



## Anthropological Study and Sustainability of Qashqai Tribal Clothing

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**Abstract:** Culture encompasses the values, norms, traditions, beliefs, and customs of a society, with clothing representing one of its most significant elements. In analyzing the traditional attire of an ethnic group, two key aspects are of importance: the cultural patterns influencing choices of material, color, design, and tailoring methods, and the symbolic and functional roles of clothing. Certain garments play vital roles across various social, cultural, occupational, and religious contexts. The Qashqai are one of the major nomadic tribes of Iran, primarily residing in the southern and southwestern regions of the country. The distinctive features of Qashqai clothing set it apart from that of other ethnic groups, despite notable similarities with the attire of the Lurs. Based on archival research and fieldwork, this study explores the historical evolution of Qashqai clothing. It aims to identify the earliest documented references to their attire through textual sources and visual representations, and to discuss the key factors contributing to its continuity. The findings reveal that although traditional Qashqai clothing has undergone changes over time, particularly among men, where modern styles are increasingly replacing it, it continues to be preserved among Qashqai women, especially during ceremonial events.

**Keywords:** *Continuity, Clothing, Qashqai, Culture, Identity.*

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## **Introduction**

The way in which people choose to live is inherently shaped by their natural environment. Anthropology, as a discipline, explores the differences among human societies and emphasizes that these distinctions are not solely physical; rather, they stem from variations in culture, livelihood, and ecological settings. Accordingly, anthropologists often begin by examining a community's environment and way of life to understand its culture (Amerian, 2017, p. 56). The social structure of Iran comprises nomadic, rural, and urban communities. Although the nomadic population has declined in recent decades, it remains a significant component of Iran's cultural landscape. In most Persian sources, the term *ashayer* (nomads) refers to tribal and migratory groups belonging to various ethnic branches such as Turkic, Lur, Kurdish, and Arab (Amerian, 2017, p. 51). Iran's diverse geography has given rise to a mosaic of ethnic groups, each with its own unique history, traditions, culture, and clothing styles. The diversity observed in both the details and overall design of traditional clothing draws attention to the significance of studying and understanding the garments of different ethnic communities. Identifying the social commonalities among ethnic groups, particularly those that facilitate coexistence and cohesion, has always been of fundamental importance. Ethnicity, as a cultural and social phenomenon, is defined through symbolic markers and cultural boundaries (Yousefi, 2001, pp. 200–202). Clothing, like language, functions as an indicator of ethnic, social, and geographical identity, as well as religious affiliations, professional status, and socio-economic class. To comprehend the social and cultural functions of clothing in shaping individual and collective identity across nomadic, tribal, rural, and urban communities, garments must be analyzed as a system of material symbols (Yarshater, 2003, p. 20). The Qashqai people are a confederation of Turkic-speaking, Shia Muslim tribes predominantly located in southern and southwestern Iran. Until about a century ago, their primary occupation was animal husbandry. The confederation includes six major tribal divisions: Darreh Shuri (51 clans), Greater Kashkuli (47 clans), Amaleh (45 clans), Farsimadan (25 clans), Lesser Kashkuli (12 clans), dispersed across the provinces of Fars, Isfahan, Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad, Bushehr, and Hormozgan (Kiani, 2009, p. 80). Traditional clothing is a visible and essential aspect of nomadic life and serves as a distinctive cultural identifier among Iranian ethnic groups. The clothing of men and women within each group reflects their cultural identity and indicates their economic and social status.

Despite changes brought about by modernization and the spread of contemporary fashion, Qashqai women have largely retained their traditional attire, especially outside urban environments. In Qashqai society, women are responsible for sewing their own garments, and clothing colors are generally determined by age. Middle-aged women tend to avoid bright colors, which are typically reserved for brides and young women. Even adolescent girls face limitations in wearing brightly colored clothing. The type and quality of fabric used are influenced by the family's economic status; however, bridal dresses are often made from more expensive fabrics and are traditionally white with elaborate embellishments. Men's clothing in the Qashqai tribe is governed by established norms and differs based on social status. The attire of tribal leaders and elders is distinct from that of ordinary members (Tayebi, 1992, p. 70). The primary objective of this study is to explore Qashqai clothing from an anthropological perspective, focusing on its cultural, identity-related, and social dimensions within the framework of sustainability. This research seeks to determine whether the traditional attire of the Qashqai people, as a valuable cultural element, has shown resilience and continuity in the face of temporal and societal changes.

### ***Significance and Rationale of the Study***

Iranian nomadic communities represent some of the oldest forms of social organization in the region. The nomadic and pastoralist way of life holds considerable importance in ethno-archaeological studies, as it marks one of the earliest transitions in human history from hunter-gatherer societies to settled lifestyles. Research in this area provides valuable insights into the origins and development of cultural elements. Understanding the cultural factors, environmental conditions, and belief systems of these communities is crucial in analyzing the form, composition, and diversity of their traditional clothing. Studying the garments of ethnic groups serves as an entry point for examining cultural symbols and, more broadly, facilitates a deeper understanding of Iranian cultural identity as shaped by the subcultures of its many ethnic communities.

