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## Iconological Study of “Rustam in Struggle with Div-e Sepid” in Tilework of Karim Khan-e Zand Citadel Portal in Shiraz Based on Erwin Panofsky Method

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### Abstract

**Problem Statement:** The “Rustam and Div-e Sepid (White Demon)” tilework painting on the Karim Khan citadel (Arg) is one of the Qajarian’s interventions into this Zandian’s building. In addition to its artistic features, this work has a special social and governmental significance. However, it has received less attention from researchers. A new interpretation of it could provide a deeper understanding of the developments of the Zandian’s complex at Qajar era. The research is based on the hypotheses that this tilework in spite of its artistic role -in keeping with the Iranian tradition of illustrating the struggle of Rustam and Div-e Sepid in the art- also has non-artistic (political and governmental) functions.

**Research objective:** The aim of the research is to recognize the content and conceptual aspects of this neglected tilework in its historical and social context and to identify its political and governmental functions in the Karim Khan citadel (Arg).

**Research method:** This study attempts to obtain a new understanding of the aforementioned tilework by “describing”, “analyzing” and “interpreting” the existing documents using the three stages of the iconography method of Erwin Panofsky in history of art studies. Primary data included archived images of the tilework and historical documents.

**Conclusion:** The findings show that: A) The primary or natural subject of this tilework was similar to other examples, however, the scene’s components such as “animals” and “elements of Western architecture” on the margins are different from previous samples; B) The secondary or conventional subject of this tilework illustrates Rustam’s struggle with Div-e Sepid (the thirteenth scene of the story narration) in the last stage of the Shahnameh Seven Adventures story called Haft Khan, which also undergoes some changes over time; C) The intrinsic meaning of this tilework with respect to the three subjects named “Artistic Backgrounds”, “Shiraz Government and Administrative Conditions” and “Symbolic Social and Political Implications” indicates that the use of these figures at the Karim Khan Citadel portal-at two levels of “Populace” and “Elite”- can serve as a visual medium for the transfer of the glory and political power of Fars governor Hussein-Ali Mirza Farmanfarma as well as a symbol of his centrality, individuality, and independence against central government in Tehran. This artwork is to be interpreted as a part of other similar actions by the governor to announce the succession after Fath-Ali Shah Qajar.

**Keywords:** *Iconology, Shahnameh, Tile, Rustam, Hussein-Ali Mirza Farmanfarma.*

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## Introduction and Problem Statement

Rustam & Div-e Sepid tilework at the portal of Arg or Karim Khan Harem is an example of the Qajarian's interventions; it is composed of 340 square shape tiles which some part of them could be seen behind the Shiraz Canon Square (named Toupkhaneh) gateway and its trees in photos from the Mozaffar ad-Din Shah Qajar and later. Its artistic and symbolic values, except in some descriptions, have received little attention and were not the subject of unique research. But why this tilework was placed on the citadel portal and why its artistic aspects were considered less than expected in later periods by travelogues and Persian governors. Ervin Panofsky's iconography as a comprehensive method in the art history provides the opportunity to interpret and discover this tilework, and discover its social and governmental meanings to shed a new light on it. In this research, a link has been constructed between literature, painting and the socio-cultural context of the age of its creation. The outcome reveals some parts of Karim Khan's castle (Arg) history and confirms the tradition of the propaganda use of art in the Qajar era. Thus, the purpose of this study is to recognize the content and conceptual aspects of this tilework. It would be possible to obtain a comprehensive answer to the iconography that includes the following questions: A) what changes did the "Rustam and Div-e Sepid" tilework have, and what are its "primary" or "natural" subjects? B) What is the relevance of its "secondary" or "conventional" subject to Shahnameh's narration of Rustam's Haft Khan (seven adventure)? and D) what are its symbolic, cultural, social, and governmental symbolic themes of "intrinsic meanings" or "contents"?

## Research Background

Except for descriptions in books and articles written for the general public, the art features and decorations of Karim Khan Citadel (Arg) have been the subject of some academic research; for instance, Ghanbari et al. identified the cultural symbols

of Zand tribal art in the form of "naturalism" and "simplification -which had been derived from the abstraction of meanings" in connection with the Shiraz school of art- in the brickwork and paintings of the Arg (Ghanbari, Soltanzadeh & NasirSalami, 2018). Furthermore, a variety of plant motifs have been studied in Arg interior wall paintings and other Zandian's monuments in Shiraz (Mirshamsi, Mirzaabolghasemi, & Zare Khalili, 2017). However, tile paintings on the Arg portal have not been the subject of any specific research in any type. Moreover, the use of iconology and iconography is more prevalent in Persian paintings and no iconography research could be found on the Persian tilework. For instance, most of the studies that have focused on paintings attributed to Nizami Ganjavi (c. 1141-1209 A.D.) poems (Etemadi, 2019) or Shiite icons in the Islamic arts (Javani & Kazemnejad, 2016; Shayestefar, Kiani & Shayestefar, 2011). However, studies by Abachi et al. on the Shahnameh in the al-injo period (c. 1335-1356 A.D.) are among the few examples that have put Ferdowsi's Shahnameh poems (c. 977-1010 A.D.) in the spotlight. Their findings show that Bahram was depicted on the al-injo king's board. The al-injo used the content of the painting to emphasize ancient Iranian myths, too (Abachi, Fahimifar & Tavousi, 2017). Farid & Pouyan Majd (2012) by the iconography of the death of Shidah by Kay Khosrow showed that in addition to the artistic concepts in the painting, the official religion of the country and the nationalism of the Safavids were represented by symbols and signs. Despite all the research done on iconography in Iranian paintings, it has not been used to understand the content and concept of Iranian tilework, or the results of such studies have not been published yet. Therefore, current research can be considered a new step.

