
Second Half of the Shāhnāmeḥ of Ferdowsi

folio 25

**Esfandiār's Third Exploit:
He Battles the Dragon**

The composition is quite original in concept, and appears as if the text were superimposed in front of the miniature. The text is written in four columns within a rectangular ruled frame. Only the left column runs full length; the right column is two lines short of full, and the two center columns eight lines shorter still. This leaves an opening at the bottom through which the observer sees two horses, one gray, the other brown, grazing next to a stream. Harnessed to the horses is a carriage frame on which is mounted a black box with daggers affixed to all surfaces in such a manner that the points are outward. The wheels of the carriage disappear behind the left text column, only to emerge again in the left and lower margins outside the frame. The stream next to which the horses are grazing continues horizontally across the foreground where it is interrupted by the right frame, only to continue again in the right margin where the bulk of the painting is executed. Within the narrow confines of the right margin is painted a large, bluish-gray serpentine dragon with white spots, a gold-colored mouth, and flame-like appendages on its side. The backdrop for the dragon is a vertically articulated rock formation, presumably the dragon's lair, with a small tree growing from its pinnacle.

The four columns of text are comprised of, from right to left, twenty-three, thirteen, thirteen, and twenty-five lines of text respectively. A chapter title on a plaque is captivated in the middle of the two center columns. The miniature is signed in the lower margin, near the center, in miniscule characters that seem to be in Mo'in's hand: *raqam zad kamineh....* the remainder of the inscription is effaced.

For a similar composition by Mo'in see Ms. E, no.5

Location:

Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, Ms. no. 270, folio 25

Miniature references:

Unpublished.

Text references:

Warner, V, p.127.

Mohl, IV, pp.402-3.

