

The Place of Text and Image Framing in the First Persian Illustrated Shahnamas (in the Eighth Century AH)

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Abstract After the Seljuk illustrated Shahnama, from which small and damaged leaves have been obtained, first Persian illustrated Shahnamas can be attributed to the eighth century AH which coincided with Ilkhanid period. In this period, there remain over 10 illustrated Shahnamas that have been spread leaf by leaf in museums and libraries around the world. With a comparative-historical approach, this research studies the position of writing and image in three Small Shahnamas and three Injuid Shahnamas. The authors aim to find the layout principles of the eighth century Shahnamas and to analyze the position of the text and images, and in particular combination and stair framing in them. In most illustrated pages, the use of text is more than the use of image, and text occupies larger volumes of pages—or text and image are used equally. It seems that for these types of unique designs, three objectives have been principally considered: creation of a variety of forms in the page configurations, embedding the position of the illustrated verse line and linking image frames with narrative thread.

Keywords First illustrated Shahnamas, Ilkhanid, Image framing, Text framing, Combination frame

1. Introduction

There has always been a strong link between Persian painting and book designing from the past. This link starts from old versions before Islam, like Manichaean books, and continues in a more complete way in the Islamic period. Even though in the early centuries of Islam, only religious books were decorated, scientific books and those on astronomy and literature were also gradually decorated and even illustrated. The Shahnama of Ferdowsi found a special place at this time because of its rich literary imagery. Almost in all schools of Persian painting, one can identify multiple instances of the Shahnama illustrated. However, first Persian illustrated Shahnamas, after the single Shahnama attributed to the Seljuks of which many leaves are damaged, are Shahnamas illustrated in the eighth century AH. During this period, due to the great interest of government leaders to develop and illustrate historical and mythical books, designing and painting in the Shahnama of Ferdowsi, which is full of epic and heroic themes, were also highly regarded in the Ilkhanid period¹. Of course, Soudavar believes that the cause of the great attention to the illustration of Shahnamas, especially by the Injuid family², “is seen in the influence of vassals from the Ilkhanid main court and the Abu Saidi’s

Shahnama” [22]. These Shahnamas are provided in several art centers and have a particular way of designing. Unfortunately, “their leaves are very sparse and scattered in libraries and museums around the world” [21]. Perhaps the most important feature of these works is the special type of composition in their text and images. The relationship between specific text, images and framing seems to have affected the layout of images in the pages, in addition to the structure and composition of the images. The present study is an attempt to check the special and different framing and configurations of these illustrated Shahnamas. “The eighth century AH, especially from the late seventh century to the middle of the eighth century, during which about a third of the illustrated versions comes from the Shahnama, can be considered as the official start date of the Persian painting” [21].

2. Objective

The aim of this study was to identify the earliest examples of Persian Shahnama illustration. Its main purpose was to study the artists’ art and creativity in the eighth century AH—those who managed to create a collection of such valuable and admirable works, despite the limitations of tools, for example, small folio of some Shahnamas, as well as the constraints of time and place. The authors’ objective have been an attempt to understand their specific layout principles and analyze the position of text and images in them.

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In order to explain and formulate the research statement, following questions were raised:

- (1) with regard to book designing, how has the eighth-century artist associated text with image?
- (2) on what grounds, have the size and form of the image frames³ and their location on the page been chosen?

3. Research Methodology

This descriptive-analytical and comparative study analyzes the data after having compared the findings. Since Shahnamas in this century are all incomplete and scattered illustrated versions in different corners of the world and the location of many of the images has been moved to pages with texts being in better condition while sales, images have been collected from foreign museums and collections. The lack of quality of some images in related museum or library websites made the path difficult for us. Samples of this research study include three Small⁴ and three Injuvid Shahnamas. In the first category, 97 leaves of the First Small Shahnama, 20 leaves from the Second Small Shahnama, and 40 to 45 leaves from the Freer Gallery's Shahnama have been analyzed. In the second category, 72 leaves of the 731-AH Shahnama, 43 leaves of the 733-AH version and about 62 leaves of the 741-AH version have been investigated—these versions are selected because they are better known among all Shahnamas in the eighth century AH.

