



CLOTHING XXV. CLOTHING OF KHORASAN

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Owing to different climatic regions and the existence of various tribes in Khorasan, the province is distinguished by a broad variety of clothing styles, recognizable in design, color, and decoration. Although at present traditional and local dress has largely been supplanted by modern, Western-influenced styles, particularly in the cities and neighboring villages, in the recent past, and even now in the more remote villages, it has been possible to record the older traditions. In different parts of the province both clothing and the related terminology (see xxviii, below) are influenced by those of neighboring areas and populations. In northern Khorasan, for example, the influence of the Turkmen on the clothing of other ethnic groups is clear (Lukasheva, pp. 42-43, 64-77; see xxvi, below).

Northern Khorasan

The Kurds. The Kurds of Khorasan, known as Kormānj, live in the northern part of the province (see “Ālbom-e Kormānjī” in Tawaḥḥodī, III, pp. 456-64). The typical male costume includes one of several types of headgear: a tasseled black cap, around which a shawl is wrapped; a hood woven of black lamb’s wool (Figure 69), which covers the head from above the eyebrows to the neck;



a traveling hood, which covers the face, with an opening for the eyes; and an expensive hat made of lambskin. The traditional man’s shirt is of red or white silk, without a collar and with either a front opening or a slit on the shoulder, fastened with buttons and loops. Over it a jacket (*nīvtana*, *panjak*) is worn. The full trousers, of calico or other cotton, are constructed with a gusset. The ankle-length overcoat (*čok*) is made of brown or black lamb’s wool, with a wide collar and an opening in front. On their feet men wear woolen stockings and wrap their ankles and calves with bands (*patāva*) 1.5-2 m long and 20 cm wide. The finer shoes (*čārok*) are made of good red leather, fastened with laces and decorated with tassels. Ordinary shoes (*čārok-e kām*) are made of untreated skins from the heads of cows.

Among women four tribal groups can be distinguished by their clothing. First are the border Kurds, especially those in Čenārān, Daragaz, and north of Qūčān, Šīrvān, and Bojnord as far as the Russian border. Women of this group wrap a large scarf (*čārqađ*, *gavn*, *šār[l]*) around their heads, with one end brought across to cover the mouth and the other trailing down the back to the ankles. A colorful silk kerchief with coins sewn to the edges is tied around the head over this scarf. The traditional dress, of red silk patterned with other colors, closes with three buttons on the chest; the skirt is slit at the sides for ease of movement, and the long sleeves are trimmed with braid at the cuffs. At home a woman wears a pair of full trousers, similar to those worn by men, often taking as much as 12 m of coarse blue calico. When she goes out she dons over these trousers a second, longer pair, in a floral print, so full as to resemble a skirt, the hem trimmed with a kind of lace called *medākel* or *jak*. A simple velvet or felt jacket with inset sleeves (*yal*), most commonly in blue, red, or black, is normally worn over the dress. A more decorative type (*kollaja*, *kolla*) is covered in front from neck to waist with coins, sequins, and silver ornaments. Over the jacket women wear a *jelesqa*, cut like the *yal* but sleeveless and worn open in front. Knitted stockings of soft white wool dyed different colors are somewhat longer than those worn by men. Women’s shoes (*čārok*) are made of single pieces of red calfskin turned up at the toes and decorated with silk tassels and a buckle on top. In the house women wear a kind of slipper called *komokt*.

The Qaramānī Kurds live south of Qūčān between the foothills of the Šāh Jahān, Bīnālū, and Alādāg mountains and the region of Esfarāyen and Sabzavār. The women’s clothing differs from that of the border tribeswomen mainly in the trousers: Instead of the inner pair they wear shorter drawers



(*tonoka*), and the floral outer trousers extend only to below the knee. The dresses are generally embroidered. The kerchief (*šāmī*) tied over the *čārqađ* is black.

