

## **A Comparative Study of the Moharamat Design of the Handwoven Fabrics of the Caucasus and the Qashqai Tribe of Fars**

### **Abstract**

Qashqai tribe is one of the important Turkic-speaking tribes of Iran consisting of six clans: Dareshuri, Big Kashkuli, Farsi-Madan, Kashkuli Koksh, Amale and Sheshbloki. The main center of this clan is the Fars region, which is one of the most significant areas of carpet weaving of Iran. One of the characteristics of the carpets of this clan is the wide variety of colors, designs and motifs. Moharamat design is one of the oldest designs in the preparation of Qashqai carpets that has been depicted by Qashqai women in various ways to express their feelings and dreams. This design has also been observed among the handwoven artifacts of the Caucasus region. There are many similarities between the Qashqai tribe and the Caucasus region; this resemblance is observed in the older weaves related to the time when the southern borders of the Caucasus and Iran were the same. The current research has been carried out using a descriptive and analytical method with a comparative approach and relying on the data of library and electronic sources. The findings of the research indicate that considering that a number of clans migrated from the Caucasus to Fars and joined the Qashqai tribe, the similarities are more evident in their art and culture. Therefore, in this research, an attempt is made to collect an authentic collection of hand-woven fabrics with the design of Moharamat in order to analyze their design and role. Investigation was carried out on ۳۲ samples of carpets from the mentioned areas. The comparative findings of the design and motifs of the design under study indicate that all types of the design including vertical, horizontal, slanted, geometric are woven relatively more or less in both regions. The design and pattern in the margin and the text have many common features that have been identified in this research.

### **Research aims:**

۱. Examining the coordinates of the Moharamat design.
۲. Knowing the commonalities and differences in the handwoven artifacts of the Caucasus region with the Qashqai tribe.

### **Research questions:**

١. How to classify handwoven pieces with the Moharamat design in the Qashqai tribe and the Caucasus region in terms of their structural elements and motifs?
٢. Is it possible to define common and different criteria in terms of design, role for handwoven artifacts with the Moharamat design of the Qashqai tribe and the Caucasus region?

**Keywords:** Moharamat design, handwoven, Qashqai tribe, Caucasus.

## Introduction

The design of Moharamat or striped patterns is the oldest design and pattern applied in the carpet weaving of Fars region, especially the Qashqai tribe. This design is considered one of the oldest patterns of Iranian cloth and carpet weaving. This pattern can be seen in many Greek dishes of the Achaemenes period and Iranian clothing. The clothes with human motifs painted on the glazed terracotta of Amol and Saveh in the ٤th and ٦th centuries of Hijri are decorated with the same pattern. The striped fabrics are from the workshops of the ٤th and ٥th centuries of Hijri in Tabaristan and Mazandaran and the cashmere and Zarbafts are from Kerman and Isfahan during the Safavid era. The role of this pattern among the handwoven fabrics of Fars province is very eye-catching considering that the Qashqai tribe owns the most production of the region. The great variety of colors and motifs are one of the characteristics of the handwoven items of this tribe considering that Qashqai women's weaving style of this design has constantly been colorful. In other regions of Fars, as well as the Arab and Khamseh tribes, the pattern is woven relatively less. The Caucasus region is also one of the regions that weaves the Moharamat pattern in Qashqai style. In the Caucasus, this design is mostly woven in Ganja, Shirvan, Karabagh. In the regions of Baku, Shusha, Dagestan, and Talysh, handwoven items with the mentioned design are rarely seen. The existence of similarity has caused this research to compare the handwoven patterns of the Moharamat designs in these two regions by choosing a society consisting of the mentioned design.

Research history shows that so far no independent work with this title has been published in the field of writing. The studies that have been carried out so far in line with this research include: The book of handwoven rural nomads of Fars (١٩٨٥), the first volume, written by Siros Parham; in this book he considers the Moharamat pattern to be one of the oldest patterns of carpet weaving in Iran and one of the original patterns of the Achaemenes and Sasanian periods. It is not known when this motif entered Persian and Caucasus carpet weaving. In the

second volume, in a part of this book (۱۹۹۲), in the Qashqai rugs and needlework section, he has analyzed the design of Moharamat based on pictorial examples. In the book "Masterpieces of Persian Carpet Weaving" (۱۳۷۵), the treasure of Persian carpets that have been collected in the museums and art collections of Iran and the world since the beginning of the ۱۴th century A.H. In this book, examples of carpets with mahramat design can be seen in Qashqai tribe. In the book Understanding the Designs and Maps of the Carpets of Iran and the World (۱۳۸۲) authored by Abolfazl Vakili, the geometric designs common in the Caucasus are generally similar to the designs and patterns of the Iranian Qashqai, Afshars, Shahsons and Lors, which are very similar in terms of the culture of carpet weaving and patterning. have together

