

Second Half of the Shāhnāmeḥ of Ferdowsi

folio 66

Eskandar with Roshanak in the Harām

The miniature is roughly square in shape but not confined to the width of the text; rather it extends irregularly into the right margin for a distance of what would be an additional two or three text columns. Eskandar and his consort Roshanak are seated on an elevated hexagonal throne in the upper right. He wears a yellow robe and a crown, she is attired in an olive colored dress. Behind them is a multi-lobed arched panel painted with representations of foliage, and above is a roof with a bulbous dome glazed with light mauve tiles, and a small pavilion. The floor in front of them is also tiled in light mauve, with a small rectangular pool in the center surrounded by several candlesticks. A middle aged man with a turban and walking stick appears in the lower right corner. On the left side of the miniature, in that portion corresponding to the width of the text, five young female servants are lined up, some seated, others standing, holding musical instruments or vessels of drink. They are variously attired in long dresses of maroon, blue, orange, and olive. Below them is a white floor (or carpet?) decorated with delicate arabesques, in the center of which is another rectangular pool surrounded by a number of bottles and platters of fruit and condiments. A tiled octagonal pavilion surmounted by a smaller pavilion serves as a backdrop for the servants, and in the extreme background is a pink hillside and two cypress trees.

There are four columns of text comprised of two or three lines each above the miniature, and two lines of four column text below the miniature. A rectangular ruled frame encloses miniature and text except on the right side where the frame is omitted between the upper and lower text blocks, allowing the miniature to spill freely into the right margin. The miniature is signed near the center of the lower margin in miniscule characters in Mo'in's handwriting: *raqam zad ze toufiq šān'e mo'in* (Drawn with the grace of the Maker by Mo'in). No date is indicated.

Location:

Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, Ms. no. 270, folio 66

Miniature references:

Kühnel, Survey, pl.922.

Stchoukine, SA, p.65 (not ill.).

Text references:

Warner, VI, pp.90-91.

Mohl, V, p.88.

Levy, p.236.

