

## Shāhnāmeḥ of Ferdowsi

## Miniature 10

## Bahrām Gur Kills a Dragon

Bahrām Gur is portrayed alone on the right, in a vermillion coat and jewel studded crown, with a bowcase hanging from his belt. Facing the left, he stands with his feet firmly planted on the ground, his right arm extended with bow and arrow in hand. With his left hand he pulls the bowstring back causing the bow to arch, and takes aim at the nose of the large dragon hissing before him. The serpentine dragon occupies the entire left side of the miniature, stretching out in a horseshoe curve before him, its tail at Bahrām's feet, its mouth just inches from his bow. The dragon is rendered in black with gold flame-like appendages at two junctures on its side, a long neck, and a snake-like head with two red horns. Its mouth, also trimmed in gold, is wide open, and a slithering tongue emerges. The setting is a barren, rocky hillside, rendered in light beige, that rises to a rocky crest near the top of the miniature. At a depression in the crest, three Indians armed with shields, watch the event below. A blue sky striated with white clouds is in the far background.

Welch lists the dimensions as 21.4 x 16 cm., which seems proportionally incorrect. If 16 cm. is the width of the miniature including the frame, which is consistent with the other miniatures in the manuscript, then the painting is approximately 15 cm. high, and the miniature plus text and frame 26.0 cm. high. There are four columns of text above and below the miniature. Above the miniature the outside columns are each comprised of five lines of text, and the center columns of three lines each. Below the miniature the outside columns each consist of nine lines of text, and the two center columns of eight lines each. A rectangular ruled frame encloses miniature and text. The tail of the dragon, some of the sky, and one of the Indian's faces appears to have suffered from rubbing. There are no other signs of damage and no indications of retouching. Although the miniature is unsigned and undated, the style and quality are consistent with other miniatures signed by Mo'in in this manuscript to warrant an attribution to him.

For two other variants of this same subject painted by Mo'in at a later date, see Ms.G, ff. 347 and 354.

**Miniature references:**

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

**Text references:**

Warner, VII, p.125.

Mohl, VI, p.32.

