
Adaptation of Shirikipich Carpet Motifs from Sirjan Qajar Period and Contemporary

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Abstract

This library and field method study compared the motifs of contemporary Sirjan's Shirikipich carpet with that of the Qajar period and provided information on the motifs of the two periods. The purpose of studying these motifs was to know the extent of adherence of the current weavers to the motifs left from the past. The result of study revealed that the commercial process, the consumer's taste and the actuality of the sales market and of the old handlooms resulted in some changes in the patterns of carpets.

The Shirikipich carpet design of Sirjan has undergone changes and new patterns have been added to it.

Keywords: Shirikipich, Gilim Sirjan, Qajar rug, pattern.

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1. Introduction

Iranian rugs are more diverse than rugs from other regions of the world. Iran is a country with many different tribes and origins, and only with full knowledge of these tribes can one gain more insight into the art of carpet weaving.

The design and pattern of these hand-woven fabrics, with a cultural burden, carry with them an ancient cultural heritage that has undergone many transformations throughout history due to the transfer of motifs, migrations, imitations or faulty designs, influenced by other Arts. The design and pattern of the Shirikipich rug, as one of the original handwoven fabrics of Kerman province, has undergone many changes in recent years. In the studied sources of this art; the method of weaving Sirjan rugs, their designs, and their current prosperity in the country have been discussed. However, little studies have investigated the design and pattern of Shirikipich rug between the two periods, and among these studies, there is a gap in matching the patterns. To cover this gap, this field study using photos of Shirikipich rugs being woven currently in Sirjan, compared the design of present Shirikipich rugs with the Qajar period.

Considering the importance of the Shirikipich rug in Sirjan, which is one of the staples of this town, the question is whether its design and role are respected or whether has it changed over time. Therefore, examination of the Sirjan Shiriki rug determines the degree of adherence to traditions and also the degree of change in this handicraft.

What is a rug?

In the dictionary of Dekhoda, the famous cover woven from goat and sheep hair is referred to as a rug. (Dekhoda, 1335, 410). This covering is known as kilim or glim in most parts of the world and most languages. The word rug has Turkish roots and has many uses and is produced in of the flat weaving methods. Flat weaving methods are commonly used in regions such as Iran, Pakistan, parts of Turkey, Caucasus, Afghanistan, Balkans, North Africa, Central Asia and China which are engaged in the production of hand-woven fabrics (Afrogh, 2013, 1995).

A rug is a kind of pile-free carpet that is usually woven by hand and is used by nomads, including the nomads of the Mughan, Ahar, and Meshkinshahr plains and almost in most villages of the country, especially in Kerman, Fars, Sistan and Baluchistan, East and West Azerbaijan, Kermanshah, Ilam, and Kurdistan. Its raw material is wool, cotton or silk and it is woven in flat weave without lint. If this fabric is woven with "dar" which is a common tool in carpet production, the products are called: Glim, Susni, Verni, Masand, Sumak, Randi, Shurki, Gol Al-Alaand and Shirikipich. When weaving is carried out by a machine, the products are called: Jajim, Zilo and Glimche (Heshmati Razavi, 1387, 7).

Carpets have both practical and decorative aspects in life. The motif and design of the rug is often an important aspect in identifying its age and origin, which is the result of various influences and methods. For example, different weaving techniques often determine the style of the motifs used (Hall, 1379, 20). The age and history of carpets in our country is more than that of carpets in other countries, and in fact it can be said that carpets are the result of the evolution of carpet weaving over a long period of time. Each region offers rugs that have specific characteristics in terms of design and color, and generally speaking, rugs from each region are distinct in design and color from other regions. (Yavari, 1382, 42).

Yavari (1382) in *Manifesting Light in Traditional Iranian Arts* divides Iranian rugs into three categories:

- 1- Simple or double rugs that are woven by wefting. It has a warp thread made of wool or cotton or in rare cases undyed silk and a weft thread made of wool or in other cases dyed silk, and the weft thread gradually creates the desired design on the carpet by passing through the layers of the warp. Among the plain or two-sided carpets in Iran, we can refer to Qashqai carpets, Kurdistan carpets, Kermanshah carpets, and the carpets of Ardabil, East Azarbaijan and Khorasan provinces, which all have geometric patterns and are mainly woven mentally.

