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Volume 5 issue 2 Summer 2022

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***Front cover**: Man in a Boysun-type skull cap (in the foreground) and a man in a Chust-type skull cap. Nukus, Uzbekistan, 2021. Photograph: Tereza Hejzlarová. See article on page 16.*

ORTS NEWS

ORTS committee members have been working hard to deliver this year's programme of lectures, recordings, visits, newsletters and journals, not to mention the summer lunch party. All this work is carried out entirely by volunteers – members' subscriptions cover the costs of room hire, equipment, printing, and digital costs, but not, of course, paid staff. This is a plea, then, for any members willing to lend a hand to get in touch. Please drop me a line if you think you can help in any way.

We are also looking for a new Chair, as other commitments mean I will be stepping down in July. If anyone would like to propose a new chair, please let me know.

We are sad to report the deaths of two members: Mary Rawitzer and Ron Stewart. There is a farewell to Mary in the latest newsletter and you can read an obituary for Ron Stewart on page 30 of this issue.

Fiona Kerlogue

ORTS members gather outside the Mall Galleries for the Hali Fair in 2019 following a screening of the film 'Grass' with Antony Wynn for HALI's 40th Anniversary celebrations. Mary Rawitzer is second from the left.

ORTS LECTURE PROGRAMME Autumn 2022

Saturday, September 10th. Robyn Maxwell (Australia): *Textiles from Lombok & Sasak (Indonesia) including new fieldwork images & research.* 10.00. Via Zoom.

Tuesday, October 25th. Bruce Healy: *A Survey of Northwest Persian Garden Carpets.* Please note this talk will be taking place during Islamic week in the salerooms. University Women's Club. 18.00 for 19.00.

Wednesday, November 9th. Roberta Marin: *'Konya rugs': the story of the enigmatic masterpieces produced in Seljuk Anatolia.* University Women's Club. 18.00 for 19.00.

Sunday, December 11th. Mamiko Markham: *The roots of Japanese textile motifs and their evolution.* 15.30 for 16.00 at Geoffrey Saba's house, 11 Consort Road, Peckham, London SE15 2PH. Following the talk there will be a (payable) supper of sushi & other Japanese food.

The diversity of the weaving designs of the tribal groups of the Fars and Kerman Provinces of southern Persia

Paul Benjamin

In this article I explore the weaving designs of the main tribal and nomadic groups of the Qashqa'i, Khamseh and Afshar who inhabit southern Persia using my own collection formed over 30 years to investigate examples of great diversity and delightful colour that are of considerable significance in the history of Persian tribal art.

The Qashqa'i confederacy of Fars province: A diversity of weavings with a variety of designs and an idiosyncratic use of colour

The Qashqa'i tribal *yastic* (Figure 1**)** is a small rug of the late 19th century, woven by the women of the Sheshboluki tribe, one of the six major divisions (*taifeh*) and a prominent nomadic group of the Qashqa'i confederacy, famous for their repeating pattern of blooming plants influenced by Mughal prayer rugs of the 17th and 18th century. Its small size indicates that it would have been useful for the seating of one person in the tent. It has an attractive and colourful *millefleurs* design and the central field contains two vertical rows of stiff flowering forms with lateral blooms growing up from a bulbous root. The pile knots are asymmetrical, open to the left, in red wool, typical of Qashqa'i weaving. The dark blue (abrashed) ground of the main field contrasts with the red of a single border with a flower and vine meander. A single band of blue and white checks is located at the top and bottom of the rug with a single row of weft twining and extended warps in natural light brown wool, some with tassels. This 19th century mat is in excellent condition with a complete and satisfying appearance because of the careful use of colour and the elegant use of fine floral designs.

The Qashqa'i tribal *chanteh* (Figure 2) is an extremely rare small warp-faced flat weave single bag woven by a Qashqa'i woman of the Darreshuri tribe in c.1900. The tight closure area and its small size suggest that it is a purse. The front side has a repeating hexagonal pattern in blue and ivory on a dark blue ground. Cross-shaped fillers in ivory are the main pattern on the rear side of the bag. The central field is framed with vertical bars on both sides in a two-colour alternating pattern. There are double rows of

Figure 1 (left). Qashqa'i tribal yastic. *53 x 46 cm.*

Figure 2 (right). Qashqa'i tribal chanteh. *13 x 17 cm.*

countered weft twining that extend into plaited loops on the right. A simple but unusual and pleasant design, suitable for a child's purse for carrying valuable items.

The Qashqa'i tribal single bag faces (Figures 3 and 4) of the late 19th century are stylized in design and delightful in the use of colour.

This 'stars and bars' single bag face (Figure 3) has a lattice design with diagonal rows of eight-pointed red or dark blue stars. The light blue edges, the red of the bars and the main border make a fine colour match. The decorative left and right edges of the main field have some small rosettes on a dark blue ground. The main border frames the central field with linked unidirectional arrows on a white ground. An outer narrow border has small flat *boteh* ornaments in a key pattern. The closure panels at the top have slit panels in a chevron patterned twill with chequered guard panels in weft brocading on either side. The pile of the bag face has asymmetrical knots. Warps are in ivory undyed wool, wefts in red. This is a well-known south-west Persian Qashqa'i design used in bags; its bright colours make it a delightful example of southern Persian art.

Figure 3 (above). Qashqa'i single bag face. 52 x 62 cm.

Figure 4 (below). Qashqa'i 'bird head' single bag face, c.1875. 69 x 61 cm.

The 'bird head' single bag face (Figure 4) is divided into horizontal alternating bands with 3 different designs: a reciprocal double-headed bird pattern, a diamond serrated leaf pattern and narrow rows of small flat S shapes that also surround the central panel. The main border is decorated with a geometrical polychrome meander on an ivory ground. The slit closure panels at the top of the bag face have the same diamond and leaf pattern as found in the main field except that their weaving is in all-over weft-faced brocading. A single row in pile weaving in a chequerboard pattern is located at the bottom of the bag face, providing a border decoration. This bird head single bag face is another example of a bag face with a variety of designs and a delightful pattern of colours providing a further Qashqa'i contribution to south-west Persian weaving.

The Khamseh Confederacy of Fars province: A mixture of Turkic, Persian and Arab tribes

The focus is on the Turkic Baharlu tribal weavings, their rare saddle and horse covers together with an example of a delightful bird *(murgh)* bag face. The Khamseh saddle and horse covers are usually of considerable age (1850-1880) and often in a fragile state. However, the saddle cover (Figure 5) and the horse covers (Figures 6 and 7) shown here are in surprisingly good condition, retaining their original bright colours.

The early Khamseh saddle cover, 1850, (Figure 5) is square, with a plain weave red central area (with abrash). Bright yellow spandrels are located in the left and right lower corners of the central area. The spandrels are decorated with horizontal rows of stylized shrub ornaments in alternating red and blue that have 'eagle claws', specific to the Baharlu tribe (Benjamin, 2015), that lie at the tips of the lateral branches of the floral shrub stems. The main borders enclosing the central field are of a typical Khamseh yellow-ground Senna rug type with minor borders formed of alternating flower head and vine meanders on a dark blue ground. The same blue-ground borders that originally formed the double edges of the mantle now lie over the cantle and the pommel slits of the saddle. The two ends of the saddle cover are in weft-faced *kelim* weave. The pile weaving located outside the central red area is in asymmetrical knotting. The warps are in ivory and brown wool colour, the wefts in red wool. The use of contrasting yellow and red on the face of this saddle cover has a lovely effect and is an excellent example of Khamseh colour design.

Figure 5. Khamseh saddle cover of the Baharlu tribe, 1850. 96 x 99 cm.

A Khamseh horse cover with an indigo plain-weave end, 1880, (Figure 6) has a dark indigo mithrabic central design in dark indigo on a brilliant madder surround, that is decorated with slanting and horizontal rows of two-armed cruciforms, diamond shapes and small medallions. The cruciform emblems are consistent with a Baharlu tribal origin (Benjamin, 2015). The weaving skills required to achieve the level of organization of such a large number of ornaments are remarkable. The top region of this horse cover is formed of an unusually wide (10 cm) web-faced plain weave band in dark indigo penetrated by two large trapping holes bound tightly at their edges by overcast indigo wool. The lower edge of the indigo band, sewn to the adjacent piled area below, forms a continuous front side to the horse cover. Left and right piled edges in the same colour give the impression of a continuous indigo frame enclosing the whole horse cover. The knotting is asymmetrical in lamb's wool. The warps are in undyed wool with no depression, wefts with some natural wool, some madder-dyed in two shoots. This is a very beautiful horse cover with great wool.

Figure 6. Khamseh horse cover of the Baharlu tribe. 70 x 89 cm.

A small Khamseh 'striped' design horse cover, c. 1880, (Figure 7) is unusually shaped, with stripes in alternating blue and ivory influenced by the design of shawls woven in the important weaving centre of Kerman. The main border is unusual in having a continuous trellis pattern and a linking vine meander on a blue ground. The minor outer borders are full of small geometric block shapes in a variety of colours. The central pile area is in asymmetrical knotting, the warps are in undyed ivory wool with a mixture of brown, the wefts in brown wool alone. On the far left and right sides of the horse cover is a wide brown *kelim* border, 5 cm in width, that is joined by a narrow strip to both ends of the cover. Despite the apparent functional simplicity in its role as a horse cover, there is a remarkable range of weaving methods that result in a robust feeling when handled and a long life (from about 1880) of practical work on the back of a horse. A simple piece but looks authentically tribal.

Figure 7. Khamseh 'striped' design horse cover, c.1880. 78 x 83 cm.

A Khamseh 'bird' single bag face, c. 1865, (Figure 8) of medium size is of a novel design with brilliant brick red and ivory colours and is consistent with a Khamseh Baharlu tribal weaving of south Persia. Pairs of confronting red birds lie above and below a small central medallion on either side of ivory poles that terminate in outward pointing arrows. These and the endless knot rosette that fills the medallion set the scene for the central panel that is dominated by the brilliant madder and ivory pile colour in asymmetrical knots on a dark blue ground. This colour pattern is also a feature of the edges of the main field bounded by prominent triangular-hooked forms in alternating ivory and madder red. There is also an inner border with variably coloured *boteh* ornaments on a red ground and an outer border with alternating bird and tree forms again on a red ground. The *boteh* in the Khamseh weavings are copies of those from the Afshar rugs. The slit closure panels are in chevron pattern twill in varying colours and the bottom ends of the bag face are finished in rows of web twining. A bag type that is well known in the weaving literature but this one stands out because of its particularly attractive colour pattern.

