Data Entry Worksheet: Preserving Images and Decorations of Persian Manuscripts and Lithographed Books

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Abstract:

The printed catalogues of Persian manuscripts and lithographs are often organized according to bibliographical entries and all information about images or decorations (Head Chapters, Illuminations, explicit, etc.) are either ignored or mostly classified under other entries. This issue, which shows the main approach of cataloguers in providing text related information, limits researchers' access to detailed information about images and decorations, thus limiting researches done on the subject. This lack of information proves the need for collecting the existing data entry worksheets for manuscripts and lithographs, as well as adding images and decorations to them.

This article studies 246 catalogues of Persian manuscripts and lithographs – published between 1926 and 2012 – and presents a new data entry worksheet accordingly – with emphasis on their images and decorations.

Keywords: Data entry worksheet, Persian manuscripts, Persian lithographs, Image, Illumination, catalogue.

1 INTRODUCTION

Although cataloguing of Rare Books and Manuscript collections has a long history, most of cataloguers still prefer to base their work on experience and the specifications of existing archives, believing that there can hardly be a standard procedure for the cataloguing of manuscripts and rare books collections. This difficulty is mainly the result of the diversity of manuscripts and rare books, forcing the cataloguer to mention different kinds of information in his own catalogue. Therefore, perhaps creating standard data entry worksheets – which will

enrich the process intentionally or unintentionally – is the safest way of gathering comprehensive and complete information about manuscripts.

Codicology in Iran is about a century old and during this time, cataloguers of Persian manuscripts and rare books have used multiple approaches and methods which are mostly a combination of traditional conventions of Persian classic catalogues along with the criteria used by European cataloguers. In most of these methods, the cataloguer basically focuses their efforts on introducing the main text of manuscripts. Only in highly valuable manuscripts, the cataloguer – according to his own interests and preferences – adds additional notes containing information about the appearance of the book (i.e. illumination, illustrations, scripts, etc.) . Only a few of the pioneer Iranian codicologists (e.g. *Mohamad Taghi Daneshpajouh*, *Mahdi Bayani*, *Badri Atabai*, and *Iraj Afshar*) have created data entry worksheets, part of which was designed to include codicological features of the manuscripts. However, cataloguers are still unfamiliar with methods of describing rare books within modern data entry worksheets. For instance, in many catalogues different kinds of information related to paper (material and type) could be found and this chaotic diversity makes the information difficult – and sometimes impossible – to use.

This study focuses on the condition of codicological entries in Persian manuscripts cataloguing background and proposes a new data entry worksheet for cataloguing of Persian manuscript collections. In other words, standardizing and presenting a comprehensive worksheet that can in turn describe all the codicological information about a Persian rare book or Manuscript is the main goal of this research.

2 CODICOLOGY IN THE EXISTING CATALOGS OF PERSIAN MANUSCRIPTS AND LITHOGRAPHED BOOKS

In traditional cataloging of Persian manuscripts and lithographed books, text is one of the main elements of a manuscript and in most classic catalogs, the main entry is chosen in a certain way so that it can directly refer to the text. However, during the past few decades, considering the fact that the appearance of manuscripts with same text is somehow different, cataloguers have tried to describe it in catalogues. Therefore, since users consider different factors (date of scribing, place of scribing, value, script type, and illustration) when they encounter multiple manuscripts of the same text, in recent years cataloguers have tried to include more codicological information in the catalogue-records.

The first discussions about the cataloging of manuscripts and lithographed books date back to 1963, when the *National Library of Iran* held meetings with scholars of codicology/bibliography. These meetings resulted in the creation of a two-part data entry worksheet: the first part contains bibliography of the book and the second part describes the codicology. The publication of this worksheet began the process of officiating and standardizing codicology information in catalogs. Looking at the worksheets published in the past few years, one can easily figure out that the contemporary codicologists have used the worksheet created by the national library in 1963 as a template.

In the current article, to judge about the quality and quantity of codicological information in catalogues, 246 manuscript and lithograph catalogues – published between 1930 to 2011 – have been surveyed. In order to get a clear view of the background, the history of contemporary Persian codicology (manuscripts and lithographs) has been divided into three eras: pre-Islamic Revolution (1930 – 1979), first two post-Islamic Revolution decades (1979

