red circles on the right side represent Greek rulers and the wise men of Greek and Roman antiquity, such as Aristotle and Ptolemy. The prophetic lineage continues with David and Solomon at

the top and extends to Alexander the Great and Jesus at the bottom-left corner of the folio.[17]

Folio 8b features the portraits of the Prophet Muhammad and the first four caliphs, as well as of the prophet's grandfather ʿAbd al-Muttalib. The right side and the middle of folio 8b are devoted to the ancestors of the Prophet Muhammad and the first four caliphs. The left side is dedicated to the Japhetic genealogy. The lines emanating here trace a path to the Ottoman house. Folio 9a is a detailed representation of the house of the fourth caliph ʿAli b. Abi Talib (d. 40 AH / 661 CE). The Umayyad caliphs are depicted quite modestly, in red circles with no paintings, on the right side of the folio. The top of the folio shows paintings of the children of ʿAli b. Abi Talib, Hasan and Husayn, who are the second and third Twelver-Shiʿi imams, respectively. The lower part is reserved for the paintings of the eighth Twelver-Shiʿi imam ʿAli al-Rida (d. 203/818); al-Shafiʿi (d. 820) and Abu Hanifa (d. 767), the founders of the Shafiʿi and Hanafi legal schools of Sunni Islam; and Abu Muslim al-Khorasani (d. 755), one of the leaders of the Abbasid revolution of 750. On this folio, the author states that the lineage of the Iranian kings has ceased to exist (*münkatiʿ oldu nesl-i müluk-i ʿAcem*). The term 'Iranian kings' refers to the descendants of Anushirvan the Just (*Anushirvan-ı ʿAdil*), whose name is located next to the painting of the Prophet Muhammad, but without any portraiture. Curiously, folio 9b of the *Subhat* depicts Imam Abu Hanifa, founder of the Hanafi school of jurisprudence, with a blue line to Anushirvan. The kingly lineage represented by Anushirvan becomes a prophetic lineage when it converges with a significant Muslim intellectual.

Folios 9b to 11a include the genealogies of various Islamic dynasties, such as the Samanids, Buyids, Ghaznavids, and Khwarazmshahs (see Table 3). Folio 11a takes a very sharp turn in the organizational flow of the text, as here there are two blue lines: the lineages of the Abbasids and the Mongols. The Chinggisid lineage is depicted with a double blue line.[18] In accordance with the overall impact of the Mongols on political discourse in the Middle East, the textual narrative, which

17 This part of the *Subhat*, in my opinion, is the first and most palpable representation of the unity of 'prophecy' and 'universal rule'. The painting of Alexander the Great is painted on the lower part of the page together with the prophets Jesus, Elijah (Yahya), and Zacharias (Zakariyya). Alexander the Great is shown as a prophet-like figure with a holy flame above his head.

18 The use of the double parallel line suggests that the author of the *Subhat* could have modelled his work after Rashid al-Din's *Shuʿab i Panjgana*, in which the main lineage is drawn with two parallel lines (*ʿamud al-nasab* in Rashid al-Din's terminology). However, this explanation seems very unlikely, as we have no evidence to suggest that the author of the *Subhat* had access to the *Shuʿab-i Panjgana*. On the *Shuʿab-i Panjgana* and the pillar of the lineage, see Binbaş 2011, 494.

connects the Chinggisid lineage to the general structure of the diagram, covers the entire top of the page. The Chinggisid lineage starts with Qaidu Khan.[19]

We should note some peculiarities of the Chinggisid lineage in the Subhat. First, instead of following a dynastic-linear pattern, the Subhat skips several major figures in Mongol history. The names of the great khans who ruled over the empire after Chinggis Khan (d. 1247) are not mentioned as part of the main Chinggisid line. Then again, the painting of Tolui Khan (d. 630 AH / 1233 CE), who was never elected as great khan, sits at the top of folio 11b. Obviously, the author claims a clear Toluid standpoint vis-à-vis Mongol history. Only Chinggis Khan's son Tolui and the Ilkhans Hülegü (d. 663 AH / 1265 CE), Ghazan Khan (d. 703 AH / 1304 CE), and Abu Saʿid Bahadur Khan (d. 1335) are visually represented. This genealogical order is usually described as the 'Toluid bias' by historians of the Mongol Empire.[20] Other members of the Chinggisid ruling family are arranged around the main blue line and connected to this main line by curved lines. The last figure in the Chinggisid lineage is the ilkhan Abu Saʿid Bahadur Khan on folio 12a.[21]

After the Mongols, the blue line is discontinued for two pages until the emergence of Orhan Gazi (d. 763 AH / 1362 CE). The following two folios are devoted to the lineage of the Ottomans from Kızıl Buğa Khan through ʿOsman Gazi (d. *c.* 724 AH / 1324 CE) on folios 12b and 13a. The text summarizes the story of ʿOsman Gazi with a special emphasis on the role of the Seljuq family. The blue line resumes with Orhan Gazi on folio 13b. After that point, all the relationships in the Ottoman dynastic family are depicted in blue until Mehmed IV, who is the last Ottoman sultan in the *Subhat*.

19 For a standard Chinggisid genealogy, see Rashid al-Din, *Jamiʿ al-Tawarikh*, ed. Rawshan and Musawi 1373 SH / 1994 CE, 221–283. The Chinggisid genealogy presented by Rashid al-Din goes like this: Alan Qo'a, Bodonchar, Dutum Menen, Qaidu Khan, Tümbine Khan, Qabul Khan, Qutula Qa'an, Bartan Bahadur, Yesügei Bahadur, Temüjin/Chinggis Khan.

20 The 'Toluid bias' is a term referring to a general historical perspective among Mongol historians in Iran and China, where the Toluid branch of the Chinggisid dynasty ruled. Since major chronicles of the Mongol Empire were written in Iran and China, their perspective on the Mongol past reflects the Toluid view of history and ignores the perspectives of other major ruling lineages, most prominently the views of the Jochids, Ögedeids, and Chaghadaids. See Jackson 1978, 188.

21 At the end of this section, the author of the *Subhat* states: 'After Abu Saʿid, there is no independent ruler from the lineage of Chinggis Khan. After that everybody wanted to be king here and there and the lineage of Chinggis Khan ceased to exist.'

3 Prophetic lineage and Ottoman political culture

The first time that the name of the Ottoman dynasty appears in this genealogy is on folio 7a. The author inserts a very short sentence near the line emanating from Koy Khan, son of Numish Khan, reading 'this line goes to the Ottoman dynasty' (*Bu çizi Al-i ʿOsmana çıkar*). At the top of the page, two circles serve as the starting points of the lineages of Japheth and Shem, respectively. On folio 6b, the Japhetic line descends from Afrasiyab, and the Semitic line from Esau, son of the Prophet Isaac. The Japhetic lineage continues with Koy Khan in red, and the Semitic lineage continues with Bashar in blue. Bashar's circle is drawn in blue next to the name of Koy Khan. However, the author does not connect the blue line to the circle of Bashar; rather, the blue line circles around the name of Bashar and, by some miracle, becomes red at the very moment when the line approaches the name of Koy Khan and the beginning of the Ottoman lineage (see Figs 2a–2b). After this change in colour, it turns blue again and continues towards the Prophet Job (Ayub) on the same folio.

