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MINIATURE FROM A COPY OF FIRDAWSI'S SHAHNAME. 'JAMSHID IS BORNE ON HIS THRONE INTO THE AIR BY DEMONS'

IRAN, SHIRAZ; C. 1440

LEAF: 32 × 23.3 CM

In this Timurid painting, the artist made a definite break with the confining, symmetrical frame that the manuscript's designer had given him.

Jamshid was Iran's fourth mythical king, who ruled man, animals, and demons. At one point he had delusions of grandeur and had the demons carry him up into heaven. Between the two set pieces his subjects look on, wide-eyed with admiration. An unimpressed camel munches on the leaves of a tree, which like the king himself and an elegant phoenix breaks out of the text frame.

Jamshid's invasion of the divine sphere naturally has consequences, and from then on, he fared badly and was finally killed by the evil King Zahhak.

Published in:

Sotheby's, London, 1/12-1969, lot 38;

Kjeld von Folsach: *For the Privileged Few: Islamic Miniature Painting from The David Collection*, Louisiana, Humlebæk 2007, cat.no. 15;

Joachim Meyer and Peter Wandel: *Shahnama: the Colorful Epic About Iran's Past*, The David Collection, Copenhagen 2016, cat.nr. 3; <http://shahnama.caret.cam.ac.uk/new/jnama/card/cemanuscript:2143526757>;