

The Circumstances Connected with Shah Esma'il, His Conquests, and His Coming Out in Revolt against the Āq Qoyūnlū Ruler

Those who have sung the praises and narrated the exploits of Shah Esma'il have recorded that, after the death of his brother, Esma'il, who had been nominated as his brother's heir, was secretly smuggled into Ardabil, and hidden in a different place every day. After forty days, the band of devoted followers who were looking after him decided that it was unsafe to remain in Ardabil because of the stratagems of their enemies. They took counsel with his mother, and decided that the most prudent and expedient course was to move to Gilān. His mother reconciled herself to being separated from her sons, and some of the Sufi nobles, such as Hoseyn Beg Lala Šamlū, Kādem Beg Tāleš, who had recently been given the title of *kalifat al-kolafā*, Abdāl Beg Dada Zu'l-Qadar,¹ and others, removed the two brothers and set off for Gilān accompanied by about two hundred retainers. As is recorded in more detailed histories, such as the *Ḥabīb al-Sīar*, Esma'il, when he reached Gilān, stayed for a few days in Rašt. The governor of Rašt, Emir Eshāq, offered his services to him. From there, Esma'il went to Lāhijān, where he and his brother Ebrāhīm were received with enthusiasm by the governor of Lāhijān, Kār Kiā Mirzā 'Alī, who was himself of *seyyed* descent, and who was distinguished from and superior to the other governors of Gilān by virtue of his rank and station, his noble lineage, the excellence of his character, and the sagacity of his conduct.

Esma'il's brother Ebrāhīm had an overwhelming desire to see his mother; since he was a dervish both in character and in his mode of life, he placed a Turkman *tāqīya*² on his head and returned to Ardabil.

Esma'il, however, remained in Gilān with that small band of followers, awaiting a sign from the unseen world. At that time he was not more than seven years of age, but he was already remarkable for his intellectual capacity and shrewdness of insight, and notable for his wisdom and knowledge. Even at this early age, the ornament of im-

¹See Savory, *Khalifat*, p. 497, n.2.

²*Tāqīya*: a tall, round hat which could be used either in its own right or as a base around which to wind a turban (see R. P. A. Dozy, *Dictionnaire détaillé des Noms des Vêtements chez les Arabes*, Amsterdam, 1843, pp. 280ff).

perial rule was visible on his auspicious brow, and the divine glory³ shone forth from his face. His followers nurtured this tender plant with loyal devotion. They were moved by divine inspiration to address him as king, despite his youth, and to call him, with firm faith and perfect devotion, both spiritual director (*moršed-e kāmāl*) and king (*pādešāh*).⁴

According to the usual account, Esma'il stayed in Gilān for six and a half years.⁵ He spent some of the time in Biya Pas,⁶ and some of the time at Lāhijān. He was instructed in the recitation of the Koran by Mowlānā Šams al-Dīn Lāhijī, and Kār Kiā Mirzā 'Alī and his brother Kār Kiā Solṭān Ḥasan made themselves responsible for supplying his needs. It is generally known, and recorded in the *Jahān-ārā*, that during the early days of Esma'il's stay in Gilān, Rostam Pādešāh Torkmān sent men to Gilān to search for him, but Kār Kiā Mirzā 'Alī, taking refuge in various clever excuses, sent the envoys back again. Ultimately, the empire of the Turkman rulers declined, and the descendants of Ḥasan Pādešāh set upon each other. They were so distracted by strife and factionalism that they had no time for hostile action against any outsider.

Esma'il's place of residence was frequented by Sufis, and devotees were never absent from his threshold. As he grew up, he used to indulge in the pleasures of the chase, and visited Somām⁷ and Eškavar⁸ and other pleasant parts of the province. At no time, however, did he lose sight of his ambition to rule an empire.

When the news of the tumult and disarray of the Āq Qoyūnlū empire reached Esma'il, he determined to come forth from Gilān. Kār

³*farr-e izādī*. The *farr* (old Persian *hvarnah*; Avestan *khvarenah*; Middle Persian *khvarrah*), meaning "kingly or imperial glory," has been a symbol of the charisma of kingship from the time of Zoroaster, and has contributed materially to the stability of the institution of the monarchy.

⁴In other words, Esma'il's followers accepted him as both a religious leader and as a temporal ruler.

⁵This is an exaggeration; Esma'il moved to Gilān at the end of 899 or beginning of 900/1494, and made his bid for power in 905/1499 (See Savory, *Development*, pp. 58ff). As will be seen below, Eskandar Monšī gives 906 A.H. as the date of Esma'il's emergence from Gilān.

⁶Biya Pas, i.e., the western part of the province of Gilān, in which lies Rašt, the capital of the province. Lāhijān is the chief town of Biya Pāš, the eastern part of the province.

⁷Mt. Somām, near Rānekūh in Gilān; see H. L. Rabino, *Māzandarān and Astarābād*, E.J.W. Gibb Memorial Series, New Series, Vol. VII, p. 150 (hereinafter referred to as Rabino).

⁸In the district of Tonakābon (Rabino, p. 105).

Kiā Mirzā 'Alī, exhibiting the concern of a host toward his guest, and prudence and caution of a well-wisher, tried to dissuade him from his intention. "The time is not ripe," he said, "for this bud to blossom." In other words, he was advising Esma'il, in view of his extreme youth, the multitude of his foes, and the paucity of his supporters and companions, that the time had not yet come to reveal himself and to come out against the Turkman régime. "Be patient yet a while," he said, "so that your lofty purpose may be better achieved with the assistance of a larger number of supporters."

Esma'il remained at Lāhijān a while longer, out of consideration for Kār Kiā. But in the year 906/1500-01, when hostilities broke out between Sultan Morād b. Ya'qūb and Mirzā Alvand b. Yūsof Mirzā, the grandson of Hasan Pādešāh, a truce was finally concluded on the basis of a division of Iran between these two cousins. Esma'il had by then lived in Gīlān for six and a half years. Not wanting to stay there any longer, and inspired by a revelation from Him who gives guidance from the unseen world, he took the decision to leave Gīlān. He said farewell to Kār Kiā and, with a small band of his most devoted and dedicated followers—at a moment in time of which history is proud—set out toward his goal. Kār Kiā Mirzā 'Alī loaded him with gifts to the utmost of his ability, and proffered his good offices, and escorted him several leagues on the road. He uttered some final words of excellent counsel to the senior officers who were in attendance on Esma'il, and wished them Godspeed.

With the onset of the bitter cold of winter, Esma'il made his winter quarters at the village of Arjovān in the Āstārā district,⁹ and the people of Ṭavāleš hastened to serve him. At the beginning of spring in 1500, when the partisans of the Safavid house were filled with hope, Esma'il left his winter camp and returned to Ardabīl. First, he visited the tomb of Shaikh Ṣaḡīr al-Dīn and the tombs of the rest of his ancestors. In that holy place, where men's prayers are answered and divine grace descends upon them, he prayed for God's help in achieving those lofty purposes which were firmly rooted in his heart. After completing the ceremonies of this pilgrimage, and receiving a revelation that his prayers would be answered, he was joyously reunited with his mother and brother.

To describe in detail the events which attended Esma'il's rise to

⁹Āstārā is on the present border between Iran and the USSR.

power, and the mighty battles which he fought during the early days of his reign and during the consolidation of his power, and the conquests which his officers accomplished with God's aid, would be beyond the ability of this broken reed, and even beyond the literary capacity of eloquent historians. The accounts which are given in the *Ḥabīb al-Sīar*, and the *Aḥsan al-Tavāriḡ* of Ḥasan-e Rūmlū, and in the *Lobb al-Tavāriḡ* of Mīr Yaḥyā Seyfī Qazvīnī, constitute only a tenth, nay, a thousandth part, of the story. Since this trifling work does not purport to give a detailed history of the reign of Shah Esma'il, in order to avoid being prolix I shall, with God's blessing and benediction, make do with this abridged version. In this way, I shall not fall short of my fundamental purpose, namely, to write a history of the reign of Shah Abbas I.

In brief, then, Esma'il, having asked the assistance of the spirits of his ancestors and of the noble shaikhs, left Ardabīl and moved to Qarābāḡ. Day by day, his disciples gathered at his camp. In Qarābāḡ he met Sultan Ḥoseyn Bārānī, a grandson of Mirzā Jahānšāh, who was nursing rebellious and ambitious ideas. Since Esma'il suspected him of treacherous intentions, he dissociated himself from him, and went by way of Gökčā Deñiz to Arzenjān. There he was joined by three or four thousand Sufis and trusted followers from Syria, Dīār Bakr, Sīvās, Bāybord, and those regions. Khan Moḥammad Ostājlu joined him with a large force, and was well received by Esma'il and treated with great favor.

At Arzenjān, after taking counsel, Esma'il decided to invade Šīrvān, and to exact revenge on the people of Šīrvān. With eight thousand devoted Sufis, he set out for Šīrvān, and fought a pitched battle in the region of the Golestān fortress with Farroḡyasār, the ruler of Šīrvān, who had twenty thousand horsemen and several thousand infantry. Farroḡyasār fell in the battle, together with many of the nobility of Šīrvān and members of the rank-and-file, both cavalry and infantry, and the news of Esma'il's victory soon spread throughout those regions. Esma'il spent the winter at Maḥmūdābād in Šīrvān. Shaikh Ebrāhīm, known as Shaikh Shah, the elder son of the Šīrvānšāh, took ship and crossed the Caspian Sea to Gīlān.

Most of the inhabitants of Šīrvān submitted to Esma'il, and all the treasure of the Šīrvānšāh fell into his hands. The garrisons of some of the forts, especially of the fortress at Bākū, put up some resistance, but were eventually subjugated. The fortress at Bākū was surrounded

on three sides by the sea, and no conqueror, however powerful, could succeed in reaching the walls on those sides. The fourth side, which faces the land, was protected by a very wide and deep ditch. After the capture of the fort at Bākū, Esma'il returned to Golestān, another fortress famed for its strength, which was still held by a garrison of Šīrvānīs.

While Esma'il was laying siege to Golestān, the angelic messenger from the unseen world brought him the glad tidings that he would possess the throne of Azerbaijan. Esma'il summoned his great emirs and said, "You can either have the Golestān fort, or the throne of Azerbaijan." Since the trusted followers of the Safavid house believed implicitly in the truth of whatever divinely inspired words he uttered, because of their spiritual relationship with Esma'il, no shadow of doubt crossed their minds. At the prospect of the throne of Azerbaijan, a joyful roar burst from their throats and ascended to the heavens.

At that moment, the news arrived that Alvand, with a Turkman army, had reached Naḳčevān, and had dispatched another Turkman force so that he could advance into Šīrvān from two directions and give battle to Esma'il. Esma'il, his zeal fanned by the approach of his rival, at once abandoned the siege of Golestān and, at the instance of the messengers of the unseen world, marched toward Azerbaijan.

