

Shāhnāmeḥ of Ferdowsi

folio 106

Garsivaz Slanders Siyāvosh before Afrasiyāb

The miniature portrays Garsivaz, the brother of Afrasiyāb, seated before the Turānian monarch, wearing pointed steel helmet, arm and leg guards, with bow and quiver hanging from his belt. He is accompanied by two companions similarly attired. Afrasiyāb is seated in the upper right on an irregular shaped, slightly elevated, throne, which is positioned before a multilobe arched doorway decorated with birds, flowers, and foliage. A sword hangs from his belt, and on his head is a jeweled crown with the black brushlike feather symbolic of kingship. Two attendants, one holding a sword ceremonially against his chest, the other holding a flacon, stand behind the throne. Three musicians are seated in the left foreground, and a *ṣaḡi* serving drink is in the center foreground. Six observers also witness the scene: four advisors to Afrasiyāb are seated in the lower right; two others with walking sticks are standing in the lower left. The foreground is covered with a delicate floral pattern suggestive of a carpet, with dishes of fruit and decanters. Behind Garsivaz and his party is a tiled wall surmounted by a fence with a garden containing a deciduous tree and two cypresses. Left of the wall is a brick gateway (?) enclosing a multilobed arch and a wooden window frame, all of which is of uncertain spatial dimension.

Miniature dimensions: 26 x 16.5 cm. There are three lines of four column text above the miniature, and two lines of four column text below. A rectangular frame encloses miniature and text. The face of Garsivaz has been repainted, but there is no other damage or retouching. The miniscule signature *raqam-e kamīneh Faḡl 'Alī* appears in the upper left next to the cypresses, and a second time even lighter, *raqam-e Faḡl 'Alī* above the head of Afrasiyāb. The miniature is attributed by Jackson and Yohannan to Faḡl 'Alī, and by Robinson to Mo'in with the assistance of Faḡl 'Alī. The general style is that of Mo'in Moṣavver but not all of the faces have been painted with an equal level of execution. The faces of the companion of Garsivaz and the two men in the lower right are, for example, vastly superior to most of the others in the painting. This, plus the signatures of Faḡl 'Alī, lends support to Robinson's contention that Mo'in had assistance.

For another Siyavosh episode painting, cf. Ms.C, f.112.

Location:

New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Acq. 13.228.17 (Cochran 4)

Miniature references:

J&Y, PM, p.36 no.19 (not ill.).

Robinson, Islamic Art, p.78, no.19 (not ill.).

Text references:

Warner II, pp.296ff; Mohl, II, p.294ff; Levy, p.98.

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