

Analysis of the Continuance of Median Equestrian Cloths Aspects in Contemporary Kurdish Equestrians Aiming to Restore the Design and Sewing Technique

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Abstract

Medians were the only Aryan tribe that defeated the great Assyrian empire through relying on their unity, releasing many tribes and dynasties from the aggressive and offending Assyrians captivity situations. It can definitely be said that horse breeding and ranching were quite developed among them, farming was common in the outskirts, and they were well informed about metal working with bronze. The Kurds are among the old Iranian races, who according to many researchers are the successors of Medians. Relying on the results of the present study, with only a little change, Kurdish clothing can be said to be the same as Median clothing where in some cases, for instance, the height of the clothing is shortened and extended from the knees to the waist, or the form of the waist sash that is slightly changed nowadays from the Median shape to the sash shape; it should also be said that all the transformations have been towards a more convenience and more appropriate function. Thus, regarding the historical basis, convenience and agility, the considered design and sewing, the recognition, and the models can be effective in these outfits. Reconsidering and restoring Median and Kurdish equestrian clothing with traditional design and sewing can lead to increased exporting of these outfits and reducing the importation of these clothes. This study is an applied research and the data are obtained by field-library investigations.

Keywords: Clothing Design; Iranian Clothing; Median Clothing; Kurdish Clothing; Equestrian Clothing

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1. Introduction

Iranians have always been leading in arts and textile industry. It has been acknowledged by Ghoshman (1989) that textile industry in Iran has had a long history, and it has been written that the weaving industry, preparation of clothes and sewing techniques started about ten thousand years B.C.; the designs of sewn and woven clothes from yarn were taken from the vessels and dishes belonging to about 8th century B.C. Manhood, equestrian activities and bowing as well as veracity were among the prominent characteristics of Median and Persian tribes (Gheibi, 2008). According to researchers, horses have a great share in human civilization, especially in Aryans culture. Iranians were the first people that tried to tame and breed this animal and instructed their experience to other nations in old days according to historical documents (Table 1) (Bahrami, 2006).

In the territory of Median tribes, people occupied themselves in livestock breeding although they also had the knowledge of farming which was based on artificial irrigation. Horse breeding was quite an important task (Assyrians were not used to charge Medians with almost anything, but horses). They used to breed horned livestock and sheep. It is a known fact that alfalfa was originally cultivated in Central Asia, and its cultivation was essential along with horse breeding, and the Chinese adapted its cultivation from Central Asia.

Regarding Kurdish people, Minorsky (2003) and Niktin (1989) believe that the word “Kermanj” by which some of the present Kurdish people introduce themselves should be analyzed. According to Minorsky (2003), “kermanj” has three syllables: ker + man + j. “j” is a suffix and can be omitted, “man” has strong relation with Median or “Manani”, “Marus” were the ancestors of Medians. It was believed by the clergy, Mordech Kordestani (1971) that Medians were the contemporary Kurds. Many European orientalists, including Professor Sykes (2001), held the belief that Medians were the same Kurdish people. Moreover, numerous Iranian historians such as Moshiroldoleh state that the roots of contemporary Kurds were the Medians. Sykes (2001) also believes that Medians were the Kurdish tribe, living in the east of Assyria, and their land extended to the south of Caspian Sea. Many of the orientalists and related experts believe that Median language was the same as today’s Kurdish language.

Concerning the equestrian clothing of the Kurds, using old age specifications, by designing and sewing these clothes again (by manipulating the design, sewing, and measurements), these types of clothing can apparently be updated. Since the origin, sewing techniques, and designing equestrian clothing go back to the ancient Iran civilizations, updating these outfits seems to be necessary. Thus, the aim of this article is to return the equestrian clothing with traditional designs and sewing techniques instead of imported designs. So as to get the mentioned aims, this article is trying to respond to the following questions:

1. Is the Kurds’ clothing in continuance with the clothing of their Medians ancestors?
2. How can the designs and making (i.e., sewing) these clothes, considering the equestrian clothing of Medians and Kurdish people, be revived?

1.1. Research Methodology

The study makes use of an applied technique. Library resources and field studies are used to collect the required data. The methodology of the present study is descriptive, analytical, and comparative. The statistical population includes Iranian races, and Median and Kurdish people were selected in a purposive manner as in case studies.

