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ORIENTAL RUG & TEXTILE SOCIETY

ORIENTAL RUG AND TEXTILE SOCIETY of GREAT BRITAIN

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The Oriental Rug and Textile Society of Great Britain was founded in 1977 to encourage interest and enthusiasm in the carpets and textiles of Asia and now of the whole world. We aim to advance understanding of the processes involved in their creation and to promote knowledge of the traditional centres of weaving.

Members receive details of up to eleven events (lectures, visits and trips abroad) each year and three journals.

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Do join us!

Volume 4 issue 1 Spring 2021

Contents

Page 3 Society news

Page 4 Helen Loveday: Weaving with gold: a look at some Japanese Buddhist textiles

Page 10 Gavin Strachan: Manastir rugs and kilims

Page 16 Emma Slocombe: Industrialisation and the Import of Cotton

Page 19 Mamiko Markham: Katagami: Just a Paper Stencil Part Two

Page 25 Book Review: How to Weave a Navajo Rug by Lynda Teller Pete and Barbara Teller Ornelas

Page 26 Book Review: Early Islamic Textiles by Friedrich Spuhler

Page 27 Book Review: The Persian Carpet The Forgotten Years 1722-1872 by Hadi Maktabi

Page 30 ORTS events

ORTS since lockdown

If I reflect back on what has happened since March 2020, when I became ORTS Acting Chair and Covid hit the UK hard, it has been quite a roller coaster. It could have been a disaster for ORTS but has, in fact, been an opportunity to develop and expand activities.

ORTS members around the country and overseas can now share equally in our lectures via Zoom. Does it make anyone else smile to see a message in the chat box reading "Hi from Baku" (or Canada)? We have all come to grips (a bit better?) with Zoom, thanks to our IT support Julian Nicholas. Chris Aslan, who presented our first virtual lecture about the Silk Road, helped us on our way. Overseas-based lecturers such as Stefano Ionescu, with his excellent talk on Ottoman Court Prayer Rugs in Rumania, can now contribute. And the year ended on a high note with a fine celebratory lecture by Jennifer Wearden about the South Kensington Museum carpet collection.

We have also introduced more informal members' talks. Clive Rogers ably took up the challenge in a discussion about Navajo rugs and textiles with fellow dealer Tony Hazledine. Geoffrey Saba was the first brave member to pilot the ORTS members' collection talks with his collection of Thai ikat and then persuaded Claude Delmas to undertake the second talk (of what we hope will be an ongoing ORTS series) about her double ikat collection.

The virtual Show and Tell was a great success and we plan further Show and Tell activities. Pia Rainey keeps us all in touch about our own and other events via e news, and 760 people are now following such notifications via Facebook as well. As part of our proposals to revamp the website, we will add a members only section where copies of the Zoom lectures will be available. ORTS members have enjoyed high quality Summer and Autumn ORTS journals during lockdown, with more to come. By popular request, in August we re-sent the Kyrgyzstan journal out to members as well.

So, thank you to all committee members involved in exploring possibilities, and thank you also to all our ORTS members for continuing to support us with your virtual presence. We promise to explore more opportunities. Do keep coming to us with ideas and comments.

Sue Jones. ORTS Chair

Editorial news

Normally at this time of year we look forward to receiving reports on exhibitions, auctions, textile fairs and Society outings. While current circumstances have restricted such events, we do have some fascinating articles. Helen Loveday's piece on a Chinese-inspired Japanese textile, which links to Mamiko Markham's continuation of her examination of Japanese katagami, and Gavin Strachan's account of Manastir rugs, make up the bulk of the journal; and we have excellent reviews of some must-have books.

We are delighted to include also an article by Emma Slocombe, textiles curator at the National Trust. I'm sure that like me, many members are looking forward to visiting NT properties again as soon as it becomes possible. The Trust has a renewed focus on researching its collections (which include some wonderful textiles and carpets) and we hope to be able to bring news of some of these items in forthcoming issues.

