

Shāhnāmeḥ of Ferdowsi

Miniature 1

Zāl by Rudābeh's Castle

The miniature is primarily confined to the margins on the left and top, with an additional section captivated within the two left text columns. In the lower left margin, Zāl has arrived at Rudābeh's palace and signals a greeting. Behind him is the door leading to the palace, above which are two windows, corresponding to the second and third floors. A much larger window is off to the right, on the second floor. Young ladies appear at each window silhouetted against multilobe arched white panels decorated with blue foliage. They are similarly clothed, in long dresses loosely knotted at the waist, and pointed tiaras on their heads. Only the color of their dresses vary, and all cant their heads to the left in the typical Mo'in manner. Three stand at the largest window that is inset into the text. The two furthest to the right, holding long neck flacons, are maid servants; the third, dressed in red, would appear to be Rudābeh. To the left of her is a more elderly woman wearing a *chador*. A lady-in-waiting occupies each of the smaller windows on the left. The walls of the palace are tiled in various colors - orange, mauve, or beige - without any real attempt to render structure or spatial organization. In the upper margin is a tiled roof surmounted by a small pavilion.

Welch records the dimensions as 30x15 cm. without stating his reference points. Judging by the size of the other miniatures in the manuscript, 15 cm would appear to be the width of the four column text including the frame. Proportionally interpolating, the height of the text including the frame would be 26 cm., the width of the text including the extension into the margin 18.4 cm., and 30 cm. would be the height including the miniature extension in the upper margin. There are four columns of text including a chapter title. The two right columns are full, each comprised of 30 lines of text; the two left columns are interrupted by the miniature and only contain 19 lines each. A ruled frame encloses the text, and a lighter ruled frame once enclosed it and the irregular shaped miniature. There are tears in the lower left, but no evident damage to the miniature, and no indications of retouching. The margins have been trimmed; thus, any signature or numerical designations that may have been in the margins have been lost. Although unsigned and undated, the style and quality is consistent with the other miniatures signed by Mo'in in the manuscript to warrant an attribution to him. Miniature no. 2 is on the verso of this page.

Miniature references:

Welch, AK2, Ir.M.43 recto (not ill.)

Text references:

Warner, I, p.270; Mohl, I, p.206; Levy, p.44.