- 2- Sumak or one-sided rugs are woven in a weft style, and the design is created by passing colored threads in a twisting manner around the warp thread. The addition of colored yarn goes to the back of the rug and remains hidden. It is finished by passing another weft yarn over each row and then beating it with a knitting comb. It should be mentioned that only one side of these types of rugs can be used. The famous Iranian sumacs include: *Verni* which is woven in Ardabil and East Azerbaijan provinces containing images of domestic and wild animals; *Shirikipich* which is woven in the province of Kerman and contains images of domestic animals and flowers; *Randi* which is woven in Fars and Khuzestan provinces containing images of birds and flowers; *Sarandaz* which is woven in Chahar Mahal and Bakhtiari province, and also some sumaks referred to *nameless sumac* woven in Khorasan province.
- 3- Single-faced but non-sumac rugs- which may be used in the course of its weaving and based on the desired pattern and design, various methods of wefting, wefting and even carpet weaving methods, which include relief rugs, tablecloth rugs, etc. Jajimi flower rug pointed out.

The evolution of the carpet

Throughout history, human beings have turned to the production and use of textiles to protect themselves from the climatic conditions. Textile production began with the weaving of plant fibers and continued with today's rugs, carpets and fabrics. The technique of knotless and lint-free knitting or so-called flat weaving and carpet weaving method belongs to the types of expansive type weaving techniques. This weaving technique, which is referred to as a rug, is more common among nomads and villagers (Mirzaei, 1391, 1994). The useful culture of carpet weaving was actually created to meet the basic needs of nomads and villagers trying to get cool and dry tents, wide tents and warmer sleeping clothes. What we call carpets today is the result of centuries of hard work by nomadic and rural carpet weavers (Hall, 1377, 11).

Iranian Seljuk, Ottoman, Mongol, Safavid and other governments were great proponents of the art of weaving. During the Safavid period, the carpet industry flourished in Iran, and it can be said that the luxurious life of the court had a great influence on the prosperity of the art of weaving. During this period, carpet weaving was done as the model for royal rugs and carpets. With the invasion of Afghans and the loss of the power of Afsharia period, this prosperity declined and only recovered to some extent during the Qajar period. The production and export of carpets increased during the Qajar period, mainly due to the establishment of foreign companies engaged in the production of carpets in some cities such as Tabriz, Mashhad, Kashan and Kerman, and secondly due to the spread of trade between Iran and the West. Studies show that during the Qajar period, carpets, silk, cotton, and shawls were the main domestic trade goods. Annette Etik, an English researcher who has studied Qajar-era carpets, believes that the prosperity of Iranian carpets during this period was due to the growing development of international markets for this product. (Hashmati Razavi, 1387, 241).

Today, many different carpets are produced with different sizes and prices. Among this variety you will find original samples with traditional designs, natural colors and hand-spun wool and textures with cheap raw materials. In recent years, the motivations for carpet weaving have changed significantly. Indeed, it can be said that nomadic and rural weavers took into account the commercial aspect of their weavings, producing carpets of different quality and at different prices. Woven carpets for sale to tourists and for general consumption in the international market have generally replaced the traditional ones (Hall, 1377, 24). Carpets made in Iran have many varieties, which is important because many tribes and clans of different cultures exist in the country. In order to get more detailed information about the art of carpet weaving in different regions where this art is prevalent, one must first know about that region and the culture that has spread there.

Sirjan

While there is still no evidence of Sirjan's age before the Sassanid period, it is very likely that Sirjan was a small town during the Sassanid period and the people were unable to leave a significant impression. However, due to its location, Sirjan was a place of merchants and commerce which made it a wealthy and prosperous city

(Hatami, 1380, 145). Since Sirjan is the center of crossroads between Kerman, Fars, Bandar Abbas, Yazd and Isfahan, goods imported from southern ports of Iran, especially Bandar Abbas, are transported to the country via Sirjan. Additionally, Sirjan is important on the basis of its commercial location, it has many products and a large population, and many historians have placed it among the major cities (Leadership trust, 2016, 20). But the attraction of Sirjan for nomads is its geographical location. The presence of high mountains like Mount Panj in the north, Chahargonbad and Lalezar in the east and vast plains located in the south and east of it.

This area has long been home to many nomads and shepherds. As soon as the weather warms up, these people leave their winter quarters around Hajiabad and head towards Sirjan and spend the long summer, which runs from May to October, in black tents. They live in the plains and slopes of Sirjan. During this period, the nomadic Afshar can be found in different parts of Sirjan. Afshars who made a big impact on the Shiriki carpet of Sirjan's turn. No doubt, Sirjan is the major carpet weaving center of the Afshars. Although the people of Sirjan villages are not Afshars, the carpets woven by them bear the name of Afshar. In addition to the nomadic Afshars, the villagers of Sirjan region also play an important role in carpet weaving. One of these villages is Balvard, which lies 35 kilometers east of Sirjan and is one of the important centers of carpet weaving. East of Balvard and on the road from Sirjan to Baft are three more villages, Ostu, Heshun and Arkan, all known to Farsh Sirjan. Astour has only 100 households, but most of them are weavers and they weave both tufted carpets and twisted rugs known as Shirki Astouri. In Hasto and Arkan, there is a carpet in almost all houses, and they weave both knotted carpets and Shirki weaves (Tanavali, 1389, 42).