Fiona Kerlogue, Editor

Front cover: A very fine pictorial carpet made in the mid-20th century, probably around 1960. It has a silk foundation and a fine Kork wool pile. The workshop signature in the top cartouche reads 'Mahdi Dar Dashti, Isfahan'. The signature in Farsi is superimposed on an English translation, something which Aaron Nejad says he has not come across before. The rug depicts a scene from one of the poems of Sa'adi, who lived in the 13th century. Image courtesy of Aaron Nejad.

Weaving with gold: a look at some Japanese Buddhist textiles

Helen Loveday

Among the treasures of East Asian art collected by the Swiss businessman Alfred Baur (1865-1951), now housed in a private museum in Geneva alongside Chinese imperial ceramics, Japanese lacquerware and sword fittings, is an uncommon category of textile: the altar cloth, or *uchishiki*, used in Buddhist temples in Japan (fig. 1). Such altar cloths had appeared in the West during the second half of the 19th century as part of much larger consignments of Japanese embroidered and woven textiles exhibited at the World Fairs. Baur acquired his collection as a single lot in 1927 from a Kyôto dealer named Tomita Kumasaku (1872-1954). Through meticulous selection, Tomita had assembled a remarkably homogenous group of one hundred and twenty-one square silk cloths, each measuring between 63 and 68 centimetres in width, and dating from the late 17th century to the first decade of the 20th century. At a time when Western collectors were more interested in Nô theatre robes, Buddhist priests' stoles (*kesa*), or items of clothing such as women's *kosode* and sashes (*obi*), Baur's purchase would have been somewhat unusual. Even today, only a few museums outside Japan, most notably the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston and the Metropolitan Museum in New York, can boast of possessing respectable collections of these altar cloths, which remain little known, even within specialist circles. In 2014, in the hope of stimulating renewed interest in this field, and perhaps of bringing to light similar collections lying overlooked in museum storerooms, the Baur Foundation organised an exhibition of its own *uchishiki*, accompanied by a catalogue. The present article provides an introduction to these textiles.

Figure 1. Altar cloth, uchishiki, *silk lampas, twill ground with flat gold thread. Regular rows of interlocking octagons with various diaper motifs, grasses, and blossoms. Length 67.5 cm, width 68 cm 19th century. CB-TJ-1927-81.*

One feature which the *uchishiki* shares with the priest's *kesa* is that it is made from material donated to the temples, which is then cut up and resewn to fulfil a new function. These fabrics were often valued items of clothing, selected from among the donor's personal possessions; frequently embroidered or woven with gold and silver thread, they represented the most expensive and luxurious textiles of their time. As such, they are a testimony to the extraordinary complexity and quality of weaving produced in Japan during the Edo (1603-1868) and Meiji (1868-1912) periods. Throughout Asia, textiles have always been used extensively in Buddhist temples for both decorative and practical purposes. Brightly-coloured silks and other fabrics may serve as canopies, banners, or column-shaped hangings for embellishing hall interiors, become altar coverings, be draped over statues or chairs, or sewn into clothing for monks and priests. The custom of placing textiles over the top surface of certain altars and tables in Buddhist halls is well attested in China from at least the 7th century on, and was adopted in Japan around the same time. Just as the layout of the halls and the number and size of the tables in them differ according to the school as well as the occasion, so too have the dimensions and shape of these cloths varied over the centuries. Long narrow altars before the main image of a hall require a rectangular format, while smaller side altars tend to favour the square cloth such as those in the Baur collection.

Donations made by members of all levels of society represent the main source of these textiles, the most lavish gifts being those bestowed by emperors and shoguns. The act of giving is considered one of several pious deeds which allow a person to accumulate spiritual merit during his or her lifetime and will help the donor and his family along their path to salvation. In Japan, such were the amounts donated that certain temples employed specialised artisans to cut and resew the fabrics, or assigned their own monks and nuns

to the job of needle workers. The spiritual importance attached to the act of giving explains the frequent practice of adding dedicatory inscriptions to the textiles, written in ink on the lining. These texts vary in length but provide precious documentation which may include the names of the temple and the donor, as well as a date and the occasion on which the altar cloth was actually used.

