

History of Shāh Esmā'il

folio 42v

Esmā'il Kills Sultan Ḥoseyn Bārāni

In the spring of the year 1500 Sultan Ḥoseyn Bārāni, a grandson of Mirzā Jahānshāh, was nursing rebellious and ambitious ideas against the crumbling Āq Qoyunlu dynasty. Several times he sent envoys to Esmā'il at Qarābāgh inviting him to meet and join with him. Esmā'il, however, had a dream, and in that dream it was revealed that Sultan Ḥoseyn had the intention of poisoning him. When Esmā'il revealed his vision to his confidants, they thought it best to escape from that area. Thus, Esmā'il and his forces departed in the direction of Arzenjān by way of Gökcha Deñiz. Sultan Ḥoseyn, not wanting a possible rival to escape, pursued Esmā'il with a force of 8000 men. At the Aras River Esmā'il learned of the pursuing force, and decided to turn and fight. The two armies confronted each other in a pitched battle in which many of Sultan Ḥoseyn's soldiers were killed, and Sultan Ḥoseyn himself decided to flee. Esmā'il chased Ḥoseyn for two *fārsaks* before catching up to him at the river, and there coming up behind him, cut him in two with a single stroke of his sword.

Esmā'il and Bārāni are shown mounted on horseback in the foreground and form the dominant portion of the miniature. Three of Esmā'il's *qezelbāsh*, also mounted, observe from the right background, while behind a rock formation in the left rear are two of Sultan Bārāni's troops. One has a forefinger to his lip in a gesture of astonishment. Esmā'il is dressed in a white knee-length coat with gold buttons, collar, and quiver case. On his head he wears the red flat top *tāj* crossed with a white sash, as do his three followers. Sultan Ḥoseyn, with beard and mustache, is dressed in mauve and sports a pointed helmet, shield, and sword. The landscape is simply suggested by an off-white rock formation, the silver river in the foreground, and touches of variegated blue sky in the far background. The miniature is painted largely in neutral colors - white, off-white, brown, gray, and silver - with touches of red in the clothing of the Safavids that emphasizes their importance.

Miniature: 20.3 x 13 cm. Three lines of text above and below the miniature; frame encloses miniature and text. Three pendant banners protrude beyond the frame into the margins. No apparent signs of damage or retouching. A marginal inscription in red, presumably of later date, describes the event depicted. Inscriptions, one in red and the other black, are written on two of the figures, identifying them as Sultan Ḥoseyn and Shāh Esmā'il.

Miniature references:

Mahboubian catalog, #923 folio 42v (not illustrated)

Text references:

Muntazar, p.50-52; Savory, SA, p.43.