– 2001), and contemporary period (2001 – 2011). From the 246 catalogues that were surveyed, 173 ones have codicological entries, more than half of which were published in the last period (see Chart 1).
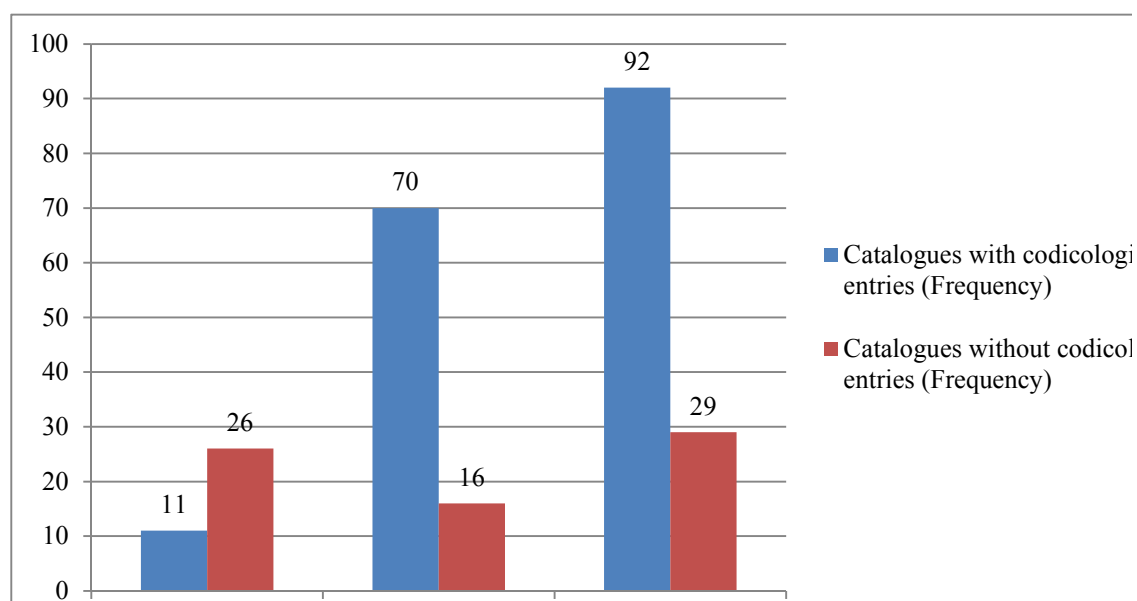

Chart 1 - Comparative Data about the Frequency of Catalogues with/without Codicological Entries

The role of codicology is more significant in the newly published catalogues, but the information regarding the visual characteristics of manuscripts, illustrations and decorations is still insufficient. As a result, users looking for manuscripts with certain visual features are unable to find what they seek. This deficiency calls for the creation of a new worksheet that contains well-organized and categorized visual information.

3   THE PROPOSED WORKSHEET

The worksheet designed in the current article is based on the 1963 worksheet of the national library of Iran and its entries are divided to two parts: bibliography and codicology, marked with letters A and B. Part A (Bibliography) follows the data entry worksheet template of the national library (1963), with the addition of publication data area (A.2) to include lithographed books as well. In part B however, 4 main areas – General Codicology, Layout, Illumination, Illustration/Drawing – have been defined with new descriptive entries so that they can confirm the presence/absence of visual elements, while including features such as material, size, layout, and (illuminative) motifs of visual parts of the book. In addition, separate entries have been considered for the signatures of scribers and artists, so that information related to them is placed near the entries for illuminations, images, and drawings. This way, the user can find the information related to each artist near their work.

Since there is no unanimous list of terms to refer to the drawings, visual motifs, and techniques used in visual elements, we tried to avoid using open fields. Therefore, the information of each field is provided in the form of a multiple choice list. The choices are defined according to terms found in general references and encyclopaedias and include elements – frequently in manuscripts and lithographed books – that the cataloguer will most

likely encounter in the course of their work. In spite of this, some open fields have been provided to include information that has not been predicted.

As a matter of fact, in designing the current data entry worksheet we tried to categorize and organize entries in a logical, and yet distinguishable, way and manage to standardize the terms and titles used to describe visual elements.

Part A	
A.1. Bibliography	
A.1.1. Shelfmark	
A.1.2. Collection	
A.1.3. Author	(name, Date of Birth and Death) 1. 2. 3.
A.1.4. Title	
A.1.5. Other Title	
A.1.6. Translator/Interpreter	(name, Date of Birth and Death) 1. 2. 3.
A.1.7. Summery	
A.1.8. Language	
A.1.9. Incipit	
A.1.10. Explicit	
A.1.11. Dedication	
A.1.12. Reference	
A.2. Publication	
A.2.1. Publisher/Sponsor	
A.2.2. Publication House	
A.2.3. Date of Publication	
A.2.4. Place of Publication	

