

Regeneration of Iranian Heritage



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ABSTRACT

As the nations and peoples boasted what they offered to the structure of human civilization of cultural heritage, contributed effectively in the formation of a particular civilizations, as: Egyptian, Byzantine, Romanian, and Iranian Civilization; that have historical roots dating back to ancient times, each of which is distinctive from the others by clear artistic and cultural characteristics, this is the motivation that prompted the Iranians to be proud of their cultural heritage, that prevailed in pre – Islamic times, attempting to revive and restore it, Despite the many centuries were passed, This happened after a period of Cultural stagnation that Iran had suffered since late 17th century and throughout the majority of the eighteenth century. This study will shed light on The Restoration of Iranian Heritage in the 19th century, and its aspects.

Keywords:

Iran, Heritage, pre – Islamic ages, Sasanian, Safavids, Qajars

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Introduction

Regeneration stage of Iranian Heritage means that "the period which Iranian artistic movement had witnessed a great renaissance beginning from the late of 18th century and throughout the 19th century, that has never achieved since the ends of **Safavid** era, until the fall of their throne completely, in (1145 A.H / 1732 A.D)", As the rulers of the state there were interested in trying to restore the cultural renaissance of **Iran** as it was in ancient times, they were prompted by their deep faith in Iranian heritage and civilization, and was led by Iran's rulers that time "**The Qajars**" (1193 – 1343 A.H / 1779 – 1925 A.D), who were keen to adopt various artistic ideas, especially those which affected much of European artistic thought, in order to keep up with the movement of scientific and artistic progress, which the western world has ever seen, and

getting rid of the artistic and cultural stagnation, that Iran had suffered in the ends of **Safavid era**, sinking the rulers in the life of luxury, attention to personal pleasures.⁽¹⁾

Qajars dynasty keenness to promote Iranian arts, through adopting the artists and supervising a number of different artistic activities; this phenomenon which was concentrated among aristocrats, who have a financial incentive, that flourishes artistic life.⁽²⁾ So, architectural buildings which were constructed during the 19th century, expressed the decorative richness that characterized architectures there, reflected through all architectural elements that formed these buildings, marked by its decorative beauty, which embodied at the same time how far architects were Over cared these architectures under artistic patronage of royal elite, who were very interested in their architectures as it

was an interface which highlights their personality and status and express their pride, so their architectures embodied how far they were interested in the reconstruction of all over their kingdom to give it Qajar identity.⁽³⁾

Agha Mohamed Shah (1193 - 1212 A.H/ 1779 - 1797A.D) – founder of Qajar dynasty - expressed his great interest in architectural arts, where construction in "**Tehran**", that he selected in 1786 A.D to be the new capital for his nascent state, then ditched it, sat up high walls around the Castel which contained the Throne hall known as "**Golestan Palace**" - or - "**Rose Garden Palace**".⁽⁴⁾

During the reign of his successor **Fath Ali Shah** (1212 A.H / 1797A.D - 1250 A.H / 1834 A.D), Due solidified The Euro - Iranian relations and communications, what led to the intensification of European influences in different aspects of life. In a time he was very careful restoring the glories of Persians, as his sense of unbridled pride of **Sasanian** glories in the pre - Islamic ages.⁽⁵⁾

Fath Ali Shah showed a great interest in architecture, which became clear through the vast amount of architectural structures constructed there, that characterized by a return to the old architectural traditions, taking to the account the simplicity of design, of the most famous architectural buildings there, was a group of mosques, known as "**masajed el-shah**" or **Shah's Mosques** in **Tehran, Yazdgar, Simnan, Zinjan**, and others, which were designed by, two professors ; Mohamed Baqer & Zain Elabedeem.⁽⁶⁾

He also expanded "**Golestan Palace**", as the construction of all over **Iran**, terrified building **Kerman** city by erecting a new Castel known as, "**Argi Bam**", located to the south of the city, in **Tabriz** his Crown prince "**Abbass Mirza**" transferred "**Masjed Ali Shah**", that had been built during the 14th century into a castle, **Fath Ali Shah** constructed also many Summer residences, to fit his Stature and his nature of luxurious life, Such as; **Takhti Qajar, Narengestan Palace**, that located out of **Tehran, Sulimanya Palace** in **Karakh** village, **Shishma ye Ali Palace** near of **Damghan**, in addition to restoration of **Safavied palaces**, like; **Hasht bi Hasht** in **Esfahan, Baghifeen** and other palaces and residences which have been decorated throughout the country by large paintings as well as, the intensive use of

decorations that executed on ceramic and mosaic tiles and small pieces of bright glass - mirror known in Farsi as; **Ayna Kari**.⁽⁷⁾

