

# The Manifestation of Iranian-Islamic Identity in Qajar Women's Clothes Designing

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(pp 91 to 110)

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## Abstract

Undoubtedly, one of the ways to know any culture in the past is to analyze the history of its nation's clothing. Because the history of clothing is part of the history of a civilization, which is linked to the culture of its people, studies in this area will provide a clearer picture of the cultural-artistic conditions that dominate them. Given the fact that the Qajar era coincided with intellectual and industrial changes in Europe along with Iranian courtiers' trips to the West and increased relations between Iran and the West, the following question raises: „How were Qajar women's clothes designed and produced on the basis of Iranian-Islamic identity features since they differed from the Western wear culture in the illustrated historical documents?“ The findings of qualitative analysis showed that: Because the clothes were designed and produced based on four national, religious, humanistic and social approaches, all their components and accessories were derived from the model, common patterns, textiles and decorations among the nation. Thus, Iranian-Islamic identity manifested itself in women's clothing.

## Keywords

women, Iranian-Islamic identity, Qajar, clothes designing.

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## تجلی هویت ایرانی-اسلامی در طراحی پوشاک زنان عصر قاجار

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### چکیده

بی‌تردید یکی از راه‌های شناخت هر فرهنگ در گذشته، تحلیل تاریخ پوشاک آن ملت است؛ چراکه تاریخ پوشاک بخشی از تاریخ تمدن بوده و با فرهنگ مردم آن سرزمین پیوند دارد. از این رو، مطالعه در این زمینه تصویری روشن‌تر از وضعیت فرهنگی-هنری جوامع ارائه می‌دهد. با توجه به اینکه دوره قاجار همزمان با تحولات فکری و صنعتی در اروپا، سفرهای درباریان ایرانی به غرب و افزایش روابط ایران و غرب بود، این پرسش مطرح می‌شود که: «طراحی و تولید پوشاک زنان قاجاری بر مبنای چه ویژگی‌هایی از هویت ایرانی-اسلامی صورت می‌گرفت که در اسناد تصویری تاریخی با فرهنگ پوشاک غربی متفاوت است؟» یافته‌های تحلیل کیفی نشان می‌دهد که پوشاک زنان قاجاری بر اساس چهار رویکرد ملی، دینی، انسانی و اجتماعی طراحی و تولید می‌شده است. در نتیجه، تمام اجزاء و ملحقات پوشاک آنان از الگوها، نقوش رایج، بافت و تزئینات برگرفته از عناصر فرهنگی ملت ایران بوده است. بدین ترتیب، هویت ایرانی-اسلامی در پوشاک زنان این دوره متجلی شده است.

### کلیدواژه‌ها

زنان، هویت ایرانی-اسلامی، قاجار، طراحی لباس

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# Die Manifestation der iranisch-islamischen Identität im Design von Qajar-Frauenkleidung

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(S. 91 bis 110)

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## Zusammenfassung

Zweifellos gehört die Analyse der Kleidungs Geschichte eines Volkes zu den wichtigsten Wegen, vergangene Kulturen kennenzulernen. Da die Geschichte der Kleidung ein Teil der Zivilisationsgeschichte ist und in engem Zusammenhang mit der Kultur des Volkes steht, bieten entsprechende Studien ein klareres Bild der kulturell-künstlerischen Gegebenheiten.

Angesichts der Tatsache, dass die Kadscharenzeit mit geistigen und industriellen Umbrüchen in Europa, den Reisen iranischer Höflinge in den Westen und zunehmenden Beziehungen zwischen Iran und dem Westen zusammenfiel, stellt sich folgende Frage: „Wie wurden die Kleider der Kadscharinnen auf der Grundlage iranisch-islamischer Identitätsmerkmale entworfen und hergestellt, sodass sie sich – wie in historischen Bilddokumenten ersichtlich – deutlich von der westlichen Kleidungskultur unterscheiden?“

Die Ergebnisse der qualitativen Analyse zeigen: Da die Kleidung auf vier Ansätzen – nämlich einem nationalen, religiösen, humanistischen und sozialen – basierte, waren alle Bestandteile und Accessoires von gängigen Mustern, Modellen, Stoffen und Verzierungen inspiriert, die im Volk verbreitet waren. Auf diese Weise manifestierte sich die iranisch-islamische Identität in der Frauenkleidung der Kadscharenzeit.