Figure 8. Khamseh 'bird' single bag face, 1865. 69 x 61 cm.

The Afshar Tribal Clans of Kerman Province: Of Turkic origin, their rug designs and weaving methods are the most diverse of all the south Persian tribes

I will describe two examples of Afshar *masnad* rugs that are unusual in having a different function compared with most other Afshar rugs that are large floor covers. *Masnad* rugs, about one metre square, are limited in size to allow for the seating in the tent of one important person. They are woven in symmetrically knotted low pile and are decorated by ornaments such as floral *boteh* and stripes/bands influenced by Kerman weavers who transferred these motifs from shawls to the Afshar rugs in the early part of the 19th century.

Figure 9. Afshar masnad *rug. 118 x 113 cm.*

An Afshar *masnad* rug with a remarkable floral *boteh* design, middle of the 19th century, (Figure 9) has an all-over floral *boteh* weaving pattern on a red ground that fills the central field. Horizontal rows of individual floral *boteh* of the same type (56 weavings in total) displaced to one side to form vertical diagonal rows. They are of the 'fragmented' see-through type made up of a small root, lateral leaves and delicate blossoms that form vertical rows, on either side, to join at the plant apex. The light-blue inner and dark blue outer blossoms reproduce the curved shape and the apical extensions of the floral *boteh*. The skill required for the weavers to produce the floral *boteh* in such large numbers with such a consistent overall pattern is remarkable. The rug has three borders, each with a reciprocal tree and a sloping bar meander pattern. The rug has ends in *sumakh* weaving (simple, countered and reversed) decorated with three (top) or two (bottom) bands of white and coloured chevrons that reverse in direction to form an alternating pattern. The overall impression is of an elegantly designed rug suitable for the seating of an important visitor in the tribal tent.

An Afshar *masnad* rug with shawl-inspired stripes, middle-late 19th century, (Figure 10) of quite a large size, consists of vertical stripes in varying widths and ground colours (white, blue and red) decorated with vertical columns of small floral *boteh* elements and a geometric trellis. The rug has the usual Afshar multiple borders (seven) with a variety of content. The main one consists of a diagonal-banded pattern with leaf-like floral decorations. Another consists of opposed double rows of delicate bird -like forms. The inner narrow borders are with small geometric forms. The central field is in a low smooth pile and like other Turkic Afshar weavings, it has symmetrical knotting on madder coloured warps. The wefts are of a similar colour. Braided warp ends are located after a narrow band of kelim weave. It is remarkable that this Afshar has so many ornaments in one rug and a brilliant colour scheme to match!

It is important to note that there are no other examples of *masnads* from other south Persian tribal groups, making them unique to the Kerman Afshars.

An unusual Afshar horse cover, c. 1880, (Figure 11) has an all-over madder central field with a linked continuous *boteh* pattern forming a narrow internal border and very small white crosses at the edge of the field. A pair of striking tri-floral plants are located on the left and right sides of the central field with white flowers on stalks decorated with small blue blossoms in the shape of lateral floating *boteh*. A wide border

Figure 10. Afshar masnad *rug. 113 x 110 cm.*

Figure 11. Afshar tribal horse cover, c. 1880. 86 x 107 cm.

surrounds the central field with six-armed red stars on an ivory background connected in a brown-linked meander pattern and minor borders with small crosses on either side. The ends are in kelim weave in red and the sides are in a four-cord red wool selvedge. The very low pile has symmetrical knotting in madder. The warps are in undyed wool and the wefts in double-dyed red. Although the design of the horse cover is low in ornamental fillers, the bright madder colour attracts a lot of immediate attention.

An Afshar single small bag, c. 1860, (Figure 12) is made for use within a Turkic tribe. The central panel has a lattice design, each compartment containing stemmed flowers connected to a small trellis. Only one lozenge of the lattice has the complete pattern. The main border has a floral meander pattern suggesting the influence of Persian tribes who often shared their villages with the Afshar Turkic tribes. The exceptional beauty of the floral meander in this bag is unique as an example of a floral device within the Afshar tribal family, rare from my experience in examining many examples of this small bag type. It suggests that the tribe may have been localised in Sirjan (previously *Saidabad*) that was a well-known weaving centre in Kerman province. The symmetrical knotting of these utilitarian small bags is solely due to the women of the Turkic Afshar tribes. The warps are in ivory, the wefts in red. At the top end of bag there is a further band of decoration in chevron twill. No closure region with slit panels is present, as is the case with other bags of this type I have examined. The bottoms and sides of the bag have plaited edges in red and light blue. The back of the bag is woven in *kelim* weft-faced plain weave (not shown here) with no decoration.

Figure 12. Afshar single small utilitarian bag. 32 x 42 cm.

Discussion

The Kerman influence on Afshar weavings is most obvious in the large number of rugs and bags with *boteh* designs. *Boteh* are also subsidiary elements in the other tribal groups such as the Qashqa'i and Khamseh bags but are not part of the many design patterns that are characteristic of the geometric and floral *boteh* rugs of the Afshar tribes. *Masnads* are a major type of Afshar rug increasing this tribal group's diversity. They are absent from the rug weavings made in the 19th century by the Khamseh and Qashqa'i tribes. *Sumakh* flat weave weaving of bags has also given an increase in diversity to Afshar bags but is not used in Khamseh bags or rugs (Benjamin, 2020). There is a diversity of design and colour in the Qashqa'i tribal weavings due to family traditions and interactions with the other Qashqa'i and Luri tribal units within the Fars province; also in Khamseh rugs and bags from the wide distribution of bird (*murgh*) designs. However, diversity in the Afshar weavings is even greater than in the other tribal south Persian groups due to the borrowing of designs, such as tulip, and vase rugs, from outside of the southern Persia region, together with the important influence of the nearby weaving centre of Kerman.

References

Benjamin, Paul, 'A Persian bird rug.' *Hali* (No.185, 2015) pp. 44-45.
Benjamin, Paul, 'The same but different.' *Hali* (No. 204, 2020) pp. 64-73.

I would like to thank Richard Purdon and Clive Rogers for their support and advice in putting together my collection.

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New Inroads in the Study of Malay Textiles

John Ang

Research on Malay textiles has been scant in the recent past compared with research on textiles of other Southeast Asian countries. The few existing books and articles on Malay textiles mostly cover the textiles of the Malay Peninsula, that is, West Malaysia, but not the wider Malay world. In addition, Malay textiles displayed in museums in both Malaysia and Indonesia are mostly from their own regions. Many of them do not offer enough comparative examples to show the connections with textiles of countries that influenced them and those of other Malay areas.

What comprises the Malay world varies according to what definition is being used. In my personal journey of collecting Malay textiles, the Malay world includes Malay communities residing in Vietnam, Cambodia, Southern Thailand, the Malay Peninsula, Sumatra, coastal Borneo, Sumbawa, West Flores, South Sulawesi, South Philippines, and the islands to the south. The textiles of these countries reflect a fairly homogeneous culture extending over a wide area despite being separated by vast stretches of sea. In understanding the nature of the Malays, it is therefore important to study Malay culture from a broader perspective instead of focusing on specific regions individually. This paper seeks to share new discoveries about Malay textiles based on transregional comparisons and beyond.

Indian *patola* (singular *patolu*) from Patan, Gujarat, for example, have influenced many textiles of the Malay world and the Indonesian archipelago. One such textile is silk weft ikat or *kain limar*. This is found in the Malay-speaking regions of South Sumatra, East Malaysia, the Riau Islands, South Thailand, South Philippines, and the Cham/Malay regions of Vietnam and Cambodia. Except for South Sumatra (mostly Palembang, Bangka, and Belitung), other places that used to produce weft ikat have almost stopped production due to the difficult and time-consuming process and because of this, few today know much about *limar*.

Andaya has suggested that one of the reasons that *limar* was influenced by *patola* design may have been the Dutch monopoly on Indian trade textiles established in the early 1680s in Jambi and Palembang. This caused the prices of Indian trade textiles to rise, which may have spurred an increase in locally produced cloth (Andaya 1989). As Indian trade textiles were always popular among the Malays, it would be understandable that local textiles initially took on the patterns of their much-loved Indian imports.

The *patola* patterns that were popular in Southeast Asia can be traced through exported examples that remained there. Some of these were recorded and listed by Alfred Bühler (1980). One of the *patola* patterns most commonly encountered in the Malay world is the *chabbati bhat* (basket pattern). We find this pattern and variations of it in many weft ikats from different parts of the Malay world, from Komering, South Sumatra to Maguidanao, South Philippines.

Figure 1 (left). A section of a late 19th to early 20th century patolu pan bhat *sari, long silk double ikat with a repeat pattern of pipal leaves. Patan, Gujarat. 382 x 124 cm. Figure 2 (right). A section showing a repeat leaf pattern on a smaller late 19th-century* selendang limar*, silk shoulder cloth of weft ikat pattern, showing similar repeated heart-shaped leaves. Komering, South Sumatra. 208 x 82 cm.*

A *patola* pattern not recorded by Alfred Bühler as having been exported to the Malay world is the *pan bhat* (Figure 1). He wrote that although the *pan bhat* pattern recurred frequently in textile collections in India and abroad, it is almost completely absent among the *patolu* fabrics exported to Indonesia. According to him, this pattern was mainly used by well-to-do Hindus, especially the influential Nagar Brahmins and Jaina communities of central and northern Gujarat (ibid., 23). One *kain limar*, however, has made me suspect that Alfred Bühler's list of *patola* patterns for export may not be complete. This silk weft ikat has an almost identical pattern of repeat heart-shaped leaves, each with a white stem and outlined by white dots. This close similarity shows that *patola pan bhat* must have been exported in order to have influenced this *limar* pattern (Figure 2). Perhaps Alfred Bühler did not find this pattern because textiles of this type had perished in the humid climate of the region. Recently, however, a *patolu pan bhat* has been found in Lampung, South Sumatra, not far from Komering, where the *limar* with leaf pattern was acquired (Edyson Sungkai, personal communication). With these two pieces, we can now extend Alfred Bühler's original list of *patola* patterns for export to include the *pan bhat* pattern.

Figure 3. A Malay limar *shoulder cloth (left) and an Indian* patolu pan bhat sari *(right) showing how the form, size and function of the* limar *is adapted to local requirements.*

What is important is not simply the discovery of a new *patola* pattern that influenced Malay textiles but the homogeneity of how the patterns were first adopted and then adapted to comply with local tastes. When comparing the dress of Malay and Indian women we can see that the Malay *limar* is much smaller and shorter as it is no longer used as a sari but as a *selendang* or shoulder cloth. Also, all the border patterns have been changed to borders with local patterns, eliminating the animals and figures seen in Indian *patola* (Figure 3).