Fath Ali Shah realized that it's possible to consolidate his authority by his generous sponsorship for Architecture and Arts, per contra his grandfather **Agha Mohamed Shah**.⁽⁸⁾ So **Fath Ali Shah** steered a vast constructional campaign to reconstruct **Tehran**, accordingly it was necessary to erect many of royal constructions, as; Palaces and gardens, that were built in all over Iran.⁽⁹⁾

Mohamed Shah Qajar (1250 A.H/ 1834 A.D.) - (1264 A.H/ 1896 A.D.) followed his grandfather approach concerning attention to various artistic fields, including Architecture, So his reign witnessed many operations of restoration, regeneration and integration for the constructions.⁽¹⁰⁾

Overall, we can say that "**Iranian Architecture in the 19th century**" is considered as the final feature for traditional architecture, before predominance Modern Architecture.⁽¹¹⁾ where Iranian architects exerted great efforts attempting to reconcile the traditional architectural elements with Modern materials and styles, that led to diversity as well as, maintaining Originality for many years, So. Religious constructions expressed continuity of Safavid traditions, while residential buildings embodied a blend of European and Iranian architecture.⁽¹²⁾

Decorations of Iranian architectural constructions in the 19th century ensured diversity, harmony and flexibility, but they were influenced by Europe, tried to imitate Sasanian arts, that appeared in its finest examples in the ceilings of Qajar constructions.⁽¹³⁾

In the field of ceramic tiles at the beginning of the 18th century, that suffered from weakness appeared in its industry, due to situation disorder in the country, then its paintings became less beautiful, However its production continued throughout 18th-19th centuries.⁽¹⁴⁾

Iranian Ceramic tiles that produced in the 19th century are considered as archival material and documentary sources for Evolution of Ceramic products in general, many of them contained its makers names, histories and production centers.⁽¹⁵⁾

In **Tehran** there was a commonly intensive use of Ceramic Tiles, its decorations were a bit prominent and decorative themes reflects pictorial scenes inspired from ancient Iranian heritage in pre – Islamic periods– **Pl. (4)** -, especially of **Illakhmied style**, this was due to the excavations carried by **Fares** governor in **Perspolise** area during the period between (1870 – 1880), what was very impressive in reviving ancient Iranian heritage, principally of many Iranian artistic styles, which were dominating prior to Islam as; **Illakhmied** and **Sasanian** styles, in this regard **Mr. Judith Lerner** indicates to pictorial scenes executed on Ceramic tiles in the 19th century ensure that **Qajars** were very impressed their Pre – Islamic heritage, – **Pl. (4)** – so, they recopied these works, what appeared in Ceramic tiles used in decorating an area in a top of a wall fireplace in **Narengestan** house, 1885 in **Shiraz**.⁽¹⁶⁾

Iranian fashion during 19th century characterized by a return to the ancient traditional heritage, especially, that were wearing during the first period of Qajar Era, which we can called it " **Classical period** " embodied in features of **Sasanian** spirit and character, where **Fath Ali Shah's** reign marked by returning to the past to restore - or – revive Iranian renaissance and it's glory of civilization, that appeared in his many portraits, reflected his keenness to imitate the kings of ancient **Iran**.⁽¹⁷⁾- **plates (1,2)** –

During 19th century **Iran** witnessed remarkable recovery in Rugs and carpets industry, Where growing demand in European markets, Here Dr. Somya Hassan Ibrahim indicates that the cause of this recovery is due to the attention of Qajar Sultans in arts Generally-and rugs and carpets industry in particular.⁽¹⁸⁾

The 19th century Represents as a stage of restoration or regeneration in Iranian rugs and carpets industry, This renaissance that resulted by presence a large number of European companies, supervised the manufacture and trade of rugs and carpets.⁽¹⁹⁾ Being popular goods in European markets and the rush of Europeans on the acquisition.⁽²⁰⁾

Latter part of the 19th century is a controversial, particularly in the field of carpet, Where a return to the old traditions, which became apparent in the trappings of rugs and carpets, Manufactured according to a royal

order from **Nasir al-Din Shah** in 1876, to be presented to Victoria and Albert Museum London, Epitomized in the extent of over dominant in the public taste and style prevailing there.⁽²¹⁾