## Schlüsselwörter

Frauen, iranisch-islamische Identität, Kadscharen, Kleidungsdesign


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# The Manifestation of Iranian-Islamic Identity in Qajar Women's Clothes Designing<sup>1</sup>

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## Introduction

Clothes designing is one of the branches of applied arts that has a decisive role in creating and reviving the culture of any nation. Once, every individual considered clothing and covering to be only a protection against environmental threats and considered it a safe haven between themselves and the outside world. But over time, the same clothing had another function and became a mechanism for identifying the individual in a community and a manifestation of the religious values and cultural customs and traditions of his nation. Although clothing was originally used to protect, identify, and explain one's status, another function was later defined for it, and that was to clarify the traditions, values, and the culture

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- 1 The present article extracted from Mona Jahanpour's M.A. thesis titled „The Assessment of Identity Features in Designing Women's Clothes in Contemporary Islamic Iran (Case Study: The Presented Clothes in Fajr International Fashion and Clothing Festival in 2016-2017)“ and supervised by Dr. Fahimeh Zarezadeh at Tarbiat Modares University.
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dominating the people of a nation,<sup>4</sup> since scholars believed that a large part of the cultural-identity manifestations of a nation always appears in the fabric of its people's clothing.. As in the modern era, along with developments such as the globalization of culture and the growth of consumer culture, clothes designing and continuous monitoring of its features have become widespread and pervasive phenomena among contemporary nations and every individual tries to define their identity through clothes designing and connect to many of the collective, ethnic, and national groups to which they need to join.<sup>5</sup> Since clothing provides information about identity, culture and more generally, the cultural identity of a nation, especially women's clothing - considering the specificity of their clothing among Islamic nations - the present study also aims to investigate the cultural identity of women's clothing in Qajar era. Qajar was a period in which due to confronting with the West and the desire to experience the modern world, the court created the biggest challenges and led the Iranian nation on a fast-paced path to industrial Europe and breaking with long-standing traditions. Of course, women, as the creators of half of the structure of Iranian society, were not immune from the course of events and changes in the intellectual and cultural spaces of the time.<sup>6</sup> However, the analysis of historical illustrated documents suggests that their clothing was designed and manufactured entirely based on the characteristics of Iranian-Islamic identity and was distinct from Western wear culture. To reject or prove this hypothesis, the theoretical framework of research based on the issue of structuralist identity is first proposed. Then, its characteristics were analyzed in every component of the structure of women's clothing of that era, and finally it was explained how each of these characteristics were used in the design and production of clothes. For the purpose of this research, gaining a comprehensive and deep understanding of the existing visual writings is so important in advancing the design of contemporary clothing that we can only consider the French researcher, Anatol France's<sup>7</sup> view in this regard: „If I am allowed to choose one of the nonsenses that will be published in the world a hundred years after my death, I will

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4 (Gheibi 2006, p. 30).

5 (Gidenz 2008, p. 81).

6 (Abazari &Tayebi 2017, p. 16).

7 (1844-1924, cited in Qorbani 2003, p. 3).

definitely choose a fashion journal to see what clothes women wear and what they look like; these innovations will make me more aware of how future human life will be than most of the writings of philosophers and storytellers”.

### Research Methodology

The present study was conducted through a descriptive-content analysis method based on electronic and library resources. In collecting historical illustrated data, the statistical population is considered to be based solely on court graphemes and illustrations of the only Qajar illustrated manuscript, i.e. *One Thousand and One Nights* by Sani-al-Mulk. Ten illustrations were selected from the target population using simple random sampling and analyzed using travelogue descriptions.

### Review of the Literature

Although, extensive research has been done due to the existence of numerous documents from the Qajar era, there are few sources in the field of clothing of the people of that era that fall into three general categories: 1. Historical research, 2. Travelogues, and 3. Research with social and cultural approaches. The first category deals with a collection of studies that describe and explain the components of Qajar men's and women's clothing in their historical aspect which are followed by photographs of that time. In this regard, research presented under the title, „Qajar Period Clothes” (Shahshahani 2017), „Eight Thousand Years of Iranian Clothing History” (Gheibi 2006), „Clothing in Iran” (Yarshater 2017), „A Survey on Qajar Era Fashion” (Mobayeni & Asadi 2017), „Iranian Women in Western Travel Writers' Eyes” (Mehrabadi 2000), „Iranian Women's Clothes from 13<sup>th</sup> A.H. to the Present” (Zoka 1957), are among very important books in this field. Among foreign writers, in his book *The Story of Civilization*, Will Durant (1997) described Qajar women based on their clothes in the society. The second category includes significant books such as Dieulafoy's *Travel Book* (1982), Jacob Edward Pollock's *Iran and Iranians*, Carla Serena's *Persons and Rituals* and Lady Sheil's *Glimpses of Life and Manners in Persia*. They accurately depicted Qajar clothes in different cases such as on courtiers or the public. The third category consists of the studies with a social approach such as Mana Abazari and Habibollah Tayebi's article entitled: „A Comparative Study of Qajar Women's Clothes Before and After Nasereddin