The main pattern has also changed slightly. Although the *pan* leaves are quite similar, they are more spread out and arranged to fill a diagonal lattice grid rather than aligned tightly in vertical rows as in the *patolu*. In all the regions of the Malay world where *patola* have been a great influence the size and patterns have been adapted for their new application and not copied exactly.

Another *patola* pattern that was believed to have been used only in India is the *patolu gala vali bhat* (*patolu* with an empty plain centre field) (Buhler et al., 1980: 56) (Figure 4). According to Rosemary Crill the quality of the weaving of *patola gala vali bhat* is looser than those with full patterns in the centre field. In addition, the colours, especially the reds, are not as bright, indicating less thorough dyeing; and the use of cotton warps on the outer side borders may be evidence of cost -cutting. Although she agrees that all these features of such *patola* are related to those primarily for export to Southeast Asia, she believes that they are unlikely to have been intended for export (as so far none has been discovered overseas) (Crill, 1998: 46).

Figure 4. 1900-1920s patolu gala vali bhat sari*. Patan, Gujarat, West India. 128 x 345 cm. On the inner sides of the selvedge borders are boxes filled with alternating red parrots and white elephants, and at the edges of the short ends are two bands decorated with 14 flowering plants.*

Figure 5. Section of an 1880s-1920s selendang kain limar janda beraes *(shoulder cloth used by a widow who wants to remarry), silk weft ikat. 90 x 220 cm. Donated by Dr. Elie van Rijckevorsel, 1884. Museum number 2231. Courtesy of Wereldmuseum, Netherlands.*

A silk *limar* (weft ikat) shoulder cloth In the Wereldmuseum, Rotterdam, has the same empty yellow centre field surrounded by a red border with weft ikat patterns (Figure 5). Although the patterns along the borders are different, the layout and colours of this cloth look very similar to the *patolu gali bhat.* Could the same scenario as the *patolu phan bhat* have happened? These might once have been exported but have already disappeared through deterioration; or the few that may remain might still be waiting to be discovered.

Another cloth which also brings to mind the Gujarati *patolu gala vali bhat* is a *jbot* or *kiet* (tie-dye head shawl), also with an empty yellow centre (Figure 6). This would have been made by a member of the Chvea or Cham community, descendants of Malays from different parts of the Malay world who migrated to Cambodia and intermarried with Khmer women (See Bruckmayr, 2019: 1-2). Such cloths from Cambodia are rare and the existence of similar pieces has so far not been reported. Although coloured with extremely bright chemical dyes, this example is not new and probably dates from the early 20th century. The fabric is an old Chinese silk twill damask with a beautiful repeat woven pattern of floral motifs and Chinese *shou* or longevity symbols. This pattern is only visible under certain angles of light. Besides the nature of this fabric, the row of multi-coloured tassels at the fringes of the cloth is also an indication of its age. Such cloths were extremely finely knotted in a unique way that required patience and skill not replicable today.

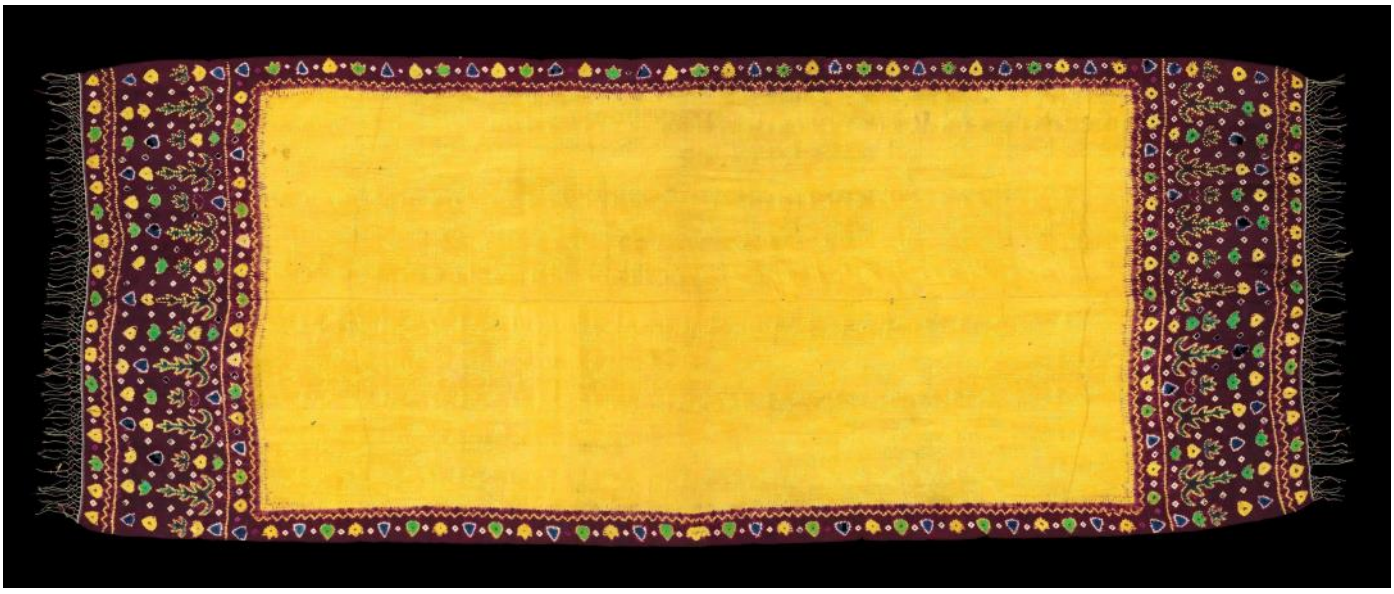


Figure 6. 1920-40s jbot/kiet *(head shawl) in patterned silk damask. The purple border is decorated with tie-dyed dots and triangles then painted with green and yellow dyes. At each end-panel is a row of stitch resist-dyed, white outlined tree-like forms. Cham or Chvea people, Cambodia. 80 x 195 cm.*

In the National Museum of Cambodia, Phnom Penh, there is currently on display a very rare pair of red silk trousers decorated with discontinuous supplementary weft patterns of gold and coloured silk threads. It was only after I saw a similar pair belonging to a private collector in Bangkok that I learned that such trousers were produced by the Cham or Chvea people. Later another pair, also believed to belong to the Cham or Chvea people, appeared in Paris. They were acquired by the collector Louis Sebastian Oh, who told me that they were brought to Paris from Cambodia before 1930 by the French civil administrator Emile Charles Deloche-Campo Casso. The example in my collection was acquired in London (Figure 7, see back cover).

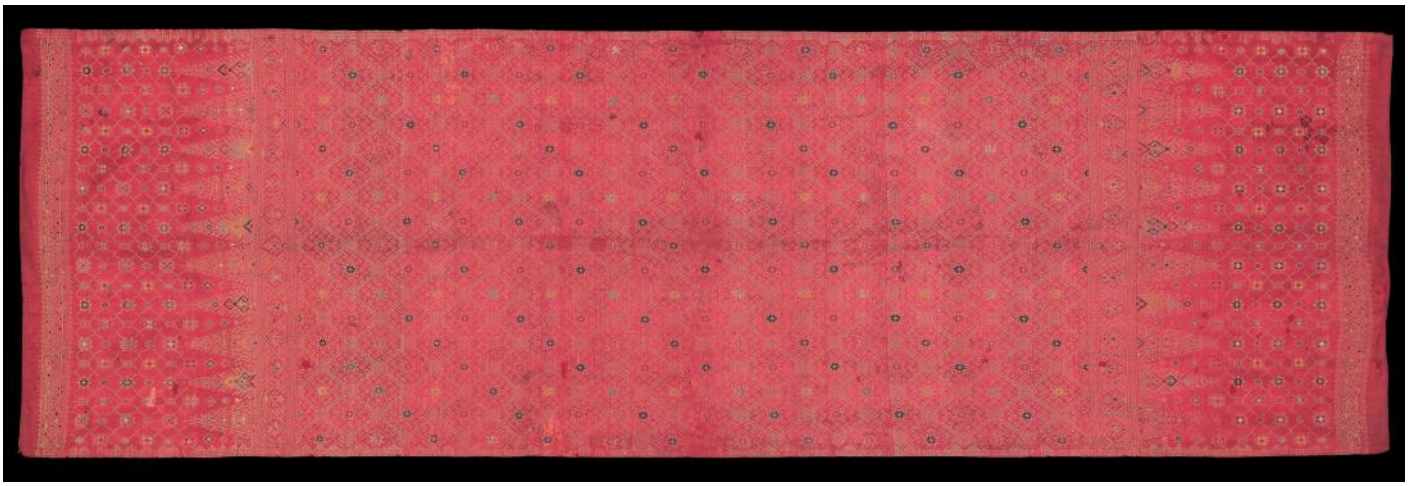
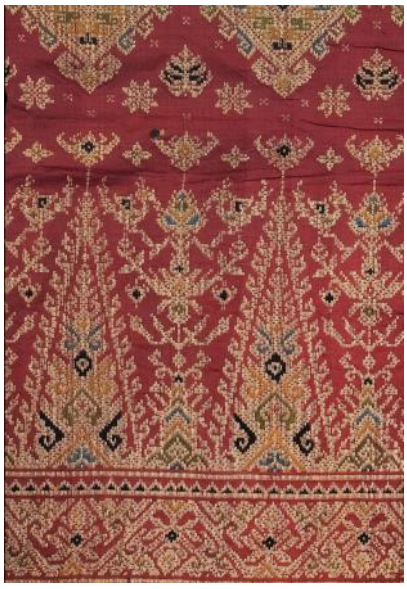


Figure 8. 19th century red silk songket selendang *with continuous and discontinuous gold and coloured silk supplementary weft decoration. Batusangkar, Minangkabau, West Sumatra. 78 x 249 cm.*

On all the trousers, the *songket* pattern includes the *pucuk rebung* (bamboo shoots) design and a lower horizontal border filled with a gold supplementary weft pattern. This pattern is of a continuous undulating tendril with alternating upward and downward pointing flowers, at equal distance. It is quite similar to both the *pucuk rebung* and the border of a *selendang* (shoulder cloth) from Batusangkar in West Sumatra (Figure 8). The *pucuk rebung* patterns on both the trousers and shoulder cloth are of the category known as *pucuk rebung tepi gigi yul,* where the edges of the triangle are lined with hook-like spirals (Nawawi, 2016: 143). The border, which also occurs frequently on much Malay *songket*, is known as *bunga semangat paling patong or bunga dala paling patong.* In this pattern *bunga semangat* refers to the triangular shape of the flower, which resembles the triangular-shaped rice dumplings made for offerings on a pedestal tray, and *paling patong* means alternating up and down. *Bunga dala* is the name of a flower that grows in Kelantan (ibid., 116). According to Selvanayagam, this border pattern is called the *buah delima* (persimmon fruit) *paling patong* (1980: 122) (Figures 9 and 10). The similarities between Cham and Malay *songket* have been studied by Etsuko Iwanaga of the Fukuoka Art Museum, who was also able to match border patterns identical to the *bunga semangat paling patong* of Palembang *songket* with those found on Cham *songket* pieces at the Musée de l'Homme, Paris (Iwanaga, 2003: 170-171).