Shirikipich

Shirikipich is a name given by the weavers of the province of Kerman to a particular type of rug that looks like a rug and its texture production is as difficult and time-consuming as the texture of a rug, and its manufacture requires as much effort and precision as carpet (Jazairi, 1370, 47). Wherever carpet weaving is common, carpet weaving is done in one of two ways: wefting or wefting. Weaving, which can actually be considered the last stage of the carpet's evolution in reaching the carpet texture, is a type of texture that is very popular among the nomads of Kerman province and looks similar to the carpet texture. In this type of fabric, unlike the method of wefting, where the cream passes through the warp threads upside down, creating a pattern depends on twisting the cream around the threads (Science, 1390, 30). The role of the weft is only to connect the threads to each other, and it is always hidden behind the pile of the carpet and cannot be seen, and the patterns are created by the knots that are tied on the thread. The texture of Shirikipich is difficult. It has had a traditional and domestic aspect from the distant past with no commercial importance. However, at present, it has gained commercial importance due to the many applicants (Yavari, 1389, 59).

Shirikipich is a delicate, beautiful and artistic product. Its fame and reputation have gone far beyond the political borders of Iran. Shirikipich is known and welcomed in many parts of the world. Although different carpets are woven in Kerman province, Shirikipich is one of the arts that can be found in almost all the regions of Kerman. It is because carpet and rug weaving has been flowing in this province since the distant past. Today, wherever you find *dar*, *tar*, *pile*, and weaving women and girls, there is a high probability that Shirikipich is also found. Nevertheless, the nomads of this province (both those who live in Iliat and those who have settled) are the main producers of Shirikipich, and the city of Sirjan, as well as a number of its villages, are among the important production centers of this type of carpet weaving (Science, 1390, 31). The designs of Sirjan region, like other Afshari weaving regions, are generally subjective, and the use of geometric motifs and navy, lacquer, and pea colors are among distinctive features of Sirjan carpet weaving (Khalghi, 1391, 110).

Pattern in Shirikipich

Carpet weaving in Iran is one of the traditional industries and indigenous arts of this country, in which folk and allegorical motifs occupy a worthy place, although it is not possible to clearly say in which type of carpet, the manifestation of these motifs is more absolute. However, it can be said that the nomadic productions of the

province of Kerman, that is, the braid called Shirikipich, is able to transmit such patterns in an impressive and significant way. (Science, 1390, 39).

The design and pattern of Shirikipich carpets are not the same and have enough diversity. The motifs common between each clan are specific to the same clan, but the overall design is nearly the same, and many motifs are the same across all clans. Due to its technical capabilities, this weave often exceeds the range of geometric patterns and sometimes achieves a harmonious balance from the combination of asymmetrical motifs. Borders are often chained and composed of a repeated geometric shape which is placed between two parallel lines. These margins are called rotational margins. The flower fills the texture of the rug with its repetition (Yavari, 1389, 61). The motifs used by the Ilyati carpet weavers, like the colors they use, is based on their thoughts and often contain their wishes and desires. Moreover, the texture of this type of motifs, unconsciously present the mentalities of the weavers.

Today's Shirikipich carpet weavers use patterns inspired by the patterns used by ancient carpet weaver nomads of the Kerman province. In general, according to Alam (13...), the motifs can be divided into five specific groups.

Ancient motifs: This group of motifs, with a very long history, can be found on uncovered dishes from *Silk* excavations on *Marlik* cups, *Pazyrik* carpets, and *Zarabafts* of the days close to the advent of Islam, and sometimes even on some textiles of the Islamic period. Because it is a symbolic representation of people's beliefs, it has been repeated for many years and centuries. It has been passed down from generation to generation until it reached the nomads. Patterns such as wavy lines which represent water, cedar representing greenery, crucifix as the four main directions, camel as a symbol of health, and lion as a symbol of strength are among the motifs used repeatedly over the years.

Symbolic symbols: The nomads of Kerman province have certain beliefs and cultures due to their unique way of life inherited to the present time. Thus, many of the signs and patterns they use in carpet weaving today are representations of their unique culture and folklore. Checkered maps represent fields, pomegranates lack of need, large bushes next to small bushes symbolize mother and child, ash trees and pines represent mat weavers wishes to enjoy blessings, peace, and greenery.