4. Literature Review

Among the Shahnamas in the eighth century, after the great Shahnama of Tabriz Ilkhani considered both in Iran and outside Iran, paintings of the 733 Shahnama have been studied. Among these researches, the following could be referred to:

1) "The Paintings of the Shahnama" written by Adel Tigranovna Adamova and Leon Tigranovich Giuzalian, two researchers from Russia who investigated the relationship between the Shahnama poems and 733 Shahnama paintings and matched the Shahnama text with the visual elements used in this version. The book has two parts; the first part is descriptive and the information given about its paintings comes in a consecutive manner. It is stated without providing the related documentary images. Since the addressee cannot match the properties listed there with the image, it is considered as the drawback of this book. However, in the second part which matches the poems with images, it has been very successful. A complete picture—albeit small and non-color—of all the illustrated leaves of the 733 version is provided which is considered a rich image source for a study like this research; 2) "Shahnama: the Visual Language of the *Persian Book of Kings*, 2003" is another book written by Robert Hillenbrand in which there is an article authored by Adamova with a

content similar to his book. After the 733 Shahnama, among the three Injuvid versions, the 741 version has gained more attention from foreign researchers, despite the high dispersion of its leaves. Of the researchers on this Shahnama, Marianna Shreve Simpson's paper in the book "*Persian Painting from the Mongols to the Qajars*" can be referred to, where some leaves of this version are introduced and the main discussion concerns with the paintings. Since no comprehensive publication is released of series of the 731 Shahnama, it has not been the subject of study, however, we could refer to two versions, named Fehmi Edhem Karatay and Cagman and Z. Taninidi in the Topkapi Palace Museum [9]⁵. Regarding Small Shahnamas, 1) Simpson's book "*The Illustration of an Epic: The Earliest Shahnama Manuscripts*" is published in which images of the First and Second Small Shahnamas are available—mostly in black and white though. In this book, mostly imagery and the way poetry and images are linked are dealt with [20].

2) Farhad Mehran's "*The break-line verse: link between text and image in early Shahnama manuscripts*" is a similar study like Adamova's which concerns with the fact that how Shahnama text is reflected on the images [13]. Mehran⁶ has used the quantitative approach and statistical patterns and method for distribution frequency of illustrated scenes in Shahnama. He, in part of his extensive work, coined the expression of "breakline verse"⁷ to refer to verse or verses right after the images. In more than half of the Shahnama under study, he indicated that the discontinuity line verse is the critical verse, namely the verse which is closer to the illustration [14, 21]. In all these studies, different assessments of Injuvid versions and Small Shahnamas have been carried out in terms of aesthetics. In his brief description, Dorn Johann Albrecht Bernhard, member of the Academy of Sciences, for instance, has assessed the 733 manuscript as having a very cheap style. This was an example on Injuvid versions. Another writer called Denike considers images of this manuscript as being very basic. Diakonov and Giuzalian believe that paintings in the 733 version are exceptional. They have pointed to the association of these paintings with wall motifs and designs of ceramic artifacts [2]. Despite the fact that these versions have been reviewed by many foreign researchers and Iranians living abroad, the reason for such ideology and topic as well as artistic features of images are yet greatly to prove and the analysis of their artistic composition and layout has not taken place yet. Adel Adamova describes the Injuvid painting style general and brief but does not accept the common accusation that the Injuvid design is crude and inaccurate, stating that this judgment has neglected the fact that overuse of black and bold lines represents extreme painting in the subsequent period [7].

5. The Eighth-Century Shahnamas

In the eighth century, along with illustration of some literary versions such as Maqâmât-e Hariri,

Kelileh-va-Demneh⁸ (with a long history of its imagery), *Kitab al-Aghani* authored by Abu l-Faraj al-Isfahani and even *Marzubannama* written by Varavini, *Shahnama* writing begins in the Ilkhanid period. On the one hand, this is the result of the efforts of Iranian bureaucratic families to identify the mythical ideals and Iranian history and introduce them to the Mongols [3].

