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## History of Shāh Esmā‘il

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A complete(?) *‘Ālām-ārā-ye Shāh Esmā‘il* manuscript of good quality containing 353 folios describing events during the reign of Shāh Esmā‘il, with a preamble on his progenitors. The Negarestan Museum, in which this manuscript was housed before the revolution, asserted that the manuscript was complete, but Mehdi Mahboubian, the previous owner claims that at least one miniature was extracted prior to his ownership, and was in private hands in Paris. It has not been possible to verify, or deny, the validity of this claim. Another loose miniature in an Iranian private collection (see Ms. O), now possibly in London, may indeed be the miniature referred to, or another that might have also been extracted; stylistically, it is well in keeping with the particulars of this manuscript down to the marginal inscriptions, but its dimensions are not available, thus making it too, subject to doubt. The text, sometimes referred to as the “Ross Anonymous”, has obscure origins. The author and the date it was written are unknown. It seems to have been originally recorded at the end of the reign of Shāh Esmā‘il I (d.930/1524), but all extant copies date from the latter half of the seventeenth century, or later. The calligraphy of this manuscript is written in good *nastā‘liq*, without columns, 15 lines to the page. Page size: 35.5 x 21.5 cm. The manuscript presently contains 21 miniature paintings, including one (f.332v) inscribed in Mo‘in’s handwriting, but that part of the inscription that might have included his signature has been smudged, and is now illegible. A later attribution next to it claims the painting to be the work of Mo‘in Moṣavver. The twenty other miniatures, although unsigned, are equally in the style of Mo‘in, and can be attributed to him, albeit perhaps with workshop assistance.

**Location:**

Presently in the Reza Abbasi Museum, Tehran, having apparently been transferred there after the revolution from the Negarestan Museum where it was previously housed as collection no. 77.1.7. Prior to that it was in the Mahboubian Collection in New York.

**Dating:**

The manuscript contains no colophon, but the paintings derive from the second half of the seventeenth century, probably the last quarter. The inscription on the miniature of folio 332v contains a date, the middle of Rabi‘ I in the year 1010/September 1601. Since the date is stylistically impossible, the year intended might rather be interpreted as 1100/January 1689. The reversal of digits in dates involving zeros was a common practice in the latter seventeenth century.

**Bibliography:**

Mahboubian Catalog, no. 923, lists all the miniatures with two illustrations (folios 114v and 217).