Mental patterns: These motifs can be as varied and numerous as the number of people who visualize the motifs. It can be attributed to the fact that every human being has a set of different feelings, emotions, interests, instincts and tastes which are allowed to emerge in various forms. Many patterns that are used by Shirikipich carpet weavers today, have their roots in the weavers' personal and abstract mentalities and imaginations. Some weave patterns seen among the Shirikipich carpet weavers cannot be found among the designs of other products.

Objective motifs: The observations of every human being have a deep impact on his innovations and creations. Obviously, nomads who spend their whole life in the lap of nature and face various natural phenomena come across many plants, animals, and landscapes during their migration, all of which can have a huge effect on their mind. Most of the several motifs used by Kermani tapestry weavers are a result of their direct contact with nature.

Imitative motifs: The mobile life of nomads gives them a good opportunity to pass through different towns and villages during their frequent travels, and they encounter different manifestations of different cultures and civilizations. Hence the continuation of these contacts gave rise to impressions and influences, and in some cases took the form of imitation actually employed by a weaver. Some examples of such designs do not have Illyrian or nomadic origin, but due to repeated use, they have opened a place for themselves in nomadic art (Science, 1390, 42).

The classification of patterns into these groups is based on the patterns the weavers used in their carpets, such as domestic and wild animals, birds, plant patterns, border patterns, etc. Sirjan's Shiriki patterns are more in line with objective motifs, although other patterns can also be seen in these carpets.

Carpet in the Qajar period

The heyday and prosperity of Iranian carpets necessarily led to its supply and influence in international markets, although Turkish and Chinese carpets probably reached European markets at the same time or earlier. However, with the arrival of Iranian carpets in Europe, Oriental rugs have become synonymous with the name Iran (Surasafil, 1369, 18). Most of the old rugs in Iran were woven during the Qajar period. Iranian carpets, at that time, had a special variety and exceptional quality and therefore attracted the attention of many Europeans, which led to the establishment of carpet merchants and multinational companies. The result of the work of these companies led to

the fact that the weavers were encouraged to weave cheap carpets, adapted to the demand of foreign markets, ostensibly to encourage the export of carpets, but in reality to sell as much as possible and get more profit (Hashmati Razavi, 2013, 20).

The sudden prosperity of Kerman carpets during the Qajar period also brought about many changes in the carpets of this region. Due to the geographical location of the city of Siryan and the presence of Afshar nomads in this region, the carpets woven in this city contained a variety of designs, patterns and beautiful colors which can be seen in the remaining carpets of this period.

Taking a quick look at the carpets of the Qajar period woven in the Sirjan region, we realize that most of the produced carpets had an aspect of self-consumption and were in various forms used in the daily life of weavers such as rugs, bed covers, bedspreads, salt containers, Quran holders, etc. To sum up, in Qajar period, carpets had both practical and decorative aspects in life, and their practical aspect were more important.

Contemporary rug

Today carpets are used in various forms such as sofa covers, bags, belts, shoes and anything creative designers can think of. The richness of different and even unusual colors of the carpet inspires different tastes and has the necessary appeal to enter world markets. Today's carpets use the composition of original designs, but the quality of the wool is often low and the colors are almost unstable. Despite the poor quality, these carpets are popular in the West and have many buyers due to their low prices. Today, carpets are no longer used as carpets or rugs, but are also used as decorative objects and large wall hangings. To create a balance between supply and demand and to adapt to the changes imposed, carpet weavers were forced to use chemical dyes and changed their traditional way of life. In carpet weaving, the use of harmonious colors is very important and nomadic and rural weavers are very talented in this art (Hall, 2017, 22).

In general, new carpets are divided into three groups:

- Some rugs are still woven by the campers and villagers for local use, and despite the use of chemical dyes and the combination of unusual raw materials, there is still a reflection of their tribal and family history.
- Others are woven in imitation of traditional designs and styles for commercial profit and Western consumer demand. These have three categories: cheap, normal and expensive, and most of the market is held by this group.
- The third group are the new antique rugs, which are of the best quality and their high price is due to fixed colors, and the reason for this is the use of natural colors by its weavers (Faghirizadeh, 1392, 20).

