

Original Research Article

Nahid Jafari Dehkordi<sup>1</sup> Marjaneh Naderi Gorzoddini<sup>2</sup>

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نشانه‌شناسی تصویری شاهزاده ایرانی در نگاره‌های هندی «داراب‌نامه» (نسخه کتابخانه بریتانیا)

## Visual Semiotics of the Iranian Prince in the Indian Paintings of "Darab-Namah" (British Library Manuscript)

### Abstract

**Problem Definition:** «Darab-Namah» is a folk legend about Darab, the hero, and his son Firuz Shah, during which the love of an Iranian prince for a Yemeni princess is narrated. This story is of interest among the Iran-oriented tendencies of the Gurkans of India, and it was included in the painting projects of Akbar Shah's court.

**Objective:** For this purpose, in this research, it is decided to ask the question; What is the shape, pictorial signs and compositions, in the illustrations of Darab Nama Tarsusi manuscript of the British Library should be answered.

**Research Method:** This research is fundamental in nature and is formed using a descriptive-analytical method based on documentary studies and a visual semiotics framework. The sampling method is purposeful, and the number of 7 elected Majlis out of 157 paintings of Darab-Namah of Tarsus is used for the qualitative analysis.

**Results:** The visual elements of the British Library manuscript are rich in cultural markers. Factors such as applying the symbolic and expressive aspects of colors, organizing visual elements in line with the story event, emphasizing the central character through the position on the page, and the type of angle of view have played an effective role in the meaning generation process.

### Keywords

Darab-Namah, Indian painting, visual semiotics, Iranian Prince

1. Department of Art Research, Faculty of Art and Entrepreneurship, Isfahan Art University, Isfahan, Iran.

2. Corresponding author, Department of Art, Technical and Vocational University, Tehran, Iran.

Email: [naderi.marjan43@yahoo.com](mailto:naderi.marjan43@yahoo.com)

## Introduction

The Persian heritage of India reached such a level during the Gurkan period that it was considered the second official language of this country and a scientific language. During this era, many Persian books were written and illustrated in India, one of which was Darab-Namah, written based on ancient Iranian narratives. This manuscript is the story of the heroism and love of a person named "Firouz", the king of Iran, a brave, adventurous, strong, and religious man. He has all the special qualities of *Ayyaran* and gentleman and lives as a committed man. The people are safe and prosperous because of his existence, and justice spreads over Iran. The manuscript number Or 4615 includes a part of the first volume of Tarsusi Darab-Namah, which is available in the Asian and African Studies section of the British Library, prepared between 1580 and 1585 and was supported and praised by Akbar Shah. This manuscript's total number of pages includes 283 pages with dimensions of 35.6 x 23.5 cm, 157 pages of which are illustrated by famous artists. In this manuscript, the literary text is mixed with pictures. Also, the literary text is used separately on other pages, which an anonymous calligrapher writes in 25 lines in the Nastaliq script with black ink. All pages are enclosed in frames vertically and identically. The dominant color of the frames is gold. On some pages, the frames are without breaks; on others, they have one or two breaks. In order to maintain the overall format of the work, the width of the columns follows a unified system. Most of the pages are seen to include a single column. In some cases, according to the type of composition or due to the volume of writing, the column is divided into two parts and placed at the top and bottom of the image. The cover of this book is made of Timaj (leather), and in its margin and center, there are Khataee motifs in gold. This manuscript is considered one of the intercultural, cultural, and artistic resources of this period of India, and its introduction can be of great help to artists and manuscriptologist in order to familiarize themselves with art and writing styles and page design. On the other hand, the illustrated manuscript of the Indian manuscript has not been collected and identified so far, and this research introduces the painting of this manuscript. The purpose of this research is to identify the pictorial elements and compositions of Iranian folk tales in the illustrated manuscript of the Darab-Namah of Tarsusi preserved in the British Library and to answer the question, «How are the pictorial signs and compositions used in the paintings of the Darab-Namah of Tarsusi in the British Library?»