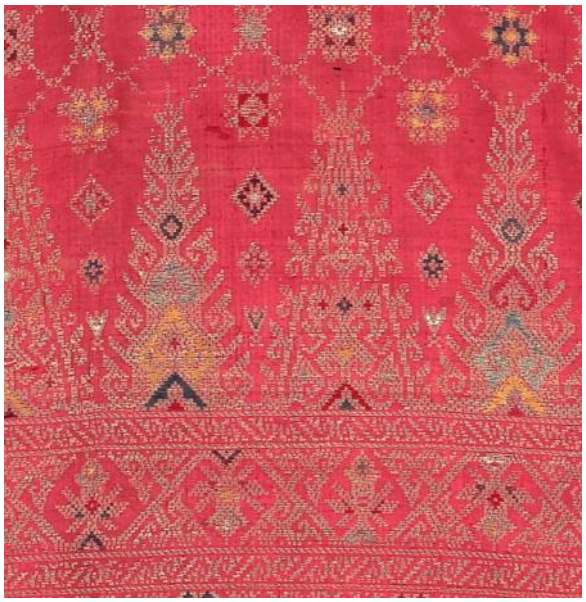


Figure 8 (left). Detail of songket *trousers illustrated in Figure 7.* *Figure 9 (right). Detail of* selendang *in figure 8.*

In addition to similarities in *songket* designs, there is another cultural similarity between these two places. This is in their *silat* or martial art traditions. One of the popular *silat* forms in Minangkabau, West Sumatra, known in local dialect as *silek harimau campo (*Champa tiger style martial art), is a traditional art of self-defence based on the movements of a tiger. This is recorded in the *Minangkabau Tambo*, a collection of stories about the origins and *adat* (traditional rules) in Minangkabau. According to the text, this form of martial art was brought to Minangkabau in ancient times by a *silat* master from Champa in Vietnam.

So how did textile arts and other aspects of culture such as the *silat* of the people of Minangkabau (a group of people who are closely connected to the Malays) become so akin to that of Champa? I would propose that the answer is the port of Ha Tien. Ha Tien, or Pantai Emas (golden fortress), at the southern tip of Vietnam, was established by a Chinese named Mac Cuu (d. 1739) around the late 17th to early 18th century. It developed into a favourite trading centre not only for the Chinese but also for the Malays and Chams. According to the 19th century account *Tufat al Nafis* (Precious Gift) by Raja Ali Haji, among the wealthy merchants of Pantai Emas were Minangkabaus (Bruckmayr, 2019: 50). They had enlisted the help of Raja Ismail of Siak to help them during the period of turmoil (1769-70) when Mac Thien Tu (d. 1780), son of Mac Cuu, was engaged in conflicts with the pirates of the region. Besides the connection between the Malays and Minangkabaus with Ha Tien, VOC records show that Palembang had strong trade ties with Cambodia and Ha Tien as regular arrivals of ships from these two regions were recorded (ibid.: 53). As far as I know this connection between Vietnam and Cambodia and Minangkabau and Palembang has never been highlighted. Nevertheless, the records of these trade connections can explain why similar features and patterns appear on the textiles of these regions.

The connection between the silk warp ikats of the Chams and those of the Malays in Pontianak, in West Kalimantan on the island of Borneo, has also, as far as I know, never been investigated. In the 18th century, large numbers of Chinese immigrants from the south coast of China settled along the northern coasts and interior of West Kalimantan in the hope of a better future through gold mining (Heidhuis, 2003: 11). However, I have seen no published reference to the Cham traders who interacted with the people of West Kalimantan.

I first suspected that that there must have been contact between traders of Champa (in Cambodia) and West Kalimantan when I was offered a Cambodian/Cham weft ikat that was said to come from Natuna, an island in the Sea of Cham, now named the South China Sea (Bray, 2014). Natuna and Anambas are small islands belonging the group of Riau islands called Pulau Tujoh, the Seven Islands, that lie south of Vietnam, directly east of the Malay Peninsula and north of Northwest Borneo. The existence of Cambodian or Cham textiles on these islands would therefore be highly likely since the Chams were notable seafarers and traders and Natuna was in the middle of the trade routes between Champa and Northwest and West Kalimantan.

Not long afterwards, I acquired a very old and fine Cambodian/Cham *hol* or silk weft ikat from Kapuas Hulu, situated in the interior of West Kalimantan, 300 km directly east of Pontianak. Although these are

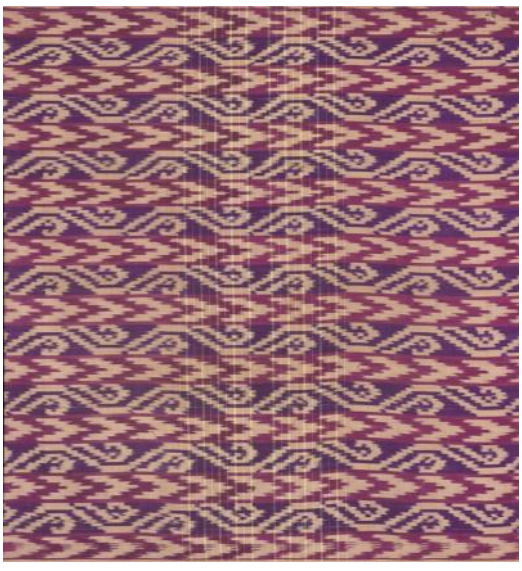


Figure 11 (left). 1940-60s ikat loseng sarong*, silk tube skirt with chevron and undulating lines pattern. Malay people, Pontianak, West Kalimantan. 104 x 97 (x2) cm. Figure 12 (right). New silk tube skirt,* sarong air angin kapal rayak *(wave and boat pattern), Chau Duc, Western Cham people, Southwest Vietnam. 112 x 103 (x2) cm.*

single examples, the existence of such textiles in these areas may indicate a long-standing but nevertheless unrecorded trade relationship between the Chams and the people of Natuna and West Kalimantan. Other textiles that indicate continued connections between the Chams and the people of West Kalimantan are the later *ikat loseng* (warp ikat) sarongs. These are still being woven by the Western Chams in the village of Chau Duc, in Ang Giang Province (Bruckmayr, 2019: 51). One of several traditional patterns that are found on warp ikat sarongs in both Chau Duc and Pontianak is the *air angin kapal rayak* (Malay for 'wave and ship') pattern (Figures 11 and 12). This pattern comprises alternating bands of warp ikat repeat chevrons representing boats and undulating lines with repeat hooks representing waves. The chevrons lie along dark purple bands while the waves are depicted on light purple bands. The light and dark purple bands and boat and wave pattern are exactly the same in the silk sarongs from Pontianak and from Chau Duc. From the wear and feel of the silk, the example from Pontianak seems to date from the 1940s to 1960s while the example from Chau Duc is new. It was made to order by my Cham friend Nik Mansour Nik Halim from Chau Duc. According to him, he had never seen the example from Pontianak in my collection. The pattern of his new sarong was a copy of his grandfather's sarong. It was only when I was preparing for my forthcoming exhibition and assembled all my *ikat loseng* sarongs together that I noticed the close similarity between these two sarongs. There are other patterns that are popular in Chau Duc and also appear in Pontianak. These will be discussed in my forthcoming book, *Splendours of Malay World Textiles*.

Looking at all these connections through textiles we begin to realize their importance and that they cannot be appreciated in isolation. They are also concrete pieces of evidence that help us reconstruct lost connections that have enriched Malay cultural heritage. It is hoped that this paper provides new inroads into the study of Malay textiles and that these textiles will become more appreciated, collected, and carefully preserved for the enlightenment of future generations.

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Unless otherwise stated all textiles are from the author's collection.

John Ang's exhibition *Splendours of Malay World Textiles*, will be at the Menara Ken building TTDI, Kuala Lumpur, from July 24th to 31st October 2022.

Skull caps of Uzbekistan

Tereza Hejzlarová

Multicoloured, richly embroidered skull caps are the traditional headgear of the people of present-day Uzbekistan. In the past, such caps were worn by all social classes and formed part of both festive and everyday clothing for men, women and children. Even today their popularity is not insignificant and they are widely sold in local bazaars (Figure 1).

They were most widespread in the 1920s and 1930s, when they more or less displaced all other types of headgear. In that period, their originally individual production began to move to embroidery guilds and industrial centres, which led to an increase in their number and, at the same time, to their great popularity among the Uzbek population, both women and men. This change was due to new ideological priorities, the transition to a new way of life and the industrialisation of the economy brought about by Russian rule. At the turn of the 20th century, the skull cap was not yet commonly worn by girls and women. It was used as a common item of clothing in this way only in some places, being worn, for example, by girls in Urgut and Bukhara (Sukhareva, 1982: 81). In that period, the skull cap was often seen as headgear for *lehkých žen* (prostitutes, literally 'light women'). It was also worn by women who acted like men in the society of women and even dressed like men. For these reasons, its being worn by ordinary girls and women was considered shameful, and its later spread among the fairer sex was received with ambivalence (Bikzhanova, 1979: 146, 148). The fact that the skull cap was a favourite headdress of prostitutes is evidenced by the portraits of women by the French photographer Hugues Krafft (1853-1935), who stayed in Russian Turkestan in 1898-1899. In his book *A Travers le Turkestan Russe* (1902) he states on the subject: 'It would be impossible to assemble a collection of female types unless one had the means of addressing courtesans, the only women who can be addressed, and whose features one is allowed to examine' (Krafft, 1902: 148-149). It is known that in the late 19th century, among the settled population it was not allowed to photograph women with uncovered faces, especially in urban settings where the Muslim clergy had a dominant position in society and culture. Krafft produced a set of portraits of women of the period from Samarkand, Tashkent and Kokand, providing a very valuable historical source (Figure 2).

