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Original Research Article

Naser al-Din Shah-Era Women's and Men's Clothing as Reflected in Sani ol-Molk's Illustrations of *One Thousand and One Nights*

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Abstract

Problem statement: In the early years of Naser al-Din Shah Qajar's reign, textiles used for women's and men's clothing were embellished with various motifs. Created in the same historical period, Sani ol-Molk's anachronistic illustrations for *One Thousand and One Nights* are a good source for research on the era's clothing, as they realistically depict how Persians lived at the time. The present study attempts to answer the following question: "Based on Sani ol-Molk's *One Thousand and One Nights* illustrations, what designs and motifs were prevalent in textiles used for women's and men's clothing in the Naserian era?" The assumption is that in this era, just as in the previous periods, there were different clothes patterning styles and gender had some influence on the choice of fabrics for clothing.

Research objective: The study aimed to explore early-Naserian-era fabric designs and motifs by examining the illustrations of the Qajar version of *One Thousand and One Nights*.

Research method: In this descriptive and analytical research, 24 book illustrations, selected through probability sampling, were examined.

Conclusion: Findings show that for women, textiles patterned with floral motifs were used for clothing that was worn in andaruni (the private, women-only quarter in traditional Persian houses; similar to the harem), and plain textiles for those worn out in biruni (outside both the andaruni and the house); for men, plain textiles were preferred, Termeh fabrics (patterned with Botteh Jegheh/ Paisley's) were only used for Qaba's, and the use of other patterned fabrics was limited to embellishments.

Keywords: *Textile, Naser al-Din Shah Qajar, Sani ol-Molk, One Thousand and One Nights, Design, Motif.*

Introduction

The designs and motifs that adorned textiles used for women's and men's clothing in the Naserian

era (1848–1896) are a controversial topic. From a historical continuity perspective, different types of patterned fabrics must have been still popular during at least a part of Naser al-Din Shah's reign;

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however, from a holistic perspective, traditional textile making seems to have declined in the Naserian era and given way to industrial manufacturing: “The Qajar era coincided with the forceful rise of machines in Europe, and Persian hand-weaving could not hold out against the machines” (Alvand, 1984, 131). Textile industry during the almost five-decade reign of Naser al-Din Shah was divided into two periods. The first period spans the first twenty-something years of the king’s reign, that is, before his visit to Europe. In this period, just as during the reign of Naser al-Din Shah’s predecessors, some textiles were imported, but Westernization had not yet affected every aspect of Persian life, including clothing.

The ideal way to investigate Qajar fabric designs and motifs is to examine paintings from that era. One reason for this is that the surviving Qajar textiles in museums are displayed only under general labels with no production years. In many cases, it is not even specified during the reign of which Qajar king, they were made. On the other hand, in the period before Naser al-Din Shah’s trip to Europe, photography was not developed enough to be used to capture the events of everyday lives—though, had it been the case, it would have depicted the lives of courtiers much more frequently than those of ordinary people. However, paintings from the period (1848–1855), in particular the illustrations of the Qajar rendition of *One Thousand and One Nights*, reflect the stylistic features of life in that period, including even textiles patterns. “The pictures of this version document how Persians lived 150 years ago” (Zoka, 2003, 33). The main question of this research is: “Based on Sani ol-Molk’s *One Thousand and One Nights* illustrations, what designs and motifs characterize textiles used for women’s and men’s clothing in the Naserian era?” The assumption is that in this era, just as in the earlier periods, there were different clothes patterning styles and that gender was a factor in the choice of fabrics for clothing. The study aims to explore different designs and

motifs that decorated fabrics in the early Naserian era, by examining Sani ol-Molk’s illustrations for *One Thousand and One Nights*. The significance of this study is that Naserian textiles are often labeled as Termeh¹, a specific kind of textile, rather than being categorized into separate groups; the reason for this, it seems, is that the dressing styles of the first part of Naser al-Din Shah’s reign have been overshadowed by the flood of changes that took place over many subsequent years. The study will first take a brief look at the state of textile-making in the first few decades of the king’s reign. Next, it will review the categories of fabric designs and motifs, and explore the Sani ol-Molk-illustrated version of *One Thousand and One Nights*. This is followed by an examination of the designs and motifs adorning the clothes worn by women and men in the illustrations, after which a conclusion will be made.

Research method

In terms of purpose, the study is fundamental research, and in terms of methodology, it is a descriptive and analytical one that includes visual and comparative analyses. The data were collected solely from textual and visual documents. The sample consisted of the 3,600 illustrated scenes in the Qajar version of *One Thousand and One Nights*. Of this total number, 24 frames were selected through probability sampling to be used to examine the designs and motifs that embellished Naserian women’s and men’s clothes. In this qualitative research, the independent variable was the articles of clothing worn by women and men in the illustrations, and the dependent variable was the various motifs and designs decorating those clothing items.