The Battle between Esma'il and Mīrzā Alvand Turkman, and Esma'il's Victory

At Naḳčevān, Alvand, hearing that Esma'il was marching toward Azerbaijan, hastened to give battle with his army of thirty thousand men. But the great bravery and valor of Esma'il, and the self-sacrifice of the *qezelbāš* who used to hurl themselves like moths against the flame, and consider this the way to everlasting life, had struck fear and terror into the hearts of the Turkmans. The two armies confronted each other at Šarūr, near Naḳčevān, in 907/1500, and the *qezelbāš* troops, numbering only seven thousand, attacked with great élan. The Turkmans resisted stoutly, but the *qezelbāš*, with God's help, won the victory, and Alvand was overcome. He suffered heavy casualties, including many Turkman nobles and great emirs. A large amount of booty fell into the hands of the victors. Mīrzā Alvand was unable to hold Azerbaijan, and fled to Arzenjān.

Esma'il reached Tabriz in triumph, and ascended the royal throne.

The practice of the Twelver rite of Shi'ism was made public.¹⁰ The pulpits in the mosques resounded with sermons in which the exalted names of the Shi'ite Imams were commemorated. The *dīnārs* were stamped with the inscription: "There is no god but God; Moḥammad is the Prophet of God, and 'Ali is the favorite friend of God," and with the name of that chosen One of his descendants (Esma'il himself). The innovating practices of the people in error¹¹ were suppressed, and Shi'ites, who hitherto had lived by dissimulation,¹² now practiced the Imams' religion openly, and their opponents crept into corners to conceal themselves.

Reports of Esma'il's majesty and power spread far and wide, but Alvand, moving like a victim to the slaughter, marched back from Arzenjān toward Azerbaijan. While Esma'il was advancing on Arzenjān by way of Terjān, Alvand entered Tabriz and began to extort money forcibly from the populace, especially the wealthy. From Tabriz, Alvand moved to Owjān,¹³ and from there, hearing of Esma'il's return, to Hamadan, and thence to Baghdad. Since his fortunes were now on the wane, Qāsem Beg Pormāk showed hostility toward him, and he could not remain in Baghdad either, but moved on to Dīār Bakr. There he fought a battle at Mārdīn¹⁴ with Qāsem Beg, the son of Jahāngīr Mīrzā, the brother of Ḥasan Pādešāh. Although Alvand was victorious, the charisma had departed from the Āq Qoyūnlū dynasty, and Alvand died in Dīār Bakr in 910/1504.

The War between Shah Esma'il and Sultan Morād, and Esma'il's Conquest of Persian Iraq, Fārs and Kerman

Sultan Morād, who was dubbed "the unsuccessful"¹⁵ by Esma'il, was the son of Ya'qūb Pādešāh, and was the ruler of Fārs, Persian Iraq ('Erāq-e 'Ajam), Kerman, and Kūzestān. When he heard of Esma'il's victories, he mobilized his forces, with the idea of achieving indepen-

¹⁰With this bold statement, Eskandar Monšī records a turning point in the history of Iran. The imposition of Shi'ism by the Safavids was a mainly political move designed to harness to their cause latent Iranian nationalism; it enabled them to weld Persians into a nation for the first time since the Arab conquest in the 7th century A.D. Eṣnā 'Ašārī Shi'ism is still the official religion of Iran today.

¹¹Referring, of course, to orthodox Sunnis!

¹²*taqiya*, "dissimulation," was permitted to Shi'ites as a means of avoiding persecution by Sunnis.

¹³Southeast of Tabriz.

¹⁴MS. has Bārdīn, but I suspect Mārdīn is the correct reading.

¹⁵There is a word-play in the Persian. The word *Morād* means "wish, desire." Shah Esma'il dubbed Sultan Morād *nāmorād*, meaning "one who fails to achieve his desire."

dent sovereignty.¹⁶ When Esma'il heard that Sultan Morād was on the march, he sent to him an envoy named Qanbar Āqā, who had been a trusted servant of Sultan Heydar, and was a man of intelligence and good judgment. This ambassador offered Sultan Morād Esma'il's friendship in return for his submission. Sultan Morād replied in terms which showed he had taken leave of his senses, and marched north from the town of Delijān to give battle.¹⁷ He reached the region of Hamadan, and disposed his forces, which consisted of seventy thousand men from the Turkman regiments, together with three hundred gun carriages, on which were mounted cannon and mortars and all the munitions of war. Esma'il, on the other hand, had with him only twelve thousand men of the *qezelbaş* tribes, and he relied on the hand of Providence.

On Saturday, 24, Zu'l-Ḥejja 908/21 June 1503, at Ālma Bolāgi¹⁸ near Hamadan, a great battle took place between the two armies. Shah Esma'il, by virtue of Heydar's strong right arm, and strengthened by the promise that Shī'a fortunes would soon shine forth in all their splendor, triumphed over the vastly superior army, and on that dreadful field shattered the Turkman forces. Sultan Morād, whom Esma'il always used to call "the unsuccessful," just as Esma'il, moved by divine inspiration, had predicted, fled in confusion and despair to Shirāz. On the battlefield, untold booty fell into the hands of the Safavids: swift Arabian horses, and other goods and commodities from far and wide, in limitless profusion. Shah Esma'il sent a proclamation of victory to all parts. In return, the rulers of neighboring regions and the nobles of other kingdoms, now convinced that the fortunes of the Āq Qoyūnlū house were in decline and those of the Safavid house in the ascendant, sent ambassadors to Esma'il's court to congratulate him on his victory, which was indeed a notable one among the victories won by the princes of the world. With the ambassadors came presents and gifts.

Shah Esma'il spent the spring on the slopes of Mount Alvand,¹⁹ taking his ease in that pleasant spot. While he was thus engaged, he received news that Sultan Morād was consolidating his control of Fārs, and was busily engaged in regrouping his forces with the intention of avenging

¹⁶Since 905/1500 Alvand and Morād had divided the Āq Qoyūnlū empire between them.

¹⁷The whole passage from: "There he fought a battle at Mārdīn" to "Delijān" is omitted in the printed text.

¹⁸The name is variously given.

¹⁹Mt. Alvand rises to a height of 11,800 feet behind Hamadan.

his defeat. Esma'il at once marched south toward Taḳt-e Soleymān, reached Isfahan, and pressed on toward Shiraz.

When he heard of Esma'il's approach, Sultan Morād did not stay to contest the issue, but fled to Šūštar, and Esma'il entered Shiraz unopposed. The inhabitants and nobles of Fārs flocked to meet him, bringing suitable gifts, and the whole of Fārs found refuge from the buffetings of fate under the shelter of Esma'il's banners. Sultan Morād, "the unsuccessful," found no resting place at Šūštar, but continued his flight to Baghdad. Circumstances there, owing to the seizure of power by Bārīk Beg Pornāk, were not to his liking either. When rumors arose that Esma'il was pursuing him into Iraq, he and Bārīk Beg left Baghdad and went to Aleppo, where they remained for a time under the protection of the Mameluke ruler of Egypt and Syria, Sultan Qānṣūḥ. Later, he decided to return to Dīār Bakr and Rostamdār. Achieving a reconciliation with Ālā al-Dowla Zu'l-Qadar, the ruler of Mar'aš, he joined him. The further history of Ālā al-Dowla will be given later. After settling the affairs of Fārs, Esma'il returned to Persian Iraq.

The Chastising of the Stubborn Rebels of Persian Iraq, the Capture of Various Forts, and the Triumph of His Majesty

Emir Ḥoseyn Kiā Čolāvi, who had made himself master of the whole of Rostamdār, the mountainous regions of Fīrūzkūh, Damāvand, Halī-rūd, and those parts, had at his command twelve thousand cavalry and large numbers of infantry. Trusting in the strength of his fortresses and the mountainous terrain, he adopted a rebellious and intransigent attitude, and began to encroach on the territory of Persian Iraq. A number of Āq Qoyūnlū Turkman nobles, the chief of whom was Morād Beg, feeling their position in Persian Iraq to be insecure,²⁰ took refuge in the mountains of Rostamdār and found sanctuary at the court of Emir Ḥoseyn Kiā Čolāvi. This encouraged the latter to adopt an even more arrogant and haughty attitude, and he showed discourtesy toward the retainers of Shah Esma'il.

When Esma'il was advancing on Fārs, he sent a detachment of men under Elyās Beg Eygūs-oglu against Ḥoseyn Kiā. On receipt of this news, Emir Ḥoseyn Kiā, before the *qezelbaş* had mustered, marched rapidly against Elyās Beg. The latter took refuge in the fortress of Varāmīn, and the Čolāvi²¹ forces arrived before its walls. For a while, they

²⁰I.e., as a result of Esma'il's victory over Sultan Morād.

²¹The text has *j.l.ā.d.l.i.ā.n*; *j.l.ā.d.i.ā.n*; etc., but I suspect the correct reading should be *čolāviān*.

besieged the fort. Finally, they arranged a parley, secured by solemn and sworn oaths. But, acting with treacherous deceit, they put to death that simple-hearted Turk and a group of his retainers, at Kabūd Gonbad near Rayy. The facts concerning the arrogant and insolent behavior of Emir Huseyn Kiā Čolāvi reached the ears of Shah Esmā'il, and he determined to crush this insurrection, and to punish those evildoers from the mountains of Rostamdār.

At the beginning of spring, 909/1504, Esmā'il left his winter quarters at Qom, and marched in the direction of Rostamdār. First, he laid siege to the fortress of Gol-e Kāndān, which was renowned for its strength. He stormed the fort, and put its garrison to the sword. From there, he went on to the fort of Fīrūzkūh, which he also captured. The commandant of the fort, Emir 'Alī Kiā, after heavy fighting, tendered his submission, and he and a group of his men who also surrendered were spared. The rest were put to death. Emir Huseyn Kiā himself, with twelve thousand men, lay in ambush across Esmā'il's line of march, hoping to win a victory by taking him unaware. When he heard of the fall of the two fortresses, however, and of the massacre of their garrisons, his heart was filled with terror, and he felt a measure of remorse for his evil deeds. With the men he had with him, he shut himself up in the fortress of Ostā, which was the strongest castle in those parts, and had strong city walls and fortifications. Esmā'il besieged the fort, and the air resounded with the sound of arrows and musket shots.

A river flowed by the walls of the castle, and the defenders drew their water from this river by means of a hole cut in the rock. When this was reported to Esmā'il, he gave orders that the river be diverted from its course. Although this seemed to be a far-fetched idea, in view of the volume of water and the strength of the current, the Safavid troops set to work with a will, and within a few days had cut a new channel and diverted the river into it. For a few days the Čolāvi troops floundered around like fish out of water; in the end, thirst compelled them to cry for quarter. In this manner, a fort of such formidable strength fell into the hands of the Safavids after thirty-three days, despite the valor of its defenders. The whole garrison fell victim to the wrath of Esmā'il, and apart from a few "men of the pen," no one was spared. Morād Beg Jahānšāhī was roasted, and his flesh eaten by the vengeful Safavid soldiers. Emir Huseyn was placed in an iron cage, like an owl, but he managed to distract the attention of his guards and inflict on himself a wound from which he died a few days later in the

Safavid camp at Kabūd Gonbad near Rayy. It was strange that he should depart this life at the very same spot at which he had put to death Elyās Beg Eygūs-oglu and his *qezelbaş* retainers. Emir Huseyn's corpse was burned.