The third group, the Kurds of the plain, live around Qūčān, in Fārūj, and south of Šīrvān. This group is particularly poverty-stricken, and the clothing is thus simple in both material and workmanship. Beneath a single pair of trousers, which are very full, like a skirt, and do not reach the knees, women wear shorter black or blue drawers (*darpa*), narrow at the hems (Figure 70).

Lāyenī Kurdish women wear two large scarves, a red one over a black one, the ends trailing to the feet in back. Over them a wide, silver-studded ribbon called a *rūsar* is tied around the head and under the chin. The traditional Lāyenī *kollaja* has wide sleeves and is made of silk, with coins sewn on the front. The dress, also of silk, is longer than that of other Kormānj women, and instead of the *yal* they wear a shorter, undecorated jacket (*nīvtana*) of felt or velvet. The trousers are similar to those of border Kurdish women.

Daragaz. The city of Daragaz is located northeast of Qūčān near the borders of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. Typical headgear for men of Daragaz is an ovoid lambskin hat (*šopūrma*, *borūk*). Another type is of black cloth or velvet (*qazzāqī*, *būḳārā'ī*) with decorations of black or brown lambskin on the rim. Men may also tie a wide white, yellow, or green (for *sayyeds*, descendants of the Prophet Moḥammad) shawl around a skullcap. The typical men's jacket (*don*) is also wrapped with a shawl, over which a long, full coat is worn. The loose trousers are made of black twill or blue cotton. Leather shoes are worn or more often sandals (*čāroq*) made from single pieces of red leather folded and laced together by leather thongs, which are tied around the ankles; the latter are more suitable for agricultural work and herding. The outfit is completed by leggings (*pālīk*) and a long, heavy cloak (*čūkā*) of coarse wool or goat hair worn over the shoulders.

The traditional garb for women of Daragaz is a knee-length dress (*kovnak*), the hem and collar decorated with black or red ribbon and coins. Over it they wear a jacket (*yal*, *kūlaja*) and under it pleated ankle-length trousers or underskirts (*šalīta*) of floral chintz, calico, or other cotton fabric. The scarf (*yāleq*, *bāšloq*) or shawl is of floral-patterned cloth. A black silk kerchief (*yāšmāq*) is tied around the head under the chin, with its point trailing in back. The tanned rawhide shoes have turned-up toes, and the tops are embroidered with red, yellow, black, and green silk thread. Stockings are made of floral-



printed wool or cotton. When going out women wear over the entire outfit a long *čādor* of black chintz or homespun cloth patterned with small blue checks.

Torbat-e Jām and Tāybād. In this area clothing more closely resembles that of adjacent Afghanistan (see xiii, xiv, above). In particular, the shirt worn by men is extremely full, requiring about 5 m of fabric, usually white or blue, and reaches to the knees, with two side slits. One type (*čeltelīz*) is fitted through the torso with flaring pleats (*telīza, parak*) at the bottom on the back and sides. The collar is also pleated. The shirt buttons over the chest, and the buttoned cuffs are decorated with *telīza* and embroidery. This version is worn by older men, whereas younger men wear unpleated shirts. Trousers, wide at the top and tapering toward the ankles, where they end in embroidered cuffs, require 6-7 m of material. They are gathered at the waist on a spun-cotton drawstring (*līfand*). Velvet caps (*qors*) are decorated with embroidery and mirror work; felt caps are also worn. Over the cap men wrap a shawl (*langūta*) 7-10 m long with tassels. Shoes were formerly made from single pieces of sheepskin or cowhide, but subsequently rubber was adopted for the soles, and nowadays Western-style leather shoes are worn.

On their heads the women of this region wear a shawl, sometimes fringed, under a diagonally folded black kerchief with red and green borders, which in turn is topped by a small cloth cap (*sarrīza*) with a string of silver coins and sequins tied around it. Their dresses somewhat resemble men's shirts, fitted to the waist and worn over trousers or skirts. The bodice is decorated with embroidery or sequins, and the sleeves are wrist-length with buttons. The trousers are similar to those of the men, with cuffs embroidered and decorated with sequins and gold thread. Heavily pleated ankle-length skirts, each requiring about 20 m of cloth, are also gathered on drawstrings at the waist. The lower part of each skirt is ornamented with bands of ribbon.

