

Second Half of the Shāhnāmeḥ of Ferdowsi

folio 48

Rostam Shoots Esfandiyār in the Eyes with a Double-Pointed Arrow

The miniature, whose dimensions approximate a square, is more regular in shape than the immediately preceding folios. The composition is dominated by the two protagonists, Rostam and Esfandiyār, who alone occupy the foreground. On the right, Esfandiyār, dressed in a yellow-orange tunic and pointed steel helmet, slumps forward in the saddle of his black mount, grasping the shaft of the twin pointed arrow that has penetrated both his eyes. A quiver case, sword, and encased bow hang from his belt. The rear quarters of his horse are cropped by the frame on the right side. On the left side, Rostam, in his familiar tiger and leopard skin outfit, calmly sits on Rakhsh facing his opponent. His left hand is partially extended, and in his right he holds a bow sword and quivers hang at his side. Rakhsh is rendered in light tan, his hindquarters overlapping the frame and extending slightly into the left margin. The setting is a pastel colored hillside, sparsely vegetated, that rises to a rocky ridge near the top of the picture. Peering over the top of the ridge is a horizontal row of eleven personages, variously attired in yellow-orange, blue, maroon, and gray, some wearing turbans, others pointed helmets. The fifth figure from the right may again (cf. folio 44) be Bahmān. Five standards are held aloft, and in the far background is a solid blue sky.

There are four columns of text above and below the miniature. Above the miniature two of the columns consist of five lines of text, and two columns of four lines. Below the miniature the columns consist of three or four lines respectively, but are juxtaposed with the top columns, so that overall each column is comprised of eight lines. A rectangular ruled frame encloses miniature and text, but on the left side juts out an extra column width to encompass the miniature which is five columns wide. The hindquarters of Rakhsh and five standards violate the frame and protrude into the left and upper margins. The miniature is signed in the lower margin, to the right of center, in miniscule characters in Mo'in's hand: *ze toufiq šān'e raqam zad mo'in* (Drawn with the grace of the Maker by the most humble Mo'in). No date is indicated.

For an earlier sequel in this same episode see folio 44; for another version of the same subject see Ms. F, no.6.

Location:

Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, Ms. no. 270, folio 48

Miniature references:

Unpublished.

Text references:

Warner, V, pp.243-44; Mohl, IV, p.545.

Levy, pp.210-11

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