While all this was going on, news arrived of the revolt of Moḥammad Karra, who had been *dārūga* of Abarqūh under Āq Qoyūnlū rule, and who had been appointed governor of Abarqūh by Esmā'il. While Esmā'il was preoccupied with his campaign in Rostamdār, the news reached him that Moḥammad Karra had made a sudden descent upon Yazd, had seized the city, and had put the governor of the city to death. Esmā'il marched to Yazd and laid siege to it for two months. At the end of that time, Moḥammad Karra could no longer hold the city and was driven back into the citadel. In the end, the Safavid troops stormed the citadel and overpowered Moḥammad Karra in one of the towers which housed the military band. He too was imprisoned in an iron cage; all the rest were put to death. Moḥammad Karra was executed in the Naqš-e Jahān *meydān* at Isfahan, and his corpse was burned in the iron cage, in the same way that the corpse of Emir Huseyn Kiā Čolāvi had been treated. This campaign consolidated Esmā'il's power in Persian Iraq, destroyed all his foes, and swept the province clean of all rebellion and sedition.

Various uncivil acts had been committed by the Čaġatāy army, at the instigation of a number of Āq Qoyūnlū Turkmans who had gone to Khorasan. The late ruler²² Sultan Huseyn Mīrzā sent his *šadr*, Emir Kamāl al-Dīn, to congratulate Shah Esmā'il on his victories, and to apologize to him for the excessive acts committed by the Čaġatāys. The message the *šadr* brought did not mollify Esmā'il; on the contrary, it enraged him. He made a sudden strike from Yazd against Ṭabas. His men poured into the town and slew large numbers of the Čaġatāys who were living in the town. Ultimately, Esmā'il's rage was appeased by this bloodletting, and after a week he marched back. The *Aḥsan al-Tavārīḡ* says that seven thousand people were killed in this affair.

In the spring of the next year (911/1505-6), Esmā'il moved to summer quarters near Hamadan. He spent the winter in the region of Kōy and Salmās, where operations against Šīr Šārem the Kurd, who had been harassing the province of Orūmīya, were carried out by Bey-rām Khan Qarāmānlū and Kādem Beg, the *kalīfat al-ḫolafā*. Šīr Šārem's son and brother fell into Safavid hands, and were executed

²²He died in 911/1505.

with dire tortures, and Şarem's tribal area was plundered. 'Abdī Beg Şamlū, the father of Dürmīş Khan,²³ and Sārū 'Alī *mohrdār*, were killed in this campaign.

Esma'il had also been displeased by the activities of Emir Ḥosām al-Dīn, the governor of Rašt, and in 911/1505-6 Esma'il sent a punitive expedition against him. He himself with the main army moved from Tārom to Rašt. Emir Ḥosām al-Dīn hastened to tender his submission, and sent numerous gifts and presents as compensation for his behavior; he was pardoned through the intercession of Emir Najm al-Dīn Mas'ūd Raštī, and returned to his post. In the same year, Esma'il issued an order that all those who had sided with the enemy and had fought against Sultan Heydar were to be put to death. Abdāl Beg Dada, who was at that time the *qūrčibāšī*, was charged with this task, and considerable numbers from among the Turkman tribes and others were executed.

Shah Esma'il's Campaign against 'Alā al-Dowla Zu'l Qadar, Events in Dīār Bakr, and His Conquest of That Province

It will be recalled that Sultan Morād Āq Qoyūnlū had taken refuge with 'Alā al-Dowla Zu'l-Qadar, the ruler of the regions of Mar'aş and Albestān. The following year (912/1506-7), it was reported to Esma'il that Sultan Morād, now 'Alā al-Dowla's son-in-law, had assembled an army of Zu'l-Qadar troops and Turkmans from the region of Mosul who had rallied round him, and was busy taking possession of various castles in Dīār Bakr, with a view to making himself the independent ruler of that province. Esma'il considered it imperative to take the field against him, and to rid the empire of this rebel. He sent *qūrčīs* to levy troops in the provinces, and in 913/1507-8 Esma'il marched in the direction of Azerbaijan.

When 'Alā al-Dowla heard of the approach of the *qezelbāş*, he retreated to Albestān, took refuge in a castle located on a high mountain called Mount Dornā, and waited there, ready to repel any attack. According to the *Ḥabīb al-Sīar*, and the *Fotūḥāt-e Amīnī* of Haravī, the battle between the Zu'l-Qadars and Esma'il's forces was long and bloody. For two days the battle raged, from dawn until nightfall. At the end of the second day, the armies withdrew at dusk to their own

²³Abdī Beg Şamlū was Esma'il's brother-in-law, and one of the inner circle of his companions.

camp, and spent the night in patrol activity and mounting guard. On the third day, Esma'il donned his armor and *kaftān*,²⁴ and led his men into the battle, which raged more furiously than before. Finally, the Zu'l-Qadars broke and ran. The Safavids subjugated the forts in Dīār Bakr which had been seized by the Zu'l-Qadars, and Moḥammad Khan Ostājilū was made governor of the province. About the same time, Emir Khan, son of Golābī Beg Mowşellū Torkmān, tendered his submission to Esma'il and was well received. After completing the pacification of the province, Esma'il began his homeward march.

Ḥasan Beg, the author of the *Aḥsan al-Tavāriḫ*, has stated that no battle took place between Shah Esma'il and 'Alā al-Dowla Zu'l-Qadar. His account is as follows: When Esma'il reached Albestān, 'Alā al-Dowla did not oppose him, but fled to Mount Dornā, a high and inaccessible place. Esma'il sent Ḥoseyn Beg Lala with a detachment of Safavid troops to find a ford across a river which had to be crossed. The *gāzīs* crossed the river and pitched camp, and most of the men went in search of barley and straw. Suddenly, Sārū Qaplān, the son of 'Alā al-Dowla, fell on them with a large force, and a fierce battle was fought between him and Lala Beg. Lala Beg was thrown from his horse, but a retainer named Kalīl Āqā brought forward his own horse and remounted him, giving his own life for his master, while Lala Beg got away safely. When Shah Esma'il heard that 'Alā al-Dowla had taken refuge in those high, inaccessible mountains, he plundered and laid waste 'Alā al-Dowla's territory and dominions, and returned. Ḥasan Beg, the historian,²⁵ has criticized the author of the *Ḥabīb al-Sīar* who, he says, although alive at the time of these events, gave an account which was at variance with the facts. I have set forth both versions, and God knoweth best which is true.²⁶

After this incident, when Khan Moḥammad²⁷ arrived in Dīār Bakr, Qāytmas Beg, the son of Golābī Beg Mowşellū, who was in the town of Ḥamīd, opposed him, shut up the fortress, and denied him entry. Khan Moḥammad was forced to camp outside in the desert, and the Kurds of those parts harassed the *qezelbāş* camp. Khan Moḥammad attacked the Kurds, and in a major engagement, seven thousand of the Kurds were killed. Khan Moḥammad returned victorious from this af-

²⁴A quilted vest worn under armor.

²⁵Author of the *Aḥsan al-Tavāriḫ* mentioned above.

²⁶The greater part of this paragraph is omitted in the printed text.

²⁷See R. M. Savory, "The Consolidation of Safawid Power in Persia," in *Der Islam* 41 (October 1965) p. 76 (hereinafter referred to as Savory, Consolidation).

fray, and Qāytmās Beg, unable to resist him any longer, sent a courier to 'Alā al-Dowla to ask for help, and made a pact with him that he would surrender the town to him.

Although 'Alā al-Dowla's affairs were in considerable disarray, the temptation of acquiring Ḥamīd was too great for him, and he listened to Qāytmās Beg's appeal for help. That winter, he again mobilized an army and sent two thousand men, under the command of his sons, Qāsem Beg, known as Sārū Qaplān (the Yellow Panther), and Ordūvāna Beg, to Dīār Bakr against Khan Moḥammad. The Khan, despite the paucity of his forces, put his trust in the unfailing good fortune of the Shah, led his Ostājilū into battle, and emerged victorious. Sārū Qaplān, who was distinguished among the other sons of 'Alā al-Dowla by his bravery and valor, and his brother Ordūvāna Beg, together with a considerable number of other men, were taken prisoner and put to death.

After this victory, Khan Moḥammad marched against Qāytmās Beg Torkmān.²⁸ Qāytmās Beg barricaded the gates of the city and prepared to hold the citadel. Before he had completed his preparations, however, the townspeople of Ḥamīd turned against him and admitted the ḡāzīs to the city. Qāytmās Beg was seized and put to death. Khan Moḥammad achieved full independence in the government of the province of Dīār Bakr, and reports of his power spread throughout the region.

'Alā al-Dowla, dismayed by the fate of his sons, again mobilized his scattered forces and dispatched about fifteen thousand men against Khan Moḥammad under the command of two of his other sons, Kūr Šāhroḡ and Aḥmad Beg, to seek vengeance for the death of their brothers. Khan Moḥammad went valiantly to meet them, and engaged the Zu'l-Qadar army within sight of the town of Āmeda.²⁹ Khan Moḥammad had only three thousand men. The story goes that, when the two armies were drawn up for battle, a number of greyhounds and their puppies came out from the Zu'l-Qadar lines and attacked the dogs

²⁸The Turkman tribe was one of the major *qezelbaş* tribes (see V. Minorsky, *Takḥkīrat al-Mulūk*, E. J. W. Gibb Memorial Series, New Series XVI, London 1943, p. 16 (hereinafter referred to as Minorsky, *TM*). Qāytmās Beg belonged to the Mowšellū clan which, although not listed by Minorsky, was one of the clans of the Turkman tribe.

²⁹Āmeda or Āmed, also known as Ḥamīd and Qarā Ḥamīd (the *TAAA* has the form Ḥamīd), was the chief town of the province of Dīār Bakr. It was situated on the west bank of the upper reaches of the Tigris. The name Qarā (Black) Ḥamīd derived from the color of the stone quarried there (see G. Le Strange, *The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate*, Cambridge, 1930, pp. 108ff).

that accompanied the Ostājilū army. Khan Moḥammad sought an omen from this dogfight. As it happened, the Ostājilū dogs gained the upper hand, and put the Zu'l-Qadar dogs to flight. Khan Moḥammad's morale was raised by this sight, and he gave the good news to the ḡāzīs. A great battle took place between the two armies, and on this occasion too Khan Moḥammad won a victory over that mighty host by virtue of the unfailing good fortune of the Shah. Kūr Šāhroḡ and Aḥmad Beg, the sons of 'Alā al-Dowla, were taken prisoner and slain on that battlefield, together with many of their kinsmen, followers, and emirs.

A strange and curious incident occurred in this connection. In the Ostājilū army there was a blind man, who had come prepared to fight. When his friends taunted him about this, he replied: 'I have besought Almighty God that the good fortune of the Shah may give that blind one (i.e., Kūr Šāhroḡ) into the hand of this blind one.' By divine decree, Kūr Šāhroḡ fell into his hands.

Those of the Zu'l-Qadar army who escaped the sword turned and fled. After this defeat, 'Alā al-Dowla donned a black felt cloak in mourning for his sons and his kinsmen, and his emirs too threw black sackcloth around their necks and went into mourning of unparalleled intensity. 'Alā al-Dowla's ambition to annex Dīār Bakr was now finally shattered, and he abandoned this vain aspiration. His fortunes had lost all their luster and sparkle.