The significance of this study lies in its approach to Qashqai traditional clothing as a living document—one that reflects history, culture, and the adaptive relationship between humans and their environment. The research not only contributes to a more nuanced understanding of Iranian identity but also plays a vital role in preserving cultural diversity and promoting sustainability in the face of modernizing pressures.

In light of this importance, the study is guided by the following key research questions:

1. Does Qashqai traditional clothing continue to exhibit cultural sustainability?
2. Can the concept of "sustainability"—defined as resistance, persistence, resilience, and durability—be meaningfully applied to Qashqai attire?

### ***Literature Review***

One of the earliest works in the study of primitive and nomadic societies is Ibn Khaldun's *Muqaddimah*, which examines the livelihood of these communities (Ibn Khaldun, 1980). A.S. Lambton, in his book *The History of the Tribes of Iran* (translated by Ali Tribes, and the history of these tribes (Lambton, 1943). Ebrahim Afshar, in his two-volume book *An Introduction to the Study of Tribes, Nomads, and Pastoral Tribes of Iran*, comprehensively introduces all the tribes and nomadic groups of Iran (Afshar, 2004). Abdullah Shahbazi, in his book *An Introduction to the Study of Tribes and Nomads*, provides theoretical foundations for understanding tribes and nomads, delving into the historical background of nomadic groups in Iran and explaining the formation of tribal governments from their origins to the present (Shahbazi, 1990). Pär Berling, in his book *The Nomads of Qashqai of Fars*, addresses the settlement of Turkic-speaking nomads in central and southwestern Iran from the 4th century AH onwards, exploring their gradual decline in recent centuries (Berling, 2004). Louis Beck, in *The Qashqai of Iran*, discusses the political power structure of the tribe, its role in political and social transformations in Iran, and the economic issues of the Qashqai. He also examines the formation and subsequent disintegration of the Qashqai confederation within the context of the rise of the modern Iranian state (Beck, 2017). Manouchehr Nasiri Tayebi, in his book *The Role of the Qashqai in the History and Culture of Iran*, explores the cultural aspects of the Qashqai tribe (Tayebi, 2011). Abbas Alizadeh, in his work *The Origins of Governmental Institutions*, provides an analysis of the archaeological studies related to the river Khor and the Qashqai tribe (Alizadeh, 2004). Mohammad Bahmanbeigi, in his book *Customs and Traditions of the Nomads of Fars*, elaborates on the tangible and intangible customs and traditions of the Qashqai tribe (Bahmanbeigi, 2007). Fasa'i, in his work *Farsnameh-ye Naseri*, discusses the various tribes and clans, explaining their differences (Fasa'i, 1983). Soheila Shahshahani, in her book *A History of Headwear in Iran*, traces the evolution of headwear from prehistoric times to the Qajar period, based on cave paintings and artifacts

found in museums (Shahshahani, 1995). Mehrasa Ghaibi, in *The Eight-Thousand-Year History of Clothing among the Tribes*, explores the political, cultural, and social transformations over eight millennia and examines the elements of clothing for both men and women across various tribes (Ghaibi, 2008). Ziapour, in his book *Iranian Clothing from the 14th Century to the Early Pahlavi Era*, analyzes and discusses the clothing of Iranians during this period (Ziapour, 2008). Chitsaz, in *A History of Iranian Clothing*, describes Iranian attire from the early Islamic period to the Mongol invasion (Chitsaz, 2000). Rahimi, in *A History of Iranian Clothing*, investigates the transformations in clothing from the 5th millennium BCE to the early 1st millennium BCE, covering the periods of the Medes and Achaemenids (Rahimi, 2006). These studies demonstrate that the Qashqai tribe has a rich history and culture, and its clothing has been thoroughly documented. However, to date, no research has been conducted on the sustainability or the lack thereof of Qashqai clothing.

### ***Research Methodology***

This study adopts a descriptive-analytical approach to the ethnography of clothing among the nomads of Fars. The descriptive section is based on archival and library sources, while ethnographic fieldwork was conducted through interviews with various individuals.

### ***Geographical Location***

The distribution of nomadic tribes and communities across Iran is not uniform. Historically, some regions were densely populated by nomads, but due to rapid urbanization and the conversion of land to industrial and agricultural uses, the number and density of nomadic populations in these areas have diminished. Nonetheless, certain regions, particularly the Zagros mountain range and specifically the vast areas of the Central Zagros, remain home to a large number of nomadic tribes and communities. The Qashqai people, one of the largest nomadic groups in Iran, lead a nomadic lifestyle primarily based on livestock breeding and agriculture. They move annually from one location to another in search of suitable grazing grounds (Dardari, 2016, p. 33). Fars Province is divided into three regions based on the needs of its inhabitants and the significance of the natural resources of various areas: the southern region (hot climate), the central region (moderate climate), and the northern region (cold climate/border areas) (Alizadeh, 2004, p. 55).