In this visual detail of the Subhat, the Ottoman dynastic lineage coming from Japheth converges with a lineage coming from Esau. There is no textual explanation for the colour change, but it is very unlikely that this design feature was arbitrary. There was a well-established genealogical narrative in Ottoman historiography connecting the Ottoman dynasty to Esau, son of Isaac: therefore, the conflation of the Japhetic and Semitic narratives in the *Subhat* must be related to debates among Ottoman historians on the ancestry of the Ottoman dynasty in the early modern period. Although the Japhetic paradigm often connects the Ottoman dynasty to Japheth via another Turkic mythical figure, called Oghuz Khan, Esau was also accepted by some contemporary Ottoman historians as the progenitor of the Ottoman dynasty. The earliest reference to Esau in Ottoman narrative sources is found in the *Saltukname*, a collection of stories about Sarı Saltuk, who was a Muslim Turkic hero in Anatolia and the Balkans. Ebu'l-Hayr i Rumi collected and collated the stories on the order of Cem Sultan, son of Mehmed II, between 1473 and 1480. According to the *Saltukname*, the Ottoman dynasty descended directly from Esau.[22] Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rumi narrates a curious story connecting the Ottomans' Esavitic lineage

22 Rumi, *Şaltuḳ-Nāme*, ed. İz, 1974–1984, Part IV, fols 308b, 310a; Part VI, fol. 528a; idem, *Saltuk-nâme*. ed. Halûk, 1987, vol. 2, pp. 108, 110; vol. 3, 238. Rumi says in another place that Bosnians, who are described in the text as a people with a fair complexion, are also descendants of Esau. This is certainly a reference to a narrative in which Esau is considered the ancestor of the Blonde Race (*Banu al-Asfar*) in the Islamic apocalyptic narratives. See Rumi, *Şaltuḳ-Nāme*, ed. İz, 1974–1984, Part I, fol. 48b; idem, *Saltuk-nâme*, ed. Halûk 1987, vol. 1, 78. See also Aydoğan 2017, 123.

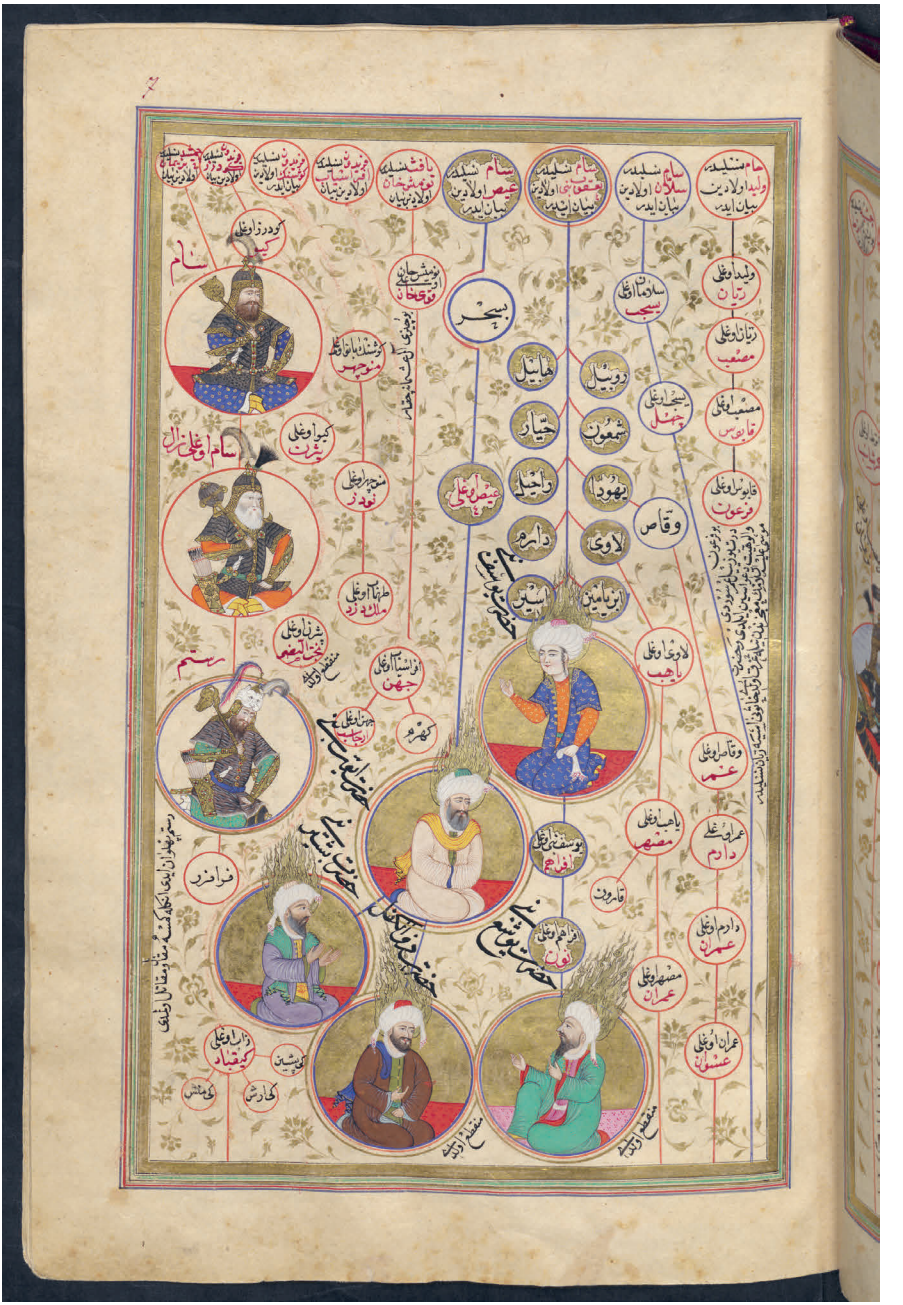

Fig. 2a: Ottoman genealogy and the inscription that announces the Ottoman dynasty. Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Ms. A.F. 50, fol. 7a; © Österreichische Nationalbibliothek.

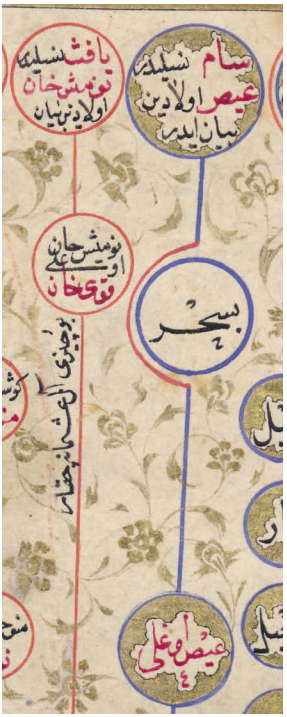

Fig. 2b: Detail of Fig. 2a. Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Ms. A.F. 50, fol. 7a; © Österreichische Nationalbibliothek.

with their claims to kingship. When Sarı Saltuk comes to Sinop, the people there protest his extreme reverence for ʿOsman I, founder of the Ottoman dynasty. The conversation that takes place between the protesters and Sarı Saltuk is relevant for our purposes:

> This is a tribal leader and a holy warrior, not a king (*padishah*), but you are giving him advice as if he were a king. The hero (Sarı Saltuk – EB) said: 'Oh people! This young man (ʿOsman) is a scion of the kings. He is a descendant of Esau, son of Isaac, son of Abraham (peace be upon them!). ʿOsman came from Esau. Three Prophets blessed this lineage. The first one is the Prophet Abraham, the second is the Prophet Isaac, and the third is the prophet of the latter days, Muhammad Mustafa (peace and prayer be upon them!). Therefore, the kings who ruled in this world have come from this lineage. Then, God most exalted shall give kingship (*sultanlık*) to this young man and his descendants and his lineage shall become (*olısar*) great sultans.[23]

23 See Rumi, *Şaltuḳ-Nāme*, ed. İz 1974–1984, Part IV, fol. 310a; Rumi, *Saltuk-Nâme*, ed. Akalın 1987, vol. 2, p. 110. The use of the *-iser*/*-ısar* suffix in the verb of the final sentence, *olısar*, is significant. This future tense suffix was used in certain Turkic languages until the end of the sixteenth century, but then disappeared. It was already a rare and unusual grammatical form by the fifteenth century, and its use was often related to prognostications and foretelling about the political and social events of the future. For a survey of the relevant literature, see Yıldız 2013, 29–46.