Part B		
B.1. General		
B.1.1. Paper	(Color, Size, thickness [mm], watermark, Section) 1. 2. 3.	
B.1.2. Ink	(Color, Section) 1. 2. 3.	
B.1.3. Scribe	1.3.1. Islamic scripts:	Kufic / □īrī □
		Tol□ □
		Nas□ □
		Mo□aqqaq □
		Ray□ān □
		Reqā□ □
		Tawqī □
		Ta□līq □
		Nasta□līq □
		Šekasta-nasta□līq □
		Siyaq □
		Other:
	1.3.2. non-Islamic Scripts:	
	1.3.3. Scriber	
	1.3.4. Date of Scribe	
	1.3.5. Place of Scribe	
	1.3.6. Colophon /Signature	
B.1.4. Cover binding	1.4.1. Size	
	1.4.2. Type	Hard □

		Soft □	
	1.4.3. Material	Leather	Timāj (goat leather) □
			Mishan (Sheepskin) □
			Sāqari (Shagreen) □
			Other:
		Paper □	
		Fabric □	
		Other:	
	1.4.4. Technique	Suⱅt or Suⱅta (burned) □	
		Moⱅarraq (mosaic) □	
		Żarbi or Kubida □	
		Rawⱅani /Lāki (Lacquer) □	
		Other :	
	1.4.5. Structure	Sartabla □	
		Flyleaf	Abri (Marbling) □
			Leather □
			Fabric □
			Plain □
			Other:
	1.4.6. Design & Motives	Lačak □	
		Toranj □	
		Sar-Toranj □	
		Eslimie □	
		Khataie □	
		Shamse □	
		Khatibe □	
		Illustration	Scene □
			Gol o Morⱅ □ (rose and nightingale)
			Gol o Botte □
			Shekargah □
			Gereft o Gir □
			Other:

		Other:
	1.4.7. Signature	(Text, Date)
		1.
		2.
		3.
	1.4.8. Date of production:	
B.1.5. Ownership & History		
B.1.6. Seal	(Text, Date)	
	1.	
	2.	
	3.	

B.2. Layout	
B.2.1. Text	One Column □
	Multi-Column □
	Different oriented □
	Ḥāšīya (Margin) □
	Additional notes:
B.2.2. Colophon	Triangle □
	Quadrilateral □
	Other:
B.2.3. Line	Number [per page]:
	Length [mm]:

B.3. Illumination	
B.3.1. Design & Motive	Sar-Lawḥa (Head Chapter) □
	Toranj □
	Lačak □
	Katiba □
	Jadwal □
	Kamand □
	Shamsa □
	Other:
B.3.2 Technique	Tazhib □
	Takhil □

	Tala-Andazi □	
	Afshan □	
	Akkasi □	
	Qatta'i □	
	Other:	
B.3.3. Signature	(Text, Date, Section) 1. 2. 3.	
B.4. Drawing & Illustration		
B.4.1. Illustration	4.1.1. Fiction	Number:
		(Subjects, Size, Signature, Date) 1. 2. 3.
	4.1.2. non-Fiction	Number:
		(Subjects, Size, Signature, Date) 1. 2. 3.
B.4.2. Map	Number:	
	(Subjects, Size, Signature, Date) 1. 2. 3.	
B.4.3. Table	Number:	
	(Subjects, Size, Signature, Date) 1. 2. 3.	
B.4.4. Diagram	Number:	
	(Subjects, Size, Signature, Date) 1. 2.	

	3.
B.4.5. Other	

4 ENTRIES OF THE PROPOSED DATA ENTRY WORKSHEET:

4.1 Part A (bibliography)

A.1 bibliography: this area contains bibliography information of the book, described in the same way in the cataloguing of manuscripts and lithographed books. If a book consists of multiple texts, this part should be filled separately for each of them.

A.1.1 Shelfmark: this entry contains the shelfmark number, added by the librarian.

A.1.2 Collection: contains the name of the collection to which the manuscript belongs.

A.1.3 Author: Information about the author including name, date of birth and death.

A.1.4 Title: title of text(s)

A.1.5 Other Title: other titles the text(s) might have

A.1.6 Translator/Interpreter: name of the translator or interpreter

A.1.7. Summary: a summary of the text content, parts, chapters

A.1.8. Language: language of the text

A.1.9. Incipit: in this field, the first few lines of the text are written

A.1.10. Explicit: in this field, the last few lines of the text are written

A.1.11. Dedication: this field contains the name of the person for whom the text was written or whom it was dedicated to

A.1.12. Reference: This entry introduces bibliographies and other references that contain information about the text.

A.2. Publication: this area is for lithographed books only and presents their publication data.

A.2.1. Publisher/Sponsor: name of the publisher or sponsor

A.2.2. Publication House: name of the publication house (or printing company)

A.2.3. Date of Publication: this entry contains date of publication according to lunar calendar (used in the geographical territory of the Islamic civilization), as well as Gregorian calendar.

A.2.4. Place of Publication: refers to the place of publication

4.2 Part B (Codicology)

B.1 General: This area contains codicology information such as paper, scribe, ink, cover, etc.