When the Ottoman emperor³⁰ heard of the repeated defeats suffered by 'Alā al-Dowla, the death of his sons, and the humbling of his emirs and troops, he decided the time was ripe for him to satisfy his long-standing desire for revenge, and he led an army against him. In the ensuing battle, 'Alā al-Dowla was killed, and the empire of the Zu'l-Qadar dynasty came to an end. Some of the vanquished elected to join the Ottomans; others entered the service of Shah Esma'il. 'Alā al-Dowla had ruled Mar'aš and Albestān, and had been the overlord of eighty thousand households.

The dynasty had consisted of four rulers: Malek Ašlān, Soleyman,³¹ Nāšer al-Dīn, and 'Alā al-Dowla; but 'Alā al-Dowla possessed greater power and independence than his predecessors. He conducted his diplomatic relations with the Ottoman emperor and with the ruler of Egypt³² on the basis of trickery and deceit. Whenever ambassadors ar-

³⁰Bāyazid II (regn. 886/918) 1481/1512).

³¹Omitted in printed text.

³²The Mameluke sultan al-Ašraf Qānšūḡ al-Ḡowrī (regn. 906-922/1501-17).

rived from the Ottoman empire, he would dress a number of his retainers in Egyptian-style clothes, and would tell the Ottoman ambassadors that these men had been sent by the Mameluke sultan to seek an alliance against the Ottomans. "But of course," he could say, "I shall not give them any help, because of my friendship with the Ottoman emperor." He used the same tactics when dealing with the Mameluke sultan, and as a result derived benefit from both parties. The story goes that Alā al-Dowla used to say: "I have two golden hens; one lays silver eggs, the other golden eggs."

In the battle which Alā al-Dowla fought against the Ottomans, Sultan Morād Āq Qoyūnlū, who had acquired a special position close to Alā al-Dowla by virtue of being his son-in-law, was captured by the Ottomans. The Ottoman emperor, Selīm I,³³ treated him well, and Sultan Morād remained in his company for some time. In the year in which Selīm invaded Iran (920/1514), Sultan Morād did not consider it expedient to accompany him, and he dissociated himself from the Ottomans. He gathered round himself a band of evil men, and marched against Eje Sultan Qājār, the governor of Orfa. The latter hastened to meet him with eight hundred men, and overcame Sultan Morād's eight thousand in a battle in which Sultan Morād was killed. Eje Sultan sent his head and his ring, for the purpose of identification, to Shah Esma'il's court, and gained the sobriquet of Qodormoš ("the mad dog") Sultan. With the death of Sultan Morād, the dynasty of the Āq Qoyūnlū sultans also came to an end. Although these events occurred after the Safavid conquest of Arab Iraq, I included them here because of their connection with what had preceded.

Shah Esma'il's Expedition to Arab Iraq and His Conquest of that Province, together with Related Events

The true account of the conquest of that province is as follows: When the nobles of the province of Arab Iraq ('Erāq-e 'Arab) received the news that the foundations of Sultan Morād's power had been shaken, one of the Turkman emirs, called Bārīk Beg, assumed control of the province, and aimed to retain possession of it. However, Shah Esma'il determined to annex Arab Iraq. First of all, he sent Bārīk Beg a gold-embroidered hat, a sword belt, and a special robe of honor, and called on him to submit to him and to acknowledge his suzerainty. At first, Bārīk Beg hastened to accept the royal robe of honor, and he took his Turkman *tāqīya* from his head, and took pride

³³Selīm did not become emperor until 1512.

in wearing the royal hat³⁴ and robe. Further, he sent suitable gifts to the Shah, and petitioned that he be confirmed in the governorship of that province. Shah Esma'il, however, did not look with favor on his gifts, and sent a message to Bārīk to say that he had made a firm resolve to visit the holy shrines of Karbala and Najaf, and that this vow could not be broken. If Bārīk was genuine in his protestations of fealty, said the Shah, let him hasten to court and take his place among the other emirs. One could not gain access to his court, said Esma'il, by guile and deceit. For a short time, Bārīk made an outward show of fealty, but when the approach of the royal army was confirmed, he busied himself with collecting munitions and the equipment necessary for conducting the defense of the fortress. He then openly beat the drum of defiance, and hurled away his *qezelbāš* hat.

As a result, Shah Esma'il decided to march on Baghdad, and sent Hoseyn Beg Lala on ahead as the advance guard. When Hoseyn Beg was only two days march from Baghdad, Bārīk's courage failed him, and most of the nobles of Arab Iraq tendered their submission to the Shah. Bārīk, considering himself incapable of withstanding the Safavids, or of holding the fort, slipped across the Tigris at night, and joined Sultan Morād Āq Qoyūnlū in headlong flight toward Aleppo. From there, as I have already recorded, they joined up with members of the Zu'l-Qadar dynasty.

The following day, the inhabitants and nobles of Baghdad brought forth from the dungeon Seyyed Beg Kamūna, one of the eminent seyeds of Najaf, who had great authority in that province. Bārīk had arrested him on suspicion of being a partisan of the Safavid cause, and had imprisoned him in a dungeon known as the Black Hole. The people released him from captivity, and declared their love for the Shah.³⁵ On Friday, Seyyed Moḥammad Kamūna went to the Masjed-e Jāme' and included in his address (*koṭba*) the names of the Twelve Imams and the titles of Shah Esma'il. Then he went outside the city to welcome Hoseyn Beg, who camped in the gardens of Mirzā Pīr Būdāq.

Hoseyn Beg sent a report on the capture of Baghdad to Shah Esma'il, and the Shah, hunting as he came, proceeded in a leisurely fashion toward Baghdad. On his arrival, the populace joyfully went out to meet him, and presented their prayers and supplication to him. The Shah

³⁴The word is *tāj*, which denotes the special Sufi headgear devised by Heydar as the distinctive mark of the *qezelbāš*. The *tāqīya* was a tall, round hat.

³⁵*Sāhi-sevānt*: see V. Minorsky in *EP*, s.v.

uttered praise and thanksgiving to God for the conquest of Baghdad, and entered the city on 20 Jomādā II 914/16 October 1508.³⁶ Seyyed Kamūna was received with great honor and respect by the Shah. Kādem Beg was made governor of the province of Arab Iraq, and was granted the titles of Abu'l-Manṣūr and *kalīfat al-kolafā*.³⁷

From Baghdad, Esmā'il went as a suppliant to Kārbala, where he visited the tomb of Abū Abdollāh al-Ḥoseyn and the martyrs of the plain of Kārbala.³⁸ Esmā'il devoted his attention to the maintenance and beautification of the shrine. From Kārbala, Esmā'il made the pilgrimage to the tomb of 'Alī at Najaf, going by way of Ḥella. The attendants of that holy shrine became the recipients of his liberality and beneficence, and Seyyed Moḥammad Kamūna was appointed *motavallī* of the shrine at Najaf and of several other places in Arab Iraq. Returning to Baghdad, Esmā'il visited the blessed resting places of the Imams Abū Ebrāhīm Mūsā al-Kāẓem and Moḥammad Taqī.³⁹ From there, Esmā'il visited Samarra,⁴⁰ where he made the pilgrimage to the holy places and performed the traditional ceremonies.⁴¹

After he had dealt with the affairs of Arab Iraq, fixing the salaries of the shrine officials, and had enhanced the splendor of the holy places, Esmā'il marched on Kūzestān, with the object of subjugating that province. On the borders of Lorestān, he detached a force of ten thousand men, under Ḥoseyn Beg Lala and Beyrām Beg Qarāmānlū, and dispatched them against Malek Rostam, the ruler of Lorestān. Esmā'il, with the main army, proceeded to Ḥavīza. The Moša'ša' Arabs who lived in that district had fallen into error, and professed the divinity of 'Alī. A strange phenomenon, which is widely held to be true, is that the Moša'ša', when they are engaged in the devotional practices which are their customary form of worship, fall into a trance, and that while they are in this state, knives and swords have no effect on them.

³⁶Other sources give 25 Jomādā II/21 October.

³⁷See Savory, *Khalīfat*.

³⁸Al-Ḥoseyn, the younger son of 'Alī, was slain, together with his small band of followers, by the troops of the Omeyyad Caliph Yazid I on the plain of Kārbala, 10 October A.D. 680. His death is commemorated by Shi'ites every year during the month of Moḥarram with public demonstrations of grief, the performance of passion plays, and the like.

³⁹The 7th and 9th Shi'ite Imams, respectively. The shrine which marks the burial place of these two imams is known as al-Kāẓemeyn. The present building is largely the work of Shah Esmā'il.

⁴⁰60 m. north of Baghdad. Capital of the Abbasid empire, A.D. 836-94.

⁴¹Alī Naqī and Ḥasan al-'Askari, the 10th and 11th Shi'ite imams, are buried at Samarra, and it was in Samarra that the 12th Imam, al-Mahdi, disappeared from earth in A.D. 873.

They place the point of their sword against their stomach, and chant phrases such as *Alī Elāhī* and other vain expressions; they lean on the sword until it is bent like a bow, without incurring the slightest injury. The governor of that tribe was always a *seyyed*.

At that time, Sultan Fayyāz, the son of Sultan Moḥsen, was the ruler and successor of his father. The ordinances of the religious law of Islam were in abeyance among that tribe. They had sunk even further into error, to the point where they professed a belief in the divinity of Sultan Fayyāz himself. When Esmā'il's standards reached the vicinity of Ḥavīza, according to the author of the *Ḥabīb al-Sīar*, Sultan Fayyāz drew up the Moša'ša' in battle array and prepared to engage the Safavid forces. A great battle was fought within sight of Ḥavīza, and the soil of Ḥavīza was stained ruby-red with the blood of the Moša'ša'. The *gāzīs* despatched the malignant Fayyāz and many of his companions in error on the road to perdition.

In Lorestān, Malek Rostam had fled before the Safavid forces and taken refuge in a mountainous area which was difficult of access. The great emirs who had been sent in pursuit of him surrounded the mountain, and his situation became desperate. He approached the emirs, on the promise of quarter affirmed by pledges and sworn oaths, and in their company went to the royal court. He uttered honeyed words in the Lori dialect, pledging his loyalty to the Shah, and was received with favor by Esmā'il. Since his meritorious actions were many, the Shah adorned his handsome person with pearls.⁴² Malek Rostam spent some time among the emirs at court, and was then reinstated as governor of Lorestān. Having attained his object, he returned to his own territory.

After the subjugation of the Moša'ša', the post of governor of Ḥavīza was granted to one of the great emirs, and the Shah marched toward Šūstar and Dezfūl. The governor of Dezfūl tendered his submission to the Shah, came to court, and surrendered the keys of the city and the citadel. Thus those regions, together with the fortress of Salāsel, were annexed to the Safavid empire. The Shah appointed one of his trusted followers as commandant of the fortress, proceeded in the direction of Fārs, and, hunting as he went, arrived at Shiraz. This was the second royal visit to Shiraz, and again the Shah devoted himself to the affairs of the people. While he was at Shiraz, envoys came to

⁴²A word-play in the Persian; the word *maḥāsen* means both "good deeds" and "good looks."

him from the governors of Hormoz and Lār, bringing suitable presents, and in those districts the name and titles of Shah Esma'il were included in the Friday sermon (*koṭba*) and stamped on the coinage.

Shah Esma'il spent the winter at Shiraz,⁴³ with full pomp and circumstance. Spring found him in the upland pastures of Hamadan, and he encamped for a while at the foot of Mount Alvand.⁴⁴ From Hamadan, he returned to his capital, Tabriz, which rejoiced at his safe return.

