

IO Islamic 3540

Date 16th century

Title Firdawsī, *Shāhnāmah*

Content A late 16th century Safavid copy of Firdawsī's *Shāhnāmah*, 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 (*Garshaspnāmah*), 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.

Illustrations (*click on the links to take you directly to the manuscript viewer*):

([1v-2r](#)) Double-page miniature within a gorgeous illuminated border, of Sulaymān and Queen of Sheba.

([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 *Shāhnāmah*.

([17r](#)) Gayumarṣ and his court.

([25r](#)) Farīdūn strikes down Zāḥḥāk in the palace in the presence of Jamshīd's sisters.

([35r](#)) Tūr defeated and killed by Manūchihr.

([44r](#)) Zāl embracing Rudābah.

([54r](#)) The birth of Rustam.

([71v](#)) Rustam and the White Demon.

([91r](#)) The death of Suhrāb.

([98r](#)) The fire-ordeal of Siyāvash.

([106r](#)) Siyāvash playing polo with Afrāsīyāb.

([116r](#)) The murder of Siyāvash.

([121v](#)) Rustam in battle against Afrāsīyāb.

([130r](#)) The enthronement of Kay Khusraw.

([138v](#)) Persian troops sacking Farūd's castle.

([144v](#)) The battle of Mount Hamavan between the armies of Gūdarz and Pīrān.

- (153r) Ruhām and the Sorcerer.
- (166r) Combat of Rustam and Ashkābūs.
- (176r) Rustam in battle, after being visited by Pīrān.
- (183r) Rustam attacking the fortress of Kāfūr the man-eater.
- (195v) Pīrān saves Bīzhan from the gallows.
- (206r) Rustam's raid on Afrāsīyāb's palace after rescuing Bīzhan.
- (219r) Barzū lassoing Farāmarz.
- (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 Ustuqila 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.

Language Persian

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).