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Conceptual Article

Analysis of the Role of Rakhsh in the Narrative Structure of Rustam's Seven Labors with Emphasis on Narratology (Case Study: Qarajaghay Khan Shahnameh)

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Abstract

Since narratology is considered an interdisciplinary field and is used in various contexts, it can also be applied to the analysis of works within the realm of visual arts. As evidenced by the study of Persian miniatures, they exhibit characteristics that make narratological analysis feasible. Indeed, the strong connection between miniature and text, especially literature, enhances this realization. It seems that the epic poems of Shahnameh have played a significant role in the emergence of Persian miniatures, which have been depicted throughout various periods. In this regard, the present research is an attempt to understand to what extent Persian miniature is influenced by the artist's personal taste and understanding of the narrative, and to what extent court commissions have impacted the formation of these artworks.

This study aims to explore the evolutionary trajectory of meaning in paintings related to the theme of Rustam's Seven Labors in the Shahnameh through the lens of narratology, elucidating the role of the miniaturist in this context.

The present study employs a descriptive-analytical research method. Two miniatures titled "Lion" and "Rustam's Third Labor: Dragon" from Qarajaghay Khan Shahnameh (Windsor) have been selected as case studies. The data for this research was collected through library research, and organized to address the research questions.

Keywords: *Persian Miniature, Shahnameh, Rustam's Seven Labor, Rakhsh, Narratology.*

Statement of Problem

A narratology is an interdisciplinary approach applicable to various fields. It deals with narrative (storytelling) and plot structure. Narratological analysis is not limited to written texts; visual arts can also be examined from this perspective. Among works in this field, Persian miniature displays

characteristics that provide a foundation for such studies due to the strong connection between text and image. The relationship between Persian miniature and Ferdowsi's epic poems is considered particularly significant in this context. It seems that the works of poets such as Jami and Nizami, along with the epic poetry of the Shahnameh, have played an unparalleled role in the formation of Persian miniatures. Throughout different eras,

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Iranian miniaturists have consistently endeavored to transform the poetry and meanings of the Shahnameh into visual elements. Persian miniature has always had an intertwined connection with literature. Pivotal moments from poetry and literature were often selected by miniaturists and depicted with the unique aesthetics of Persian miniature. Although the languages of literature and miniature are inherently distinct and each has its own functions, neither can fully describe the other. Therefore, the present study focuses on one of the most famous narratives of the Shahnameh, namely Rostam's Seven Labors, which has been illustrated in miniatures from various periods. Specifically, it examines the role of Rakhsh from a narratological perspective. In this regard, two miniatures related to the first and third labors, titled "Lion" and "Dragon" from Qarajaghay Khan Shahnameh, have been scrutinized. The objective of the current research is to investigate the evolutionary trajectory of meaning in the aforementioned miniatures from a narratological perspective. This study addresses the question of how much Persian miniature is influenced by the miniaturist's taste and their understanding of the narrative. Additionally, it explores to what extent factors such as court commissions have contributed to the formation of these artworks. To answer these questions, special attention has been paid not only to the role of Rakhsh in the two selected miniatures but also to the position of Rakhsh within these artworks has been examined. The present research is significant as it aims to demonstrate how one can move beyond superficial levels to deeper layers of meaning and elucidate the mechanisms of converting text into images within the realm of Persian miniatures.

Review of Literature

Bayat, and Mesbah (2023) have analyzed a miniature from the Zafarnameh in their article

titled "Narrative Structure Analysis in the Text and Miniature of Timur's War with Sultan Mahmud Ruler of Hindustan Based on the Greimasian Actantial Model." They have also assessed the similarities and differences governing the Greimasian actantial model in comparison with the text and evaluated the structural narrative relationship. Furthermore, Mousavi Lar and Mesbah (2011) in their research titled "Narrative Structure Analysis of the Miniature of Zakhak's Death Based on the Greimasian Actantial Model," have elucidated the aforementioned model and examined the narrative structure within this Miniature. They have analyzed the correspondence of both the underlying and narrative superstructure components of the miniature with the narrative structure. In 2011, in an article titled "Examination and Analysis of the Narrative Structure of Rostam's Seven Labors," Nabiloo has examined the story of Rostam's Seven Labors with emphasis on the views of structuralists, including Propp, Greimas, and Todorov. The review of the literature shows that the narratological approach has not been extensively applied in the examination of visual arts, including Persian miniature. In addition, no research has been presented to clarify the position of the Persian miniaturist's taste and the extent of the commissioner's involvement. Therefore, this study focuses on the subject of narratology in miniature and introduces a new theory: whether the miniaturist's taste, the commissioner's preferences, or a combination of both have been influential in creating significant works.

