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## INVESTIGATING THE EFFECTS AND CONTRIBUTION OF QAJAR ERA'S GOVERNMENTAL POLICIES ON THE TRADITIONAL ARCHITECTURE IN THE CITY OF TALESH

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### ABSTRACT

*Qajar era's architecture is the historical chapter of Iran's architecture detachment from the prior traditions and its synchronization with the western civilization's accomplishments. Numerous factors have been effective in the formation of Qajar era's artworks with the art and governmental policies' relations accounting for a large quotient of these factors. The two essential questions that the present article has been formed in line with finding answers to them are the quality of the art and governmental policies' relations during Qajar era and factors influencing these relations. The present article uses a descriptive-analytical method to investigate the way the governors in Qajar era treated the artists and architects and the art-governmental policies' relations in regard of the architecture in the city of Talesh. The obtained results are indicative of the idea that the governmental policies-art interactions are in the format of the governmental policies' support of the architecture as well as art and governmental policies' confrontation in some cases and the examples of this conflict can be found in the critical contents of the artworks. In fact, the government's political interests and expediencies and the Qajar sultans' desires, on the one hand, and the intellectual and political tendencies of the art fellows, on the other hand, are amongst the factors influencing the evolution of the relationship between art and governmental policies in this era in the architecture of such cities as Gilan and Talesh.*

**Keywords:** governmental policies, Qajar era, architectural art, Talesh.

### INTRODUCTION

Historical documents and evidence are reflective of the art and governmental policies' bonds in the course of history. The bond dates back to the launching of open political formations. Many of the cultural and artistic works and accomplishments of the ancient civilizations are memoirs and memorials of the names and memories of the rulers, warriors and wars that have played a part in the shaping of the history's stream. Generally, the art-governmental policies relations can be investigated in two ways: governmental policies' support of art and governmental policies' contradiction of art.

Local histories are amongst the important sources of research on histories of all countries. Besides the political history of the governors and local families, these local accounts contain a

lot of information about the cultural and social conditions of the regions. Researches of this type set the ground for two substantial accomplishments: first, it is by identification and codification of the local history that the richness of the country's historical studies, as coherent bodies, can be increased and the second one is that the extent to which the Qajar rulers, in Talesh, have influenced the architecture of Qajar era, can be gathered to the maximally.

Historical evidences of Qajar era reveal manifestations of the effect of governmental policies on art in this period, especially the effect of the governmental elites' policy-making. The titles of governmental positions, orders, declarations, governmental circulars and political contents of the artworks bring testimony to this claim. During the second half of Qajar government, the growth in modernism thoughts caused the emergence of a novel conversation space that considerably influenced the appearance of combined and plain art styles.

Paying attention to the art-governmental policies interactions and analyzing the factors influencing the formation of artworks are amongst the issues that have been less considered by the researchers in this field in such a way that the government's policy-making plays a determinative role amongst the factors influencing the creation of artworks.

It is worth mentioning that the majority of the studies carried out in this regard have dealt with the effect of governmental policies in a branch of art from the period amongst which reference can be made to a research by Amir Hussein Chitsaziyan on the effect of governmental policies on iconography in Qajar era that was published in seasonal journal of Iranian studies, no.21, Spring, 2013. In this research, the writer, following a brief look at the political and social evolutions in Qajar era, investigates the status of painting and its growth since Fath-Ali Shah Qajar's time but it falls short of speaking about the kings' policies for supporting the various art types of this era.

Amongst the other studies, as well, reference can be made to a contemplative article on Qajar art and its importance, translated by Vali Allah Kavusi and printed in Golestan-e-Honar article. In this article, a brief review is presented about the tendencies towards pictography in Qajar era as well as the art situation in Pre-Islam Iran and the effect of western art on the painting of this period has been dealt with within one page. The other article is titled the generalities of the Qajar era's art that has been translated by Pardis Bakhtiyari and published in the art's book of month. The author of the article suffices to the mentioning of general issues of the various kinds of Qajar era's art types.

