Access no.: 60 Tarikh Farsi
Calligrapher: Unknown
Date: 905 H / 1500 AD
Style: Safavid Iran
Size: 19 x 31 cm

The 10th c. H / 16th c. AD saw the emergence of a powerful Safavid dynasty, with strong art ateliers in its major cities that attracted many artists who were the masters and heads of earlier kutub-khanes.

This copy of the Shahnameh, which relates the glorious history of the Persian kings, is in 633 folios and features 42 miniatures of an exquisite quality. Produced between the end of the Timurid Sultan Husayn Bayqara’s rule in Herat and the beginning of the reign of Shah Ismail Safavi in Tabriz, the manuscript is the culmination of a long tradition of illuminated and illustrated books.

The manuscript starts with an oval medallion or Shamsa that gives the title of the manuscript, and it is followed by a double folio with illustrations as its frontispiece. The illustrations show a royal gathering on one side and a battle scene on the other, both being rendered in an archaic style that is reminiscent of the Baghdad art school. The illuminated double Unwan pages are similarly handled and demonstrate a well balanced use of the colors gold and lapis lazuli. The miniatures occupy only part of the illustrated pages, and are surrounded by the four columns of poems beautifully executed in black Nasta’liq.
A battle scene

معركة بين بطولين من أبطال فلوك الفرس
Shirin examines the portrait of Khusrow
شیرین نیز علت‌ی رسم خسرو
Bahram Gur kills the white devil

Bahram جویر بنیان‌السلطان الیاس
The Catalogue

The 16th & 17th centuries