

IO Islamic 3540

Date	16th century
Title	Firdawsī, <i>Shāhnāmah</i>
Content	<p>A late 16th century Safavid copy of Firdawsī's <i>Shāhnāmah</i>, probably from Shiraz containing 56 miniatures without attribution. On the basis of a miniature ascribed to Zayn al-‘Ābidīn in BL Or.12985, f.90v (<i>Garshaspnāmah</i>), the three double page compositions and 23 others may be attributed to him (ff.1v-2r, 10r, 130r, 138v, 144v, 153r, 166r, 176r, 183r, 195v, 206r, 356r, 454r, 463v, 477v, 490v, 502r, 519r, 528v, 536b, 547v, 561r, 568v-569r). The other artist, responsible for the remaining 32 illustrations, was more conventional in his treatment and exemplifies the normal late-sixteenth century Shiraz style at its best.</p> <p>Illustrations)</p> <p>(1v - 2r) Double-page miniature within a gorgeous illuminated border, of Sulaymān and Queen of Sheba.</p> <p>(10r) Bath scene, illustrating the story in the preface of how Firdawsī scornfully gave away to a bath house attendant half the paltry reward Sultan Maḥmūd gave him for writing the <i>Shāhnāmah</i>.</p> <p>(17r) Gayumarṣ and his court.</p> <p>(25r) Farīdūn strikes down Zāḥḥāk in the palace in the presence of Jamshīd's sisters.</p> <p>(35r) Tūr defeated and killed by Manūchihr.</p> <p>(44r) Zāl embracing Rudābah.</p> <p>(54r) The birth of Rustam.</p> <p>(71v) Rustam and the White Demon.</p> <p>(91r) The death of Suhrāb.</p> <p>(98r) The fire-ordeal of Siyāvash.</p> <p>(106r) Siyāvash playing polo with Afrāsiyāb.</p> <p>(116r) The murder of Siyāvash.</p> <p>(121v) Rustam in battle against Afrāsiyāb.</p> <p>(130r) The enthronement of Kay Khusraw.</p> <p>(138v) Persian troops sacking Farūd's castle.</p> <p>(144v) The battle of Mount Hamavan between the armies of Gūdarz and Pīrān.</p> <p>(153r) Ruhām and the Sorcerer.</p> <p>(166r) Combat of Rustam and Ashkābūs.</p> <p>(176r) Rustam in battle, after being visited by Pīrān.</p> <p>(183r) Rustam attacking the fortress of Kāfūr the man-eater.</p> <p>(195v) Pīrān saves Bīzhan from the gallows.</p> <p>(206r) Rustam's raid on Afrāsiyāb's palace after rescuing Bīzhan.</p> <p>(219r) Barzū lassoing Farāmarz.</p>

- (225r) Combat of Rustam and Barzū.
- (238v) Encounter of Afrāsīyāb and Pilsam.
- (242r) Rustam falls in combat with Pilsam. The latter being kicked by Rakhsh.
- (254v) Human slain by Bīzhan.
- (262r) Combat of Gīv and Pīran.
- (274r) Rustam leading the Persian army to war with Afrāsīyāb.
- (281v) Kay Khusraw slays Ustuqīla the Kurd.
- (288v) The women of Afrāsīyāb before Kay Khusraw.
- (299r) Execution of Afrāsīyāb by Kay Khusraw.
- (307v - 308r) Double-page miniature within a sumptuous illuminated border. The enthronement of Luhrasp.
- (315r) Gushtasp killing the dragon.
- (324v) Death of Zarīr in battle between Iran and Turan.
- (339v) Isfandiyār's attack on Arjasp in the Brazen Fortress.
- (356r) Rustam shoots Isfandiyār in the eyes.
- (361v) The death of Rustam.
- (373r) Iskandar comforting the dying Dārā.
- (381r) Iskandar visiting the Ka'ba.
- (390r) Iskandar building the wall against Gog and Magog.
- (401v) Bahram Gūr winning the crown from between the lions.
- (411v) Bahram Gūr hunting.
- (416v) Bahram leading the Khāqān captive.
- (429r) Battle between Pīrūz and Khūshnavāz.
- (441v) Capture of the Roman fortress by Nushirvān.
- (454r) Battle between the Khāqān and the Haytalians.
- (463v) Introduction of chess at the court of Anushirvān.
- (477v) Anushirvān attacking a moated Roman fortress.
- (490v) Sāvā Shāh slain by Bahram Chūbīn.
- (502r) The blinding of King Hurmuz and burning of his palace.
- (519r) Khusraw embracing Maryam .
- (528v) Bahram Chūbīn killing the lion-ape.
- (536v) Khusraw and Gurdīya, sister of Bahram Chūbīn.
- (547v) Shirū'ī sends an envoy to Khusraw.
- (561r) Rustam killed by Sa'ad at the battle of Qadisīya.
- (568v - 569r) Double-page miniature within a sumptuous illuminated border: hunting scene. Upper part of 568v damaged and repaired.

Physical description

Material: Paper.

Foliation: ff 569.

Dimensions: 46 x 29.5 cm. [leaf].

Script: Nasta'liq in 4 columns of 25 lines per page on gold-sprinkled paper.

Decorations: 56 miniatures of which three are double compositions; magnificently illuminated heading on ff. 15v-16r; section headings throughout illuminated; margins on illustrated folios embellished with large floral scrolls in gold.

Binding: Modern scarlet morocco binding.

Ownership

Possibly Francis Edward Rawdon-Hastings, 1st Marquess of Hastings (1754-1826), Governor-General of India 1813-23

Bibliography

Hermann Ethé, *Catalogue of Persian manuscripts in the Library of the India Office* (Oxford, 1903-37)

Basil W. Robinson, *Persian Paintings in the India Office Library: a Descriptive Catalogue* (London, 1976)