The Comparative Study of Pictorial Elements in
Ahmed Musa Mirajnameh and Mir Heidar Mirajnameh

1 Mona Mirjalili Mahna, 2 Fataneh Mahmoudi

1 monamohanna110@yahoo.com
2 faculty member of Mazandaran University, Iran
mozhan1986@gmail.com

Abstract

The Ascension (Mi’raj) of the prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is one of the important subjects considered by Iranian poets and authors during different Islamic periods. Two prominent works in two periods of Iranian art history were Ahmed Musa’s Mirajnameh illustrated in Tabriz in the Ilkhanid era and Mir Heidar’s Mirajnameh that was illustrated in the first period of Herat School in the Timurid era. In this study, the main pictorial elements of ascension (Mi’raj) were described and analyzed. Then, seven images left from Ahmed Musa’s Mirajnameh, based on its main elements, were compared to seven images of Mir Heidar’s Mirajnameh. The research hypotheses included the combining of Chinese and Iranian arts and, the effect of the related period on each one of these two Mirajnamehs. The present study aimed at investigating the main elements of ascension (Mi’raj) including the image of Prophet Muhammad, Gabriel, Buraq, angels, and the skies as well as studying and comparing them based on the main elements in the two above-mentioned Mirajnamehs. The research method was descriptive, analytical-comparative and the data collection library method was used. Two main results were achieved through this study. One of the results was that the main elements, similarities, and differences between the compared images in Ahmed Musa’s Mirajnameh were different from Mir Heidar’s and the other result was that the text used in Ahmed Musa’s Mirajnameh was different from the illustrated text in Mir Heidar’s. Since the used text in Mir Heidar’s Mirajnameh is not clear, this result cannot be useful in other studies.

Keywords: Ascension (Mi’raj), Ahmed Musa Mirajnameh, Mir Heidar Mirajnameh, Ilkhanid art, Timurid art

1 The current work has been orally presented in International Conference on Orientalism, Persian History and Literature and anniversary of SaadiShirazi (26th May 2016)
Introduction

Ascension (Mi’raj) is a divine invitation to the Prophet of Islam. This journey was considered as a high measure for determining the Prophet and nation of Islam. This amazing journey was one of the miracles of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) that is mentioned in Surah Al-Isra' and Surah An-Najm in the holy Quran. Mi’raj literally means going up or rising and refers to the event of the ascension of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Mirajnameh is a description written in prose or verse about the ascension of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). It should be noted that some editions are complete narrations on the ascension of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Some others were narrated and illustrated in literary texts. According to Muslims, ascension (Mi’raj) is the highest level of humanity. Since the grandeur and magnificence of ascension (Mi’raj) is a great event for all Muslims, it has always been considered by artists who attempted to illustrate it in all periods. This wonderful phenomenon, mostly illustrated in Mirajnamehs, has a very high artistic-visual value. These images and appreciation of the pictorial features of ascension features help us in understanding this wonderful event. Two valuable pictorial collections of Ahmed Musa’s Mirajnameh, belonging to the Ilkhanid era, which are located in Bahram Mirza's Muraqqa in the Safavid era, and Mir Heidar Mirajnameh illustrated in the Timurid era are among the most famous illustrated editions on ascension (Mi’raj) displaying the amazing images with an emphasis on hadiths, religious narrations, and artistic creativity. There are many pictorial elements in illustrating this wonderful event because the ascension of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was depicted in different stages and many events were illustrated in it. Due to the abundance of pictorial elements, this study addressed only the main elements of ascension (Mi’raj) that are the image of Prophet Muhammad, Buraq, Gabriel, angels, and the skies which had the main role in the concept of ascension (Mi’raj). These pictorial elements were analyzed in these two Mirajnamehs. Then, the images of both Mirajnamehs were compared based on the main elements. This study achieved the similarities and differences between their pictorial elements. The hypotheses used in this study were:

1. The elements used in Ahmed Musa’s Mirajnameh have the painting feature of the Ilkhanid era while the elements used in Mir Heidar’s Mirajnameh have the painting feature of the Timurid era.
2. The elements used in Ahmed Musa Mirajnameh are a combination of Chinese art and Iranian painting.

The Chinese painting features are observed in some parts of Ahmed Musa’s Mirajnameh while the Iranian art features are observed in some other parts. However, in the case of Mir Heidar’s Mirajnameh, it seems that the painters of that period addressed the subject based on the specific social conditions of their era. The aim of this research was to study the main elements of ascension (Mi’raj) in the two above-mentioned Mirajnamehs and to see which image can be compared to the other images in other Mirajnamehs based on the pictorial elements to find their similarities and differences. Finally, by comparing these features and by studying the illustration method of elements and expressing the image of ascension (Mi’raj) at each stage, it can be concluded that Ahmed Musa Mirajnameh was illustrated from a text different from the text of Mir Heidar’s Mirajnameh. Since the text of Ahmed Musa’s Mirajnameh was different from the text of Mir Heidar Mirajnameh and the text of Ahmed Musa Mirajnameh is not clear to us, this result can be useful for future studies to achieve the text for this Mirajnameh.
This study tries to answer the two following questions:

- What are the features of ascension (Mi’raj) and its main elements including the Prophet Muhammad’s image, Buraq, Gabriel, angels, and the skies in Ahmed Musa’s Mirajnameh and Mir Heidar’s Mirajnameh?
- What are the similarities and differences between these images in Ahmed Musa Mirajnameh and Mir Heidar Mirajnameh?