Research Methodology

The present study employs a descriptive-analytical approach. This research aims to delve into the preferences and narrative understanding of the miniaturist, which focuses on the role of Rakhsh in the miniatures related to Rostam's Seven Labors in the Shahnameh. Therefore, two miniatures have

been selected from Qarajaghay Khan Shahnameh (Windsor version) as case studies: “Rustam’s First Labor: Lion” and “Rustam’s Third Labor: Dragon.” The reason for choosing these miniatures is to provide a framework for studying the role of Rakhsh. In this study, information has been collected through library research and organized to address the research questions effectively.

Theoretical Framework

Narratology encompasses narrative genres, storytelling methods, and plot structures. In the book “Encyclopedia of Contemporary Literary Theory,” three distinct periods in the history of narratology are identified, including the first period, pre-structuralist (up to 1960), the second period, structuralist (from 1960 to 1980), and the third period, post-structuralist (Makaryk, 2011, 149). During the structuralist period (1960s), researchers associated with the fields of Russian formalism and Ferdinand de Saussur linguistics established the theoretical frameworks of narratology. Makaryk refers to Aristotle’s differentiation in Chapter 3 of “Poetics,” where he distinguishes between the presentation of an object and the narration of a story by a narrator through characters. This distinction is considered the first step in the realm of narratology (ibid.). In fact, Aristotle’s approach marks a shift in aesthetic theory between late 19th-century and early 20th-century writers. Current trends in narratology indicate the incorporation of ideas from various disciplines into narrative studies. In general, narratology refers to a method for analyzing the psychological act of narration and investigates the techniques of a narrative formed by a story. In the book “Applied Narratology,” it is stated that narratology as a science focuses on organizing all concepts and main levels of a narrative and examines all elements present in the text (Abbasi, 2014, 3). Thus, narratology, or

the science of narrative practice, is considered a branch of study that delves into the techniques and narrative structures present in literary texts, examining them in detail. It should be taken into consideration that “plot” is a literary term used for the narrative structure, and most of the content expressed in this area is taken from Aristotle’s poetics. Martin suggests that the plot is a result of following through temporal progression and causality. For instance, “The king died and then the queen died” is a story, whereas “the king died and then the queen died of grief” is considered a plot (Martin, 2003, 57). Unity predominates in the plot, which means that there is initially a calm situation, followed by disruption, and ultimately a return to calm by the end of the narrative. Berger reminds us to view narrative as a chain of events (Berger, 2001, 18). Additionally, it should be kept in mind that narratives unfold over a period, which can be as short as a brief children’s tale or as lengthy as some novels and epics.

The Qarajaghay Khan Shahnameh

The Qarajaghay Khan Shahnameh dates back to 1648 BC and is currently housed at Windsor Castle in Britain. Its miniatures bear similarities in color spectrum and spatial composition to those of the Shahnameh of Rashida. The Qarajaghay Khan Shahnameh contains 148 unsigned miniatures, except for the “Signature of Muhammad Yusuf” which is inscribed at the bottom of one of its miniatures (Majlis 69, depicting the battle of Afrasiyab and Barzu) (Hosseini, 2011, 14). As mentioned earlier, scholars often attribute the miniatures of this Shahnameh to Muhammad Yusuf and Muhammad Qasim, who were artists from the second Abbasid period. However, upon closer examination of the miniatures of this manuscript, it becomes evident that besides these mentioned artists, other unidentified artists also contributed

to its creation. The introduction of the book “Shahnameh Windsor 1648” states that the Qarajaghay Khan Shahnameh measures 46 by 28 centimeters and consists of a handwritten version spanning 756 pages in Nastaliq script, adorned with elaborate decorations. Additionally, extensive margins throughout the manuscript are adorned with designs featuring animals and birds (Robinson et al., 2007, 18). The fate of the Qarajaghay Khan Shahnameh remained unknown for two centuries after its completion. However, it is certain that this Shahnameh remained within the Qarajaghay Khan family for two centuries and changed hands over time. Hosseini mentions that this Shahnameh was in the possession of Ahmad Shah, the ruler of Afghanistan until the mid-18th century BC, and then it passed down to Kamran, the crown prince of Afghanistan. Ultimately, Kamran Shah (ruler of Herat) sent this complete and precious Shahnameh as a gift to Queen Victoria (Hosseini, 2011, 17).