Literature review

Many books have documented Qajar fabrics and textiles under the broader topic of the era’s clothing. Zoka (1957) has been one of the older works with this approach. Gheibi (2006) has taken a brief look

at the textile industry in the Qajar era, as part of its review of Persian women's and men's clothing styles throughout history. Talebpour (2007) stood out among such works by discussing the evolution of textiles in particular and ends with the Qajar era. The most relevant work is Farboud's doctoral thesis (2009) which has examined the designs, motifs, and even materials of Qajar fabrics. Though this study presents a one-sided view of Western influence on Qajar-era Persian art, the thesis has been significant for being the beginning steps in qualitative research on the subject. The last one in this group has been Rouhfar (2012), which has focused exclusively on the main subject and has avoided discussing history. There have been also later works, such as Mounesi Sorkheh (2017) and A Mobini and Asadi (2017); however, they merely have compiled the information given in the earlier works, without adding anything new. Shahshahani (2017) has been another book on the topic, which provides valuable information on Qajar clothing; even so, it has failed to properly organize its findings into categories that have distinguished clothing based on the form of their elements and according to their chronological order. In addition to these books, there have been also articles with this theme, such as Abazari and Tayyebi (2017). Similarly, these studies have focused mostly on clothing rather than textile designs and motifs. The illustrated version of *One Thousand and One Nights* by Sani ol-Molk- has been examined in books as well as articles and theses. Zoka (2003) has dedicated a part to the *One Thousand and One Nights* rendition, and Zarezadeh, Shade Qazvini and Hosseini (2010) deals specifically with the role of the female characters in that magnificent artwork. Finally, Mafitabar and Kateb (2018) have looked at a series of Fath-Ali Shah-era paintings known as "court portraits" to explore early-Qajar textiles. Meanwhile, it is an unprecedented research effort to use Sani ol-Molk's *One Thousand and One Nights* illustrations to study the designs and motifs of textiles used for Naserian women's and men's

clothing. Whereas most studies about the Naserian era focus on the king's and his harem members' clothing styles after his visit to Europe, this study looks through the Sani ol-Molk-illustrated book at the oft-overlooked period before the European visit and investigates the similarities between the designs and motifs that adorned women's and men's clothing in the early years of Naser al-Din Shah's reign.

Textile-making during the early Naserian decades

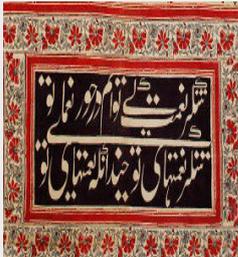
Inheriting the sophisticated techniques of the Safavid and earlier eras and influenced by the culture and economy of their day, Qajar weavers incorporated European and Indian methods into their art, forming the so-called "Qajar style of Persian weaving," which lasted about halfway through Naser al-Din Shah's reign, until 1873. This has been explicitly mentioned in travel memoirs from the era: "no progress has taken place in Persian industries since two centuries ago, the Safavid era. Although Persian industries cannot be compared to those of Europe, they meet most of the domestic demand" (Polak, 1989, 378). The Qajar era was plagued by a depression that stemmed from factors such as the Industrial Revolution, "Westernization," scientific and technological underdevelopment, and the general policies of the Persian government; a decline that intensified after Naser al-Din Shah visited Europe and the government made it mandatory to wear European-style clothing. "Today, Qajar clothing is divided into two periods: the first period is when Persians' contact with European nations was still in its early stages, and the second is when the arrival of European merchants and travelers as well as Naser al-Din Shah Qajar's visit to Europe inspired a significant change in Persian clothing and, in turn, fabrics" (Gheibi, 2006, 548). This study looks at the last years of the first period—the "limbo" of Persian textile-making—which coincided with the early years of Naser al-Din Shah's reign.

Types of textiles in terms of designs and motifs

In the context of textiles, from the perspective of traditional art, a design refers to a structure, and motifs are its parts; in other words, the *design* is the whole piece, whereas the motif is the building block. “The design is the basic framework according to which motifs are arranged. In fact, it specifies the rules governing the order of the motifs” (Hassouri, 2004, 79). Thus, “the design should be thought as the whole picture in a given context, and the motif should be defined as an element that adorns the design with its special quality” (Arbabi, 2009, 57). Accordingly, the design is the basis or fundamental arrangement

of the decorative parts. Designs can be formally categorized in different ways: “One way is to classify them into the symmetrical, the asymmetrical, and the mixed. In a symmetrical design, the motifs are repeated such as to be transitionally, bilaterally, or rotationally symmetric. In some designs, however, the motifs are arranged asymmetrically or sometimes according to a combination of the two modes” (Tam Sen, 2010, 2). Traditional Persian patterned fabrics as categorized by design are: Mihrābi², Toranj-dār³ (bilaterally symmetrical), Vāgirei/ full field⁴, Ghābi/ paneled variants⁵, Muharramat/ striped⁶ (transitionally symmetrical), narrative⁷, inscription⁸, Afshān/ scattered⁹ (asymmetrical), and mixed (Table 1).

Table 1. Types of fabric design. Displayed in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Source: <http://collections.vam.ac.uk>.

Types of fabric design in Qajar Era					
Types of fabric design and related sample					
	Mihrābi	Toranj-dār	Vāgirei/ full field	Ghābi/ Paneled Variants (Ghāb-ghābi)	
	Types of fabric design and related sample				
		Ghābi/ Paneled Variants (Kheshti)	Ghābi/ Paneled Variants (Bandi)	Muharramat/ striped	Muharramat/ striped
Types of fabric design and related sample					
		Narrative	Inscription	Afshān/ scattered	Mixed

On the other hand, motifs, in the context of hand-woven fabrics, are separate or related elements that make up an image within the framework of a design; that is, a design is the overall combination of a series of decorative elements, the simplest meaningful part of which is known as a motif. However, motifs have character and meaning by themselves, so how they are arranged can define a design; for instance, in designs such as the “Botteh Jegheh/ Paisley Muharramat” or the “Shah Abbasi Afshān”, where motifs are the dominant elements. In this regard, “the motif is the dominant and defining shape or element in a fabric design” (Stone, 2012, 347; Bassam, 2013, 203), and motifs are often thematically “categorized into human, animal, floral, geometric, object, and mixed” (Tam Sen, 2010, 2). Influenced by Industrial Age fabric patterning styles, the majority of Qajar fabrics are characterized by transitionally and bilaterally symmetrical designs as well as floral motifs.