## Research Method

This research is based on the fundamental purpose of having a descriptive-analytical nature. The collection of documentary information and data analysis has been carried out using a qualitative method. The statistical population of this research consists of 7 selected majlis, with the theme of the life of the Iranian prince, from 157 images of Darab-Namah majlis, which are chosen purposefully and analyzed in the framework of visual semiotics. "A sign is something that signifies something other than itself. Signs can appear in words, images, sounds, moods, and objects. Semiotics is a science that examines the types of signs, the factors present in their production and exchange, their interpretation, and the rules governing signs (Chandler, 2018, p. 21). Semiotics is a way to analyze culture or the world of the mind and study the change of meaning in language and in the relationships between signs and symbols. In semiotics, the discussion is about what rules of verbal or non-verbal signs govern (Danesi, 2008, p. 57). From the visual components in the analysis of the visual signs of this writing, we can refer to symbology, composition, color, and angle of view.

### **Research Background**

Various research studies have been conducted so far on the literary text of Darab-Namah. However, the illustrated manuscript in the British Library has not been semiotically analyzed. In this section, research studies related to the literary text of Darab-Namah are mentioned: «Safari» (2003) in the article entitled «The story of Darab in Shahnameh and Darab-Namah», gives a mythological space to these wonders in Darab-Namah according to Tarsusi's narrative and makes the story of Darab similar to the story of Garshasp. He also states that Darab's behavior on the royal throne in Darab-Namah is brave and bullying. At the same time, in the Shahnameh, he behaves like a king. «Shahrami and Rahmani» (2019) in the article entitled «Comparative analysis of narrative aesthetics in Tarsusi and Beyghami's Darab-Namah (with the approach of Erik Landofsky's deep structure and narrative surface structure)» have examined these two manuscripts from the perspective of discourse analysis. They believe that the surface structure system includes the components of «unity of sentences and clauses», «integrity of clauses in each part of the text», «language and gender diagram», and «element of tone», and the deep structure system includes the components of «homogenous intertextuality», «accidental system», «suspension system» and «tension orientation».

### **Introducing the Darab-Namah Manuscript of Tarsusi in the British Library**

The story of Darab-Namah includes several different accounts of the epic life of a character named Darab, a Kayani king, the son of Bahman and Hoday, and his son Firouz Shah. The existing text of Darab-Namah is an incomplete part of the original text, and so far, its second and fourth volumes have not been found. The first volume of Darab-Namah was sent to the «Revan Turkish Library» and the third volume, which is the story of Firouz Shah bin Malik Darab or «Firouz shah nama», belongs to «The Uppsala Library of Sweden». It should be noted that both of them have been published. «During 976-977 AH, the «Fatehpur Sikri» art collection was built by Akbar Shah. This center was a big place for the gathering of artists from all fields, and the efficient and powerful of every art trade, such as painting, goldsmithing, textile, etc., gathered in it (Dimand, 1953, p. 48). Simultaneously with the Safavids, the scope of Iranian culture in the light of art, the Persian language and its sensitive literature, which had long been popular as a cultural model in the surrounding lands of Iran, expanded significantly. The territory of this Iranian cultural world covered a range from East to West Asia; The Persian language was one of the links of the cultural chain; Because Persian was not only a language, but also included a collection of history, literature, poetry, calligraphy and art. One of the most important centers influenced by the Iranian culture was the different regions of the Indian subcontinent (Asar Kashani, Moinoddini & Olyaei Shad, 1401, p. 40). «During the rule of Gurkan kings over India, calligraphers and artists transcribed and gilded Persian works, which was the court language, with a special desire. Some of these works reached the British library in various ways from 1867 onwards, and this is apart from the large collection that was brought to the British Library from the East India Company in the second half of the 20th century» (Alaee, 2018, p. 154). The Or 4615 manuscript probably had another version next to it, which after the collapse of the system of Indian Gurkanian, was robbed or was somehow handed over to private collections, of which there is no information so far. The existing manuscript was purchased by "Quaritch" in 1853 and added to the British National Library (Schimmel & Carey Welch, 2017, p. 64). Due to a deficiency in the manuscript, it is believed that some of the paintings are missing. Most of the paintings in the margin have the name of their artist. «Allami» in the chapter