1.2. History of Research

Some researchers have investigated Iranian clothing, among whom; Ziapour (1974) dealt with collecting the clothing used by the nomads and villagers in 1971, based on the commands made by the Pahlavi King. According to the further analyses, no researcher has analyzed the continuance of equestrian clothing of Medians up to Iranian Kurds clothing aspects. Thus, this article is dealing with this important subject.

2. Medians Clothing

The information about people's clothing in Median era is mainly exclusive to men's clothing, and the information consists of two categories of resources; i.e., reports recorded from classical authors, and the old remaining works. This category includes the valuable ancient works which are based on archeologists' investigation.

Xenophon (2009) has written: Cyrus the Great adapted Median clothing, suggesting his close relatives and followers to wear that type of clothing. The advantage of this outfit is that it covers the body problems and shows people better and prettier. Cyrus had a sharp hat that an officer was guarding. In the book "Achaemenid kingdom", Olmstead (2014) has written: Medians are recognized by wearing original Persian clothing. Their clothing included a sleeved tight shirt that was long reaching to the knees, long trousers, and a cloak. Regarding luxury and grandeur in Median court, Sykes (2001) has written: the descriptions regarding Median palace, extensive formalities, thousands of servants and the red and purple clothing of the court people, gold chains and necklaces, and extensive trappings indicate that they had ornaments as imitated from Assyrian courts. Xenophon (2009) has written: Medians used to wear purple clothes, long cloaks, and various necklaces and decorated bracelets. Regarding the traditions of Iranians in the past for covering themselves, and according to the suggestion by Diakonoff (1966) about the Medians clothing, the sculptures of the representatives of 30 nations under the influence of Achaemenid dynasty can be observed on Dariush the First tomb in Naghsh-e Rostam near the Persepolis, and the same designs are repeated by his successors. The identities of the sculptures in Naghsh-e Rostam are recognized through the remaining inscriptions from Dariush the First tomb. The other indications are exclusive architecture of the Persepolis (especially Apadana east staircase) showing the warriors, elites, and representatives of different nations contemporary with Achaemenid Empire, the adobe-enamel works in Shush and the Persepolis showing the soldiers in different military clothing; and engraved sculptures on the Egyptian statue of Dariush in Shush being kept in the Iran Ancient Museum in Tehran which are inspired by Median's clothes.

Various designs, inspired by Median clothes, have been discovered especially on handicrafts including Greek pots, Egyptian coins, Greek-Persian stamps, and paintings which have been found, especially the ones in Karaburun the First tomb near Elmali, former province of Lycia, southwest of Turkey. Sculptures which have been discovered from Sidon and Lycia, especially "Treasury of Oxus River" and most importantly, "fighting and hunting scenes" engraved on the stone coffin are attributed to Alexander in Sidon (a little after 320 A.D), as well as Alexander mosaic situated on the floor of "Fone" temple in Pompeii (1st century A.D, almost simultaneous with Alexander stone coffin, adopted from a Dutch painting) also indicating that they are the next generations after Medians have followed them in this case (Fig 1). The history of Median culture can be divided into two parts, one related to the era before Median dynasty and before the deployment and dominance of Magus Religion, and the second era dating back to the era of the Magus. The interval related to these eras is the end of 7th century B.C. The life of the people residing in far west regions was

apparently affected by the Babylonian traditions, such as the clothes they wore. The clothing that the Lullubian tribe in the east of Zagros Mountains used to wear in the third millennium was common.