## Research Method

This research used the Erwin Panofsky's iconography method, which is based on describing, analyzing, and interpreting. To deepen findings

into its symbolic layers, “interpretative-historical” evidence has been employed. Basic data were obtained from historical texts and photos and had been used in the research by following the three steps of the Panofsky’s iconography method. By identifying and considering the symbolic value system which was depicted in this tilework/text, the hidden implications and their symbolic concepts in the socio-cultural context emerged in the final step of the research.

### **Theoretical Foundations of the Research; Iconology and its Dimensions**

“Iconology is a branch of art history studies that deals with the subject or meaning of artworks as opposed to their form... And is an interpretive method that is more of a composition rather than an analysis” (Panofsky, 2016, 35, 41). Although the origins of iconography are to be found in nineteenth-century religious art movements (Levine, 2013, 324), the modern concept of “iconography as method” in art history is owed to Ervin Panofsky. Influenced by the historicity and anthropology of Abby Warburg in art, he focused on the preservation of life and the transformation of the ancient legacy in literature and art (Emmens & Schwartz, 1967, 109) and believed that the task of art historians was to study and retrieve past and vital legacies to ancient document (Lee, 1968, 370). Panofsky and other members of the Warburg Circle at the Hamburg School sought to develop philosophical studies and sought to transfer art from the intellectual level to individual and collective psychology and paved the way for psychoanalytic, sociological, and dialectical research in the art (Argan & West, 1975, 297, 304). But unlike Warburg, Panofsky’s viewpoint of iconography was very practical (Diers, Girst & Von Moltke, 1995, 62-63).

From the conceptual point of view, “iconography” and “iconology” are similar themes with the same root; Panofsky considered iconography as “the description and classification of images [...] and the basis for further interpretation” and iconology as a

kind of iconography that “imply to interpretation” (Panofsky, 2016, 40-41). Some scholars interpreted iconography as “the search for the content of the visual arts” or considered it as “the study of the meaning of images” (Chanda, 1998, 20). Iconology has also been defined as “the description and interpretation of images and symbols in order to discover the social relations, cultural meanings, and political-economic powers” (Hoelscher, 2009, 132). Accordingly, iconography is a method of research and iconology is a historical point of view (Holly, 2016, 129).

In dividing the three phases of his interpretation of art into what is known as iconology, Panofsky outlined three semantic layers: A) primary or natural subject (pre-figurative level) based on reality and expressive meanings by recognizing pure forms and specific combinations (e.g. , the line, the color and etc.) as carriers of the meaning and world of artistic motifs; B) the secondary or conventional subject (iconological level) means the association of artistic motifs and their compounds (elements) with specific themes or concepts in images, stories and allegories; C) the intrinsic meaning or content (the iconographic level) means the discovery and interpretation of the symbolic values and the representation of the core attitude of a nation, era, class, philosophical or religious point of view by a person who describes and summarizes them in a work often unknown to the artist himself or perhaps even be different by his intention (Panofsky, 2016, 37-40). Panofsky proposed the special tools and principles outlined in Table 1 to prevent possible exaggerations and risks in iconography, including exaggerated interpretation.

### **Findings & Discussions**

#### **• Pre-iconographical description**

The earliest well detailed and recognizable photo of the struggle of Rustam & Div-e Sepid tilework at the Arg façade belongs to Ernst Herzfeld (Pahlavi I) which is shown in Fig. 1. The primary or natural subject of the image is the battlefield. In this image, a man with his eyebrows tied in a hat and a coat

Table 1. The Three Stages of Iconological Interpretation. Source: Panofsky, 2016, 48-49.

Object of Interpretation	Act of Interpretation	Equipment for Interpretation	Controlling Principle of Interpretation
1-Primary or natural subject matter- (A) factual, (B) expressional, constituting the world of artistic motifs.	Pre-iconographical description (and pseudo-formal analysis).	Practical experience (familiarity with objects and events).	History of style (insight into the manner in which, under varying historical conditions, objects and events were expressed by forms).
2- Secondary or conventional subject matter, constituting the world of images, stories, and allegories.	Iconographical analysis.	Knowledge of literary sources (familiarity with specific themes and concepts).	History of types (insight into the manner in which, under varying historical conditions, specific themes of concepts were expressed by objects and events).
3- Intrinsic meaning or content, constituting the world of 'symbolical values'.	Iconographical interpretation in a deeper sense (Iconographical synthesis).	Synthetic intuition (familiarity with the essential tendencies of the human mind), conditioned by personal psychology and 'Weltanschauung'.	History of cultural symptoms or 'symbols' in general (insight into the manner in which, under varying historical conditions, essential tendencies of the human mind were expressed by specific themes and concepts).

decorated with rubies, has a dagger in his right hand, sitting on the chest of a demon, holding his horn in the left hand. The white demon wearing a skirt and bells on his neck, waist and between of his two horns, lying down on the ground, holding his mace in his left hand, has also brought out his tongue as a sign of weakness. On the left side of the demon, there is a wound that is bleeding. This scene is the main part of the tilework that is larger than all sections. Another important element in this tilework painting is the horse on the left of the image, which is half-length, still and steady.