By the end of 19th century Iranian rugs and carpets characterized by their squares that contained decorations of subhuman forms inspired by the Iranian manuscripts fees. In addition to scenes inspired by Persian literature and poetic epics. Appearing in the legendary forms of winged objects and heroic epics that embody Iranian history– **Pl. (4)** -, And hunting scenes and others expressed the daily life, some of them included portraits for public figures as rulers of **Iran**, princes and others. Which became an important element in Iranian carpets decoration by the end of the same century– **Pl. (5)** -, Where it formed a main decorative subject.⁽²²⁾

With regard to the art of Iranian painting during "**The restoration – or – regeneration period**" that occurred in the 19th century, drawings, paintings and other pictorial presentations dating back to that period have been implemented throughout multi-artistic mediums; Some of which depicted on walls, Oil-painting on Canvas, many of them used to adorn Qajar palaces, where architects created recesses in the walls, occupied with these Oil-paintings, that most technical subjects revolved around scenes of **Shahnameh**(*), with its heroes and characters.⁽²³⁾

In the field of **Wall – Painting** during 19th century ;It has appeared in a wonderful image in a mural on the outdoor rocky interfaces– **Plates (1&2)** - represent **Fateh Ali Shah** wearing his military uniform, standing and behind him his follower carrying an umbrella, another scene, depict him met many of the prominent figures there, it is clear through this painting the over predominance of Sasanian influences – **Pl. (2)** -, Where it seems **Fateh Ali Shah** was similar to the kings of ancient Iranian particular **Kesra – or – Khosrow** ;where Painting and artistic life restarted since the reign of **Fateh Ali Shah**, Who was a lover of outlines and always had seemed nicely and luxury and was called the same" **Shahen – Shah**", that means" King of kings", imitating to the kings of ancient Iran, appearing in an aura of greatness and pride, simulating of **Taq Bustan** in **Kerman Shah**, Like scenes of

Khosrow and **Parviz** hunting, he had apparently asked to draw a picture for him on the stone depicting him hunting in " **Sheshma ali**" near of **Tehran** - **Pl. (1)** -another picture for him on the stone showing him crowned on the throne and his courtiers standing next to him dressed in an official form. ⁽²⁴⁾ - **Pl. (2)** -

Painting on ceramic tiles in that period reflected a major artistic renaissance, where mingled nits drawing sand themes many trends of Iranian and European artistic features, Particularly concerning with designs of roses, flowers and birds, and other embodied the themes borrowed from religious scenes stories, Some of which represented stories from the ancient historical epics, among the most famous examples of them the image that embodies **Agha Mohammad Khan**, executing on the ceramic tiles in the cornice at the top of the old gates of **Simnan** city, painted according to the myth that the events mentioned in the Iranian literary heritage, whereas **Agha Mohammad Khan** appeared in the form of the ancient hero **Rostam**^(*) that proves the desire of the early Qajar kings to revive the ancient Iranian heritage, expressed as well as the restoration of **Agha Mohammad Khan**, the ancient Iranian crown named "**Kyanied**" - **Pl. (1)** -, a name that mentioned in "**Shah nameh**".⁽²⁵⁾

Fatah Ali Shah was very loyal to Iranian heritage of ancient civilization, Reflected through his eagerness to restore the glories of ancient Persians, followed the same ancient Persian traditions, Which was confirmed by the enormous and varied imagery of mural paintings, Carried out in accordance with their newly created Sasanian style, that portrayed Qajari King in the form of **Khosrow** of Persians, As his reign witnessed a clear return to the local Sasanian traditions and the onset of European influences which blended with updated Sasanian artistic traditions, Exemplified in the frescoes drawings engraved in the palaces constructed in **Tehran** throughout the 19th century.⁽²⁶⁾

Finally 19th century expressed as the era of true **Renaissance** of Iranian arts, under a direct central government headed by the Qajars.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we can say that Iranian Arts in the **regeneration period**; Whether they were architectural, applied or pictorial arts, considered as a translation of a nation repeatedly much fumbled and struggled, in order to innovate a distinctive artistic style, unlike previous artistic styles; However, they did not lose Iranian identity; Where Qajar dynasty delved into the roots of ancient past to resurrect Iranian Arts, trying to revive and restore it. After a period of inactivity, Since the ends of Safavid era and even the beginnings of Qajari times, Including the Afghan invasion of Iran, And its negative effects, In turn, formed a bump stone, led to the obstruction of prosperity of Iranian art at that time, Until The Qajars came, Who On their hands Iranian arts restored life again, By disinterment in the roots of past, revival ancient patterns and styles of art, which dominated in Iran throughout Pre - Islamic ages, As; Sasanian, Allakhmied and other styles, Restored itina new more modern form, mixing with contemporary European methods and techniques, resulted in a new mix artistic style collecting in its appearance among the ancestral traditions of Iranian art and European models.