On the other hand, the inherent capacity of the *Shahnama* is in the heroism and promotion of the heroes' sacrifice to defend Iran and its sovereignty. These heroes "were considered as the anchor of Iran's kingdom throne," says Adamova [2]. With this explanation, we can say that illustrated *Shahnamas* in the centers of Tabriz, Shiraz, Isfahan and Baghdad are a reflection of the Ilkhanids' love, especially Injuids' love—Inju⁹ family—towards these ideals and gaining cultural credibility to strengthen their political authority. In fact, the battle scenes—such as pitched battles and more—sights for hunting (Bahrām Chōbīn's hunting stories and so on), imaginative-mythical stories (Kay Kāvus going to the sky and the like) and parts of the *Shahnama* which were subject to feasting and drinking have been according to the Mongols' desire and have been the cause of their happiness and joy. In the first half of the eighth century AH—fourteenth century AD—more than a dozen illustrated *Shahnamas* are known [6]. They are the group of versions which are clearly the product of different art centers and which can also be divided in another category—in terms of construction in each of the art centers—into "provincial and city *Shahnamas*" [2]. Since at that time the city of Tabriz was the center of the province, the Great Mongol *Shahnama*, also known as the Demotte¹⁰ *Shahnama* or Abu Saidi, illustrated in the Art Center of Tabriz, the provincial *Shahnama* and other *Shahnamas* obtained from Shiraz, Isfahan and Baghdad centers are called county *Shahnamas*. In this era, we face several types of influence; i.e., in the Iranian capital city of that era, Tabriz, the prominent Chinese and Byzantine art influence is evident in the Persian painting of the manuscripts, while in cultural centers such as the county of Shiraz, the influence of China and Byzantium has been low and a continuation of Persian art is observed. In general, both Injuid and Small *Shahnamas* have similar stylistic features, together with some differences, which indicates that Small *Shahnamas* are mostly under the influence of the Chinese art and use of Chinese motifs and design is evident in these versions [21].

Formally integrated book production and designing in places called library later on in all fields of science, history, literature and so forth backed by the Ilkhanids seems to have been welcomed in an artistic way since at least during Ghazan Khan (694-703 AH) [10]. Having no male heirs, Abu Saeed's (the last king of the Ilkhanids) death in 735 AH was followed by the conflict and tension between the Ilkhanid and Injuid successors and the Ilkhanid empire was analyzed to small monarchies. Each of the Ilkhanids strived to outfight their neighbor opponents. The Injuids (724-756 AH), Muzaffarids (714-739 AH) and Jalairids (736-832 AH) each vied with each other for their supremacy [24]. There

might have been a relationship between the rulers of Shiraz and Tabriz. The Injuids in Shiraz have made the best use of the court brokers' experiences in Tabriz in writing and similarly have launched ateliers in their library. In this atelier, they created a scriptorium where scribes were busy scribing the versions, i.e., the work conducted in Rashidiyeh's ateliers in Rab'-e Rashidi in Tabriz. Apparently, Shiraz's atelier has been able to meet the bibliophilic rulers' orders such as Sharaf al-Dīn Mahmoud and his children Jalal al-Dīn Mas'oud, Ghiyāth al-Dīn Kay Khosrow and Jamaldin Abu Ishaq [3].

6. Place of Text and Image Based on Form

Compliance with both practical and aesthetic aspects creates a smaller folio in the eighth century *Shahnamas* compared with those inscribed in later Islamic centuries.

Expensiveness of paper at this time has caused creation of Small *Shahnamas* with large volumes of writing and use of a lot of text columns on the page. Observing the aesthetic dimension is also seen in the design of the frame, stair and combination frames, and the breakage of the box, which often goes beyond the margin. Due to the different images of the eighth century *Shahnamas*' remaining leaves, no clear procedure could be mentioned for the writer and painter and that obviously there has been no similar routine [7]. Basically, common practice in the Middle Ages versions has been in such a way that the position of writing was set first and the images have been designed later [9]. This type of practice has been implemented as opposed to some other versions in the same century. For example, in *Marzubannama* mentioned previously, images were first drawn or just sketched and then tables were drawn. Finally, the text would be added [19]. Regarding Small *Shahnamas*—where verse(s) would be mainly illustrated in the text—the way the image is positioned immediately after the break-line verse(s)¹¹ raises the possibility that—due to the unpredictable nature of the spellers' text sequence—the space required or painting would not be set in the unwritten paper beforehand, but it would be considered the moment the speller would want to spell the break-line verse. However, long break while spelling, that would result in loss of rhythm and focus, was undesirable, especially if while spelling the text other scribes have been writing the text of the unillustrated versions. In fact, it was an effective way to further benefit from the enormous and costly work of spelling the entire *Shahnama*. Supposing that the scribe would be able to determine the size and shape suitable for painting within a few seconds—while the text is being spelled—and place it in the right place, meeting the necessity of varying size and shape of images throughout the book at the same time is unacceptable. The painter seems to have specified the painting topic and the exact dimensions of each one before starting to spell the book [7].

6.1. Place of Text

In Iran's book designing in the past, after the determination of paper and book folio, wire molds were used and slammed on paper—something similar to *paper ruling*. In this way, the dimensions of a text page, including interstitial columns—the distance between the main columns, also called “gutter” by Mahdavi [12]—and the number of lines would be obtained in a desirable way and a checkered grid would be created.