Other elements of the tilework are smaller. In addition to the aforementioned man, there are six other human figures in the picture. The two upper figures in the picture include a tall, full-bodied hand-tied man closed to a tree and the other man with a mac on his right shoulder. At the bottom of the picture, a young man is holding a simple wand in his left hand and holding his other hand finger in the mouth in astonishment. These three men have more or less similar hats. But the fourth man is drawn much smaller at the bottom of the image, holding a simple stick in his left hand and pointing to the center of the image with his other raised hand. The fifth man, the smallest of them all, is shown in a boat, which also looks at the battlefield in the center of the tilework. And the last character is the smallest human figure of the scene in the doorway

of a house on top of the tilework. The only other demon depicted in the tilework is a dark demon with a skirt and a horn with a stunned right hand in his mouth which has been drawn in the right corner of the composition.

In the picture, in addition to decorative flowers that do not play a role in the narration of the scene, there are also three trees. The first one holds a hand-tied man located at the top right of the picture. The latter in the upper left-hand corner of the image is part of a single-story house with a sloping roof and a Cross-shaped object on it. Another tree is drawn in the middle to the right of the image. On the lower left side of the picture, a simple one-story house with a sloping roof and a cross on top are drawn. The other two houses are depicted in the above middle of the image. None of the four listed houses have a role in the central battle scene. Various animals and birds are also seen in the photo; an animal with a rotated tail under a tree whose species is not clear, a deer which has lost its prior originality, a peacock, a wild boar, a gazelle, a small bird beneath a horse that can be a nightingale and a wild goat.

There is no significant difference in the tilework during the first and second Pahlavi periods. However, the current condition of this motif is very different from what it used to be. Except for the central part of the image showing the battle scene, there is more or less interference with the design,



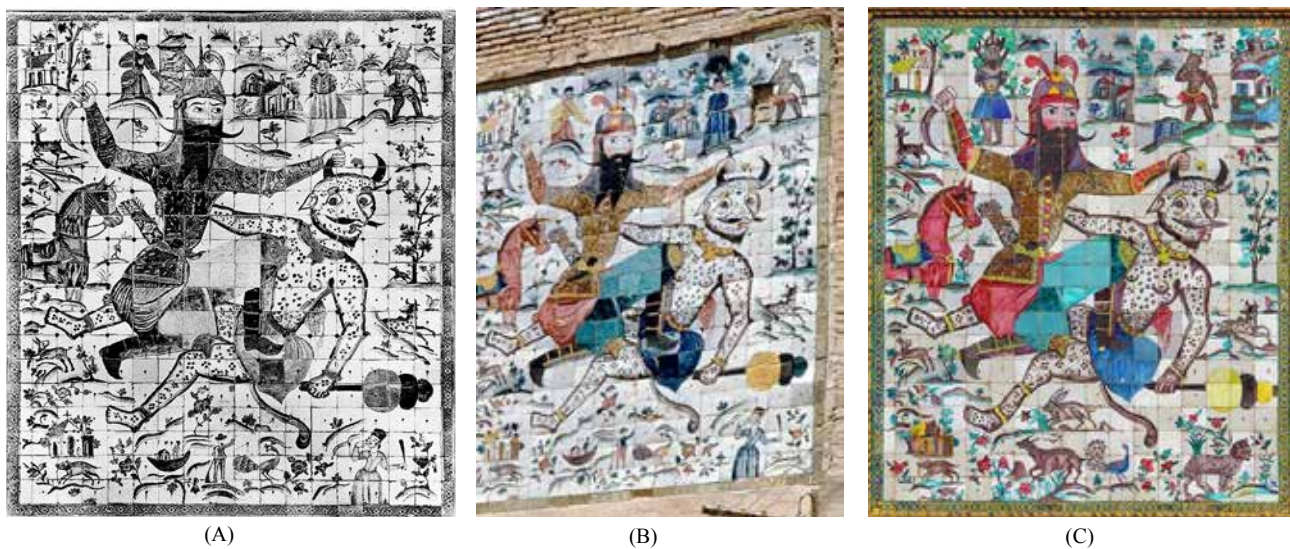


Fig.1. Historical and Current Photographs of the Rustam & Div-e Sepid tilework at the portal of Karim Khan-e Zand Citadel (Arg).

A) Early of First Pahlavi Era. Photo by Ernest Hertzfeldt. Source: <http://siris-archives.si.edu.jpg>

B) Second Pahlavi Era. Photo by Marie-Thérèse Ullens. Source: <http://archnet.org>

C) Current situation (2019). Photo by A. Asadpour, 2019.

which involves deleting, moving or altering the original design (Fig. 2). The most important changes can be made as follows: A) Transmission of the dark demon in the upper right corner of the image to the location of the tree with a hand-tied man; B) Removing the figure of a man with wand on his shoulder at the top left of the image and drawing a man instead of the demon with his hands tied to a tree similar to the previous one; C) Removing most of the motifs in the lower part of the image and drawing animals, including a tiger, a wild goat with flying seagulls and a rabbit that did not exist before. In this section, the image of the peacock is preserved. However, human figures and boats have been eliminated. The overall shape of the house roof has also changed in this area; D) Adding pictures of the concealed dark demons in the upper part of the vacant tiles that have been obtained by moving the original tiles.