Review of literature

- Nikoo Nejad, Mahboubeh (2011). The discourse reading of the images in Mir Heidar Mirajnameh. Master’s thesis in art, Isfahan Art University. This thesis compared the images of Mir Heidar Mirajnameh through semiotics and semantics.
- The book “The Mi’raj painting of manuscripts to public paintings with a look at the iconography of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), by Helena Shin Dashtgel, 2010. Scientific & Cultural Publications Company is one of the references addressing the Mi’raj painting and compilation of Mirajnameh images with some explanations of the image as work introduction.
- Tehrani, Reza (2010). The comparative study of structural elements in Mir Heidar Mirajnameh and Ahmed Musa Mirajnameh, Negareh journal. In this study, the two above-mentioned Mirajnamehs were studied with the structural approach.
- Kamran, Behnam (1998). The Symbolism of Mi’raj. Master’s thesis in art research. Art University. This study attempted to decode the hidden concepts and secrets of Mi’raj with a symbolic approach.
- Shayestefar, Mahna (2009). The symbolic presence of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in Shahrokhi Mirajnameh. Monthly Art Magazine (Ketabe Mahe Honar), 33,14-23. This study addressed the presence of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and emphasis on this element and a part of it included the Mi’raj.
- Naderi, Mahnoush (2006). The analysis of images in Mirajnameh manuscript (Herat school, the first half of the 9th century D). Master’s thesis in painting. Al-Zahra University. This study analyzed the image of Mirajnameh editions in Herat school based on the recognition and definition of used elements in the above-mentioned image.

Research methodology

The present study was descriptive- analytical and comparative. Firstly, the main elements of ascension (Mi’raj) in both Mirajnamehs were studied and then the images of Ahmed Musa Mirajnameh were compared to the images of Mir Heidar Mirajnameh based on the pictorial elements. The selected samples were the seven images left from Ahmed Musa Mirajnameh and seven images from Mir Heidar Mirajnameh which could be compared to Ahmed Musa Mirajnameh. library data collection method was used.
Findings

The Ilkhanid art and Chinese influences

The Mongol Ilkhanid dynasty that lasted from 650/1251 to 736/1335 began a period in the Iranian art that was highly influenced by the far eastern art especially the Sung art and Yuan.

At the time of Mogul conquests, Iran had passed an Islamic culture over 500 years. The new Mogul rulers absorbed this Islamic culture when they changed their religion from Buddhism to Islam. The Chinese elements of Mogul culture and their political relations to the Far East through the fundamental cooperation of iconography, painting, pottery, and other decorative arts in this era influenced by the Far East were reflected in the Ilkhanid era. In painting especially pottery and metalworking in motifs and concept of aesthetics which completely restored the Iranian art. The most obvious feature of Chinese painting influence was the new concept of space and liveliness and mostly romantic feeling of nature. The human bodies which were depicted clumsily before were painted with more realistic proportions and delicacy and the crease and beauty of clothes found an effective depth. The bodies included different subjects based on the Iranian manner while the prospect of the background was merely in a diagram form without any symbol. “The influence of Chinese art appeared for the first time in the details of images (miniature) in the early 7th/13th century and then was combined with the traditions of Iranian painting and finally was emerged in new forms. This process indicated the ability of Iranians in combining native elements together that were certainly considered as the fundamental features of Iran nature and soul” (Sherato, Gerube, 1997:17).

The Timurid art

With the emergence of Timurid art, an art emerged that peaked not only in Transoxiana and eastern Iran but also simultaneously in western Iran ruled by the Turkmen Qaraqouyunlu and Aq Quiunlu dynasties. “The innovations of painting in the Timurid era were originated from painting in Shiraz, Tabriz, and Baqdad in the late 8th/14th century during the Muzaffarids and Jalairid dynasties” (Ibid:45).

Three styles can be distinguished in the Timurid painting: Shiraz style, Turkmen style, and Herat style. Since Mir Heidar Mirajnameh was written in the Shahrokh era and categorized at Herat style, the general features of this style will be mentioned in the following part:

The general features of Herat style

The first works of Shahrokh School were directly affected by the early Timurid style while they have an old state and modeled the pre-Timurid patterns especially the Ilkhanid patterns since Herat was far from the old art centers. The design of bodies is often simple and artistic compositions are preliminary. In this style, the new rule of the high horizon with the adjustment of bodies and objects in one architectural perspective are not completely developed. Colors are soft and uniform but do not have the brightness of colors in the early Timurid style or Shiraz style. The obvious features of this style include: “bright colors, very high attention to details, full unity of composition, significant characterization of individuals in human bodies, and finally sensitivity in transferring the space from the paintings of glorious and hierarchical spaces to succulent and royal paintings of daily life” (Ibid, 50).
**Ascension (Mi’raj)**

Ascension (Mi’raj) refers to the way of ascent and progress to the kingdom of God used by angels while ascending to God (Shahrouri, 2000:122). Ascension (Mi’raj) had a long history in the life of prophets before Islam. Religious books especially the Quran mentioned ascension (Mi’raj) while there was a difference between the ascent to the kingdom of God and the ascension (Mi’raj) of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

The ascension (Mi’raj) of some prophets such as Elijah, Kharghil, and John the Apostle was explicitly mentioned in the Old Testament and New Testament. Furthermore, the ascension (Mi’raj) of Jesus, Idris, and Paul the Apostle was mentioned in Bible and the ascension (Mi’raj) of Jesus was also mentioned in Surah An-Nisa of the Quran. The ascension (Mi’raj) of Abraham, Idris, and Moses with mysterious and supernatural power was mentioned in the Quran. Thus, the issue of ascension (Mi’raj) was not exclusive to Islam. The ascension (Mi’raj) of some other prophets was mentioned in the Old Testament, New Testament, and some verses of the Quran but the complete type of ascension (Mi’raj) was the ascension (Mi’raj) of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) according to the narrations. Another example is the Book of Arda Viraf about the heavenly journey of a Zoroastrian priest in his sleep that was mentioned by him, when he woke up, on the rewards and tortures of the other universe in order to stabilize the religious beliefs

(Afifi, 1963:9).

