

Shāhnāmeḥ of Ferdowsi

Miniature 9

Bahrām Gur Wrestles before Shangul

Shangul is seated on an elevated hexagonal throne in the upper right of the miniature. He wears a vermillion robe lightly decorated with gold, and a brown turban with a red feather. A servant, dressed in a purple robe with gold trim and a scarlet turban, stands behind him on the far right. Bahrām Gur is in the lower left, and having lifted the Indian wrestler over his head, is about to dash him to the floor. Bahrām, portrayed bare-headed, wears a vermillion jacket and a white cloth draped around his waist to form a skirt. His opponent is naked above the waist and wears only a pair of tight brown wrestling pants that ends at his knees. Four other personage are portrayed in the scene; judging by the form of their turbans, they all appear to be Indians. Two of them are seated in the right foreground, another in the extreme left foreground, and the fourth is standing in the extreme left background. The floor in the foreground is a lavender tile with black decorations. An orange column splits the background in half. On the right side of it, a black and white tiled doorway set in a white panel delicately painted with foliage that serves as a backdrop for Shangul. On the left, the courtyard opens to a garden with a large tree of tropical appearance that extends into the upper margin.

Grube's dimensions appear to be correct. Page: 36.2 x 22.9 cm.; miniature: 23.3 x 14.2 cm. There are four columns of text above and below the miniature. Above the painting the two outside columns are each comprised of three lines of text, and the center columns of two lines each. Below the miniature all the columns contain eight lines of text each. A rectangular ruled frame encloses miniature and text, except for the tree that violates the frame and protrudes into the upper margin. The digits 81 are written in Arabic numerals in the lower margin, and are, presumably, of later date. There is some evidence of flaking, but it is relatively minor, and the painting otherwise appears to be in a good state of preservation. There is no indication of any retouching. According to Welch, the miniature is signed by Mo'in, presumably in the lower margin.

Miniature references:

Grube, MM, #116 (ill.).

Welch, AK2, Ir.M. 43/F (not illustrated).

Text references:

Warner, VII, p.117.

Mohl, VI, p.23.