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entitled «Image Gallery Ritual» from the book «Akbari Rituals» refers to the artistic works of Akbar's court and mentions the names of some painters and painted books, «From the pioneers of this great highway, Mir Seyed Ali from Tabriz and Khwaja Abdul Samad Shirin Qalam» is from Shiraz. Although he knew this technique before his employment, Basāwan became the only one of his time to design, paint, color, and other works of this art. Gisu, Lal, Makmand, Miskīnah (Meskine), Farrokh Qalmaq, Mādhū Khurd, Jagan, Mahish, Kabimkaran, Tara, Sānwlah, Harbans and Ram, are the most outstanding works» (Alami, 1872, p. 117). Out of the total of 42 artists whose names appear in the margins of the paintings, at least 34 are Indians; Probably some others are also Indian Muslims (Okada, 1992, p. 13). Although it was influenced by Iranian culture, Indo-Mughal painting also had traces of European and Chinese painting. In addition, the spirit of Indian culture was like a melting pot that mixed all these elements and created art with the Indian spirit from it (Randhawa, 1930, p. 295). This picture gallery or governmental painting gallery was under the high supervision of the king, and the manuscript designing projects of this art collection were often prepared for the king himself. Here, Hindu and Muslim artists used to sit together and create art. The name of the artist of each painting of Darab-Namah is mentioned later in its margin; However, 19 paintings are with no name of the artist, and according to the effects of decay, restoration, and binding in it (See Table 1, & Sample 1), it is possible that the painter's name has been lost (See Table 1, & Sample 2). Adding the name of artists during Akbar's period was often exclusive to its pioneers. It was done for Akbar's knowledge, not for documentary and archival information (Rogers, 2003, p. 112).

**Table 1.** Decay and fading of painter's name in Darab-Namah manuscript. Source: <http://bl.uk/manuscripts>.

	
<b>Sample 1.</b> Effect of decay and restoration, page f.24.	<b>Sample 2.</b> Disappearance of the artist's name during restoration, page f.54.

It seems that the names of the artists of the paintings were added to the book later, and at the time of their creation, no need was felt. However, the person who did this seems to have hesitated in identifying the artists and the owners of the work because in many cases, the previous names are covered with color and the name of another artist is mentioned on or next to them (See Table 2).

**Table 2.** Changes in painter's name in the Darab-Namah manuscript. Source: <http://bl.uk/manuscripts>.

		
<b>Sample 1.</b> f.16r.	<b>Sample 2.</b> f.20v.	<b>Sample 3.</b> f.44r.

**Analysis of the Paintings of Darab-Namah of Tarsusi in the British Library**

The first part of Darab-Nam of Tarsusi is devoted to the life of Darab, son of Bahman. At the age of six months, he was placed in a box by order of his mother, Hodaya. A launderer took him out of the water and raised him. After many adventures, he finds his real mother. The courtiers put Hodaya under pressure to drive Darab out of the court, and he is forced to start a long journey. In Oman, he encounters the sons of Qantarash - the king there - and after an argument, he kills them, and Qantarash is also killed in a fight with his brother. Tamrusia (Qantarash's wife) falls in love with Darab and runs away with him. They meet Persian Mehrasab in the sea. Darab is separated from Mehrasab and Tamrusia in war and reaches Arous Island. Darab helps Lakeland, the king of Arous Island, to defeat Zengids. Lakeland makes his daughter -Zankalisa- Darab's wife and puts Darab on the royal throne. After many adventures, Tamrusia and Darab meet again and get married. In the absence of Darab, Zankalisa kills Tamrusia. Zankalisa's treachery is revealed, and she escapes with Lakeland, but the snake kills both. Finally, Darab goes to Iran, a storm hits Oman, and everyone drowns except Darab and his family. There, he sees the launderer and finds out that Qaysar attacked Iran and defeated Hodaya's army. After many hardships, Darab defeats Qaysar and sits on the throne of Iran (Tarsusi, 1977, vol. 1, pp. 345-356).

