The scene is majestic: the summit of a mountain where the rocks, often brought to life with human and animal heads, provide shelter both to bears and illness as well as to the absin tense of Zal. The child is seated in front of a nest belonging to the simurgh, the mythical bird that rescued him. Two young simurghs are behind him and all three appear to be in a cave. The upper right corner is entirely occupied by a bird whose forked tail flutters lazily in the golden space; it is bringing two animals to feed to its young and Zal. At the lower right, three servants leading two donkeys, and a more elegant harness express their astonishment at the sight before them. The combinations of color in this painting are both grandiose and magical. They take the viewer into an imaginary, mythical world of heroes (which is what Zal will become) and of fantastical creatures like the simurgh.

The attention paid to the detail on the rocks, the mysterious figure half-hidden behind a rock lower down in the center and the expressions on the faces of the two servants are not without humor and reveal a painter keen to what his readers' curiosity.
Pl. 15  *Sadeh’s feast*  
Page from the Shahnama of Shah Tahmasp  
c. 1520 (Isfahan, Iran)  
Painting attributed to Sultan Muhammad (? post 1330)  
New York, MET, 1970.301.7

King Hushang, grandson of Gauynar, the mythical sovereign to have lived on earth, is working quietly along when he sees a black serpent with brilliant eyes. He throws a stone at him but the serpent slithers him and the stone hits his other stones causing sparks, and fire is born. The king then sings the praises of the Creator and orders prayers to be said in honor of fire. He lights a large fire and hosts a feast for his people. This painting shows the collaborations, a kind of open-air banquet at which servants [above and to the right] huddle around the two crowned princes seated on carpets. The relationship between this image and the text is significant: "The [Hushang] enjoyed civilizing people, [he] decided to separate the cattle, distrify, and sheep from the untameable ogre and elks [...], He ordered them to be joined up and used them to cultivate the land, for trade and to maintain the splendor of his throne. He killed and skinned ermines, foxes and sable and with their hides made clothes for men’s bodies.”

In the lower part of this painting, in the center on the left we can see the domesticated animals, in front the rejected elks, and a number of figures dressed in animal skins. The scene takes place in a handsome amphitheater encircled by dark-colored rocks, a particularly dense mass of which rises up on the right as it with the oblique slant, to counterbalance the central semicircle. As always with Sultan Muhammad, the detail of the figures suggests either a close relationship or feelings that are not a mystery to us: what is the meaning of the gesture being made by the figure seated on the right of the king who is tipping his helmet?