Sani ol-Molk and One Thousand and One Nights

Abul-Hassan Ghaffari (1814–1866), commonly known as Sani ol-Molk, was one of the most prominent Naserian artists, the founder of the first art school in Iran, and a pioneer of Persian graphic design. His work can be described as having bridged court portrait painting to the Kamal ol-Molk style. Influenced by European classical art, he learned the basics and rules of naturalism and achieved a novel blend of Persian and European visual traditions (Pakbaz, 2004, 2). As the painter of the Naserian court, Sani ol-Molk was commissioned to work on two major projects, one of which was to illustrate *One Thousand and One Nights* (Pakbaz, 2006, 159). *One Thousand and One Nights* does not have a specific writer or a single origin, but rather it is a collection of old Arabic, Persian, and Indian legends, most of which take place in Iraq and Iran (Sattari, 1989, 61). It was compiled in the 16th century under the Arabic title *Alfo Laylaton va Laylaton*, and translated into Persian in the 19th century, during

the reign of Muhammad Shah Qajar, by Molla Abdollatif Tasouji as a commission by Bahman Mirza. Naser al-Din Shah commissioned Muhammad-Hossein Tehrani to write the stories in calligraphy sometime in the early years of his reign. Over its 1,134 pages, the Qajar version of *One Thousand and One Nights* features 3,600 illustrated scenes, which were created by 42 artists from different artistic fields, led by Sani ol-Molk. The artists worked on the project for seven years, from 1848 to 1855, and the illustrations mirror life in 19th century Persia (Zoka, 2003, 31–33).

Women’s clothing during the early Naserian decades

The main “andaruni” outfit for women during the early years of the Naserian era—before European-style clothing became widespread—consisted of a Chārghad, a shirt, an Arkhalig, a skirt, and a pair of pants; this set with the addition of a Chādor, a Chāghchoor, and a Niqab (Ruband) was women’s main “biruni” outfit. Other items of clothing worn by women in this period included cap-and-veils, Picheh’s, prayer chadors, Kolijeh’s, and shoes; some of these, such as cap-and-veils, went out of fashion during the same period, and some others, like shoes, were not made primarily from fabrics (Gheibi, 2006, 583–607). With an emphasis on the essential aspects of women’s clothing, this article examines how designs and motifs determined the use of fabrics.

• Chārghad

During the reign of Naser al-Din Shah, the Chārghad replaced the cap-and-veil, becoming the main headscarf to be worn by women in the andaruni. A Chārghad was a lightweight, square-shaped silk fabric folded into a triangle, then placed on the head with the right angle falling on the back and the acute angles pinned together under the chin (ibid., 595). The green Chārghad in figure 1-a, the navy blue and red Chārghads in figure 1-b, and the navy blue Chārghad as well as the white Chārghad worn by the woman on the left in figure 1-d, are decorated with the Lachak-and-toranj (‘corner and

medallion’) design. In each instance, the Toranj in the center of the fabric, covering the top of the head, is surrounded by four Lachaks on the corners, which fall on the Chārghad triangle’s acute angles (in front of the wearer) and right angle (behind the wearer). The Lachak-and-toranj designs are made up of naturalistic floral motifs. Second to the Lachak-and-toranj design, the Vāgirei variants were the most common designs for Chārghad fabrics. The Vāgirei/ a simple full filed design, consisting of a pattern of naturalistic flowers, adorns the white and yellow Chārghads in figure 1-a. A design seen in figure 1-b is the Kheshti variant of Ghābi/ the paneled design, with a highly simplified, round floral motif sitting in each square. Figure 1-c shows an example of the Ghāb-ghābi, a variant of Ghābi/ the paneled design, with detailed flower motifs in the squares. In figure 1-d, two of the women wear Chārghads with Muharramat/ a striped design decorated with simplified floral motifs. As a broad conclusion, it may be argued that Naserian Chārghads used fabrics with Lachak-and-toranj, Vāgirei/ a simple full filed design, Ghābi/ paneled (including the Kheshti and Ghab-ghabi variants), and Muharramat/ striped designs containing naturalistic or abstract floral motifs.

• Shirt

As in the Afsharid and Zand eras, women in the early Naserian period commonly used white gauze or “Malmal” fabrics with goldwork embroidery for shirts (Anjoman-e Beynonmelali-ye Zanan dar

Iran, 1973, 6). However, according to a number of travelers from the era, blue and pink were also common shirt colors (Polak, 1989, 116). Shirt fabrics were often unpatterned. The white, pink, blue, green, and yellow shirts worn by the women in figures 2-a to 2-d are a few examples of early Naserian shirt fabrics.

