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Electronic version
URL: http://journals.openedition.org/abstractairanica/40661
ISSN: 1961-960X

Publisher.
CNRS (UMR 7528 Mondes iraniens et indiens), Éditions de l'IFRI

Printed version
Date of publication: 1 December 2013
ISSN: 0240-8910

Electronic reference
Akihiko Yamaguchi, « Yukako Goto. Safavid Capitals and their Coronation Ceremonies », Abstracta Iranica [Online], Volume 32-33 | 2013, document 239, Online since 01 July 2016, connection on 03 May 2019. URL : http://journals.openedition.org/abstractairanica/40661

This text was automatically generated on 3 May 2019.

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REFERENCES


This article recounts the history of the Safavid coronation ceremony while identifying three of its basic – Islamic, mystic, and secular – elements. The Safavid enthronement ceremony was originally designed to demonstrate the new ruler’s rightful inheritance of Safavid leadership and his legitimacy as ruler of a Shiite state. However the third ruler, Šāh Esmā‘īl II, crowned at the end of a civil war of succession, attached more importance to the ceremony’s secular aspects. Wearing the three objects symbolizing the imperial throne – crown, sword and belt – he held a grand coronation ceremony to publicly display his royal authority. Since his successors followed this pattern, the ceremony’s mystical aspect gradually waned.

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