Analysis of the Narrative Structure of Miniatures

In the religious ceremonies and myths of many civilizations, the horse occupies an esteemed position, initially symbolizing the sun and drawing its chariot. Horses were also sacrificed to the sun gods (Hall, 2013, 24). A significant portion of the narratives in the Shahnameh consists of epics related to heroes and their valor, whose lives are intricately linked with horses. Therefore, the horse can be considered the most frequently used symbolic animal in the Shahnameh. In the Shahnameh, the horse is always a companion and supporter of the hero, aiding him in battles and conversing with him. Ghaemi & Yahaghi note that many of the mythical horses in the Shahnameh possess independent personalities, with the hidden aspects of the epic hero projected onto them. Rakhsh stands out as the most prominent example in this regard as

the faithful companion of Rustam, the central heroic figure of the Shahnameh. To the extent that Rustam’s character is considered incomplete without Rakhsh, his absence would signify a failure (Ghaemi & Yahaghi, 2009, 18). The best example of this complementary relationship with Rakhsh is evident in Rustam’s Seven Labors.

In the miniature “Rustam’s First Labor: Lion” from the Qarajaghay Khan Shahnameh (Windsor), the first Labor of Rustam from the Seven Labors of Rustam is depicted. In the Shahnameh, Rustam sets out to rescue Kaykaus, who is trapped in a fortress, leaving behind the Seven Labors. Arriving at a plain filled with zebras, Rustam consumes one of them and falls asleep, unaware that it belongs to a lion. As the night progresses, Rakhsh encounters a ferocious lion charging towards Rustam and engages in a battle, ultimately bringing down the lion (Fig. 1).

“He sprang at glossy Rakhsh, who raged like fire And lashed out at the lion’s head, then fixed His sharp teeth in its back dashed the beast To pieces by a shift that made it shiftless.” (Ferdowsi, 1996, 261)

In the narrative of the Seven Labors, Rustam plays a crucial role as he pursues his primary goal of rescuing Kaykaus. In this tale, Zal sends Rustam on a mission to achieve this objective. If rescuing Kaykaus is designated as the main goal, the lion can be considered a hindering factor for Rustam in the first labor. In this work, Rakhsh appears as Rustam’s supportive companion in the narrative, while Rustam is asleep, he confronts and defeats the ferocious lion (acting as the hindrance) to clear the way. Consequently, Rakhsh can be seen to have a significant and even complementary role to Rustam in this context, which is also evident in the structure of the miniature. The miniature has a symmetrical composition. Rakhsh and the lion are positioned respectively on the right side of the narrative as



Fig. 1. Rustam's First Labor, Scolds Rakhsh. Source: Robinson et al., 2007, 12.

supporting and hindering elements, while Rustam is situated on the left side. This symmetry can be observed in the shapes of rocks, clouds, stones, and patterns within the miniature. Rakhsh and the lion play prominent roles in advancing the narrative, depicting one side. Additionally, their similar color tones indicate a connection between them. Another striking aspect of this depiction is the nearly equal placement of Rakhsh and Rustam in the image, which symbolizes the horse's support and companionship in the Shahnameh as a heroic figure. In this miniature, the artist has selected a part of the text according to their own taste or perhaps at the request of the court, which depicts the moment before Rustam falls asleep and the confrontation between Rakhsh and the lion. In addition to highlighting the lion's


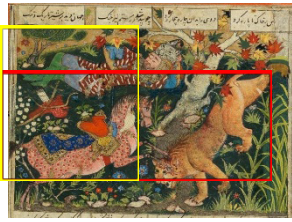




hidden presence in the text, the lion seems to be deliberately depicted behind a bush in the image to emphasize the almost equal roles of Rakhsh and Rustam in this miniature.