Figure 1. Older skull caps for sale in Khiva, 2021. Photo by Tereza Hejzlarová.

In the mid-19th century, among the general population the skull cap was mostly worn under other headgear. Married women tied a turban and later a scarf over it. The skull cap was often used in wedding ceremonies, where it was placed on the bride's head as part of the ceremony of seeing her face. The young woman then wore it until the birth of her first child. It was also worn separately by unmarried girls in some places. Men also wore a turban over their skull cap. Underneath, another cap

of thin white cotton fabric was usually worn to protect the decorated skull cap from sweat and dirt. It was worn alone, that is, without the turban, only by the poorest men, usually those at the bottom of the social ladder (Sukhareva, 1982: 76). Skull caps were also popular headgear for children, both boys and girls.

Until the 20th century, each ethnic or local group had its own characteristic style of skull cap, which was reflected in their form, colour and ornamentation. Later on, these specifics gradually blurred. In the second half of the 20th century, their form began to change, new materials were used, the range of colours of embroidery yarn expanded and the ornamentation was enriched (Bogoslovskaya, Levteeva, 2006: 16).

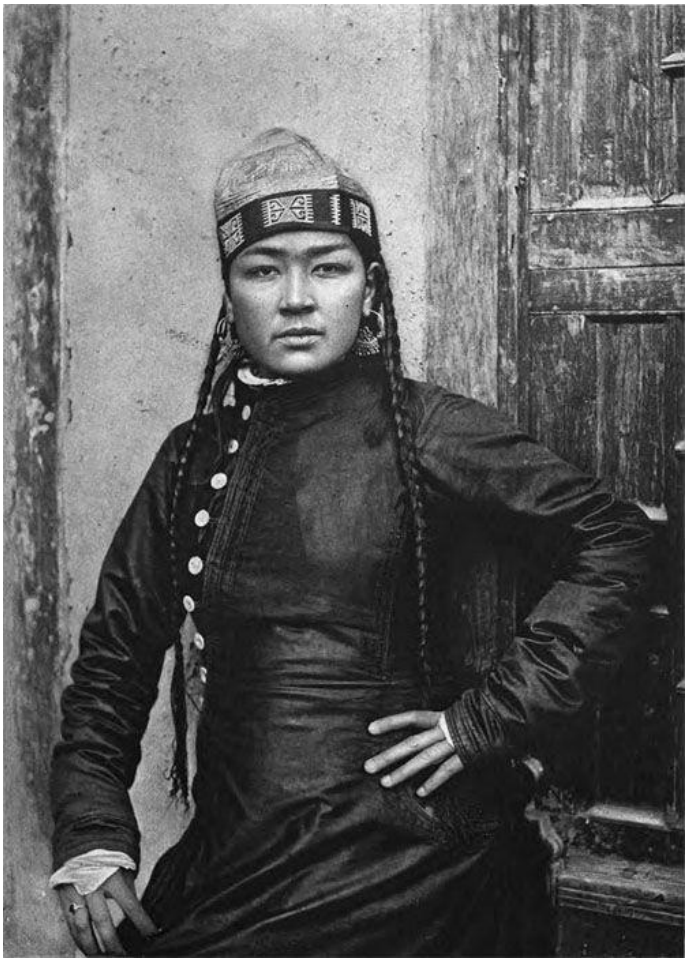

Figure 2. Portrait of a woman taken by Hugues Krafft (Krafft: 1902, unpaginated).

Material

Both locally-produced and imported fabrics were used to make skull caps. Woollen, cotton and silk fabrics were already produced in the territory of present-day Uzbekistan in the distant past. Due to their beauty and high quality, these fabrics were valued beyond the borders of Central Asia and formed an important trade item along the Silk Road. At the end of the 19th century, the Fergana Valley was the main centre of production and is still considered an important centre for the production of traditional Uzbek fabrics and silk processing. At the turn of the 20th century, the production of silk and cotton fabrics was mainly concentrated among the settled population and was chiefly intended for the market. Many fabrics were also imported during this period. These were mainly fabrics from Kashgar and Iran, but also British calico, which was imported from India. From the 18th century onwards, however, Russia began to assert itself as an importer of Western European textiles, and at the end of the 19th century it sought to dominate the local market and restricted the import of fabrics from other countries (Tomina, 1989: 249). Russian cotton fabrics of various colours and patterns were used for the production of skull caps. Solid-coloured cotton fabrics usually formed the basis for the embroidery, and multicoloured, patterned ones served as the material for the lining. A very popular fabric for both men's and women's skull caps was dark-coloured velvet imported from Russia, but local Bukhara velvet was also used. Women's skull caps were also made from single-coloured silk fabrics or brocade.

Until about the 1880s, embroidery was mainly done using local silk, cotton and wool threads, which were dyed with natural dyes. These included, for example, rose madder (*Rubia tinctorum)*, from whose roots warm red shades were obtained. The *Delphinium semibarbatum* plant, the Japanese pagoda tree (*Sophora japonica*) and pomegranate peel also provided yellow colour. Oak trees, pistachios and the flowers of the mallow (*Malva moschata*), for example, were used to obtain black. Among the imported dyes was indigo, providing a deep blue. Its further dilution or mixing with other colours (yellow, red) produced different shades of blue, green and purple. Indigo, obtained from the indigo shrub (*Indigofera tinctoria*), was imported from India, as was cochineal (*Dactylopius coccus*), from which carmine red was obtained. The valuable characteristic of natural dyes is especially the balance of shades and their stability of colour. From the second half of the 19th century, the first synthetic dyes began to be used in textile production and reached the local market via Russia (Sukhareva, 2006: 24). However, these dyes were of very poor quality and faded quickly. Although the quality of current synthetic dyes is incomparably higher, Uzbek workshops have returned to dyeing technologies using original natural dyes.

Figure 3. Women's skull cap. Uzbekistan, Tashkent, 1950s. Velvet, cotton, zarduzi gulduzi *embroidery,* likak *wire,* pulakcha *sequins, 13 x 13 cm, h. 7 cm. Inv. no. A 28 789. National Museum–Náprstek Museum, Prague, Czech Republic.*

Skull caps were also very often embroidered with gold and silver threads (Figure 3). Different types of these threads in various qualities were imported mainly from India and Russia. The colour and material of the threads, which were wrapped with metal wire, can serve as a guide to date skull caps made using the gold embroidery technique. On textiles dating from the 1830s to the 1870s, gold wire was wrapped around a yellow silk thread. In the 1880s and 1890s, this thread was orange, but also red or reddish brown, and in the first decade of the 20th century only orange silk thread was used. Later, the quality of the gold wire gradually decreased and it was wound on yellow cotton thread (Goncharova, 1986: 17–18). Especially in the second half of the 19th century, thread made from a thin, narrow gold strip, which was produced in Bukhara and imported from India and Iran, also found an important place in gold embroidery (Sidorenko, Artykova, Radjabov, 1981: 13).

Technology and types of stitches

Skull caps were usually sewn from several layers of fabric and took different forms. A cap with a higher crown of conical form with a wide hem is considered to be the oldest type. In the 1920s, their form began to change, and skull caps appeared in circular forms, more or less convex with a flat crown and a narrow and/or wide rim. The most widespread type were square caps with a slightly conical crown. This form was achieved by specially folding the skull cap into a triangle. Once folded, it was starched and weighted, giving it the desired square shape when unfolded. A technique called *piltaduzi* was also widely used in the production of skull caps (Figure 4). A crown made using this technique is characterised by the creasing achieved by stitching the fabric in parallel and filling the resulting tunnels. In the 19th century, woollen wicks (*pilta*) were used as fillers, later thin rolls of paper. The individual stitches were often embroidered with satin stitch or buttonhole stitch.

The copious embroidery was mainly done by women, but in the case of gold embroidery also by men. Patterns were drawn on the fabric freehand, usually with a reed pen and ink. Usually only the basic lines were outlined, with the details created during the embroidery process. One of the popular stitches used with coloured yarn was the *bosma* stitch, which consists of a backing thread covered by small transverse stitches. The backing thread is stretched in rows side by side from edge to edge along the entire length and area of the motif and, thus prepared, is attached with transverse stitches. In each successive row, the stitches are placed a little further away from the previous ones, thus forming regular diagonal lines, creating a slightly embossed surface. The *bosma* has several variants, which differ in the way the transverse stitches are worked. A similar stitch is the *kanda khaiol*, in which the transverse stitches are carried along the face of the fabric by wrapping diagonally around the backing thread and are not sewn as tightly as in the *bosma* stitch. Another widespread stitch was the *iroki* cross stitch, which had two variants – the classic cross stitch (*tirma*) and the half cross stitch (*kuklama*). When embroidering with the second variant, the thread is first stretched diagonally across the entire row before being crossed by small stitches. The crosses are so tiny that they can hardly be seen with the naked eye. *Yurma* chain stitch is considered to be one of the oldest stitches (Figure 5). It was done with a needle or hook and the fabric was stretched on an embroidery frame. As early as the late 19th century, hand chain stitch was often replaced by a machine stitch (Chepelevetskaya, 1961: 26). The *ilmok* buttonhole stitch was also used for the contours and hems of the embroidery, which had two basic variants – *ilmok yaktarafa* – one-sided buttonhole stitch, and *ilmok dutarafa* – two-sided buttonhole stitch. In Samarkand, *ilmok* was used only in the 1850s and 1860s (Sukhareva, 2006: 38). The *khomduzi* satin stitch was also often used

Figure 4. Men's skull cap. Uzbekistan, Samarkand. Second half of the 19th century. Cotton, silk embroidery, piltaduzi *technique,* ilmok *stitch, h. 15.7 cm. Inv. no. A 15 324. National Museum–Náprstek Museum, Prague, Czech Republic.*

Figure 5. Men's skull cap. Uzbekistan, Bukhara. Late 19th century. Cotton, silk and cotton embroidery, piltaduzi *technique,* bosma *and* yurma *stitch, h. 15.5 cm, diam. 22.5 cm. Inv. no. 160. National Museum–Náprstek Museum, Prague, Czech Republic.*

Figure 6. Men's skull cap. Uzbekistan, Tashkent. 1930s. Cotton, velvet, silk embroidery, khomduzi *stitch,* chakmatur *technique, h. 9 cm, diam. 15 cm.. Inv. No. A 28 784. National Museum–Náprstek Museum, Prague.*

(Figure 6). There are often different types of stitches on a single skull cap, each used for a specific purpose. For example, in a flower motif, the *bosma* and *kanda khaiol* stitches may alternate on the petals; the stems and leaves are usually hemmed with *yurma* stitch; the line separating the central field and the border is usually stitched with the *ilmok* stitch.