The Qashqai nomads' migratory territory is as follows: the wintering (Qeshlāqi) area, which is more extensive than their summering (Yīlāqi) area, stretches along the southern regions of Fars and the coastline of the Persian Gulf. The eastern boundary reaches the towns of Lar and Jahrom, while the southern boundary extends from Galleh-dar to Khormuj and Bandar Genaveh. To the west, it reaches near Behbahan, and the northern boundary extends from Jahrom to Firuzabad, Kazeroon, and Farsabad. The Qashqai summering area, which is smaller in size, includes three main areas in the border regions of Ardakan, Komehr, and Chahar-dangeh, with six additional sub-regions. A new summering area is found around Ardakan and Kakan in Fars. These two regions, one with a hot climate and winter rainfall and the other with highlands that experience cold weather, snow, and rain in winter and spring, constitute the Qashqai's migratory zones (Dardari, 2016, p. 35).

### ***Historical Context***

Life in Iran, since ancient times, has been deeply influenced by the nomadic society and its connections with the broader community. This society has consistently played a decisive role in the political, social, and economic life of the country. Iran is one of the regions that, about

11,000 years ago, entered the stage of food production, namely agriculture and animal husbandry. Additionally, it is one of the few countries that reached urban civilization around 6,000 years ago. Moreover, it is a region where nomadic lifestyles have been practiced for approximately 8,000 years. Therefore, it can be said that for the past 6,000 years, the intertwined lifestyles of urban living, rural settlement, and nomadism, including tent living, have coexisted in this land (Amanollahi Baharvand, 1981). The nomads and tribes, alongside other Iranians, have followed the evolutionary path from early humans to the present day on the Iranian plateau. In Iran, habitats from the Paleolithic and Neolithic eras, nomadism, agriculture, the beginnings of urbanization, and flourishing cultures during both historical and Islamic periods have all developed over thousands of years. Archaeological excavations in Khuzestan suggest that nomadic life in this region has existed for about 8,000 years (Kiani, 2009, p. 15). The Qashqai people are Turkic-speaking nomads who, throughout various historical periods, migrated from the borderlands of Turkestan and regions once part of Greater Iran to settle in southern Iran centuries ago. The term "Qashqai" derives from the Turkish word "Qaj Qayi," meaning "fleeing" or "escaping." According to Mirza Hassan Fasa'i, the author of *Farsnameh Naseri*, the Qashqai were a tribe of the Khalaj Turks who migrated from the regions of Iraq-e-Ajam and Saveh to Fars (Afshar, 2004, p. 242).

### ***Historical Context***

Life in Iran, since ancient times, has been influenced by the connections and cohabitation with nomadic communities, and this society has consistently played a decisive role in the political, social, and economic processes of the country. Iran is one of the regions where, around 11,000 years ago, it transitioned into food production, including agriculture and animal husbandry. Additionally, it is one of the few countries where, nearly 6,000 years ago, urban civilization emerged. Furthermore, it is one of the regions where, approximately 8,000 years ago, nomadic life began. Thus, it can be stated that for the past 6,000 years, the intertwined lifestyles of urbanism, rural settlement, and nomadism—including tent living—have coexisted in this land (Amanollahi Baharvand, 1981). Nomads and tribes, alongside other Iranians, have undergone their evolutionary development from early humans to the present day in the Iranian plateau. In Iran, habitats from the Paleolithic and Neolithic eras, nomadism, agriculture, the beginnings of urbanization, and the flourishing of cultures during historical and Islamic periods have all developed over thousands of years. Archaeological excavations in Khuzestan suggest that nomadic life in this region dates back 8,000 years (Kiani, 2009, p. 15). The Qashqai people are Turkic-speaking nomads who, throughout various historical periods, migrated from the territories of Turkestan and areas of Greater Iran and have settled in southern Iran for centuries. The term "Qashqai" comes from the Turkish word "Qaj Qayi," meaning "fleeing" or "escaped." According to Mirza Hassan Fasa'i, the author of *Farsnameh Naseri*, the Qashqai are a tribe of the Khalaj Turks who migrated from the regions of Iraq-e-Ajam and Saveh to Fars (Afshar, 2004, p. 242). Some scholars consider the Qashqai people to be descendants of the Mongols who migrated from Turkestan during the reign of Genghis Khan and settled in Fars during the time of Nader Shah. It is highly probable that the Qashqai are descendants of an ancient Turkic tribe called the Khalaj tribe from Asia Minor (Eastern Turkey), who had settled in Iraq-e-Ajam and in Saveh. Part of this large tribe dispersed and settled in different areas of Fars (Du Morini, 1996, p. 26). During the Seljuk era, multiple migrations of Turkic tribes to Fars are reported. A group of Khalaj migrated to southern Afghanistan and, after the fall of the Ghaznavids, moved to Fars. In 727 AH (1327 AD), Ibn Battuta observed Turkic nomads in the Fars plain. These Turkic tribes, along with others that joined them later, established the Qashqai tribal union in subsequent centu-