After this brief reference to the Esavitic narrative, there are longer and more detailed references to Esau in several dynastic chronicles. The earliest is the Oxford Anonymous, which was written for the Ottoman sultan Bayezid II, brother of Cem Sultan, in 1484, just a few years after the composition of the *Saltukname*. It includes a lengthy section on the story of Jacob and Esau and then appends the Ottoman dynastic genealogy in the following manner:

> Ertuğrul, son of Selman Shah [...] Gökalp, son of Oghuz, son of Kaz Khan, son of Koy Khan, which corresponds to Esau in the Coptic language. Esau is the son of Isaac, who is a descendant of Shem, son of Noah. According to one account, Koy Khan does not refer to Esau, but to one of the sons of Japheth, the son of Noah.[24]

The Oxford Anonymous does not exclude the Japhetic paradigm. It states at the beginning that the Ottomans descended from Kayı Khan, son of Oghuz Khan, but the Oghuz narrative is much shorter and lacks many of the details that we find in other texts highlighting the Oghuz ancestry of the Ottoman dynasty.[25] Although the Oxford Anonymous was mistakenly attributed to another historian, called Ruhi (early sixteenth century), current scholarship considers the Oxford Anonymous an independent chronicle. Yet Ruhi's text also includes a reference to Esau. In Ruhi's narrative, which is very close to that of the Oxford Anonymous, Esau goes to Turkistan after quarrelling with his brother Jacob, and there his descendants multiply. Some Oghuz tribesmen from the line of Kayı Khan, son of Oghuz Khan, come to Ahlat in Eastern Anatolia under the pressure of the Tatars.[26] The Kurdish historian Idris-i Bidlisi (d. 1520) copied the same narrative in his *Hasht Bihisht*. Written in an ornate Persian, the *Hasht Bihisht* is the first true Ottoman dynastic chronicle to narrate the history of the first eight Ottoman sultans, hence its title, *Eight Paradises*. Following the Oxford Anonymous, Idris-i Bidlisi states that the ancestor of the Ottoman dynasty was Oghuz Khan, but he also connects Oghuz Khan to Esau in a very complicated narrative plot. According to him, the genealogy of Oghuz Khan goes back to Esau:

> According to some historians, the branches of the lineages of humans, sovereigns, and the kings of the East, especially the khans of the tribes of Turkistan, and the khaqans, who currently rule over most of the world, especially in the Eastern and Northern countries, and some [parts of] Iran, and the Ottoman dynasty, which is the conqueror of lands, all of them are kings, and they are all descendants of Oghuz Khan. Oghuz is the ancestor of Turkish sov-

24 Yücel and Cengiz 1989–1992, 375; Kastritsis 2017, 61–62. I have modified Kastritsis's translation above. The attribution of this text to the Ottoman historian Ruhi by Yücel and Cengiz is incorrect. For further discussion and references, see Ménage 1964, 11–14.

25 For a survey of the late medieval and early modern narratives on Oghuz Khan, see Binbaş 2010.

26 Berlin, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Ruhi, *Tevarih-i Al-i ʿOsman*, Ms. or. quart. 821, fols 11b–12a.

> ereigns and the seal of the khaqans and khans. According to the opinion of these historians, the lineage of Oghuz Khan goes back to Esau, son of Isaac, in two steps, and his name is Qayi Khan in Turkish.[27]

Idris-i Bidlisi merges the Japhetic and Semitic paradigms in his reconstruction of the Ottoman genealogy by referring to Esau as Qayi Khan. The paradigm of dual ancestry is reflected in the work of another influential Ottoman historian, Ibn Kemal (d. 1534), who was also an eminent legal scholar and the grand mufti of Istanbul in the early years of the reign of Süleyman the Lawgiver:

> According to a well-known and more conspicuous tradition, Qayi Khan is Esau, son of Isaac. The origin of his pedigree reaches back to Shem, son of Noah; however, according to another opinion, the genealogy of his illustrious ancestors goes back uninterruptedly to Japheth, son of Noah. However that may be, the grace and fortune of this garden of flowers of justice are due to the prophetic dynasty, which is the abode of the heavenly springs.[28]

Ibn Kemal's position adds another dimension to the debate by emphasizing the lineage itself. In other words, according to Ibn Kemal, it does not matter who the ancestor is, since all the lineages go back to Adam. Instead, the nature of the lineage is the crucial issue. In his solution, the Ottoman lineage is a prophetic lineage, which is divinely mandated through the progeny of all prophets.

Other Ottoman historians, however, categorically reject the Semitic narrative and promote the Japhetic paradigm. One of the chief representatives of the opposing party was the Ottoman historian Neşri (d. before 1520), who claimed that the mythical ancestor of the Ottomans, Oghuz Khan, descended directly from Japheth.

> The engineers of the edifices of life stories and the reminders of the secret meanings have related that the glorious lineage [of the Ottoman dynasty] goes back to Oghuz, son of Kara Han, who was a descendant of Bulcas, son of Japheth, son of Noah (peace be upon him!), in the following manner: Ertuğrul, son of Süleyman Şah [...] Gök Alp, son of Oğuz, son of Kara Han, son of Zib Takoy, son of Bulcas, son of Japheth, son of Noah (peace be upon him!). Some say that when they say Kara Han, they mean Esau. Oğuz Khan was the son of Esau, son of Isaac, son of Abraham (peace be upon him!), but they made a mistake, because Esau was the ancestor of Lesser Rome, which was the Second Rome. He is from the lineage of Arfakhshad, son of Shem.[29]

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27 Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Idris-i Bidlisi, Hasht Bihisht, Ayasofya 3541, fol. 17a; [Akkaya] 1934, 29. There are now two excellent monographs on Idris-i Bidlisi and his intellectual persona: see Markiewicz 2019; Genç 2019.