Amongst the resources, as well, the architectural book in Naseri's royal court by Vahid Qobadiyan can be mentioned. The writer of this work solely investigates the architectural properties of Qajar era. Amongst the other resources, the history of Iran's art and architecture by Muhammad Yousef Kiyani can be pointed out. In this work, the author gives a brief review of the emergence and historical trend of architecture from the advent of Islam till the present time and nothing has been stated about the relations between art and governmental policies. Therefore, it is made clear that it is necessary to do research in this regard.

### ***Research Questions***

- 1) How has been the relationship between architecture and policies of the governors during Qajar era in the city of Talesh?
- 2) What factors have influenced the relationships between art and policies of the governors during Qajar era in the city of Talesh?



## RESEARCH METHOD:

The present study is a descriptive-analytical research that applies the library tools and field studies. Thus, numerous resources has been used for collecting the required information in the library research section about the way the Qajar governors have treated architecture, artists and artworks in the city of Talesh and investigating its outcomes.

### *Theoretical Foundation:*

#### *Qajar Kings' policies for Art Support:*

The relationships between architecture and governmental policies during Qajar era in the beginning of the Qajar government's establishment, i.e. the period of Aqa Muhammad Khan's reign, were afflicted with cessation and stagnation due to the existence of various disputes for the founding and stabilizing of the power. Besides the crises in this period, personality characteristics of Aqa Muhammad Khan, as well, instigated the negligence of art-related matters. The majority of the resources know his nomadic dispositions and tribal context as the causes for such an ignorance of art (Dialafola, 1983, 689). Amongst the favorable actions he took after enthronement, his pilgrimage to the holy shrine of Imam Reza (PBUH), his order for making a gilded sepulcher for the tomb of Imam Ali (PBUH) in Najaf, his construction of a dome on the tomb of Imam Hussein (PBUH) can be pointed out (Hedayat, 2007, 7475). But, the most important intervention by Aqa Muhammad Khan is his choosing of Tehran as the capital city. From historical viewpoint, Tehran can be considered as the inheritor of such ancient honors as Pasargad and Takht-e-Jamshid and also as the successor of a high position for which Shiraz and Isfahan had always been qualified until several centuries ago. And, it was in the end of 18<sup>th</sup> century that Tehran reached a degree of importance that made Aqa Muhammad Khan introduce it as the capital city and grant it the honors he had acquired following his defeat of Zandiyeh Dynasty (Jackson, 1991, 474). Moreover, in case of an invasion catastrophe from the north, it was always kept as a probable option to more readily transfer the capital to the aforesaid cities (Curzon, 2002, 44).

In an investigation of the art-governmental policies relationships during Qajar era, Fath-Ali Shah and Naser Al-Din Shah periods are enumerated amongst outstanding epochs. In these periods, various states of these relations surfaced within both supportive and confrontational formats. In fact, power projection that has been continuously exercised in the course of Iran's history was a part of a coordinated program for showcasing domination over the country's political arena during Qajar era (Diba, 2000, 433).

Fath-Ali Shah was seeking for the stabilization of his power and he was considered as an intermediary between the social orders and Iranian kings' ancient tradition heritage (Diba, 1998, 45). Amongst the essential accomplishments of his kingship, literary return, artistic mobility and government-oriented semi-regeneration have been pointed out (Golmohammadi, 1992, 98).

Paying attention to art was not only practiced for showcasing power and glory of Qajar's royal court (Diba, 2000, 428) but Qajar government was also seeking for the preservation of the heritage of the Iranian kings' ancient traditions via supporting various art types that showed itself within the format of art in support of politics and politics in support of art (Flore et al, 2003, 31). During the reign of Fath-Ali Shah that stability and peace returned to some extent



to Iran, efforts were made for improving the Iranians' art situation as a result of the king's expression of interest in art (Chitsaziyan, 2013, 75).