ries. According to Iraj Afshar, the earliest document that mentions the name "Qashqai" is Jami' al-Tawarikh (Chronicle of Histories) by Hasan, written between 855-857 AH (1451-1453 AD), which describes the affairs of Timurid princes. During the Safavid period, the name "Qashqai" also appears alongside the Khalaj Turkic tribe in two instances, notably in the Tadhkira-yi Nasr Abadi from the era of Shah Abbas II (1128 AH, 1716 AD). During the Qajar era, the Qashqai tribe established itself as the most significant nomadic group in Fars and one of the most important tribes in the country. In other words, the emergence of the Qashqai as a powerful and numerous tribal union occurred primarily during this time. The Farsnameh Naseri, dated 1304 AH (1886 AD), also mentions the population of the Qashqai tribe and its sub-tribes. It seems that from the time of the compilation of Farsnameh Naseri until 1337 AH (1918 AD), the larger Qashqai sub-tribes, by absorbing smaller tribes, became the most powerful units of the Qashqai tribe (Shahbazi, 1990, p. 53). After Reza Shah came to power and pursued modernization and the creation of a new Iran, he sought to suppress the tribes and nomadic groups. In 1307 SH (1928 AD), he dealt with the uprising of the southern nomads in Fars (Dardari, 2016, p. 478).

In 1932 (1311 SH), Reza Shah passed a law stating that nomadic tribes must settle in one place, due to the belief that nomadism hindered the country's development. One of the methods used to force the nomads into settlement during this period was the burning of their black tents. At the same time, the government attempted to replace the traditional attire of the nomads with Western-style clothing. Women were prohibited from wearing headscarves, and men were forced to wear the Pahlavi hat. Officials strongly pressured people to comply with this law, and those who resisted were either fined or coerced into paying bribes. Although this policy was not strictly enforced through fines or corporal punishment at the time, the gradual weakening of nomadic culture and the dominance of urban and Western cultures eventually had its effect, and the traditional clothing of the nomads gradually faded. One of the reasons for this shift today can be attributed to the rising cost of fabrics, which has led many men and women to wear non-local clothing (Dardari, 2016, p. 702).

### ***The Clothing of the Qashqai People***

One of the distinguishing features of every ethnic group is their traditional clothing. The Qashqai attire, known as "Turkish dress," with minor variations across the Fars province and neighboring areas, represents the clothing of all the tribes within the Qashqai confederation. The similarities between this clothing and the garments worn by the Turks of Turkestan and parts of Turkey indicate a long-standing historical connection and origin. Additionally, the clothing of Qashqai women shares many details with the traditional attire of the Bakhtiari and Lorestan women (Dardari, 2016, p. 96).

### ***Qashqai Women's Clothing***

The clothing of Qashqai women consists of various components, each with its own distinct characteristics. These components include: Bork or Kalaqche (Headpiece), Lechek (Headscarf), Albaki (Forehead Band), Koing (Shirt), Kolche (Jacket), and Tanban (Skirt).

### ***Kalaqche\_ Bork (Headpiece)***

Kalaqche, which is shaped like a crescent or semicircle, is made from high-quality fabrics such as velvet and satin, and it is lined. This headpiece has two straps attached to its corners that tie under the chin. The edge of the Kalaqche is adorned with a decorative band called Jeck or Yaraq, often embroidered and embellished. In some tribes, women increase its beauty by sewing various coins on the front of the Kalaqche.



Figure 1: A Qashqai woman wearing a Lechek (headscarf).



Figure 2: Al Baqi (Headband)

### ***Lechek or Headscarf:***

Qashqai women always wear a Lechek (headscarf) on their heads, even when sleeping. It is rare to see a Qashqai woman without her headscarf at any ceremony or occasion, as not wearing one is considered impolite and a social offense. The headscarves are usually made from colored fabrics, silk tulle, and other materials, in a variety of colors, often decorated with sequins. The headscarf is placed over the headpiece, and its two corners are pinned together with a pin to a string, called Asmalouq (Pendant), which is adorned with coins, cloves, cardamom seeds, or beaded jewelry. This string is tied under the chin.

### ***Al Baqi (Headband):***

Al Baqi is a scarf made from delicate fabrics such as silk or chiffon, in bright and vibrant col-

ors. It is wrapped around the head over the headscarf and tied at the back of the head. Al Baqi is a complementary head covering for Qashqai women, and it is rare to see a woman without a headband.

### ***Kuwing (Dress):***

The dress of Qashqai women is long and covers the body from the shoulders to the feet. Its collar is simple and round, with a short slit and several buttons for ease of wearing. The sleeves are long, covering the wrists. The neckline and the slit around the collar are usually decorated with trims, and the ends of the sleeves are narrower, often finished with lining. The dress has slits on both sides, from the bottom to the upper thighs, which align with the skirt, and the edges of these slits are hemmed.

