Zumurrud Shah retreats to Noshad Fort, where he receives the homage of Anquill Demon-Hurturer and his countless legions. Zumurrud Shah still fears Hamza and is mollified only when Anquill offers to reinforce the defenses of the already treacherous rocky mountain pass leading to the city. His men dig a complicated series of channels that flood the narrow road and encircle the fort and two outposts with an untraversable moat.

Having located their enemy, Hamza's forces set up camp on the other side of the water but the defenders refuse to engage them. The next day, however, the enemy champion Marku' Boar-Tooth rides out to fight all challengers, killing or wounding each one. On the third day of fighting, suddenly and unexpectedly, he is defeated by a mysterious young knight whose identity is concealed by a veil. The champion challenges Marku' s frightened supporters and they jump into the sea. Only later does Hamza learn that the champion is a prince named Kayhan b. Rustam, who is kidnapped by Marku' s immediate allies by way of revenge.

Despite Kayhan's victory, the waters around Noshad continue to thwart Hamza's forces. A massive naval expedition is mounted, but is repulsed by a barrage of stones. Finally, other princes decide to take matters into their own hands. Hamza's son, Prince Badi'uzzaman, hides himself in a trunk and has it thrown into the sea; Malik Qasim immediately leaps into the sea and starts to swim after the trunk. By clinging to a tree, the latter saves himself and finds the source of the river in a garden, where he is discovered by a beautiful girl who immediately falls in love with him. Although she is the daughter of one of the fort's defenders, he tells her his mission and she becomes a Muslim.

The next day Qasim makes his way into the heart of the enemy lines. He responds to an insolent soldier by man-handling him before Surkhah, the commander of the garrison. Surkhah is duly impressed by this show of strength, but when he is told of Qasim's identity and how he came to Noshad, he is so overwhelmed by his resolve that he converts to Islam along with thousands of his men. Meanwhile, Badi'uzzaman has been washed ashore ready to do battle. He kills several opponents and converts hundreds of others. The exploits of these two princes bring about the surrender of the garrison to Hamza's forces, who are welcomed with much fanfare.
The text near the end of the precedingfolio (cat. 39) recounts the initial survey of the seemingly impregnable defenses of Noshad by Hamza's lieutenant Umar Ma'dikar:

"...on the way was a river that was difficult to cross other than by a bridge, and on both sides of the river a tunnel had been dug. Water tumbled down from the top of the mountain, and it was so rocky that no one could traverse it. In olden times there had been no road through the rocks, but a road had been cut so that it was possible to go easily along the edge of the water. Facing this road a fortress had been built, and when the fortress was manned it was difficult to cross the water. Behind the fortress another gate had been constructed and another tunnel cut so that water from the moat of the fortress spilled into the tunnel and then entered a garden where buildings had been constructed. When the water left there it went to the skirt of a second fortress and then to the lands of Noshad. Anquial said, 'Be easy of mind. The road by which you have come cannot be traversed by all the armies of the world if we so choose.'"

The narrative ends abruptly with a night skirmish, and some messages being exchanged. Surprisingly, though the image represents the remarkable terrain described in considerable detail in the text on cat. 39, the episode actually depicted corresponds to few lines on the reverse of this painting. This moment is, as the caption informs us, when the ayen Umar joins the stalwart Ma'di and Hamza himself in beholding the awesome site. Hamza masses his forces at the water's edge and sounds the battle drums in an effort to draw out the enemy, but to no avail. The drawbridge of the outpost remains raised, and the defenders refuse to engage Hamza and his men.

This painting is unique in the Hamzanama because it preserves a clue as to how Mughal artists really knew what to paint. The text of the Hamzanama is written in straightforward Persian and most Mughal artists were probably capable of reading the relevant passages, but they were never compelled to do so. Instead, they relied on oral instructions or cursory prescriptive notes written specifically for them by various supervisors or clerks involved in the project. Such notes are found on a number of sixteenth-century Mughal manuscripts, but this example is the very earliest known note in all of Mughal painting. It reads: 'The Amir Umar come before Umar Ma'dikar at the edge of the sea. There should be a mountain on two sides. The water should cover the entire path. On top of the mountain is another path blocked with stones.' The unpainted cloth beneath the inscription and the very language of the note—"there should be"—make it clear that it was written before the execution of the painting, and was simply overlooked by the artists and marginator when they completed the painting.

Banavari, the designer of the painting, heeds his supervisor’s recommendations. He places the three protagonists and an unidentified princely figure—perhaps Qasim—prominently in the foreground, and dutifully depicts a river encircling a promontory fortified with a pair of portals. A second artist, Mah Muhammad, has the larger of these portals stand oddly apart from any structure whatsoever, apparently construing it merely as the mechanism supporting the drawbridge. The moat is rather too narrow to cause much consternation, particularly for a figure as expansive as Ma'di, and Mah Muhammad's boyish defenders struggling on opposite shores seem more apprehensive than their thwarted attackers.