The width of the columns should be consistent with the size of the letters as well as the amount of the text used. These distances in each Shahnama were designed with regard to the dimensions considered for the lines. For example, the distance between the columns in the Freer Shahnama is less than that of the adjacent Shahnama, which has created more order in this collection.

6.2. Place of Image

Having been set the amount of daily work for scribing the Shahnama in libraries and/or ateliers, given that the common pattern of the eighth century Shahnama is about one hundred images inside the text, it would probably have been necessary to draw a painting to write three hundred verses a day.

At this point, immediately before the scribe would want to begin writing the designated amount of text, the nature of the scene and the type of painter's understanding of the scene would specify the image folio. It is also possible that the folio of each painting would have been determined when deciding about the overall program of images. However, the main point is that the scribe had been aware of dimensions of the painting designated for a given day when starting the daily work. The painter would draw the images whose places in the text had been specified previously, because the scribe would always be ahead of the painter. It should be noted that the number of the paintings in most Shahnamas illustrated in the past was less than the amount enabling them to have an impact on the scribe's working process. The only thing that the scribe should have been doing had been to mark the pre-defined range for each image when they reach to it [7].

Three main factors could be named as reasons for locating the image and the text, leading to creativity in image boxes:

- (1) creation of a variety of forms in the page configurations
- (2) embedding the position of the illustrated verse line
- (3) linking image frames and narrative thread.

The first one is the review of text and image place based on the form, which generates a variety of boxes on the illustrated pages of the Shahnama, and which is explored in this study. The next two will be discussed in further research.

6.2.1. Image Framing

During the act of scribing, the scribe would continue their work again, after specifying the image area.¹² With a look at the entire set—scribe's marking act—the painters could then create a set of varied and eye-catching sequential images

both in terms of box composition and element arrangements inside the box. Perhaps that is why Shahnamas in this period saw greater use of stair and combination frames. It should be noted that in Kama Shahnama leaves, examples of stair framing can be seen and certainly they also contribute to the diversity of framing in this era.¹³ In most pages obtained from the First Small Shahnama, the image is in the form of a horizontal rectangle. If the grid is drawn, it will be observed that in most cases one third of the text is image. In fact, it can be said that the fixed and typical layout of the image range in the First Small Shahnama is a rectangular image with perpendicular angles as wide as four or six columns of verses which has been spread through the page frame with its height covering the space as much as ten or eleven rows of verses. However, it seems that the location of the image as well as its expanding range in the page is completely random—for not all Shahnama images do follow this fixed and symbolic layout. Some of the images are much taller and some of them have much lower width and height. Thus, the position of the image on the page, i.e., the number of the lines before the image is from zero to twenty-two lines. It means that the text starts from under the frame at the top of the page and continues to the bottom of the page based on the number of the verses. In this version, some of the images are in the top corner and some in the middle of the page. Even in some cases, images are spread as wide as an odd number of columns. In the 731 Shahnama, adjacent leaves usually have a similar layout and composition. For example, in stories related to Yazdah Rokh (Eleven Combats) and pitched battles between the Turanians and Iranians, two rectangular image boxes can be seen in a few adjacent pages (Table 1- row 16). Similar to the First and Second Small Shahnamas, although images in the 741 version differ in terms of size¹⁴, almost half of them have horizontal rectangular boxes as wide as six columns (Table 1- row 6). After examining all illustrated pages of Shahnamas—that the authors were able to recover—an outline for image framing of Shahnamas was made. Table 1 presents different types of framing in the illustrated pages of the First and Second Small Shahnamas, Freer Shahnama and three Injuid versions, 731, 733 and 741.

- According to the findings in Table 1, the following cases can be obtained:

Only the Freer and 733 Shahnamas have square boxes, and they are used largely in the two versions.

Asymmetrical rectangular boxes (rows 3 and 4) have not been used in the eighth century Shahnamas very often; they have not been used in the 731 and 741 versions at all.

Rectangular 4-column boxes are used in all of the versions above.

Entirely-wide rectangles are most widely used in the First Small Shahnama.

Most usage of row-7 box is in the 741 version; it is not used in the Second Small Shahnama and Freer Shahnama at all.

Three-stair box (row 8) is mostly used in the 731 and then 741 versions.

In all these 6 versions, row-9 box is used once only and in

one version only.

Quasi-chlipa box is specific to the 741 version and it has been used four times.

Row-11 box is used once only, in the Second Small Shahnama.