**The first Majlis, Darab's power show against Hormoz:** This incident happened when Darab got fed up with the laundry job and asked his stepfather (Hormoz) to provide him with an Arabic horse, a sultan's helmet, and a spear. The launderer fulfilled his stepson's request with many struggles. In **Figure 1**, the subject of Darab's power show against Hormoz, Darab is seen riding a black horse while throwing a tool (laundry pin) into the sea. In front of him, Hormoz is watching his son's power show wearing a yellow cover. In the foreground, three men witness Darab's performance. By using visual facilities, such as form, color, and composition, the painter emphasized Darab's character and created a kind of visual prominence. The vivid and bright orange color of the cover of Darab and the circular composition direct the audience's view toward Darab. Also, the way of representing the body of the horse and its black color have added to the expressive aspects of the subject. Factors such as the direction of the Darab towards the city, which shows a view of the palace along with other architectural elements, as well as the way he designed it and his composition, indicate his determination to leave behind the existing conditions and move towards a new destiny. The selection of the vertical rectangular frame has added more depth and space to the artwork and helped organize the visual elements in line with the story's theme. In this Majlis, the viewer's perspective starts from the right side, where Darab is located and returns to Darab's body after a circular rotation. The landscape of the painting, such as rocks and trees, is taken from the art of Gurakani and Persian Indian painting. However, the European landscape in the background is also a point of reflection. The background is covered by urban space. In a way, one can see the atmosphere of a medieval European city with church bell towers and rough Gothic architecture. By drawing the background, the artist has turned it into a meaningful element that points to the destination and goal of the narrative's main character (Darab). In general, it can be said that the painting has revealed Darab's determined and strong personality more than anything else. Factors such as the moods and movements of human characters, how they act and interact, and their astonishing looks toward Darab indicate his power and unexpected decision. One of the notable points in this image is the slow rhythm created by the text frame in the picture, which implicitly points to Darab's path of ups and downs to reach his goal.



**Figure 1.** Darab's power show against Hormoz; page f.4v. Source: <http://bl.uk/manuscripts>.



**Figure 2.** Darab and Tamrusia's journey to Island of Angaliyun; page f.20v. Source: <http://bl.uk/manuscripts>.

**The second Majlis, Darab, and Tamrusia's journey to Island of Angaliyun:** the designer in **Figure 2** has created a square frame for the image space by breaking the frame and placing the text frame in the lower part. The image is created with a viewing angle leveled with the audience. The choice of a square frame and the closed viewing angle is an emphasis on the characters of the narrative. In this figure, Darab and Tamrusia are traveling on a boat to Island of Angaliyun and are talking to each other. In the left half, Tamrusia is depicted with a golden crown, a lace scarf and many jewels, and in the right half, Darab is seen in a luxurious orange costume. Behind is a rower whose form is influenced by European painting figures. The rower's body's rotation and the sea waves' curved lines evoke a sense of movement in the picture. In this Majlis, the type of clothing, the predominance of warm colors, the characterization, and the behavioral states of Darab and Tamrusia as a symbolic element, in addition to showing their social position, also indicate the emotional relationship of these two lovers. The various foods and drinks inside the boat refer to their long journey. In the foreground, fish are swimming in the water. In Hinduism, the first incarnation of Vishnu was a fish that rose to guide and save Manu (Jobs, 1991, p. 133). The fish is the symbol of all the concepts of the mother goddess, it can be said that «in the iconography of the Indo-European societies, the fish is a symbol of fertility and wisdom» (Chevalier & Gerbran, 2009, Vol. 5, p. 142). The presence of fish in this painting has a symbolic aspect, and its meanings are implicitly related to the story's characters. The piety and wisdom of Darab, the love of Tamrusia and Darab towards each other, the result of which was reflected in the continuity of Darab's generation, are some of the issues that can be mentioned. In the background, a view of nature can be seen. The rough rocks with dark coloring and a dried tree, and a solitary tree with dark, tangled leaves show a clear contrast with the other parts of the image and implicitly point to the dangerous place that Darab and Tamrusia are facing.

