



*The Education of Women
During the Qājār Period:
the Contribution Provided by the Works
of Fénelon and Madame de Lambert*

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ABSTRACT: This work aims at presenting the new educational materials proposed by Persian translators and foreigner authors such as Fénelon and Madame de Lambert whose works focused on woman's genuine role within the Islamic community and on new cultural ideals where men should have a different attitude towards women in order to grow the new generation according to healthy and renewed principles. Through the comparative and intertextual method, this research traces the links between texts and different influences. It will be shown how Persian authors have been inspired by French writers belonging to previous literary traditions to conciliate tradition and progress.

KEY WORDS: Women; Education; Qājār Period; French Literature



INTRODUCTION

The middle years of 19th century were characterized by deep political and social changes. In 1268H/1851, further education courses managed by teachers arose, without any addition of programs managed by the government. Instead, the religion schools' program was strictly traditional and Islamic. Only by the end of the Qājār age, more initiatives were implemented, mostly private, aimed at creating modern schools following the model of Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian schools (Avery-Hambly-Melville 177-179).

During this period, a new concept of culture was born; while previously the culture was a synonym for religion and, therefore transmitted through the sermons of religious men, now a written and printed culture spreads and it concerns different topics different from religious ones (Najmabadi 187).

A concept strictly linked to culture is the one regarding the homeland. Therefore, the homeland becomes a source of humanity as it is the source of cultural humanism and illumination. If patriotism implied the respect for the homeland, it also included an interest towards the human beings in order to keep the society clean and healthy (Kashani-Sabet 1175-1176). This concept implied the transfer of loyalty, honor and dignity from the family to the *Vaṭan* (Tavakoli Targhi 222). In fact, in that period, an overlapping of the concept of female identity with the idea of homeland was recorded: the homeland was showed as a female body and both of them were possessed and had to be protected. Moreover, during the first years of the XX century, the word "woman" (*zan*) takes a controversial value, meaning both woman and wife and suggesting an ambiguity of the femininity itself. In light of these considerations, the woman was seen as the partner of the man within the new Iranian nation (Najmabadi 207). In order to describe the progressive development of the role of women in XX century Iran, it is important to consider the transformation of political thought in the country. First of all it is underlined how the role of women has been central in the political evolution of the Nation. The theoretical relationship between the progressive change of the country and the socio-cultural relations with other western societies has been debated for a long time. Women were initially regarded as guardians of the family, reproductive vehicles and transmitters of national values for future generations (Paidar 356-357).

Therefore, the issue of women came to the fore especially during the period between the two centuries with the increase of cultural and political relationships with Europe, which delineated two perspectives. The first one was focused on the traditional role of woman intended as wife and mother. The second horizon is the one focused on the representation of the woman as a symbol of *millat* (people). Therefore, the educated woman becomes a representative for the Iranian progress towards civilization. Women education, such as the law and the industrial progress according to many reformists, became part of that plan aimed at progress and modernization. That was followed by a strong impulse for the establishment of schools for girls starting from 1324H/1906 arising from the awareness concerning the fact that the main cause for the Iran backwardness compared to Europe had to be attributed to the lack of education for



women, restating at the same time how women were not suitable for politics and should not to interfere in such issues (Ringer 238-240).

THE ISSUE OVER WOMEN EDUCATION AND TRANSLATION

At the end of the XIX century, the religious aspect was still prominent due to the presence, in Egypt, Turkey, Caucasus and Iran, of many works, texts and articles in Turkish, Arabic and Persian concerning the need for women to cover themselves.

The importance of education and teaching to girls as wives and mothers of the future generations made a large number of intellectuals start to write specific texts for girls.

At first, such texts were the result of translations. An example of this kind is the one offered by *Tarbiyat-i nisvān*, a translation of the *Tahrīr al-Maraāt* by the Egyptian Qāsim Amīn of Egypt, translated and printed in Persian in 1318/1900 by Mīrzā Yusif l'tiṣām al-Mulk (Āriyanpūr 5-6, 8). Therefore, *Tarbiyat-i nisvān* produces new observations regarding women's rights and the relevance of instruction and education for them. The author states that Muslims must stress the importance of women education as well as it happens in the European countries. The chapters, which constitute the mentioned work, are linked to different topics ('Āmilī Riḍā'ī 228-229; Najmabadi 193). These topics are as much common to other texts studied in the first schools of that age as those newspapers focusing on the need for the establishment of schools for girls.

The press of that age explains what is the difference between the European woman and the Iranian one and, most of all, the fact that in the European countries there was a slight difference between man and woman in each employment and job, also in science, in terms of education and training. In Iran, on the contrary, women were not present in any work field, but almost exclusively relegated to their childcare and domestic field (*Akhtar* n. 4 3).