#### • Iconographical analysis

The secondary or conventional tilework subject is Rustam's struggle with the White Demon (Div-e Sepid) in the last stage of the Shahnameh Seven Adventures story called in Persian Haft Khan written by Abolqasem Ferdowsi. The last stage is the most difficult period in the narration. The main

theme of the seventh stage is in order "Rustam's struggle with the Div-e Sepid, Rustam's victory in the battle, and the ability of the Kay Kāvus' eyes to see by dripping the blood of the demon in them" (Rashed Mohasel & Huseinzadeh Heravian, 2013, 122). These events narrated in twenty three episodes; Rustam went to the king of Mazandaran with the Div-e Sepid nephew named "Owlad"; he avoided the battle with the Div-e Sepid; Rustam left his horse named Raxsh away; tied the Owlad on the tree (as soon as he had bound Owlad to a tree hand and foot, with the thongs of his Kamand) and then walked to demon cave (fifth sequence) and after awakening the demon and having a tough conversation between them, "Div-e Sepid attacked Rustam with a cleaver and Rustam threw a wand at demon and hit him."; the fight continues until "Rustam pulled out a sword and grabbed a demon's thigh and Div-e Sepid grabbed Rustam's waist and Rustam grabbed his chest" (tenth sequence) (but presently the darling shouts of Rustam broke his rest, and brought him suddenly upon his feet) until Rustam finally sat on Div's chest, tore off it; And pulled his heart out (thirteen sequence) (that life no longer moved his monstrous frame, promptly he then tore out the reeking heart) and drank the blood

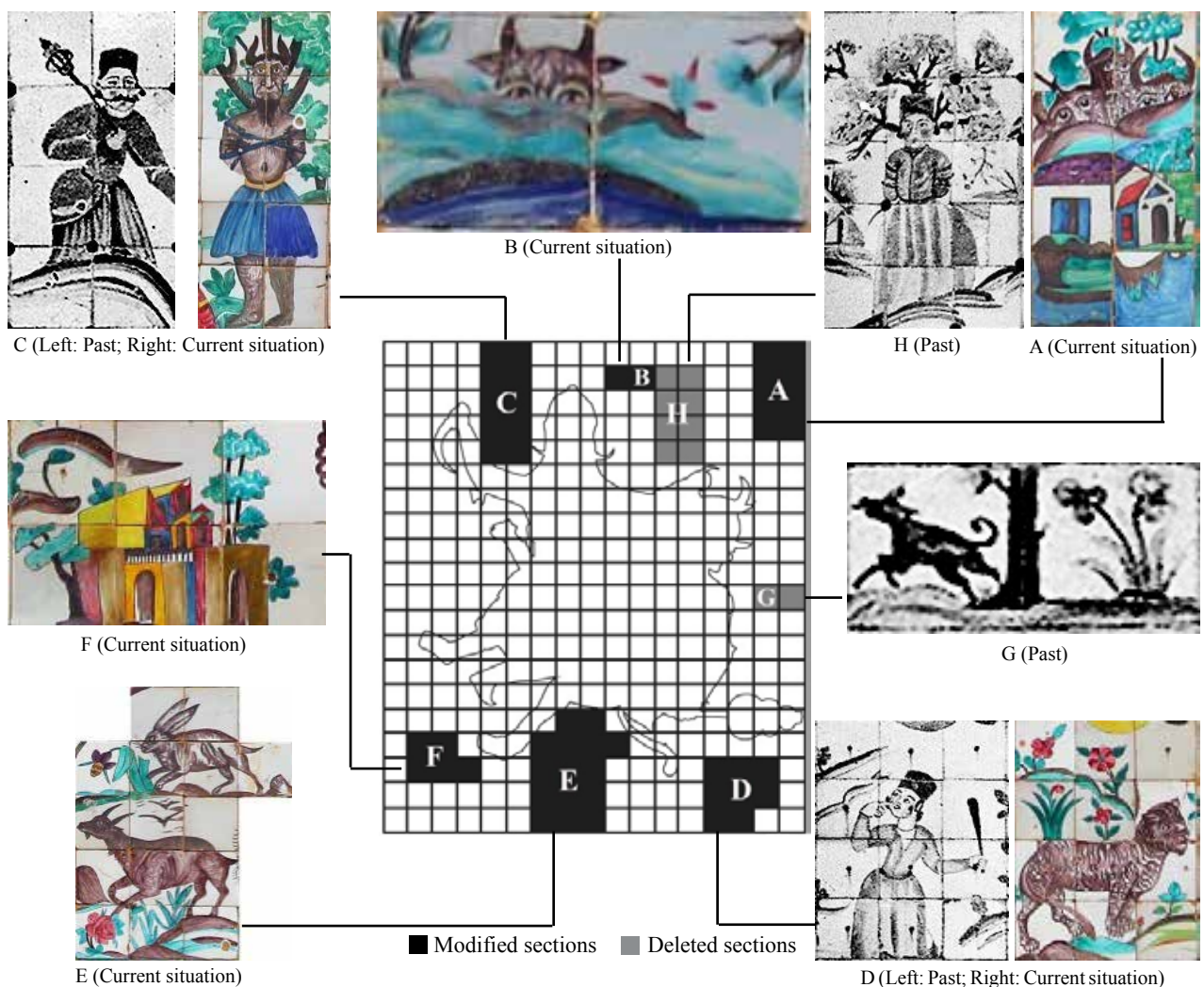


Fig. 2. Main Transformations in the tilework of the Rustam & Div-e Sepid since Pahlavi era up to the present time. Source: Author.

of the demon and goes to Kay Kāvus (Akbari Mafakher, 2018, 83, 84).