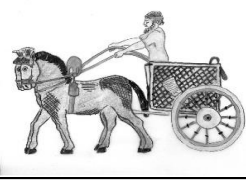
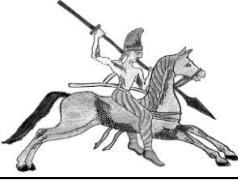
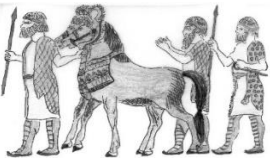
Chariot of Median rich Medes people: From the book "Iran social history" (source: Ravandi, 1977)	Median equestrian: (source: Diakonoff, 1966)
	
Medians in a robe of panther skin: From the book "Median history" (source: Diakonoff, 1966)	Design of a Median stamp of Kashan Silk Hill: From the book "Eight thousand years of Iranians clothing" (source: Gheibi, 2008)
	

Fig 1 Schematic views of equestrian Medians and their clothing (designed by the authors)

On a short-sleeve shirt that was long to the knees, a piece of animal skin or fur was put on the left shoulder, and sometimes this skin was placed under a belt. Rich people used panther skin and the poor used sheep skin. Median clothing and the clothes used by other tribes of Median Union and the Medians had such a style. This tradition, i.e. placing a sheep skin on the shoulder, has been so far kept among the mountain shepherds of Azerbaijan and Kurdistan. They used to tie their hair by a red ribbon, and they also used to shave their beard; long felt hats, called "tiar" in Greek language, that were specific to Median people are seen in Assyrian images. However, since this type of hat was common both in the third millennium and also during the Achaemenid era (6th to 4th centuries B.C), it was also undoubtedly popular. The shoes used by the Median people were soft and with rolled tips. The clothes of the residents of East Media included a loose dress with long sleeves and loose ruffled trousers, which was indeed a long skirt, coming close in the middle between the legs, a short coat by colored fabric or embroidered by wool. This type of dress was completed by the capuchin which was used for head (Fig 1).

2.1. General Clothing of the Medians

It can be seen in the Persepolis stone carvings that some people had worn Median clothing with a dagger placed by the waist and shoes, apparently using all the Median clothing, with five types of hats on their heads. Median trousers were straight, and long to the ankles or on the shoes. The trousers which used to be gradually tightened from top to bottom had laces on the front near the shoes openings to be knotted and, hence were tightened by the ankles. The rest of the laces after the knots used to be dropped on the shoes (Fig 2).

There used to be straight tight trousers similar to today's trousers shown in the designs of the Persepolis and Pasargadae that were rather loose and longer, coming on top of the shoes and having strips under the shoes (Gheibi, 2008). The dresses had no ruffles, no opening in the front and with no sutures, and they were long up to the knees, with tight sleeves and simple collars without turning

parts that were worn from the head. Median shoes were made of one-piece leather worn similar to socks, having no heels, and no seams were seen on their sides. Seemingly, the seams were on the back and in front of the shoes. Median shoes had round heels.

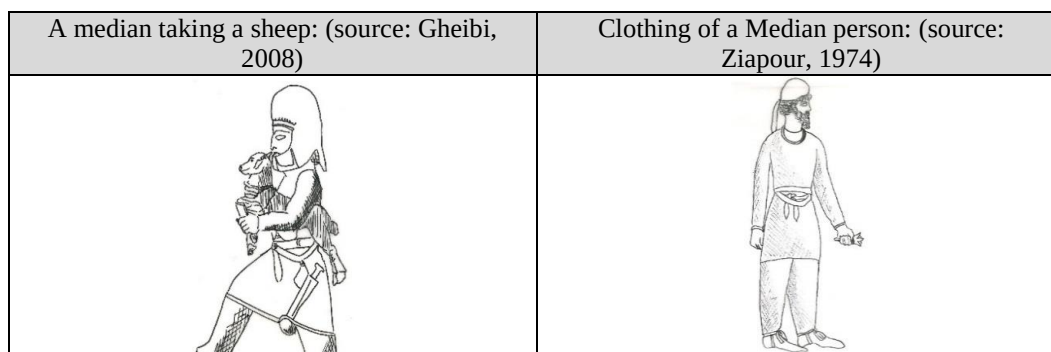


Fig 2 Medians general clothing (designed by the authors)

3. Kurds Clothing

Regarding the general views of people's clothing, Iranian tribes, nomads and villagers have different types of clothing that are identified for their general forms. For example, each one of them has separate names. However, we hereby only consider Kurdish people's clothing. Kurds in Iran reside in four different regions: Kurdistan, Kermanshahan, West Azerbaijan, and North Khorasan, thus occupying a large region from the northern borders of West Azerbaijan to the south regions in North Lorestan (near Malayer and Boroujerd mountains), as well as North Khorasan. There are undoubtedly differences in the clothing of the Kurds living in three regions of West Azerbaijan, Kurdistan, and Kermanshahan, but the similarities of the clothing of the people in these regions are such that small differences do not hinder the classification of clothing (Ziapour, 1974) (Fig 3). The ladies in these regions and nearby areas have 11 pieces of clothing, including a pair of shoes, trousers, underwear, waist coat, cloak, decorative triangular handkerchief, turban, scarf or sometimes a headband (consisting of different pieces) (Fig 3).