Naseri government's supportive policies in respect to painters appeared in various forms. In line with this, a number of Iranian painters, including Mirza Ali Akbar Khan Naqqashbashi, Mazin Al-Dawleh and Moshaver Al-Mamalek Mahmoudi, were sent to Paris (Goudarzi, 2006, 69).

The use of Sassanid palaces' pattern is clearly visible in some castles of this period. On the other hand, magnificent ancient architectural ornamentations, including stone-works and paintings, can also be seen in some of the aristocrats' edifices (Afshar Asl, 2000, 133). On the other hand, the local art's effect can be especially seen in the ornamental elements and images in the architecture of the Qajar era. Paintings of hunting scenes, working the symbol of sun and lion and figurative shapes and use of red and yellow in the tile-works and decorative elements are amongst the examples demonstrating the effect of ancient Iran's art on Qajar era's architecture (Dorudgar, 2004, 14). In this period, a sort of return to the splendid past of Achaemenids and Sassanids can be witnessed. For example, the larger hall of Golestan Palace is like the Sassanid palace in Damghan in terms of its general design and map. This is also a piece of evidence indicating the continuation of ancient Iran's architectural traditions (Ayatollahi, 2002, 303).

In fact, Qajar era's architecture should be investigated in two separate part types: one belongs to the beginning till the end of Naser Al-Din Shah's period that is the continuation of Zand and Safavid architecture but with a little change in building and decoration. In these periods, Iranian elements dominated the architecture and the foreign architecture's influence is very trivial during the early Naseri kingship period. The second part belongs to the architecture that was commenced since the late Naseri era and it is a successful combination of Iranian architectural types of the western Asia (Ayati, 2002, 300).

#### ***Examples of Iran's Traditional Architecture Effects during Qajar Era:***

Introversion, module-setting and enjoyment of identical bodies and sizes (Pirnia, 2010, 26), simplicity in the plan of the buildings, the existence of the minimum protrusions and indentations in the buildings and the shapes' rigidity and robustness (Ziari et al, 2014, 43), latent vertical and relatively less important communications and, instead, important and organizing central halls (Fatullayeve, 2013, 221), room-to-room spatial circulation system, no use of semi-circular arches in the building's façade (Pirnia, 2010, 344), utilization of columned porches as strong elements in the plan structure, the use of columns and columned architecture (Mohammadi et al, 2012, 92-93), use of yard as the element organizing the building spaces, subsided entrances and roofed porches on the same level as the exterior façade (E'tesam, 1996, 92), use of symmetry in the configuration of the ornamental images (Meskoob, 1999, 411), use of arabesque tracteries and hotai images as the ornamental architectural forms and avoiding the drawing of creatures having soul (Ansari, 1988, 357-358), giving superiority to the cold colors over warm colors and making no use of the nature in the ornamental images (Zabolinejad, 2009, 142-159) and interior decorations that needed a lot of work in contrast to the minimum exterior decorations are amongst the main indicators and indices of Iran's traditional architecture and they have played an important role in the formation of the Qajar era's architecture. Thus, they can be substantiated in tracing the effects of Iran's traditional architecture on Qajar era's architecture.



### *Examples of The West's Architecture Effects during Qajar Era:*

Windows opening to the street with decorated fences over them (beginning of extroversion in Iran's architecture), protruded entrances, bulged balconies, sloped gable roofs) and ornamentations of Rococo style (E'tesam, 1996, 92-93), use of staircase shelves as an axial element in organizing the building spaces (Fatullayev, 2013, 221), staircases starting from the middle of the antechamber and ascend in two branches in an opposite direction to one another or ceremonial stairways with decorative holders (E'tesam, 1996, 93), spatial circulation system relying on the centrality of the vertical and horizontal relationships of the corridor or antechamber to the room; Greek style column heads and semi-circular roman arches (Ansari, 2010, 167), giving superiority to warm colors over cold colors, naturalist and non-abstract ornamental images and use of the images of creatures having souls (Zabolinejad, 2009, 140-159), triangular or curved pediment on top of the façade, wall-installed stoves and fireplaces and the very high importance of external decorations are amongst the examples related to western architecture that, as opined by some researchers, shaped the structure of the architecture and decorations of a great many of the edifices during Qajar era in a way different from its prior traditional form. Thus, these can be substantiated in an investigation of the western architecture's effect on Qajar architecture.