The dresses are made in various colors depending on the age of the women. Young women typically wear dresses made from colorful and bright fabrics, often floral, while older women opt for simple, neutral-colored fabrics.

### ***Kulja (Jacket):***

Kulja, according to Dehkhoda's dictionary, refers to a type of coat or cloak that is worn over other garments and is shorter than a full-length coat. It is a half-length jacket typically worn over a dress during the cold season. Kulja is often made from velvet or woolen fabrics and features sleeves. The edges are usually decorated with trims, or based on preference, sequins and beadwork are added for embellishment.

At the lower hem of the kulja, there are triangular corners resembling a samosa shape, and the sleeves are long, covering the entire arm. Under the arms, there is a triangular slit that facilitates the movement of the arms, helps cool the underarms, and prevents sweating.

### ***Tonban-Skirt:***

In Dehkhoda's dictionary, "Tonban" is translated as undergarments or trousers. It is one of the special and beautiful garments worn by Qashqai women, and due to its beauty, the attire of Qashqai women is well-known and famous.

The skirt is made from very colorful fabrics. To sew a pleated skirt, between 10 to 15 meters of fabric is used. The fabric is cut to the length from the ankle to the upper thigh and then sewn together. At the top, fine pleats are added to the fabric, and a thicker strip of fabric is sewn over the pleats. A waistband is threaded through this strip to fasten the skirt at the waist. Depending on their financial means, Qashqai women wear multiple skirts on top of each other, sometimes as many as seven or more.

### ***Giyeh (Cloth Shoes):***

The footwear for women in the Qashqai tribe is the "giyeh," which is typically made with a cotton yarn upper and a sole made from compressed pieces of fabric. This type of footwear is the most suitable for them due to the frequent walking of the nomads, as it not only prevents foot sweating but also provides the necessary flexibility for bending and straightening in rocky roads and deserts (Dardari, 2016, p. 99).

### ***Qashqai Men's Clothing***

#### **Hat:**

The Qashqai men's hat is made from felt and is usually in natural wool colors such as white, beige, gray, and brown. The hat is round, covering up to the ears, with two wide half-circle flaps





Figure 3: Kuwing (Dress)



Figure 4: Kulja (Jacket)



Figure 5: Tonban-Skirt



Figure 6: Felt hat

Figure 7: The Qashqai man wearing an arkhalig.



on the sides attached to the hat, hence it is called a "double-eared" hat. These ear flaps are used to protect the head from the sun and cold weather. This type of hat is unique to the Qashqai tribe and is found only among them in Iran, distinguishing them from other Turkish people in Iran. Qashqai men always wear hats, and it is considered inappropriate to go without one.

### **Shirt**

The shirt, referred to as "king" in Turkish, is similar to ordinary shirts without a collar or stiffened neck. It typically has long sleeves and is made of simple colors.

### **Arkhalig (Overcoat):**

Arkhalig is a Turkish term and refers to a long overcoat that covers the body from the neck to the ankles. It resembles a coat and is worn over a shirt. It has slits on the sides, from the waist down, which facilitate walking and running. The arkhalig has long sleeves and slits under the armpits. It is usually made from light and colorful fabrics and is lined. The arkhalig is fastened around the waist with a wide belt, and for decoration, a colorful silk band called "zenehare" is draped around the neck, with the ends hanging down and tied in the middle of the shoulder with silk tassels.

*Choqeh:* The choqeh is an upper garment worn in cold weather and especially during hunting or chub-bazi (a type of sport or dance) over the arkhalig or shirt. Its length reaches the knee or lower. It is made of fine fabrics such as atlas silk or similar materials and is typically lined. The choqeh is worn at parties and wedding ceremonies and is often decorated with a colorful silk belt called "zenahare."

*Shawl:* The shawl is a piece of cloth typically 2 to 6 meters long and 1 meter wide. The fabric is folded over by approximately 25 to 30 centimeters and wrapped around the waist over the arkhalig or choqeh. The color of the shawl is usually coordinated with that of the arkhalig or choqeh. In the past, the shawl was considered an essential part of men's clothing, and not wearing it was seen as a sign of neglecting social norms.

*Kopank:* According to Dehkhoda's dictionary, a kopank is a garment that reaches the waist and has no sleeves. It is simple and similar to a shroud, which is why it was originally called "kefank" and later changed to "kopank" in local dialects. The kopank is a felt coat worn for protection against the cold. Its length reaches below the knee, and it has a simple collar with a full-length slit. The sleeves are long and made in colors such as white, black, gray, and beige. The kopank is made of felt, produced by felt makers, and sold to nomads. Another type of kopank, without sleeves and reaching just above the knee, is called "Kordak" and is worn by young people and children.