28 Ibn Kemal, *Tevârih-i Âl-i Osman: I. Defter*, ed. Turan 1970, 39.

29 Neşrî, *Cihânnümâ*, ed. Öztürk 2013, 28.

In an excellent article on the Esavitic narrative in Ottoman historiography, Hiroyuki Ogasawara suggests that after Idris-i Bidlisi, only Seyyid Lokman, a court historian who died after 1601, and Mustafa ʿAli, a renowned Ottoman historian (who composed one of the most famous Ottoman universal chronicles, titled *Künhü'l-Ahbar*), mention Esau as the ancestor of the Ottoman dynasty. Mustafa ʿAli cites Neşri to refute the Esavitic narrative.[30] However, references to the Esavitic narrative appear to have continued well into the late seventeenth century. For instance, Vani Mehmed Efendi (d. 1685), an influential scholar and preacher during the reign of the Ottoman sultan Mehmed IV, alludes to the Esavitic narrative in his Quranic commentary, titled *ʿAra'is al-Qur'an*. Vani Mehmed was an enthusiastic proponent of holy war, and he was particularly supportive of the Ottoman conquest of Vienna. In his commentary, he refers to the conquest of Constantinople in 1453 and argues that the Ottomans are predestined to conquer the land of Rum – land formerly controlled by the Byzantine Empire. The proof of this predestination is the conquest of Constantinople, a historical event that was predicted by the Prophet Muhammad. In this divine plan of events, Turks are the descendants of the Prophet Isaac. However, Vani Mehmed does not refute the more famous narrative, which connects the Ottomans to Oghuz Khan, a descendant of Japheth, but instead offers a noteworthy solution. According to him, Oghuz Khan is the Quranic figure Dhu al-Qarnayn, who is often interpreted as Alexander the Great in Islamic prophetology. He further suggests that Oghuz Khan was a contemporary of the Prophet Abraham. Therefore, he concludes, the Ottomans were the descendants of Japheth from their father's side and Isaac from their mother's side. It is important to note that Vani Mehmed does not mention Esau in his narrative; he refers only to the Prophet Isaac.[31]

The brief survey on the Esavitic narrative demonstrates that Ottoman historians played with two different genealogical narratives referring to two different ancestors, Japheth and Esau, and the author and painter of the *Subhat* appear to have been very well aware of this debate that took place in the sixteenth century.

4 The dual nature of politics

What was really at stake when Ottoman historians discussed Esau as an ancestor of the Ottoman dynasty? Although the Oghuz Khan narrative is very well known to

30 Ogasawara 2017, 53; Mustafa ʿAli, *Künhü'l-Ahbar*, 1861–1869, vol. 5, 19.

31 Istanbul Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Vani Mehmed Efendi, *ʿAra'is al-Qur'an*, Yeni Cami 100, fol. 544b. For a discussion of this curious passage and a translation into Turkish, see Pazarbaşı, 1997, 197.

students of the Ottoman dynasty, the Esau narrative has not attracted much attention until recently. For modern historiography, the debate on Esau was in fact triggered by a short exchange on early Ottoman historiography between J. H. Mordtmann (1852–1932) and Paul Wittek (1894–1978) in the 1920s, which culminated in Paul Wittek's influential rejection of Ottoman genealogical narratives as reliable historical sources in his famous book titled *The Rise of the Ottoman Empire* in 1938. Wittek was well aware of the competing genealogical narratives, including the Esavitic narrative. He thought that the Oghuz Khan narrative was historically significant, because it was part of the ideological scaffolding that Ottoman intellectuals constructed as the dynasty recovered from the disastrous confrontation with the Central Asian warlord Timur (Tamerlane) at the Battle of Ankara in 1402, but he dismissed other narratives as the inventions of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century historians.[32] For various historiographical reasons – Wittek's forceful promotion of the Japhetic Oghuz narrative and the prevalence of nationalist historiographies in the twentieth century, among others – the Esavitic narrative was by and large ignored by scholars until the late 1980s, when Barbara Flemming and Stefanos Yerasimos brought it back into discussion. More recently, Hiroyuki Ogasawara and Ali Anooshahr have highlighted the importance of this narrative in Ottoman political discourse.[33] However, before we go into how the narrative should be interpreted, let us summarize the main elements of the Esavitic narrative and the roles of the twins Esau and Jacob.

According to the Book of Genesis in the Hebrew Bible, Esau is the Prophet Isaac's son and the Prophet Jacob's twin brother.[34] Esau is red-haired, very hairy, and a skilful hunter. He lives in the open country. Jacob, on the other hand, is a very quiet man and lives among the tents (Gen. 25:24–28). Isaac has a taste for wild game (Gen. 25:28). In his old age, Isaac's sight deteriorates and he can no longer see. He asks Esau to bring him wild game. He further says: 'Prepare me the kind of tasty food I like and bring it to me to eat, so that I may give you my blessing before I die.' Esau goes to the open country to find what his father desires (Gen. 27:1–5). Isaac favours Esau, but Rebecca loves Jacob (Gen. 25:28). She overhears this conversation and asks Jacob to bring two choice young goats so that she can prepare what Isaac

32 Wittek 1925, 97–100; Wittek 2012, 38–43. Wittek takes the Oghuz genealogy more seriously, as he thinks it might include a real historical reference in its kernel, but to him the Esavitic narrative is just an 'Arabic' genealogical tree (p. 39). For further discussion on this topic, see Woods 1999, 173–182; Kafadar 1995, 96–97; Binbaş 2010. It is very unfortunate that Hiroyuki Ogasawara's detailed philological study on early Ottoman genealogical narratives, in Japanese, is not available in a language that I can read. For future reference, see Ogasawara 2014.

33 Flemming 1988, 134–137; Yerasimos 1990, 198–199; Ogasawara 2017.

34 Biblical translations are from *The New Oxford Annotated Bible. New Revised Standard Version with the Apocrypha*, 3rd edn, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

wants. Then she says: 'Then take it to your father to eat, so that he may give you his blessing before he dies' (Gen. 27: 6–10). Jacob, however, is not sure about his mother's plan because of the hairy body of his brother. He says that if his father touches him, he will notice that he is not Esau, and this in turn will bring a curse instead of a blessing (Gen. 27:11–12). Rebecca gives Esau's clothes to Jacob, and Jacob covers his hands with goatskin so as to resemble his hairy brother. Jacob takes the food to his startled father, who wonders how Esau could prepare the game so quickly. Isaac touches Jacob and says: 'The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau' (Gen. 27:22). Isaac eats the food and drinks the wine and asks his son to kiss him. He smells Esau on his clothes, and says:

> Ah, the smell of my son is like the smell of a field that the Lord has blessed. May God give you of the dew of heaven, of the fatness of the earth, and plenty of grain and wine. Let peoples serve you, and nations bow down to you. Be lord over your brothers, and may your mother's sons bow down to you. Cursed be everyone who curses you, and blessed be everyone who blesses you. (Gen. 27:27–29)

When Esau returns and learns that his brother has stolen his blessing, he grows very angry and asks his father to bless him, too. Isaac says:

> See, away from the fatness of the earth shall your home be, and away from the dew of heaven on high. By your sword you shall live, and you shall serve your brother; but when you break loose, you shall break his yoke from your neck. (Gen. 27:39–40)

In the rest of the narrative as told in the Hebrew Bible, Jacob becomes the ancestor of the Israelites, and Esau becomes the ancestor of the Edomites, as had been planned by God all along (Gen. 25:23). This aspect of the narrative played a crucial role in the development of Islamic narratives on Esau and Jacob. Islamic narratives of biblical prophets (*Isra'iliyat*) embraced this story and repeated it, often almost verbatim, but with some changes and alterations. One of the most important changes in the narrative is the fact that while Jacob becomes the ancestor of the prophets, Esau becomes the ancestor of the Rum, or Romans, and later Greeks, and his descendants were called Banu al-Asfar, 'Sons of the Red One' or the 'Blonde Race'. The Banu al-Asfar played a significant role in Islamic apocalyptic narratives, according to which the apocalypse and the final hour will not come until Muslims conquer Constantinople, followed by a counterattack by the Blonde Race against the conquering Muslim army.[35]

35 The narratives on Esau in Islamic literatures have not yet been properly studied, but we can tentatively suggest that the Islamic narratives were deeply influenced by the Jewish and also perhaps Christian narratives on Esau. See the article 'Aṣfar' in *EI*^{2}, vol. 1, 687–688 (I. Goldzieher); Cohen 1991, 324–325.