The main elements which are important in ascension (Mi’raj) and have a key role in most images of ascension (Mi’raj) are: Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), Gabriel, Buraq, angels, and the skies. The presence of these pictorial elements in ascension (Mi’raj) determines the happenings occurred in each stage of this heavenly journey. Different angels and levels of the sky indicate the different stages of this heavenly journey.

**Ahmed Musa Mirajnameh**

“one of the most important and prominent illustrated works which is a preface to the pictorial theme of the ascension (Mi’raj) of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in the history of Iranian painting is a Mirajnameh by Ahmed Musa who was one of the famous painters in the Mongol Ilkhan court” (Dashtgol, 2005:43).

A part of this Mirajnameh is placed in Bahram Mirza's Muraqqa belonging to Topkapı Palace, Istanbul in No. Hazine 2154. Bahram Mirza's muraqqa the brother of Tahmasp I was provided by Dust Muhammad Heravi, the artist and historian of the 10th century AD in 951 AD/1544. The images of a part of Mirajnameh were attached to this famous muraqqa in line with the stages of the ascension (Mi’raj) of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) (Ibid:43).

The scenery inscriptions of the Mirajnameh illustrated edition were written by Maulana Abdullah Sirefi and prepared by the order of Sultan Abu Saeed Bahadur Khan about 772-762 AD/1360-1370. It included 10 images separated from the text that was attached on eight papers in Bahram Mirza's muraqqa referring to the ascension (Mi’raj) of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and his visit to the wonders of the world. Since no part of the text is available, the book on which base Ahmed Musa illustrated his work by the early 8th century AD is not certain.
The illustrators did not consider the order of images in the edition while attaching on the papers of muraqqa and sometimes put two images from two different stages of the event next to each other.

**Mir Heidar Mirajnameh**

The Mirajnameh edition of the Timurid era is one of the most precious illustrated manuscripts on the ascension (Mi’raj) of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) to the seven skies and visit to the wonders of the world, heaven, and hell. This Mirajnameh was translated by Mir Heidar the poet in about 840 AD and written by Uyghur Malek Bakhshi from Herat. This edition was illustrated by the order of Sharokh Mirza (807-851 AD) the fourth son of Timur Goorkani in three languages of Arabic, Turkish, and Uyghur with 68 sceneries. This edition with 265 pages and quarto in size of 22.5x34 cm is kept in the eastern branch of Pars Library in No. Supple-Turk-165. This edition has a cover with Ottoman bindings, brown Timakh and oval cover that is sealed.

**The main elements in Ahmed Musa Mirajnameh**

**The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in Ahmed Musa Mirajnameh**

The face of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was illustrated in the images of Ahmed Musa Mirajnameh and the arrangement of pictorial elements and face of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) along the eastern art tradition especially the painting of Christian churches and Chinese art associated with the Sassanid art tradition were presented. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was illustrated with a white and delicate turban on his head referring to his purity, a golden and circular aura on his head and lineal decorations around it, dark braided hair hanging on both shoulders as the Mongolian aesthetics of that time. Diverse positions of head and hands in the illustration of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) are considerable. The obvious details in the painting were derived from the central Asia painting and ancient Iranian art.

Using the circular aura was the “sign of greatness and the authority of the person and was emphasized

![Image 1. Some details of image a121, Ahmed Musa Mirajnameh, author: Dashtgel, 2010](image1.png)

not only in the initial Islamic paintings but also in the images of potteries, motifs of Bronzes, glasses, and even on fabrics”

(Tehrani, 2010:29) (Figure 1).
Ultramarine cloak is the color of mercy and infinity (Figure 2) emphasizing the heavenly and non-earthly aspect. In fact, ultramarine can be used for showing the mercy of God in a painting. The blue color is the symbol of other traits such as right and wisdom. Using an ultramarine clothing and golden aura around the head creates a specific meaning in the image. Ultramarine is the symbol of the infinite sky.

Gold color is the symbol of soul that is inherently beyond the whole world. Ultramarine and gold color refer to a mercy tending to appear (Bolkhari, 2005:118).

For this reason, in the images, the gold color used in the aura with ultramarine color express the manifestation of a word to describe the prophet Muhammad (PBUH) who is “Rahmat al-Alamin” mercy upon the worlds.

