

History of Shāh Esmā‘il

folio 339v

Shāh Esmā‘il Receiving Ghazālī Oghli

Once Ghazālī ‘Arab had settled in his new land (cf. f.332v), he wrote a letter to his son Ghazālī Oghli, who had remained in Syria, telling him of the fine treatment he had received from Esmā‘il, and asking his son to gather all of the Arabs and join him in Iran. Upon receiving the letter, the young Ghazālī summoned the Arab chieftains and related his father’s words, and much to his surprise they recounted an ancestral debt owed to the Safavids. many years earlier their forefathers had been captured by Timur who was taking them captive back to Samarkand, when Esmā‘il’s ancestor Sultan Kh‘ājeh ‘Ali Sīāh Push obtained their release (cf. f.17). Subsequent generations continued to respect and admire the Safavid successors of Sultan ‘Ali, and in response to this invitation the Arab chieftains decided to gather all their belongings, and under the lead of Ghazālī Oghli, to make the mass movement in the direction of Azerbaijan.

At first, the Ottomans tried to verbally dissuade them from going, but when this failed, physically attempted to prevent them with armed force. Several battles took place during which, if the text is to be believed, enormous numbers were killed on each side. Eventually, however, despite the obstacles, they succeeded in reaching their destination where Aḥmad Solṭān Qājār, the Safavid governor of Qarā Ḥamid, came out to greet them. News of their arrival was immediately sent to Shāh Esmā‘il, who dispatched Div Solṭān Rumlu with gifts of luxurious clothing for Ghazālī Oghli and his headmen, together with an invitation to meet with him. But the army of Arabs accompanying Ghazālī Oghli also wanted to see the shāh to whom they felt so indebted, and insisted on accompanying him to the meeting. Together 100,000 strong, they rode to meet the shāh. The meeting was cordial with a full exchange of respect and pleasantries, after which the Arabs army and families were invited to settle in Shush (Susa), and Ghazālī Oghli was retained by the shāh as a confident.

The miniature depicts the meeting of Shāh Esmā‘il and Ghazālī Oghli. The Safavids are grouped on the right, Ghazālī Oghli and the Arabs on the left, and in the center running from top to bottom is a space that clearly separates the two groups. Shāh Esmā‘il, dressed in his now familiar white coat with gold trim, flat-top red and white *qezelbāsh* headgear, sits astride a gray horse in the upper right. A mounted *qezelbāsh*, dressed in vermillion, is directly behind him holding the vermillion, gray, and gold ceremonial umbrella of kingship over Esmā‘il’s head. More towards the foreground and immediately to the shāh’s left, a bearded man dressed in a black and white striped robe and white turban sits astride a chestnut colored horse. He is identified by inscription Ghazālī, meaning Ghazālī ‘Arab, the father of Ghazālī Oghli and now one of Esmā‘il’s followers. In the near foreground, the lower right of the miniature, are three additional mounted *qezelbāsh*, dressed in vermillion, beige, and yellow-orange respectively.

On the left side of the composition, the dominant figure, identified by inscription, is of course the young Ghazālī. He wears a striped turban with

loose ends, a green and blue striped coat with a beige robe underneath, holds a standard, and stretches his arms out in supplication. Immediately to his right is another dignitary of unknown identification but apparently one of the Arab chieftains. He wears a white turban, purple robe, green top coat, and repeats Ghazālī Oghli’s gesture. The two have dismounted and are standing next to their mounts whose forequarters are visible in the lower left. The saddled horses are retained by a single bearded groom dressed in vermillion. Behind Ghazālī Oghli, on the far left, is a standing attendant, in beige with a white turban. The background is simply treated. A light pinkish-mauve hillside rises to a craggy rock formation near the top, with four insignificant suggestions of foliage, and a narrow band of blue sky with clouds at the top.

Miniature: 16.0 x 13.2 cm. Two lines of text above and below the miniature. Frame encloses miniature and text. A marginal inscription in red, presumably of later date, describes the event depicted. Inscriptions, also in red, appear on three of the figures, identifying two of them as Shāh Esmā‘il and Ghazālī Oghli. Just a *lam* and *ye* remain of the inscription on the third figure, but undoubtedly this originally read Ghazālī, meaning Ghazālī ‘Arab. There is similar damage to the other sleeve of the same personage, but there are no other indications of damage or retouching.

Miniature references:

Mahboubian Cat., #923 folio 339v (not illustrated).

Text references:

Muntazar, pp.591-92.

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