**The Third Majlis, Darab, and Tamrusia at the bottom of the well:** In the continuation of Darab-Namah's romance, we see that Zengi Khavariq throws Darab and Tamrusia into the bottom of the well without any food or drink. But the painter in **Figure 3** painted this story with signs from his contemporary world. In the background, Darab and Tamrusia are depicted talking inside a dark well. Considering the theme of the painting and the location

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of the story, depicting this scene at the edge of the frame better evokes the lowness of the captivity. It is as if the artist has painted this Majlis based on his own mental impression and emphasis on the love between Darab and Tamrusia. The representation of Darab and Tamrusia's body and facial expressions with a calm appearance shows the power of love between them. A love that has not created any fear in their hearts, even in captivity. On the second level, two men armed with swords are depicted talking to each other. The sword of one of them has come out of its scabbard, which shows that he is ready to deal with the escape of Darab and Tamrusia. The third level or background, a nature scene influenced by Indo-Iranian painting, is drawn, which includes rocks, vegetation, and a large blooming tree that stretches its head to the sky. It can be said that plant elements have been used in this painting with regard to its symbolic aspects. The blossoming tree is a sign of freshness and youth, symbolically referring to the story's main characters. The lotus is also one of the important Indian symbols that can be seen scattered in the image. «The lotus was a symbol of the Indian mother goddesses since ancient times and was considered a symbol of the cosmic womb» (Hall, 2001, p. 310). In ancient Iranian mythology, the lotus is considered the flower of Venus, and «Venus was the main concept of the feminine of existence in the religious traditions of ancient Iran, which is similar to the beliefs of ancient Indians» (Namvar Motlaq & Kangarani, 2015, p. 321). Here, the lotus is a symbol that implicitly refers to Tamrusia. According to the sign systems used in this painting, a contrast between good/bad and peace/violence can be seen. Evil and violence in guards armed with swords, Goodness, and peace in the calm state of Darab and Tamrusia can be seen. These signs indicate the relationship of conflict between these two poles. The organization of the visual elements has created a static spatial image that is most relevant to the story's theme. The perspective of nature and limiting the place where the story takes place by creating a contrast directs the viewer's focus to the main theme. The artist has created a balanced composition with a balanced distribution of visual elements throughout the work. In this painting, even though the painter used the principle of transparency in painting to depict the well, he adhered to the rules and principles of the European perspective, and in a way, in this work, we see the painter's ability to combine two artistic styles. In this painting, the artist has created various levels, like the conversation between Darab and Tamrusia and the two guards standing outside the well.



**Figure 3.** Darab and Tamrusia at the bottom of the well; Page f.24r. Source: <http://bl.uk/manuscripts>.



**Figure 4.** Mehrasab and Tamrusia throw Shapur into the sea; Page f.39r. Source: <http://bl.uk/manuscripts>.

**In the fourth Majlis, Mehrasab, and Tamrusia throw Shapur into the sea:** Figure 4 belongs to the time when Darab goes from Iran to Oman, and through many adventures, he falls in love with Tamrusia (the queen of Oman) who is of Greek origin, and together with her, he travels to the Greek islands by ship. On the way, Darab and Tamrusia face many incidents, including storms and cannibals, and many hardships; However, with the help of God and some supernatural forces, they are saved from these dangers. In one of the Greek islands, an Iranian man named Persian Mehraseb saves them from the Zengid. But on this same island, they were separated by the trick of a businessman named Shapur, who was in love with Tamrusia (Tarsusi, 1977, vol. 1, pp. 100-137). Tamrusia remained in Shapur's captivity for seven years and was finally saved by Mehrasab, and together they killed Shapur. In this figure, placing part of the text in the picture frame has caused the main scene to be placed in the center of the frame and has caused a symmetrical combination. In addition, we are faced with two other combinations within the image; The circular composition of the island, which indicates the place of the story, and the triangular composition of human figures, which corresponds to the type of action of the characters in the story. Here, knowing the visual expression of the triangle that induces conflict, the painter has made good use of this composition and has represented the form of the figures in a real way by showing movement in the figures, creating bright shadows, and precision in the details. The story's main character wears an orange costume and helps Mehrasab throw Shapur into the sea. In fact, color as a symbolic element indicates the narrative's main character. The artist has chosen the angle of view from above to show where the story takes place; thus, the place becomes a meaningful element in connection with the story's content. The painter has created an exciting atmosphere with arrangements such as representing rocks and turbulent water waves in line with the story's theme.

