



## ḤAYDAR MIRZĀ ŞAFĀVI

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**ḤAYDAR MIRZĀ ŞAFĀVI**, Safavid prince who considered himself to be the chosen successor of his father, Shah Ṭahmāsb, but was killed immediately after the latter's death on 15 Şafar 984/14 May 1576. When Shah Ṭahmāsb died, there was confusion at the court regarding the question of succession. The Shah's eldest son, Moḥammad Ḳodā-banda, was almost totally blind, and was therefore deemed unfit to rule, while his second son, Esmā'il Mirzā, had been kept prisoner at the Qahqaha fortress (about 150 miles to the north of Tabriz), having displeased his father in his youth. As Shah Ṭah-māsb's third son, Ḥaydar Mirzā thought he could fill the vacuum: "With the approbation of his mother, he took his place next to his father's sick bed; and as a result of imaginary desires and devilish delusions he claimed supreme power" (Rumlu, p. 601). Or as Eskandar Beg put it, "With the arrogance of youth, and natural ambition, he considered himself the heir-apparent" (p. 133; tr. Savory, p. 215).

With his two elder brothers out of contention, Ḥaydar Mirzā ingratiated himself with his father. In his dotage the Shah was unable to perform his royal duties, and so Ḥaydar Mirzā took on the role of his substitute, which implied that he was Ṭahmāsp's preferred successor. However, even though a will was produced in the eleventh hour to confirm this, it was too late for the prince. Ḥaydar Mirzā was at the palace when his father died. As a result of factional rivalries among the Qezelbāš supporters of the Safavid throne, and the unusual role played by his sister, Pari-Ḳān Ḳānom, who secretly supported their brother Esmā'il Mirzā, Ḥaydar failed to secure the palace grounds. This enabled the opposition forces to storm the palace and sieze Ḥaydar, who was



hiding in the women's quarters. Thus, at the age of twenty-two, Ḥaydar Mirzā was brutally killed, and his body was mutilated.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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All major Safavid chronicles refer to this incident, the most detailed being Eskandar Beg Monši, *Tāriḳ-e 'Ālamārā-ye 'Abbāsi*, ed. Iraj Afshar, Tehran, 1350 Š./1972, I, pp. 192 ff.; tr. Roger M. Savory as *History of Shah 'Abbas the Great*, Boulder, 1978, I, pp. 283 ff.

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