Barbara Flemming and Stefanos Yerasimos centre their analysis on this particular element. The Esavitic narrative surfaced in Ottoman genealogical discourse when the Ottoman political, administrative, and literary elite were still trying to come to terms with the massive reverberations of the conquest of Constantinople in 1453. Constantinople was not just another name on the list of cities that they had conquered; rather, it symbolized the transformation of the Ottoman polity from a regional power in the Balkans and western Anatolia into a highly sophisticated state apparatus with universalist political ambitions. As far as the Ottomans were concerned, they had conquered the city of Rome – or the Second Rome, depending on one's perspective – but they were the uncontestable inheritors of the Roman Empire, and the clock of the Apocalypse had just made a big leap.

Needless to say, there were many among the Ottoman ruling elite – especially the warriors and their supporters who protected the Balkan borders and launched razzias into neighbouring polities – who were unhappy about the overextension of the sultan's power.[36] In other words, there were pro-imperialist and anti-imperialist factions in the Ottoman elite. The anti-imperialist faction expressed its dissatisfaction through stories that relied on biblical narratives or imagined the destruction of the third temple, the Hagia Sophia, in Constantinople. If the creation of a new Roman Empire was analogous to the reconstruction of Solomon's temple in the capital Constantinople, then that temple had to fall in order to rein in the empire's power.

Flemming, and more pronouncedly Yerasimos, have contextualized the Esavitic Ottoman genealogy in this intellectual environment of competing ideologies in the post-conquest period. Yerasimos has suggested that the Esau narrative was inserted in Ottoman dynastic genealogy by those who harboured pro-imperialist sympathies. Neither Flemming nor Yerasimos is entirely sure how the Esavitic narrative would enable an imperialist ideology, but they have located the discourse squarely in the imperialist camp vis-à-vis those narratives that criticize the Ottoman imperial ideal.[37] Hiroyuki Ogasawara, on the other hand, has expressed doubts about the Esavitic narrative's eschatological and imperialistic underpinnings: he has argued that the prophetic tradition (*hadith*) that prognosticated the conquest of Constantinople as a sign of the end times is not mentioned as part of the Esavitic narratives. Rather, Ogasawara argues, the narrative was related to how some Ottoman intellectuals understood the notion of kingship. Esau must have been considered superior to Japheth: he was the son of a prophet, hence providing a stronger basis of legitimacy for a dynasty that had been rapidly expanding in regions formerly controlled

36 For a detailed account of this transformation in Ottoman history, see Kafadar 1995, 118–154 (esp. 151–154).

37 Flemming 1988, 134–137; Yerasimos 1990, 198–199.

by various other Muslim dynasties. Ultimately, Ogasawara develops a utilitarian approach in which the idea of the 'divine rights of kings' is the main thrust behind the Esavitic narrative in Ottoman chronicles.[38]

Ali Anooshahr has interpreted Idris-i Bidlisi's narrative as an attempt to reconcile different political cultures, one Central Asian and the other Islamic. According to him, the Esavitic narrative is first and foremost an Islamic narrative that has its roots in the Quran, and Idris-i Bidlisi was well aware of this. *Quran* 45:16 says, 'And indeed We gave the Children of Israel the Book, judgement (*al-hukm*), and prophethood (*al-nubuwwa*), and We provided them with good things, and We favoured them above the worlds.' Idris-i Bidlisi also cites *Quran* 4:54: 'We gave the House of Abraham the Book and Wisdom (*al-hikma*), and We granted them a mighty sovereignty (*mulk*^{an} *azim*^{an})'.[39] For Anooshahr, Idris-i Bidlisi's main concern was first and foremost to bring the Ottoman dynasty into the framework of these two Quranic verses. He observes, quite accurately in my opinion, that Idris-i Bidlisi's main intention was to elevate the status of the Ottoman dynasty to the level of the prophets. Furthermore, just like Jacob and Esau reconcile at the end of the narrative in Idris-i Bidlisi's version, the Ottoman dynasty represents the reconciliation between the Central Asian and Islamic political cultures.[40]

I would like to propose a different approach in this article. My analysis takes its cue from Ogasawara's work in the sense that the Esavitic narrative was related to the development of political ideas in the Ottoman Empire, but instead of the theory of the divine rights of kings, I argue that the Esavitic narrative may be related to how the sacrality of political authority was constituted in Ottoman political discourse. One point I would like to highlight is the fact that the above-mentioned scholars put their focus on the figure of Esau and his position in the genealogy of the Ottoman dynasty. However, neither Esau's position nor his relationship with his father Isaac or brother Jacob changes in these narratives. Instead, the crucial point in the Esavitic narrative is what Isaac gives to Jacob and Esau. A brief look at the different versions of the story written before the Ottomans should provide a better understanding of this narrative.

As Yerasimos has observed, the Ottoman Esavitic narratives rely on a framework that first took shape in the tenth century, above all in al-Tabari's (d. 923) universal chronicle. Al-Tabari introduces Isaac and his family in these words:

38 Ogasawara 2017, 50–51.

39 *Quran* 45:16; 4:54 (pp. 216–217, 1221–1222).

40 Anooshahr 2018, 35–50.

> We will now return to the discussion of Isaac b. Abraham and of his wives and descendants, since after the Persians no nation except for them has a continuous, unbroken history. This is because the Persian kings continued in unbroken succession from the days of Jayumart [...] until they vanished with the coming of the best nation brought forth from humanity, the nation of our prophet Muhammad. *Prophecy and kingship* [my emphasis – EB] continued in an unbroken succession in Syria and its environs among the children of Israel b. Isaac [i.e. the children of Jacob – EB], until those things vanished from among them with the coming of the Persians and Byzantines after John b. Zacharias and after Jesus b. Mary.[41]

Al-Tabari sets the leitmotiv of the narrative as the continuity of *prophecy and kingship* in the lineage of the Prophet Isaac. But the question is: Which progeny of Isaac should we follow in order to understand the relationship between prophecy and kingship? According to the biblical narrative and the subsequent Islamic prophetology, Esau and Jacob were twins, and the rivalry between these two brothers was a matter of debate among medieval authors. Let us follow al-Tabari's narrative at this point:

> As the two boys grew up, Esau was more loved by his father while Jacob was more loved by his mother. Esau was a hunter, and when Isaac grew old and blind, he said to Esau, 'O my son! Feed me some game, and draw near me so that I may invoke a prayer over you which my father did for me.' Esau was a hairy man while Jacob was a hairless man. Esau went forth seeking game, and his mother, who had overheard the conversation, said to Jacob, 'O my son! Go to the flocks and slaughter a sheep therefrom, then roast it and dress yourself in its skin. Then go and present it to your father, and say you are Esau.' Jacob did that, and when he came he said, 'O my father, eat!' His father asked, 'Who are you?' He said, 'I am your son, Esau.' Isaac felt him and said, 'The touch is that of Esau, but the smell is that of Jacob.' His mother said, 'He is your son Esau, so pray for him.' Isaac said, 'Present your food.' Jacob presented it and Isaac ate of it, then said, 'Come closer.' Jacob drew near him, and Isaac prayed that *prophets and kings should be appointed from among his offspring* [my emphasis – EB]. After Jacob left, Esau came and said, 'I have brought the game as you ordered me to do.' Isaac said, 'O my son! Your brother Jacob preceded you.' Esau became angry and said, 'By God! I shall surely kill him.' Isaac said, 'O my son, a prayer is left for you. Come here and I will invoke it for you.' Then he prayed for Esau, saying, 'May your offspring be as numerous as the dust and may no one rule them but themselves.'[42]

In al-Tabari's narrative, Jacob's progeny unites prophecy and kingship. It is not surprising to find different versions of a story with such significant political associations in later narrative sources. For instance, in the *Qisas al-Anbiya'* by al-Rabghuzi (*fl.* 1310), the story is initially very similar to al-Tabari's account. Isaac craves game and asks Esau to bring it to him. Rebecca overhears the conversation, and then Jacob dresses as Esau and brings the meat to Isaac, but the concluding part of the narrative diverges from al-Tabari significantly:

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41 Al-Tabari, *The History of al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 2., tr. Brinner 1987, 133; Yerasimos 1990, 198.