The fascination which Chinese silk has exerted right across the Asian and European continents, from the Mediterranean to Japan, has been the subject of many a study. Imported silks reached Japan as early as the 3rd century BC, and from the 4th century AD sericulture and silk weaving developed rapidly there thanks to immigrant weavers from China and Korea. Silk textiles represented highly valued luxury goods, long reserved for the imperial court and nobility. For centuries, lengths of silk featured regularly among the diplomatic gifts brought back to Japan by missions returning from China. An 8th-century inventory of textiles preserved in a temple in Nara lists an impressive variety of fabrics, including tabby and twill weaves, damasks, tapestry, several varieties of gauze, both warp- and weft-faced compound twills, as well as embroidered and resist-dyed textiles. Although by the 12th century, weaving guilds established in the Japanese provinces were specialising in particular weaves, the most highly-prized fabrics of all, those incorporating woven or embroidered metallic thread, were still produced only in China and arriving in limited quantities. Demand always outstripped supply and ensured their continuing high value. Even the smallest samples of the coveted textiles were put to good use, frequently sewn together into bags to hold precious tea-caddies or bowls, or assembled as part of the mountings of hanging scrolls.

Following the establishment of official relations with the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), trade between Japan and China increased considerably; above all, it facilitated the settlement of Chinese silk weavers in the port of Sakai, near present-day Osaka, who brought with them the secret of weaving with supplementary gold-paper wefts, needed for producing the much sought-after golden fabrics. Weavers from the Nishijin quarter of Kyôto travelled to Sakai and even to China to master these techniques, and by the end of the 16th century, Nishijin was manufacturing its own imitations of the finest Chinese fabrics, supplying the imperial court, the ruling samurai class, as well as shrines and Buddhist temples throughout the country. In its heyday in the late 17th century, an estimated 7000 looms were in operation there, and the industry employed tens of thousands of workers, either as weavers or in associated activities such as silk reeling and dyeing.

With a small number of exceptions, all the altar cloths in the Baur collection are patterned silks decorated with a rich palette of bright colours which incorporate gold, and in a few cases silver, thread. Known as *nishiki*, they would originally have been destined for court and ceremonial attire, or costumes for the Nô theatre. These fabrics are quite distinct from those used for everyday wear, and no examples of embroidery or of the numerous resist-dyeing techniques known in Japan are included in the collection. *Nishiki* represent a complex form of weaving in which the metallic threads are introduced as a supplementary layer lying on top of the foundation or ground weave (fig. 2). The latter, usually a twill or a satin, provides the background colour of the finished fabric, while the polychrome design is entirely composed of these additional threads which, in the cases under discussion here, are all weft threads, that is which run horizontally across the width of the loom. They are woven in at the same time as the ground weave itself is created, a process which requires a particular type of loom. The introduction at the end of the 16th century of an improved Chinese drawloom allowed the Japanese weavers to produce these complex polychrome patterns for the first time. The drawloom resembles the treadle loom, with the addition of a second level from which are hung the shafts which must be raised and lowered to create the pattern (fig. 3). The weaver activates with his foot the treadles which are attached to the heddles for the foundation weave. At the same time, he inserts by hand the supplementary patterning wefts, while in the upper tier, his assistant, usually his wife or a child, raises the shafts in the appropriate sequence.