Plates

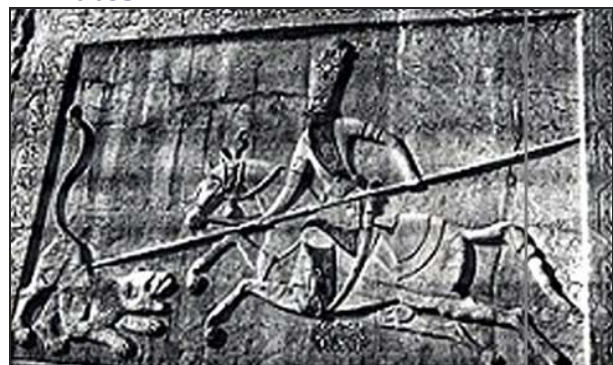


Plate (1): Wall - Painting on a rocky interface in a mountain near of Tehran in Elrai city, executing on newly Sasanian style, figures Fath Ali Shah kills a lion, Early 19th century, according to: Yassavoli, Beauties of Iran. P.48.



Plate (2): An outdoor wall - painting in Shishma ye ali, shows scenes from Fath Ali Shah's court, according to: Sims, Eleanor: Persian painting and its sources, P.25.



Plate (3): Pictorial scenes on a ceramic tile, the Upper one shows the last Persian kings "Gamsheed", where the lower figures Qajar youth meeting, preserved in Gayer Anderson museum, the tile isn't included in the museum's records.

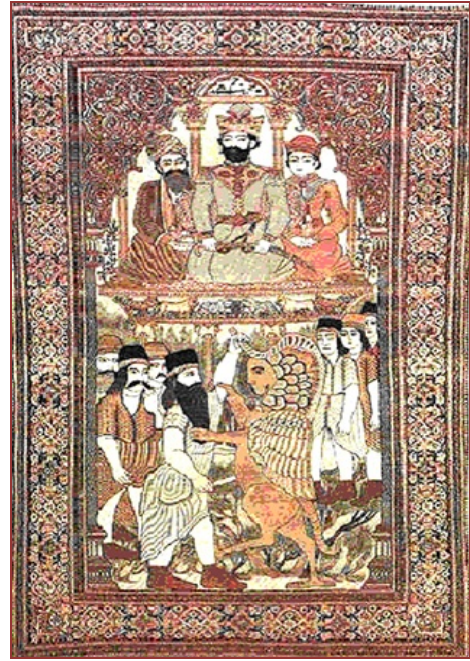


Plate (4): Scenes inspired from "Gamsheed" court on a Qajari carpet - Iran 19th century; according to Qalihan we Qaliga ye Iran.



Plate (5): A Carpet decorated with pictures of more than (52) personality from past and present world leaders, squatted in front of an architectural background - early 20th century, Kashan, 246×152cm, Macey, R.E.G.: Oriental prayer rugs, P. 47.