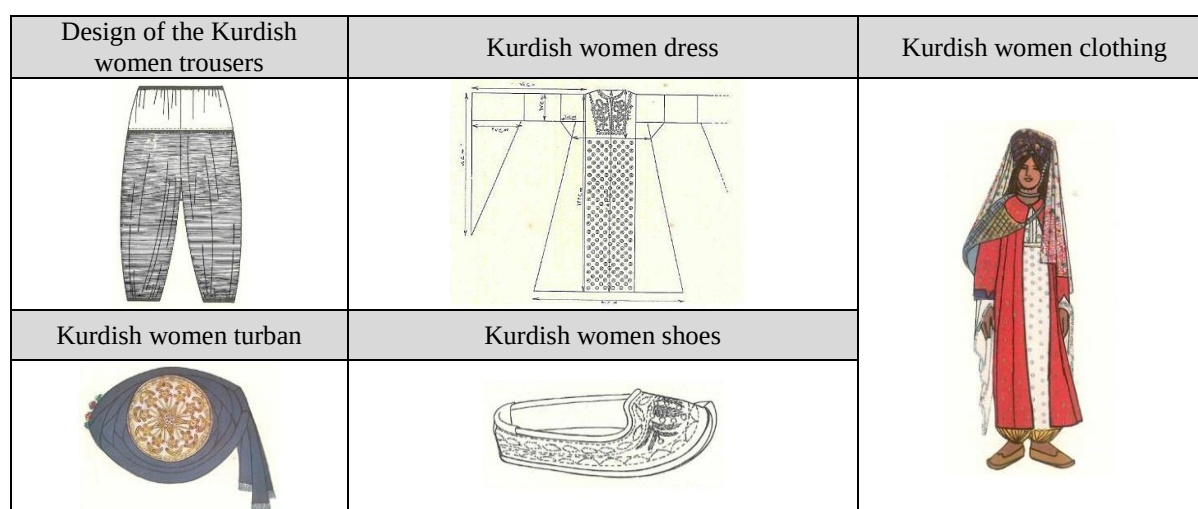


Fig 3 An example of Kurdish women clothing (source: Ziapour, 1974)

4. Comparison of Median and Kurdish People Clothing

One of the important necessities and the bases for equestrian clothing is its convenience. Clothing has always served culture and has been proportional to the geography of the clothing birth place. Besides, Median and Persian archer soldiers have been well-known in the world so that even Herodotus has also mentioned about it. Thus, the factors such as convenience of riding horses (e.g., body physique and possibility of using fighting skills), coolness, and even beauty that is, according to Xenophon (2009), among the necessities of the Median and Persian cultures, and the lateral elements such as the cold region of Median geography, which has led to designing wool sashes for maintaining health and required access of the horse rider, should be observed. All the mentioned factors and necessities were effective in clothing designs by the Medians. Moreover, sashes were also used to hide or place the fighting weapons with regard to the accessibility and applications used during equestrian action in high speeds or while fighting of the equestrian. These garments also had other applications such as dressing the wounds.

According to the above points, Kurdish clothing today is the same as Median clothing with only a few changes, such as the length of the shirt (becoming shorter, reaching from the knees to under the groin) or the form of the sash that has changed from a belt-shape to woollen sash. It should be said that all the transformations are for more convenience or further evolution of the applications.

It is also to be noted that more ruffles in trousers that can be also observed nowadays in Kurdish regions are altered in different regions requiring different sizes of fabric and it is an element for local dances in those areas; for instance, Mahabad dance that is exclusive to that region requires extensive movements of the body and foot movements.