### *Duality of Architecture in Qajar Era:*

In Qajar era, architecture is faced with new issues and it, on the one hand, fosters inclinations towards foreign buildings and, on the other hand, it never denies tradition. In between, reflection of the so-called foreign architecture in Iranian buildings is carried out by means of the images and descriptions of them and it never leads to the pure simulation. On the other hand, a membrane of the modernized Iranian decorations sits on the buildings and gives them Iranian spirits. It is worth mentioning that the various kinds of Qajar era art types were not direct continuation of the art types belonging to the immediate prior epochs (Nader Shah Afshar and Zand Dynasty's eras). Qajar era's art was indicator of three fundamental characteristics and features: daily increasing separation of Iranian culture from the great Islamic tradition as a result of Shiites' victory and competition with Ottoman Empire; daily increasing entry of people-oriented and public artistic elements; growing dependency on the western art's effects. Although this era's art is qualitatively in a lower level than the art of the prior periods, it exhibits a completely independent feature and identity (Scarcha, 2006, 35). Alongside the return to the previous traditions of Iranian architecture, the most important intervention taken by Qajar kings in the area of art can be perhaps classified into several sets: A) interest in art branches; B) modernism; C) religious interests; and, D) kings' acquisition of legitimacy

In confrontation with the governmental policies, some art species, meanwhile expressing the relationship between the art and the governmental policies, also display the conflicts between them as well as the challenges art could have created for the politicians. Art in confrontation with governmental policies is expressive of the principle of reversal or altering Fuco's methodological principles. The reversal principle speaks of the things individuals may imagine in their minds of concepts opposing a certain assumption (Zamiran, 2009, 38).

### *Position of Talesh:*

Tavaleh County or Talesh County is a city in Gilan Province in the north of Iran. It accommodates a population of 200649 people (2017) and it is the second largest city of the





province following the lead of Rasht and its capital is the city of Hashtpar reaching in population to over 54178 individuals (Statistical Center of Iran). The county has four districts and ten villages. Talesh County is located in the west of Gilan and it also possesses mountains and beautiful nature and enchanting plains and it is considered as one of Iran's ecotourism poles for its being stretched along a part of Caspian seaside. The county shares borders with Astara from the north, Caspian Sea from the east, Ardabil from the west and Rezvanshar from the south.



Figure 1: Cities positions

## STUDY FINDINGS:

### *Talesh during Agha Muhammad Khan Qajar's Reign:*

At the time that Aqa Muhammad Khan Qajar took over the power, Lankaran Port in the northern side of Astara River was the center of Talesh State. The ground had been set since Nader Shah Afshar's time for the formation of Lankaran Governorship with it being the center of Talesh government before the wars between Iran and Russia and it was envisioned as the governor house of Talesh state. The clan governing Talesh resided Lankaran since 1739 to 1918. The territory of this governing clan was gradually expanded and incorporated all the regions in Talesh except Masal and Shanderman and Taleshdoulab, the today's Masal and Rezvanshahr Counties. The founder of this government was Jamal Al-Din Mirza Beig, known as Qara Khan who was amongst Lankaran's Sadat and his lineage returned to Zaid Ibn Ali Ibn Al-Hussein (PBUH) (Baradgahi, 2000, 56-57).



Figure 2: State roads.

