

## Shāhnāmeḥ of Ferdowsi

folio 244v

### Goshtāsp Slays a Dragon

The composition is simple yet dynamic, being basically conceived in a broad circular movement. Goshtāsp, seated on a spirited horse in the right foreground, draws his bow taught and aims an arrow directly at the head of the dragon which appears only inches away. The large serpentine dragon is snake-like in form with four short legs and flame-like appendages fluttering from its head, back, and feet. A twin branched horn grows from its head, and its mouth is open revealing sharp white teeth and a slithering tongue that dances before Goshtāsp. The body of the dragon forms a sweeping arc beginning at its head just before Goshtāsp's bow in the left foreground, up and across the top of the miniature, and terminating in its pointed tail that extends into the right margin. The dragon stands straddle of a mountain that reaches a peak under its midsection. Another jagged rock formation, in the left foreground, begins its upward slope under the hooves of Goshtāsp's horse, curving upward to visually reinforce the transfer of thrust from Goshtāsp's bow to the head of the dragon. A few small green bushes grow from the rock formation, and in the far distance is a sky striated with clouds of the Faḡl 'Alī type.

Miniature dimensions: 23.25 x 16.5 cm. The text is written in four columns above and below the painting, with a rectangular frame enclosing miniature and text. Only the tail of the dragon violates the frame and protrudes into the right margin. The miniscule signature, *raqam-e kamineh faḡl 'alī*, is inscribed at the top of the painting, just above the dragon. In the center of the lower margin, written in Mo'in's hand, is the signature *raqam zad kamineh mo'in-e moṣavver*, and the date 1104/1693. The miniature is attributed by Jackson and Yohannan to Faḡl 'Alī, and by Robinson to Mo'in with the assistance of Faḡl 'Alī. The painting is in excellent Mo'in style, and except for the sky which appears at variance with the master's work, no other details are distinguishable from Mo'in's hand.

#### Location:

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

#### Miniature references:

J&Y, PM, p.37, no.33 (not ill.).

Robinson, *Islamic Art*, p.79, no.33 and p.84, fig.19.

#### Text references:

Warner, IV, p.346.

Mohl, IV, p.261.

Levy, pp.186-87.

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