

History of Shāh Esmā'il

folio 48v

Esmā'il Celebrates the Rite of the Twelve Imams

Cf. Ms. L, folio 74, for another version of this subject, and a summary of the event depicted. The date is 907/1501. The place is the *Masjed-e Jom'eh* in Tabriz, and the event is the simultaneous coronation of Shāh Esmā'il and the adoption of *Eṣnā 'Ashari Shi'ism* as the official state religion. The miniature is almost identical to the rendition in the British Library cited above and varies only in details. It is tighter in draftsmanship and less sketchy in execution than its British Library counterpart. There are also fewer figures represented in the two main groups - seven religious dignitaries and five *qezelbāsh* - as compared to eight and six respectively in the British Library version. And two additional religious figures, or at least their heads, have been added in the upper left peering from a balcony.

A central dome in pale blue tile flanked by two buff minarets, representing the superstructure of the mosque, protrude beyond the frame into the upper margin. On the right, just below the upper text is a pointed *mimbar*, in light orange and mauve, the steps of which lead diagonally down towards the left. Two steps below the top stands young Esmā'il, in a white coat with gold trim and red *qezelbāsh wāj*, quiver case and bow on his belt. He raises a sword over his head in ceremonial gesture that denotes both the institution of Shi'ism as the state religion and the commencement of Safavid rule over Iran. At the top is a white-bearded *katib*, in blue and purple robes and a white turban, his arms outstretched over Esmā'il's head. At the base of the steps, on the left, are seven turbanned religious dignitaries organized in pyramidal form; balancing them, on the right, is a group of five *qezelbāsh* organized in similar fashion. Two additional religious leaders appear in the upper left. The backdrop, the inner walls of the mosque, is executed in light washes of orange, mauve, gray, and white, with the figures standing out in darker tones of blue, purple, red, and orange.

Miniature: 27.0 x 13.0 cm. One line of text above and below the miniature. Frame encloses miniature and text except for the dome and two minarets that protrude into the upper margin. Some minor damage: upper text and marginal inscription smeared; water stain and/or repair just above the religious dignitaries. No sign of retouching. A marginal inscription in red, presumably of later date, describes the event. Another inscription identifies Esmā'il.

Miniature references:

Mahboubian Cat., #923 folio 48v, where it is listed as the "Coronation of Shah Ismael" (not illustrated).

Text references:

Muntazar, p.60; Savory, SA, pp.44-45.

