

Second Half of the Shāhnāmeḥ of Ferdowsi

folio 95

Ardashir Recognizes Shāpur During a Polo Game

The conservative rectangular format of the miniature lacks the vibrancy and sense of originality evident in some of the other paintings in the manuscript that are irregular in shape with bold outcroppings. In addition, the composition does not hold together effectively, resulting in a less than accomplished depiction. Ardashir is portrayed wearing a yellow coat and crown in the upper right, astride a white horse. To the left of him, an attendant on a black horse has moved the polo ball near Ardashir's feet. Five children are depicted on the left side, but only one of them, Shāpur, has advanced to retrieve the loose ball. The others remain motionless at a distance. Four mounted men carrying polo mallets are tightly grouped together in the lower right, and can be identified as members of the "company of youths and elders" that accompanied Ardashir to the playing field. The field is represented as sloping ground of light mauve color that reaches a rocky ridge across the top of the miniature. One set of goal posts appears in the lower left, another set in the upper right. Peering over the ridge at the top is a row of eight figures, including one horn blower, that celebrate the event. And beyond, in the far background, is a solid dark blue sky.

A single line of four column text appears at the top of the miniature, and an additional column of two lines is in the bottom left corner. A rectangular ruled frame encloses miniature and text. The nose and forehoofs of a horse, and the flared end of a horn violate the frame and timidly protrude 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: *raqam zad kamineh mo'in*. No date is recorded.

Location:

Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, Ms. no. 270, folio 95

Miniature reference:

Unpublished.

Text references:

Warner, VI, p.264.

Mohl, V, pp. 273-74.

Levy, p.274.