Presumably, these actions look more beautiful with trousers having more ruffles and pleats, and it is indeed the case. It is noteworthy that clothing evolution is determined by considering hundreds of years of culture, traditions, convenience, and appropriate applications in different periods.

5. Proposed Design

As a whole, the designs are made by getting the ideas from Median and Kurdish clothing, via observing the Iranian identity. The simple styles of the well-known Median clothing are used in the front cuts for the designed outfit, and its length in the back of the outfit considers cuts on waist part and the skirt models to be more convenient and beautiful for the equestrians on horses.

The narrow sash was used as a belt in Medians era, which was discussed in the previous sections in this paper. This sash in Kurdish tribes is in the form of waist scarf that also goes around the neck.

In addition to maintaining and respecting the primary design of Median trousers, and considering the morals and interests of contemporary humans, a model should be considered in designing trousers for equestrian purposes for the young people, who are the main addressees, to accept and use them. Hence, the looseness of Median trousers is made to be a little tighter on the thighs with cotton fabric; the Median designs are observed for the calves and ankles, and sewing the clothes properly suits equestrian clothing (Fig 4).

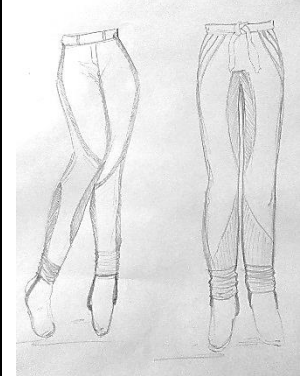
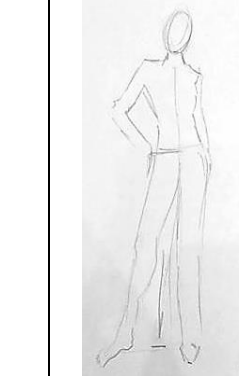
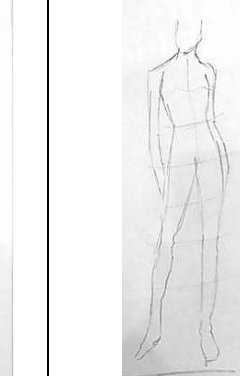
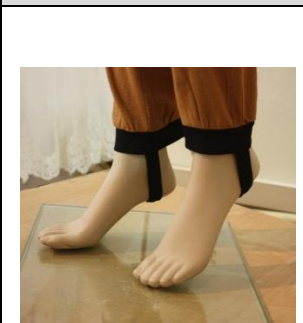
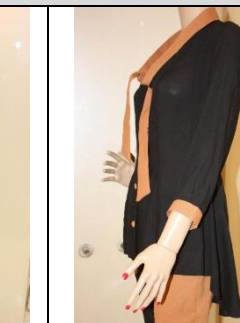
Primary designs of the authors			
Design of trousers	Implementing the clothing	Human figurative	Human dimensions
			
Final design			
			

Fig 4 Designs by the authors (Primary and final designs)

6. Conclusion

Based on the previous investigations, Kurdish people clothing has been in continuance with the clothing of their ancestors, Medians. This continuance is observed in all the clothing items, as discussed in the previous parts above. Regarding the considered features for these clothes (i.e., Median and Kurdish clothing), it is through the style of the Medians that we notice Aryans in Iran had chosen full clothing features to respect their high human dignity, to the extent that researchers believe that cutting fabrics and making clothes have been introduced from Iran to other countries of the world; the clothing included a long shirt to the knees with quite professional cuts and proper sewing, to be gifted to other tribes, as shown on the ancient engraved inscriptions in the Persepolis stairs depicting the Medians taking trousers souvenirs for the Persians; the trousers were gradually tightened from top to bottom to be helpful in wearing, riding horses, and fighting. This design, cut, and sewing cannot be accidental and without thinking. Undoubtedly, all the obtained information has become the basis for the authors to select a trend of designing, cutting, and sewing that can be attractive to the equestrian addressees. Moreover, in light of the efforts in designing modern clothing, away from the importation culture, and with clear indications to Iranian identity, and regarding the needs of equestrians based on the interviews, the textile industry must be ready for higher rates of production for appropriate and comfortable clothing with civilized beauty that are reminiscent of the Aryan race.

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