

Second Half of the Shāhnāmeḥ of Ferdowsi

folio 53

Rostam Slays Shaghād Then Dies

The pit is depicted in the right foreground as a round headed arch, inside of which is solid black. Within this black confine Rostam is seated on his horse Rakhsh. The horse, portrayed in light tan, is still standing but impaled on many pointed blades that pierce its body. Little blood and no sign of agony is evident, and curiously, none of the blades pierce or even touch Rostam. The Iranian hero, dressed in his familiar tiger skin coat and leopard skin headdress, has turned toward the rear (the left of the miniature) and shot an arrow. The bow is held in Rostam's right hand, the artist here having made him left handed in order that his back not be turned to the viewer. On the left, beyond the frame that encloses the text, is a *chenār* tree that grows from an island of dense vegetation. Hiding behind the trunk of the *chenār* is Shaghād, dressed in a yellow tunic and a pointed steel helmet, with a long arrow protruding through his upper torso. Although the text states that the arrow passed through the tree into Shaghād, the artist has here portrayed the event as if the arrow had passed alongside the tree into its target. A light mauve rock formation which reaches a craggy crest near the top serves as a backdrop to the entire scene. Some short vegetation grows from the crest, and a gold sky is beyond.

There are four columns of text above and below the miniature. Above the miniature the columns consist of, from right to left, eight, six, six, and eight lines of text respectively. A chapter title at the bottom of the two center columns even off their length with the others. Below the miniature the columns consist of three, one, one, and three lines of text respectively. A title block above the two center columns again evens off the length of all four columns. A rectangular ruled frame encloses miniature and text, except on the left side where the frame is omitted between the upper and lower text blocks, and the miniature spills freely into the left margin. The miniature is signed in the lower margin, to the right of center, in miniscule characters in Mo'in's hand: *ze towfiq šān'e raqam zad mo'in* (Drawn with the grace of the Maker by the most humble Mo'in). No date is indicated.

Cf. Ms. G, folio 282 for a later version of this same subject also painted by Mo'in.

Location:

Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, Ms. no. 270, folio 53

Miniature references:

Unpublished.

Text references:

Warner, V, p.272.

Mohl, IV, p.578.

Levy, pp.216-17.

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