Two basic techniques were used in gold embroidery – *zarduzi-zaminduzi* and *zarduzi-gulduzi* (Figure 7). Both techniques apply a satin stitch with gold or silver thread. In the case of *zarduzi-zaminduzi*, there are two methods – embroidery without a backing and embroidery on a backing, which was more widespread. The backing was mainly fine cotton threads, which were used to embroider the design either through the fabric or using laid work technique. The *zarduzi-gulduzi* technique is distinguished by the background of the motifs, which consisted of stencils made of leather or cardboard. In this method, too, the gold thread is laid in parallel rows, close together, and fastened at the edges with silk or cotton threads. The *zarduzi-zaminduzi* technique was especially widespread in the 19th century, but the *zarduzi-gulduzi* technique flourished in the early 20th century. The combination of the two techniques used in one embroidery was called *zarduzi-gulduzi-zaminduzi* or *zarduzi-zaminduzi-gulduzi*, depending on which technique predominated in the embroidery. Other variations were *zarduzi-berishimduzi* – embroidery using coloured silk along with gold threads and *zarduzi-pulakchaduzi* – embroidery with gold threads combined with sequins (*pulakcha*). The sequins were usually used to fill in or contour floral motifs, and in such cases, they were sewn in dense rows. In gold embroidery, many other types of stitches were used in addition to the satin stitch formed by the laid work technique. On skull caps, the *maudji-yakruia* (one-sided wave) stitch, which consists of parallel diagonal lines, and the *kandori* stitch, in the form of a divided square that is gradually filled in from the edge to the centre, are most commonly seen. The square was embroidered in two ways – *kandori choor-*

Figure 7. Women's skull cap. Uzbekistan, Bukhara. Late 19th – early 20th century. Silk, silk and adras *lining,* zarduzi gulduzi (berishimduzi) *embroidery,* kandori khasht-bakhiyagi *stitch (border), diam. 18cm, h. 8 cm. Inv. no. A 19 611. National Museum–Náprstek Museum, Prague, Czech Republic.*

bakhiyagi – divided into four parts, and *kandori khasht-bakhiyagi* – divided into eight parts. The contours of the motifs were hemmed with a thin tahrir cord made of tightly twisted golden threads, or small motifs, such as spirals, were also created using it.

Local styles

In the past, local differences were expressed on the skull caps so distinctly that it was possible to tell which region the wearer came from. Their appearance was mainly influenced by the ethnic composition of specific areas and their artistic traditions. The different styles of Uzbek skull caps can be identified by their form, the material used, the processing technique and the ornamentation.

The most common type is the men's skull cap called *tus (chust) duppi*, originally made in the town of Chust in the Fergana Valley, which has gained popularity throughout Uzbekistan. It is characterised by its square shape and delicate white embroidery of a *bodom* (almond) or *kalampir* (pepper pod) motif on a black ground. Nowadays, these elegant caps, along with the traditional cloak and belt, are presented to distinguished guests. More recently, they have also acquired a ritualistic character – they are worn, for example, when visiting a mosque or during funeral ceremonies. In the 1940s, especially in Samarkand, they were sewn from black satin (ibid:, 86). Tashkent skull caps of the Chust type were made of black, dark green or dark blue velvet. In Namangan, the central 'almond' motif was wide with a sharply curved tip; in Margilan it took the form of a narrow and long 'pepper pod'.

The Fergana Valley region is characterised by the women's skull cap of square form with *iroki* embroidery in variegated colours (Figure 8). The composition consists of four identical motifs of *chamanda gul* (flowers on a small grassy clearing) in the form of green bushes with bright pink flowers bordered by a black outline. The background was embroidered all over with white yarn. Floral motifs were usually

Figure 8. Women's skull cap. Uzbekistan, Margilan. 1950s. Cotton, velvet, silk and cotton embroidery, iroki *stitch,* chamanda gul *pattern, 15.5 x 15.5 cm. Inv. no. A 21 077. National Museum–Náprstek Museum, Prague, Czech Republic.*

Figure 9. Men's skull cap. Uzbekistan, Samarkand. Second half of the 19th century. Silk, cotton lining, silk embroidery, piltaduzi *technique,* ilmok *stitch, h. 17.5 cm, diam. 19 cm. Inv. no. 47 069. National Museum–Náprstek Museum, Prague, Czech Republic.*

geometric in form. In the 1940s and 1950s, in addition to girls and women, men also wore them on festive occasions (Bogoslovkaya, Levteeva, 2006: 90). The *chamanda gul* motif was also widely depicted on the Margilan and Tashkent skull caps. In the 1940s, a skull cap called *kizil gul* (red flower) was widespread in Tashkent, with contrasting colour motifs of red flowers and a green-blue background divided into four sectors on the crown. The same motifs decorated the hem. The flowers are embroidered with satin stitch and the background with *kanda khaiol* stitch. Velvet skull caps with beaded embroidery with floral motifs were also typical for the Tashkent area. White beads imitating pearls were widely used. Some of the Tashkent skull caps are embroidered using the *chakmatur* technique, consisting of small squares worked in white yarn to fill the area between the floral motifs embroidered with *bosma* stitch.

The most characteristic for Samarkand were skull caps with a higher conical crown sewn from four parts and elaborated by the *piltaduzi* technique (Figure 9). The ornament is characterised by multicoloured geometric patterns. The Chust-type skull caps were also common here, but the white yarn used for the central motif was often combined with dark pink and green.

The *piltaduzi* technique is also typical for skull caps from the Boysun region, but here they have a regular circular form and the crown is only slightly conical (Figure 10). The ornamentation is also in this case subordinate to the

Figure 10. Men's skull cap. Uzbekistan, Boysun. Contemporary production. Cotton, silk and cotton embroidery, piltaduzi *technique, h. 10 cm, diam. 16 cm. Inv. no. A 30 208. National Museum–Náprstek Museum, Prague, Czech Republic.*

Figure 11. Men's skull cap. Uzbekistan, Shakhrisabz. 1950s. Cotton, silk embroidery, iroki *stitch, h. 6 cm, diam. 17 cm. Inv. no. A 21 082. National Museum–Náprstek Museum, Prague, Czech Republic.*

processing technique and is composed of geometric motifs of square forms. The predominant colours are a combination of red, blue, yellow, white and black.

All-over embroidery with the *iroki* stitch is characteristic especially of the caps from the Shahrisabz region (Figure 11). In the 19th century, their ornament consisted of floral motifs in soft pastel colours, dominated by cool tones. In the 20th century, when the use of artificial dyes became widespread, bright colours began to be used in Shahrisabz skull caps (ibid., 120–121). The most common colours combined were green, red, yellow, dark blue and black. The Shahrisabz skull caps embroidered with *iroki* stitch differ from the Tashkent and Ferghana skull caps in the colourful floral ornamentation that covers the entire surface of the cap.

Bukhara skull caps are characterised by their gold embroidery (Figure 12). Their forms were round and square, with round, flat and slightly conical crowns. The ornamentation consisted mostly of floral or geometric motifs. In the case of embroidery with coloured yarn, the most characteristic of the Bukhara skull caps was the chain stitch and the predominant colours were blue, grey and dark pink. Gold embroidery was also used to a lesser extent in Samarkand, Urgut and Tashkent.

Figure 12. Women's skull cap. Uzbekistan, Bukhara, 1950s. Velvet, cotton, zarduzi gulduzi *embroidery,* likak *wire, 15 x 15 cm, h. 6 cm. Inv. no. A 21 080. National Museum–Náprstek Museum, Prague, Czech Republic.*

Skull caps of Uzbekistan

Figure 13. Chust men's skull cap. Uzbekistan, Margilan. Middle of the 20th century. Silk, silk embroidery, h. 10 cm, diam. 15 cm. Inv. no. A 28 782. National Museum–Náprstek Museum, Prague, Czech Republic.

Nowadays, the most widespread skull caps in Uzbekistan are the men's examples of the Chust type, which are worn not only on festive occasions, but also in everyday life. This elegant black skull cap with delicate white ornamentation can be seen in everyday life mainly worn by older men (Figure 13). Its popularity has reached such an extent that it is commonly made only from black lacquered cardboard on which the *bodom* or *kalampir* motif is painted in white. They are sold in large quantities in bazaars and are intended for local residents. The second most popular type is the skull cap, embroidered with *iroki* stitch in the style of Shahrisabz caps, but unlike in the past, it is most often circular in shape and has a slightly conical crown, which is characteristic of the Boysun style in particular. The ornament has been simplified compared to the past. The colour scheme is also not as rich and is predominantly white. The skull caps of the Ferghana type embroidered with *iroki* stitch with colourful *chamanda gul* motifs on a white background are also still popular. It is these two types of caps that dominate the bazaars and are mainly for tourists. The classic Boysun skull caps made in the *piltaduzi* technique also occupy an important place in contemporary production. In tourist attractions, bazaars not only sell contemporary products, but also older caps, mostly from the second half of the 20th century. Among them, many Bukhara caps with gold embroidery can be found. Vendors have also responded to the demand from tourists craving ‘ethno style’ and are themselves redesigning and decorating the caps with mainly Turkmen metal accessories. This creates new models of caps, certainly attractive to the uninitiated tourist, mixing styles of different ethnic groups, which in effect give the impression of something 'ancient' and purely 'ethnic', although it is a contemporary innovation.

Girls and women today wear skull caps only rarely, mostly only on festive occasions, especially at various festivals, where people often dress in their traditional costumes to demonstrate their belonging to a particular ethnic group or region. Such festivals are a very impressive spectacle for admirers of local traditional culture.

The government of Uzbekistan currently cares very much about cultural heritage and the national costume is an important part of it. For this reason, the Uzbek Ministry of Culture recently put forward a proposal that all its employees should be required to wear a skull cap – the national headdress. With this initiative, the Minister of Culture wanted to set an example in promoting national traditions. However, his proposal was derided by the majority of the Uzbek population, who pointed out that it was the 21st century; the Minister of Culture was advised, with some exaggeration, to start riding a donkey instead of driving a car, which had been the traditional means of transport of the local population in the past.