Figure 2. Detail of a silk lampas altar cloth, uchishiki*, with a satin ground, showing both flat and twisted gold thread. 19th century. CB-TJ-1927-45.*

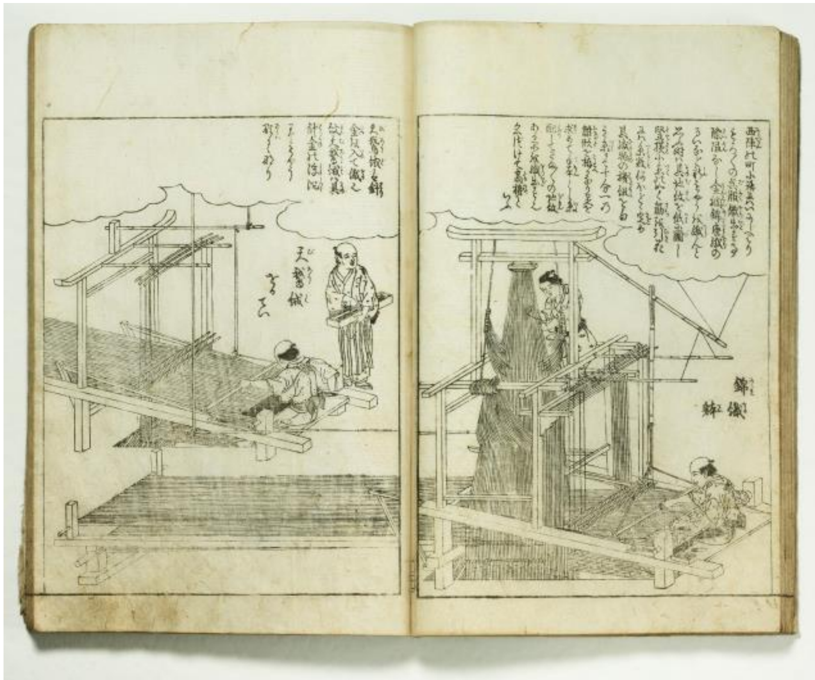

Figure 3. Looms in use in Nishijin, Kyôto, illustrated in Miyako meisho zu-e, 1780.

Aside from metallic threads, between five and eight coloured silk threads, and occasionally as many as twelve, could also be inserted as supplementary wefts. These appear as needed on the top surface to form the pattern, and when they are no longer wanted, pass through to the back (fig. 4). There they may run the entire width of the cloth from selvage to selvage, in which case they are known as continuous wefts, or they may be inserted in a limited area only (discontinuous wefts). Figure 4 illustrates both cases: the long white lines are the back of the continuous silver metal thread which appears on the surface only to form the outline of the flower and petals; the blue and red threads, on the other hand, are discontinuous and have been inserted only in a limited area of the fabric. Very often, as is the case here, the unused continuous threads float unbound on the reverse of the cloth.

The presence of these long floats is inconvenient in any fabric intended for clothing or frequent manipulation; one solution is to bind them on the reverse of the cloth, just as they are on the front. This may be done directly by the foundation warp or, more commonly, by the insertion of an extra warp thread known as a secondary or binding warp. This particular type of weave is frequently referred to as a *lampas* in Western literature (fig. 5). Unless a particular chromatic effect is wanted, this warp thread is generally chosen in a neutral colour so as to be as inconspicuous as possible.

Figure 4. Continuous, unbound gold strips (white) and discontinuous weft (red and blue) on the reverse of a satin fabric. 18th century. CB-TJ-1927-49.

Two types of gold thread are used in these fabrics, either singly (fig. 5) or in combination with one another (fig. 2). The latter option allows the weaver to take advantage of the contrasts, however slight, created by the different reflective properties, textures, and height of the two threads. The older form has a round cross-section in which sheets of metal foil or gilt paper are twisted over a silk core. It is commonly used for embroidery and tapestry, and to a lesser extent as a woven supplementary weft. The second, and by far the more widespread type by the 16th century, is a flat gilt strip (fig. 5). Its core is composed of a thin sheet of paper made from the long, resistant fibres of the paper mulberry plant (*kôzo*). In the Edo period (1603-1868), the hand-beaten metal foil was stuck to the upper surface of the paper with an adhesive arrowroot (*kuzu*) paste, followed by a thin layer of lacquer. The under-surface of the paper was left bare as can be seen in figure 4. Once covered in foil, the sheets were cut by hand into narrow, slightly uneven strips, generally between 0,20 mm and 0,30 mm in width, though sometimes as wide as 0,40 mm or even 0,50 mm when a large surface area is to be covered. During the Meiji period (1868-1912), commercial glue replaced the lacquer, and the strips were machine-cut, thereby becoming much more regular in

Figure 5. Flat gold strips on a silk lampas of kinran *type, twill ground. 18th century. CB-TJ-1927-71.*

width. It is not uncommon for metal threads to become abraded and broken with wear, leaving the substrate and the adhesive visible in places. In extreme cases, the entire metal surface may be oxidised or worn away, leaving just the bare strips of paper on the surface of the fabric.