Notes

- (1) Yaseen, Eman Mohamed Elabed : Altae'therat aloropia ala alfnoon aleslamia alerania fi el'aser alqajari " = " European influences on Iranian Islamic arts during Qajar Period " (1193 – 1343 A.H / 1779 – 1925 A.D) –Unpublished Master thesis, Faculty of archaeology lib. – Cairo University, 2009, P.37.
- (2) Yaseen, Eman Elabed : Alta'etherat Aloropya, P. 38.
- (3) Yaseen, Eman Elabed : Alta'etherat Aloropia, P. 52.
- (4) Verniot Stephan: The Nasser Khalili Collection of Islamic art. Vol. 23Occidentalism "The Islamic art in the 19th Century "–The Nour foundation in association with Azimuth editions and Oxford university Press, 1997- P. 100 & - Ibrahim, Somya Hassan : Almadrasa alqajaria fi altasweer Aleslami- an Artistic study, Master thesis, Faculty of archaeology lib. – Cairo University, 1977, P. 13.
- (5) Sims, Eleanor: Persian painting and its sources. – Yale University press, 2002 - P. 153 &Diba, Layla&Ekhtiari, Maryam: Royal Persian Paintings – the Qajar epoch (1785 - 1925) – I. B. Taurus. 1999, P.8.
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- (7) verniot; Occidentalism. P.100.
- (8) Ibraheem, Somya: almadrasa alqajaria, P.18.
- (9) Faramarzi, M. T. &Yassavoli, Javad: Beauties of Iran. Yassavoli publications, 3rd edition, 2004 - P. 24 & - Ganjnameh:vol.2-" mosques of Isfahan"- Cultural environment Development Company,1996 - P.68.
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- (13) Verniot, S. Occidentalism - P. 101.
- (14) Farghaley, Ab-elhamed Mahmoud: "Alfnoon alzughrofia aleslamia fi a'asr alsafaweyeen" = "Decorative Islamic arts in the Safavid era", 1st edition Madbouly Lib., Cairo, 1990, Pp. 125-126.
- (15) Porter, Venetia: Islamic Tiles. - 2nd edition, British Museum press, London. 1999 - Pp.81-82.
- (16) lane, Arther: Later Islamic Pottery-Faber and Faber, London,1947.P.86.
- (17) Sims E. Persian Painting. P.195.
- (18) Degeorge, Gerard & Porter, Yves: The art of Islamic Tile,2nd edition. Flammarion, 2002, P.81.
- (19) Ibrahim, Somya: Almadrasa alqajaria, P.34.
- (20) Formenton, Fabio: Oriental rugs and carpets, 2nd press, Hamlyn, London, 1974, Pp. 22 – 23.
- (21) Walker, Daniels. Oriental Rugs of the Hajji babas, New York,1983, P.11.
- (22) Victoria and Albert Museum: guide to the carpet. Pp. 24 – 25.
- (23) Milanese, E. The Carpet. p.97.
- (*) Shahnameh: One of the most famous works of the poet Firdausi, expressed as the National epicofIranandone of theclassics ofworld literature, For beingchronicling thepast ofIranin the form ofversifiedpoetry, Firdausi Excelledin the description ofIranian fieldsandnature, wars andallthe charactershe talked about, as well as it's considered as a copious record of thehabitsandtraditions ofIranian people. – An article entitled "Makanat alsh'er wa alsho'araa" = "Poetry and poetsposition ", By; Abd Elmen'em ; Nor eldeen mohamed, magalet Mokhtarat Irania = "Iranian magazine Anthology", Issue 65, December 2005, P.78.
- (24) Floor w.: Art" Naqqash" .Mouqarnas. "An annual on Islamic art architecture" vol. 6- Qajar Lacquer.Leiden- El Brill- 1989,P. 139.
- (25) Sims, E. Persian Painting. Pp. 81- 82.
- (*) RostamFarrokhzād: was a Sasanian nobleman from the Ispahbudhan family, who was thespahbed of Atropatene and Khorasan during the reign of Borandukht and YazdegerdIII. Rostam is remembered as an historical figure, a character in the Persian epic poem Shahnameh, and as a touchstone of most Iranian nationalists. - SASANIANDYNASTY, A. Shapur Shahbazi, Encyclopædia Iranica, (20 July 2005)
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إحياء التراث الإيراني

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ملخص:

لما كانت الأمم والشعوب تتباهى فيما بينها بما قدمته للهيكل الحضاري الإنساني من موروث ثقافي أسهم بفاعلية في تكوين حضارات بعينها كالحضارات؛ المصرية، البيزنطية، الرومانية، والإيرانية، والتي تمتد جذورها إلى عصور تاريخية ضاربة في القدم، وتتميز كلٌ منها عن الأخرى بملامح وسمات فنية وحضارية واضحة، وهو الدافع الذي أدى بالإيرانيين إلى الفخر بتراثهم الحضاري الذي كان سائداً في عصور ما قبل الإسلام، ومحاولة إحيائه وبعثه من جديد، وعلى الرغم من مرور قرون طوال؛ حدث هذا عقب فترة من الإفلاس والركود الحضاري التي عانت منها إيران أواخر القرن السابع عشر الميلادي، وطوال غالبية فترة القرن الثامن عشر الميلادي. يلقي هذا المقال الضوء على مرحلة البعث للتراث الإيراني في القرن التاسع عشر الميلادي ومظاهر تلك المرحلة.