**The fifth Majlis, Tamrusia's thrown into the sea by Zankalisa:** During his journey, Darab reaches the Arous Islands and helps the ruler of these islands, Lakeland, to escape from Khavariq. Zankalisa is another aspect of Darab's anima. After marrying him, Darab receives the kingdom of his father-in-law's islands. On the way to Darab's place of residence, Zankalisa meets Tamrusia, and after realizing the emotional relationship between Darab and Tamrusia, she throws her into the sea (Tarsusi, 1977, vol. 1, p. 118). In Figure 5,

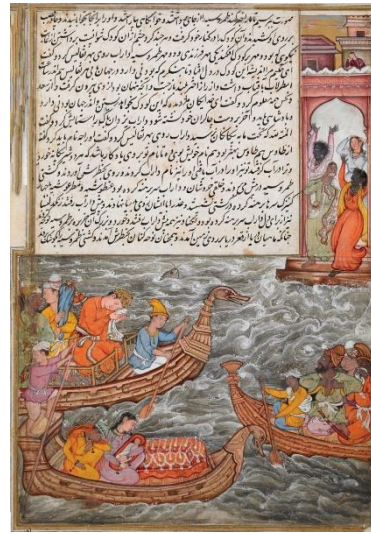


the painter shows the story's track in a general frame simultaneously with creative arrangements; Thus, the frame is divided into two parts of the text. In fact, the image is a combination of two frames that are superimposed. The upper part shows the scene of Tamrusia being thrown into the sea by Zankalisa, drawn from the front angle, and the lower part shows the rescue of Tamrusia by a sailor in another boat. In the upper part, the artist shows the figure of Zankalisa in a boat, under a canopy, with luxurious clothes and ornaments. Behind him, two maids are standing calmly. While staring at Zankalisa with a terrified face, two women throw Tamrusia into the water. A little further, two men are watching the incident from a boat, and they look at each other in surprise. The way the river is represented evokes the depth and intensity of the water flow. In the background, the landscape of nature and architectural landscapes influenced by European painting can be seen. In this scene, the main actor is Zankalisa, who, out of jealousy, orders the murder of her love rival, Tamrusia; Therefore, she is seen in a red dress, which is a sign of anger, evil, and jealousy. Tamrusia has a passive role and is portrayed as a person who is oppressed in a way that evokes pity in the viewer. According to the theme of the story, the symbolic systems used in it show a contrast between dominant/defeated and oppressor/oppressed. In order to show the dominance of Zankalisa, the painter has placed her in a higher position than Tamrusia. Zankalisa's power and dominance are visible in the image with the help of her large figure, body shape, and facial expression. On the other hand, the representation of Tamrusia with a frightened look, disturbed hair, and a defenseless state indicates her oppression. In fact, the painter has displayed the characteristics of the story's main characters with symbolic elements such as the type of clothing, facial expressions, figure, and behavioral states. The type of approach in this picture is realism; the artist has tried to display a real space by borrowing from European painting and three-dimensional visual techniques. By portraying the scene from a close-up view, the painter has emphasized the story's theme and given depth to the image by using atmospheric perspective to prevent visual congestion and create breathing. All the figures are drawn in different situations. Most of the faces, except the face of the older man, are from a three-sided angle. Among the maids, a black woman reminds the natives of India. The residents' clothing, including Zankalisa, is similar to the Europeans, oriented towards the Christian culture, and borrowed from the ancient Egyptian and Mesopotamia models. The points of emphasis in this scene include the figure of Zankalisa, Tamrusia, and the sailor man, which is larger than the others. Factors such as the contrast of vertical and horizontal form in the body of Zankalisa and Tamrusia, and the contrast of size and color are among the issues that affect the emphasis points in this painting. The image's composition has a dynamic structure according to the atmosphere that governs the story. The second part of the page is related to the rescue of Tamrusia by two sailors, which is drawn from the above. In this scene, the painter shows the Yemeni princess suspended in the water, with the sailors holding her hands and trying to pull her out of the sea. The way the figures are placed forms a triangular composition, at the head of which is the figure of Tamrusia. The face of these three figures has created focal points along the angles of the triangle. One of the subtle and significant points in this image is how the swan's head is placed at the beginning of the boat, which is placed inward, unlike usual. It is as if the painter intended to show his concern by bringing her head and eyes to life and the direction of her gaze toward Tamrusia, while implicitly emphasizing Tamrusia's innocence. All the visual elements, such as the diagonal movement of the paddles, the turbulence of the water waves, the shape of the figures, and the rough shape of the rocks, represent the exciting atmosphere of the story. By using the light-dark technique in the use