From a structural point of view, the Ferdowsi's seven adventures or Khan of Rustam consists of beginning, middle, and final stages in which, at the seventh adventure, in particular, the subject is Rustam, the helpers are Raxsh and Owlad (after being captured) and the opponent is Div-e Sepid (Nabiloo, 2012, 93). Rustam has the most references and contributions to various discourse tools in the seventh adventure in the Shahnameh text, followed by Div-e Sepid, Kay Kāvus, and the Owad are the sub-participants respectively (Ahangar, Mashhadi, Mojahedi Reza'yan, 2014, 172). Div-e Sepid not

only represents the false champion but also the evil personality because of his evils in reaching Rustam's goals (Farzi & Fakhimi Faryabi, 2014, 73). The killing of Div-e Sepid by Rustam and his departure from the cave are also regarded as a rebirth for Rustam and his return to the world of light (Meskoob, 1995, 46). Studies have shown that Div (demon) as a symbol of contradiction the two forces of good and evil has a strong presence in Persian literature, and Rustam's description of Arjang Div, Div-e Sepid, Akwan Div and Pooladvand in the Shahnameh may have such interpretations as well (Zomorodi & Nazari, 2011, 59, 76-79). For archetype, Raxsh is the supporter archetype



throughout the story (Ghorban Sabbagh, 2013, 32). Nightingale is also a symbol of compassion and even a Ferdowsi narrator. Boar is also one of the natural and divine animals (Abbaszadeh & Jabbari, 2016, 116). Div-e Sepid in the Ferdowsi's poems has an iron armlet and helmet (Rashed Mohasel, & Huseinzadeh Heravian, 2013, 124), dark face and white hairy body like snow; the white hair of Div can tell of its 'longevity' and its relation to the god of time (called in Persian Zerwan), whose overcoming can be a metaphor for the survival of the hero's name after the passing of the seventh stages of battle (Ghorban Sabagh, 2013, 43, 44). Some argue that a black as an epithet, attributed to the Div-e Sepid after Rustam overthrew him, and to legitimatizing this name, his milky colour hair are considered white (Abbaszadeh & Jabbari, 2016, 126).

In 1333 A.D. in Shiraz School of Painting the scene of the battle between Rustam and Div-e Sepid is depicted in the cave with special violence. In Shahnameh of Baysonghor, Juki and Shamloo (all in Herat school), Shah Tahmasbi (Tabriz school), Astrabadi and Rashidab (Isfahan school), the battle has always been depicted in the 13th sequence of the Shahnameh narration, inside the cave, and in some instances the foot of the demon has also been cut off. In all of the abovementioned Shahnamehs, if the Ovlad is depicted, he is in a human figure tied to a tree and in most cases, Rustam is in the face of a Mongol man (Shahpasand Hosain Abadi, 2009, 141; Shateri & Aarab, 2015; Sadri & Esmati, 2015). The Iranian tileworks also represent the battle scene of Rustam and Div-e Sepid; in Table 4 key samples are highlighted. The earliest of these is tilework at the entrance of the public bathroom in Malayer, dated to 1786 A.D. by a painter named Mirza Aqha Abdullah (see Fig. "a" in Table 2), who depicts Rustam and the Div in grapple position, and Ovlad is represented as a demon. In other instances, the scene of Rustam's supremacy over Div-e Sepid (13th sequence) has always been shown; The most important of these samples is the one at end of the nineteenth century







in the bathroom of Ganj-Alikhan in Kerman, which depicted the Ovlad in a human figure (see Fig. "b" in Table 2). This tilework is unique in detailing and the clothing details in particular. The tile painting of the old gate of Semnan city (Fig. "f" in Table 2) - which was commissioned on Nasser al-Din Shah Qajar's first trip to Semnan in 1867 A.D. - is one of the few examples of a demon with a broken leg. Another example of the old gate of Tehran (Fig. "e" in Table 2) by Mohammad Gholi Shirazi is a special one due to his attention to background design and natural representation in detail. As a conclusion, the following results can be obtained from at least these sample review:

- The tradition of depicting the struggle of Rustam and Div-e Sepid in tile-paintings follows popular traditions of art among ordinary people -especially in the Qajar era (1796-1925 A.D.)- rather than being influenced by the historical background of this scene mentioned in Shahnameh original text. For this reason, the struggle has been accrued in the outdoor space instead of the cave.
- Rustam in all of the tiles studied here has Iranian original face and appearance, and in most cases, he is shown holding a dagger on the chest of the Div.
- In all cases, Div has a white body, wearing yellow bells and a purple or blue skirt.
- The Rustam dress color is always purple or blue, and this color is always the opposite of Div's skirt color.
- The Ovlad depicted on both human and demon figures.
- Except for Raxsh and, in some cases, demons sheltered in the ambush, no other animal is depicted in the scenes.
- Plants and trees are merely decorative and just used for keeping the Ovlad tied to the tree.

The presence of this scene in the public bathrooms could be more to tell the story and at the gates of the cities to show the power of bureaucracy and government.

Based on what has been mentioned so far, the content of Rustam and Div-e Sepid tilework of Karim

Table 2. Representation of the Battle of Rustam and Div-e Sepid in Qajar Tiles. Source: Author.