On his arrival, Shah Esma'il learned that Shaikh Shah⁴⁵ had again seized power in Šīrvān, and was withholding payment of tribute and taxes. Esma'il's rage was such that, despite the severity of the winter, he marched toward Šīrvān. At Javād he busied himself with the construction of a bridge of boats, and he crossed the river Kor in safety. The Šīrvānšāh did not dispute his advance, but fled to the fortress of Bīqord. Shah Esma'il marched into Šīrvān in triumph, and bestowed the governorship of that province on Ḥoseyn Lala Beg, who took up residence at Šamāḳī.⁴⁶ The commandants of the forts at Bākū and Šabarān submitted to Esma'il, and surrendered the keys of their forts. The inhabitants of Darband, on the other hand, relying on the strength of their walls and earthworks, procrastinated for a few days, but eventually sued for quarter and pledged their allegiance to the Shah. Esma'il then returned from Šīrvān the same winter, and went to Qarābāḡ. At the beginning of spring, he moved to Solḡānīya, and began to make preparations for the invasion of Khorasan.

The Beginning of the Account of the Conquest of Khorasan

The writers of historical narratives and the chroniclers have described the events associated with Shah Esma'il's conquest of Khorasan as follows. When the drums of war began to sound, rulers from near and far, fearful of Esma'il's power, hastened to admit his claim and title, and to assert their loyalty and sincere devotion to him; they demonstrated the sincerity of their support for him by sending gifts, presents, envoys, and letters. Abu'l-Ḡāzī Solḡān Ḥoseyn Mīrzā Bāyarā, the former ruler of Khorasan, Marv-e Šāhijān,⁴⁷ Kārazm, Tokār-

⁴³The winter of 1508–09.

⁴⁴The 11,800-foot mountain that rises behind Hamadan.

⁴⁵The son of the Šīrvānšāh Farroḡyasār who had been defeated and killed by Esma'il in 1500.

⁴⁶The capital of Šīrvān.

⁴⁷Or Great Marv; so called to distinguish it from Marv al-Rūd, or Little Marv, situated 160 miles higher up the Morgāb River.

estān, Zābolestān, and Kandahar up to the borders of Kabul and Badaḡšān, whose reign had lasted for a considerable number of years,⁴⁸ and who had numerous sons,⁴⁹ had been sufficiently far-sighted to enter into and maintain friendly relations with Shah Esma'il.

The Shah, for his part, as he had always looked upon Sultan Ḥoseyn Mīrzā as a father, had displayed respect toward the Timurid dynasty, and had taken care to preserve the amicable relations both of the past and of more recent times.⁵⁰ In the early period of his conquest of Persia, Esma'il had not meddled with the provinces which were under the control of the Timurid ruler, and there was constant diplomatic correspondence between the two. After the death of Sultan Ḥoseyn Mīrzā,⁵¹ dissension and schism rent that dynasty, as is recorded in the *Ḥabīb al-Sīar*, as a result of the lack of agreement between the sons of Sultan Ḥoseyn Mīrzā, and the pretensions to independent rule on the part of two or three of them, especially Badī' al-Zamān Mīrzā, Moẓaffar Ḥoseyn Mīrzā, and Kōpek Mīrzā.

Moḥammad Kān Šībānī Özbeg b. Būdāq Solḡān b. Abu'l-Ḳeyr Kān b. Dowlat Šeyḡ-oḡlū, a descendant of Šībān b. Jočī b. Čīngīz, had progressed from being a retainer of Sulḡān Aḥmad Mīrzā b. Solḡān Abū Sa'īd Gūrakān, the ruler of Transoxania, to being a ruler in his own right, and he made himself the sovereign of that area. Hearing something of the dissension and disagreement between the Timurid princes, he laid covetous eyes on Khorasan, and resolved to destroy the descendants of Timur. In 913/1507 he invaded Khorasan, gave battle to those feckless princes, and having defeated them, put them to death. In brief, he destroyed the Timurid dynasty, as is recorded in more detailed histories, and annexed their territory. Thus Moḥammad Khan Šībānī, commonly known as Šāhī Beg Khan, brought under his sway all the land from the farthest reaches of Turkestan to the borders of Persian Iraq. As his power increased, so did his arrogance and ambition, and he held any other powerful prince in low esteem. He began to show hostility toward Shah Esma'il, and in the year that the Shah led his second expedition to Šīrvān (915/1509–10), Moḥammad Khan Šībānī sent a detachment of troops across the desert to Kerman, plundering, killing, and destroying.

⁴⁸For thirty-five years, in fact (1470–1505).

⁴⁹Seven of his fourteen sons survived him. See Savory, Consolidation, p. 78.

⁵⁰This was not quite as magnanimous as it sounds. Shah Esma'il, because of his pre-occupations elsewhere, had been in no position to do anything else.

⁵¹May 5, 1505.

Shah Esma'il several times sent ambassadors to Moḥammad Khan Šībānī, ambassadors such as Šeykzāda Lāhijī, one of the most eminent and able men of his day, to call on the Uzbek leader to abandon sedition and strife. Moḥammad Khan, by virtue of his ill-starred nature, sent back harsh replies containing empty boasts. "I have a strong desire to perform the pilgrimage to Mecca," he said. "Where shall our rendezvous be?" Shah Esma'il sent an amiable reply: "I too have a firm resolve to visit the tomb of the Imam of *jenn* and men;⁵² I hope that we will meet in the holy city of Mašhad."⁵³

In the year 916/1510, in his summer quarters at Korqān,⁵⁴ Esma'il issued orders for the general mobilization of his forces, and he marched toward Khorasan with a stout heart and with high hopes. Passing Semnān, the army marched boldly into Khorasan. The Uzbek governors of the various districts of Khorasan did not stay to oppose him, but abandoned their seats of government and fell back on Herat. Šāhī Beg Khan, who had recently returned from an expedition against the Hazāra, and who was in Herat, was frightened by the boldness and audacity of Shah Esma'il, and by the fearless way in which he was advancing into Khorasan, thus making them both nervous and anxious. Every day his fear of Shah Esma'il increased. When he heard the news that the Safavid army had reached the neighborhood of Mašhad, he decided that he did not have the strength to withstand Esma'il, and he withdrew to Marv-e Šāhijān, leaving Jān Vafā Mīrzā, a kinsman of his, in the citadel at Herat. However, Jān Vafā Mīrzā also abandoned his post and fled to Marv.

Shah Esma'il, his morale high and his heart fearless, entered Mašhad, and on visiting the holy shrine of the Imam 'Alī al-Rezā as a suppliant, performed the obligatory rituals of prayer and pilgrimage. The *seyyeds* and employees of the shrine were made the recipients of special royal favor. Then, having invoked the aid of the holy spirit of the Imam 'Alī al-Rezā, Shah Esma'il set off toward Marv in pursuit of Šāhī Beg Khan. The *gāzīs* who were in the Safavid van reached Marv, and Jān Vafā Mīrzā, with a strong force of illustrious warriors, came out to meet them. Hard fighting took place between the two forces, and although the Safavid commander, Dāna Moḥammad, was killed in the battle, Jān Vafā Mīrzā was routed and retreated in disorder to the

⁵²Alī al-Rezā, the 8th Imam.

⁵³Esma'il's invitation to a Sunni ruler to visit one of the most holy Shi'i shrines was, of course, a deliberate insult.

⁵⁴In the province of Kūmeš about 15 m. northwest of Beštām.

city. The *qezelbāš* pursued the Uzbeks up to the walls of the citadel, and slew many of them.

At this juncture, Shah Esma'il arrived with the main Safavid army. He pitched his tents near the citadel, and Šāhī Beg Khan, filled with even greater terror than before, walled himself up in the citadel and devoted strenuous efforts to putting the defenses of the city in order. In addition, he sent couriers to Transoxania to summon the Uzbek tribes. Every day skirmishes took place beneath the walls of the citadel, and casualties were incurred by both sides. When this pattern of events had been repeated for a number of days and no clear prospect of capturing the city appeared, Shah Esma'il, who always preferred pitched battles in the open field to siege warfare, devised a plan for luring forth Šāhī Beg Khan, who had crept into his hole like a fox fleeing from a lion. Esma'il ordered the drums to sound for breaking camp, and he marched away from the foot of the citadel. He sent a letter to Moḥammad Khan, saying "You promised to meet me in Persian Iraq or Azerbaijan. You have not kept your promise. I, however, have kept my promise, and have come to Khorasan. Despite this, you have not come out to fight me. Various events have now occurred in Azerbaijan which make it necessary for me to return. For this reason I have broken camp and am leaving. Whenever you are ready to fight, and God shall decree it, we shall meet in battle." Šāhī Beg Khan attributed Esma'il's departure to weakness and feebleness, and wishing to bring off at least a minor triumph and so free himself from the ignominy of having fled before the might of the *qezelbāš* army, thus allowing himself to be besieged in the citadel at Marv, decided to pursue Esma'il. He marched forth from Marv with about thirty thousand men, consisting of Uzbeks and the troops of the renowned emirs and commanders who at that time were serving under his colors.

Emir Khan Mowšellū, who in obedience to the Shah's orders, was covering the Safavid rear with three hundred men, withdrew according to plan when he saw the Uzbek army approaching and rejoined the royal army. Moḥammad Khan concluded from the retreat of Emir Khan Mowšellū that the *qezelbāš* army was in dire straits, and pressed his pursuit more boldly. When Shah Esma'il received news of his approach, he paused only to cross a stream some twelve miles from the city and send a detachment of men to destroy the bridge across the stream. He himself drew up his forces, seventeen thousand in number, near the village of Maḥmūdābād in the district of Marv, facing the Uzbek army. Šāhī Beg Khan was forced to commit himself to a pitched

battle. Such a terrible conflict took place between the *qezelbaş* and the Uzbeks that Mars himself wept at the number of the slain.

Jān Vafā Mīrzā, Qanbar Beg, and the majority of the Uzbeks' emirs were killed on that field. Šāhī Beg Khan and a group of Uzbeks, in their precipitate flight, entered an enclosed area which had no escape route. There they piled one upon the other in a bog, only to perish miserably. The corpse of Šāhī Beg Khan was discovered beneath a pile of dead bodies by one of the Bōzčālū *gāzīs*, 'Azīz Āqā by name, known as Ādī Bahādor. The head of Šāhī Beg Khan, which in its arrogance had not considered any other head worthy of wearing a crown, was separated from his body and flung down beneath the dragon standard, under the hooves of Esma'il's steed. Shah Esma'il prostrated himself in thanksgiving to God, and dispatched each of the limbs of the slain Uzbek leader to a different province. The skin of the head, stuffed with straw, was sent to Solṭān Bāyazīd b. Solṭān Moḥammad Ġāzī, the Ottoman sultan. The skull, as we are told by the author of the *Aḥsan al-Tavārīk*, was encased in gold and fashioned into a chalice that was circulated as a wine cup at banquets and festive occasions.