In the book Glim (۱۳۷۷) Alsterhall mentions weavers and artists of clans and tribes, the common denominator of many of them is the religion of Islam. Alastair Hall considers the opposite point of Iran to be the Caucasus, and for this reason, he has collected the carpets of Iran and the Caucasus in one season. Among the rugs, there are weaves with Moharamat designs in the Qashqai tribe and the Caucasus region, which are used in the process of this research. In the book "Tribal a Village Rugs" written by Stone, is mostly about the motifs in Caucasus rugs. In the book "Teppiche Aus Dem Kaukasus" written by Schurmaan Ulrich, Caucasian carpets are examined based on their weaving regions, among which sub-sizes with Moharamat designs woven in the regions of Karabagh, Ganja, Shirvan, and Baku are mentioned. In the book "Caucasian Prayer Rugs" by Ralph (۱۹۹۸), the woven designs in the Caucasus region are introduced. Rezaei Azar (۲۰۱۱) in an article titled "Investigation of the design of Moharamat in Qashqai carpets of Fars" has investigated the design, role and color of this pattern and how this design is woven and used in Qashqai carpets. An article entitled "The Handwoven Carpet of the Caucasus and Armenia" published in the Iranian carpet magazine, written by Khalil Darudchi, the Caucasus carpet and its weaving regions are discussed.

## Conclusion

Considering that some tribes of the Qashqai tribe came to Fars from the Caucasus (Qashqai tribe), certainly there are commonalities and differences in the designs and motifs that are worthy of consideration. One of these designs with many common features is the Moharamat pattern which is woven in both regions and is one of the oldest designs in Iranian carpet weaving. This design is popular among the weavers of the Fars region and has unique features making it distinguished among nomadic weaves for its order, symmetry and balance that is

visible in this design. In the Caucasus region, this design is woven in Ganja, Shirvan, Karabagh, and other areas with the same features. This research has clarified these commonalities and slanders by examining the pattern in the two regions and has achieved significant results. These specific features can be seen in the structure of the design and the motifs and the border of the design.

In general, the Moharamat designs are divided into four general groups, the following table represents the similarities and differences:

| Moharamat Type | Caucasus region  | Qashqai region   |
|----------------|--|--|
| Vertical       | The most vertical prohibitions in the Caucasus are observed in the Karabagh region.  | Vertical veils are woven in large quantities in the Qashqai tribe.   |
| Horizontal     | Most of the horizontal Moharamat in the Caucasus are woven in the rugs of the Shirvan region.  | Horizontal veils are woven in large quantities in the Qashqai tribe.   |
| Oblique        | Most oblique Moharamat are woven in Ganja region.<br>The use of "S" pattern in slanted Moharamat is one of the characteristic features of Ganja weaves.            | This feature is reduced in the Qashqai tribe's Moharamat patterns, and have been lesser observed in the this tribe.  |
| Geometrical    | Geometric Moharamats are rarely woven in the Caucasus region.  | In Qashqai tribe, this design woven in very small quantities.  |
| Explanations   | \- The use of S motif (the abstract form of a dragon), the first letter of God's name in the Armenian language, is one of the characteristic features of Caucasian | \- The use of the Moharamat pattern in Lachak or Toranj with a simple background is one of the characteristics of Qashqai carpets, which are rarely woven. |

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|  | <p>textiles, especially in the Ganja region.</p> <p>۲- Using the role of Moharamat in carpets with a Mihrab pattern is found in abundance among Caucasian weavers. This feature is excluded in Qashqai handwoven items.</p> <p>۳- The use of the Moharamat pattern on the wide border is abundantly observed among Caucasian textiles.</p> <p>۴- In the Caucasus, Moharamat designs have a middle limit that is neither too wide nor too narrow.</p> | <p>۱- In the surveys, we come across examples of the S painting in the slanted Moharamat pattern in the Fars region, especially Shahson carpets in northwest Iran.</p> <p>۲- All kinds of wide and narrow Moharamat are woven in the Qashqai tribe.</p> |
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These designs and motifs continue to display their unique beauty and use in the carpets of the Qashqai tribe and the Caucasus region from the past until today in which similarity between weaves and patterns can be seen. The motifs are mostly passed down from generation to generation, and despite the fact that the weavers are illiterate, most of the patterns have elegance and inherent beauty, which is unique and eye-catching.

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