Reviewed Picture	Date of Creating	Place	Depicted Scene	Source	Details
	1786	Malayer old public bathroom	Tenth sequence	Seif (2010, 164)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rustam grabbed Div's neck with a dagger in hand and Div grabs Rustam's waist.</li> <li>- Owlad tied to the tree in a figure of a Div.</li> <li>- Raxsh is drawn to the left of the tilework.</li> </ul>
	End of 19th	The bathroom of Ibrahim-khan in Kerman	Thirteen sequence	Seif (2010, 165)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Rustam with a dagger in his hand holds Div-e Sepid's horn.</li> <li>- Div's side is split.</li> <li>- Raxsh is tied to a tree on the right-hand corner of the drawing.</li> <li>- Owlad depicted in a figure of a human.</li> </ul>
	1891	Mohammad Jafar Hajj Foroush Doorway in Rasht	Thirteen sequence	Seif (2010, 104)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Unlike the examples in this table, Rustam is pictured on the right side of the tilework.</li> <li>- Div-e Sepid has no mace.</li> <li>- The wound is not painted on the side of the demon.</li> <li>- The Owlad as a figure of a demon is depicted next to a tree.</li> <li>- Raxsh is on the right side of the tilework.</li> </ul>
	First half of 19th	Shams al-Amara palace in Tehran	Thirteen sequence	Seif (2010, 162)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wound not painted on Div's body.</li> <li>- Owlad is tied to a tree as a human figure.</li> <li>- Unlike other examples in this table, Raxsh is not depicted in tilework painting.</li> </ul>
	1854	The Old Gate of Tehran	Thirteen sequence	Seif (2010, 93)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The wound is depicted on the side of the Div.</li> <li>- Black demons and various whites take refuge in the background.</li> <li>- Raxsh is depicted in the right corner of the scene.</li> <li>- Owlad is depicted as a human figure in a tree-tied position.</li> </ul>
	First half of 19th	The Old gate of Semnan	Thirteen sequence	Seif (2010, 92)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Unlike other examples in this table, Div-e Sepid's left leg has been cut off.</li> <li>- Div has stickers, unlike previous ones.</li> <li>- Some white demons have taken shelter.</li> <li>- Someone with an ornate hat lurking behind a hill whose hands cannot be seen.</li> <li>- Raxsh is drawn on the left corner of the tilework.</li> </ul>



Khan-e Zand Citadel Portal could be divided into several layers as follows (Fig. 3).

**- Pahlavi I and II (1925-1979 A.D.)**

**A) First Layer:** The center of the tile painting, which depicts the struggle of good and evil (Rustam and Div-e Sepid) in the 13th sequence of Shahnameh's narration, lacks a scene in which Div's limbs have been cut off. The Owlad is depicted as a human figure in blue clothing. Rustam in purple and Div-e Sepid has blue trousers which resembles other cases, and Raxsh is on the left side of the battle. Thus, the triple structural narrative elements involved in the image (the subject, the helper and the opponent) are in harmony with the color and literary narration of the Shahnameh.

**B) Second Layer:** The margins of the main narration in the first layer comprise a series of motifs

depicting scenes of escaping animals and stunning human figures. Although referred to as nightingale and boar in the Shahnameh, these motifs do not play a part in the context of this story, but rather represent the frightening mood that can be imagined by the leaving creatures in the scene. However, they also increase the aesthetics of the scene and make the background of the battle more legible.

**C) Third Layer:** In addition to the animal and greenery backdrop in the previous layer, a series of western-like houses are depicted in the tilework, which, apart from their aesthetic function in displaying conception of western architecture and city, cannot be considered to have roles in the narration of the scene.