![Image 2. Some details of images, the image of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), Ahmed Musa Mirajnameh, author: Dashtgel, 2010](image)

**Gabriel in Ahmed Musa Mirajnameh**

Gabriel in Ahmed Musa Mirajnameh was illustrated in both flying state and standing state (Figure 3). Although the presence of Buraq is one of the images of Ahmed Musa Mirajnameh, in some images, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was illustrated as being carried by Gabriel while Gabriel played a significant role both as guide and steed of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). It is significant because in some narrations, Buraq and in some others Gabriel was introduced as the steed of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Gabriel was illustrated with two wings on his body indicating his divine aspect and greatness. The images illustrating his wings open, the logical state of flying was not shown as if they were illustrated for the simultaneous display of both wings. On the other hand, two directions of up and down wings refer to the nature of revelation that received by Gabriel and transferred to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The reason why the angels such as Gabriel were illustrated in a female shape can be searched in the Quran. Some Quranic verses stated that Arabs considered angels as God’s daughters. For example, Surah Az-Zukhruf, verse 19 states: (And they have made the angels, who are servants of the Most Merciful, females.)
Did they witness their creation? Their testimony will be recorded, and they will be questioned.) and Surah Al-Isra verse 40 states: (Then, has your Lord chosen you for [having] sons and taken from among the angels daughters? Indeed, you say a grave saying.). “The angels having long straight wings transfer the power and authority” (Shams Borujeni, 2014: 92).

In images, the greatness of Gabriel can be observed in large wings with long straight lines. The Quran stated that angels in human perception appear as human (And if We had made him an angel, we would have made him [appear as] a man, and We would have covered them with that in which they cover themselves.) (Surah Al-An'am: 9). The Quran also states: (And she took, in seclusion from them, a screen. Then we sent to her Our Angel, and he represented himself to her as a well-proportioned man.) (Surah Maryam:17) (Ibid:95).

Gabriel that is one of the close angels was illustrated as a human in this Mirajnameh. The warm and moving colors and crease in the clothes of Gabriel which were influenced by Byzantine art can be observed in the image of Gabriel.

**Buraq in Ahmed Musa Mirajnameh**

Among the left pages from this Mirajnameh, the presence of Buraq was only illustrated in only one image in page 620. In this image (Figure 4), Buraq is present in the first plan. Buraq is introduced as the steed of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in ascension (Mi’raj) that has been interpreted in many different ways. The mystical view of Buraq is considered it as the steed of love with unlimited agility as Rumi stated in Diwan-e Shams-e Tabrizi:

** (Diwan-e Shams-e Tabrizi, 2007:73)
A combined creature showing the supernatural power was illustrated in warm colors. The Mongolian makeup common in the Ilkhanid era and a golden crown highlight the position and superiority of this creature more than ever.

![Image 4. Some details of images, images of Buraq, Ahmed Musa Mirajnameh, author: Dashtgel, 2010](image)

Buraq was mentioned as demiurge in mystical and literary interpretations. Khaqani in Tuḥfat al‐Iraqayn mentioned ascension (Mi’raj) and wrote a beautiful poem on Buraq and Mi’raj. He described Buraq as:

** (Tuḥfat al‐Iraqayn, 1978: 74-75)

The human-shaped figure of Buraq was clearly stated in the poem of Khaqani. A significant closeness is even observed between the image and poem in terms of the type of braided hairstyle. The small white wing in front of Buraq refers to the purity and ability to fly in the sky.

**Angels in Ahmed Musa Mirajnameh**

In this Mirajnameh, angels were illustrated in different positions. In image 62a, two angels were illustrated behind the column granting the bowls of milk, wine, and water to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as a divine test or the image of angels in human-shaped figures with braided hair hanging or in looped style based on Mongolian aesthetics with monochrome clothes full of crease influenced by

![Image 5. Some details of images, angels in Ahmed Musa Mirajnameh, author: Dashtgel, 2010](image)
Byzantine art and a golden crown showing their high position were illustrated in standing or praying positions (Image 5).

The wings of angels in this Mirajnameh were illustrated as long and straight with different colors. Space and wings significantly changed in the Ilkhanid era due to the arrival of Chinese and Byzantine elements and their combination with the Iranian elements. The form of angels’ wings changed. “The angels of the early Islamic schools were influenced by either the earlier method such as Manavi painting or the angels of Byzantine and Abbasi School. In the first case, the colorful and static state and in the second case, the crease of clothes was their features”. (Shams Borujeni, 2014:100).

**Sky in Ahmed Musa Mirajnameh**

The ascension (Mi’raj) of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was carried out in different stages and different levels of the sky. For this reason, considering this pictorial element reveals the quality and condition of that stage. But in Ahmed Musa Mirajnameh, considering the sky and addressing it as a single element was less observed. In most images of this Mirajnameh, the sky plays a role as the monochrome background of the image and only in one image showed a specific meaning in a stage of Mi’raj. Image 42b showed a red sky in fire with flames among which there are white snowy mountains (Figure 6). Neither the fire melts the snow nor does the snow put out the fire, “so that the concept of this heavenly atmosphere reminds an angel that was created in a strange shape half fire and half ice praying loudly.” (Dashtgel, 2010:110).

![Image 6. Image 42 b, Ahmed Musa Mirajnameh, author: Dashtgel, 2010](image-url)
The main elements in Mir Heidar Mirajnameh

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in Mir Heidar Mirajnameh

The wonderful quantity of sceneries in this edition with ideal images of the ascension (Mi’raj) of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) reveals the selection of scenery themes based on the significance of Buddhist art, Chinese painting, elements of Mongolian style with ascension (Mi’raj) of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and with Islamic attitude and thinking. The image of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in all sceneries of the painting is observed with no cover on the face and with the expression of emotions and astonishment from observing the unseen world. His head and in some cases his whole body was illustrated among a beam of the fiery light (Figure 7). According to Al-Ghazali “light” only works for this real existence that is the highest light and other creatures receive light from him (Bolkhari, 2005:458).