Shah's Trip to Europe". In this article, the authors have analyzed the clothing of Qajar women in three periods of tradition, transition and modernity, and have concluded that indoor clothing and footwear in the transition period and outerwear in the modern period have undergone changes. Another study by Mahnaz Jahani and Sahar Changiz (2017) conducted a comparative analysis of women's clothes fashion at the court of Fath-Ali Shah and Nasereddin Shah. They found that the influence of the king's taste and will in each period has been a very effective factor in changing the model of court women's clothing and the point of difference between them. In her M.A. thesis entitled, „Iranian Clothes during Qajar Era in *One Thousand and One Nights*' Illustrations," Mahnaz Jahani compared the existing reports and the illustrations in *One Thousand and One Nights* with the aim of comprehensive clarification of clothing themes. Therefore, it can be generally concluded that the above-mentioned studies gave merely a descriptive report on Qajar clothes or showed the changes in clothes through comparative-social studies. While what distinguishes the subject of the present study is that for the first it aims to investigate Qajar women's clothing design based on the existing pictorial documents from a cultural point of view in order to identify how they benefited from the characteristics of Iranian- Islamic identity.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Culture is one of the most ancient words in the Persian language, not only in the first texts of Dari Persian prose, but also in the extant writings from the Pahlavi language with roots meaning educating and teaching proper conduct<sup>8</sup>. However, Edward Taylor - the first to bring culture out of its classical definition - said that culture as a whole is intertwined with knowledge, religion, art, ethics, customs, and any abilities and habits that a person acquires in a society.<sup>9</sup> In this sense, there is no uncivilized human being and uncivilized society. Therefore, what distinguishes human beings or societies in general is the difference in form, meaning, simplicity, or complexity in cultural elements that encompass all knowledge, belief, art, ethics, and habits and the person belonging to that society acquires them. Kroeber and Kluckhohn believed that „culture consists of patterns,

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8 (Ashouri 2012, pp. 25-26).

9 (cited in Ashouri 2012, p. 75).

explicit and implicit, of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups"<sup>10</sup>. Accordingly, culture is considered to be the most important element in the formation of the existence of a society that, if deviated, even if that society is economically, politically, industrially and militarily powerful; but in terms of identity, it becomes null and void. In other words, culture is one of the most important and richest sources of identity that people are always resorting to its components and elements to find identity whose literal meaning is the truth and nature of what is being said in response to the question of who and how it is, and as a fluid and multifaceted phenomenon which is the result of a continuous historical process that is constantly changing under environmental conditions. Thus, identity is considered as an integral and complementary element to culture, as sociologists refer to identity as cultural identity in a broader sense in relation to culture. In this regard, there are three general views: 1. Essentialist view: In this nature-oriented view, cultural identity is considered as a fixed and unchangeable essence. 2. Discoursal point of view: cultural identity and social issues are the achievements of discourse, thus social categories are constructed and addressed in discourses. Therefore, social realities are born and formed in discourses, and because discourses are fluid, cultural identities can also be fluid, changeable, and transformative.<sup>11</sup> 3. Structuralist view: cultural identity is a social construct which has not been discovered, but formed on the basis of social circumstances of human beings. Accordingly, identity and culture are both related to social interactions and dialectic association between social and mental networks<sup>12</sup>. Thus, the present study, based on this approach, has considered the cultural identity hidden in the design of Qajar women's clothing as part of the characteristics and conditions of Islamic Iran, which has distinguished their clothing from the wear culture of other nations, especially the West.

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10 (1952, p. 181, cited in Eivazi, 2007, p. 5).