Kāja Maḥmūd Sāgarčī, the renowned vizier of Šāhī Beg Khan, who had emerged from the citadel at Marv, was standing among the ranks of the prisoners at the moment when Shah Esma'il took the gold-encrusted skull in his hand and proceeded to drink deeply from that cup of joy and prosperity. Shah Esma'il addressed him as follows: "Oh Kāja, do you recognize this cup? It is the head of your king." The Kāja replied, "Glory be to God! What a fortunate man my master was! For his good fortune is still with him, in that he is now in the hands of such an auspicious ruler as yourself, who every moment drinks from that cup of joy!" This witticism greatly pleased Shah Esma'il, who looked upon the Kāja with favor and raised him to the position of vizier of Khorasan.

Aqa Rostam Rūz-Afzūn, who had subjugated and seized control of the province of Māzandarān, had consistently acted in a hostile manner toward officers of the Safavid court, and constantly used to say, "the power is mine, under the protection of Šāhī Beg Khan." Shah Esma'il now sent him the severed hand of Šāhī Beg Khan, which was carried to Māzandarān by an *aide-de-camp*,⁵⁵ who was instructed to toss it into the lap of Aqa Rostam with the words, "his protection has

⁵⁵*Yasāvul*; for the various categories of *yasāvul*, see TM, p. 133.

availed you nothing; now his hand lies in your lap."⁵⁶ The *aide-de-camp* entered the assembly at a moment when Aqa Rostam was in council with the high officers of Ṭabarestān,⁵⁷ discharged his commission fearlessly, and left immediately. Not a soul had a chance to speak.⁵⁸ Aqa Rostam, terrified by that menacing message, was petrified with fear,⁵⁹ and his heart failed him. Day by day he became weaker and eventually he died.

To return to the main narrative. After his famous victory at Marv, Shah Esma'il sent *fathnāmas* (letters announcing his victory) to all the provinces of the empire. In all the districts of Khorasan, the names of the immaculate Twelve Imams (the blessings of God the Omnipotent be upon them!) were included in the *koṭba* and struck on the coinage, together with the auspicious name of Shah Esma'il. All the land up to the banks of the Oxus River was brought under the control of *qezelbaş* emirs, and the practices and rituals of the Imami creed came to be used throughout all the regions of Khorasan. The city of Herat, which had been the capital of the Ṭīmūrīd sultan Ḥoseyn Mīrzā Bayqarā, was honored by the arrival of the Shah. The chronogram for the date of this amazing event is: "The victory of the Shah, Defender of the Faith."⁶⁰

That winter (1510-11), Esma'il made his headquarters at Herat, and from all sides rulers and governors flocked there to congratulate him on his conquest of Khorasan. Among these was Sultan Oveys Mīrzā, known as Kān Mīrzā b. Solṭān Maḥmūd Mīrzā b. Solṭān Abū Sa'īd Gūrakān, who came from Badaḳšān to present himself to the Shah. He was received with special favor, and a private banquet was given in his honor. He was granted a letter of appointment (*nešān*) to the governorship of Ḥešār-e Šādmān and Badaḳšān, and returned having succeeded in his objective. Similarly, Moḥammad Yār Mīrzā b. 'Omār Šeyk Mīrzā b. Solṭān Abū Sa'īd Gūrakān in Kabul sent eloquent ambassadors and assured the Shah of the sincerity of his friendship.

At the beginning of spring (1511), Esma'il marched forth from Herat to subjugate Transoxania. When he reached Meymand⁶¹ and Fāryāb, the

⁵⁶The force of this grim jest in the Persian depends on word-plays on *dast* and *dāman*, and is impossible to reproduce in English.

⁵⁷The old name for Māzandarān.

⁵⁸Lit.: to draw breath.

⁵⁹Lit.: his gall-bladder was turned to water.

⁶⁰This chronogram gives the correct date, 916/1510. The title Defender of the Faith, incidentally, is usually reserved for Shah Tahmasp.

⁶¹Meymana. Meymana and Fāryāb lay northeast of Herat, between that city and Balḵ.

Uzbek sultans, including Moḥammad Timūr, who after the death of his father had taken over the reins of government in Samarkand, Abdollāh Khan, who ruled in Bokhara, and Jānī Beg Sultan and the other sultans of Transoxania assembled on the banks of the Oxus. Envoys were sent to the Shah to declare the sincerity of their attachment to him, and to offer him suitable gifts. A treaty was concluded on the following basis: Transoxania was to be left in Uzbek hands; in return, the Uzbek sultans promised not to deviate from the path of fealty for the rest of their lives. Shah Esmā'il responded favorably to their overtures, and prepared to march back to Persian Iraq. En route, he received ambassadors from Egypt, Syria, and the Ottoman empire, who had come to congratulate him on his victory in Khorasan. On their heels came the local rulers of Māzandarān. Esmā'il allotted half of Māzandarān to Mir Abd al-Karīm, one of the sons of Mir Bozorg, and half to Aqa Moḥammad Rūz-Afzūn. Each made requests appropriate to his position, and these were granted. The two rulers departed satisfied at having obtained what they wanted. The local rulers of the various districts of Gilān, and Shaikh Shah the ruler of Šīrvān, undertook to pay tribute and taxes and to acknowledge the suzerainty of the Shah.

The Uzbek sultans, however, did not remain loyal to the treaty and to their sworn oaths; as soon as the Shah's back was turned, they began to raid the periphery of the Safavid empire. At the request of Zāhir al-Salṭana Moḥammad Bābor Mirzā,⁶² Shah Esmā'il issued a decree that Bābor Mirzā should be confirmed in the possession of whatever areas of Transoxania he might conquer by his own efforts. Bābor Mirzā marched north from Kabul toward his ancestral dominions.⁶³ In Badaḡšān, he was joined by Khan Mirzā, and together they advanced on Heṣār-e Šādmān.⁶⁴ Jamšīd Sultan and Mahdī Sultan Özbek, the governors of the province of Heṣār and Badaḡšān, hastened to give battle to the Čaġatāy army, but were defeated by Moḥammad Bābor Mirzā. Both the Uzbek commanders were killed on the battlefield. The province of Heṣār and Badaḡšān, in accordance with Shah Esmā'il's decree, was granted to Khan Mirzā. Bābor reported this event to Shah Esmā'il and said that, if he should receive some reinforcement from the Shah, there was every hope he could conquer the rest of Transoxania too. Shah Esmā'il dispatched Aḥmad Sultan Šūfi-oġlū and

⁶²Correctly, Zāhir al-Dīn.

⁶³He had been expelled from Transoxania in 906/1500-01 by Moḥammad Khan Šībānī.

⁶⁴The ancient Šūmān, lying north of the Oxus, between the Zāmel and the Qobāzīān rivers, which are tributaries of the Oxus.

Šāhroḡ Sultan *mohrdār* Afšār with a detachment of seasoned troops to his assistance. Moḥammad Bābor Mirzā linked up with these great emirs, and together they advanced on Samarkand.

When the Uzbek sultans got word of the approach of Moḥammad Bābor Mirzā with the support of *qezelbāš* forces, they evacuated the capital, Samarkand, and retreated in the direction of Turkestan. Bābor entered Samarkand and took his place on the throne of his victorious ancestors. He had the *koṭba* used by the Twelver Shi'ites recited in the name of Shah Esmā'il, and he dismissed the *qezelbāš* emirs, giving them permission to return with suitable presents for the Shah.

After the *qezelbāš* emirs had left, however, the Uzbek sultans returned to Transoxania with a great army. Bābor Mirzā went out to meet them with the small force that was available to him. In the ensuing battle, many of Bābor's men were killed, and the rest fled. Bābor, unable to maintain his position in Transoxania, retreated to Heṣār-e Šādmān, where the Uzbek sultans pursued him and laid siege to the fortress. Bābor fortified himself in the citadel and sent a courtier to Beyrām Khan Qarāmānlū to seek assistance. Beyrām Khan sent a detachment of *qezelbāš* troops to his aid, and when the Uzbeks heard of their approach, they abandoned the siege and returned to Transoxania.⁶⁵

An account of these events and of the Uzbek insurrection was transmitted to those close to the Shah. Emir Najm-e Šānī, the *vakīl-e dīvān-e a'lā*,⁶⁶ whose power and influence at court are well known (some further details of this are given in the *Ḥabīb al-Sīar*), was appointed to set in order the affairs of Khorasan and to deal with the Uzbek menace. Without orders or instructions from the Shah, Najm-e Šānī resolved on the subjugation of Transoxania. With Hoseyn Beg Lala, the governor of Herat, and the great emirs of Khorasan, including Beyrām Khan the governor of Balk, he crossed the Oxus. Moḥammad Bābor Mirzā marched from Heṣār and joined the *qezelbāš* army. First they captured the fort of Kozār, and then the fort of Qaršī.⁶⁷ At Qaršī, Emir

⁶⁵Heṣār-e Šādmān is actually in Transoxania. The meaning, however, is clear: the Uzbeks returned to the Samarkand and Bokhara region.

⁶⁶See Savory, "The Principal Offices of the Safavid State during the Reign of Shah Ismā'il," in *BSOAS*, xxiii, part 1 (1960), pp. 91-105 (hereinafter referred to as Savory, *Offices I*).

⁶⁷The ancient town of Nasaf or Naḡšab, famous as the birthplace of al-Moqanna', the Veiled Prophet of Khorasan, in the 8th century A.D.

Najm gave orders for a general massacre, in which Šeyk Mīrzā-ye Ōzbeḡ and about fifteen thousand people, both military and civilians, were put to death. Mīrzā Bābor interceded with Emir Najm in an attempt to save the life of a number of the inhabitants of Qaršī who were members of Čaḡatay tribes, but in vain. This incident became a cause of dissension between Emir Najm and Bābor. Again, the *šadr* Emir Moḥammad b. Yūsuf⁶⁸ put in a plea for the life of a number of *seyyeds* who had taken refuge in the Masjed-e Jāme', but this request too was refused, and a large number of *seyyeds* were put to death. This action proved to be unlucky for Emir Najm.

After the massacre at Qaršī, he marched against the fortress of Čojdovān, which was held by Moḥammad Tīmūr Sultan and Abū Sa'īd Sultan. The siege dragged on for four months, and food supplies in the *qezelbāš* camp began to run short. The troops were subjected to short rations of food and of fodder for their animals. When Abdollāh Khan and Jānī Beg Sultan, who were at Bokhara, heard of the plight of the *qezelbāš*, they assembled an army and marched against Emir Najm. Moḥammad Tīmūr Sultan left the fort of Čojdovān and joined them. Battle was joined on Sunday, 3 Ramaẓān 918/12 November 1512,⁶⁹ within sight of Čojdovān. Beyrām Khan Qarāmānlū who was the commander and led the vanguard of the *qezelbāš* army, was fatally wounded by an arrow and fell from his horse. This blow caused the vanguard to turn and flee, and the Uzbegs, correspondingly encouraged, made a concerted charge. The *qezelbāš* emirs were scattered, and the Safavid center was thrown into confusion. Moḥammad Bābor Mīrzā abandoned his position on the wing, and withdrew with his men to Heṣār-e Šādmān. The *qezelbāš* emirs, who were heartily sick of the haughty airs and arrogance of Emir Najm, made no effort to defend him, and he was taken prisoner and put to death. Some of the nobles of Khorasan, crossing the Oxus at Karkī, reached Khorasan.