• Skirt

Long enough to reach the ankle, the early Naserian skirt was among the garments that originally came into fashion in the Zand era (Gheibi, 2006, 529). Before Naser al-Din Shah’s visit to Europe and his harem innovations, women wore loose-fitting, pleated, lace-edged skirts (Zoka, 2003, 36). Based on Sani ol-Molk’s *One Thousand and One Nights* illustrations, in addition to unpatterned skirts, those with the Vāgirei/ a simple full filed design were also popular at the time; an example is a white skirt worn in figure 2-a, ornamented with naturalistic floral motifs. In figure 2-b, similar motifs are arranged within a variant of the Ghābi/ paneled design called “Bandi.” In figure 2-c, simplified and stylized floral motifs sit in Kheshti design, another variant of the Ghābi/ paneled, and embellish the violet skirt of the woman in the back. The woman in the foreground wears a red skirt adorned with a range of naturalistic floral motifs forming Afshān/ a scattered design. It may be argued that, besides unpatterned textiles, patterned fabrics with, at least, Vāgirei/ a simple full filed, Ghābi/ paneled (Bandi and Kheshti), and Afshān/scattered designs

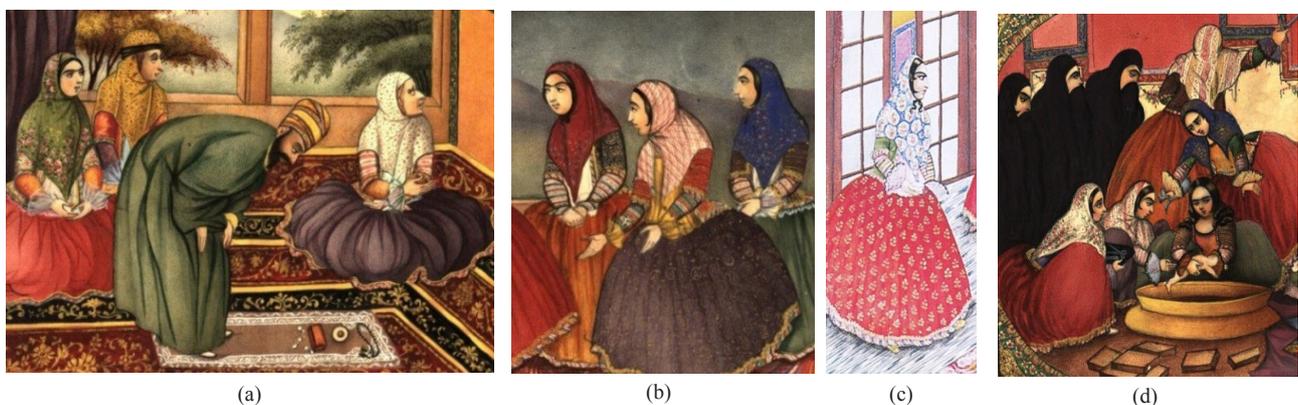


Fig. 1. Chārghad in Sani ol-Molk’s *One Thousand and One Nights* illustrations. Source: Author, based on illustrations from Golestan Palace, Tehran.

were commonly used for skirts during this period. Adding to the beauty of garments, these designs were decorated with naturalistic and abstract floral motifs.

• Pants

Continuing a tradition from the Zand era, women wore pants under long skirts, from the early Qajar era through the mid-Naserian period. However, pants were generally of little importance, as they were obscured by skirts that exceeded them in length (Gheibi, 2006, 587). For this reason, pant designs and motifs from this period cannot be discerned from the *One Thousand and One Nights* illustrations, but pants may be speculated to have been unpatterned—and in case they were actually patterned, the designs and motifs may be ignored. “Women in this period wore under their skirt a pair of Zari-laid, lace-edged, lined velvet or taffeta pants, which was stiffened with cotton underpants or even a set of hoops” (Anjoman-e Beynonmelali-ye Zanand Iran, 1973, 7).

• Arkhalig

From the beginning of the Qajar era to when tops became common, women wore Arkhaligs over shirts, continuing an old tradition from the Safavid era. An Arkhalig was a jacket that covered the torso and, despite having buttons in the front, was often left open to expose the wearer’s shirt and necklaces (Gheibi, 2006, 590). The *One Thousand and One Nights* illustrations show that, apart from unpatterned

fabrics, textiles with the simple vagirei design were among those used for this garment. A plain Arkhalig and an orange simple vagirei Arkhalig with small but naturalistic floral motifs are shown in figures 3-a and 3-b, respectively. Figure 3-c presents two examples of Termeh Arkhaligs from this period: a simple vagirei Arkhalig with Botteh Jegheh/ Paisley motifs is worn by the woman in the foreground, and the same motifs decorate a bandi paneled design on the Arkhalig of the woman in the background. Another variant of the Arkhalig used fabrics with the striped design and is worn by two female musicians in figure 3-b, ornamented with small, simplified flower motifs within the even stripes. A closer look at Arkhaligs reveals other structural elements: “These garments sometimes featured triangular cuffs, individually called a ‘Sambusa’. The inside surface of Sambusas was made from fabrics more expensive than that used for the rest of the Arkhalig” (Zoka, 2003, 24). Examples of these decorative elements can be seen on the Arkhaligs of two of the women in figure 3-b, with both Sambusa pairs made from Muharrāmat/ striped fabrics. According to historical sources, “Muharrāmat/ striped fabrics were mostly used by the middle class. By contrast, high-ranking officials often only used them in the form of undergarments, or used their finest kinds as embellishments” (Mafītabar & Kateb, 2018, 95). The social status of the women in figure 3-b, who are servants and musicians, is the reason why