of colors and creating movement in the form of the figures, the painter tried to make the viewer visualize the story's theme in a real way. In this scene, as in the previous scene, the painter has presented the story's main characters in a close-up view and has allocated more space to it by drawing a high horizon. In general, it can be said that these two pictures are in harmony with the theme and content of the story in terms of expression and visual structure.



**Figure 5.** Tamrusia was thrown into the sea by Zankalisa; page f.56v.  
Source:  
<http://bl.uk/manuscripts>.



**Figure 6.** Killing of Tamrusia; page f.85v.  
Source:  
<http://bl.uk/manuscripts>.

**The sixth Majles, the killing of Tamrusia:** Figure 6 is one of the samples of a romantic story that is beautifully illustrated. Zankalisa, the wife of Darab and the daughter of Lakeland, the king of the Arous Islands, succeeds in killing Tamrusia after many efforts. This happened after the marriage of Darab and Tamrusia and in the eighth month of Tamrusia's pregnancy. Zankalisa meets Tamrusia at sea and kills her with the cooperation of the ship's crew. The baby is born prematurely and survives this danger. This picture shows the transfer of Tamrusia's body. Tamrusia's coffin is seen in the boat with a woman holding her baby and a maidservant from the natives of India in the boat. The coffin is covered with an orange cloth decorated with geometric patterns. Darab, with an orange cloth in another boat, is crying from his beloved separation. The curvature of his body is a sign of the grief that surrounds him. Behind Darab, an armed bodyguard and a black-eyed slave are sitting. In front of Darab, a young man steers the boat. On the right side, another boat accompanies them. Its occupants look at Darab and the coffin of Tamrusia with a state full of sorrow and sympathy. Among them, two dark-skinned men can be seen with ruptures in their collars. The background has only a small part that contains the architectural space. At the entrance of this space, four female figures (native and non-native) with bare heads and feet, while moaning, intend to enter there through the stairs leading to the sea to fulfill the welcoming ritual in a way. Someone is also watching this sad event on the roof of the building. All the visual elements in this scene are restless because of the sadness of Tamrusia's death. According to the text of the story, even the fishes of the sea have come out from the bottom of the water and accompanied Darab in this great calamity. The turbulence of the sea and the distress of the people present in the scene have created a sensual and expressive atmosphere. The structure of the work has a realistic approach. The

dominance of warm colors and the type of composition has created a dynamic atmosphere. By using the mutual effect of colors and their balanced distribution in the whole image, the painter has created a balanced space, and by characterizing and showing movement in the figures and the relationship between them with the setting of the picture, he has created an image that is appropriate and harmonious with the theme of the story and from factors such as color, form, positioning, use of positional perspective and people's lines of sight as visual signs to emphasize Darab's personality. In this image, the angle of view has a structural connection, and the visual elements are placed together in a chain manner and complement each other.