This disaster occurred in 918/1512. The Uzbeg sultans, flushed with victory, resolved to subjugate Khorasan. They crossed the Oxus, and for a while the land of Khorasan was ravaged by the Uzbegs. When the news reached the Shah, who was in winter quarters at Qom, he decided on a second expedition to Khorasan. When the royal army reached Kālpūš, the Shah sent a number of emirs and a detachment of men in the direction of Tūs. The Uzbeg sultans, filled with alarm by the

⁶⁸See Savory, "Some Notes on the Provincial Administration of the Early Safavid Empire," in *BSOAS*, xxvii/1 (1964), pp. 114-29.

⁶⁹The third of Ramaẓān was actually on a Friday.

news of the Shah's approach, withdrew hastily across the Oxus. Once again, the provinces of Khorasan came under the sway of the officers of the Shah, who stayed there for some time. He severely punished a number of emirs who had been guilty of treason and cowardice at the battle of Čojdovān; he vented his wrath particularly on Dada Beg Tāleš, the governor of Marv, who was forced to wear a woman's veil. A number of seditious persons, who during the Shah's absence from Khorasan had shown signs of being partisans of the Uzbegs and had persecuted and inflicted harm on Shi'ites,⁷⁰ were consumed in the fire of the Shah's wrath. The whole province was swept clean of the dross and rubbish of contumacious people, and the Shah, having placed the government of the province of Khorasan in the capable hands of Zeynal Khan Šāmlū, returned home.

The Battle of Čālderān⁷¹ between Shah Esma'il and the Ottoman Sultan, Selīm

In the year 920/1514, when Shah Esma'il was enjoying himself in his summer quarters at Hamadan and in the pleasant retreats in that district, a report was spread abroad that Selīm, the Ottoman sultan, was advancing on Iran. We must go back briefly to explain the background to this invasion.

Sultan Bāyazīd, who was ruler of the Ottoman empire at the time when Esma'il emerged from Gīlān to make his bid for power, had always observed the protocol necessary for a policy of close friendship and alliance, and the two powers had followed the path of entente. In 917/1511, however, Sultan Selīm rebelled against his father and civil war broke out. The army leaders, and particularly the Janissary corps, banded together and put Sultan Selīm on the throne and deprived Bāyazīd of all power. Bāyazīd, falling sick through grief at this turn of events, died in 918/1512, and Sultan Selīm inherited the throne and the crown.

Sultan Aḥmad b. Sultan Bāyazīd, who was in Anatolia at the time of his father's death, had the *koṭba* pronounced in his own name, but the emirs and the viziers lured him by means of a ruse to Istanbul, where they put him to death. They then dispatched an army against his son Sultan Morād who, fearful of the troops of his paternal uncle, fled to

⁷⁰Many Shi'ites had been put to death at Herat by Tīmūr Sultan (See Savory, *Consolidation*, p. 81).

⁷¹In the province of Azerbaijan, northwest of Kōy.

Esma'il and entered his service at Isfahan, where he was received with favor. Shortly afterwards, however, Sultan Morād died. Sultan Selīm suspected Shah Esma'il of supporting Sultan Morād. Furthermore, he was angered by the activities of Nūr 'Alī Kalifa Rūmlū, the governor of Arzenjān. Nūr 'Alī, fighting side by side with Sultan Morād, had defeated Senān Pasha with heavy losses, the Pasha himself being killed. Sultan Selīm therefore bore a grudge against Shah Esma'il which blossomed into open hostility. Disputes over various forts in Dīār Bakr added fuel to the flames, and gradually, for a variety of reasons, the causes of war between the two sides increased.

Finally, in 920/1514, Selim marched on Azerbaijan with a huge army. He sent a letter to Shah Esma'il, telling him of his approach. Esma'il had moved from Isfahan to his summer quarters at Hamadan without any thought of war and conflict with the Ottomans. Informed of the Ottoman sultan's inopportune arrival, he did not pause to mobilize the armies of Iran; impetuously, with such troops as he had with him, he hastened to meet the enemy. On Wednesday, 2 Rajab 920/23 August 1514, in the plain of Čalderān, a district of Kōy, he drew up his twenty thousand men in their battle stations, facing the overwhelmingly superior forces of the Ottomans.⁷²

The Ottomans, as was their usual practice, constructed a barricade of gun carriages and chains in front and behind their forces. Twelve thousand Janissaries, armed with muskets, were stationed under the cover of the gun carriages. Sultan Selīm, having constructed this strong center of firepower as his main defense, saw to the disposition of the center and the wings. On the Safavid side, Khan Moḥammad Ostājlu, who had just arrived from Dīār Bakr with his seasoned troops, counseled against a frontal attack because of the strength of the Ottoman artillery. "We must," he said, "give battle to them when they are on the move." Dürmiš Khan, however, with arrogant pride in his own bravery, did not accept this advice, and the Shah said: "I am not a caravan-thief. Whatever is decreed by God, will occur." And Khan Moḥammad fell silent.

Shah Esma'il stationed Khan Moḥammad in the van of the Safavid army, supported by Sārū Pīra qūrčibāšī Ostājlu, the brother of Mantašā Sultan. On the right wing, he stationed several of the great emirs, including Dürmiš Kan Šāmlū, Nūr 'Alī Kalifa Rūmlū, Kolafā Beg, Hoseyn Beg Lala, and Kalil Soljān Zu'l-Qadar. On the left, he

⁷²See Savory, Consolidation, p. 87.

placed the Ostājlu khans and sultans, the sons of Bābā Elyās Čaūšlu, and others. Esma'il himself was in command of the Safavid center. Seyyed Moḥammad Kamūnā, who was enrolled in the ranks of the emirs, Mīr 'Abd al-Bāqī the vizier,⁷³ and Mīr Seyyed Šarīf the *šadr*, were stationed in the center with the Shah. The warriors on both sides leapt to the attack, and the battle was soon raging furiously.

According to the *Jahān-ārā*, and this is confirmed by general report, Shah Esma'il, while his troops were taking up their stations for battle, went off to hunt quail, and returned to the battlefield after the fighting had started. A certain Malqoç-oğlū,⁷⁴ a renowned Ottoman warrior and one of the champions of the age, was stationed in the Ottoman van. He was constantly boasting to the other Ottoman nobles that there was no one in the enemy ranks worthy of giving battle to him except the Shah himself. In the course of the battle, that vile, evil man girded himself to engage in combat with the Shah. With a group of intrepid Ottoman warriors, he reached the Safavid center and challenged the Shah to single combat. Although that base fellow, whose life was forfeit, was not an opponent of sufficient caliber to merit the attention of such a powerful monarch, or to justify his going out to meet him in combat, nevertheless Shah Esma'il, impelled by his sense of honor, galloped out to meet him, against the advice of the loyal emirs and without the assistance of any of his men. Armed with his Heydarī sword, which resembled the famous blade Zu'l-Faqār,⁷⁵ he charged at that ill-fated fellow with such fury and hostility that the latter was bereft of his senses by the violence of the Shah's assault. He remained paralyzed with fear, incapable of movement, and the Shah struck him a blow that cleft both chain mail and steel breastplate, and hurled his vile corpse to the ground. A shout went up from both armies, and the cherubim sang their praises of the Shah's strength and power.

Then the two armies hurled themselves at each other, and the air was darkened by the clouds of dust. Shah Esma'il entered that frightful field in person, supervising the course of the battle and performing deeds of valor surpassing those of Sām and Esfandīār.⁷⁶ It is a matter of record among the Ottomans that the Shah several times forced his

⁷³This is a mistake. Mīr 'Abd al-Bāqī was not the vizier, but the *šadr*, and Mīr Seyyed Šarīf was a former *šadr*.

⁷⁴The Malqoç-oğlū family was descended from a Greek renegade named Malco. By about 1537 there was only one representative of the family left, and he was a *sanjaq-bey* in Greece (information courtesy of G. M. Meredith-Owens).

⁷⁵The sword of 'Alī.

⁷⁶Two heroes of the Iranian national epic, the *Šāh-nāma*. Sām was the grandfather of the renowned Rostam, and Esfandīār was a legendary king of Iran.

horse right up to the gun carriages and the barricade, and with blows of his sword severed the chains linking the gun carriages. When the *qezelbaş* warriors reached the gun carriages, they hacked to pieces with their swords about three hundred Janissaries who were stationed behind the carriages. However, the Janissaries and artillerymen bent themselves to their task, and the volume of fire from the heavy artillery, light cannon (*zarbzān*), and muskets was such that smoke blotted out the brightness of the day. Large numbers of *qezelbaş* who had flung themselves fearlessly into that maelstrom were cut down by musket fire. Khan Moḥammad Ostājlu, who was in the forefront of the Safavid army, was struck by a cannonball and killed, along with a considerable number of the Ostājlu contingent.

When the Ottomans realized that the Shah was no longer present in the Safavid center, they directed their fiercest attacks and their heaviest fire against the center, which was thrown into confusion by the Ottoman artillery and light cannon. Seyyed Moḥammad Kamūna, Mīr 'Abd al-Bāqī, and Mīr Seyyed Šarīf the *šadr*,⁷⁷ who were in the Safavid center, were all killed. Of the great emirs, the following lost their lives: Sārū Pīra *qūrčibāš* Ostājlu; Hošeyn Beg Lala; Khan Moḥammad Ostājlu; the sons of Bābā Elyās Čāušlu; and a number of others. In addition, Sultan 'Alī Afšār, mistaken for the Shah, was taken prisoner and led before Sultan Selīm. When he revealed his real name, he was put to death on the spot.

When Shah Esma'il recognized the Ottoman superiority in numbers and saw the confusion in the Safavid ranks and the destruction of the center, he commanded that the war trumpets be sounded. Three hundred men rallied to his standard. At the pressing insistence and urgent entreaty of his loyal companions, the Shah was forced to abandon the field. As he did so, he and his companions clashed with the troop of Ottomans which had shattered the Safavid center and was returning to its own lines. The Shah broke through their ranks and continued on his way. En route, his horse sank into a bog, whereupon Kezr Aqa Ostājlu brought up his own horse and mounted the Shah on it. He then extracted the Shah's horse from the bog and followed on behind, later to be received by the Shah at Darjozin.⁷⁸

Thus the Shah, with a small band of his close companions, retreated from the field of Čālderān, and reached Darjozin. His intention

⁷⁷See above, note 73.

⁷⁸*Persice* Darjozin, situated north of Hamadan.

was to mobilize his forces and to give battle to the Ottomans, this time from a position of strength. Sultan Selīm, in order to glory in his triumph, entered Tabriz,⁷⁹ but did not occupy the city for more than five or six days. As he had a healthy respect for the fighting qualities of the *qezelbaş* and for the Shah's impetuosity and personal bravery, he regretted his boldness and audacity in advancing as far as Tabriz, and decided that it would be more prudent to withdraw and retire to Ottoman territory.

According to verbal reports and popular accounts, the casualties at Čālderān were heavy. But Ḥasan Beg Rūmlū⁸⁰, the historian, states that according to most reliable accounts, five thousand men were killed, of whom three thousand were Ottomans and two thousand *qezelbaş*, and that the total casualties did not exceed this number.⁸¹ When the news of the Ottoman withdrawal reached Darjozin, the Shah marched jauntily back to his capital, Tabriz, and devoted himself to repairing the damage caused by the passage of the Ottoman army in that area.