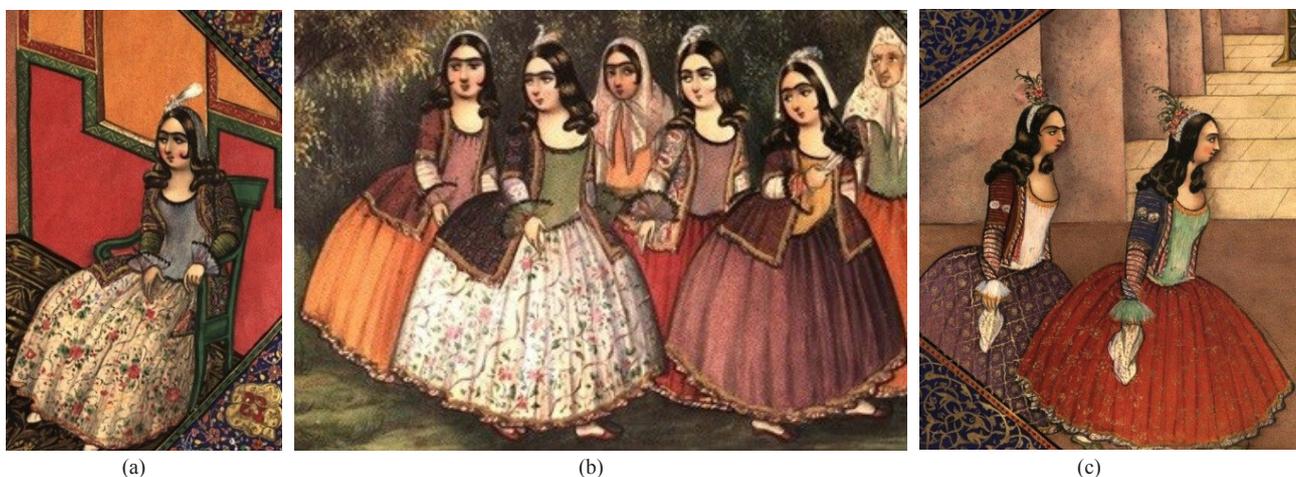


Fig. 2. Skirt in Sani ol-Molk’s *One Thousand and One Nights* illustrations. Source: Author, based on illustrations from Golestan Palace, Tehran.

their Arkhaligs or Sambusas are illustrated as made from striped fabrics. Other kinds of fabric either patterned or plain, may have been used in Arkhaligs and Arkhalig embellishments for people from higher echelons of society, with the finest of such fabrics being the Termeh. In sum, Arkhaligs in this period were made from plain fabrics as well as those with Vāgirei/ a simple full filed, Bandi variant of the Ghābi/ paneled, and Muharrāmat/ striped designs decorated with naturalistic and abstract motifs (especially Botteh Jegheh/ Paisleys).

• Chādor, Chāghchoor, and Niqab

Outside home, early Naserian women covered their figures from head to toe with large and bordered black or violet chadors, wore Chāghchoor pants, and veiled their faces with white Niqabs (Anjoman-e Beynonmelali-ye Zanan dar Iran, 1973, 6). According to historical records, wearing white chadors outside was common until mid-Qajar era, when it gradually changed to dark-colored and black chadors in the mid-19th century, the studied period (Matin, 2004, 56). The chador was Qajar women's main outside-the-house garment. The Chāghchoor was a pair of long, loose-fitting, footed pants worn over a Shaliteh and a Tonbān during the Zand and Qajar eras. Common Chāghchoor colors were violet, azure, and steel blue; sayyid women wore green Chāghchoors, and black Chāghchoors were considered classier (Zoka, 1957, 31). Figure 3-d depicts a woman

in a white Niqab, a black chador, and a steel blue Chāghchoor, standing outside a fabric shop in a bazaar. As seen in this picture, Niqabs, chadors, and Chāghchoors were typically made from expensive, unpatterned fabrics. In addition, women's outside-the-house clothing, except for the always-white Niqab, mostly used dark-colored and black textiles, helping women appear more modest.

• Socks

Women were often barefooted at home, but if needed, they wore white, hand-woven socks (Anjoman-e Beynonmelali-ye Zanan dar Iran, 1973, 7). Because women's socks were occasionally worn and tended to be white, they are not represented in the *One Thousand and One Nights* illustrations.

Men's clothing during the early Naserian decades

In the Qajar era, especially in the Naserian period, the typical men's outfit consisted of hats, turbans, shirts, Qaba's/Jobba's, waist sashes, Kolijeh's, Sardāri's, and pants. There were also other items, such as crown hats, vests, Kapanak's, Abā's, capes, and shoes, but they were worn only by men from certain social strata. Some items, such as boots, were never made from fabric. Giveh, shoes were made from condensed fibers, which rendered being patterned or plain unimportant (Gheibi, 2006, 548–582).



Fig. 3. Pants, Arkaligh, Chador, Chaghchoor and Nighab in Sani ol-Molk's *One Thousand and One Nights* illustrations. Source: Author, based on illustrations from Golestan Palace, Tehran.