It is worth noting that despite their use in a religious setting, be it as altar cloths, banners or clothing for monks, there is nothing particularly Buddhist about the majority of the designs on these fabrics. The Japanese weavers faithfully reproduced the models which arrived from China, thus perpetuating with little change the traditional Chinese patterns, simply adapting when appropriate the symbolism attached to them. The dragon is one of the more common motifs; copied from Chinese court robes, it is generally seen in profile, ascending or descending in alternate rows and set among clusters of clouds (fig. 6). Its original associations with the Chinese emperor no longer apply in Japan where it is understood rather as a powerful supernatural being, with cosmological significance and a general provider of good fortune. As such, it belongs to a very broad category of auspicious motifs which include the phoenix (fig. 7) and the crane. As a herald of peace and prosperity, the phoenix was said to be the physical embodiment of Confucian virtues. As in China, it is shown as a large, majestic bird with a pheasant's tail, and a crest or cock's comb. In Japan, it frequently appears alongside the flowering branches of the paulownia tree in which it is said to alight. This combination of phoenix and paulownia became a conventional motif, and over time, the paulownia evolved into a stylised form consisting of a large, three-lobed leaf with three vertical sprigs of flowers. All of these heavenly creatures soar in the sky among multi-coloured clouds whose lobed outline conveys a wish for long-life and immortality.

Figure 6. Silk lampas altar cloth, uchishiki*, , twill ground with flat gold thread. Alternating rows of ascending and descending four-clawed dragons, among stylized clouds. Length 63 cm, width 64 cm. 19th century. CB-TJ-1927-83.*

Flowers, and to a lesser extent fruit, have featured prominently in both Chinese and Japanese decorative arts for centuries, either as scrolls, individual flower heads or roundels, sometimes spreading across the entire surface, at others arranged in orderly rows. They tend to be represented in conventional forms, frequently so stylised as to bear little resemblance to any botanical reality. Certain flowers have become seasonal emblems: the plum (*ume*) and the cherry (*sakura*), which flower at the end of winter, mark the coming of spring, while the lotus (*renge*) is an indication of summer and the chrysanthemum (*kiku*) is the flower of autumn. Representations of the chrysanthemum vary considerably as can be seen in a composition (fig. 8) which brings together several of its forms: shown at the top in profile with long feathery petals, with small daisy-like corollas, or in a starburst effect below. The lotus is often combined with the peony, a symbol of wealth and honour; these

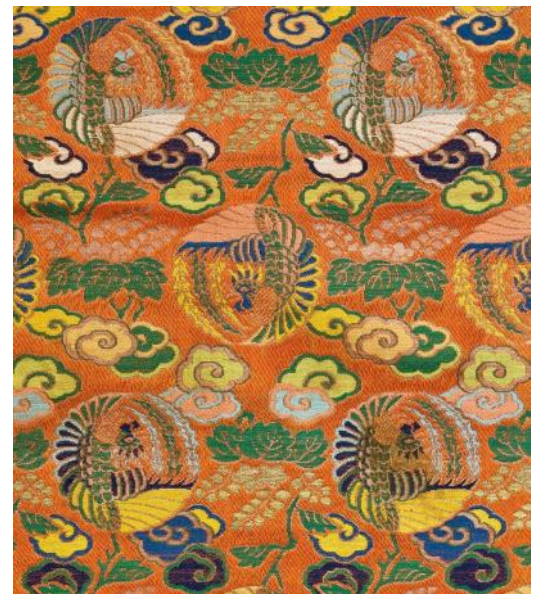

Figure 7. Detail of altar cloth, uchishiki*, silk lampas, twill ground with flat silver and twisted gold thread. Phoenix medallions set among stylised clouds and paulownia branches. Length 73.5 cm, width 67.5 cm. 18th century. CB-TJ-1927-*