From this socio-cultural relationship and comparison with European reality, a combination of factors came out which led to the increase in the number of educated boys at the end of the XIX century. However, the lack of education for girls and their following lack of development lasted. This circumstance caused a strong desire for Iranian boys to establish relationships, and even marriages, with European girls. This issue caused such a strong concern ('Āmelī Riḍā'ī 178-179; *Īrānshahr* n. 8 494-495; *Īrānshahr*, n. 9 542-548).

In the magazine *Īrānshahr* it is underlined the fact that Iranian men knew that the marriage with European women was first aimed at satisfying sexual needs and personal fun. Therefore, other reasons had to be intended only as excuses and justifications. Other answers underlined that foreign mothers would have not desired to protect their husband, children and Iran, or to resist against enemies because their national feeling was not strong. Furthermore, other men who were against the marriage with European women focused on the issue deriving from such practices that would have damaged Iranian girls. These young women, at this point, would have remained without a



husband while the *shar'ia* expected for them the exclusive marriage with men coming from the same country and religion. As a consequence, a solution to this issue could have been to send in Europe both boys and girls in order to develop the new mentality in each of them. This would have led to a new generation, completely and perfectly Iranian ('Āmelī Riḍā'ī 181; *Īrānshahr* n. 11-12 675-681; *Īrānshahr* n. 9 219-221).

This is the point of awareness concerning the importance of education at first, together with training, for both the female and male sphere. The education is reached through a hard and long path and it took the first steps in this respect only during the period of the Constitutional Revolution. In fact, the activists, in order to educate girls, established schools and helped the development of women associations, which had a key role in the spread of teaching for women (Ringer 238-240).

Nūrī, an unconstitutional religious man, stated that the establishment of schools for women was the same as opening houses of prostitution (Najmabadi 200). Therefore, he issued a *fatvā* against women education as it caused "changes in the social roles" (Sabahi 54).

From an educational point of view, during the years between 1246/1830 and 1288/1871, Christian missionaries, especially American and French, launched educational and medical programs in the country for the first time (Curzon 506). Anyways, the American and French missionary schools could benefit from a strong protection by Iranian authorities and by the king. In fact, the king Muḥammad Shāh believed that they encouraged the achievement of his goal by moving the attention over languages and European science towards Iran (Nāṭiq 158).

The school *Tarbiyat-i banāt* (the education of girls) was established in 1329H/1911 in Tehran and it was the most well-attended and well-respected school. It was opened in the village of the Bahā'ī community and followed the modern style of that community. The Iranian bahā'ī were the pioneers of modern education in the late XIX century. The researcher Rostam Kolayi claims that perhaps this school existed also before under a different name and it was managed by bahā'ī women. In any case, it was opened under the managing direction of the *Iranian Bahā'ī boys' school committee* and many bahā'ī American missionary women. The school *Tarbiyat* attracted also children coming from non-bahā'ī families due to its non-religious course of studies. The educational path offered was a mixture of domestic sciences, such as education of children, management of the house, cook, and a solid academic basis, such as teaching of English, geography, anatomy, physiology and some first aid notions. Apart from schools bahā'ī inspired, in Iran there were schools called *Maktabkhānih* belonging to the ethnic-religious minority of the Zoroastrians. In these schools, boys and girls learnt to read, write, the *Avestā* and prayers (Rostam-Kolayi 63-64).

It is interesting to highlight the contribution of Ī'timād al-Salṭānih, writer, translator, politician and journalist who was in charge as secretary of the king for years and directed the *Dār al-ṭabā'ih* (1284H/1867), the translating organ of the Court. Furthermore, he dealt with the woman issue and in his diary *Dār al-ṭabā'ih* (1284H/1867), written from 1298H/1880 to 1313H/1895, Ī'timād al-Salṭāneh reveals how the relationship between Iranian and European, the presence of European missionary



schools, the publication of books and newspapers strongly influenced the change of women's everyday life.

Another interesting point regarding I'timād al-Salṭānih is that, between the years 1304H/1886 and 1306H/1888, he translated a book from Turkish and he called it *Khiyrāt Hisān*. It introduced the names of some well-known women in the Islamic world until the age of the author himself. Through the translation of this book, which was focused on wise women, well known within the Islamic world for their devotion and fear towards God, he aimed at stimulating women and encourage those behaviors that he could not find in the women of that age. To these women, he wanted to show right models they could have followed. Moreover, he adds that in Europe, during the last few centuries, all of the sciences had been addressed towards progress by extending the credit also to women authors called *Femmes Celebres* and *Femmes Illustres*, well-known and prestigious women, of whom he appreciated the wit and level of knowledge. Therefore, they could have offered their useful contribution to the world, with their commitment also in the field of science and industry. The desire to encourage the womankind is clear and it is also obvious that the standards found in prestigious women, according to the point of view of I'timād al-Salṭāneh, represent the same criteria that could be attributed to the male gender (Malik Tāj Xānum Najm al-Salṭānih 15-19). Therefore, the literary work becomes a means of information and social criticism, new forms of communication through an easier and sometimes colloquial language arose thanks to newspapers. In fact, the improved Persian literature addressed wider population groups with educational aims (Tornesello 3).

