

**A Comparative Study of the Royal Splendor of the Image
in the Ornaments of the Monoliths of Fath Ali Shah
(by Mirza Baba) and Naser al-Din Shah (by Kamal al-Molk)**

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Introduction

This study investigates the evolution of royal jewelry during the Qajar era through a comparative analysis of portraits of Fath-Ali Shah and Naser al-Din Shah. The examination of these 19th-century artworks reveals significant conceptual and visual transformations. The opulent attire and abundant jewelry of Fath-Ali Shah is in stark contrast with Naser al-Din Shah's military uniform, reflecting societal shifts and the impact of Western artistic styles. Mirza Baba's paintings exemplify the traditional style, while Kamal al-Molk's works showcase the adoption of Western academic styles. These portraits effectively highlight the evolution of jewelry during the Qajar era, mirroring broader socio-artistic transitions within Iranian society.

Research Method

To explore the evolution of royal jewelry during the Qajar era, this study uses a qualitative method and is descriptive-analytic in approach. The central question examines the transformations in jewelry depicted in 19th-century portraits and their conceptual meanings. Data were collected through library research and analyzed comparatively, using Mirza Baba's portrait of Fath-Ali Shah and Kamal-ol-Molk's portrait of Naser al-Din Shah as primary sources. These portraits were chosen for their detailed representation of royal adornments. By comparing the jewelry in these portraits, the study aims to uncover the aesthetic, cultural, and political factors influencing the design and significance of royal jewelry in the 19th century. The research contributes to the understanding of the Qajar court's artistic patronage and the role of visual representation in shaping royal identity and cultural values. This analysis provides insight into the socio-aesthetic context of Qajar visual culture.

Research Findings

This study analyzes the evolution of Qajar royal jewelry through a comparative examination of portraits of Fath-Ali Shah and Naser al-Din Shah. The portrait of Fath-Ali Shah employs allegorical representation, utilizing jewelry as symbolic ornamentation to project divine authority and imperial self-display. This approach potentially diverges from the accurate replication of actual pieces, focusing instead on idealized symbolism. In contrast, the portrait of Naser al-Din Shah, attributed to Kamal al-Molk, demonstrates a shift towards heightened realism, accurately depicting jewelry and reflecting a broader movement in the Naseri period towards naturalistic art.

This transition bridges traditional Iranian painting with emerging modern styles, indicating an aesthetic evolution. A detailed comparative analysis highlights alterations in jewelry application and significance. Fath-Ali Shah's jewelry emphasizes the symbolic divine power and imperial grandeur, comprising elaborate crowns, aigrettes, and decorative elements. These items serve to reinforce the king's divinely ordained status and authority. Conversely, Naser al-Din Shah's adornments focus on insignia, medals, and standardized accoutrements, signifying personal rank and achievement, aligning with the global norms of recognition and status. This progression indicates a significant cultural shift from symbolic, idealized portrayals to objective, realistic depictions. These aesthetic changes underscore a transition towards modernity and individualism within the late Qajar era, reflecting broader societal transformations in art and self-representation. The analysis provides insights into the evolving dynamics of power, cultural values, and artistic expression during a critical period of Iranian history, illustrating how royal portraiture reflects and reinforces shifting societal norms.

Table 1: Jewelry Used by Fath-Ali Shah and Naser al-Din Shah in the Studied Portraits (Authors)

	Crown or Hat	Jigha (Aigrette)	Epaulette	Armband	Belt	Insignia	Tassel and Pearl Strand	Baton	Watch	Sword	Medal	Dagger
Fath-Ali Shah	*	*	*	*	*	-	*	*	*	*	-	*
Naser al-Din Shah	*	-	-	-	*	*	-	-	-	-	*	-

It can be said that the function of jewelry in the portrait of Fath-Ali Shah also refers to the divine aspect of the king. In general, it seems that individuals are in fact introduced by objects, and their psychological characteristics are not evident, which is also related to the nature of court portraiture. According to the table (1), the jewelry used in Fath-Ali Shah's portrait mostly refers to the power, greatness, and splendor of his kingdom. However, the jewelry in Naser al-Din Shah's portrait, which mostly includes insignia, mostly through insignia or medals of courage, honor, etc., has the aspect of introducing the person's rank with a certain degree at the global level of that time, which in most cases had the same symbol among the nations of that period.

Conclusion

Qajar era portraiture exhibits two key aspects: verisimilitude and meaning. Verisimilitude is predominantly descriptive, emphasizing the recording of appearances, while meaning is prescriptive, focused on manifesting desires and ideals. This contrast is useful in discerning the characteristics of 'Qajar-century' portraiture. These differing aspects can be observed in the portraits of Fath-Ali Shah by Mirza Baba and Naser al-Din Shah by Kamal-ol-Molk. The portrait of Fath-Ali Shah prioritizes the dimension of meaning, accentuating royal glory above all else. Conversely, towards the end of Naser al-Din Shah's reign, portraiture shifted towards descriptive realism. The central research question addresses the transformations in the jewelry depicted in portraits of Fath-Ali Shah and Naser al-Din Shah during the 19th century, and the implications thereof. Analyses revealed that the jewelry in Fath-Ali Shah's portrait deviates from simulation

and realism. Instead, the artist aimed to express tendencies and flaunt the king's sovereignty. The advent of photography during Naser al-Din Shah's era provided real images of the king, influencing a shift in painting towards jewelry depictions more aligned with their original forms. Throughout the reigns of these two kings, significant changes occurred in both portraiture and jewelry usage. In the Naseri era, the prior artificial poses and excessive jewelry of the Khaghani era diminished, giving way to more realistic portrayals with fewer jewelry pieces. Khaghani era portraits were allegorical representations, whereas the Naseri era, influenced by photography, embraced realism. This evolution reflects broader cultural shifts, emphasizing descriptive accuracy over symbolic representation, aligning with the modernization influences of the time. The transition in portraiture and jewelry depicted mirrors the evolving dynamics of power and aesthetic values within Qajar society.

Keywords: Royal jewelry, court portraiture, Fath-Ali Shah, Naser al-Din Shah, Mirza Baba (Painter), Kamal-ol-Molk (Painter).