Sabzavār. In the part of Khorasan bordering on Semnān men wear simple, often cotton shirts with round collars under black sleeveless V-necked vests. Their trousers (*tembū*) are full, tapering toward the ankles. In winter they don cloaks of heavy cotton or other materials, slit at the sides and under the arms for freedom of movement. They wrap shawls (*mendīl*) around their waists over the cloaks and often also around their heads. Traditional shoes (*čāroq*) made from single pieces of leather are expensive and thus have been largely supplanted by handwoven cotton slippers (*gīva*) and rubber shoes. Farmers and herdsman wear felt caps and in cold weather bulky felt mantles (*kapank*),



with sleeves cut straight at the shoulders. They wrap their ankles with woolen strips (*peytava*) 1 m long and 10 cm wide.

Women wear scarves of cotton cloth, sometimes fringed, over which they wrap a small black silk kerchief (*sīā-dīsmāl*), with two corners tied at the forehead. One type of *čādor* (*čeršaw*) is made of blue checked material; the other has a border around its semicircular hem. The center of the straight edge is placed over the head. The simple knee-length dress has long sleeves and is slit at the sides. The collar is round with a buttoned opening over the chest, and the trousers like those worn by men. In warm weather a sleeveless vest (*jalīzqa*) is worn over the dress; when it is cooler a version with sleeves, embroidered with silk thread at the wrists and hem, is worn instead. Younger women wear red vests, whereas older women wear black ones with V-necks. The jacket (*yal*) is often made of velvet, with two pockets and embroidery at the closing and cuffs. The skirt is constructed of a broad band of cloth fitted to the hips and closing with two buttons in front, which is sewn to a second, heavily pleated piece reaching to the knees; the pleats require about 10 m of fabric. As women grow older they tend to wear their skirts longer. In winter they wear woolen stockings with designs at the ankles and heels and pointed leather shoes with tassels (*čoqqī*). They also wear rubber overshoes (*gāleš*).

Central and southern Khorasan

Dress for both men and women is similar to that of Sabzavār, with variations. In Gonābād, for example, men wear a felt cap sometimes wrapped with a white shawl. The shirt is loose and reaches almost to the knees; instead of a collar it has buttoned openings on the shoulders. Trousers (*tonbān*) are made of about 5 m of locally produced blue cotton and are gathered at the waist on a drawstring. The standard outer garment is a loose cloak slit on both sides. Women wear filmy scarves of locally produced materials (*yak-naḳī*). Their everyday dresses are usually short and worn over long, full trousers (*qadak*). At feasts and celebrations, however, women wear tight trousers (*nezāmī*), colorful short printed dresses decorated with sequins, and brightly colored short, pleated skirts (*šalīta*). The *čādor*, known as *afendī*, is typically made from cotton fabric.

In Bīrjand, at the southern tip of Khorasan, men wear skullcaps or felt caps around which white, yellow, or black shawls (*lambūta*) are wrapped; the shawls are tied under the chin and on top of the head. A long, loose shirt is worn under a vest (*jelesqa*) and over the vest a collarless coat. Trousers for



men and women are the same. Stockings (*ḵorow*) are made of wool in different colors, and the calves are wrapped with strips as elsewhere in this part of the province. A piece of cloth (*močpīč*) is worn at the wrists for work. Shoes are of leather or rubber, the latter known as *čaplīt* or *čappat*. Shoes with wooden soles (*katrāk*) are worn in the fields. Women knot scarves under the chin or fasten them with pins under a silk kerchief. Their dresses, of plain, dyed cotton, reach to just above the knees and are worn over skirts so long that they sometimes trail on the ground. At weddings and other festive occasions they wear shoes called *orsī*.

For clothing of the Turkmen of Khorasan, see xxvi, below.

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