

Second Half of the Shāhnāmeḥ of Ferdowsi

folio 186v

Khosrow Parviz Battles with Rumis (?)

The subject is not readily apparent from the iconography of the painting or the accompanying text. Its location in the manuscript suggests that it is an early episode in the confrontation between Khosrow Parviz, son of Shāh Hormozd, and the usurper Bahrām Chubineh, in their ongoing struggle for the crown of Iran. The text, however, speaks not of Bahrām Chubineh, but only of Khosrow in confrontation with Rumis (Turks). This might suggest a sequel following the initial face off of Bahrām and Khosrow, when three brutal Turks allied to the Khāqān rode out and challenged Khosrow.

Khosrow Parviz might seemingly be identified as the dominant figure on the right, dressed in a yellow coat and pointed steel helmet, who charges on an armor protected horse to dislodge an opponent with his sword. His youthful depiction is almost identical to the personage in the upper left of folio 189, who might likewise be identified as Khosrow, but at variance with the artist's conception on folio 216, where he is portrayed with a full moustache. Khosrow is accompanied by five mounted warriors, distinguished by their pointed helmets, who are clustered about him on the right side fighting with bows and arrows, lances, and in one instance grappling hand to hand with an opponent. On the left side of the composition are five opponents, presumably Rumis, who are armed with similar weapons. All wear turbans except for the dark-skinned, bearded, bareheaded personage in the upper left, perhaps intended to be of Ethiopian origin, who raises his hands in despair. The setting is the traditional sloping hillside colored in light mauve-pink that rises to a rocky ridge accented with white highlights near the top. Beyond it is a gold sky. Two trumpeters and two standard bearers are silhouetted against the sky in the upper right, and balancing them on the left two more standard bearers. Colors include yellow, maroon, purple, gray, and light blue costumes; brown, white, black and gray horses.

There are three lines of four column text above the painting, and two lines below. A rectangular ruled frame encloses miniature and text which is only violated by the seven standards that protrude into the upper margin, and two horns in the right margin. The miniature is signed in the lower margin with miniscule characters in Mo'in's handwriting: *raqam zad kamineh mo'in* (drawn by the humble Mo'in). The inscription is not dated.

Location:

Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, Ms. no. 270, folio 186v

Miniature references:

Unpublished

Possible text references:

Warner, VIII, pp.213 ff; Mohl, VII, pp.23ff.

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