Mirza Beig was called Qara Khan by Nader Shah for his black face and he drew Nader Shah's attention for his chivalry during Daqestan war (1733-1734). After Nader Shah was murdered and in the course of the battle for claiming Iran's kingdom, Qara Khan could expand his territory and captured a vast part of Talesh. Qara Khan was arrested and imprisoned after Karim Khan Zand took over the power in 1743. Seven years later, he was freed by Karim Khan's order and he was again installed to the governorship of Talesh so as to act as a barrier to the ambitiousness of Hedayat Khan Gilani. In his struggles with Hedayat Khan, Hedayat Khan was also imprisoned for a period of time along with his sons, Mir Mustafa and Asgar Beig (Lankarani, 2002, 51-54). He died in 1780 and his elder son, Mir Mustafa Khan, became the governor of Talesh (Baradgahi, 2000, 59-60). Based on Bakikhanov's writings, Mir Mustafa Khan was imprisoned for a while in the jail of the local Amir and governor of Daqestan and Azerbaijan and he could take control of Talesh Khans with his agreement. Mir Mustafa Khan is the most famous governor of this clan (Bakikhanov, 2002, 169).

During his reign, the territory of Talesh's Khans was expanded and it encompassed nearly all Talesh from Balharoud to Dinachal-e-Asalem. He never submitted to Aqa Muhammad Khan Qajar and he also engaged in battles with his forces several times. Mir Mostafa Khan was a very powerful, astute and clever governor and a real politician and he could clasp the governance of Rasht twice by war. During the first time, he ruled the city for a year and, in the second time, he could only rule it for a month after which he was forced to retreat to Talesh. He commanded the entire region with his special strategies. The governance of Talesh by Mir Mustafa Khan should be considered as the beginning of a new period in the life of Talesh residents and a new era of government began with the disintegration of Talesh in 1828 into two northern and southern part types with the former being occupied by Russians and the latter governed by this clan.

This part was divided into three districts, namely Astara, Wilkij and Ojard and Wilkij (Namin) was selected as the governorship center of the foresaid threefold region. In the later stages, various individuals from this clan ruled Talesh and Mir Hasan Khan, his son, was one of them



and the governance of Wilkij, Namin, Astara and Ojard was transferred to his son Mir Kazem Khan following the death of Mir Hasan Khan. In the interval between 1824 and 1918, the following persons governed the region respectively: Mir Sultan Ahmad Khan, Mir Lotf-Ali Khan, Mirza Zain Al-Abedin Khan, Asadollah Khan Sarem Al-Saltaneh, again Mir Lotf-Ali Khan, Mir Solaiman Khan Sarem Al-Saltaneh, Mir Lotf-Ali Khan for a third time and another time Mir Solaiman Khan Sarem Al-Saltaneh and then Mir Sadeq Khan Sarem Al-Saltaneh (Qaffari, 2002, 31-34).

#### ***Evidence of Talesh Rulers during Qajar Era:***

The important historical documents for analyzing the events and accidents as well as the recognition and discovery of the cause and effect relationships in the contemporary historical issues of Iran are amongst the preliminary instruments in historical research based on which the researchers can provide their studies with credibility and substantiation and/or come up with confirming or refuting and/or supporting the existent theories. The role of documents cannot be even ignored in the contemporary era and in political decision-making. It is based on the investigation of the documents that many of the contemporary historical events of Iran can be illuminated and the required insights can be gained and the decisions can be rendered scientific and trial and error in the various historical periods can be avoided.