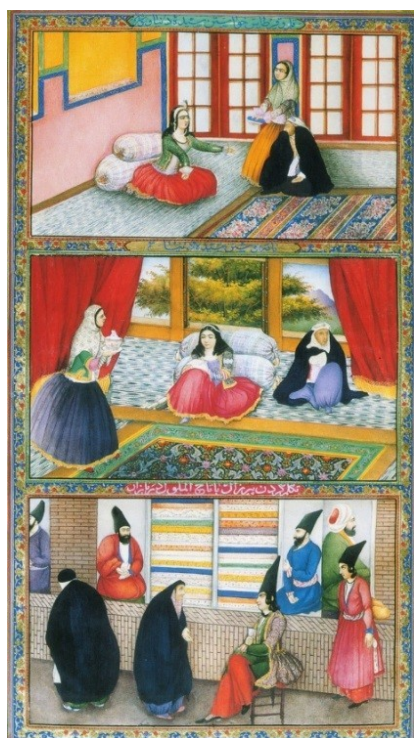
11 (Tajik, 2000, 17).

12 (Seifzadeh, 2000, 250).

## Identity Components in Clothes Designing

Clothing, which is one of the most essential human needs and has a history as old as his biological life, has found many manifestations commensurate with different periods, thus it cannot be separate from the history of human thought. According to Anne Hollander, the body has a different shape and texture with or without clothing, so it becomes something new when the clothes shows up.<sup>13</sup> This interpretation clearly shows the power of clothes designing, thus the most important part of clothes designing, without which it becomes only a cover to protect the body, can be considered as the creation of new ideas. In his book *Clothing and Fashion*, Kelsie Cruse referred to the high power of clothes designing as wearable art for conveying values,

since ideas arise from the creative minds and are influenced by the circumstances of a nation and are placed on the bodies of its people.<sup>14</sup> According to the book *Clothing in Iran* by Yarshater, clothes designing also requires an understanding of people's social and cultural behaviors and knowledge of their religious, doctrinal, magical, taboo, and belief systems, because these values help to preserve cultural identity in the history of generations<sup>15</sup>. Therefore, in order to be able to provide an interpretation of a garment with the characteristics of an innovative, original, meaningful and creative thought and to be understood as an artistic format in the context of cultural identity, design must have some components which meet human needs and purposes and get assessed



**Figure 1:** common clothing of Qajar women inside and outside the house  
**Source:** Golestan Museum Palace Library

13 (Hollander, 1975, 27-33).

14 (Cruse, 2012, 70).

15 (Yarshater 2004, pp. 17-18).

based on the following four approaches:

### **1. Nationalistic Approach**

Nationalism is a kind of collective consciousness shared by a group or nation shaping different dimensions of identity. As Anthony Smith stated, nationalism constantly redefines and reinterprets the pattern of values and traditions making up the heritage of the distinction between nations' which makes it possible to identify individuals with that pattern and distinction<sup>16</sup>. In this regard, the use of traditional clothing based on values, rituals and traditions left behind induces a kind of indigenous identity that has occurred in designing Qajar women's clothing by two components.

#### **1.1. Conventionality**

The prevalence of a particular type of clothing in a spontaneous manner indicates its acceptability<sup>17</sup>. In this regard, the clothing of Qajar women, according to the tradition of their mothers and ancestors' clothing and believing in what has always been so, was divided into two parts, indoor and outdoor, each of which was used in conjunction with their own space. In fact, these clothes were designed based on principles and doctrines prevailing in Qajar era and achieved from previous eras especially Safavid. Mitra Mehrabadi's research about chador, chaghchoor (special type of skirt), burka, giveh (handwoven-top shoes) and galesh (traditional footwear) quoted from Shirley brothers' travelogue written during the reign of the Safavid Shah, Abbas the Great, „generally speaking, women are beautiful and put on chador and burka so that the sun never shines on their faces“<sup>18</sup>. This type of clothing can be seen among the outdoor clothes of Qajar women. They used chador and chaghchoor when they went to bazaar and took off the burka when talking to the salespeople. Their indoor clothes included short open dresses, arkhaliq, long corrugated skirts, embroidered shoes and footwear which were similar to Safavid clothing according to Tavernier, the French travel writer (Figure 1).

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16 (Smith, 2004, p. 30).

17 (Ghorbani 2008, p. 62).

18 (Mehrabadi 2007, p. 125).

## 1.2. Value Creation

Every clothing requires a ready-made context when it is designed, and value creation is one of the prerequisites for its promotion. One of the ways to create value is to redefine the norms, principles and common patterns among the target nation. In other words, the creation of a new plan arising from the culture of that nation is important in order to achieve this goal.<sup>19</sup> In Iranian culture, the use of the head covering means keeping the head clean from all kinds of impurities, and the head is considered as the highest part of the body and the source of respectable thoughts and spiritual instincts<sup>20</sup>. Therefore, in the design of women's clothing, hijab (the Islamic dress code) has always been considered as the main component of clothing, and its decorations and accessories are produced according to the conditions. In the illustrated pictures of Qajar women's indoor clothes, women wore special headdresses made of embroidered termeh (a luxurious Iranian handwoven fabric) with silk and a net or ornamental cloth hung from the back (Figure 2).

