

extending into the margin takes the form here of the tip of the dragon's tail attached, we are to assume, to the beast's hindquarters, which are hidden behind the right-hand marginal text. The figures along the horizon and Isfandiyar are consistent with comparable soldiers and heroes in other works by Mu'in. The *divs*, on the other hand, despite their red and purple pigmentation, have realistically soulful expressions.

30. *Kay Khusrau Kills Shida, Son of Afrasiyab*, fol. 157a. The David Collection (fig. 33)

The painting is out of place in the manuscript, suggesting that it may have been bound into this section when the painting of Isfandiyar and the simurgh was removed. The image shows Kay Khusrau administering the *coup de grace* with his dagger through the heart of Shida after he has picked him up and dashed him to the ground. The episode occurs during the last great battle between the Iranians and Turanians. The pictorial elements in this illustration are consistent with those in other scenes of combat in this manuscript, with the onlookers placed on the horizon and in the foreground, the grooms and horses of the combatants placed to either side of them, the distinctive sky, and the use of purple for the jutting crag in the background.

31. *The Fourth Stage of Isfandiyar: Isfandiyar and the Witch*, fol. 186b.

The David Collection (fig. 34)

In Isfandiyar's encounter with a witch, she first took the form of a beautiful woman. He sang and drank with her, but realized that she was a witch and slipped a metal chain around her. At this point she metamorphosed into a lion, but Isfandiyar threatened her with his sword. Finally she reverted to her original identity, a frightful hag. The scene depicted here appears to be the moment before Isfandiyar hit her on the head and she turned to dust. The composition conforms to the enthronement scenes in this manuscript, except that Isfandiyar is seated before a tent, part of an encampment. An illustration by Mu'in of the same episode from a *Shahnameh* of 1066 / 1655⁴⁶ presents the more traditional version of this scene in which Rustam cleaves the witch.

32. *The Fifth Stage of Isfandiyar: Isfandiyar Kills the Simurgh*. Private collection (not illustrated)⁴⁷

In this painting, Mu'in Musavvir has depicted the mythical simurgh swooping dramatically down on an armored casket with sword blades protruding from its sides in which Isfandiyar was hiding. The simurgh attacked it and met its end when it was impaled on the blades. At the upper left on the pinnacle of a rocky crag sits a nest containing two young simurghs. In the foreground, a gray demon converses with a warrior, suggesting that Mu'in thought it appropriate to add demons to the illustrations in this section of the manuscript. Additionally, he has replaced the chariot of the story with a casket, perhaps to keep the composition from becoming too crowded or busy.

33. *Rustam and Isfandiyar Hand-wrestle*.

Private collection (not illustrated)

In the build-up to the final battle between Rustam and Isfandiyar, each man boasted of his valor and strength. Gushtasp, the shah and father of Isfandiyar, had bid him to find Rustam and return with Rustam in chains to the court, knowing that the prince would fail. In their conversation, Isfandiyar grasped and squeezed Rustam's hand, but the warrior did not flinch. In turn, he squeezed Isfandiyar's hand until the prince's face turned red and blood oozed from his fingernails. In the painting, the two seated protagonists face each other and engage in their hand clinch. Characteristically, despite the teeth-gnashing and face-reddening described in the text, Mu'in's figures have remained impassive. The short yellow curtains and centrally placed pole identify the setting as the interior of a tent.

34. *Rustam Kills Shaghad and Dies*,

fol. 211a. The David Collection (fig. 35)

One of the most poignant stories in the *Shahnameh* concerns the death of the great hero Rustam and his horse, Rakhsh. Shaghad, Rustam's half-brother, married the daughter of the King of Kabul, a satrap of Rustam's father, Zal. When the King decided he would no longer pay his annual tribute, he and Shaghad began to plot the downfall of Rustam,