• Hat

In this period, there was a variety of headwear for men, with each item reflecting the social status of the wearer and the region he came from. Among the most important of these items, the “Qajar hat” was a cone-shaped head covering that occasionally featured a Termeh section around its crown or was embellished with fabrics such as broadcloth. As the name suggests, the hat came into fashion in the Qajar era, coinciding with the popularity of the expensive “scarf-and-hat” combination, a set dating back to the Zand era and consisting of a hat wrapped in a Termeh, white, or striped cloth (*ibid.*, 520–569). The less financially advantaged wore a tall, cylindrical, felt hat around which a cloth was wrapped (Zoka, 2003, 34). Traditionally worn by kings and ornamented with various gemstones, crowns, and “crown-hats” were other head coverings from this period. The hat worn by the young man in [figure 4-a](#) is a simple Qajar hat, which is also pictured in [figure 4-b](#) decorated with Botteh Jegheh/ Paisleys and feathers. Depicted in [figure 4-c](#), the scarf-and-hat combination is given featured in the *One Thousand and One Nights* illustrations as frequently as the Qajar hat. However, the way the scarf is wrapped around the hat in this picture makes it impossible to examine its design and motifs with certainty. Even so, a comparison between textual records and other visual representations suggests that, apart from plain textiles, fabrics with Vāgirei/ simple full filed or Muharrāmat/ striped designs

decorated with abstract floral motifs were probably used for this article of clothing. A type of worker’s hat common in this period, combined with a white turban, is detectable in [figure 4-d](#), and a crown hat worn by princes and rulers is depicted in [figure 4-e](#). Although expensive and adorned with gemstones, crown hats used unpatterned fabrics. In fact, it may be argued that the majority of textiles used for Naserian men’s head coverings were plain, with patterned fabrics used only occasionally as embellishments on Qajar hat crowns or as a scarf wrapped around hats. Most of these occasional patterned fabrics probably had Vāgirei/ simple full filed or Muharrāmat/ striped designs with abstract floral motifs. Consisting only of the Chārghad, women’s headwear was homogenous in form but greatly varied in fabric design; by contrast, men’s head coverings came in different shapes yet were limited in fabric design to the Muharrāmat/ striped and the Vāgirei/ simple full filed, which also only appeared in scarf-and-hats and, even less frequently, on the crown of Qajar hats.

• Shirt

Just as in the Zand era, men in this period typically wore white, round-necked shirts that were hemmed on one side of the neckline (Gheibi, 2006, 549). This type of white shirt is found in many of the pictures featured in this article. [Figure 4-a](#) depicts the sewing method of its neck. Functioning as undergarments, these shirts were similar to their women’s counterparts in that they were made from patternless



Fig. 4. Hat, Shirt and Pants in Sani ol-Molk’s *One Thousand and One Nights* illustrations. Source: Author, based on illustrations from Golestan Palace, Tehran.

textiles that, based on a comparison between textual sources and the *One Thousand and One Nights* illustrations, were limited to white in color.

• Pants

Continuing the Safavid style, men's pants in this period were made from cotton or silk and colored blue or purple. As in the Zand era, they were made loose-fitting to be comfortable for sitting on the ground (*ibid.*, 517, 564). Viziers and other high-ranking figures often wore red, loose-fitting pants when attending the royal court (Zoka, 2003, 35). As seen in many of the featured pictures, men's pants were limited in material to plain textiles —unlike women's skirts, which were patterned. In most cases, such as in figures 4-a and 4-b, pants were red, and even when other colors were used, the fabric was still patternless.

• Qaba/Jobba

Mirroring the wearer's high social standing, the Qaba was worn along with a long skirt in the first half of the Qajar era, just as in earlier periods. The Qaba was close-fitting down to the waist, and the skirt was bell-shaped and gradually shrank in length to above the knee during Naser al-Din Shah's reign. There were various kinds of Qabas: some were open-front and reached the shin, some were shorter, some had the left flap overlap the right one, some had an exquisite scarf wrapped around them, some had decorative buttons in the front, and some had

Sambusa cuffs (Gheibi, 2006, 553). Despite this structural variety, Qabas were invariably plain in color and limited to green, yellow, blue, violet, or red (Shahshahani, 2017, 152). Based on Sani ol-Molk's *One Thousand and One Nights* illustrations, every style of qabas, from the short and the long (Fig. 5-a) to the buttoned (Fig. 5-b), was made from unpatterned textiles; however, the occasional Qaba hem decorations and Sambusas used, in addition to plain fabrics, textiles with Vāgirei/ simple full filed or Muharrāmat/ striped designs containing abstract floral motifs. The Vāgirei/ simple full filed design appears on the waist sash, hem, and Sambusas of the beige qaba worn by the man on the right corner in figure 5-c; the Muharrāmat/ striped design decorates the waist sashes and Qaba hems of the rest. A more remarkable example of the use of the latter design in Qabas is seen in figure 5-d, decorating the hem, Sambusas, and waist sash of the man's navy blue Qaba. Based on the illustrations, waist sashes were made from both plain textiles and fabrics with a floral-patterned Vāgirei/ simple full filed or Muharrāmat/ striped designs, with the waist sash fabric matching those used for the hem and the lining. In conclusion, men's Qaba embellishment was limited to the waist sash, hem, and cuff Sambusas; the use of floral-patterned Vāgirei/ simple full filed or Muharrāmat/ striped fabrics for these parts may have been popular; and, by harmonizing with the