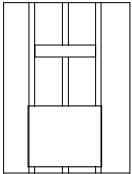
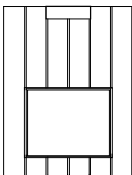
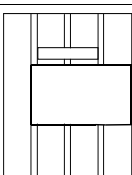
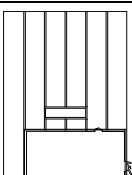
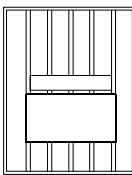
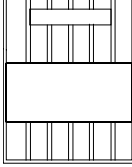
Row-12 box, although slightly, was used in all 6 versions. The largest number of this framing was specific to the 731 Shahnama, in 10 leaves.

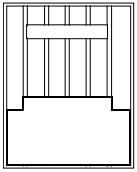
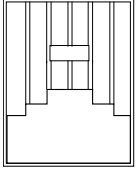
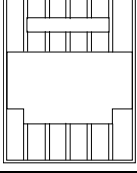
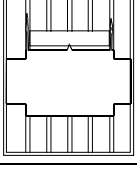
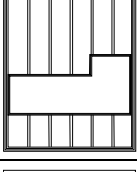
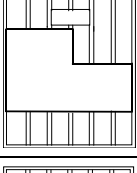
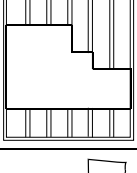
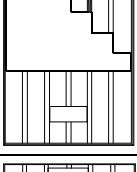
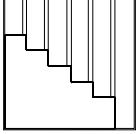
Row-14 box was used in the three Injuid versions only, and it is most used in the 741 version.

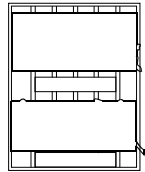
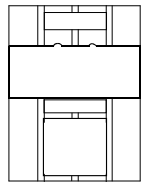
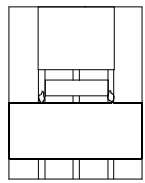
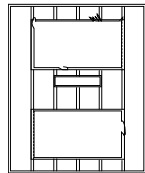
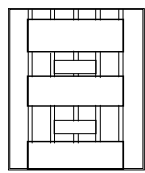
Row-15 box is one of the stair frames, with the highest number of stairs specific to the 741 version.

In the three Injuid versions, we see cases involving more than one image frame on the page. This style of image frame arrangement within text reaches the peak of aesthetics with the tripling of the boxes in the 741 Shahnama. Another important point about the extent to which this image arrangement is used on the page is the use of text and image. That is, in most of the pages of this century's versions, either the amount of text and image is equal or text has priority and occupies a larger amount of paper. However, this method is reversed in the recent framing (rows 16-20). Especially, in row 16, the amount of image-to-text use is almost double.

Table 1. Different types of image framing in the illustrated pages of Shahnamas

No.	Image characteristics	Grid ¹⁵	Small Shahnamas			Injuid Shahnamas		
			First Small Shahnama -97 leaves ¹⁷	Second Small Shahnama-20 leaves	Freer Shahnama-40 leaves	731-AH Shahnama-72 leaves	733-AH Shahnama ¹⁶ -43 leaves	741-AH Shahnama-62 leaves
1	Two-column ¹⁹ square frame ²⁰		—	—	—	—	16 Cases, Mainly down the page ¹⁸	—
2	Four-column square frame		—	—	25 Cases, mainly center of the page	—	—	—
3	Three-column rectangle frame		—	—	—	—	7 Cases, mainly center of the page	—
4	Five-column rectangle frame		1 Case, down the page	—	3 Cases Almost equal	—	—	—
5	Four-column rectangle frame		5 Cases, Mainly down the page	2 Cases, mainly top of the page	1 Case, down the page	4 Cases, mainly down the page	3 Cases, Mainly down the page	5 Cases, Almost equal
6	Entirely-wide rectangles		83 Cases, mainly center of the page	15 Cases, mainly center of the page	7 Cases, mainly center of the page	26 Cases, mainly center of the page	3 Cases, Mainly down the page	26 Cases, mainly top of the page