*Trousers or Tonban:* Men's trousers are simple, loose, and usually have a waistband. Sometimes, instead of a waistband, a wide, lined piece of fabric is sewn around the waist in the form of a belt. Buttons are placed on the side for fastening and unfastening. Occasionally, decorative embroidery (yaraq) is added to the trousers. The fabric used for the trousers is typically thick and chosen in various solid colors.

*Pāpīch:* The pāpīch is made from thick fabrics, usually wool or cotton. It is wrapped around the foot from the ankle to the knee and is worn in winter for protection against cold and frost-bite. During extreme cold or frost and when walking on snow, felt or woolen cloth is placed underneath the pāpīch, which is then wrapped around the foot. Its width is usually between 15 to 20 centimeters.





Figure 8: Shirt and Zenahare

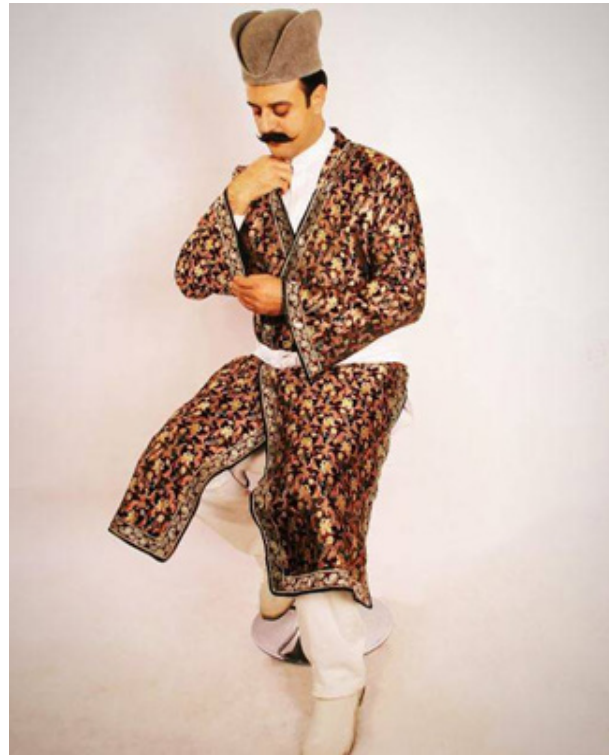


Figure 9: A Qashqai man wearing a Choqeh.



Figure 10: Kopank



Figure 11: Trousers

*Kolesh - Gīveh*: The footwear of Qashqai men is the "gīveh," called "kolesh" in Turkish. The difference between men's and women's gīvehs lies in the decoration, and men's gīvehs are typically sturdier and thicker.

*Chārq*: In Dehkhoda's dictionary, "chārq" is a Turkish word referring to a type of desert footwear or shoe. The sole or bottom is made of leather or skin, and the upper part is made from rope.

*Charq*: Charq is made from leather or skin and is a type of footwear used for walking in snow or mountaineering. The skin is wrapped around the ankle and sewn with threads made from skin (Dardari, 2016: 110).

### ***Ornaments and Jewelry of Women in the Qashqai Tribe:***

A woman's name is always associated with beauty. It does not matter where or under what conditions women live, their nature is always like spring, intertwined with beauty and vibrant colors. The women of the Qashqai tribe share this natural characteristic and, using the limited resources of their living areas, strive to beautify and adorn themselves.

The specific ornaments of the women include: Mahlu necklaces, Clove necklaces, Beaded necklaces, Amber containers, Quran cases, Bangles and beaded bracelets, Hair binders, Armlets, and Sunflowers.

#### ***Mahlu Necklace:***

Mahlu is a very fragrant seed from a shrub that grows in temperate and cold areas. The seeds are white or creamy-colored and are smaller than bean seeds. Their pleasant aroma does not diminish over time. Qashqai women collect the seeds, drill holes in them, and after drying, make beautiful necklaces. To make the Mahlu necklace, the seeds are arranged in groups of 20, of each color, in five similar strands, and then all the threads are passed through one bead. In the next set of 20, the color order is changed, and the type of beads is usually altered as well. A pendant or coin is often hung in the center of the necklace.

#### ***Clove Necklace:***

These are aromatic seeds from a shrub that have a pleasant and attractive fragrance. The artistic women of the tribe soak these seeds in henna for several hours until they take on a reddish color; then they drill holes in them. The thread is passed through them, and once they dry, the strands are shaped and designed, and the gaps between the seeds are decorated with beads or coins.

#### ***Amber Container:***

An amber container is a small, delicate metal box used to hold aromatic substances and essential oils. Due to the lack of frequent access to baths and to prevent the unpleasant odor of body sweat, and since the use of perfume and sprays is not common in the tribe, the women replace artificial perfumes with natural substances.

For this purpose, a fragrant herb called Alfalfa, which is imported from India, is purchased from herbal shops and placed in an amber container, which is then worn around the neck. Wealthy individuals of the tribe use amber containers made of gold or jeweled gold.

#### ***Quran Case:***

The women of the Qashqai tribe place a small leaf with a Quranic verse written on it inside a Quran case to protect themselves from the evil eye, jealousy, and illness. The Quran case is a





Figure 12: Kolesh - Givoh

Figure 13: The image of a Median soldier's hat in the Persepolis relief.