The progress resulting from a better education can be found in one of the most important and influential texts about the education during the Constitutional Revolution: the work by Ṭālibūf. The main character is a seven years old boy called Aḥmad who has two brothers and two sisters and it is the smartest between the siblings.

The author tries to compare the sister Māhrukh with Aḥmad by highlighting the lack of education of the first one. In the preface of the book, it is specified that the deep trust the main character feels towards science has inspired the topics which were handled and taken from *Émile* by Rousseau, leading the author to compare the education of the two children, Émile and Aḥmad. Different chapters make up the book. The first one deals with the education of Aḥmad by his father who does not allow him to go to school, the second one, in which Aḥmad goes to school and the third one, in which the boy becomes an engineer, author of many books. In this way, Aḥmad becomes the model of the citizen as scientist through the scientific education. Later, through the figures of the two sisters, Zīnab e Māhrukh, the author deals with the topic of women education. Aḥmad, often by answering to the questions of his sister, shows a high knowledge. In this way, he lets her ignorance emerge but he explains how women are interested in learning. Ultimately, Ṭālibūf negatively judges European women, especially concerning their relationship with men, their revealing outfit, their way to put on make-up and the fact that they go dancing. All of this reveals a kind of moral anxiety (Najmabadi 191-192; Ṭālibūf).

We must specify that Ṭālibūf belonged to a large group of intellectuals influenced by European authors, especially French ones. At the beginning, the novels entered Iran



in different languages, such as French, English, Russian, German and Arabic and, after that, the translators made them available in Persian. For instance, 'Ali Khān Nāẓim al-'ulūm translated the work *Les Aventures de Télémaque* by François Fénelon from French in 1304H/1886. Muḥammad Ṭāhir Mirzā Iskandarī translated *Le Comte de Monte-Cristo* (1309H/1891), *Les Trois Mousquetaires* (1316H/1898), *Louis XIV de France* (1322H/1904) by Alexandre Dumas and *Les Mystères de Paris* (1325H/1907) by Joseph Marie Eugène Sue; *Paul et Virginie* (1324H/1906) by Jacques-Henri Bernardin de Saint-Pierre (Āryanpūr 237). Since Persians discovered French literature during the XIX century, they were attracted by its various literary genres, first by the philosophical essays, then by the adventure novels with the Romantics. In the middle of the XX century, they were fascinated by the existentialists and by the "theatre of the absurd", although they showed a deep interest towards the comedies written by Molière during the XVII century. These were field of interest and sources for several adaptations during the Constitutional age (1323H/1905-1337H/1919) and during the age of Riḍā Shāh (1300/1921-1320/1941). The influence of this model of French literature in Iran is very significant, not only for the stylistic innovation and for adaptation, but also for its socio-cultural features (Sanjabi 251).

THE LINK BETWEEN PERSIAN EDUCATIONAL TEXTS AND THE WORKS BY FÉNELON AND MADAME DE LAMBERT

Speaking of French authors, especially in the history of French literature, the work *Traité de l'Éducation des filles* written by Fénelon is very well known. It deals with the education of girls and it was published in 1099H/1687. At the end of the eighteenth century, common to different European countries, the main task of women was to pass on to their children both traditional customs and language. Women took a prominent role in building and preserving the historical memory of their country. This process favoured the politicization of women and, as a consequence, the private and public spheres were no longer separate. Belonging to a group is a very strong emotional and primitive stimulus. "Family" is the place where complementary capacities are structured and it has played an important role in the nationalization process. In the 19th century, the family was not only a place to exercise moral virtues, it was also the environment where mutual obligations coexisted and above all it was the place where honor linked ancestors and descendants. In Europe, family is the place where the idea of national honour begins, the place where a bond between an individual and a society is built thus establishing a code of social conduct. At the same level homeland is the reference for the honour of the family (Porciani 19-20, 23).

In the literary circle of French authors, Fénelon claimed that women had a main role in causing positive or negative behaviors and that the bad education of women is more damaging than the men's one. That is why men's confusion is often caused by the bad education they received by their mothers and by the passions other women imparted to them at a later age (de Salignac de Lamothe Fénelon 7).