Figure 7. Some details of image 28, the fiery aura in Mir Heidar Mirajnameh

The concept of bright aura and light to the Islamic scholars, considering the world of ideas all from light, was a view derived from Quranic verses from Surah An-Nur. Suhrawardi in his book “Hayakel Al-Noor” wrote: “among the variety of heavenly lights related to God, one light is associated with us which is the stereotype or our Godhead” (Henry Corbin, 2005:42).

Khvarenah was mentioned in ancient Iran. According to Suhrawardi, Khvarenah was like the eternal radiation of Noor-ul-Anwaar in the whole world and the mystic must be able to receive this light” (Radi, 2000:78).

The scholars of mysticism, for their progress and intuition, considered different colors with regard to different places and positions. For example, here is a quote from the book “Fuathah al-Jamal” by Najmuddin Kubra in which the influence of his colorful attitude in the opinions of Islamic art critics is obvious.
According to him “when you see the green color, you will find a peace in your heart, patience in the chest, succulence inside, joy in the soul, and sight in the eyes and they are all the attributes of life obtained by the mystic in the path of his progress. Farid, (2009:61) emphasized this point in the long green cloak of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

**Gabriel in Mir Heidar Mirajnameh**

In this Mirajnameh, Gabriel was illustrated in a human-shaped figure with Mongolian makeup based on the Mongolian aesthetics governing that era and influenced by the Ilkhanid era. Long, straight, and colorful wings influenced by the Manavi painting indicate the greatness and ability to fly in the sky with different clothes. In some images, the fiery legs were illustrated instead of human legs. “Displaying the fiery legs for most angels refers to their difference from human and their creation from light” (Nikoo Nejad, 2013:66).

These flames illustrated in the legs of these angels were the only fire in this Mirajnameh that was not in gold color and only followed the form of fire flames (Images 8 &9).

**Buraq in Mir Heidar Mirajnameh**

Buraq in most images of this Mirajnameh was illustrated as a static composition influenced by the Herat school. It has red and purple colors with white spots. Two small white wings in front of its body were influenced by Chinese elements as the symbol of divinity. The position of the tail and its long legs are the symbols of his extraordinary agility and speed. There is a necklace with triangular threads where the human head is joined to the animal body.
The necklace visually justifies the irregular connection of human to animal and strengthens this connection. Buraq’s bridle was illustrated according to the narrations. Buraq has an amber silk clothing on its back and there is a purple and sometimes purple saddle with green and yellow margins on it (Garshasbi fakhr, 2010:44) (Images 10 & 11).

Angels in Mir Heidar Mirajnameh

Different types of angels were illustrated in Mir Heidar Mirajnameh image related to Herat school. For example, an angel with 70 heads, an angel with eagle, cow, lion, and human heads, an angel in shape of a rooster and an angel half in snow and half in fire. The color of clothing was diverse and hairstyle was in form of Mongolian aesthetics at that time. An angel with 70 heads and long earlobes was influenced by Buddhist art and the plummed crown was influenced by Uyghur culture. “In the Uyghur culture, the plummed crown is a symbol of fluidity and movement of birds that was manifested in this painting” (Maleki, 2008:105).

Sky in Mir Heidar Mirajnameh

The role of the sky as the main element and place of the ascension (Mi’raj) of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in the sceneries of the edition is considerable. In this Mirajnameh, the ascension (Mi’raj) of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in seven skies was illustrated. Seven skies were in this order: first sky: iron, second sky: bronze or copper, third sky: silver, fifth sky: Garnet, sixth sky: Emerald, and seventh sky: light (Ibid:95). In most images, the sky was illustrated in Ultramarine with small golden circles such as stars influenced by the Baghdad school with spiral clouds as golden delicate lines throughout the heavenly journey of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) around the scene. The twists of clouds were somewhat exaggerated implying the moving scene and indicating the spiral curve or Arabesque, especially in Iranian painting elements. This type of decoration was displayed as the turns and twists of the body in dragon leaf Arabesque of Iranian painting (Image 12). The color of the sky in the story was changed and when the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) reached the seventh sky, space became full of light and this image was illustrated with a golden and bright sky. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in this image is prostrating in front of the divine light after the unveiling. According to Gruber, the artist has probably illustrated the presence of God by using golden colors and changing the blue color of the sky into red color. In some images showing the hell, the sky was illustrated in black.
Comparative and analytical tables

Table 1. The features of main pictorial elements of Mi’raj in Ahmed Musa Mirajnameh

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>pictorial element</th>
<th>Features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)</td>
<td>painting borrowed from the Central Asian painting - Decorative elements influenced by the eastern art especially Chinese art with the linkage of the Sassanid art, circular aura showing the power, majesty and spirituality of the original paintings of Islam - hairstyle influenced by Mongolian aesthetics of that era- blue cloak emphasizing the heavenly aspect and mercy- various states of standing and sitting and riding on the shoulder of Gabriel- white turban referring to purity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gabriel</td>
<td>In two modes of flying and standing-human-shaped figures influenced by the Ilkhanid art, with two long straight wings indicating the authority and solidity- the direction of wings to up and down shows the role of Gabriel as the bearer of divine revelation- the role of steed for the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), a golden crown on head indicating its high spirituality, soft colors of clothing with crease influenced by the Byzantine Art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buraq</td>
<td>Combined creature referring to the extraterrestrial power- the red color of the body refers to the steed of love and agility- Mongolian hairstyle that was common in the Ilkhanid era, a golden crown on head indicating its high spirituality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>angels</td>
<td>Braided hair influenced by the Mongolian aesthetics. Monochromatic clothing with creased lines influenced by the Byzantine art, a golden crown on head indicating its high spirituality, high status and colorfulness of the Manavi painting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sky</td>
<td>Monochrome background without clouds and mostly dark- in an image with flames of fire and snowy mountains reminding an angel with a weird creation of half fire and half ice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2. The features of main pictorial elements of Mi’raj in Mir Heidar Mirajnameh