7	Single-stair ²¹ frame from the middle		4 Cases, Mainly down the page	—	—	7 Cases, mainly top of the page	4 Cases, mainly top of the page	11 Cases, mainly center of the page
8	Three-stair frame from the middle		1 Case, down the page	1 Case, down the page	—	19 Cases, mainly down the page	—	7 Cases, mainly center of the page
9	Single-stair frame from the middle down the page		—	—	—	1 Case, center of the page	—	—
10	Quasi-chlipa ²²		—	—	—	4 Cases, mainly center of the page	—	—
11	Single-stair frame from the right (L-shape)		—	1 Case, center of the page	—	—	—	—
12	Single-stair frame from the left (L-shape)		1 Case, center of the page	1 Case, center of the page	4 Cases, mainly down the page	10 Cases, mainly down the page	1 Case, center of the page	5 Cases, mainly center of the page
13	Three-stair frame from the left		—	—	—	4 Cases, mainly center of the page	2 Cases, mainly down the page	—
14	Four-stair frame from the left		—	—	—	2 Cases, down the page	1 Case, top of the page	4 Cases, mainly top of the page
15	Five-stair frame from the left		—	—	—	—	—	1 Case, down the page

16	Two separate rectangles ²³		1 Case	—	—	5 Cases	1 Case	2 Cases
17	Two frames and up located rectangle		—	—	—	—	3 Cases	—
18	Two frames and up located square		—	—	—	—	2 Cases	—
19	Two separated rectangular four-column frames		1 Case ²⁴	—	—	—	—	—
20	Three separated rectangular frames		—	—	—	—	—	1 Case

6.2.2. Box Breakage

Elements that are somehow out of the frame create box breaking in the image, leading to visual communications between text and images that brings about eye movement across the page. In the Shahnamas in question, in many places box breakages are in accordance with the layout and arrangement of the text. However, in many cases, they have no harmony with text alignment; the only reason for this is the lack of embedded space for image, and the painter has painted out of the box the elements that could not have been fitted in the box. Aside from the breakages outside the box, there are other breakages which lead to the stairs in the image frame. They are referred to as combination frames.

6.2.3. Combination Frames

They are frames consisting of several square and rectangular boxes combined together that cannot be easily named. This type of box is mainly used in the three Injuid versions. Such combinations have not been observed in the Small Shahnamas. There are combinations in these boxes that exist in the Kelileh-va-Demneh²⁵ made by the Injuids. Similar to the falling frames shown in Table 2, represented in rows 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 10 and 11 which are mainly a space to display wells and ponds, “in a leaf from 733

Kelileh-va-Demneh²⁶ also, there is a reverse L-shaped combination frame designed to display under the ground” [15]. This administrative practice indicates a similar visual style, especially among the 733 Shahnama and 733 Kelileh-va-Demneh, in such a way that it seems that the two versions have had the same designer.

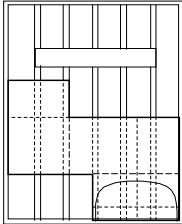
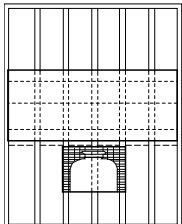
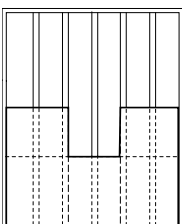
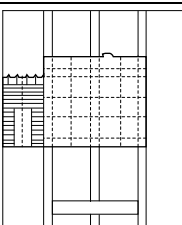
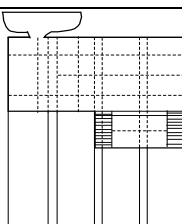
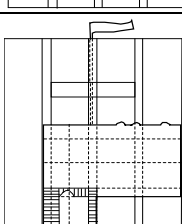
- Table 2 can help achieve the following results:

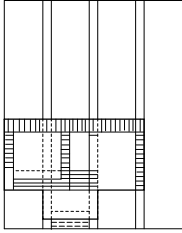
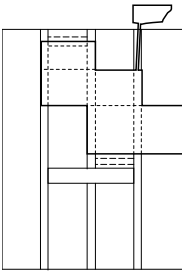
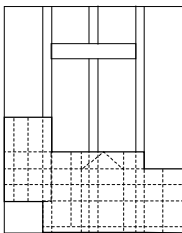
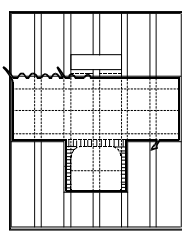
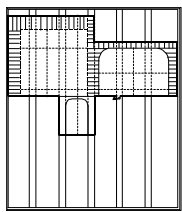
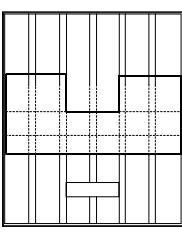
- In most combination frames, the size of the frame structure is equal to the figure or element that is supposed to be drawn into it. That is why in most images of versions of this period, there is no stretched and long horizon. This type of coordination is dramatically seen in the narratives as “The Simurgh (Phoenix) brings Zal to Sam” (row 8). In fact, proper use of combination and stair frames in the 733 and 741 Shahnamas has led the painter to portray the mountain area in the tallest stair, Phoenix in the lower row and the character of Sam and his companions in the shortest stair.
- In many cases of combination frames, a similar design is used to represent the same or very closely related topics. In these examples, Injuid artists’ particular style of design can be recognized. A prominent example of such conventional traditions is showing a well, pond and generally under the ground. This principle is well

