

## Shāhnāmeḥ of Ferdowsi

### folio 354

#### Bahrām Gur Kills a Dragon

Although the composition is differently arranged, the individual components are similar to the representation of Bahrām Gur's previous encounter with a dragon represented on folio 347. The action takes place in the extreme foreground. Bahrām Gur, clad identically to his depiction on f. 347, except for the inclusion of a bull-headed mace on his belt, is this time mounted on a dark horse that prances over the tail of the dragon. The dragon, virtually a mirror image of the animal shown on f. 347, stretches horizontally across the miniature from left to right, but turns its head back toward the center to confront Bahrām, who has bow bent and arrow in place ready for a shot to the dragon's mouth. The setting is a similar rocky landscape, comprised in two levels of depth, with a ridge just behind the main action, and a second one with a rock outcropping further in the distance. Figures again populate the interstices on either side of the rocky peak: on the left are five warriors with pointed helmets; on the right, however, rather than a horse and groom, are five Indians. The one closest to the foreground is a warrior carrying a shield, and the two furthest in the background might also be of the same vocation. One of the two remaining figures is obviously an attendant, and the other, astride a white horse, his master, who might even be identified as Shangol himself. Two bushes grow at the top of the nearer ridge; a single tree and some sprigs of vegetation emanate from the crest behind. In the far distance is a Mo'in type sky.

Miniature dimensions: 25.2 x 16.5 cm. The text is written in four columns above and below the painting, with a rectangular frame enclosing miniature and text. There is a fine horizontal tear just below the head of the main Indian personage; there are no signs of other damage or retouching. The only signature on the page, *raqam-e kamineh faẓl 'alī*, appears in miniscule characters at the extreme top of the miniature, next to the trunk of the tree. The miniature is attributed by Jackson and Yohannan to Faẓl 'Alī, and by Robinson to Mo'in with the assistance of Faẓl 'Alī. Although the miniature is not signed by Mo'in, it is executed in excellent Mo'in style, and the detailing is indistinguishable from the master's other work.

For another Mo'in painting of the same subject, see Ms. E, no.10.

#### Location:

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

#### Miniature references:

J&Y, PM, p.38, no.41 (not ill.).

Robinson, *Islamic Art*, p.79, no.41 and p.86, fig.24.

#### Text references:

Warner, VII, p.125; Mohl, VI, p.32.

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