Mir Mustafa Khan Hosseini, son of Mir Jamal Al-Din Qarreh Khan Ibn Sayyed Abbas Ibn Mir Muhammad Baqer Ibn Mir Muhammad Reza Mojtahed Al-Orafa is amongst the most popular and most powerful rulers in Talesh and he had been ruling the entire region of Talesh. He started fighting Aqa Muhammad Khan Qajar after his power was taken over and he signed treaties with his other enemies and he incited a manlike fight and contention against the Qajar khan. In 1773, the commander Solaiman Khan Qajar wanted to go to Talesh when Aqa Muhammad Khan enthroned and he sent a message before entry to Mir Mustafa Khan but he refrained from going to welcome him and Solaiman attacked Mir Mustafa Khan accompanied by five thousand soldiers and set their houses on fire and the people rose up to support Mir Mustafa and a number of Qajar troopers were killed. In 1784, upon getting aware of the king's power, Mir Mustafa Khan, the autonomous ruler of Talesh, sent two of his brothers, Mir Qasem and Mir Isa, as well as Mirza Ahmad Kateb and Firuz Khan Mehrani Roudkenari along with a group of Talesh's elites to the royal court of Qajar khan and wrote a letter to him requesting the king's companionship by his brothers. In 1788, Aqa Muhammad Khan and his army decided to march through Talesh for capturing Georgia and they camped in Huniyeji (Virmuni) and had become ready to move towards Georgia (Ne'ematollahi, 2002, 191).

#### ***Effects of Modernism on Gilan's Traditional Architecture:***

One may unconsciously imagine the special geography of Gilan when talking about Gilan's architecture. It is clear beforehand from the aforesaid expression that the most original branch of this architecture is its overlap with a geography named Gilan. The delimitation of this geographical limit is beyond the scope of the present study. But, the pre-modern human being once began residing and constructing therein. The entire thing that is termed Gilan's traditional architecture heritage is the product of the human's mental and practical engagement with the nature. It ranges from the traditional structures and selection of constructional materials and methods of facing with the wind and rain to the patterns of the houses and the way of constructing passageways and bazars. Even the most detailed ornamentations existent in this architecture are inspired by the nature. In fact, it is called the





architecture without architect or vernacular architecture or spontaneous architecture or any other title given by the experts to this architectural kind (Bahraini, 2000, 74).

### ***Conditions Influencing Traditional Architecture in Talesh:***

Besides weather and climatic conditions that have considerable effects on the formation of the region's extroversive architecture, the social conditions and the people's way of earning income have not been ineffective. For example, in rural regions, the greeneries and highly planted environments prevent specific and evident hedging. The combination of architectural spaces in this region does not follow a special geometrical order. Constant rainfall and high relative humidity are the primary factors contributing to the formation of the region's architecture and city-building. In traditional architecture, wood and plant fibers are predominantly applied. Massive forests alongside the rice paddies are amongst the most important sources of supplying the masonries. The roof covers are usually built with two or four sloped segments due to the intensity and continuance of the rain (Diba, 1994, 49).

### ***The Epical and Political Contents in Talesh's Qajari Architecture:***

Showcasing the glory and magnificence of the governing Qajar Dynasty was one of the primary goals of applying political themes in visual art types. Qajar kings, more than any other Iranian dynasties, attempted to boast their power and importance via art in both inside and outside Iran. There, they exhibited the images of one single person or a group of their families and/or their visiting of the foreign ambassadors so as to deepen their influence of power inside the people's minds and also to magnify their sultanate and they did this by imitating the behaviors of the kings before the advent of Islam such as in Sassanid era. The return to Iran's ancient splendor not only found its way into the visual art types but it was also a part of recreating the Iranian history and culture and this movement was begun with the establishment of Qajar sultanate. Qajars did not invent graffiti rather they continued the long tradition of Iranian graffiti pace (Saremi, 1996, 104).

### ***The Contents of Plasterworks in Qajar Era's Talesh:***

In plasterworks from Qajar era, decorative themes possess a special stance. Originally, plasterwork and plaster-molding have always been given a decorative dimension in Iranian architecture and they were the integral types of beautifying the interior of the houses. The oldest plasterworks and plaster-moldings date back to the decoration of the Parthians and Sassanids' palace and the plasterworks and plaster-moldings in such castles as Dura-Europos and three-porch mansions and Karkheh summerhouses are reflective of the prominent stance of this art in the ancient time of Iran. In post-Islam Iran, as well, the plasterwork decorations find notable credibility by taking advantage of the Islamic culture's concepts like arabesque and hotai traceries and even Quranic inscriptions and this credibility receives a specific dimension in every epoch of Iran's history.