42 Al-Tabari, *The History of al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 2., trans. Brinner 1987, 133; Yerasimos 1990, 137–138.

> Jacob put on the sheepskin and went inside. He said: 'Here, father! I have brought the roast game.' Isaac ate the mutton. Jacob said: 'I have come to ask for the benediction.' Isaac took Jacob's hand and when he felt the skin, he exclaimed: […] 'The flesh is Esau's, but the voice is Jacob's voice.' He then pronounced this benediction: 'May your progeny become prophets and be good and pious.' The almighty Lord granted Isaac's prayer on behalf of Jacob. After that Esau returned from hunting, bringing meat. And he asked for the benediction. Isaac said: 'You were already here, and I have blessed you.' Esau said: 'I have not been here.' Isaac said: 'Oh Esau, Jacob has played this trick on you, together with his mother.' Thereupon Isaac blessed Esau, but it did not have the force of conferring prophethood. For this reason a feud arose between Esau and Jacob. Isaac feared the feud between them and sent Esau to the land of Rum. The Greeks are all descendants of Esau. Because of Isaac's benediction, all the prophets descended from Jacob's family line.[43]

Thus, the gist of the story is that Jacob receives the legacy of prophecy, and Esau the land of Rum. In terms of the prophetic lineage, al-Rabghuzi and al-Tabari do not differ from each other: both attribute prophecy to Jacob's lineage. In terms of the kingly lineage, however, al-Rabghuzi has a more ambiguous attitude, as he does not make any reference to a kingly lineage in his narrative. Rather, he connects the progeny of Esau with the Greeks, which was not an uncommon attribution among medieval authors.

In al-Rabghuzi's account, one still feels the ambiguity of the post-Mongol political environment of the fourteenth century, when the caliph, as the only legitimate inheritor of the prophetic lineage, was gone, but the Mongol dynasty, as the sole political authority in the western part of the Islamic world, had yet to reach a level of recognition and acceptance that would allow them to influence the discourse of a prophetic narrative, such as the one presented by al-Rabghuzi. If we put it in another way, al-Rabghuzi chose to exclude any reference to kings and rulers from the narrative, despite the fact that he presented his book to a Mongol prince, Toq Buqa, in 709 AH / 1310 CE. Whatever al-Rabghuzi's personal motivations were, his narrative marks the beginning of a split in the definition of religious and political authority as defined in genealogical terms.

In the Oxford Anonymous, this story takes a different turn. The anonymous author reiterates the basic plot: Isaac sends Esau out hunting, but Jacob receives the benediction thanks to his mother Rebecca's intervention. Isaac tells Jacob: 'O God! For the sake of the glory and greatness of Your divinity and grandeur, may all messengers and prophets (*mürsel ve nebi*) who appear from this time onward be from among this man's [Jacob's – EB] sons.'[44] When Esau returns and gives the meat

43 Al-Rabghuzi, *The Stories of the Prophets*, ed. Boeschoten, Vandamme and Tezcan, vol. 1, 108–109 (text); vol. 2, 134–135 (trans.).

44 Yücel and Cengiz 1989–1992, 372; Kastritsis 2017, 57.

to his father, Isaac regrets that the benediction went to Jacob, and gives political authority to his older son:

> The Prophet Isaac (peace and prayers be upon him!) said, 'That prayer was supposed to be yours, but it fell upon Jacob. Once by God's will the arrow of prayer has joined the target of response, it cannot be reversed. But let me make a prayer for you as well, so that your sons and descendants may enjoy a comfortable condition and be honoured and exalted.' He raised his hand and said, 'O God! By virtue of Your perfect power, may all future padishahs, beys, and champions be from among this man's sons.'[45]

In the Oxford Anonymous, prophethood and kingship are divided between the descendants of Jacob and Esau. Idris-i Bidlisi follows the same narrative template. According to him, Isaac prayed for the investiture of prophethood in the progeny of Jacob, and the investiture of worldly power, government, and political leadership in the progeny of Esau.[46] Mustafa ʿAli also divides kingship and prophethood between the descendants of Esau and Jacob.[47] Yet we should also observe that the narrative becomes much shorter and more simplified from the late fifteenth to the late sixteenth century. We can tabulate the sources discussed above in the following manner (see Table 4):

Table 4: Esau and Jacob in Islamic and Ottoman historical narratives.

	Al-Tabari	**Al-Rabghuzi**	**The Oxford Anonymous, Ruhi**	**Idris-i Bidlisi**	**Mustafa ʿAli**
Jacob	Prophethood and kingship	Prophethood	Prophethood	Prophethood	Prophethood
Esau	Numerous offspring, independent rule	Land of Rum, ancestor of Greeks	Kingship	Kingship	Kingship

The basic theme of this narrative is very similar to the semantic differentiation of blue and red, namely, the separation of prophethood and kingship, in the *Subhat*.

Let us now return to the second Koy Khan, whose connection to Aaron and Moses we had found difficult to explain. As discussed above, there were conflicting views on the identity of Koy Khan. For instance, the Oxford Anonymous suggests that the

45 Yücel and Cengiz 1989–1992, 372; Kastritsis 2017, 57. I have slightly revised Kastritsis's translation. Ruhi's narrative is no different from that of the Oxford Anonymous. See Berlin, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Ruhi, *Tevarih i Al i ʿOsman*, Ms. or. quart. 821, fols 7b–8a.

46 Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Idris-i Bidlisi, *Hasht Bihisht*, Ayasofya 3541, fol. 18a.

47 Mustafa ʿAli, *Künhü'l-Ahbar*, 1861–1869, vol. 5, 18.

name Koy Khan may refer to Esau or a descendant of Japheth. If we assume that the *Subhat* includes both Koy Khans presented by the Oxford Anonymous, we should have a direct connection between the second Koy Khan and the Prophet Ezekiel, whose painting is found at the bottom of folio 7a. However, the inscription near the painting of Ezekiel reads that his lineage does not continue (*munkatiʿ oldu*). The same is true for Yushaʿ, the other prophetic figure at the end of folio 7a. The only blue line that continues from folio 7a to 7b is the line of Salaman, but that line is not connected to Koy Khan in the blue line. Salaman's line eventually reaches the Prophet Muhammad. Therefore, the blue line that connects Aaron and the Prophet Moses to Koy Khan is a completely new line that starts on folio 7b. This line eventually reaches the Prophets Daniel and Samuel. The *Subhat* does not depict the descendants of these two prophets, but the Prophet Daniel is located on the red line that eventually reaches the Ottoman dynasty. In conclusion, the *Subhat* endorses the Ottoman dynasty's dual lineage, one prophetic and one kingly, on folio 7b as well (see Figs 3a–3b).

