

Shāhnāmeḥ of Ferdowsi

folio 292

Eskandar Attends the Dying Dārā

The miniature depicts the dying Dārā (Darius III) outstretched on the ground near the center of the composition. He is fully clothed in battle dress, his eyes shut, his crown at his side, but he displays no visible sign of a wound. Eskandar (Alexander the Great), his headdress removed, kneels on the ground comforting Dārā's head in his lap. The umbrella of state is open over their heads. Five bareheaded dignitaries, dressed in battle gear, stand near the dying shāh. Although they make gestures of grief, none really appears grief stricken. Another, similarly attired, kneels at Dārā's side, while two grooms with their forefingers raised to their lips in astonishment, stand in the foreground attending their master's mounts. A single tree grows in the center background behind the state umbrella; a craggy ridge with several bushes is near the top of the miniature. On each side of the crest three helmeted soldiers peer over the ridge, and in the far distance is a Faẓl 'Alī type sky with clouds.

Miniature dimensions: 25.5 x 16.5 cm. The text is written in four columns above and below the miniature, with a rectangular frame enclosing miniature and text. There is a fine horizontal tear across the miniature just below the center, and a vertical tear near the right border just below the center. The miniscule signature, *raqam-e kamīneh faẓl 'alī*, is inscribed on the sky at the top. In the center of the lower margin, written in Mo'in's hand, is the signature *raqam zad kamīneh mo'in-e moṣavver*. The miniature is attributed by Jackson and Yohannan to Faẓl 'Alī, and by Robinson to Mo'in with the assistance of Faẓl 'Alī. The painting is in excellent Mo'in style, and except for the sky which appears at variance with the master's work, no other details are distinguishable from Mo'in's hand.

Location:

New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Acq. 13.228.17 (Cochran 4)

Miniature references:

J&Y, PM, p.37, no.36 (not ill.).

Robinson, Islamic Art, p.79, no.36 and p.84, fig.20.

Text references:

Warner, VI, pp.52-55.

Mohl, V, pp.70-73.

Levy, p.236.

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