The topic of education and particularly the role of mothers in this field is reaffirmed in the memories of princess Tāj al-Saltānih who confesses the wish to have the writing skills of Victor Hugo or Jean-Jacques Rousseau (Taj al-Saltana 96). Then, by quoting the words of the French scholar Jules Simon, she describes the figure of the mother as a “kind gardener of the house”. Her duty consists in providing education, information and knowledge because the ethical and social reforms must have the priority over the political ones [...], obviously the education starts at home before school (Taj al-Saltana 78-80, 84).

In her works *Avis d'une mère à son fils* and *Avis d'une mère à sa fille*, written for the education of both boys and girls, Madame de Lambert believes that the education of girls and women has been seriously ignored during the centuries. Concerning this, the author states that families are enhanced or destroyed by women, considered by her the half of the World and, therefore, essential for children education, especially during the first years, a time in which they get the deepest and strongest impressions (de Marguenat de Courcelles de Lambert 97-98). Family and homeland have a relationship of mutual assistance. Moreover, the nation represents an important reference point for giving precise rules to domestic life (Porciani 21).

The issue over the education of women and its influence on children's education was one of the most important issues discussed in the works of modernist Iranian scholars during the age Qājār, such as Mīrzā Āqā Khān Kirmānī (1270H/1853-1314H/1896) and Mīrzā Fath 'Alī Ākhūndzādih (1226H/1811-1294H/1877). These authors dealt with women's issues, which were brought up again later and spread in the newspapers and magazines during the period of the Constitutional Revolution. Kirmānī wrote that Iranian women were not only considered as insignificant, shameless, inferior, weak, prisoners, but also without knowledge and far from sagacity and, for this reason, not informed about the world. Therefore, without all the features of human beings, women who for one thousand, two hundred and eighty years had been covered by the *chādūr*, far from social relationships, segregated in the dark corners of the houses, forced to give up to any expectation. It is clear that, according to the author, children born from women living in these conditions would have acquired the same features and habits of their mothers (Kirmānī *Si Maktūb* 130-131). According to the intellectual Kirmānī, the first school for an individual is the one given by the mother's womb, a school in which the foetus acquires the moral principles and develops those features and that nature that accompany also the mother during the pregnancy.

The second school is the one ensured by the family where the child is educated according to the nature and habits of that unit in which the closest teacher is the mother (Kirmānī *Ṣad khiṭābih* 158-160).

It can be seen that the concept on the importance of child education is addressed in a similar way by Fénelon, by princess Tāj al-Saltānih, by Madame de Lambert and by Kirmānī, who support the great importance of the mother's role at the same time. The text *Tarbiyat al-banāt* (The education of girls), a lithography written for the girls of the age Qājār who were enrolled in school (Mīrzā 'Azīz Allāh Khān), was published for its second edition in 1329H/1911 by Mīrzā 'Azīz Allāh Khān. The author translated the work, as stated by himself, from French to Persian with the aim of giving a teaching that could



have been used by families. Actually, girls studied it during the second year of primary school.

Mīrzā 'Azīz Allāh Khān admits that he partially translated the original text by taking only the parts suitable for the society of that age.

Moreover, in the introduction, the author underlines the important duties for both women and girls: to manage the family, to look after children and raise them. He suggests that girls, from a very young age, have to be informed about the ways and manners of living and have to be warned concerning the correct educational teachings in order to be prepared when they become mothers and lead of the family and can put into effect the rights of the household.

The author defines the woman with the word *kadbānū*, which means a woman who knows very well how to manage a house and arrange the housework in the best way. In the dictionary, this word is translated as married woman and lady of the family. Consequently, we could state that the author, by using this definition, outlines and suggests the precise role of the woman within the family, as the word *kadbānū* is repeated several times in the schoolbook. Moreover, it also describes the features, which embody the lady of the house (Mīrzā 'Azīz Allāh Khān 9).

The desire to start educational paths together with a greater freedom for the female society, seen as a way to improve life conditions, can be observed also in the work by Bībī Khānum Astarābādī. In the *Ma'āyib al-rjāl* (the flaws of men) written in 1312H/1894, the author appreciates the freedom of the European woman, which appears respectful and well-educated, knows many things and she is allowed to be in contact with men she does not know or who are not tied to her by marriage or blood bonds. It is considered very positive the fact that these women have an education, which allows them to be emancipated and reach a high level of education, unlike Iranian women who are busy with domestic works, especially if they belong to the middle class.

On the other hand, Bībī Khānum explains the difficulties for Iranian women to imitate the behaviors of the European ones, due to their strict link with religion and family commitments (Floor-Javadi 75).