They also attached a feather called jeqqe to the straps around their head. Later, charghad became popular. Charghad was a thin, square



**Figure 2:** Types of Qajar women's headgear with a quadrangle or a ribbon tied around the head with its upper collars

**Source:** Golestan Museum Palace Library, picture of One Thousand and One Nights book

cloth which was folded in half to form a triangle when being used. Then it was placed on their head so that the right angle was behind the head while it was fixed with a pin under their chin in accordance with the size of their face<sup>21</sup>. It must be mentioned that charghad was simpler than headdresses with net and

19 (Farbod 2018, p. 20).

20 (Mounesi Sorkheh 2017, pp. 113-114).

21 (Jahani & Changiz 2017, p. 392).

they applied some innovations to preserve its ornamental function (figure 3).

## 2. Religious approach

Clothing in Persian is a sign of human dignity and means, in its explicit sense, to wear, cover or put on clothes. According to *The Culture of Nakedness and the Nakedness of Culture* by Haddad Adel, clothing also has an implied meaning and is considered as a means of concealing the body.<sup>22</sup> As Strabo, the Greek historian of the 1<sup>st</sup> century B.C. mentioned, if a part of Iranians' body was naked, they considered it immodest and most people wore ankle length clothing.<sup>23</sup> In fact, the primary function of clothing was a response to the intrinsic needs of Iranians for camouflaging themselves which was applied according to the circumstances and environment the result of which was to avoid nakedness. According to Islam, clothing and modesty are tightly connected, since clothing is a type of moral veil encompassing two functions of preserving one's personality and respecting social dignity and both are generally accepted by observing the principles of modesty, chastity and virtuousness in relation to each another<sup>24</sup>. Regarding the two following components, the aforementioned religious principles were delicately and vitally observed when designing Qajar women's clothes.



**Figure 3:** The Qajar woman's head covering inside the house is hung as a decorative hat and lace  
source: Brooklyn Museum

22 (Haddad Adel 1993, p. 41).

23 (Gheibi 2006, p. 124).

24 (Babaei & Akbari 2014, p. 243).



**Figure 4:** Types of Qajar women's clothing with full coverage and at least nudity  
**Source:** Golestan Museum Palace Library, pictures of One Thousand and One Nights book

## 2.1. Covering



**Figure 5:** Full coverage of Qajar woman with embroidered chador and loose pants

**Source:** <https://www.pinterest.com/bardya/qajar-painting>

Covering in Islam means having hijab within the framework of Islamic law and the custom of society. Thus, its primary characteristic is to cover the body in a way it avoids nakedness while not being diaphanous which is clearly shown in Qajar women's clothes while being colorful, beautiful and having a few pieces indicated in the illustrated documents. Figure 4 shows three types of covering: an old woman with a chador, burka and pants corrugated at her ankle; a court woman wearing a corrugated skirt, arkhaliq (a long tight-waist jacket), and a headband; and maids with arkhaliq, corrugated skirts, and charghads pinned under their chin. It must be mentioned that all women were dressed in navy blue chadors, and green, purple, gray or red

loose pants made from chelvar (cotton fabric) (Figure 5). Later, the women of the court decorated their chadors with braids and a silver ribbon and sewed a cord around their waist or head to keep the chador tight (Abazari & Tayebi 2017, p. 18). Other women wore darker chadors with golden embroideries.

## 2.2. Abstractness

Abstractness in designing equals with creativity and unpretentiousness, while having the principles of practicality and dressing up. According to



**Figure 6:** dancing maiden, Qajar woman with thin silk skirt to control sweating and skin health  
Source: Sotheby's Auction

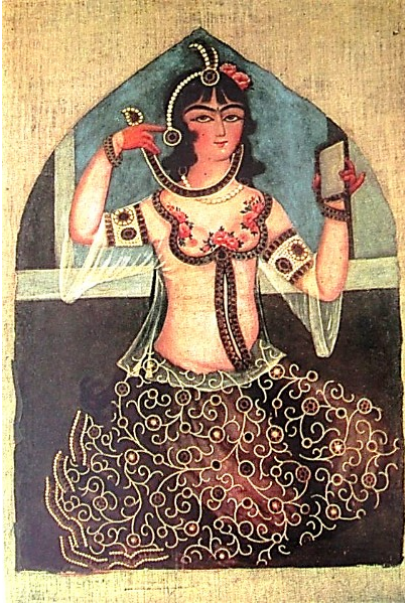
the authors, this component was applied to Qajar women's clothes through simple cuts and fragmentation. Each piece, made of embossed fabrics especially decorated, was often sewn with a lining in order to hide the major parts of their body while giving them a good shape.