Figure 14 (opposite). Men in Shahrisabz-type skull caps. Festival in Nukus, 2021.

It is evident that opinions on the wearing of traditional skull caps vary among the local population, but they are hard to overlook when visiting Uzbekistan, if only because they form a significant part of the assortment sold in the local bazaars. They can often be seen on men's heads, especially in rural areas, and sometimes on women's heads, especially on the occasion of national holidays or family celebrations and various festivals.

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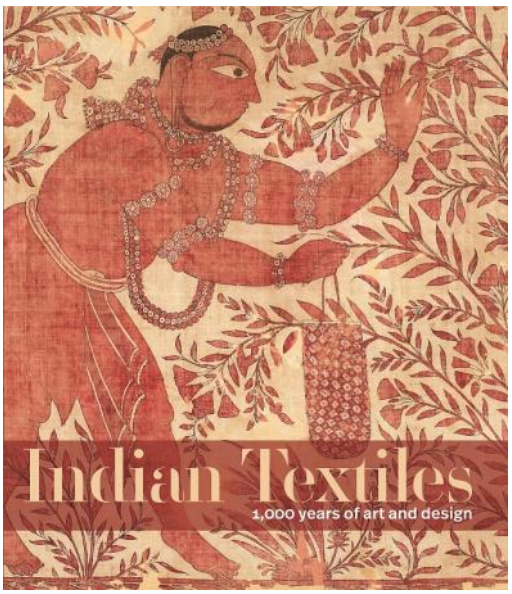


Indian Textiles: 1,000 Years of Art and Design.

By Karun Thakar, Avalon Fotheringham, Sylvia Houghteling, Steven Cohen and Rosemary Crill

Hali Publications, 2021.

Hardback. 391 pages.

£75 from Hali Bookshop.

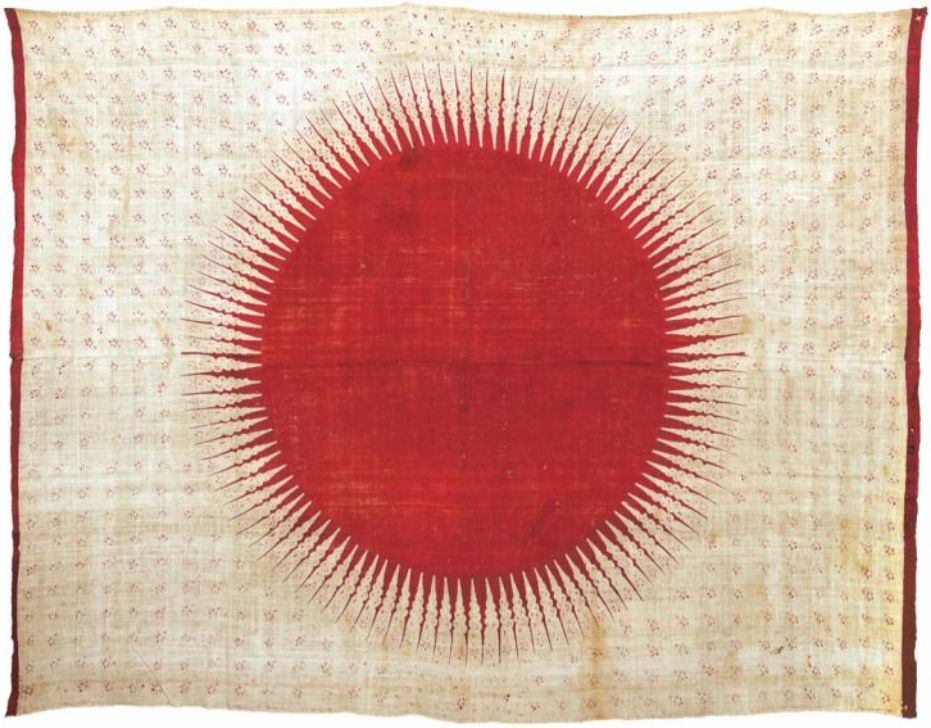
ISBN-10: 1898113963
ISBN-13: 978-1898113966

Indian Textiles, 1000 years of art and design is a lavishly produced catalogue that offers a visually seductive journey into the aesthetic landscape and design vocabulary of India's textile heritage. Weighing over three and a quarter kilos, it is not a volume to carry around in your bag or balance on your knees. Engaging with it requires a sturdy table and ample time to digest the myriad details of pattern, weave, stitch, shade, ornament and text. Such effort is well rewarded. This is a book that draws on the collective dedication and expertise of textile scholars, collectors and museum curators whose shared appreciation of Indian textiles pulsates from every colour plate and whose combined technical and historical knowledge is extensive.

The book, which accompanies an exhibition of the same name held at the George Washington University Museum and the Textile Museum, brings together textiles from London-based Karun Thakur's private collection as well as from the museum itself. This is a marriage that was meant to be. It contains details of textiles as diverse as a fragment of woollen rug woven in the 1st century and excavated in China, spectacular double-ikat silk saris from Gujarat, tie dyed, block printed and painted cottons from different regions and eras spanning many centuries, examples of professional and domestic embroidery, sumptuous Moghul velvets and seductive chintzes. Different materials from dogs' teeth and hair, cowry shells and beetles' wings compete for attention alongside silk, cotton and wool in this array of textile arts.

Eschewing typologies based on time, place, usage and technique, the editors have favoured a typology of pattern, organising the textiles according to the categories: abstract, floral and figurative. The effect is to keep the focus on the visual, emphasising pattern and ornament and offering a rich design resource for students of textiles interested in drawing on this heritage. Photographs of whole textiles are combined with magnified close ups, showcasing the extraordinary technical dexterity of India's artisans from weavers, embroiderers and dyers to block printers and painters. The artists themselves, however, remain firmly out of view. The book does not contain any images of textile artists demonstrating their skills nor of textiles being worn, which seems curious given the number of historic paintings which depict such scenes.

It is difficult to select visual highlights from a volume so rich in possible contenders. This reviewer found herself drawn as much to designs characterised by simplicity as to those which demonstrate extraordinary complexity. Amongst the former is a beautiful early 20th century cotton resist dyed sari from Rajasthan in yellow and indigo diagonal stripes *(lahari)* evoking the watery quality of rain and worn apparently in the rainy season (p. 58) and an equally stunning late 18th or early 19th century ceremonial cloth from Coastal Southeast India, featuring a giant red sun expelling solar rays on an off white background decorated with subtle block printed floral motifs (p. 49). Such cloths, we are told, were exported to Indonesia where they were known as *mata hari*, the sun, or literally 'the eye of the day', and were preserved as heirlooms. Amongst the complex designs that stand out are the fine silk thread embroidery featured on women's clothing in late 19th century Bulushistan (p. 123), a double ikat *patolu* sari from Gujarat in which the pattern of elephants and parrots is achieved through the accurate alignment and inter weaving of resist dyed warp and weft threads and a fragment of an early 18th century chintz decorated with an exuberant painted design of tulips and insects, made for the Dutch market but purchased in Japan (p. 182).



Ceremonial cloth, mata hari. Coastal Southeast India for the Indonesian market, late 18th or 19th century. 274cm x 210 cm. Karun Thakar collection, London.

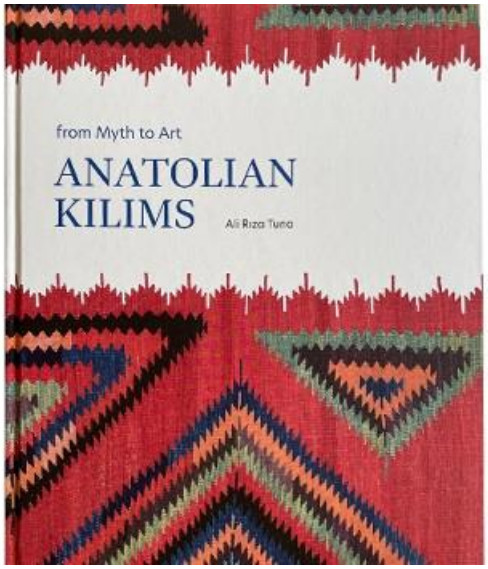
It would be possible to appreciate this book purely for the visual pleasure it offers but it is also a treasure trove of well -researched historical information on textile history, provenance and production. Following introductions from curator, Lee Talbot, and collector, Karun Thakar, it contains three well-researched essays by the acclaimed textile scholars, Rosemary Crill, Avalon Fotheringham and Sylvia Houghteling. In addition the written entries that accompany each plate written by Rosemary Crill and Steven Cohen are highly informative. Taken together these remind us that Indian textiles are not merely a decorative appendage to history but have played a vital role in shaping social, cultural, political, economic and technological developments both locally and globally. This comes out particularly clearly in Avalon Fotheringham's essay on the widespread popularity of Indian floral motifs outside India from the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries and the competition this stimulated worldwide. She shows how the presence of such textiles on the global market accelerated new technological developments in textile manufacture in Europe and Japan, stimulated the growth of cotton agricultural industries in the Americas and contributed to the depreciation of the local textile industry in West Africa where Indian textiles were also bartered in exchange for captives. She also reminds us that the East India Company's profit-driven monopolisation of India's lucrative textile industry created a framework for the colonisation of India.

One theme that emerges throughout the book is the versatility of Indian textile artists in adapting designs to suit different demands in the world market. Paintings from Persia, botanical drawings from Europe, Jacobean crewel-work and Japanese wood block prints have all acted as important sources of design inspiration and been reworked in the Indian context. When the export of floral chintzes from India to Europe was at its height in the 17th and 18th centuries, these 'Indian' designs were drawn from an amalgam of Indian, European, Chinese, Iranian and other sources of inspiration. They bear witness to the resourcefulness of textile makers, the mobility and fluidity of designs and the relevance that Indian textiles attained in different cultural contexts whether incorporated as currency in West Africa, clothing and furnishings in Europe or as family heir looms and for use in ceremonial parades in Southeast Asia.

If the essays in this book deepen our understanding of India's remarkable textile heritage, the images offer a cornucopia of long lasting visual pleasure.

Emma Tarlo

Emma Tarlo is Emeritus Professor of Anthropology, Goldsmiths, University of London.