**The seventh Majlis, Darab's encounter with the dragon:** Figure 7 shows the scene of Darab's encounter with the dragon and the conversation between the two. In this figure, Darab is seen on the left side in a white dress, which is a sign of his purity and innocence, in a three-faced position. Darab is staring at the dragon with a surprised finger on his mouth. The dragon is seen with four legs and scaly skin, with long and narrow appendages protruding from its arms and legs. There is no trace of evil and predatoryness in the drawing of the dragon. Unlike most mythological images, this image shows no conflict between the protagonist and the dragon. The calm state of this creature and the face of Darab, as well as the way the dragon is represented, indicate the relationship of peace and friendship between the two. Since ancient times, the dragon has been manifested in the mythology of nations in positive and negative aspects. The multifaceted symbolism of the dragon is sometimes associated with destruction, drought, and evil, and sometimes with blessing, abundance, and prosperity. As a supernatural creature, the dragon is «the keeper of hidden treasures that must be defeated in order to obtain these treasures» (Chevalier & Gerbran, 2000, Vol. 1, p. 123). In the background, a dark cave and a mountain above it with various plants can be seen. A clear dark contrast has been established between the light clothes of the story's main character and the cave. «The cave symbolizes the center of the world, the place of unity of self and self; It is the meeting place of divinity and man» (Cooper, 2001, p. 265). The cave is the passage from the earth to the sky, and entering it is a return to the origin. According to ancient rituals and beliefs, the cave was a place for the secret of familiarity; Therefore, it was considered a secret place, and its entrance was guarded by some giants or a supernatural person. It was possible to enter it only if these forces were overcome. In the Mithraic religion, worship and the secret of familiarity took place in the cave (Chevalier & Gerbran, 2006, vol. 4, p. 341). According to the symbolic meanings of the dragon and the cave, it can be said that in this work, the dragon acts as a helping actor, a savior, and a protector of Darab. The image of two skeletons in the foreground emphasizes the dragon's role in destroying Darab's enemies, which are located in the corner of the image and under the other visual elements. To avoid disturbing the picture's calm atmosphere, the painter has drawn pictures of skeletons with faded colors. In this work, the depiction of Darab at the cave entrance refers to the safety that Darab took refuge in, and with the help of the dragon's guard and protection, he was safe from the evil of ill-wishers. In addition, Darab's ascetic solemnity indicates his inner refinement, which he achieved by seclusion. In this painting, the frankness of the expression can be seen in the representation of the story's theme and the relationship between the text and the image. Factors such as the dominance of colored and neutral grays, composition, and characterization have created a calm and undisturbed atmosphere in harmony with the theme of the work.



Figure 7. Darab's confrontation with the dragon; page f.112v. Source: <http://bl.uk/manuscripts>.

## Conclusion

The manuscript that was studied in this research, besides having strong elements of Iranian culture (in terms of text and paintings) and Indian culture and art, also contains elements of European culture, which are important to explore. When the European works arrived, Indian artists created the ground for evolution in the Gurkani painting tradition. Considering that the art of book design influenced the art of painting, this tendency penetrated the court manuscripts of that time. Among these books is Darab-Namah, which has become the stage and field of art for several prominent court painters. In one language, Darab-Namah marks the end of Mughal Indian painting in its classical style. Because in this manuscript, realism becomes popular in the field of Indian painting, and the daily life of people is depicted in it. Although the paintings are in harmony with the theme and content of the story in terms of expression and visual structure, they are all mixed in rectangular frames with vertical cuts. Still, in some cases, the artist has given a different effect to the narratives with the help of mythology. In contrast, in a kind of effect, it has brought itself closer to the literary text. Each of the images, while having a structure in harmony with the whole edition, has special visual characteristics to strengthen the expression of the story's theme. In all the paintings, the main character dominates the space of the frame with measures such as enlargement and the use of spatial perspective, location, type of composition and a special and bright color in the center, and the relationships of the elements in the frame are of the type of space and time chain relationships that show the movement of time and space. In these pictures, there is no gap between the past, present, and future, as if the scenes are beyond time and the time has lost its boundaries here, and the painters have been able to present a story to the audience in a single frame. In these paintings, the main subject dominates the space of the frame. This mastery is done with the help of bright colors or magnification. In general, the components and elements used in the Darab-Namah of Tarsusi, aligned with the content of the text in the chain of meaning, have formed a narrative that guides the viewer from a starting point to an ending point. A huge part of the implications of the visual message in the Darab-Namah manuscript has been shaped and meaningful by the selection of visual elements and visual arrangements that have emerged in components such as symbol, color, composition, angle of view, portraiture, face painting, and scenery. The proposal of a new article is the subject of examining the romantic story of the Iranian prince and the Yemeni princess from the illustrated Majlis of this manuscript.

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