The Differences and Similarities of Sirjan's Carpet in the Qajar Period and Contemporary

The weavers of Sirjan region, who are currently engaged in Shirikipich weaving, mostly weave rugs based on the orders of merchants; and most of them use carpet maps provided by merchants for carpet weaving. These maps were undoubtedly designed under the influence of carpets, hand-woven fabrics and previous textiles. Considering the prosperity of carpets in the Qajar period and the importance of hand-woven fabrics in this period, they have undoubtedly influenced today's carpet maps. By looking at the photos of Qajar period rugs and comparing them with new weaves, you can see the similarities and differences between them. According to the Sirjan merchants, some carpet designs they made available to their weavers came with changes in the overall

design of the carpet. And in some cases, with new motifs (Image 1 and 2), they design the carpet map and provide it to the weavers. They did this because of their freshness and durability in the market, so that their products do not become repetitive and monotonous for the consumer.

Nowadays carpet maps are used to weave the Shirikipich rug, while the weavers of the Qajar period created patterns mentally or objectively. The nomads, who were always on the move throughout their lives, were so influenced by the natural scenery and the animals and plants in their environment that patterns such as flowers, **bete** (the most common plant pattern in carpet weaving) were woven into their rugs. According to the Shirikipich weaving method, which takes the form of weaving, the patterns are created in a stylized way; this case can be considered as one of the similarities of Shirikipich of the two periods. In the two periods of Sirjan's carpet, the designs are mostly in the form of geometric shapes and are usually formed with straight and broken lines. Among these patterns, we can mention to animal images such as rabbit (picture 3), goat (picture 4), Negar (picture 5), chain moon (picture 6). The motifs of birds and domestic and wild animals in Shirikipich weaving are not subject to any particular order and may be woven together with wild animal motifs in the carpet texture.

The design of most carpets of the Qajar period is such that a specific pattern is repeated throughout the texture of the carpet and fills the background (Image 7), the same patterns are woven in stripes in the new rugs, and a pattern is repeated in each section, which creates a beautiful variation in the rug (Image 8). Today, the striped pattern in Shirikipich rugs has become very common. According to Kohzad Ruhol Amini who one of the prominent carpet traders in Sirjan, this is a special design of Sirjan, and this design is known as the Shirikipich rug of Sirjan (Interview, 2014).

The Shirikipich carpet is one of the few carpets that has a border similar to a carpet, and the designs used for its borders are very diverse. Some examples of these designs can be seen in Sirjan carpets, such as the pattern of cashmere or Haft Rang (picture 9), flowers and leaves (image 10), scorpion (image 11), liver (image 12). The rugs have a wide border with a pattern repeated in each row of these borders (Image 13).

Different colors and compositions can be seen in these rugs and are considered to be the most important elements of their beauty and quality and add to the attractiveness of the designs. The interviews with the weavers of Shirikipich of Sirjan revealed that the weavers themselves choose the colors while weaving. Therefore, it is natural that their spirits are transferred in their weavings during the carpet weaving. Sometimes weavers may be sad while weaving rugs and the colors they use are dark, or a weaver may convey a sense of happiness by choosing bright colors (Interview with aaaaa, 2014).

Perhaps this case can be considered as one of the similar cases between the carpets of the two periods. With the difference that in the Qajar era more natural colors were used and the color was more stable, whereas today chemical dyes have replaced natural colors resulting in color of the carpet different from that of the past.



Picture 2: Innovative flower pattern



Picture 1: Potted flower



Picture 6: The image of the chain moon



Picture 5: Negar



Picture 4: Goat pattern



Picture 3: Rabbit pattern



Picture 8: Carpet with striped pattern



Picture 7: Rug with Bote pattern (Tanavali, 1389, 129)



Picture 10: Pattern of flowers and leaves



Picture 9: Termeh pattern



Picture 12: The pattern of the liver



Picture 11: Scorpion pattern



Picture 13: Carpet border

Conclusion

The present study was conducted to study the history of Shirikipitch rug in Sirjan, and to investigate the motifs of Shirikipitch rug in the Qajar and contemporary periods. The main purpose of study was to investigate the adherence of weavers to past traditions. In general, it can be concluded that with the passage of time and changing consumer tastes and changing the use of carpets, weavers and merchants thought of designing carpets in order to get out of the repetition of carpet designs and to diversify the manufactured products to present to the market. To create new patterns alongside old ones, new patterns are created with the influence of past patterns; but they are not quite like them. To create these designs, it is best to use the designs of Sirjan rugs and rugs of the past; that consumers love. Therefore, with the passage of time, the Shiriki carpet design of Sirjan has undergone changes and new patterns have been added to it, which to some extent can be said not to have the originality of the past patterns. The influencing factors are therefore the commercial process, the consumer's taste and the actuality of the sales market and of the old handlooms.

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