The circumstance, in which the woman is confined and deprived of information regarding the world around her, is stated again by the newspaper *Īrān-i nuw*, which reports the fact that the woman does not have rights neither in her private and family life. The only card they can play during their life consists in having a beautiful body because, thanks to it, the woman can be loved by her husband. A woman who does not have neither *kifāyat-i 'aql* (enough mind) nor *iṣālat-i ra'ī* (noble of opinions) will stay confined in her lack of education and her illiteracy will have repercussions on her family, whether rich or poor. Therefore, the only difference between women from different social backgrounds in Iran seems to be, at this point, the difference regarding clothes (*Rūznāmih-yi Īrān-i nuw* n. 91 7).

Women do not have any commitment except to meet each other in order to chat and gossip, they do not think to science neither for a moment and they do not have the slightest awareness about the seriousness of their lack of education (*Rūznāmih-yi Īrān-i nuw* n. 24 8). In fact, they believe to *Khurāfāt* (superstitions) and to the hallucination of *Kulthum nanih*, to witches and fortune-tellers (*Rūznāmih-yi Īrān-i nuw* n. 94 6).



Concerning the superstition in *Avis d'une mère à sa fille*, Madame de Lambert states that the female rulers took from vulgar people, instil in children the lowest feelings and replace religion with superstition (de Marguenat de Courcelles de Lambert 98-99).

At the same time of the publication of the newspaper *Īrān-i nuw*, the book *Tarbiyat-i al-banāt* by Mīrzā 'Azīz Allāh Khān was printed in 1329H/1911. We must remind that in the same year in which the book was published, the school *Tarbiyat-i banāt* (the education of girls) was established in Tehran, as previously mentioned. This was one of the most efficient schools established by the Bahā'ī community that was the pioneer in modern education during the late XIX century (Rostam-Kolayi 63). Therefore, the text *Tarbiyat-i al-banāt*, carrying the same name of the school, could probably be one of the textbooks studied in it.

Tarbiyat-i al-banāt is the first lithographic work analyzed in this research and, on the front cover, it states as follows:

The book *Tarbiyat-i al-banāt* was translated in Persian by Mr. Mīrzā 'Azīz Allāh Khān, secretary in France, in an easy way, simple and effective, because it is a moral book for all the girls coming from any family and its teaching and learning are useful. (Mīrzā 'Azīz Allāh Khān 3)

The researcher Najmabadi refers to the text *Tarbiyat-i al-banāt* and claims that the study subjects in the schools for girls were no longer restricted to the teaching of Islamic tradition but these places also offered courses to teach to women new ways of raising their children, in order to become a new kind of wife. Such courses included: management of the house, education of children, hygiene, manual arts, cooking and other instructions. In the text, there are three examples of woman. The first one called Lady Pleasure ('Ishrat) spends her time chatting and spending her husband's money; the second one called Lady Pleasant (Bihjat) works hard to become a good housewife, makes her best but she is messy because she did not learn how to manage a house. The third one, instead, is called Lady Chaste ('Iṣmat) and she is a model of behavior, she is efficient, she finishes her duties first and, in this way, she can deal with something else when husband and children come back home. The name Lady Chaste is significant when referring to the chastity of the new modern women (Astarābādī 24-26).

Concerning the subjects studied by girls, Fénelon considers as essential that they know the four arithmetical rules, by getting them used to maths from an early age. According to the French author, it would be good if they knew also the principles of justice, for instance the difference between testament and donation, or between a contract and a replacement, inheritance and the main law rules or the habits of the country in which they live in order to make these legal acts valid. Such information are necessary if they get married as businesses will concern them within the marriage (de Salignac de Lamothe Fénelon 68).

In fact, according to the text too, it is important to educate a girl since childhood and, above all, it is useful that she knows the regulations of the law in order to avoid being tricked and to be a good mother (Mīrzā 'Azīz Allāh Khān 4-5).

According to Fénelon, a mother must be fully educated concerning religion, must have a determined and firm character to be applied to the management of the house and a character that is used to do so. Most women ignore the economic management



as it is considered as a less important task. According to Fénelon, especially those women who grew up in luxury and wealth refuse this virtue. Strength and happiness of a Country do not consist in having many districts and poorly farmed, but in having what is needed for the maintenance of many people. This requires, without doubts, a greater brilliance in order to learn all of the arts which might be useful for economy and for the management of the family, which is like a little republic (de Salignac de Lamothé Fénelon 62-63). The link between family and country conditions can be found in the scholastic text *Tarbiyat-i al-banāt*, where the author explains also the importance of technique and knowledge development for the homeland improvement (Mīrzā 'Azīz Allāh Khān 4-5). Indeed, the following passage from *Tarbiyat-i al-banāt*, shows how the housewife's work is considered as a science:

In one of the ancient books on this topic, one of the scientists wrote that you have to put in a pot a lot of patience and good mood, add the same amount of good character and goodwill, take off laziness and arrogance; then, without moving away from the fireside, let it cook gradually. This is the receipt for the happiness of a woman! This wise saying is correct but not complete: we complete it with order, manner, speed and cleaning that have to be taught to a woman and it is essential. [These are Cicero's sayings] (Mīrzā 'Azīz Allāh Khān 9)

We can then notice that one of the quoted passages from the *Tarbiyat-i al-banāt* by Mīrzā 'Azīz Allāh Khān underlines some concepts in a very similar way to what the French author Fénelon wrote.

