
History of Shāh Esmā'il

When the Turkman ruler Rostam Shāh died he was survived by four sons. Family intrigues that pitted Āq Qoyunlu against Qarā Qoyunlu resulted in the assassination of the two eldest sons and allowed the third son Alvand Mirzā (also known as Mirzā Alvand Torkmān and Alvand Pāshā) to attain his father's throne. In the year 907/1500 Esmā'il was consolidating his position in northwestern Iran, and after having successfully subjugated the province of Shirvān (see Manuscript L, folio 62v), and having defeated Sultan Ḥoseyn Bārāni (see Manuscript M, folio 42v), he turned his attention towards the Turkman seat in Tabriz.

Eskandar Monshi states that it was Alvand who first made threatening gestures against Esmā'il by moving with a large force to Nakhchevān with the intent of taking Shirvān, but the text of this manuscript indicates a different chain of events. Here it is stated that when Alvand received word that Esmā'il was moving in his direction with a large force, he dispatched a letter to Esmā'il with a peace initiative. Esmā'il's response was conditional on Alvand's embracing Shi'ism and becoming his vassal. this Alvand refused to accept, and a battle ensued which according to Monshi took place near Sharur, near Nakhchevān. Despite the fact that Alvand had reportedly 20,000 troops and the qezelbāsh only 7,000, both sources agree on the outcome of the battle, that Alvand was readily defeated, and once the tide of battle had turned against him, Alvand fled in the direction of Diār Bakr. Esmā'il pursued the fleeing Alvand for some distance, but unable to catch up with him, returned and entered Tabriz in triumph, where he was coronated shāh and proclaimed *Shi'ism* as the state religion (see Manuscript L, folio 74 and M, folio 48v).

Alvand was cordially received in Diār Bakr by 'Alā al-Dowleh Zū'l-Qadar, who owed a debt to the Turkman rulers of Tabriz. This initial meeting of the two personages is the scene depicted on folio 51. After the cordialities had been dispensed with, Alvand requested, and received, a force of 20,000 fresh troops from 'Alā al-Dowleh Zū'l-Qadar with which to again confront Esmā'il.

Upon arriving in the vicinity of Tabriz, Alvand learned that Esmā'il and the main Safavid force had departed Tabriz leaving only a contingent under the command of Halvāchi Oghli. Alvand entered Tabriz from another route than that used by Esmā'il, and once inside took vengeance on the residents who had converted to Shi'ism. He reportedly slew 7,000 residents. Meanwhile, Halvāchi Oghli mustered his limited forces and was defending the city as best he could from the roof tops. The Shi'ite residents joined forces with him, but those that were Sunni refrained from fighting on either side.

At this point Esmā'il had a dream where he foresaw wild dogs attacking Tabriz, and without delay returned with the main force to Tabriz. For a second time, Esmā'il resoundingly defeated Mirzā Alvand, who again fled when the tide of battle had turned against him, however this time, he did not bother to stop at Diār Bakr, but continued on to Turkey. Monshi reports that Alvand died in Diār Bakr in 910/1504.

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folio 51

Alvand Mirzā Torkmān Visits 'Alā al-Dowleh Zū'l-Qadar

'Alā al-Dowleh Zū'l-Qadar, ruler of Mar'ash, Albestān, and Diār Bakr, is represented with a bejeweled white beard, jewel studded crown, and brocaded coat, seated on a carpet before a tiled pavilion, with his arms outstretched to greet the visitor. Alvand, dressed in an olive garment with vermillion topcoat and jewelled headgear, stands before the Zū'l-Qadar and gestures a *salam*. Both Alvand and al-Dowleh are accompanied by retainers holding their swords in ceremonial position, and are shown in true hieratic scale slightly smaller and a few steps behind their respective masters. Three observers are seated in the lower right foreground, and a fourth almost caricatured man with a cane or walking stick, is shown in profile in the lower left, cropped at the waist by the frame. The color scheme consists primarily of a light mauve and a light gray (or white), with touches of vermillion, olive, light blue, light orange, and dark purple.

Miniature: 23.2 x 13.0 cm. One line of text above and below the miniature. Frame encloses miniature and text; cupola above the tiled pavilion protrudes beyond the frame into the upper margin. No 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 in black, are written on two of the figures, identifying them as Alvand Pāshā and 'Alā al-Dowleh Zū'l-Qadar.

Miniature references:

Mahboubian Cat., #923, folio 51 (not illustrated)

Text references:

Muntazar, p.63.

Savory, SA, pp.44-45.