B.1.2 ink: contains information about the ink (color, thickness, watermark, section, etc.)

B.1.3 Scribe: contains information about the script of the text

B.1.3.1 Islamic Scripts: this entry belongs to scripts used in the geographical territory of the Islamic civilization; Kufic/Hiri, Tolt, Nask, Mohaqqaq, Rayhan, Reqa, Tawqi, Ta'liq, Nasta'liq, Shekasta-nasta'liq, Siyaq are scripts are presented as choices, while information related to other scripts can be entered in an open field.

B.1.3.2 non-Islamic scripts: contains information about scripts that do not belong to the Islamic culture and civilization

B.1.3.3 Scriber: name of the scriber

B.1.3.4 Date of scribing: contains the date of scribing

B.1.3.5 Place of scribing: contains the place of scribing

B.1.3.6 Colophon/Signature: contains the colophon or the scriber's signature

B.1.4 Cover: contains entries related to the cover

B.1.4.1 Cover Size: this entry presents the cover size (mm)

B.1.4.2 Cover Type: refers to the cover type (hard/soft cover)

B.1.4.3 Cover Material: contains information about the material of the exterior cover of the book; **leather** [Timaj (goat leather), Mishan (Sheepskin), Saqari (Shagreen), etc.] **paper**, and **textile fabric** that are the most common materials, are presented as choices and there is an open field for any other material that might come up.

B.1.4.4 Technique: refers to the technique used to create the cover; sukt (burned), Mo'arraq (mosaic), and Rawgani/Laaki (Lacquer) are the most common techniques and appear as choices, while there is an open field, in case other techniques are used.

B.1.4.5 Structure: information about the structure of the cover (Sartabla, Flyleaf, Abri [Marbling], leather, textile fabric, plain, etc.)

B.1.4.6 Design and Motifs: includes information about the design and motifs used in the cover; common designs and motifs presented as choices include: Lachak, Toranj, Sar-Toranj, Eslimie, Khataie, Shamsa, Katiba, and Illustration (distinguished as Scene, Gol o Morgh [rose and nightingale], Gol o Botte, Shekargah, Gereft o Gir, etc.). There is also an open field, in case other designs and motifs are used.

B.1.4.7 Signature: contains signature of the binder; in this entry, first the text of the signature appears, then its date.

B.1.4.8 Date of Production: this entry contains date of production according to lunar calendar (used in the geographical territory of the Islamic civilization), as well as Gregorian calendar.

B.1.5 Ownership and History: contains information about past owners and ownership notes.

B.1.6 Seals: contains information about the seals (printed or manual) along with their text and date.

B.2 Layout: feature of the layout

B.2.1 Text: contains information about the appearance of the text: one-columned, multi-columned, different-oriented and Hashiyeh (margin) which are presented as choices, while other information (related to the order, orientation, and appearance of the text) can be explained in the field of Additional notes. This entry only relates to the main text of a book and does not apply to the notes that might be found in it.

B.2.2 Colophon: refers to the appearance of the colophon; Triangle and Quadrilateral forms are the most common ones, and therefore presented as choices, while other forms can be stated in the open field.

B.2.3 Lines: this entry refers to the number of lines and their length. If the size of the lines varies, the minimum and maximum size will be indicated here.

B.3 Illumination: contains information about the illuminations could be found on pages of the book.

B.3.1 Design and Motif: This entry contains information about the design and motif used in the illuminations. Motifs Sar-Lawha (Head Chapter), Toranj, Lachak, Katiba, Jadwal, Kamand, and Shamsa are the most common ones and are presented as choices, while other possible motifs can appear in the open field.

B.3.2 Technique: this entry refers to the technique used for the illumination of a manuscript. The most common techniques – presented as choices – are: Tazhib, Takhil, Tala-Andazi, Afshan, Akkasi, Qatta'i. Other possible techniques can appear in the open field.

B.3.3 Signature: this entry contains information about the artist who created the illuminations (text and date respectively); the part of the manuscript containing the signature is also presented.

B.4 Drawing and Illustration: contains information about the drawings and illustrations (illustration, map, table, diagram, etc.).

B.4.1 Illustration: contains information about the illustrations that could either be Fictional or non-Fictional (astrology, medicine, travel journals, etc.).

B.4.1.1 Fictional Illustrations: contains number, subject, size, signature, and date of each fictional illustration.

B.4.1.2 non-Fictional Illustrations: contains number, subject, size, signature, and date of each non-fictional illustration.

B.4.2 Map: contains number, subject, size, signature, and date of each map.

B.4.3 Table: contains number, subject, size, signature, and date of each table.

B.4.4 Diagram: contains number, subject, size, signature, and date of each diagram.

B.4.5 Other: in this entry, the cataloguer can write other drawings and illustrations that cannot be included in the above classification.