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>pictorial element</th>
<th>Features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)</td>
<td>hairstyle based on Mongolian aesthetics – Long clothing without decorations indicating his purity and simplicity, the fiery aura around the head indicating the highest light from the viewpoint of Al-Ghazali and Noor-ul-Anwaar according to Suhrawardi referring to Khvarenah in ancient Iran- The green color of cloak indicates the perfection of progress, broad-mindedness, and inherent happiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gabriel</td>
<td>colorful wings influenced by the Manavi painting- long straight wings influenced by the Ilkhanid era showing the strength and greatness- the form of flames in legs in some images shows the difference in creation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buraq</td>
<td>Combined creature referring to extraterrestrial force – static state in composition in the Herat school- two small bright wings influenced by the elements of the Chinese art and the symbol of divinity - according to the narrations and thoughts of mystics the human face- Mongolian portrait with long earlobe influenced by Buddhist art, long legs and tail showing the agility - White chest and purple saddle influenced by narrations-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>angels</td>
<td>Different and strange shapes like seventy heads or angels with multiple human and animal heads with long earlobe influenced by Buddhist art, braided hair as the Mongolian aesthetics, in some images the plumed hat influenced by the Uyghur vulture as a symbol of the fluidity and movement of birds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sky</td>
<td>the spiral and golden lines of clouds influenced by the Chinese art, Different colors in the background of the sky based on storytelling and level of the sky in Ultramarine, golden and black colors- illustration of motion due to wavy and spiral lines reminding of dragon leaf Arabesque -</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3. Comparing each image of Ahmed Musa Mirajnameh to the image of Mir Heidar Mirajnameh

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status of comparison</th>
<th>The reasons for accepting or rejecting the image</th>
<th>The compared pictorial elements</th>
<th>the image of Mir Heidar Mirajnameh</th>
<th>the image of Ahmed Musa Mirajnameh</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>rejected</td>
<td>The absence of angels as the main element and the lack of a vivid image on which the great angel is sitting that shows Azrael</td>
<td>Image 12</td>
<td>Image 12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rejected</td>
<td>The great angel in Ahmed Musa Mirajnameh is not Gabriel while this angel in Mir Heidar Mirajnameh is Gabriel</td>
<td>Image 33</td>
<td>Image 33</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>accepted</td>
<td>The presence of the great angel in the corner of the image and the existence of the image of the Prophet (PBUH) Gabriel, angels and the sky are the main elements of the ascension in the two matching images.</td>
<td>Image 28</td>
<td>Image 28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>accepted</td>
<td>The presence of the subject and the element of half the snow and half the fire in the form of a certain angel and the presence of the main elements of the ascension in both the image of the Prophet (PBUH) Gabriel, angel, and sky</td>
<td>Image 10</td>
<td>Image 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The presence of a great angel and its relationship to the main subject</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The presence of a great angel and its relationship to the main subject</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Element theme Half snow and Half fire</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accepted</td>
<td>Assigning both images to the white rooster element on a large scale of the frame that indicates its direct connection to the subject. However, the main elements of the ascension, such as the Prophet (PBUH), Gabriel, angels and the sky.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Importance of the presence of white rooster in a wide range of image frame</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><img src="image9" alt="Image 9" /></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accepted</td>
<td>Prophet (PBUH) in either image is taking or drinking one of the bowls that the main subject in both images is common.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The main subject of the divine test by sending three bowls of wine, water, and milk to the service of the Prophet by the angels</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><img src="image32" alt="Image 32" /></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accepted</td>
<td>In both images, the three main elements of the image of the Prophet (PBUH) Gabriel and the sky are seen while the Prophet (PBUH) and Gabriel are flying along the sea.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There are three main elements of the image of the Prophet (PBUH) Gabriel, and the sea when the Prophet (PBUH) and Gabriel are flying</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><img src="image6" alt="Image 6" /></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rejected</td>
<td>In both images, the three main elements of the image of the Prophet (PBUH), Gabriel and the sky are seen while the Prophet (PBUH) and Gabriel are flying along the sea but the element of the sea is not observed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There are three main elements of the image of the Prophet (PBUH), Gabriel, and the sea when the Prophet (PBUH) and Gabriel are flying</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><img src="image22" alt="Image 22" /></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Rejected | In both images, the three main elements of the image of the Prophet (PBUH), Gabriel and the sky are seen while the Prophet (PBUH) and Gabriel are flying along the sea but the element of the sea is not observed.

There are three main elements of the image of the Prophet (PBUH), Gabriel, and the sea when the Prophet (PBUH) and Gabriel are flying. |

| Accepted | In both images, approximately one-third of the frame is dedicated to the angel standing by the door which has a direct connection with the main subject, and the presence of the elements of the Prophet (PBUH), Gabriel, Angel and sky are common.