In 1331H/1912, the *Kitāb-i Ta'līm al-banāt* (The book of teaching for girls) by Mīrzā 'Azīz Allāh Khān was published and addressed to girls. The author does not say that this text is the result of a translation but he uses the words "*bih sabk-i jadīd*", that meaning "a new style".

On the first page, we might notice the stamp of approval by the minister *mu'arīf* (culture) who grants the permission to use the book and teach it in the female schools. In the preface, the author gives importance to those who try to keep the country body healthy and must take care of it through the security of teaching and learning for girls. This has to be done in a reasonable and right way, so that it can be useful for boys too and their background results as strengthened since childhood. Moreover, he believes that in most countries, thanks to abundance of science and art, women have reached the highest level of dignity. In the second lesson, we can read some advice offered by the author in support of women rights and education. That is because, after having spoken about the progress of European and American women and after having considered them as a model, which has to be followed when learning science, he explains that the progress of the country derives from the female commitment. However, his book is largely based on the rules of the life as a housewife and it does not speak about the social activity of women. According to the author, all of this belongs to the rules of civilization (Mīrzā 'Azīz Allāh Khān 5-7). Actually, according to Madame de Lambert, the first foundation of the civil life consists in thinking about the others because the civil life is a mutual exchange of help (de Marguenat de Courcelles de Lambert 178-179).



The connection between the previous passage from the text *Kitāb-e Ta'lim al-banāt* and the work by Fénelon, *Traité de l'Éducation des filles*, can be found in the essential role played by the mother or educator. Furthermore, according to Fénelon when speaking about the features of the person who deals with children's education, he states that they do not have to be influenced by people who do not follow the rules because they will get used to love feelings and behaviors of those they love (de Salignac de Lamothé Fénelon 18). According to Mīrzā 'Azīz Allāh Khān too, the mother has to be a model of behavior for children (Mīrzā 'Azīz Allāh Khān 38). By comparing the thought of Bibī Khānum regarding the role of the mother, the author underlines the importance of the mother figure as educator who has to give a greater discipline to the child; otherwise the behavior of the latter will be always worse (Floor-Javadi 75). In her essay *Avis d'une mère à sa fille*, regarding the education of young women and addressed to her daughter, Madame de Lambert is inspired by the teachings of Fénelon. In Madame de Lambert's work, a firm and right spirit is acquired through study, which therefore influences the moral education, because the mind cultivation leads to virtue and happiness (Granderoute 23-24). According to her too, rather than forbidding a certain behavior, it was necessary to show the reasons which could lead to carry out a certain task, by making it more pleasant too. By always referring to Fénelon, Madame de Lambert underlines the importance and effectiveness of a good example compared to the disconnection between actions and words (Granderoute 17-18). Therefore, the French and Iranian authors coming from different ages argue that the mother, apart from being an example to be followed for her children, must be educated in order to be a model to emulate.

The author of the text *Tarbiyat-i al-banāt* highlights the fact that the relationship within the couple influences the child education; in fact, parents, in order to get the best results, must be in agreement. He underlines the flaws of parents stating that there is no need to be in conflict to become the head of the family. On the other hand, Fénelon encourages parents or educators to avoid hiding their flaws to the child because, those who do not forgive anything to children but forgive everything to themselves, create a critical and evil sensibility in the child. On the contrary, it is necessary to give children a good example by correcting their flaws while parents correct theirs (de Salignac de Lamothé Fénelon 18). Both in the *Tarbiyat-i al-banāt* and in the *Traité de l'Éducation des filles*, the authors try to underline a link between the child behavior and his development and the parents' behaviors which influence especially the moral dimension of children. However, in the *Tarbiyat-i al-banāt*, the author claims that the woman must respect and obey to the husband's decisions in order to get the well-being of the family.

