

The Style of Iranian Clothing before Islam based on Works of Art and Written Sources

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Introduction

Numerous documents emphasize on the importance of clothing to cover defects in body organs and to enhance beauty. In order to understand the social and cultural functions of clothes and its role in giving identity to the members of society, clothes in different societies can be analyzed as a set of linguistic signs embodied in the type, shape and cover, reflecting values hidden in the Iranian thought system. Iranian clothing reflects the identity that originates in Iranian culture. At the same time, paying attention to semantic indicators is important. Examining the link between clothing and meaning in the studied time period--the ancient period and Zoroastrianism--is one of the cases that represent the association of clothing with humans as a guide or a warning in the path of life.

Research Method

Although the current research relies on historical investigations, a historical study cannot fully express the nature of phenomena in the context of time and, thus, it is not very useful. Transhistorical approaches are formed from examining elements and signs, which add or integrate various elements related to different historical periods and styles to a specific context. Art works, visual sources, and written sources are studied under the analysis of historical clothes, and along that all religious, moral, cultural connections are evaluated and analyzed. As a rule, the examination of the written and visual sources represents those patterns that shape the structure of Iranian clothing in the ancient period while showing the relationship between the appearance of clothing and meanings. Finally, as a witness and example, one can refer to the followers of Zoroastrianism, who construct a trans-historical connections with their culture and daily life that led to the formation of symbols, signs, and of course certain clothes—including Sedra and Koshti--which represented their values, beliefs, and cultural principles. The method of collecting information in this research was library study. The review and analysis of written and visual sources proved the patterns that formed the structure of Iranian clothing in the ancient period as well as the relationship between the appearance of clothing and concepts and meanings.

Research Findings

The historical heritage of Iranian clothing refers to the cultural and identity roots and represents the lifestyle, thinking, customs, and rituals that are symbolic and represent special aesthetic effects, norms, beliefs, and convictions. It shows dignity and beauty, cleanliness, thoughtfulness, flexibility, and excellence; at the same time, it narrates the beliefs that are alive in the depth of Iranian clothing. Examining the cover of ancient Iran shows strength, culture, tact, attention to ethnic and regional culture, purity and chastity, and attention to beauty with a mixture with religion, history, and identity. Iranian clothing carries many symbols that express the relationship between human being and his living environment. Clothing in Iranian culture is a display of superiority. The examples presented in this article indicate adherence to humane and sublime values of Iran. In Avesta and the related texts of ancient Iran, clothing is mentioned for various reasons. Historical texts related to ancient and later periods have described Iranians as a well-dressed, graceful nation. Iranians adhere to their cultural characteristics and beliefs through their clothing; stone carvings and dressed figures left over from the past are the narrator of this story. Thus, to know the implications of clothing in Iran, one must go through history.

Conclusion

Iranian clothing with all its features alone is a rich cultural carrier. Since clothing can be designed as an artistic text, its evaluation and exploration can be realized through the study of historical development, artistic viewpoints, and the use of artistic concepts. In this way, visual and written sources were illuminating the connections between clothing and people's identities. They have introduced clothing as an identity-building phenomenon. The heritage of Iran's clothing history is indebted to the thoughts, religious and spiritual values, values as well as dignity, social status, decency, and chastity. The cultural essence of clothing includes both the material and the spiritual aspects of clothing, where the movement towards excellence, connection with nature, modesty, shame, and social status can be seen in it.

Keywords: clothes, textile, style of clothing, pre-Islam Iran, identity.