The presence of the elements of the image of the Prophet (PBUH), Gabriel, sky and the angel standing by the door. |

| Accepted | The prophet (PBUH), Gabriel and sky are the main and common elements in both images and the presence of 4 feminine figures inside the building is one of the main reasons for the comparison and is directly related to the subject. |

The pictorial elements of the image of the Prophet (PBUH), Gabriel and sky and the presence of 4 feminine figures inside the building. |
Table 4. The similarities and differences between the compared images in Ahmed Musa Mirajnameh and Mir Heidar Mirajnameh

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Ahmed Musa Mirajnameh</th>
<th>Mir Heidar Mirajnameh</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Image</td>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="Image 1" /></td>
<td><img src="image28.png" alt="Image 28" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similarities</td>
<td>The presence of the Prophet (PBUH), Gabriel, angels and the sky are the main elements of Mi’raj, hairstyle, and morphology of figures based on Mongolian aesthetics, long straight wings of angels, pointing to the strength and greatness, the golden crown of Gabriel showing its greatness and colorful clothes by the Manavi art.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differences</td>
<td>The Absence of Buraq in Ahmed Musa Mirajnameh, the form of fiery legs in Mir Heidar Mirajnameh shows the difference in creation, different states of angels in the two Mirajnamehs, long earlobe influenced by the Buddhist art in Mir Heidar Mirajnameh, the crease of clothing influenced by Byzantine art in Ahmed Musa Mirajnameh.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image</td>
<td><img src="image9.png" alt="Image 9" /></td>
<td><img src="image10.png" alt="Image 10" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similarities</td>
<td>The presence of the Prophet (PBUH), Gabriel, angels, and sky are the main elements of Mi’raj, hairstyle and morphology of figures based on Mongolian aesthetics, long straight wings of showing its authority and power.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differences</td>
<td>The manifestation of two elements of fire and snow in the form of an angel in Mir Heidar Mirajnameh and the manifestation of these two elements in the form of the general space of sky in Ahmed Musa Mirajnameh, Gabriel as the steed of the prophet (PBUH) in Ahmed Musa Mirajnameh and Buraq in Mir Heidar Mirajnameh – the static composition of elements in Mir Heidar Mirajnameh versus the movement and dynamism in Ahmed Musa Mirajnameh, the plurality and diversity of angels in Ahmed Musa Mirajnameh versus the presence of an angel in a different shape in Mir Heidar Mirajnameh, blue sky with spiral clouds versus the vibrant atmosphere and warm colors of Ahmed Musa Mirajnameh the vertical and agile frame of Ahmed Musa versus the other horizontal frame.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- The presence of the Prophet (PBUH), Gabriel, and the sky as the main elements-the focus on rooster, morphology, and hairstyle based on Mongolian aesthetics, the golden crown of Gabriel showing its high position.   
- the absence of Buraq in Ahmed Musa Mirajnameh versus the presence of Buraq as the steed of the prophet in the other Mirajnameh, shining colors and the blue sky versus the night sky and the use of the dark color of the bed in the background - the lack of maturity in the precise execution of figures in Ahmed Musa Mirajnameh and the difference in the form of the presentation of the image of rooster which is more natural in Ahmed Musa Mirajnameh, the presence of praying angels in Ahmed Musa Mirajnameh.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Image</th>
<th>Presence of the prophet (PBUH), Buraq (with common apparent features) and angels as the main elements – referring to the divine test by angels-morphology of the Mongolian aesthetics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Similarities</td>
<td>The narrative of the image in a colse space and the state of the Prophet (PBUH) sitting with many people who are present in Ahmed Musa Mirajnameh versus the narration of the other Mirajnameh in the sky and riding on the steed, the inclusion of two times in a picture in Mir Heidar Mirajnameh, granting the bowls simultaneously with drinking from them, the difference in the number of angels displayed –it seems that a piece of the sea is attached above the image in Ahmed Musa Mirajnameh, different composition in the two Mirajnamehs, the difference in the shape of the aura around the head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differences</td>
<td>The presence of the Prophet (PBUH) and Gabriel as the main elements, Mongolian morphology– long straight wings of Gabriel indicating its role as the bearer of the message of revelation, the aura around the head showing the inner purity and brightness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similarities</td>
<td>The steed of the Prophet (PBUH) in Ahmed Musa Mirajnameh is Gabriel that is Buraq in the other Mirajnameh and can be a difference in perceived interpretations, the difference in the shape of aura around the head, mobility and dynamism in Ahmed Musa Mirajnameh versus the relative stagnation of the Herat school, the difference in human figure and fiery legs of Gabriel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differences</td>
<td>The presence of the prophet (PBUH), Gabriel, angel and the sky from the main elements - Morphology and hairstyle based on Mongolian aesthetics - A common form of flax in the heaven and the place of angel by the door, long wings of Gabriel indicating its greatness, the aura around the head, the golden crown of Gabriel showing its role as the carrier of divine revelation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similarities</td>
<td>Difference of the dominant common space showing the heaven in Mir Heidar Mirajnameh and the failure to address it in the other Mirajnameh, the absence of Buraq and the presence of Gabriel in a mobile state, considering the details and decorations in shining colors in Mir Heidar Mirajnameh versus the black colors in Ahmed Musa Mirajnameh’s without details, considering the cease of clothes in Ahmed Musa Mirajnameh influenced by the Byzantine art and the difference in their form - The difference between the sky represents the difference between the time of night and day in these two images</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Discussion and conclusion

The present study revealed many features of Mi’raj main elements that have a fundamental role in this heavenly journey. Some features, obtained from studying the images, are in line with the previous studies on these two Mirajnamehs. In the illustration of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in both Mirajnamehs, there are Mongolian morphological similarities influenced by that era even in the image without veil and cloak in Mir Heidar Mirajnameh which followed the Ilkhanid era Mirajnameh. Meanwhile, there are some visual difficulties in clothing and crease illustrated in Ahmed Musa Mirajnameh that was influenced by Byzantine art having some differences with the other sample. Different composition and states of the image of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in Ahmed Musa Mirajnameh, in comparison with the other sample, are considerable. The static composition of the main elements of Mir Heidar Mirajnameh was influenced by Herat school. In both samples, although the clothes of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) are in a different color, they show the inherent perfection, mercy, peace, broad-mindedness, and happiness. Studying Gabriel in both Mirajnamehs showed some differences and similarities.