**- Current Situation**

**A) First Layer:** From the changes that have been

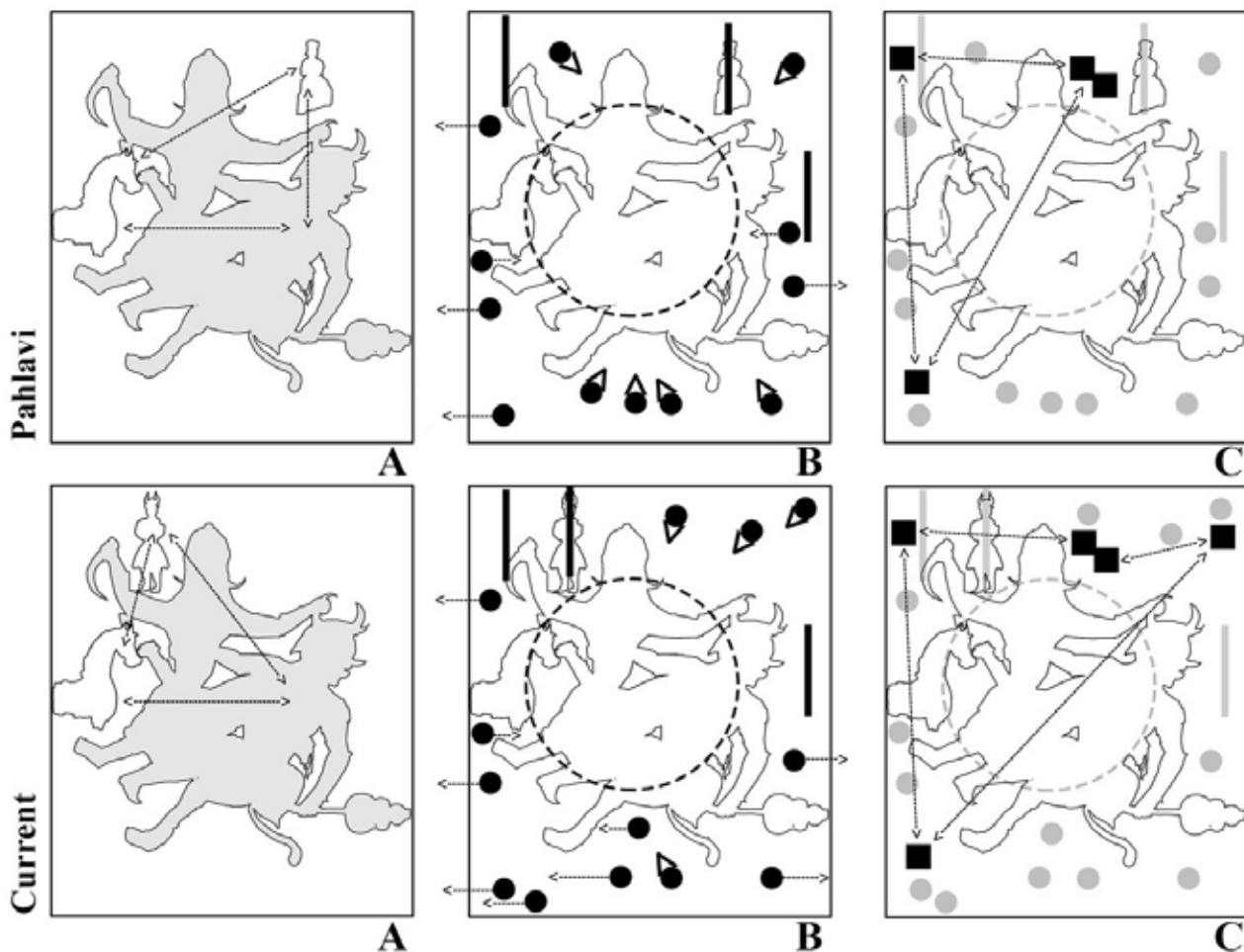


Fig. 3. Graphical Analysis of the Three Layers in the Rustam in the struggle with the Div-e Sepid's tilework on the Karim Khan-e Zand Citadel (Arg) (Circle: Animals, Square: House, Vertical Line: Tree, Arrow: Vision and Motion direction). Source: Author.

applied to the motifs in the present era, it could be concluded that the center of a battle in the first layer has always remained constant, except that the Ovlad has been transformed from humanistic figure to demonic-like one. However, the triple of the structural narrative elements is retained in the narrative without any intervention.

**B) Second Layer:** Most interventions have occurred in this layer. Changes include removing some animals and adding more. However, these changes also occurred without regard to the first literary layer of the narration. Due to the orientation of some of them, the sense of escape and evasion is also weakened. However, by adding figures from stunned or frightened demons, the scene has been able to make references to the first layer in the Shahnameh story.

**C) Third Layer:** In this layer, the interventions in the layout of the houses, distorted and changed the originality of the western architectural and pattern, and in some cases do not fit the overall scene composition.

#### • Iconographical interpretation

The date of adding the tilework above the citadel portal can most probably be traced back to the time of Hussein-Ali Mirza Farmanfarma (son of Fath-Ali Shah Qajar), who had been governor of Fars province for about thirty-six years and created most of the changes in the Zandian complex architecture, such as building the Mansion of the Ayeneh (Mirror) which also called Garden Palace in the northwest corner of the Nazar garden from the Karim Khan era. The mansion was composed of several halls and a mirrored iwan that was ornamented by relieves of the Shahnameh tales champions in stones on the exterior facade. Some believe that the mansion was part of a beautiful, well-known building called the Homayoun Palace, built by Farmanfarma in 1815 A.D. (Khormaei, 2003, 100). There are also tiles and inscriptions from him in the mosque of Vakil from 1827 to 1829 A.D. Therefore, and for other reasons that follow, this addition can be attributed to his time.

By accepting this assumption, the tilework of Rostam & Div-e Sepid in Shiraz history becomes more meaningful than before and can be examined in several sections:

#### - Artistic backgrounds

In brief, Iran during Nader Shah Afshar's era (1736-1747 A.D.) and before Zandian's rise to power (c. 1751) faced the collapse of political unity and the destruction of the country's economy. In the art, a new national awareness off the ancient Iranian traditions and ambitious to break with European art could be mentioned (Scarcia, 1997, 38). Thus, Karim Khan's attention to "representing scenes of the Shahnameh... cannot be considered accidental" (Rajabi, 2010, 131). He ordered that the battle of Rostam with Ashkbous (another hero in Shahnameh) be depicted in the stone at the courtyard of Divan-Khaneh located at the north of the Arg (citadel). William Franklin, who visited Shiraz in 1787 A.D., quoted that at the entrance gate of the Arg was a scene of Rostam's battle with Div-e Sepid in painting (Ranjbaran & Golshani, 2015, 135), which was later destroyed in the Qajar era. This quotation could also serve as an early impetus for a redesign of the battle in tilework in Qajar times. The "myth of returning to the ancient traditions", as Scarcia (1997, 42) explained, is also obvious in the return to the Iranian tradition of art in the Qajar art, especially in Fath-Ali Shah's era.

Fath-Ali Shah was the Fars governor located in Shiraz during his crown prince, and his interest in the Shahnameh and the national stories of Iran and the kings of Kayanians (a semi-mythological dynasty of Persian tradition and folklore) on the one hand and the proximity of Shiraz to the Achaemenid and Sassanid architectural masterpieces, on the other hand, may have influenced his artistic taste in ancient Iranian relieves (Hosseini Rad, 2013, 26). Fath-Ali Shah used visual media -including rock relives to imitate the Achaemenid and Sassanid motifs- for propaganda purposes, political empowerment and legitimization, and ultimately to highlight the power whose target was not just the

elites but also the whole of society (Asna Ashari & Ashuri, 2017). Thus, the Shahnameh could, as a popular narrative, be an interesting tool for transmitting governmental messages to ordinary people in the time of need.

