

History of Shāh Esmā'il

folio 17

Timur Visits Sultan Khājeh 'Ali Siāh Push at Ardabil

Several years after the incident in which Khājeh 'Ali returned the whip (see folio 13), Timur was returning from his campaign in Asia Minor with a large number of prisoners. The fame of Shaikh Ṣafi's shrine was widespread, and Timur stopped at Ardabil to make a pilgrimage to the Safavid mausoleum. When Timur questioned the attendants, the darvishes directed him to Khājeh 'Ali's private quarters, only to find him at prayer. Upon completion of his prayers, Khājeh 'Ali had the conqueror seated in the proper manner, and offered him words of counsel and admonition. In response, Timur vowed to commit himself to the Khājeh's spiritual direction, if the mystic could reveal three things of which the emir was thinking. Khājeh 'Ali successfully revealed all three things, prompting Timur to offer him any request¹. Since Khājeh 'Ali was completely free of worldly considerations, he requested that Timur release all his prisoners. Timur complied, and with his own money bought pasture land for them in the area of Ardabil, and presented it as a *vaqf* to the Safavid sanctuary.

The miniature illustrates the meeting of Timur and Sultan Khājeh 'Ali in the latter's private quarters. The elderly white-bearded Khājeh, clad in brown and black with a white turban, is seated in front of (perhaps intended to be inside of) a domed, tiled, hexagonal pavilion of pastel colors. He looks in the direction of Emir timur who, clad in red with black boots, kneels before him. As in folio 13 Timur is portrayed dark-skinned in the traditional representation of an Indian. Behind Timur stands his son, Shāh Rokh, dressed in maroon and holding a quiver. Off to the right are two attendants, both dressed in brown and orange. One kneels with a tray, the other stands with an envelope under his arm.

Miniature: 15.5 x 13.0 cm. Two lines of text above and below the miniature; frame encloses miniature and text. No apparent sign of damage or retouching. A marginal inscription in red, presumably of later date, describes the event depicted. Inscriptions in white by the same hand as in the margin are written on three figures, identifying them as Timur, Shāh Rokh, and Sultan 'Ali Siāh Push.

Miniature references:

Mahboubian Cat., #923 folio 17 (not illustrated).

Text references:

Muntazar, p.19; Savory, SA, pp.27-28.

¹ Different versions are given by different sources - see Savory, Development, p.23.