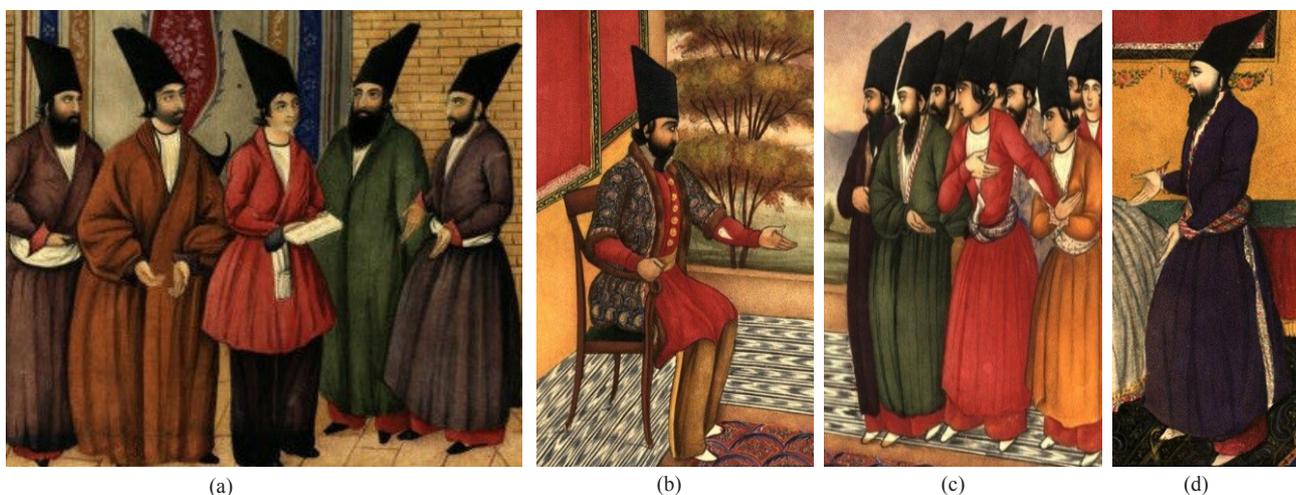


Fig. 5. Qaba/ Jobba in Sani ol-Molk's *One Thousand and One Nights* illustrations. Tehran. Source: Author, based on illustrations from Golestan Palace, Tehran.

qaba's plain color, the partial decorations added to the garment's beauty.

• Kolijeh and Sardāri

Among the clothing worn by all during the Qajar era, the Kolijeh was a long, open-front coat—resembling a long-sleeve Qaba—worn over a qaba, mostly in the winter. As qabas shrank in length over time, men's Kolijehs gave way to pleated coats called Sardāri's, which reached the knee and sometimes below the knee (Gheibi, 2006, 556–560). Both the Kolijeh and the Sardari were commonly made from patternless fabrics, exemplified in the red Kolijeh worn by the man in figure 6-a and the violet Sardari of the man in figure 6-b. Less frequent, patterned styles of the two garments were often ornamented with Botteh Jegheh/ Paisley motifs. The Botteh Jegheh/ Paisley is generally perceived to have been present in all Qajar textiles, which is an uninformed generalization inspired by the motif's frequency in fabrics used for men's Kolijehs and Sardaris as well as for women's Arkhaligs. An abstract floral motif, the Botteh Jegheh/ Paisley appears on the Kolijeh worn by the short man in figure 6-a and in the Vāgirei/ simple full filed design of the Sardari worn by the young

man in figure 6-b. Also decorated with Botteh Jegheh/ Paisleys, women's Arkhaligs were more varied than men's Kolijehs and Sardaris in terms of pattern; they bore other floral motifs besides Botteh Jegheh/ Paisleys and used designs such as the Vāgirei/ simple full filed, the Bandi, and the striped. Nevertheless, Termeh cloths were used in Arkhaligs virtually as frequently as in men's Kolijehs and Sardaris.

• Socks

Qajar men wore short socks that reached only the ankle (Polak, 1989, 108). In some of Sani ol-Molk's *One Thousand and One Nights* illustrations, including figure 6-d, men's feet, in indoor settings, are painted with white and red stripes, recalling the Muharrāmat/ striped design. Therefore, it may be argued that, unlike women's socks, which often came in white, men's socks came not only in different plain colors but also in the Muharrāmat/ striped design.

Conclusion

Persian textile-making during the long reign of Naser al-Din Shah Qajar falls into two distinct periods. The Persian textile industry in its first phase coinciding with the first twenty-something years of



Fig. 6. Kolijeh, Sardari and Socks in Sani ol-Molk's *One Thousand and One Nights* illustrations. Tehran. Source: Author, based on illustrations from Golestan Palace, Tehran.

the Naser al-Din Shah's reign underwent a series of ups and downs. This period was later overshadowed by the spread of Westernization in the second half of his reign. Realistically reflecting contemporary Persian life and giving special attention to human characters, Sani ol-Molk's illustrations for *One Thousand and One Nights* make it possible to delve into the designs and motifs that decorated textiles used for clothing in the first period. There is an uninformed yet popular belief that fabrics in this period were very limited in terms of motifs and characterized only by Botteh Jegheh/ Paisleys. On the contrary, a careful examination of the different types of traditional Persian fabrics suggests that at least some of the traditional fabric designs—the Afshān/scattered, the Toranj-dar, the Vāgirei/ simple full filed, the Ghābi/ paneled variants, and the Muharrāmat/ striped—decorated with human, animal, floral, geometric, object, and mixed motifs, must have appeared on clothing. A study of 24 of Sani ol-Molk's *One Thousand and One Nights* illustrations, selected through probability sampling, reveals that in this period, just as in the earlier eras, both plain and patterned fabrics were used for certain women's "andaruni" garments, namely Charghads, skirts, and Arkhaligs. These patterned fabrics had Lachak-and-toranj, Vāgirei/ simple full filed, Ghābi/ paneled (Ghāb-ghābi, Kheshti, Bandi), Muharrāmat/ striped, or Afshān/ scattered designs adorned with not only Botteh Jegheh/ Paisleys but also various naturalistic and other abstract floral motifs. On the other hand, women's "biruni" clothing—Chadors, Chaghchoors, Niqabs, and socks—were completely patternless. In terms of fabric use, women's clothing was the reverse of men's. Functioning as undergarments, men's shirts, pants, and Qabas were mostly plain—with patterned fabrics used either only partially for hems, linings, and waist sashes, or more broadly in certain outside-the-house garments, namely Kolijs, Sardaris, turbans, and socks. Even so, patterned fabrics used for men's clothing were less varied than those used for women's; they were

limited to Vāgirei/ simple full filed, Ghābi/ paneled (Bandi), and Muharrāmat/ striped designs and abstract floral motifs, especially the Botteh Jegheh/ Paisley.