It is with the prevalence and peaking of Iranian art that decorative plasterworks are guised with a brilliant visage in the palaces and aristocratic edifices steal the heart and eyes of the possessors of tastes and satisfy their desires (Ajand, 2007, 38). In line with this, plasterworks have not been devoid of any effect in the houses of the governors and aristocrats in Gilan province and, subsequently, in the architecture of the city of Talesh.

An unexampled blossoming and a glazing magnificence has come about for a reason or another in the plasterworks from Qajar era in Talesh and this has to be envisaged more as a traditional art heritage. It was right at this time that the western architecture kneeled down



and it gradually become faded in the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to 20<sup>th</sup> century and the purely Iranian thematic images give their place to European motifs (Ajand, 2007, 40).

Disregarding the political intentions, Qajar era's paintings have also been applied for stimulating the emotions and satisfying the aesthetical senses, as well. They have taken over graffiti by depicting the images of flowers and birds and ornamented their houses by unprecedented and eye-catching styles. These paintings are seen especially in flowers and landscapes and in the form of images of things other than human figure on the pencil cases, mirror frameworks and so forth. Besides birds, flowers and landscapes, girls were also fascinating to Iranians like Europeans.

The effect of western art on Iranian art started from Safavid era and it reached its apex during Zand and Qajar eras and impressed various aspects of culture and art, particularly graffiti. During Qajar era, there is seen a large diversity in the art types related to architecture and designs and paintings like tile-works, plasterworks and mirror-works bearing different kinds of images and the painting on plasterworks became popular during Qajar era. These designs are usually simple and plain and this simplicity had stemmed from the painters' illiteracy and their being not attached to the principles of painting. During Qajar era, there is seen a large diversity in the art types related to architecture and designs and paintings such as in tile-works, plasterworks and mirror-works bearing different kinds of images. Painting on plaster becomes popular during Qajar era and it mostly takes two forms of watercolor and oil paints.

Amongst the distinct characteristics of painting on plaster, the art of establishing a relationship with the general public can be pointed out. The importance of recognizing the history of painting is also related to that. Such a communication with the general public has been most frequently visual. The majority of the Qajar era's graffiti were exhibited in the houses, bazars and passageways and they were influenced by the society's general culture and this helps us get closer to the discernment of the importance of these works.

The other vulgar art types like the paintings in the tea-houses displayed subjects similar to balanced artistic products. The heroic scenes of Ferdowsi's Shahnameh were the most frequent images of the epical paintings' canvas. Shiite topics, particularly the narration of Karbala incident, had taken special artistic forms and they were recounted by the narrators. The novel religious use of painting illustrated images of outstanding political characters in the memorial of their death. These images made the spectators sink into a space of religious moods because these representations were most often carried out in the vicinity of a tomb or inside a tomb.

#### ***Commander Amjad's House in Talesh:***

Otaqsara Palace or winter palace belonging to Nosratollah Khan Sardar Amjad is one of the most important governmental edifices of Gilan in the city of Talesh (Hashtpar) and it is a gigantic house made of brick that cannot be found anywhere else in Gilan. The building style and the domes' arcs on the entry gates and doorways are unprecedented in Gilan. According to local resources, the construction and completion of this building took 25 years. The stones used in the building have been brought from summer dwelling elevations in Talesh to this place and the architectural masters and many workers have worked for the construction of the edifice every day. The building that was seminally called Otaqsara for the place it has been established, can now be seen in the western edge of the main square in the city of Talesh (Hashtpar). This brick building with its blue exterior view along with the arched roofs on its doorways and entry gates draws the attention of any passerby. The first floor of the building



contains two large entry gates in its north and south in a symmetrical arrangement. The same symmetry can be seen in the use of four large windows providing a view of four sides on the second floor. The third floor contains four pergolas with wind-catching windows. The building was set on fire in the course of the Talesh people's local riots during constitutionalists' revolution and it was abandoned for sixty years until it was again reconstructed during early 1970s.



