

## Second Half of the Shāhnāmeḥ of Ferdowsi

folio 44

### Combat of Rostam and Esfandiyār

The miniature has an irregular shape, in the form of an L, which is not confined within the frame that encloses the text, but continues well into the left margin and upward in that margin paralleling the text. The main portion of the miniature, in the space under the text, is almost entirely filled by the figures of the two combatants and their mounts. Rostam, clad in his familiar tiger skin coat and leopard skin headdress, has charged from the right on his horse Rakhsh, here in a light tan color. Esfandiyār, in a chain mail tunic and pointed steel helmet, has approached from the opposite direction on his customary black horse (also depicted on folios 26 and 31v). The two have met and are tugging at each others belts, each trying to dislodge his opponent from the saddle. The background is a light mauve, non-descript, hillside that rises to a peak behind the heads of the two combatants. In the right background the head of a soldier appears from behind the slope, and in the right foreground three others, with their lower extremities cropped by the frame, also observe the battle. On the left side of the miniature, in the portion in the left margin, is a group of onlookers stacked in a row going back in pictorial space. Altogether seven figures, all but one wearing turbans, and four horses, are represented. The figure at the top, wearing a yellow tunic, a pointed helmet, with his finger to his lips in a sign of astonishment, is evidently of higher rank than the other onlookers and might possibly be identified as Esfandiyār's son, Bahrām. Yellow-orange, maroon, and blue are used for the clothing of the remaining personages in the group. Three standards emerge high on the left, and in the far background is a rock hill rendered in white with gray articulations, with a bush growing at the top.

The four columns of text above the miniature consists of, from right to left, fifteen, eleven, eleven, and fifteen lines of text respectively. Below is a single column of two lines in the lower left corner. A rectangular frame encloses the text and the miniature on the right side and bottom, but is omitted on the left side between the upper and lower text blocks, allowing the miniature to spill into the left margin. The miniature is signed in the lower margin in miniscule characters in Mo'in's hand: *ze tawfiq šān'e raqam zad mo'in* (Drawn with the grace of the Maker by the most humble Mo'in). No date is indicated.

For a further sequel in this same episode see folio 48.

#### Location:

Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, Ms. no. 270, folio 44

#### Miniature references:

Unpublished.

#### Text references:

Warner, V, pp.224-25; Mohl, IV, p.522; Levy, p.205.