But these slight illogical details would certainly have been forgiven by contemporary viewers, who had little expectation of a painting with a coherent sense of space. Yet this is precisely what the team of artists was trying to achieve by diminishing the scale of the figures as they receded into the distance. Such a concern with pictorial space was both novel and ambitious, but remained essentially peripheral to the narrative thrust of the painting. The real appeal of the illustration lay in the slyly comical presentation of the very different physical types in Hamza’s small band of companions and the drumbeat of anticipation among the ranks of Anquil’s soldiers. The surging forms and scumbled surfaces of the rocks in the foreground heighten the excitement of the scene and link the two halves of the composition.

A third artist, Madhava Khurd, painted Umar and Umar Ma'dikar, and reddish the face, hand, and cape of the prince. Madhava Khurd typically gives his figures larger and darker features and more naturalistically rendered hands; in contrast to Banavari, he rounds off his forms by applying rich, black lines to their contours, an effect seen most clearly here in the rotund shoulders and belly of Umar Ma'dikar and in the hem of Umar's cloak.
The enemy cannot resist the lure of Hamza’s army forever. When day breaks, a fearsome champion named Marku, son of Brahmin, attacks the outposts with a storm of arrows. One champion after another responds to the call, but each is thoroughly trounced in turn. With each triumph, Marku grows more impudent, cruelly taunting the wounded opponent as he retreats. ‘God-worshipper, where are you going? Stay where you are. I’m coming!’ In a righteous world, such blasphemy does not go unpunished for long.

‘... then, without warning, by God’s command and infinite grace, a young veiled hero stepped forth. Entering the field, he stood in that infidel’s path. The treacherous guebre aimed a sword blow at the veiled youth’s head, but the prince raised his shield, and as the sword came down, he grasped the guebre’s wrist. Try as he might, the guebre was unable to wrestle his hand and sword from the youth’s grasp. With one swift motion he pulled the sword from his hand and said, “Take that!” The guebre raised his shield over his head, but the warrior struck him so hard across his middle that, despite all his armor, he was cut in two. All the guebre’s men hurled themselves into the water and ran away.’

The dramatic culmination of this sequence of events is narrated in a few lines near the very bottom of the preceding folio. Yet the writing does not end after the usual nineteen lines, but continues in two partial lines of text that are squeezed awkwardly into the narrow space below the last regular line. Surprisingly, these additional sentences describe a new phase of activity, beginning with the resentment that Marku’s immediate ally, Master, has been revealed as the veiled hero, and ending in the kidnapping of the youth by a spy in their employ.

“When Marku was killed, Surkhab and Zarnab became angry and wrote a letter to Anquill. At this point, Nawroo Ayjar came from Anquill and said, ‘Let me across the wall. Perhaps I can achieve something.’

Thus they did. By night he went to Rayhan’s tent, rendered him unconscious, and stole him away.’

That the text is extended in such an ungainly manner demonstrates the indifference accorded the physical layout of the text in this manuscript; that this narrative extension was unrelated to the subject of the ensuing illustration underscores the fluid nature of the relationship between text and illustration on consecutive folios.

Mukhilis presents a relatively comprehensive summary of the narrative. The young champion is positioned prominently, his veiled face practically at the center of the composition. Located to the left and slightly below him is Marku, blood spewing from his innards and streaming over his dangling head. The artist casts this gory spectacle as the simple triumph of good over evil, whether by design or by accident, he omits Marku’s fatal incapacitation, showing his sword plainly unencumbered and Rayhan without a shield. Likewise, he compresses the sequence of events so that three soldiers flounder in the sea while the veiled knight is still busy splitting Marku’s asunder. Other warriors mill about, their helmetless heads and gaping mouths leaving no doubt that the fight has gone out of them. The result is an image of a solitary champion wreaking havoc among a more numerous enemy.

The composition repeats the key features of the distinctive terrain of the Noskud Pass. One foe clammers across the drawbridge, which his compatriots hasten to raise; this detail simultaneously evokes Marku’s sortie and funnels the chaotic action in the foreground back toward the outpost. The promontory is rendered in essentially the same manner, and is once more shown encircled by water and bracketed by a pair of outposts. In this case, however, the larger outpost abuts the edge of the painting, and the scale of the figures in the distance is reduced more gradually. The work is generally livelier than the preceding illustration. This effect is due in large part to the meandering flow of figures, but the particularly brilliant patterns of the caparisons and painterly treatment of the rocks also impart a vitality to the surface.

Mukhilis, who may have designed the painting, supplied all the figures up to the drawbridge. Although the coarse features of the fleeing soldiers function as attributes of their mean nature, Mukhilis habitually endows all his figures with wide-open eyes and expressive facial markings, and gives volume to their clothing with heavily conventionalized folds; all these elements also appear in cat. 58. The prominent use of yellow and the garish bands of the caparisons are later repeated in another work (cat. 62). A second artist, Lalu, who is known from five ascribed paintings and two attributable works in the Tutinimo, seems to have provided the figures above the drawbridge and beyond.\[1\]}