**Figure 3:** Commander Amjad's House in Talesh

#### ***Zarqam Al-Saltaneh's Summer Palace in Talesh***

Zarqam Al-Saltaneh's Summer Palace (Commander Amjad) is in the ancient village of "Aq Owler" that is also a summer resort positioned within a 35-kilometer distance to the west of Talesh County. The village is 1100m above open seas and it possesses an intact and untouched nature, deep valleys, vast and green pastures, lofty mountains and limpid springs full of mineral water and it enjoys a distinct position. The walls of the rural houses in Aq Owler are mostly white and the windows are blue; the roofs are sometimes covered by red clay and occasionally by timbers collected from the forest trees that are locally called "Latt".



**Figure 4:** Zarqam Al-Saltaneh's Summer Palace in Talesh

Summer edifices are comprised of three parts as follows: 1) the khan dwelling place that was specific to the khan and his family and close relatives; 2) guard-house that was the place

specific to the military persons; 3) barn. The aforementioned palace was set on fire during the peak of constitutionalism movement's activities by the constitutionalists and its reconstruction has been started from some time ago by Gilan's organization for tourism and cultural heritage.

## CONCLUSION:

Some historians consider this era as the period of copying the styles of western architecture. But, some others believe that the self-criticism approaches following Iran's defeat in the wars against Russia caused the formation of evolutionary tendencies in Qajar era's Iranian society; the different Qajar architecture, as well, is the product of this same idealist approach. A new method was institutionalized during Qajar era in architecture and this made Iranian architects mix the specific factors of Iran's architecture with the factors of Far East's architecture based on the specific method and attention and this provided for the superimposition of modernism over tradition.

It can be generally inferred that the relationships between art and governmental policies are reflective of the interactive and confrontational relations in the city of Talesh and, on the other hand, the political careers of the Qajar kings, the governance's ideologies and interests considerably influenced the art and governmental policies' relations in Gilan Province and Talesh County.

Qajar government's inability in encountering the foreigner-driven changes provided for the motivation and the initial determination for creating changes and copying the model of western civilization in the traditional space of the Iranian society. Qajar era's architecture was also not excluded from this maxim and it was in the beginning of Naseri period that buildings made based on a combined style appeared in Iran's architecture.

Qajar era is amongst the sensitive epochs of Iran's history. It was the time that tradition and modernity were firstly interwoven and the art became strongly interlaced with politics. In these relations, art is sometimes utilized for eternalizing the names of the sultans and the governmental families and showcasing the kingship authority and sometimes for satisfying the artistic interests of the king and also occasionally for acquiring legitimacy as well as for the inclination towards modernism. This approach of the fellows of power and art caused the fellows of art and possessors of talents and tastes to be installed to governmental positions and be given governmental titles. Therefore, the institutional position of the Qajar kings has played a valuable role in enhancing some art branches. In some cases, some of these same king-beloved art types served unexpected functions. Dramatic art types were given such functions during Naseri period in such a way that the statesmen were sometimes challenged in the acts by royal clowns for their use of critical themes. Thus, such functions reveal the confrontation of art and the governmental policies in this period. In fact, the governance's political interests and expediencies and the Qajar sultans' interests, on the one hand, and the intellectual and political tendencies of the fellows of art, on the other hand, are amongst the factors influencing the evolution of the art and politics relationships in this era.

Gilan's traditional architecture is declining and close to annihilation and the works made based on such a construction style will not be seen within several decades from now in this land. Unfortunately, quasi-modern methods have taken the place of the traditional architecture. In the novel methods of building construction, metal structures, brick covers,



sloped roofs are used within western formats and based on separation of the rooms' performance for certain intentions and needs and these are least coordinated with the environment and the climate.

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