

combining two stages of the story, the artist has produced a more visually compelling composition than if he had painted one or the other episode alone or on successive pages. Moreover, no other 17th-century artist had attempted to depict the paladins lost in the snow, but had only shown Rustam and the companions hunting for them.

Mu'in Musavvir illustrated two of the single combats from the section on the Battle of the Twelve Rukhs on facing pages (figs. 30 and 31). Each of the combats of the Rukhs is depicted in a provincial Isfahan-style *Shahnameh* manuscript in the John Rylands Library, Manchester, also dated 1650, with two episodes per page on consecutive folios.²¹ Thus, the bunching of illustrations of certain sections of the epic was not unknown in the 17th century. However, the British Library *Shahnameh* of c. 1630-1640 mentioned above does not have any double-page scenes. What is more interesting in the 1650 manuscript is that Mu'in made no attempt to unite the two compositions by suggesting a single landscape. Not only is the ground in *Fariburz Defeats Kulbad* on the right violet, while on the left in *The Battle of Gurazeh and Siyamak* it is white with pink mountains, but also the horse of Kulbad is cut off by the inner margin and its hind quarters do not appear on the left.

A far more unusual and innovative double-page pair of images appears on the dispersed folios from the end of the reign of Kay Khusrau and before the start of the chapter on the reign of Luhrasp (fig. 12).²² The double-page opening consists of a portrait of a youth in European garb holding a hat and standing next to a small white dog. He tilts his head toward the left with a slight smile. On the left-hand page, a young woman whose feet face left bends back toward the right and holds a wine bottle out in the direction of the young man with her left hand while holding a wine-cup to the left, over the marginal ruling, with her right hand. The setting within the marginal rulings consists of vegetation and clouds painted gold in the style popularized by Riza-yi 'Abbasi. The outer margin includes birds, deer, foxes, and rabbits in landscape. This type of marginal decoration had been in use in Persian painting since the

early 16th century and continued to be popular until the end of the Safavid period.

Assuming that both figures are contemporary with the manuscript, they are highly significant for several reasons. Generally speaking, if such figures were not known to be from a *Shahnameh* manuscript, they would be identified as album pages, produced as pendants for insertion in an album. Because paintings were removed or moved around in albums, one can rarely be entirely certain that they were intended to be placed and viewed together. Such doubts do not exist with these paintings. The complimentary use of red and purple in the clothing of both figures sets up a pleasing resonance between the two images that is accentuated by their poses and gestures. B. W. Robinson has noted another version of the male figure, signed by Mu'in and dated 1652, and a further image in mirror reverse.²³ Additionally, Mu'in's portrait of Riza-yi 'Abbasi depicts the artist painting a picture of a standing man in European garb, wearing the same style hat as the one that the 1650 figure holds. In Riza-yi 'Abbasi's last painting, *European Giving a Dog a Drink* from 1634, the dog is the same variety as that in the *Shahnameh* figure and it also appears in a painting of a standing European by Riza from 1628.²⁴ This breed of dog, most likely a papillon, was not the only type that Europeans in Iran possessed in the 17th century, since a painting on the exterior wall of the Chihil Sutun in Isfahan portrays a European with an Italian greyhound. Rather, by 1650 the dog and the hat had become the accepted props with which an artist could suggest that a figure was European. Likewise, the pose of the woman with her arm outstretched and her veil spread like a cape appears in other works of the 17th century²⁵ and may ultimately refer back to a lost work by Riza.

What relevance did these figures have to the *Shahnameh*? They have no narrative connection with the epic, and function as bookends demarcating the end of the early section of the manuscript and the beginning of the later segment. Possibly they were inserted at the request of the patron. However, a more likely, though unverifiable, scenario would be that Mu'in Musavvir wished to introduce a novel

means of separating the two main sections of the book. The figures would have appeared up-to-date and fashionable in 1650, and they might have injected an element of surprise to the reader perusing such a well-known text. As with the compositional deviations from the norm in Mu'in's illustrations to this manuscript, the pendant figures of a standing man and woman offer an unexpected element that must have been intended to delight the patron.

The Illustrations

Despite Mu'in's debt to his master Riza in many aspects of pictorial composition, palette, and subject matter, his individuality shines forth in the 1650 *Shahnameh*. The following section of this article will analyze each illustration stylistically and will propose where the known dispersed pages were placed in the original manuscript as well as the placement of others that have not yet surfaced.

1. *The Divan of Tahmuras*, fol. 8a.

The David Collection (fig. 15)

Tahmuras was the great-grandson of Gayumars, the first king in the *Shahnameh*. He ruled for only thirty years, but accomplished a great deal, teaching people crafts and domesticating animals. Although Tahmuras tamed the *divs* and captured Ahriman, the incarnation of evil, Mu'in has not chosen to portray him in a moment of drama or action. Instead, the beardless King Tahmuras is seated on a platform throne at the right, attended by two musicians and a cupbearer. Kneeling in the foreground at the left, one of the members of the divan, or council, gestures to Tahmuras with open hands, while two other men kneeling behind him drink wine. Two more cupbearers holding long-necked flasks stand behind them with heads inclined toward the enthroned king. This scene takes place at the beginning of the short chapter on Tahmuras.

The purple, fuchsia, and peach hues of the walls, floor-coverings, and one musician's robe are typical of Mu'in's paintings throughout most of his career. The blue mural in the niche with a bird in foliage

recalls the wall painting in Mu'in's image of the *Old Man Who Fell from the Roof*, which is dated 1050 / 1640-1641.²⁶ The figure wearing a turban with a *taj*, or vertical extension around which the turban cloth is wrapped, reflects the social category of the *Shahsevan*, or people strictly loyal to the shah, common in the first half of the 17th century. Although this composition is not innovative, it contains many of the traits associated with Mu'in Musavvir's manuscript illustrations. Moreover, the choice of episode is unique not only in Mu'in's work, but also in the 17th-century *Shahnamehs* listed in the Cambridge website.

2. *Faridun Binds Zahhak in the Presence of Shahrnavaz and Arnavaz*, fol. 13a.

The David Collection (fig. 16)

This scene depicts Faridun's victory over the evil king Zahhak while the two sisters of Jamshid, the previous shah, observe from the side. Zahhak knew that the young Faridun would defeat him because he had dreamed that an Iranian prince with an ox-headed mace would overpower him. While the battle raged between Zahhak's army and the citizens of his realm, he slipped into his palace, intent on murdering the sisters of Jamshid. Instead he encountered Faridun, who bashed his head with his ox-headed mace. Then, in response to a heavenly message, Faridun refrained from killing the evil king and instead bound and took him to hang in a cave for eternity. In the illustration, Zahhak's empty throne awaits Faridun at the right while his mace lies in the foreground. The sisters of Jamshid, among the few women who appear in the illustrations to this manuscript, raise their forefingers to their lips in the gesture of astonishment.

The palette of this scene closely resembles that of the previous illustration, with its purple ground, violet throne, and bright red passages. Although the impassive facial expressions and the women's poses are standard fare in the work of Mu'in, he has added some subtle touches to this illustration, notably the minor variation of the background of the wall painting – white in the throne chamber and gray in the room to the left. This suggests that the sisters stand