## 3. Humanistic approach

A number of humanistic principles, apart from any social and geographical restrictions, form an approach with two aspects related to the human body and spirit. The spiritual aspect deals with cultural identity and the physical aspect deals with choices and tastes which are related to the human body. Cultural identity is implicitly embedded in one's taste, thus people choose their clothes and redefine their culture based on their tastes and mindsets. In other words, individuals' tastes create their cultural identity and each nation is formed by the combination of its individuals' tastes<sup>25</sup>.

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25 (Khazaee 2008, p. 30).



**Figure 7:** Qajar woman with thin silk skirt and embroidered tight pants for ease of sitting and moving  
**Source:** Art Museum of Georgia



**Figure 8:** Qajar woman dressed up in fully embroidered clothes made of nationally designed  
**Source:** <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/458804280766165022>

In this regard, two following components are of great importance:

### 3.1. Balance

Balance refers to the state of being physically and psychologically comfortable with clothing coordinated with human ergonomics<sup>26</sup>. This component was well considered in Qajar women's clothes, for instance they wore some dresses made of high quality silk under their clothes in order to observe perspiration and skin health and also facilitated the process of breast-feeding. Moreover, they put on loose pants for ease of sitting and moving. Under the silk skirts, they wore tight pants to keep beauty, cover and

comfort. Multi-piece clothing was also utilized for making a sense of comfort for women so that they could adjust them based on indoor or outdoor circumstances or the temperature. Figure 6 illustrates the use of bird and floral motifs around the collar, Islamic motifs on the skirt, ornamental ribbons and stone embroideries on the sleeves which changed a simple fabric into an Iranian painting. The loose cloche sleeves made it easy to move the hands while its silk textile brought coolness for the users. In Figure 7 attention has been paid to how to decorate the garment along with the balancing component. Embroidered tight

26. (Tavassolian 2016)

pants besides delicate skirts complete other pieces of clothing while emphasizing modesty, beauty and ease.

### 3.2. Being ornamental

Clothing meets one of the most natural needs of human beings, and ornaments one of the additional aspects of Iranian clothes designing, thus in designing Qajar women's clothing, it is also a self-reliant element. Ornaments in Iranian clothes were presented based on designs and patterns, not gender. Historical illustrated documents attest to the fact that ornaments were the integral part of Qajar women's clothes. All the following elements played a significant role in beautifying clothes: fabric application (appropriate pattern, color and their composition), colors and patterns application (the principles of beautifying the style through proper use of linear patterns and colors), ornaments application (using accessories such as ribbons, buttons and traditional stitches in special parts of the clothes or the edges)<sup>27</sup>.

Figure 8 shows the application of delicate ornamental ribbons full of stone and pearl embroideries on the sleeves and around the collar. There is a dress under the coat with ornaments on the collar and accessories such as luxurious necklaces for decorating the dress. For completing the upper part of the clothing, a red velvet headband and skirt are both designed with interesting Islamic and botte jeqqe motifs (traditional Iranian motif resembling cypress tree bent in the wind).

### 4. Social approach

Clothing can be a tool for socialization, controlling social issues and liberating from some restrictions. Soheila Shahshahani believes that one of the most basic human emotions that is taught by clothing is the feeling of shame. When someone wears inappropriate clothes, they become ashamed and this feeling is induced by the society (Shahshahani 2017, p. 49). Therefore, appropriate clothing must be in accordance with the norms of the society to be capable of preserving the cultural identity in the history of their generations. Changes in clothes designing and producing may bring about identification or unidentification in a nation. To examine how this

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27 (Mounesi Sorkkeh 2017, p. 112). SPEKTRUM

approach is considered in Qajar women's clothing, three components have been considered.