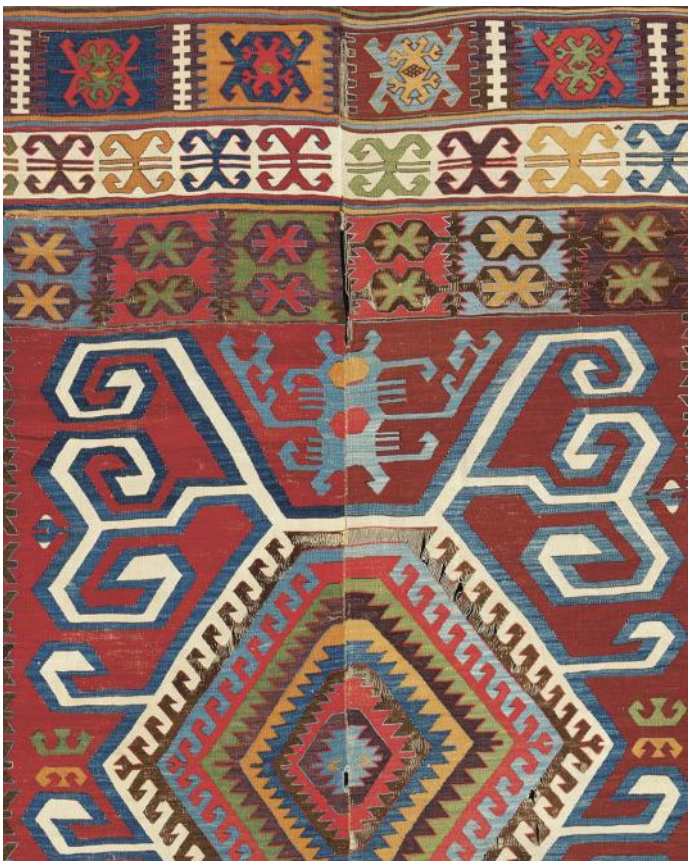
From Myth to Art: Anatolian Kilims

Edited by Ali Rıza Tuna, copy editing by Bethany Mendenhall
Published 2021.
Hardback, 260 pages, 295 illustrations.
£110 from Hali Bookshop.
ISBN: 9782839933599

Ali Rıza Tuna is a kilim collector and passionate scholar. He started buying kilims in the 1980s and gradually formed a very important collection, which continues to grow to this day. In the Introduction to his book, the author sets out the main points of discussion, especially in terms of aesthetic and style. He proposes a new approach to understanding kilims, by putting them in dialogue with a diversity of disciplines, such as anthropology, ethnography, semiotics, mythology, philosophy and archaeology. Reading the works of great scholars of the calibre of Franz Boas, Ernst Cassirer and Hans Belting on the relationship between human cultures and their artefacts and image traditions, he developed his own thesis. Anatolian kilims should be considered part of the iconographic tradition of a given culture and placed in the context of other manifestations of the same culture, such as oral and dancing traditions, rituals, myths and sacred beliefs.

In Chapter I *The Anatolian kilim as an image*, Ali Rıza Tuna emphasizes the importance of style in kilims and the close link between style and image. According to the author, the images embedded in the rugs follow a unique style, which 'distinguish them both through history and geography from other textiles (..)' (p. 11). Two main elements define the kilim style: the mutuality of forms and the colour field. Since the imagery on kilims could generate multiple readings, the author suggests bearing in mind the specific cultural context in which the images were created and perpetuated.

In Chapter II *The Anatolian kilims as a symbolic form of culture*, Ali Rıza Tuna seeks to identify the sources of inspiration for kilim images in Anatolia and beyond. Kilims are a product of people who practiced nomadism and it is on kilims that these communities have been able to transmit their cultural and historical memory. The same images, however, were found on kilims produced not only in different places in Anatolia, but also in the Caucasus and Iran. The author provides some examples of the links between kilim images and ancient decorative motifs found in other media and unearthed during archaeological campaigns in Anatolia and Central Asia. He then comes to two main conclusions: Anatolian kilims have integrated into their unique style an imagery of distant geographical places; some images were initially used in other media and were integrated into kilims only after the development of the weaving techniques.



Above: Kilim (detail). Hotamiş tribe, central Anatolia, circa. 1800 or earlier. Opposite: Kilim (detail), Sivas region, central Anatolia, 18th century or earlier.

In Chapter III *The Aesthetic of the Anatolian kilim*, the author takes into consideration some visual elements developed by painters and art critics for

the analysis of Western abstract or abstract expressionist art and applies them to kilims. The visual elements to which he refers are the *lines*, the *forms* and the *colours* together with the *extent*, the *structure* and the *rhythm*. In kilims, the *lines* separate the *forms*. Primary *colours* occupy specific areas of the patterns and are emphasized by colour shades, which are placed in transitional areas. The *extent* of colour is equally important and in fact large areas with solid colour in kilims have no patterns. As Ali Rıza Tuna points out, these coloured areas are not to be considered 'empty', but they represent an expressive element. Finally, the *rhythm* gives dynamism to the kilim by making the different parts work together.

In Chapter IV *The Anatolian kilim between Myth and Art*, the author reinforces the importance of interpreting kilims 'within the larger cultural context of the nomadic tribes of Anatolia' (p. 43) and refers to the work of Yusuf Durul, a Turkish folklore researcher, who lived with the nomadic weavers of Anatolia in the 1940s. Durul created four categories of subjects to which motifs on kilims are related: *Tamghas* or identification signs for specific nomadic groups; magic rituals or religious and mythical beliefs; human feelings and finally, ancient historical monuments. Ali Rıza Tuna added two categories, with motifs related to 'the memory of an event or an individual, either within the tribal history or the personal life of the viewer' and to 'basic patterns linked to weaving technique' (p. 43). The six categories are not definitive, as scholarship progresses, it will be possible to add more, but those already established can help the onlooker to get closer to the inner symbolism of kilims.

The second part of the book is dedicated to the catalogue of the most significant kilims in the author's collection. The section is beautifully illustrated with photographs of the kilims and there is a brief description and technical analysis for each of them. Where possible, there is also additional information on the history of kilims in terms of publications, past exhibitions and comparative materials. Çuvals, cicims and zilis have been included to feature other textiles made by the same weavers involved in kilims production.

This is a valuable contribution in the field of kilim studies and I would recommend this book to anyone interested in the subject.

Roberta Marin

Roberta Marin is a specialist in Islamic art. She collaborates with the Khalili Collection of Islamic art and runs art history courses at the University of York and at the Arab British Centre in London.

Ronald Anthony Stewart 22 March 1942 – 4 April 2022

Ron Stewart, a long-standing member of ORTS and former committee member, has died aged 80.

Ron Stewart lived his first few happy years in rural Haywards Heath with his mother Aunt Dolly and cousin Keith. When his father returned from the war the family moved to East London, where they lived in some poverty in a flat above a Jewish tailor's shop, his father having been disowned by his wealthy Quaker family when he joined the RAF (they were eventually reconciled). The family eventually moved to Bush Hill Park in Enfield. Ron passed the 11+ and insisted on going to Tottenham Grammar, a tough school but where his friends were. He was taught by war veterans and his hard left atheistic views were cemented. He read Russian at Cambridge University and spent the long vacations in Europe, usually working at the youth hostel in Sett, where his French improved greatly.

After graduation, he became a sports club groundsman – he was really good at tennis, table tennis and rugby. His mother one day suggested he get a proper job and he spotted an advertisement in the Evening Standard for a very well-paid job – about £800 per year. The job seemed to be to do with telephones, so he started to walk out of the interview. But they asked him if he could sell a carpet in French and he went to meet M. La Fontaine, who ran a famous oriental carpet company in Holborn. And the rest is history.

There was much travel, first selling rugs throughout Europe, adding German and Italian along the way, then on to buying in Pakistan, India, Afghanistan, Turkey and of course Iran and Morocco, his two favourite countries. He visited nomadic tribes and experienced ways of living which hardly exist today. He saw how war, repression and poverty led to the nomadic way of life being destroyed as tribal peoples were forced into cities. He learnt enough Arabic and Farsi to get by. He had an amazing in-depth knowledge of the structure and origin of rugs – he could, for example, identify the exact village a rug came from in Iran. This led to his own interest in weaving, which became his passion later in life.

Ron spent the last ten years of his working life at Liberty, travelling the world and bringing wonderful objects back. Richard Liberty said he was the best thing that ever happened to the shop, as he explored the cultures of Japan, Mali, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Guatemala, Indonesia – and again, his beloved Iran and Morocco. In his basement kingdom, the Oriental Department, he put on spectacular exhibitions. And he would come home and casually mention, days later, that he had sold a rug to a rock star, or a bowl to royalty. It didn't matter to him. He resigned when technology appeared and he had to deal with budgets, projections etc. He could no longer handwrite every label and his staff banned him from using the electronic tills. In his day, carpet buying was done on a handshake. He was recognised as an expert in his field and was called upon by auction houses and courts to authenticate and value oriental rugs and textiles.

In later years he was involved with charities, working with weavers in Nepal and Bulgaria, and gave occasional lectures. He spent his retirement happily weaving - all the family and many friends now have a Stewart original. He carried on learning, going to French and Philosophy classes. He was never without a book and loved reading, and listening to all manner of histories, biographies and stories while weaving. The range of his knowledge and interest in the world was extraordinary.

There are so many stories – nearly dying in Ukraine, arrested at gunpoint in Afghanistan, bringing rain wherever he went, including the Sahara, introducing Moroccan rugs to the UK. They are everywhere now. In all this, he was comfortable talking to people from all countries, cultures and religions. He hated fundamentalism, Brexit saddened and infuriated him. His views were very left wing always, and he believed education was the saviour of the world.

Quite a life!

Bev Stewart

TALKS

Talks are held at the University Women's Club, which is behind the Dorchester Hotel in London.

Buses 13, 16, and 36 go from Victoria Station to Park Lane. Bus 38 goes to Piccadilly. Both stop at the Hard Rock Café bus stop. The nearest tube stations are Green Park and Hyde Park Corner. Doors open at 6 pm. Please sign your names at reception, and go upstairs to the elegant first floor drawing room, where there will be a pay bar.

Non-members are welcome to attend lectures for £7 a single lecture, students £5.

Lectures are free for members.

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With thanks to Pia Rainey for managing the monthly newsletters

The ORTS journal is published three times a year. Contributions are welcomed from members and non-members. Please send ideas for articles and proposals for book or exhibition reviews to Dr Fiona Kerlogue on editor.orts@gmail.com

The deadline for content for the autumn issue is October 1st 2022.

Back cover: *Extremely rare 19th-century red silk songket trousers with gold and coloured silk discontinuous supplementary weft decoration. 65 x 89 cm. See article page 10.*