#### **- Shiraz Government and Administrative Conditions:**

From the first days of the Qajar dynasty to the governance of Fath-Ali Shah's brother in Shiraz, Fars province has always been the site of disputes between Zandian and the central government. However, after the opposition ended in c. 1799 A.D., Fars governorship was transferred to Hussein-Ali Mirza Farmanfarma (son of Fath-Ali Shah). Despite the political changes, he remained in power until c. 1834 A.D. and "since the beginning of his ruling, he has been competing with other brothers, especially Abbas Mirza, who was the crown prince of the country" (Afsar, 1974, 239). Hussein-Ali Mirza sought independency from the capital. Like Fath-Ali Shah, Hussein Ali Mirza seems to have used the visual media of his day; stone reliefs as a political and propaganda tool. For instance, the stone reliefs of Iranian ancient heroes (1815 A.D.) based on the tales of Shahnameh remain from the Mansion of the Ayeneh (Mirror) which was built by him in the Nazar Garden in the south of the Arg that mentioned before. There is also the rock reliefs called Mashreghin in Tang-e-Allah Akbar, which depicts Rostam on horseback in the lion's hunt (1803 A.D.), indicating his special interest in the Shahnameh. Besides, in the "Tazkareh Delgosha", Ali Akbar Shirazi states that "Hussein-Ali Mirza Farmanfarma isolated some parts of the city which included royal buildings and two gates named Bagh-e-shah and Isfahan, as a new closed district that latter called Arg-e-Hussein Abbad [Hussein Abbad castle]". He has built a very strong and tall brick wall for it (ibid., 232). Thus, the necessary and essential preparations were made for a "few days long kingship of Hussein Ali Mirza Farmanfarma" as a king of Persia. After the death of Fath-Ali Shah, he read the royal sermon and

issued a government coin in the name of the ruler, calling himself Hussein Ali Shah (ibid., 240).

#### **- Symbolic social and political implications:**

One of the most important consequences of the Haft Khan (seven adventures) is the individualization of Rostam's character after the last stage, after which Rostam is no longer submissive to the king (Ghorban Sabbagh, 2013, 45). Rostam reaches the archetype of himself in the seventh stage, which is the king's symbol... himself is the symbol of perfection and, like the king and his throne, is a sign of centrality which holds everyone under his command (Taslami & Mir Miran, 2011, 45, 46). On the other hand, Rostam is a myth in Iranian politics that symbolizes power and coronation, and seven adventures symbolizing the unity of a state after being overthrown (Amouie & Shamsavand, 2009, 19, 29). Rostam as a hero is "the result of all the Iranian forces, the will and power of the Iranians to balance the order of life" and "the embodiment of the wisdom" (Fakhr-e Eslam & Arabiani, 2010, 200, 213). For these reasons, the plot of the Rostam and Div-e Sepid tilework over the Arg portal at that time could be interpreted as a symbol of Hussein Ali Mirza Farmanfarma's inner interest in the kingships' ambition which tries to imitate his father (Fath-Ali Shah) and Zandian in referring to Iranian popular ancient stories. By implying the visual language of the tiles on the one hand and the Shahnameh understandable stories to the public, on the other hand, this tilework helped him to convey glory and unify his political power to legitimize his local government in Shiraz and then the kingdom of Persia over Iran.

Furthermore, this tilework installed in a place that has two functions at the same time: First, the Arg massive brick walls are like a screen or a backdrop that makes it possible for non-literal ordinary people to read such a message within the city square. Secondly, it was installed on the forehead of the Arg as the first Zandian governmental building in the city, the largest brick structure in Shiraz, and the visual focal point of the Toupkhaneh and Mashgh squares in front



of it. The tilework conveyed to the bureaucrats the message that the legitimacy of the present power should continue in the dignity of Shiraz's capital in the previous centuries. In this tilework, Rostam in a sense could be replaced by Hussein-Ali Mirza, who seeks individuality and independency, and as the archetype of the Shahnameh seeks the kingships. Like Ferdowsi's mythical narration, Hussein Ali Mirza thought that in his toughest and most recent battle in the last stage, he could overcome the enemies and claimants of the monarchy through his civil defensive structures mentioned before. Unfortunately, he had portrayed the message of victory before his success. Furthermore, historically the battlefield of Rostam against the Div-e Sepid at the gates of the Iranian cities was a continuation of the tradition that represented power and sovereignty of government. The presence of this scene on the Arg portal, in general, signified this meaning, too. As a result, the defeat of Hussein Ali Mirza did not impair the overall meaning of the tilework, but eliminated its symbolic value and abandoned its propaganda aspect.

## Conclusion

Iconography as a method offers new opportunities in Iranian tilework studies. The scene of the Rostam in Struggle with Div-e Sepid over the portal of the citadel (Arg) of Karim Khan-e Zand is unique and less-paid attention that has artistic and symbolic values. Studying the photos of this tilework during the Pahlavi and contemporary eras suggest changes in design. A) The primary or natural subject of this tilework has many similarities with other specimens, but its important distinction is in sceneries such as depicting animals and elements of the architectural elements on the margins of the border. B) Although the secondary or the conventional subject of this tilework, which is one of the Qajar additions to Zandian's building, still shows Rostam's dominance over Div-e Sepid in the 7th Shahnameh seven adventures (the thirteenth sequence of the narration), however, the change of Ovlad from human to demon figure

was removed. Besides, the addition of demons and other animals in the tilework is one of the changes which have taken place in its composition and content over time. C) The iconographic interpretation of the tilework in the three areas of "Artistic Backgrounds", "Shiraz Government and Administrative Conditions" and "Symbolic Social and Political Implications" shows that the tilework employed over the citadel (Arg) portal -at the two levels of "Populace" and "Elite"- as a media by which an image can be used to convey glory and implies the political power of the Fars governor as well as a symbol of his centrality, individuality, and independence against the central government. The suppression of Hussein Ali Mirza individual desire by the capital governors reduced the subject matter of this tilework and its symbolic functions to only the literary level. Thus, by dimming the Hussein Ali Mirza Farmanfarma's wishes in public and elite memories, this motif became practically useless and was preserved merely as an aesthetic element over the citadel portal throughout history. Accordingly, as an addition to the Zandian citadel architecture, the tilework never regained its former value and never achieved the focus of attention as in the past.

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