#### 4.1. Novelty

Clothes designing satisfies both the desire to be in harmony with others and to be separated from them in a society. Therefore, by introducing a new



Figure 9: Qajar women with short corrugated shalites based on European ballerinas' style

Source: Victoria and Albert Museum

element to it, one feels both different and original and obtains the approval of the majority who dress like them.<sup>28</sup> Anne Hollander in her article „The Modernization of Fashion” stated that „designing ordinary material objects began to seem less like merely providing trivial ornaments or practical tools, and more like

finding an authentic medium for personal aesthetic expression, even for collective moral expression”. During Qajar era, although some models and designs from the West were introduced into Iranian women's clothing due to the extensive relations between Iran and the Europe, clothes designers preserved Iranian rituals and tradition when designing. According to Pollack and Wells, two doctors who had permission to get inside the court, women wore dresses with transparent back, and knee length skirts, while most of their upper body was naked. They put on tight tops with or without women's underwear exactly similar to the underwear Victorian authors mentioned in their works<sup>29</sup>. On his travel to Saint Petersburg and watching the ballet dancers at Kaolin Theater, Nasereddin Shah decided to change his wives' style of clothing in the way western women were. He commanded his wives to wear short umbrella skirts with tight pants. Thenceforth, a new

28 (Stotzel 1992, p. 350).

29 (Boloukbashi 2013, p. 222).

type of clothing became popular among women. In fact, Russian ballet dancers' skirts were transformed into shorter skirts (shalite) with multi-layered undergarments fastened under their waist along with a short dress (Figure 9) (Zaka 1957, p. 22). This type of clothing represented the variety of models and cuts in women's clothing at that time, which had an interest in updating and passing past patterns under the shadow of Iranian culture and in accordance with social norms.

#### 4.2. Identification

Each person gets an identity by being present and growing up in a nation, i.e. they have a common history with other people in that nation. This common history is a requirement to be able to be identified in the society.<sup>30</sup> Based on this, it can be said that in the discussion of the identification of Qajar women's clothing, reference has been made to the history of weaving and the national handicrafts of Iran. Although cultural and social changes in the textile and clothing industry at that time have been rare in the history of Iran, the drawings show that Qajar women benefited from national textiles and needlework inheriting from their past generations. Because of the high quality of production, their clothes provided a sense of physical comfort. On the other hand, they were free from animal or human figures and full of floral and geometric motifs which were the symbols of perfection, unity and excellence, exploration, movement and stillness, which are related to the pacifying aspect of human beings in Iranian philosophy. In Figure 9 the national value creation can be seen in the form of the design of the fabrics and their decorations. In fact, all the clothes were made of fabrics with symbolic motifs, such as Islamic and Khatai flowers, which were used in accordance with the Iranian sewing patterns for shalite, arkhaig, and pants. Also, all kinds of jewelry stitching and needlework were used in combination with Iranian decorative arrays to complete the outfit. As illustrated in the figures, court women's clothes are mostly embroidered with gold or silver threads, wide stripes, precious stones, coronets and crowns. The combination of these elements in the design and production of clothing has caused women to somehow find an Iranian identity by wearing those clothes. In this regard, S.D. Goten believes the display of beauty and price of fabric is more prominent when the applied fabrics are embroidered

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30 (Elahi 2010, p. 14).

and designed. This display of color and pattern is apparently well occurred in Qajar women's clothes so that they are called „the flowing of colors”<sup>31</sup>. Furthermore, Lady O'Sullivan, the wife of the British ambassador, described the scarf of Fathali Shah's queen so embroidered that she had difficulty in moving<sup>32</sup>; it proves the special application of Iranian historical arts in their clothing. According to Ravandi, women in the court wore short dresses embroidered with gold buttons and pearls which made them seem almost naked<sup>33</sup>. As Gaspar Darville stated, women put on long tops made of cotton satin fabric worn under their clothes. Embroidered bras which were worn under or above their dresses were considered as an innovation in Qajar women's clothing<sup>34</sup>.

#### 4.3. Taste Creation

Clothes designing has the ability to create tastes in consumers and society. Since consumers cannot be expected to apply for a new design without being providing with a suitable context, one of the most important steps in clothing production is to create taste.<sup>35</sup> This was formed in the middle of the Qajar period after Nasereddin Shah's visit to Saint Petersburg and his return with Russian ballet dancers' clothes. After the spread of short shalite, another component which was known as prayer chador was added to women's clothing due to religious reasons. A pin or button was utilized in order to fasten prayer chador to the waist.<sup>36</sup> Prayer chador which was made of canvas, velvet, satin or plaid blue and brown fabric was called chadorshab (Gheibi 2016, p. 598). In this way, women were encouraged to compensate the shortness of their clothes by using pray chador (Figure 10). Moreover, dresses which had plackets from the neck to the navel and were known as Zandieh style were removed from Qajar women's clothing and the clothes' ornaments were gradually simplified.