Figure 8. Altar cloth, uchishiki*, silk lampas, twill ground with flat gold thread. Alternating rows of large stylised chrysanthemum flowers interspersed with smaller chrysanthemums and leaves. Length 66 cm, width 66 cm. 18th century. CB-TJ-1927-61.*

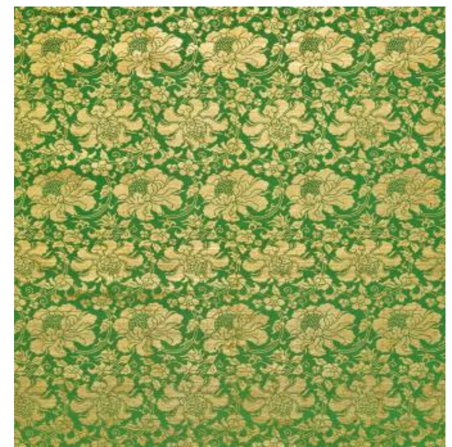

Figure 9. Altar cloth, uchishiki, silk lampas, kinran*, twill ground with flat gold thread. Peony and plum blossom scroll in gold on a green ground. Length 64.5 cm, width 64.5 cm. 18th century. CB-TJ-1927-4.*

can be seen in figure 9, set in alternate rows, the peony facing upwards and the lotus facing down. In this particular type of fabric, known as a *kinran*, the pattern is created entirely by the supplementary gold wefts on a monochrome ground.

Geometric designs frequently serve either as small filler patterns or, on a larger scale, as the framework of the composition. Rows of repeated circles, squares, hexagons, and octagons, interlocking or not, provide a basic structure which can then be almost infinitely modified by adapting the size of the grid or stretching the pattern horizontally or vertically. The designs illustrated in figures 1, 10 and 11 give an idea of the range of effects created from a regular pattern of interlocking elements. A skilful manipulation of colour is crucial to the overall balance of the finished fabric, particularly when taken to extremes by the Nishijin weavers of Kyôto, who, by the 19th century, were producing extraordinarily rich and dense compositions. Many of these represented entirely new combinations of traditional motifs, unknown in China. One such example is the fabric in figure 11 with its large medallions containing pairs of confronted dragon and phoenix. This is one of the most sumptuous of textiles produced in Japan, its bright colours set off against a pure gold ground, created by the supplementary wefts which entirely conceal the foundation weave.

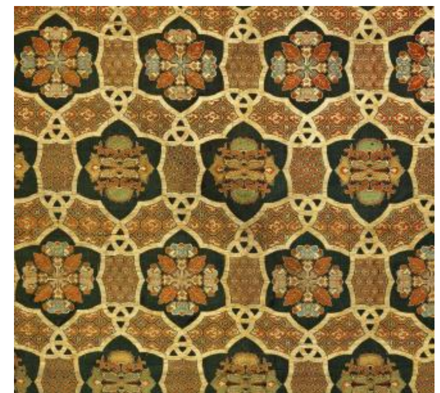

Figure 10. Altar cloth, uchishiki, *silk lampas, satin ground with flat gold thread. Large-scale pattern of interlocking hexagonal medallions with various diaper motifs and stylised flowers. Length 65 cm, width 65.5 cm. Late 18th century. CB-TJ-1927-85.*

Reinterpretations of traditional compositions and motifs are not the only innovations perceptible in the production of the Kyôto *nishiki* weavers from the mid-18th century on. Increased competition at home from rival weaving centres encouraged experimentation, at a time which coincided with the arrival of new sources of inspiration, no longer originating from continental China but from other foreign lands. Despite being officially closed to the outside world from the 1630s until 1840, Japan nevertheless maintained a certain level of international commerce through Chinese and Dutch ships whose cargoes were laden with goods from South-East Asia, India, and the Middle East, as well as East Asia and Europe. Among these articles were fabrics bearing designs of an entirely new kind. They appeared fresh and exotic, and their appeal was immediate. Much like the Chinese gold silks before them, they would be collected and treasured, down to the smallest piece, and their designs incorporated into the Japanese versions produced in imitation of them (figs. 12-13).