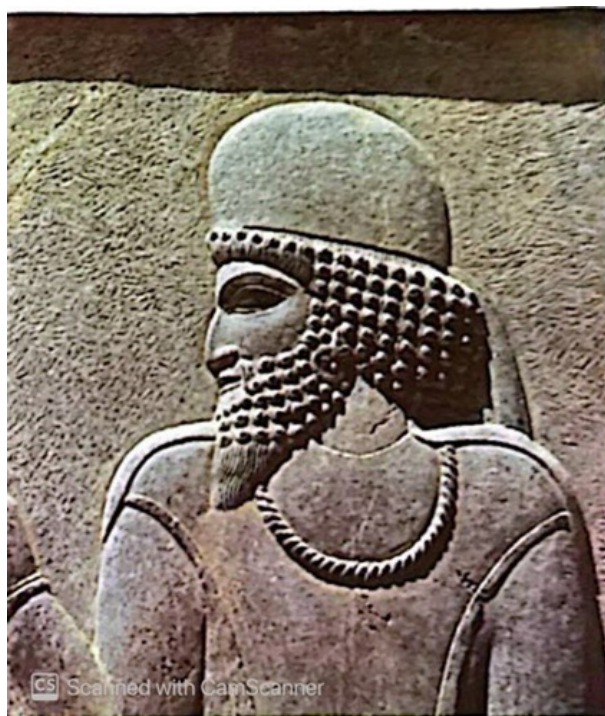


Figure 14: Persepolis petroglyphs

Figure 15: Median man, Persepolis relief



Figure 16: Other ethnic groups in the Persepolis relief

rectangular box made of gold or silver, often decorated with enamel work or engraving.

### ***Beaded Necklaces:***

The women of the Qashqai tribe create necklaces and bracelets from various beads such as crystal, plastic, agate, ruby, beautiful carved wood, coral, amber, and turquoise. For decorating bracelets and bangles, they use beads made from:

- Plant resins that have transformed into amber over time.
- A type of dry plastic material, known as fake amber, which the tribal people call "Zardian."
- Faceted crystal glass.
- Transparent or matte plastic.
- Round or oval-shaped carved wood.
- Precious stones such as agate, turquoise, and ruby.
- Colorful and glossy stones.
- Beautiful seeds of plants.

These beads, which come in various sizes, are arranged by women or young girls, strung together on a sturdy thread, and the ends are tied to create bracelets. These bracelets are usually worn by women with lower income.

### ***Hair Binder (Gisuband):***

A decorative tool for binding and protecting the hair, made by women. The hair binder is a fine silk thread woven in an interesting pattern, with strands branching out, each associated with a delicate pompom in various colors. The hair passes through the binder and hangs down from the waist.

### ***Armlet (Bazuband):***

A small leather, knitted, or beautifully decorated fabric bag, adorned with fine silk or wool threads and pompons, and decorated with beads. This armlet is tied around the upper arm and contains a prayer or charm. It is believed to protect the wearer from the evil eye, evil spirits, and bad language (Dardari, 2016: 106).

The hats of the Qashqai men and the hats depicted in the bas-reliefs of Persepolis share similarities in material (felt) and traditional roots, but they differ significantly in shape and structure. The Qashqai hat, with its two-ear flaps, has a design distinct from the round hats of the Medes or the crenellated crowns of the Persians. However, the claim of inspiration from Achaemenid crowns, particularly the crown of Jamshid, could be seen as a symbolic and cultural connection rather than an exact historical match. This connection is more rooted in the Qashqai's efforts to reconstruct their identity based on Iran's ancient heritage, rather than a direct continuation of Achaemenid hats.

The hats seen in the Persepolis bas-reliefs are over 2500 years old, whereas the Qashqai two-ear hat is a relatively recent phenomenon (about a century old). Therefore, any potential resemblance could result from a conscious or unconscious inspiration drawn from ancient traditions.

The two-ear hat dates back to about 50 to 100 years ago and is said to have been designed by Naserkhan Qashqai after the reign of Reza Shah, inspired by traditional hats and possibly as a symbol of resistance against uniformity in clothing policies. Some believe its design is modeled



after ancient crowns, such as the Kiani crown or the crowns depicted in the Persepolis bas-reliefs, but this claim is more rooted in local legends than concrete archaeological evidence.

The clothing of Qashqai men and those depicted in the Persepolis bas-reliefs differ significantly in shape, structure, and function. The Qashqai cloak (Chouqa) and loose trousers do not directly correlate with the pleated tunics of the Persians or the shorter garments of the Medes. However, the use of wool and simple designs in both reflects the continuity of certain textile and garment-making traditions in Iran. The Qashqai clothing is more shaped by the practical needs of nomadic life, while the Achaemenid garments had ceremonial and display purposes. Therefore, the similarities are limited to the materials used and shared cultural roots, not the design or overall style.