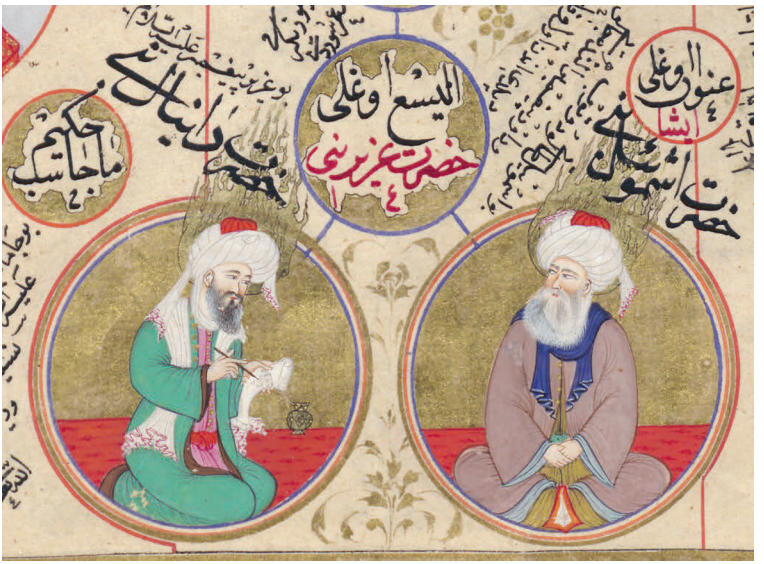

Fig. 3a: Detail of Fig. 3b. The prophets Daniel and Samuel. The Prophet Daniel is connected to both blue and red lines. Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Ms. A.F. 50, fol. 7b; © Österreichische Nationalbibliothek.

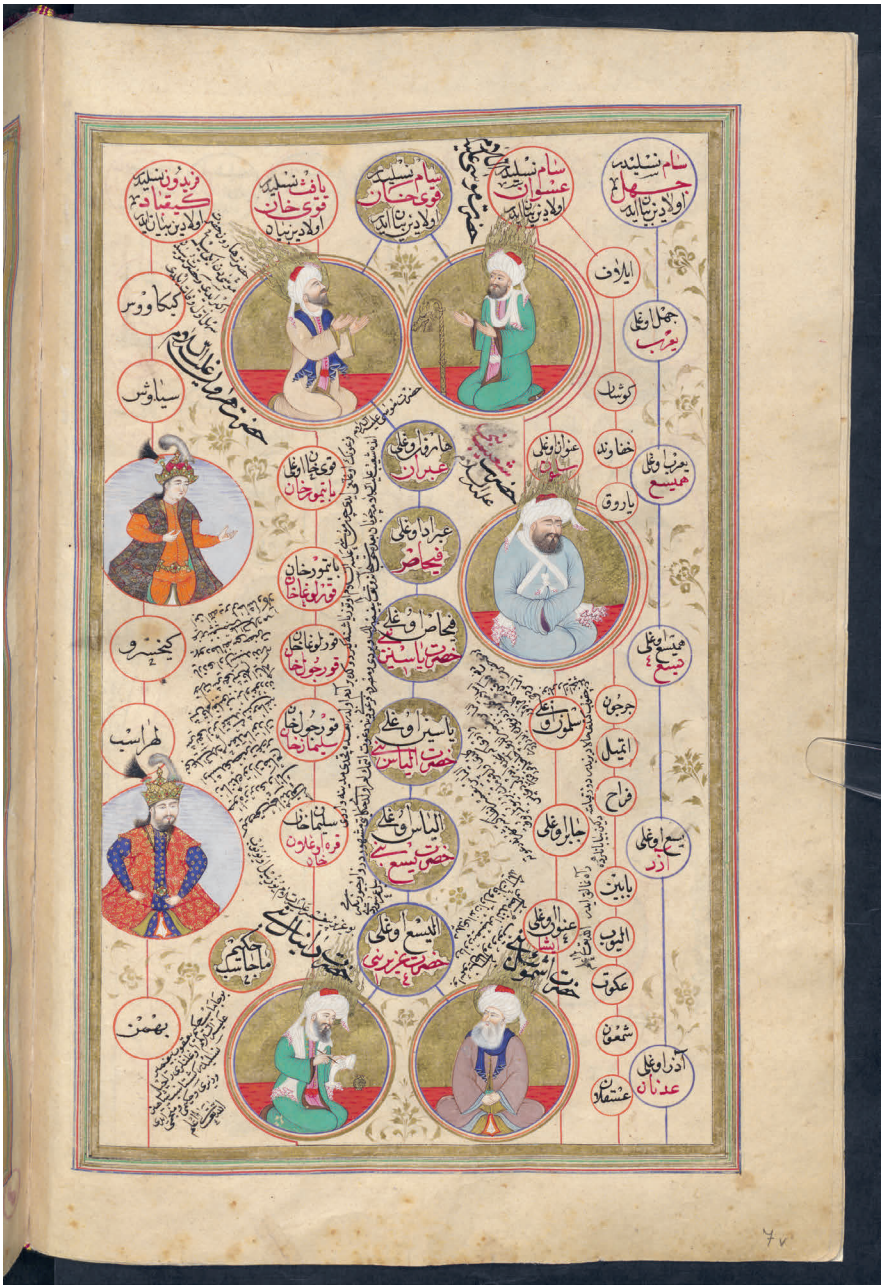

Fig. 3b: The Prophet Daniel on the left and Samuel on the right on folio 7b. Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Ms. A.F. 50, fol. 7b; © Österreichische Nationalbibliothek.

Mirroring dualist political authority in genealogical imagery and reconstructing it in a world-historical framework is not an unprecedented discursive tool in Islamic history. As early as the eighth century, the Umayyad caliph Yazid b. al-Walid b. ʿAbd al-Malik (r. 126/744) stated, 'I am the descendant of the Persian emperor, my forefather was Marwan, and both the Emperor of Byzantium and the Khaqan of the Turks were my ancestors.'[48] I believe the most relevant comparison, however, would be to the *Nasihat al-muluk*, which is a work in the mirror-for-princes genre and considered to have been written by the late eleventh-/early twelfth-century Muslim philosopher and theologian Muhammad al-Ghazali (d. 1111 CE). In this work, al-Ghazali articulates a form of dual kingship conceived in genealogical terms. Al-Ghazali says:

> It was narrated in the histories that Adam had many sons, but he chose two of them: Seth and Kayumars. He gave forty pages from the pages of great books to them so that they would behave accordingly. Then, he delegated to Seth the business of that world and looking after religion. He delegated to Kayumars the business of this world and kingship.[49]

Al-Ghazali divides religious and political authority between two brothers. Adam confers prophethood and religious authority on Seth, and kingship on Kayumars. His proposition is an attempt to find a resolution to a very real problem: the relationship between religion and political authority. By the time of al-Ghazali, politics had long been dominated by military warlords or local dynasties, rather than the Abbasid caliphs, who were supposed to be the only legitimate sovereigns over the community of believers.[50] These warlords and local dynasties tried to legitimize their rule with mythical or semi-historical genealogies going back to Iranian kings and heroes or Arab tribes other than the Quraysh, the tribe of the Prophet Muhammad and all subsequent caliphs.[51] Al-Ghazali formulated a balance among different

48 Muhammad b. Habib al-Baghdadi, *Kitab al-Muhabbar*, ed. Lichtenstädter 1361 AH / 1942 CE, 31, quoted in Bosworth 1973, 53.