seen as in the stories of “Rustam removes the stone from the mouth of Bizhan's pit” (row 2, 6, 10), “Ablution and anointment of Rustam's body” (row 5) and “Rustam kills shaghad” (row 1), etc. Despite the fact that the stories do not come from the same Shahnama, in all of them artists have used a falling

frame attached to the main frame of the image to display wells. Interestingly, not only has this method been used in the Injuid Shahnamas, but it is used also in the story “The Perils of Life” of this family's Kelileh-va-Demneh to display under the ground.

Table 2. Different types of combination frames in illustrated pages of Shahnamas²⁷

No.	Image characteristics	Grid ²⁸	Place of use
1	Stair frame at the top and falling frame at the bottom		731 Shahnama
2	Combination of rectangle and falling frame		
3	Combination of rectangle with a square frame cut in the middle		
4	Combination of square and rectangle		733 Shahnama
5	Combination of rectangle and falling frame at the bottom		
6	Combination of three-column rectangle and falling frame, reverse L-shaped		

7	Combination of three-column rectangle and falling frame		
8	Combination of stair frame with a cut at the bottom		
9	Combination of stair frame at the top and falling frame at the bottom		
10	Combination of rectangle and falling frame		741 Shahnama
11	Combination of rectangle, square and falling frame		
12	Combination of rectangle and a square frame cut in the middle		

7. Conclusions

Design, composition, color and even typeface are among the most important similarities and differences in Persian illustrated pages of the Shahnamas in the eighth century AH. Perhaps the most important difference between them is that

the 733 version has four columns and 731 and 741 versions have six columns. In order to shed light on the debate here, the following details are presented: Shahnamas in the eighth century AH have a variety of stair and combination frames—in addition to normal rectangular frames—that either have not been used before or have been used in a very

simpler way in a version like Kama Shahnama from the Seljuks. Therefore, it can be said that not only are these versions among the first versions of illustrated Shahnamas, but also they are the first in their particular and creative framing. In most illustrated pages, the use of text is more than the use of image, and text occupies larger volumes of pages—or text and image are used equally. There are also exceptions; for instance, in the Injuid versions and a leaf from the First Small version where two image frames are used on the page and particularly in a leaf from the 741 Shahnama with three image frames, using the image to text is almost doubled. In all three-stair frames in the middle in the 731 Shahnama (Table 1, row 8), the titles are located in a place higher than the image, which makes the type of frame used for the image and text coordinated. The position of the title, in the case that approaches the first step of the image frame, evokes another stair. This mode in the same type of frame, in the 741 version, given the title area's being two-column, evokes the fourth stair yet to a greater deal. In the three Injuid versions, use of more than one image frame on the page is witnessed, where this style of image frame arrangement within the text culminates in beauty with triple frames in the 741 Shahnama. Two First and Second Small Shahnamas are designed very close together in terms of image and frame, so that in some cases it is difficult to distinguish them from one another. Even though the three Small Shahnamas share similar image and text features, there exist differences between them, where most differentiations are between the two first versions and the third one, the Freer Shahnama. For example, the size of the paper in Freer version is larger than that of the two first versions, and Freer Shahnama is much simpler than its two adjacent versions in terms of layout and imagery. Similarities between the three Injuid versions are more than those of the three Small Shahnamas. The Freer Small Shahnama and 733 Shahnama are similar structurally and in terms of using a lot of square frames. However, the difference is that in the Freer version there is no unusual frame except for single-stair frames. The word “accidental” cannot be used with regard to stair and unconventional box designs. It seems that for these types of unique designs, three objectives have been principally considered: creation of a variety of forms in the page configurations, embedding the position of the illustrated verse line and linking image frames and narrative thread.