The bas-reliefs of Persepolis (dating to the Achaemenid period, around 550-330 BC) depict men from various ethnic groups within the Persian Empire, each wearing different clothes according to their ethnicity and social status.

*Persians:* Persian clothing typically included a long tunic (reaching the knee or ankle), made from soft and possibly expensive fabric (such as linen or fine wool) with regular pleats. This tunic was sometimes accompanied by a short cape or decorative cloak. Persian kings and nobility often wore crenellated crowns or hats and cloaks adorned with golden or silver decorations.

*Medes:* The men of the Medean tribe are depicted wearing shorter and more practical clothing, including knee-length tunics and tight-fitting trousers made from thicker fabrics (perhaps wool or leather). These garments, paired with round felt hats, reflect a more practical and possibly more warrior-like lifestyle of the Medes.

*Other Nations:* Representatives of the subject nations (such as the Bactrians, Scythians, or Egyptians) wore diverse clothing, including short tunics, loose trousers, or even robes with local patterns, reflecting the cultural diversity of the empire. The garments depicted in the bas-reliefs at Persepolis were often carefully and finely crafted, and in some cases, adorned with colors (likely made from natural dyes) and decorations (such as intricate stitching or jewels). These garments were primarily ceremonial and decorative, designed for formal events or to signify social status.

The Qashqai chogha bears little resemblance to Achaemenid tunics or cloaks. Persian tunics were long, pleated, and seamless, while Median cloaks were shorter, though still quite different from the chogha.

*Trousers:* The loose trousers worn by the Qashqai differ from the tight-fitting trousers of the Medes. However, some subordinate groups depicted in the reliefs of Persepolis wear looser trousers, which may suggest a slight similarity.

*Shirt:* The undershirt worn beneath the chogha in Qashqai attire is simpler than the often pleated and decorated Achaemenid tunics.

Both cultures used natural materials such as wool and linen in their garments. The Qashqai chogha is woven from wool, aligning with the likely material of Median clothing (wool or felt). Persians, on the other hand, likely used finer and higher-quality fabrics.

Qashqai clothing is plain and lacks elaborate ornamentation, whereas Achaemenid garments—particularly those worn by Persian nobility—were adorned with fine stitching, pleats, and sometimes metallic or fabric embellishments.

Traditional Qashqai clothing remained common from the Qajar period up until the end of the

Pahlavi II era. Following Reza Shah Pahlavi's policies promoting sedentarization and the replacement of tribal clothing with modern urban attire, the use of traditional Qashqai garments declined.

As a result, the Qashqai people were divided into two groups: one group became settled, abandoning their traditional dress due to urbanization and standardized clothing; the other group, which remained nomadic, continues to wear their traditional attire to this day.

### ***Conclusion***

Clothing is one of the most prominent symbols of a society's culture, rooted in the traditions, beliefs, and history of its people. Studying traditional garments can provide valuable insights into historical evolution, aesthetics, religious beliefs, social structures, and particularly the development of textile arts and weaving techniques. The traditional attire of the Qashqai tribe carries symbolic, spiritual, cultural, social, and identity-related functions, making it a lasting and unique element of their heritage. Although Qashqai clothing still endures as part of tribal identity, the decline of nomadic life and the influence of modernity have reduced its everyday use, turning it into a more ceremonial symbol. Nevertheless, cultural efforts to preserve it are ongoing. The fading presence of Qashqai clothing is tied to various factors rooted in social, cultural, and economic changes. Once a symbol of authenticity, joy, and nomadic life among the Qashqai Turks, this attire has gradually declined due to lifestyle changes and globalization. One major factor was Reza Shah's policy of forced settlement and the prohibition of traditional dress, which compelled tribes to adopt standardized, Western-style clothing. These pressures had lasting effects on the clothing habits of groups like the Qashqai. In addition, sewing Qashqai clothing—especially with fine fabrics and traditional embellishments—is expensive. By contrast, ready-made industrial clothing is more affordable and accessible, making traditional dress impractical for many families (Malileh Pakdaman, personal interview, September 24, 2024). Qashqai clothing was also commonly worn at weddings and festive ceremonies, but with the decline of these traditions or their replacement with urban-style events, opportunities to wear traditional garments have diminished. As this clothing becomes less used in everyday life, younger generations have less exposure to it. The expansion of media, internet access, and global fashion trends has led younger Qashqais—especially in urban areas—to favor modern attire. This has gradually pushed traditional clothing to the margins (Afsaneh Khosravi, personal interview, May 31, 2024). Nevertheless, there are ongoing efforts to revive this cultural heritage, such as organizing festivals where participants wear traditional garments.

### ***Conflict of Interest:***

The authors declare that they agreed to participate in the present paper and there are no competing interests.

### ***Authors' Participation:***

This article was written by Leila Shahnezadegan, and the analysis of data was done by Gholamreza Karamian and Maryam Kolbadinejad



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