It can be speculated that the miniaturist chose this particular excerpt based on personal preference or at the request of the court. A comparative study of miniatures related to Rustam's first labor reveals a common pattern in the placement of Rustam, Rakhsh, and the lion. According to previous research, most miniatures depict the confrontation between Rakhsh and the lion, but in the Qarajaghay Khan Shahnameh, the miniaturist portrays the moment when Rustam wakes up from sleep and reproaches Rakhsh upon learning what has happened. On the other hand, it is evident that in most related miniatures, Rustam, Rakhsh, and the lion are arranged in an L-shaped pattern. Rakhsh is positioned between the lion and Rustam. Furthermore, in many miniatures depicting the confrontation between Rakhsh and the lion in the first labor, Rakhsh typically has a vertical relationship with the lion, while having a horizontal relationship with Rustam. As it was previously discussed, the scene where Rustam reproaches Rakhsh is depicted in Qarajaghay Khan Shahnameh. It seems that based on the topic, Rakhsh and the lion have a vertical relationship, while the relationship between Rakhsh and Rustam is portrayed horizontally. This arrangement is illustrated in Table 1. Javadi emphasizes that the artist sometimes captures a significant and influential scene based on personal taste, understanding, and choice, while at other times, the selection may be influenced by the commissioner's directives. Indeed, since Persian miniature is in service of literature, it has often depicted some pivotal moments of poetry and literature through painting. Consequently, the miniature is a representation of Iranian art that is characterized by decorative elements and

Table 1. A comparative study of miniatures related to Rustam’s first labor (Source: Authors)

Image	Analysis	Description
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Arrangement of Rustam, Rakhsh, and the lion in an L-shape -Placement of Rakhsh between the Lion and Rustam -Vertical connection with the lion and horizontal connection with Rustam -The lion is hidden behind a bush -Selected scene where Rustam wakes up and scolds Rakhsh
<p>The Qarajaghay Khan Shahnameh. Source: Robinson et al., 2007, 12.</p>		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Arrangement of Rustam, Rakhsh, and the Lion in an L shape -Placement of Rakhsh between the lion and Rustam -Horizontal connection with the lion and Vertical connection with Rustam -The bush is depicted in the artwork, but the lion is not hidden behind it -Selected scene where Rustam is asleep and Rakhsh is struggling with the lion
<p>Shahnameh of Shah Tahmasp. Source: Canby, 2014, 148.</p>		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Arrangement of Rustam, Rakhsh, and the Lion in an L shape -Placement of Rakhsh between the lion and Rustam -Horizontal connection with the lion and Vertical connection with Rustam -The plant isn't specifically mentioned. -Selected scene where Rustam is asleep and Rakhsh is struggling with the lion
<p>An illustration from a manuscript of Firdausi's Shahnameh, 1519. Source: Pakbaz, 2011, 103.</p>		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Arrangement of Rustam, Rakhsh, and the Lion in an L shape -Placement of Rakhsh between the lion and Rustam -Horizontal connection with the lion and Vertical (& Oblique) connection with Rustam -The bush is depicted in the artwork, but the lion is not hidden behind it -Selected scene where Rustam is asleep and Rakhsh is struggling with the lion
<p>Shahnameh of Shah Abbas. Source: https://fa.m.wikipedia.org</p>		

Rest of Table 1.

Image	Analysis	Description
		<p>Arrangement of Rustam, Rakhsh, and the lion in an L-shape</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Placement of Rakhsh between the Lion and Rustam -Horizontal connection with the lion and Vertical connection with Rustam -The bush is depicted in the artwork, but the lion is not hidden behind it -Selected scene where Rustam is asleep and Rakhsh is struggling with the lion
		<p>Arrangement of Rustam, Rakhsh, and the Lion in an L shape</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Placement of Rakhsh between the lion and Rustam -Horizontal connection with the lion and Vertical connection with Rustam -The bush isn't seen at work. -Selected scene where Rustam is asleep and Rakhsh is struggling with the lion
		<p>Arrangement of Rustam, Rakhsh, and the lion in an L-shape</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Placement of Rakhsh between the Lion and Rustam -Oblique connection with the lion and Rustam -The bush is depicted in the artwork, but the lion is not hidden behind it -Selected scene where Rustam is asleep and Rakhsh is struggling with the lion

a unique aesthetic sensibility, bringing segments of literature to life through imagery (Sh. Javadi, personal communication, December 2024). In this context, comparing related miniatures from the first labor of Rustam reveals a consistent pattern in depicting narratives.