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Notes

- ¹ For more information on the illustrated Shahnamas of Iran after the Mugal period, see [17].
- ² Soudavar also believes: "the frequent visits of the Injuid Mahmud Shāh (736/ 1336) and his son Masud Shāh (743/1334), to the Il-Khānid court might explain the sudden interest in Shahnama production at the Injuid court after 1330" [22].
- ³ The words "frame" and "box" will be used interchangeably in this paper.
- ⁴ The term is generally used to refer to a *Shahnama* with small-size miniatures, most of which are now housed in the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, and the so-called First and Second Small *Shahnamas*, whose miniatures are scattered throughout the world [8].
- ⁵ For more information about Shahnamas in Turkey, See [11].
- ⁶ Mehran, F. (statistician) is studied the position of breakline verse in two First Small Shahnamas and the Second Shahnama [13].
- ⁷ Some comments are provided on breakline verse by Hillenbrand within an article entitled "New Perspectives in Shahnama Iconography" [7].
- ⁸ Or Kalila and Dimna.
- ⁹ Injuids, Injus, or Inju'ids is a Mongolian word meaning king's private property.
- ¹⁰ Sheila Blair is a scholar who has worked on this script. He says: "in the early twentieth century the Belgian dealer Georges Demotte acquired the manuscript and transformed it from a bound book into a group of saleable miniatures by splitting pages with illustrations on both sides" [5], also see: [4].
- ¹¹ A line that has the highest appropriateness to the image and that comes directly after a part [7], considered as an introduction or caption for the image.
- ¹² This would be the case for titles, including book titles, subtitles, or image captions.
- ¹³ The authors have been unable to achieve high-quality images.
- ¹⁴ The size of the image is measured by the equivalent number of verses that the image occupies on the grid of the page. In this system, the parts of the image that may extend to the margins of the page are not included in the measurement [14].
- ¹⁵ Drawing all the line designs belong to the authors.
- ¹⁶ All the Shahnamas mentioned have six columns except for the 733 Shahnama.
- ¹⁷ The mentioned number of the leaves refers to the leaves that the authors have been able to find and review.
- ¹⁸ Top of the page" and "down the page" refer to the fact that if the entire text in the related Shahnama is horizontally split, in which part of the page—top half, bottom half or center—the image boxes are roughly located.
- ¹⁹ Based on the number of columns surrounded by images, the authors have used the terms two-column, three-column and four-column.
- ²⁰ Given the extent of the work, the height of the image boxes and shortness and/or tallness of the stair boxes in these tables are not of concern.
- ²¹ In this table, alteration of boxes and formation of stairs from the middle, top, down, left and right have been noted.
- ²² Given the similarity of the image box to chlipa (cross), the word quasi-chlipa is a title chosen by the authors

²³ Throughout all eighth-century Shahnamas, using more than one box on the page takes place when a collection of stories with a narrative sequence is the narrative thread.

²⁴ In the First Small Shahnama, a page is obtained containing two image frames—similar to the Injuvid versions—related to the first and second Khan of Haft-Khan-e-Rostam (Rostam's Seven Labours) [25].

²⁵ This Kelileh-va-Demneh was scribed in 733 AH in Shiraz. Images in this version are largely compatible with the ones in the 733 Shahnama in terms of design, composition and color [23]. Combinations of this version are simple, and human and animal figures and other elements are presented in red [6].

²⁶ Cf. British Museum, No: 1955,0709,0.1; Figure 14 in [15].

²⁷ The classification method in this table is based on the versions' place of use.

²⁸ The image sample of the grids executed in Table 2 (in the order of row, with the title of the painting) is available in the following references: -Rustam kills Shaghad [25], Topkapi Sarayi museum, H1479, f.159r. -Rustam removes the stone from the mouth of Bizhan's pit [25], Topkapi Sarayi museum, H1479, 091v. -Musician Barbad plays for Khusrau Parviz [25], Topkapi Sarayi museum, H 1479; Simpson, 2000: 228. -Anushirvan executes Mazdak and five of his followers [25], National Library of Russia, Dorn 329, 288r. -Ablution and anointment of Rustam's body [25], National Library of Russia Dorn 329, 214r. -Rustam removes the stone from the mouth of Bizhan's pit [25], National Library of Russia, Dorn 329, f. 137r. -Ardashir pours molten lead down the worm's throat [25], National Library of Russia, Dorn 329, f. 243r. -The Simurgh brings Zal to Sam [25], National Library of Russia, Dorn 329, 021v. -Musician Barbad plays for Khusrau Parviz [25], National Library of Russia, Dorn 329, 352v. -Rustam removes the stone from the mouth of Bizhan's pit [25], Washington, D.C, Freer Gallery of Art, 2017, 45.7r. - Shapur discovers Mihrak's daughter at the well [25], Harvard art museums, 2017, f.216r, 1960-192v. -Musician Barbad plays for Khusrau Parviz [25], Colnaghi No. 9, 310; [20].