According to the author of the *Kitāb-i Ta'lim al-banāt*, what ensures happiness and security of a society is given by religion, law and education, for women in particular; these concepts are reaffirmed in the school books of the Constitutional Revolution age. The author focuses his attention on the importance of faith, which has to be felt by everyone and represents one of the essential basis for society (Mīrzā 'Azīz Allāh Khān 4). According to Fénelon too, religion is a basic element. In fact, he suggests to parents or educators the ways to bring children closer to God, by persuading them with Christian truth and leading them to the knowledge of death and Heaven, referring to it as a place



where the souls of the dead people go. Moreover, Fénelon believes that the example of many martyrs, of other first Christians [...] and the grace of baptism together with education, could mainly involve the faithful, by letting them despise what belongs to body because the soul which is dominated by the body, is weak and miserable and it is like a furious horse. The soul is the immortal expression of the image of God's beauty (de Salignac de Lamothe Fénelon 35-36, 40). Fénelon argues that the life of women must follow the model of Jesus Christ. He imposed on women a complete submission regarding faith. They must know the religious precepts but could not think about them too much. On the other hand, according to Madame de Lambert: "In order to be Christians, it is necessary to strongly believe, in order to be wise it is necessary to see with certainty" (Grandroute 25-27). Furthermore, the French author believes that the woman must cultivate and feed the mind with truth, purify the heart and lead it towards a religious devotion (de Marguenat de Courcelles de Lambert 140).

Concerning the value of a woman, Madame de Lambert states that it lies in chastity and, in support of her argument, the French author mentions the example of Agrippina Maggiore, wife of Germanico, who was forgiven due to the love of her chastity (de Marguenat de Courcelles de Lambert 111).

In the *Kitāb-i Ta'lim al-banāt* the features of the woman who is worthy of praise are listed, by focusing on her character because it is more important than the material assets and it is the only element for which a woman is chosen by the man. The honesty of the husband and, therefore, the happiness of the marriage will derive from the behavior of the wife (if it will be aggressive or submissive). Moreover, the flaws of the husband have to be changed with kindness, it is necessary to keep the secrets of the spouse and the couple and hold the tongue in order not to regret about the consequences. The obedience to the husband's will is essential to maintain a peaceful relationship. Concerning the children education, the authors highlights the hygiene because the husband appreciates the dedication of the person who takes care of his children (Mirzā 'Azīz Allāh Khān 84-88). With regard to the relationship, Fénelon claims that for women it is enough that one day they will know how to manage the house and obey their husbands. The author gives his reasons by saying that generally women have a weaker and more curious spirit than men. They must not rule the country, make war or join the minister of sacred things. The majority of the liberal arts does not lie with them as they are made for moderate execution. Even their body is less strong and robust than the men's ones, however nature gave them sharing, industry, cleaning and the economy in order to be easily busy in their houses (de Salignac de Lamothe Fénelon 6).

In any case, we must point out again that Fénelon considered as important the fact that women had some knowledge concerning the law so that they could avoid to be deceived. Regarding the figure of the woman who is worthy of praise, he gives an example of virtuous woman included in the Bible, where it is described a woman who is always busy with the care of the house, get used to hard work, she has well-mannered children of whom people speak well and she is praised for her commitment. Furthermore, the French author claims that the woman who fears God is the one who will be praised. "By the fruit of her hands and in the public council she is praised for her works" (de Salignac de Lamothe Fénelon 77).



One of the things that the woman should avoid, according to what claimed in the lithography *Kitāb-i Ta'lim al-banāt*, is speaking without restraint and without using the brain (Mīrzā 'Azīz Allāh Khān 9). Regarding that, also Madame de Lambert explains that the inner disorder passes through the heart until the mouth and it is this same disorder which generates dissolute conversations (de Marguenat de Courcelles de Lambert 116).

Concerning bad habits, while Madame de Lambert encourages thinking and improving the character by changing flaws into advantages because the mind grows larger and expands through exercise (de Marguenat de Courcelles de Lambert 142-152), in the *Kitāb-i Ta'lim al-banāt* it is also specified that, apart from thinking, it is essential to be far-sighted (Mīrzā Muḥammad 'Alī Khān 85).

In the following passage from the text *Kitāb-i Ta'lim al-banāt*, the author highlights the importance of savings for women but by specifying that the excess produces unpleasant consequences and parsimony must not be turned into avarice because also the latter ruins the well-being of the family (Mīrzā 'Azīz Allāh Khān 7).

The concept regarding the use of money in a good way is supported by Fénelon too, who believes that it is useful to get used to handle tasks since the early age, to go to the grocery store, to be careful with money but without exceeding in avarice (de Salignac de Lamothe Fénelon 63). Consequently, the importance of being disciplined since the early age is underlined both in the text by Fénelon and in the ones studied in the schools for girls.