Fig. 2 illustrated Rustam's third labor: "Dragon" from the Qarajaghay Khan Shahnameh. In this miniature, Rustam falls asleep in a plain that is the territory of a dragon. As soon as the dragon sees Rustam asleep and Rakhsh grazing, he

attacks Rakhsh. Rakhsh moves towards Rustam and wakes him up, but the dragon disappears. Rustam, angry with Rakhsh, goes back to sleep. It happens again for the second time. For the third time, when the dragon appears, Rustam wakes up and sees the dragon. So, he gets into a fight with him. Seeing the dragon's power, Rakhsh comes to help Rustam and peels off the dragon's skin. Finally, Rustam cuts off the dragon's head with a blade.

"Rakhsh On seeing the dragon's might, and how



Fig. 2. Third Labor: Dragon. Source: <https://www.rct.uk>.

it battled with Rustam, laid his ears back, joined the fray, Bit at the dragon's shoulders, tore its hide As though he were a lion, and amazed Th valiant paladin, who with keen glaive" (Ferdowsi, 1996, 257).


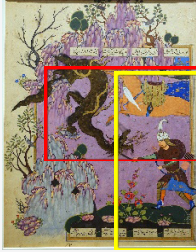


Fig. 2, titled "Rustam's Third Labor: Dragon," Rustam plays a significant role in advancing the narrative, pursuing his goal of freeing Kaykaus. In this depiction, Rakhsh continues to appear as Rustam's companion and helper. The dragon can be seen as a restraining element in the narrative, hindering Rustam's progress. The composition of this miniature is symmetrical. If we divide the frame into two halves starting from the tip of the rock placed almost in the center of the upper edge, Rustam and the dragon's head are positioned on the right side, while Rakhsh and

the body of the dragon are on the left side of the miniature. This arrangement may correspond to the narrative where Rakhsh peels off the dragon's skin, and Rustam separates the head from the body of the dragon. Considering the placement of Rakhsh, the dragon, and Rustam along the rock's edge creates a diagonal line that elevates Rustam above Rakhsh in the visual hierarchy, reflecting his role in the narrative. According to Grabar, in Persian miniature, emotions, and psychological aspects are rarely depicted directly, but there are indications for their representation. In Persian miniatures, everything related to humans is depicted symbolically, and these symbols cannot be deciphered solely through images. It is essential to refer to the artwork itself and consider the sources of inspiration for the depicted scenes to uncover the underlying meanings (Grabar, 2011, 176). In this particular artwork, only Rustam is fully depicted, while the bodies of Rakhsh and the dragon are positioned partially outside the frame as supportive and restraining elements in the narrative. As mentioned earlier, in Iranian painting, artists interpret what they deem important based on their own taste or under the commission of the ruling authority. As evident from the comparative study of the miniatures related to Rustam's third labor, two different positioning methods can be observed in these miniatures. In some, the dragon is depicted between Rakhsh and Rustam, while in others, the dragon is positioned facing both Rustam and Rakhsh. Furthermore, differences can be noted in the positioning of Rakhsh relative to Rustam and the contact between the dragon and Rakhsh. In most of these miniatures, a part of the text is selected that depicts the confrontation of Rakhsh and Rustam with the dragon (Table 2). Analysis of the narrative appearance creates an evolutionary trajectory of meaning. The miniatures exhibit similarities that consistently influence

Table 2. Comparative study of miniatures related to Rustam’s third labor. Source: Authors.

Image	Analysis	Description
 <p data-bbox="220 723 555 779">Qarajaghay Khan Shahnameh. Source: https://www.rct.uk</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Positioning of Rustam, Rakhsh, and the Dragon diagonally (Parallel to each other) -The dragon is positioned between and Rustam -Rakhsh is aligned with the dragon and placed below Rustam -Rakhsh is depicted in full contact with the dragon -A part of the text is selected that depicts the confrontation of Rakhsh and Rustam with the dragon.
 <p data-bbox="159 1120 614 1176">An illustration from a manuscript of Firdausi's Shahnameh. Source: Zafari Naein et al., 2016, 16.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Rustam is depicted top of Rakhsh and the dragon is obliquely related to Rakhsh. -The Rakhsh is positioned between the dragon and Rustam -Rakhsh is aligned with the dragon and placed below Rustam -Rakhsh isn't depicted in full contact with the dragon -A part of the text is selected that depicts the confrontation of Rakhsh and Rustam with the dragon.
 <p data-bbox="159 1541 614 1597">Shahnameh of Shah Tahmasp. Source: Canby, 2014, 148.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Positioning of Rustam, Rakhsh, and the Dragon diagonally (cross to each other) -The dragon is positioned between Rakhsh and Rustam Rakhsh is higher than the dragon and Rustam. -Rakhsh is depicted in full contact with the dragon -A part of the text is selected that depicts the confrontation of Rakhsh and Rustam with the dragon.
 <p data-bbox="159 1848 614 1933">An illustration from a manuscript of Firdausi's Shahnameh, 1619. Source: https://www.britishmuseum.org</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Positioning of Rakhsh and Rustam in an oblique form (crossed) and placement of Rakhsh and the dragon in a vertical form -The dragon is positioned between Rakhsh and Rustam -Rakhsh is higher than the dragon and Rustam. -Rakhsh is depicted in full contact with the dragon -A part of the text is selected that depicts the confrontation of Rakhsh and Rustam with the dragon.