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31 (Babaei& Akbari 2014, p. 249).

32 (Boloukbashi 2013, p. 218).

33 (Ravandi 1973, p. 251).

34 (Abazari& Tayebi 2017, p. 18).

35 (Yasini 2017, p. 106).

36 (Mostofi, 1998, pp. 510-511).



Figure 10: Qajar women with clothes full of ornaments and needlework based on Iranian-Islamic motifs such as botte jeqqe

Source: Gatchina Palace Museum

## Conclusion

Based on Qajar illustrated documents, research findings indicate that since women's clothes were designed and produced based on four nationalistic, religious, humanistic and social approaches, they manifested the Iranian-Islamic identity as a cultural mechanism. In fact, women's clothes were made based on the following components: 1. Conventional social customs and traditions, 2. Principles of Islamic belief, 3. Covering and simplicity while being applicable, 4. Patterns and cuts appropriate with domestically produced fabrics, 5. Coordination of clothing with body ergonomics, 6. Productivity of Iranian designs and ornaments, 7. Innovation in the form of clothing and 8. Making tastes congruent with social norms. Therefore, in the process of Iranization, Qajar women's clothes were approved and consumed while expressing an Iranian-Islamic identity.

Chart 1 Approaches and components related to Qajar women's clothes deigning giving a demonstration of Iranian-Islamic identity

Reference: authors

<p><b>Nationalistic Approach</b></p> <p><i>constant redefinition of the patterns of values and traditions in fashion designing</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conventuality: the heritage of Safavid women clothing in indoor and outdoor clothing style</li> <li>• Value creation: redefinition of common norms, principles and patterns among a nation regarding headdresses such as embroidered scarves, hats and close-fitting caps</li> </ul>
<p><b>Religious Approach</b></p> <p><i>avoiding nakedness due to the principles of hijab, modesty, chastity and purity</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Covering: the least level of nakedness by wearing chador and loose pants</li> <li>• Abstractness: designing with simple cuts in different peices while having the principles of practicality</li> </ul>
<p><b>Humanistic Approach</b></p> <p><i>choosing the clothes based on tastes and mindsets embedded in domestic culture</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Balance: physical and psychological comfort by high quality thin and silk dresses under their clothes in order to facilitate the process of breast-feeding, and loose pants for ease of sitting and moving, and tight designed pants to keep coverage</li> <li>• Being ornamental: demonstrating aesthetic aspect of ornaments based on designs and patterns of clothing, not gender.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Social Approach</b></p> <p><i>meaningful designing in accordance with the norms of society</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Novelty: transforming Russian ballet dancer's skirt into shalite while preserving aesthetic and moral standards</li> <li>• Identification: fashion designing based on national textiles and historicl handworks of Iran</li> <li>• Taste creation: making tastes among consumers and society by prayer chadors</li> </ul>

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Figure 1: common clothing of Qajar women inside and outside the house, Source: Golestan Museum Palace Library.

Figure 2: Types of Qajar women's headgear with a quadrangle or a ribbon tied around the head with its upper collars, Source: Golestan Museum Palace Library, picture of One Thousand and One Nights book.

Figure 3: The Qajar woman's head covering inside the house is hung as a decorative hat and lace, source: Brooklyn Musem.

Figure 4: Types of Qajar women's clothing with full coverage and at least nudity, Source: Golestan Museum Palace Library, pictures of One Thousand and One Nights book.

Figure 5: Full coverage of Qajar woman with embroidered chador and loose pants, Source: <https://www.pinterest.com/bardya/qajar-painting>.

Figure 6: Qajar woman with thin silk skirt to control sweating and skin health, Source: Sotheby's Auction.

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Figure 7: Qajar woman with thin silk skirt and embroidered tight pants for ease of sitting and moving, Source: Art Museum of Georgia.

Figure 8 Qajar woman dressed up in fully embroidered clothes made of nationally designed fabrics, Source: <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/458804280766165022>.

Figure 9: Qajar women with short corrugated shalites based on European ballerinas' style, Source: Victoria and Albert Museum.

Figure 10: Qajar women with clothes full of ornaments and needlework based on Iranian-Islamic motifs such as botte jeqqe, Source: Gatchina Palace Museum.

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