Another similar feature that can be found in the comparison with the lithography *Kitāb-i Ta'lim al-banāt* and French authors is the topic of female beauty. While Fénelon believes that graces are misleading and beauty is vain (de Salignac de Lamothe Fénelon 77), Madame de Lambert and Fénelon have different opinions regarding aesthetic beauty. According to the male French author, beauty has a charming and deceptive power, it is fleeting and it helps young women only for a good marriage. On the contrary, according to Madame de Lambert, "beauty is not everything compared to value, but value without beauty risks being nothing" (Grandroute 18). According to the Iranian author Mīrzā 'Azīz Allāh Khān, real beauty derives from behavior and not from aspect, that is why a good education has to be achieved and the character has to be corrected. Moreover, he underlines the need of study and knowledge in order to acquire a correct behavior (Mīrzā 'Azīz Allāh Khān 13). This concept is stated also by Madame de Lambert but in a different way. In the essay dedicated to her daughter, she hopes that her studies influence her nature and, therefore, reading could be turned into virtue (de Marguenat de Courcelles de Lambert 76).

As underlined, there are different common features between the teachings of French and Iranian authors, addressed both to boys and girls. Based on the assumption that many Iranian authors were translators and knew French, there are two theories: the first one is that the French works mentioned before have influenced Iranian authors. The second one is that there would be other similar works in other languages, which have contributed to change some features in the view of female and male education. We must remember that in the last page of the school book *Kitāb-i Ta'lim al-banāt*, there is a list of the texts published by the same publishing house together with the authors of the work. Most of these people are both authors and translators in different fields



such as maths, science and behavior manners. The fact that they are translators could prove how translation contributed to partially change the educational texts in that age.

CONCLUSION

Within Iranian society, it is perceived the need of a connection between traditional values and new boosts, especially scientific, coming from Europe. The educational literature of this age had the aim to teach to women and girls how to manage a happy family life in relation to women attitude in managing the house life. In this period, there is the need to develop new educational models aimed at creating a new society. In fact, the new concept of homeland needed new means and updated methods in order to be spread and, therefore, new learning materials influenced by the Western cultural models were necessary and they could be found within translations selected by Iranian authors. The woman must reflect the traditional values as mother and wife, but her duty is not only aimed at guaranteeing the conservation of a mainly religious order. This change in female education helps to build a new concept of patriotism, which passes especially through the management of the family.

At the end of the XIX century, works focus on good manners and on how a good social and conjugal relationship can be reached. The language and style used in some works, which belong to the beginning of the age Qājār, are articulate and complicated, full of metaphors and similes. Instead, in the texts written by the end of the age, the language is easier, fluid, direct and it addresses to a wide group of readers because now it is considered necessary to add also women between the readers. Furthermore, there are scientific and foreign words, especially linked to some accessories of the Western everyday life, very important in Iran. This presence of scientific terminology can prove that the one of the housewife is considered as a job which implies a scientific knowledge.

Concerning the influence of the Western literature in Iran, probably the most moderate Iranian authors could be inspired by the translations of the works written by French authors such as Fénelon and Madame de Lambert. They both considered the female behavior and the role of the woman in the family in a similar way to Iranian moderate authors and to editors of schoolbooks with progressive ideas. These belonged to the age between the end of the XIX and the beginning of XX century. In this regard, we might notice that Iranian authors tried to take from Western works only the useful features and the ones suitable for Persian society in order to reaffirm the importance of the woman within the family.

We see how, towards the end of the age, men's anxieties and concerns change and the values assume a different shape. In a kind of struggle with the new trends and influences of Western nature too, the educational religious foundation attenuates because there are circumstances in which it goes side by side with science. Such works, in fact, are the result of the conflict between the need of protecting tradition, linked to Islamic values, and the wish to imitate the European lifestyle. We have to consider that the *'ulamā* had created an image of the woman aimed at satisfying the political ideology



of that age. For instance, a woman who goes out of the house during the Qājār age, in which there are intensive contacts with Europe, is seen as a danger for Islamic religion. Moreover, the Iranian feared the English domination and this results in the fear of losing the control over the woman and the influence of the Western culture, which contributed to the establishment of many female schools in Iran. This situation brings the religious men of that age to monitor the behavior and the woman's way of being. On the other hand, the moderate Iranian appreciated the European woman who is strongly idealized and, at the same time, it is highlighted the refuse of the Arabic taste. Therefore, socio-cultural relationships and translations help the change of the Iranian taste. Another feature that can be noticed is that translators chose the topics to translate addressed to women between the themes regarding the concept of pure wife and good mother and housewife.

The texts analyzed have the same aim, in other words to regulate the female behavior and they are focused on marriage, housekeeping and management of themselves. None of the authors argues about women rights. They are unsuited for any political role; they are suitable only for their role within the family. However, the concept of *adab* takes a shade. In fact, in the texts, we can find the prototype of Iranian woman. Through intertextuality we can better understand how these texts had been considerably influenced by the relationships with previous European literary times, specifically selected by Iranian authors to be included among the interpretative lines of the Iranian society of that age, whose cultural atmosphere was still in contrast with the contemporary Western values.

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