Rest of Table 2.

Image	Analysis	Description
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Positioning of Rakhsh and Rustam in an vertically form and placing of Rakhsh and the dragon in a horizontal form -The Rakhsh is positioned between dragon and Rustam -Rakhsh is higher than the dragon and Rustam. -Rakhsh is depicted in less contact with the dragon -A part of the text is selected that depicts the confrontation of Rakhsh and Rustam with the dragon.
		<p>Positioning of Rustam, Rakhsh, and the Dragon diagonally (Parallel to each other)</p> <p>The dragon is positioned between Rakhsh and Rustam</p> <p>Rakhsh is aligned with the dragon and placed below Rustam</p> <p>Rakhsh is depicted in full contact with the dragon</p> <p>A part of the text is selected that depicts the confrontation of Rakhsh and Rustam with the dragon.</p>

the creation of meaning. The composition of both works is almost symmetrical, and Rakhsh's role as a helper is prominently displayed. In the first miniature, due to the greater impact of Rakhsh's role in the narrative (battle with the lion), a larger portion of the horse's body is depicted. However, in the third labor, less of the horse's body is visible. Moreover, Rakhsh visually adheres to the traditional aesthetics of horses in Persian miniatures, with only minor details distinguishing its activity. The book "Painting and Persian Literature" notes that, unlike Western painting, the entire composition in Persian paintings appears simultaneously. As the viewer perceives the elements and details of the work, their attention gradually shifts from one figure to another, gently entering the two-dimensional space. The Persian miniaturist often depicts themes using allegory, without insisting on portraying all events and details. For instance,

a few small trees evoke a landscape in the viewer's mind (Rakhimova & Poliakova, 2002, 107-109). In the first miniature, the horse's hoof is raised and extends beyond the frame, while in "Rustam's Third Labor: Dragon," the dragon's body lies under Rakhsh's feet. As the examination of the miniatures reveals, in Persian painting, the artist created what they deemed important, either according to their taste or by the ruler's commission. As Javadi points out, it should always be noted that the individuality of the painter is not particularly prominent in Persian painting (Sh. Javadi, personal communication, December 2024). This is also explained by the similarities present among miniatures with the same subject matter. However, it remains uncertain to what extent the depiction of the narrative in Persian miniatures was the artist's choice and to what extent it was influenced by the commissioner.

Conclusion

Narratology involves studying the system governing the disclosure of internal relationships within a narrative. Given its interdisciplinary nature, this approach is also valuable in the realm of visual arts and, consequently, in Persian miniatures. In the present study, two miniatures titled “Rustam’s First Labor: Lion” and “Rustam’s Third Labor: Dragon” from Qarajaghay Khan Shahnameh were examined from a narratological perspective. These two miniatures exhibit similarities in the depiction of the narrative. For instance, in the Shahnameh, the horse consistently occupies the role of a helper, which is evident in Rustam’s Seven Labors. This underscores the point that the supportive role of the horse in the text is reflected in its visual representation. By analyzing these miniatures, it becomes apparent that the miniaturist may have depicted the narrative and literary stories of Iran according to the instructions and preferences of the commissioners, as these literary books and their miniatures were produced in royal libraries. Alternatively, the miniaturist might have incorporated his preferences in depicting the narrative, which cannot be determined with certainty. This study addresses this issue and can pave the way for future research in this field.

Endnotes

1. Canby points out that Muhammad Qasim was younger than Muhammad Yusuf and she also worked on the Shahnameh of 1648 (Canby, 2012, 108).
2. Muhammad Youssef used to sign his works with the words “Muhammed Youssef Mosavar” and “Mohammed Youssef Abbasi” (Pakbaz, 2016, 1355).

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