49 Al Ghazali, *Nasihat al-Muluk*, ed. Jalal al-Din Huma'i 1361 SH / 1982 CE, 84–88. It has been argued that the *Nasihat al-Muluk* is either partially or entirely part of a huge pseudo-Ghazalian literature. Patricia Crone has suggested that the first part of the book, which is 'the treatise on the faith', was definitely written by al-Ghazali, but the second part, the 'mirror-for-princes' section – which is actually the part most relevant to this paper – was written by somebody close to the vizier Nizam al-Mulk (d. 485 AH / 1092 CE). In any case, this is irrelevant for my purposes, because shortly after al-Ghazali's death in 1111 CE, the book was translated into Arabic, and the Arabic translation includes both sections of the book, attributing both to al-Ghazali without any doubt of their authorship. See Crone 1987, 169 and 190. The *Nasihat al-Muluk* was used by Ottoman genealogists as well: the *Silsile-name*, which is in the Library of the General Directorate of Foundations (Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü), lists the *Nasihat al-Muluk* as one of its sources. See Bayram 1981, 280.

50 Woods 1999, 4.

51 Clifford Bosworth's article adduces many examples from Iranian dynasties, such as the Tahirids, Saffarids, and Samanids. See Bosworth 1973, 51–60.

political positions, i.e. caliphal and sultanic authority.[52] Hence, the phrase *al-din wa-l-dawla taw'aman* ('religion and state are twins') became common parlance among Islamic political thinkers.[53] In this understanding, political authority and religion are inseparable – two faces of a single coin. Religion means a fundamental contract between God and men, and it is incumbent upon men to believe in the unity of God. However, political authority is important, because without it, we cannot attain happiness.[54]

The visual discourse of the *Subhat* responds to this line of thought, though the *Subhat* associates Seth with Cainan – thus changing the balance proposed previously by al-Ghazali – and favours prophethood over kingship. In the *Subhat*, Seth is Kayumars's great uncle. Nevertheless, the duality persists throughout the book until the emergence of the Ottoman Dynasty.

In the *Subhat*, the entire work rests on the idea that prophetic authority (blue line) supersedes and absorbs kingly authority (red line). It includes a linear succession of three lineages that were respected in the early modern period, namely the prophets and caliphs, the Chinggisids, and the Ottomans. The connection with the Chinggisids attests to the importance of the Chinggisid lineage, according to which only a Chinggisid can claim universal sovereignty. Similarly, by connecting the Ottomans with the caliphs, the author justifies the claim that the Ottomans were the true sovereigns of the Islamic community. However, the ideological framework of the *Subhat* goes beyond these two levels to include the prophetic lineage. The Ottoman sultans, according to the *Subhat*, are the true successors of the prophets, hence creating the impression that their rule and authority are sacred, unchallengeable, and universal. Sultanic authority was connected with the divine through a succession of lineages in the *Subhat* (see Table 5).

Table 5: The prophetic lineage (blue line) in the *Subhat*.

Prophetic Lineage: From Adam and Eve to the last Abbasid caliph al-Musta'sim
Chinggisid Lineage: From Qaidu Khan to Sultan Abu Sa'id
Ottoman Lineage: From 'Osman Gazi to Mehmed IV

52 For a summary of al-Ghazali's political thought, see Black 2001, 97–107.

53 Al-Ghazali does not use this term in the section quoted above. He says that Seth and Kayumars are just two of Adam's many children. Later in the *Nasihat al-Muluk*, however, he devotes a full section to the meaning of this phrase. See al-Ghazali, *Nasihat al-Muluk*, ed. Jalal al-Din Huma'i, 1361 SH / 1982 CE, 106–126. This term is a political maxim attributed to the Sassanid ruler Anushirvan the Great. For the historical development of this concept before the Ottomans, see Arjomand 2010, 233–240.

54 Black 2021, 100–101.

A comparison of the *Subhat* with another, earlier Ottoman genealogical manuscript highlights the significance of this organizational model. A Dublin manuscript entitled *Zübdetü't-Tevarih*, dated to 1598, proposes another solution to this debate. The detail that differentiates the Dublin manuscript from the *Subhat* is a modification in its colour scheme. A note below the painting of Japheth says, 'This golden line goes generation by generation to the Ottoman family' (*Bu altun çizi ferzend be-ferzend Al-i ʿOsmana çıkar*), and the author draws a golden line connecting Japheth and the Ottoman dynasty.[55] Therefore, the author isolates the Ottoman lineage visually from the lineages of the prophets and caliphs, who are located on a blue line. In the Dublin manuscript, the Ottoman dynasty does not appear as an inheritor of the Chinggisid or the caliphal-prophetic dynastic lineage; rather, it stands alone, unprecedented and unique in history. It seems that these two authors, namely the author of the Dublin manuscript and the author of the *Subhat*, agree on the argument that the Ottoman dynasty had a lineage going back to Japheth. However, the Dublin manuscript rejects the dual nature of politics, and Ottoman political power does not appear as a continuation of any previous model of sovereignty, such as the Chinggisid and caliphal models.

5 Conclusion

The duality of religion and political authority appears to be one of the overarching themes of early modern Islamic political ideas. In the fifteenth century, the idea of the dual caliphate, external caliphate, or caliph of this world, and the spiritual caliphate, or the caliph of the other world, was formulated to constitute a political system in which a non-religious ('secular') political figure and a religious political figure (often a Sufi sheikh or a messianic revolutionary) would share the authority. During the Timurid period in the fifteenth century, this vocabulary emerged as a reaction to more radical political ideas that defended the investment of the entire political authority in a single political figure. This idea of duality was carried over to the Ottoman sphere, one of the main conduits of this transmission being Idris-i Bidlisi, who developed a unified notion of sovereignty under the title *khilafat-i rahmani* ('caliphate of God'). It appears Idris-i Bidlisi formulated this idea to come up with an absolutist solution by using a more conventional political terminology in the sixteenth century.[56]

55 Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, Ms. T. 423.

56 Binbaş 2016, 274–278; Yılmaz 2018, 206–209; Markiewicz 2019, 240–284.

The *Subhat* is a visual depiction of the duality of authority, which sees dynastic fortune and religion as twins (*al-din wa-l-dawla taw'aman*). On the other hand, the author of the *Subhat* goes one step further: in the post-Mongol political environment, devoid of a caliph as a representative of religious authority, religion and dynastic fortune, or the sacred and the profane, are conflated in the Chinggisid and Ottoman lineages. Therefore, the Ottoman lineage and the Ottoman sultan embody both sacred and temporal authority, which was initially divided between the sons of Seth and Kayumars. Thus, religion and state are no longer twins in the discourse presented in the *Subhat*, but just two faces of an absolute ruler, the Ottoman sultan.

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Abbreviation

EI^2 = *The Encyclopaedia of Islam, New edition*, Leiden: Brill, 11 vols and on volume of supplement, 1960–2004.

Genealogical trees in manuscripts

Istanbul, Topkapı Palace Library, Ms. A. 3599 (*Tomar-ı Hümayun*).
Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Ms. Ayasofya 3259.
Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Ms. Lala İsmail 347.
Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Ms. Hasan Hüsnü Paşa 1289-2 (*Safavid Genealogy*).

Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Ms. A.F. 50. Online: http://data.onb.ac.at/rec/baa18848669 (accessed on 25 January 2021).
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Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Ms. H.O. 11.
Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Ms. Mxt 487.
Philadelphia, The Free Library of Philadelphia, Ms. Lewis O 37 Genealogical tables.
Ankara, Ethnography Museum, *Jamʿ-i Tarikh*, Ms. 8457.
Ankara, General Directorate of Endowments, Ms. 1872.
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Lithograph

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