

“many punishments according to the deserts of the persons concerned. When they left that place, he proceeded to the gate of the town, riding 12 horses, i.e. now one, now another, in allusion to the twelve sons of 'Ali his prophet: and, because he was afraid lest some shot from an arquebuse should be fired at him and he should be killed, with a score of his most trusted men he went by a street along which he was not expected to pass to the garden gate, and through that into the royal palace, causing his captain-general to proceed in procession under the (royal) umbrella,¹ by the usual route, where all the people stood awaiting him.

“When Isma'il had been securely seated on his throne, it was not long before he became more cruel than anyone else had been, having no mercy on any of the race of the rebel governor, nor even on his own brother-in-law, appointed by him his captain-general, whom he had put to death together with ten brothers² of his own, some by poison, some strangled—all except the present king who was at Shiraz, 21 days' journey distant from Qazwin, and whom he could never get into his hands: instead of whom he killed a son of his (i.e. Muhammad Khudabandeh's?) and two of his cousins. He also had put to death all the chief governors (sultans) who had been at his father's Court, saying that 'the royal tents could not be held up by old ropes'. He even reddened with blood his own hands, killing many of them with his own sword, saying that he wanted to see whether it would cut: wherefore, by the reckoning made, it was estimated that by his own hands or by his orders during the brief period of his reign there were killed about 12,000 persons, without counting those whom he deprived of eyesight and sent into exile.

“For some objective he had in view, he was thinking of abandoning the creed of 'Ali and taking that of Abu Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthman, which is that professed by the Turks: and he gave evidence of this by putting out the eyes of a 'Khalifeh' of his, or leading personage in his creed after the Mujtahidin, their 'popes', and sending him away to a mosque, which is in the city of Imam Riza³ in the province of Khurasan, distant from Qazwin 14 days' march, and by many other outrages and insults offered to many other spiritual leaders. All this being observed by the chief personages who had remained alive in the realm they made a conspiracy together with a sister of the king, called Piri Khanum, against whom he had perpetrated many outrageous actions, taking away more than 200,000 ducats of hers, and all the male and female slaves she had, causing her to live in straitened circumstances a life full of hardships, she being a woman of some thirty years, shrewd and prudent, who had been esteemed and trusted by their father. Together they devised the poison, putting it in some pills of opium, which he (Isma'il) was wont to eat, and then placing them in a small wallet which was carried by the son of a captain trusted by him, who had always remained by him. According to his wont the king took some (of the pills), and on the following night, which was the 25th November in the year 1577, vigil of S. Catharine's day, he died, being aged 44 years, and having reigned only 1 year, 7 months, 6 days.⁴

“He died at the time when he intended to have proclaimed the creed” (i.e. the Sunni) “which he desired to have observed at the end of his Ramazan” (month of fasting); “and he wanted it to be observed by all, promising very large gifts to all those who imitated him, and threatening with a cruel death those who obstinately refused: this was the cause of his death being accelerated. . . .”

¹ The word *ombrella* is used in the Italian, so that in 1570 in Persia as in India in this century, the processional umbrella was a symbol of sovereignty.

² The *suoi* seems to refer to Isma'il not Sultan Ibrahim Mirza: yet Tahmasp had 11 sons, and 6 with Haidar and Mustafa had already been slain in this narrative.

³ Spelt in the manuscript “Momorosa”: at Mashhad is the shrine of Imam Riza, one of the chief places of pilgrimage of the Shiah.

⁴ The 25th is S. Catharine's Day. But this statement, 1 year, 7 months, 6 days, does not accord with that previous that Tahmasp died 11.5.1576, which would make 1 year, 6 months, 14 days solar: nor even if lunar computation be meant.