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MINIATURE FROM A COPY OF FIRDAWSI'S *SHAHNAMA*. 'KAY KHUSRAW WELCOMED BY HIS GRANDFATHER, KAY KAUS, KING OF IRAN'

IRAN, TABRIZ; BETWEEN 1520 AND 1535

LEAF: 47.6 X 32.1 CM

The David Collection owns three miniatures from the copy of the *Shahnama* that was commissioned by Shah Ismail and his son, Shah Tahmasp. The volume was dispersed in 1970, and most of it is now divided between the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art. With its 258 miniatures painted by the court studio's finest artists, the book is considered the finest Safavid manuscript ever produced.

The scene is enacted at the court of Kay Kaus. He is seated on his throne together with his grandson, Kay Khusraw, who has just returned from Turan, where he grew up in secrecy after his father, good Prince Siyawush, was killed.

The courtiers are depicted individually and wear contemporary dress.

Nothing was done to historicize the scene. Although the painting does indicate a room with perspective, it is very two-dimensional. The brilliant colors are largely unmixed, the plants and especially the clouds are stylized, and the golden sky highlights the ideal world depicted by the Persian artist.

Published in:

Martin Bernard Dickson and Stuart Cary Welch: *The Houghton Shahnameh*, Cambridge, Mass. 1981, vol. 2, pl. 134;

Christie's, London, 11/10-1988, lot 6;

Kjeld von Folsach: *Islamic art. The David Collection*, Copenhagen 1990, cat.no. 24;

Kjeld von Folsach, Torben Lundbæk and Peder Mortensen (eds.): *Sultan, Shah and Great Mughal: the history and culture of the Islamic world*, The National Museum, Copenhagen 1996, cat.no. 269;

Kjeld von Folsach: *Art from the World of Islam in The David Collection*, Copenhagen 2001, cat.no. 32;

Sheila S. Blair and Jonathan M. Bloom (eds.): *Cosmophilia. Islamic Art from the David Collection*, McMullen Museum of Art, Boston College, Boston 2006, cat.no. 5;

Kjeld von Folsach: *For the Privileged Few: Islamic Miniature Painting from The David Collection*, Louisiana, Humlebæk 2007, cat.no. 33;

Sheila R. Canby: *The Shahnama of Shah Tahmasp : the Persian Book of Kings*, New York [2014], cat.no. 196;

Joachim Meyer and Peter Wandel: *Shahnama: the Colorful Epic About Iran's Past*, The David Collection, Copenhagen 2016, cat.nr. 33;

<http://shahnama.caret.cam.ac.uk/new/jnama/card/cemanuscript:-2038354105>

Kjeld von Folsach, Joachim Meyer: *The Human Figure in Islamic Art – Holy Men, Princes, and Commoners*, The David Collection, Copenhagen 2017, cat.no. 40;