A comparison between Sani ol-Molk's *One Thousand and One Nights* illustrations shows that: A) women wore patterned clothes at home and plain clothes outside, and the reverse applied to men; B) the distribution of patterned textiles was not the same in women's and men's clothing. Some women's garments, such as Chārgahads, were invariably patterned and some others, such as Arkhāligs and skirts, were mostly decorated with designs such as the Afshān/ scattered, Vāgirei/ simple full filed, or Muharrāmat/ striped along with naturalistic or abstract floral motifs. On the other hand, men's garments, even those worn outside and the embellishments, were mostly plain and only occasionally patterned. Although fabrics with the Muharrāmat/ striped design were sometimes used for men's patterned clothing, the dominant designs were the Vāgirei/ simple full filed and the Bandi with Botteh Jegheh/ Paisley motifs. In general, the use of patterned fabrics for men's clothing was very limited.

In conclusion, what Naserian women and men wore in public—which was limited to strictly plain garments for women and partially patterned clothes for men—has overshadowed women's andaruni clothing; this, in turn, maybe the reason why textiles from the era have remained uncategorized and the role of gender in their choice for use in clothing has been overlooked. Contrary to general belief, a wide range of designs and motifs was used for, at least, women's clothing: from the Lachak-and-toranj and the Vāgirei/ simple full filed to the Ghābi/ paneled, Muharrāmat/ striped, Afshān/ scattered, and embellished with a variety of naturalistic and abstract floral motifs (Table 2). It is encouraged that other researchers also study periods in Persian history that are overshadowed by more well-known eras, and thereby reveal things that will enable us to better appreciate Persian art and culture.

Table 2. A comparison of the fabric designs and motifs used in women’s and men’s clothing during the Qajar era, based on Sani ol-Molk’s One Thousand and One Nights illustrations. Source: Author.

	Type of clothing	Fabric design	Fabric motif
Women’s clothing	Charghad	Lachak-and-toranj, Vāgirei/ simple full filed, Ghābi/ paneled (Kheshti, Ghāb-ghābi), Muharrāmat/ striped	Naturalistic and abstract floral
	Shirt	-----	-----
	Skirt	Vāgirei/ simple full filed, Afshān/ scattered, Ghābi/ paneled (Kheshti, Bandi)	Naturalistic and abstract floral
	Pants	-----	-----
	Arkhalig	Vāgirei/ simple full filed, Muharrāmat/ striped, Ghābi/ paneled (Bandi)	Naturalistic and abstract floral (especially Botteh Jegheh/ Paisley)
	Chador and Chaghchoor	-----	-----
	Niqab	-----	-----
	Socks	-----	-----
Men’s clothing	Scarf-and-hat	Vāgirei/ simple full filed, Muharrāmat/ striped	Abstract floral
	Qajar hat	Probably Vāgirei/ simple full filed, Ghābi/paneled (Bandi)	Abstract floral (only Botteh Jegheh/ Paisley)
	Shirt	-----	-----
	Pants	-----	-----
	Qaba/Jobba	-----	-----
	Waist sash	Vāgirei/ simple full filed, Muharrāmat/ striped	Abstract floral
	Kolijeh and Sardari	Vāgirei/ simple full filed, Ghābi/paneled (Bandi)	Abstract floral (only Botteh Jegheh/ Paisley)
	Socks	Muharrāmat/ striped	-----

Endnote

1. A type of cloth patterned with Botteh Jegheh/ Paisley motifs. Termeh cloths often come in Vāgirei/ simple full filed, Bandi, and Muharrāmat/ striped designs.
2. The main design in this type is based on mosque Mihrab’s. Mihrabi cloths are often used as prayer rugs or hung on the wall as decoration.
3. This design consists of a Toranj (medallion) in the middle and has two styles: with Lachaks and Lachak-less. In the Lachak-and-toranj design, Lachaks are the triangular parts bordering the Toranj on the four corners.
4. A pattern-based design, the Vāgirei/ simple full filed is made up of the orderly repetition of a motif.
5. A symmetrical design categorized as a subtype of the Vāgirei, the paneled design has three variants: Ghāb-ghābi, Kheshti, and Bandi.
6. Consists of a series of even and parallel stripes, within which motifs are arranged.
7. Depicts natural landscapes, scenes from the Shahnameh, historical events, and the like. Never used for clothing, narrative textiles declined in popularity during the Qajar era.
8. Contains Quranic verses, Islamic prayers, and, occasionally, the name of the weaver and the production date (Rouhfar, 2012, 46). Textiles adorned with calligraphy were not used for clothing in the Qajar era.
9. As the name suggests, in this design, the motifs are Afshān/ scattered across the background. No flower or leaf motif has a mirrored pair in the Afshān/ scattered design (Zhouleh, 2002, 21).

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