Similarity in Mongolian aesthetics in terms of hairstyle, using a golden crown, and referring to the superior position of Gabriel, and long straight wings which indicate the greatness of this angel are common in both Mirajnamehs while in some parts of Mir Heidar Mirajnameh, the emphasis on fiery legs shows the different creation of Gabriel from humans. Buraq is a combined creature that was introduced as the steed of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in this heavenly journey. Combined creatures give a sense of supernatural power having many similarities in both Mirajnamehs. Red color and long legs show the agility and dynamism. Two small white wings in front of its body were influenced by the Chinese art and are a symbol of divinity. The summary of differences and similarities between the two Mirajnamehs and their pictorial elements which were resulted from the present study and led to the second finding of the study (the difference between the used texts in the illustration of the two above-mentioned Mirajnamehs), which were not examined in any other studies, are as follows:
The aura in both samples shows the superior position of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) having the divine light and Noor-ul-Anwaar (according to Suhrawardi) and the difference in the presented form was influenced by the art of each period. Accuracy and elegance in the illustration of face and details of the image in Mir Heidar Mirajnameh were higher than the other sample. In all images of Mir Heidar Mirajnameh, Gabriel was appeared as a guide next to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in a relatively static state while in most images in Ahmed Musa Mirajnameh, Gabriel was illustrated as a steed carrying the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) with highly moving compositions while flying. This difference in two samples showed that the text from which Ahmed Musa Mirajnameh was illustrated had some narrative differences with the other sample. The direction of Gabriel’s wings in most images of both Mirajnamehs is up and down having the ability to see both wings. On the other hand, it refers to the role of Gabriel as the carrier of revelation that took the revelation or divine message and transferred it to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

In the images of Mir Heidar Mirajnameh, Buraq was illustrated with a necklace having a more logical relationship between human hand and animal body and more closeness to narrations while the Buraq in the other sample has nothing on its neck. This difference in the images points to the difference in the texts of these two Mirajnamehs.

Angels in Ahmed Musa Mirajnameh were mostly illustrated in human-shaped figures with two wings while in the other sample, some angels with different animal heads or multiple human heads influenced by the Buddhist art were illustrated. Even their long earlobes were influenced by the Buddhist art but the Mongolian aesthetics was used in hairstyle. One of the main differences was in the manifestation of fire and snow illustrated in the general space of sky in Ahmed Musa Mirajnameh while in Mir Heidar Mirajnameh an angel having the fire and snow in itself was illustrated. This sample was another reason showing the different texts used in both samples. The differences used in the details of bright colors and images used in Mir Heidar Mirajnameh were mostly influenced by Herat school. Although the Chinese art affected some cases in both Mirajnamehs, Ahmed Musa Mirajnameh had less accuracy and elegance. In addition, the vertical frame and very dynamic compositions of Ahmed Musa Mirajnameh were the opposite of stagnation of Herat school. The difference in illustrating the sky as a determining element at the stage of Mi’raj and levels of the sky is considerable. In Mir Heidar Mirajnameh, due to the narration and level of sky and its relevant event, a sky with different color is observed where the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) unveiled the seventh sky and received light, a golden sky is observed while in some images an Ultramarine sky with spiral clouds influenced by the Chinese art is observed.

In addition, in the hell part, a black sky was illustrated while in another sample, the sky was illustrated only as background and mainly with dark colors having no highlighted pictorial role in expressing the general atmosphere governing the image. Considering the nature and showing the heavenly atmosphere with bright colors and details, and separation of inside and outside spaces were observed in Mir Heidar Mirajnameh while the above-mentioned space creations were less observed in the other sample. In an image of Mir Heidar Mirajnameh, referring to the divine test with three bowls by angels, two times were included in one image. When the bowls are granted and when the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is drinking from the bowl. This event was illustrated in the sky while in another sample in Ahmed Musa Mirajnameh, the atmosphere of doing this test shows a stage of the Mi’raj of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) after stopping and praying in Mount Sinai, the Grand Mosque of Makkah, and then Jerusalem and a stage before ascending to the first sky. This great pictorial difference in the general narrative space
between the two Mirajnamehs highlighted the different texts of the two samples. Since the text of Ahmed Musa Mirajnameh is not available, this result can be useful for future studies.

References

5. Shine Dashtgel, Helena .2010. Writing the Mi’raj from manuscripts to popular paintings by looking at the iconography of the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH). Scientific and Cultural Company.
8. Shams Boroujeni, Massoud. 2014. The evolution of the Qur'anic angelography in the painting of Islamic Iran from the 7th century AH to the end of the 11th century AH with regard to the hadiths of Quranic verses and Islamic philosophy. Master's Thesis, Faculty of Arts and Islamic Azad University.