After his victory at Čālderān, Sultan Selīm marched to Arzenjān and laid siege to the fortress of Kāk, which had been entrusted to Dīv Solṭān Varsāq. Dīv Sultan had gone to join the Shah and had left the fort in the charge of his brother, Yūsof Sultan, and three hundred Varsāq *gāzīs*. Sultan Selīm sent a message to the garrison, offering them quarter and calling on them to join his colors. The *gāzīs* replied, "Just because our spiritual director and master has suffered a slight setback in battle, we are not prepared to renounce our obligation to support him and to exchange disloyalty for fidelity. As long as there is breath in our bodies, we shall fight the enemies of the Shah." The Ottomans then assaulted the castle, and stormed it. The *gāzīs* retreated to the Masjed-e Jāme'. Since the situation was desperate, they drew their swords and, holding their shields above their heads, made a sally into the Ottoman ranks. All died fighting. Sultan Selīm occupied the fort, and then marched against 'Alā al-Dowla. He then annexed the province of Dīār Bakr, as will be described below. After that, no further hostile act was committed by Sultan Selīm against the Safavids.

Without doubt God, in His most excellent wisdom, had decreed that

⁷⁹The chief city of the province of Azerbaijan and at that time the capital of Iran.

⁸⁰Author of the *Aḥsan al-Tavāriḡ*, an important 16th-century Safavid chronicle. The author was himself a *qezelbaş* officer.

⁸¹Ḥasan-e Rūmlū's figures seem low; for other sets of figures, see Savory, Consolidation, p. 90.

Shah Esma'il should suffer a reverse at the battle of Čalderān, for had he been victorious in this battle too, there would have been a danger that the belief and faith of the unsophisticated *qezelbāš* in the authority of the Shah would have reached such heights that their feet might have strayed from the straight path of religious faith and belief, and they might have fallen into serious error.⁸²

After the battle of Čalderān, the governorship of Dīār Bakr was given to Qarā Khan, the brother of Khan Moḥammad Ostājlu, and Qarā Khan took up residence at Mārdīn. But the inhabitants of the city of Āmed, also known as Qarā Ḥamīd, broke their allegiance to the Safavids, called in the Ottomans, and handed over the city to them. Qarā Khan, marching from Mārdīn, gave battle to an Ottoman army of five thousand men and defeated them, with most of the Ottoman force being wiped out. When Qarā Khan reached Āmed, he found the inhabitants in league with the Ottomans, and despaired of capturing the fort there. The city therefore remained in Ottoman hands, while the Safavids retained control of the rest of the province.

However, in 922/1516–17, the second year of Qarā Khan's governorship, the Ottomans sent twenty thousand infantry and cavalry to Dīār Bakr. Qarā Khan, together with Dürmiš Khan Qajār, engaged the Ottoman army at Olang-e Qorūq near Mārdīn, and again defeated the Ottomans. But, while pursuing the enemy, he was struck by a stray bullet and fell dead from his horse. At this mischance, the *qezelbāš* scattered in all directions, and the Ottomans were able to convert total defeat into victory. Reinforcements arrived from Turkey, the Ottomans annexed the province of Dīār Bakr, and *qezelbāš* influence disappeared from that region. When the Shah received the news of the first Ottoman incursion, he delegated a force to go to the assistance of Qarā Khan, but on receiving the report of the latter's death, he canceled the order.⁸³

After Čalderān, the Shah, despite his preoccupation with essential matters of state, devoted himself night and day to making plans for a blockade and an invasion of Ottoman territory. In the year 926/1520, however, Sultan Selīm died, and his son Sultan Sülaymān succeeded him. Since no signs of hostility were observed on the part of the new

⁸²For details of the extent to which the *qezelbāš* already worshipped Shah Esma'il as a semi-divine being, see Savory, Consolidation, pp. 91ff. (N.B.: At this point we return to the printed text after a lengthy lacuna.)

⁸³The first indication of the change wrought in Shah Esma'il by his defeat at Čalderān (see Savory, Consolidation, pp. 91ff).

sultan, the *'olamā* did not consider it legitimate to launch an expedition against territory forming part of the Islamic world (*dār al-eslām*) in the absence of some hostile move on the part of the enemy.⁸⁴ On the contrary, Sultan Sülaymān, in the early years of his reign, led his armies against Russia and Europe, and was engaged in plundering raids and holy war against the infidel. This aroused in the Shah also a desire to plunder infidel lands, and accordingly, for several years, he sent his forces against the Georgians, seeking the rewards of pillage, while he himself devoted his time to merrymaking and life at court.⁸⁵

About this time, Shah Esma'il decided to appoint one of the royal princes to the governorship of Khorasan, and to dispatch him to that province. Initially, he selected his eldest son, Ṭahmāsp Mirzā,⁸⁶ who was already showing signs of ability to rule, and sent him to Khorasan with Emir Khan Mowse'lu as his *lala*⁸⁷—the latter having actual administrative authority in his hands. After a while, Ṭahmāsp Mirzā was recalled by the Shah and replaced by Sām Mirzā, with Dürmiš Khan as his *lala*.⁸⁸ During the remaining years of Shah Esma'il's reign, the province of Khorasan was peaceful and secure.

In 926/1519–20, Shaikh Shah, the ruler of Šīrvān, came to court and made a present to the Shah of all he possessed, and wished to be considered as one of the Shah's loyal servants. In addition, his daughter, who had been chastely reared in the royal house of Šīrvān, became one of the virtuous inmates of Shah Esma'il's harem. In consideration of these services to the Shah, the position of ruler of Šīrvān was again granted to him.

In the year 930/1524, death, the destroyer of earthly delights, visited Shah Esma'il, as he entered upon his thirty-eighth year of life.⁸⁹

⁸⁴Surely Eskandar Monšī does not expect us to believe this! The argument is entirely specious. In the first place, there is no evidence that Shah Esma'il was planning a retaliatory expedition against Ottoman territory; indeed, all the evidence points in the opposition direction (see Savory, Consolidation, pp. 93ff). Secondly, the *'olamā* had never before been so scrupulous about the turning of Safavid arms against fellow Muslims. Third, one must remember that, at this early period in the history of the Safavid state, the religious institution was still subordinate to the political institution, the head of which was the Shah, and it is highly improbable that Shah Esma'il, had he really intended to invade the Ottoman Empire, would have been deflected from his purpose by the opinions of the *'olamā*.

⁸⁵After Čalderān, Shah Esma'il never again led his troops into action in person.

⁸⁶Born in 919/1520. He was sent to Khorasan in 922/1516.

⁸⁷Guardian, mentor.

⁸⁸In 927/1521.

⁸⁹This is, of course, according to the lunar calendar. Shah Esma'il was born in 892/1487.

He died at a place called Mānqūṭāy, near Sarāb,⁹⁰ and was buried in the holy mausoleum of Shaikh Ṣafī at Ardabīl. Various chronograms give the date of his death. These include: "May his resting place be peacefull"; "Defender of the Faith"; and "the Shadow of God upon earth."⁹¹

Shah Esma'il left four sons, all of them infants; Ṭahmāsp Mīrzā; Bahrām Mīrzā (the mother of both of these princes was the daughter of one of the Mowṣellū Turkman emirs); Alqās Mīrzā; and Sām Mīrzā (born of different mothers). There is no point in listing the names of the daughters of Shah Esma'il. The Shah had an excellent natural talent for poetry, but most of his poems were composed in Turkish,⁹² under the pen name of Kaṭā'i. Because he was a contemporary of Sul-tan Selīm, Mowlānā Omīdī composed the following occasional verse, which alludes to this:

Destiny, in the celestial workshop,
Fashioned both Selīm and Kaṭā'i.

⁹⁰Sarāb is a district near Tabriz.

⁹¹All three chronograms give the correct date: 930/1524.

⁹²In the Āzarī dialect of Turkish.

The Life and Times of Shah Tahmasp (God's Mercy and Benediction Be upon Him!)

Of the sons of Shah Esma'il, Tahmasp, his eldest son, was most fit to succeed him on the throne of Kōsrow and Key-Qobād. Tahmasp was born on Wednesday, 26 Zu'l-Ḥejja 919/22 February 1514, in the borough of Šāhābād, in the district of Isfahan. Those whose business it was to forecast events considered the fact that Tahmasp was born in a place called Šāhābād, "the king's abode," a happy augury, foretelling his kingship and imperial rule. The astrologers, who understood the subtleties of the astrolabe, predicted on the basis of his horoscope that he would soon grace the throne of Kōsrow, and that his reign would illumine the earth. The divinely inspired chronogram of his birth is "The world-illuminating sun."¹

During the reign of Shah Esma'il, Tahmasp, while still an infant, was elevated above his other brothers by being appointed governor of Khorasan, and he grew up in the city of Herat.² When his *lala*, Emir Khan Mowṣellū, was guilty of conduct displeasing to the Shah and was dismissed from his post, Tahmasp returned to court and remained at his father's side. From an early age his conduct portended his future kingship and imperial rule, and his brow shone with the light of his future status as the Shadow of God upon Earth.³ After his father's death, Tahmasp was invested with the authority and attributes of kingship. In his eleventh year⁴ he ascended the throne in accordance with the Koranic prescription: "God commands you to make over what is held in trust to those who are entitled to it."⁵

Tahmasp ascended the throne on Monday, 19 Rajab in the Year of the Monkey, corresponding to the year 930 of the Muslim calendar (1524), and the divinely inspired chronogram for this event is "He took the place of his father." Because of his deep faith and sincere belief in Alī, Tahmasp used to call himself "the servant of Alī"; and by a

¹This chronogram gives the correct date, 919/1514.

²Herat, now in Afghanistan, was formerly Persian territory. In 1856 Nāṣer al-Dīn Shah, by the terms of the Treaty of Paris, was forced to renounce all claim to it. In Safavid times, Herat was the capital of the province of Khorasan.

³The Shah was the living emanation of the godhead, the Shadow of God upon earth. Since he had divine sanction for his authority, his rule was necessarily absolute.

⁴He was 10 1/2 years old.

⁵Koran: 4:59.

Persian Heritage Series

The Persian Heritage Series aims at making the best of Persian literary, historical and scientific texts, available in the major Western languages. The translations in the series are intended not only to satisfy the needs of the students of Persian history and culture, but also to respond to the demands of the intelligent reader who seeks to broaden his intellectual and artistic horizon through an acquaintance with major world literatures.

General Editor

Ehsan Yarshater (Columbia University)

Advisory Council

I. Gershevitch (Cambridge University)

G. Lazard (University of Paris)

B. Spuler (University of Hamburg)

G. Tucci (University of Rome)

Late Members

A. J. Arberry (Cambridge University)

W. B. Henning (University of California)

H. Massé (University of Paris)

T. C. Young (Princeton University)

G. Morgenstierne (University of Oslo)

The volumes in the Persian Heritage Series form part of the UNESCO
COLLECTION OF REPRESENTATIVE WORKS.

A complete list of titles published in the Persian Heritage Series and related series appears at the end of Volume II.

Persian Heritage Series

Edited by Ehsan Yarshater

Number 28

History of Shah 'Abbas the Great

(*Tārīkh-e 'Ālamārā-ye 'Abbāsī*)

by

Eskandar Beg Monshi

Volume I

Translated by Roger M. Savory

Professor of Middle East and Islamic Studies, University of Toronto

Westview Press

Boulder, Colorado