Figure 11. Altar cloth, uchishiki*, silk lampas, twill ground with flat gold thread. Large* shokkô *design of confronted dragons and phoenixes with stylised flowers and various diaper patterns, on a dark blue ground covered in gold. Length 67 cm, width 64.5 cm. 19th century. CB-TJ-1927-17.*

One such category was the Indo-European chintz, printed cotton fabrics with floral, geometric, or figurative patterns, known in Japan under the generic name of *sarasa*. The history of chintz design in the 17th and 18th centuries is one of complex cultural interactions between East and West, of mutual borrowings and translations, of adaptations to meet the requirements of differing tastes and demands across continents. These textiles were already hybrids by the time they reached Japan, with their European, Chinese, Persian, and Indian roots. The history of their designs would of course not have been known in Japan, where their

Figure 12. Altar cloth, uchishiki*, silk lampas, twill ground with flat gold thread. Alternating rows of large stylised flower and fruit clusters. Length 68 cm, width 68.5 cm. Late 18th /early 19th century. CB-TJ-1927-79.*

foreign origin was sufficient in itself to ensure their popularity. The volume of imported Indian fabrics increased considerably from the mid-17th century on, stimulating a demand for patterns designed in India specifically for the Japanese market, as well as imitations of these produced in South-East Asia. Once imports of Indian cloth ended in the 1830s, the continued demand for chintz was filled by British-produced cottons as well as by Japanese-made copies.

Other categories of imported fabrics which arrived as diplomatic gifts included European textiles as well as Persian and Indian carpets. Many of these were decorated with designs which were once again of multiple ancestry, a fusion of Ottoman, Indian, Chinese, and ironically, Japanese influences. Among these, were the so-called 'bizarre' silks, produced in Europe between the 1680s and 1710s, and characterized by large-scale designs of stylized leaves and flowers, asymmetrical compositions, and the juxtaposition of curves and diagonals. While there is much evidence to suggest that Japanese *kosode* were being used as a source of inspiration for bizarre patterns by European designers by the 1680s, it would also appear that a century later, through a reciprocal process, these bizarre designs and their successors were in turn helping to revitalise the Japanese *nishiki* production. Many early 19th-century silks display fanciful flowers which are not derived from the traditional Chinese models. Instead, they show several of the characteristics associated with European decorative trends of the previous century: the enlargement of the flower, as if seen through a magnifying glass, the elongation and distortion of its details, the proliferation of botanical elements composing it, and the serrated or feather-like edges of the leaves and petals (fig. 12). Even a motif such as the pomegranate, originally a component of the traditional Sino-Japanese repertoire, was rediscovered in its Westernised guise and readopted, appearing in these new compositions with even greater frequency than it had before (fig. 13). It must be stressed, however, that it is often difficult to trace these new motifs back to specific models; by their very nature, these imported 17th and 18th-century styles were themselves eclectic mixes of shared Western, Middle Eastern, Indian, and East Asian elements, so that the shape of a given flower or leaf could equally well have been inspired by a chintz, a bizarre, or an Ottoman carpet. What the history of these fabrics does reveal, however, is that far from being isolated, Japan occupied a unique geographical position at the far end of a complex network of cross-continental trade routes, which, for over a millennium and a half, provided a constant and stimulating flow of new ideas. All aspects of its culture were affected, but textiles were undoubtedly one of the greatest beneficiaries of this rich inheritance.

Figure 13. Altar cloth, uchishiki*, silk lampas, satin ground with flat gold thread. Alternating rows of stylised flowers and pomegranates. Length 68.5 cm, width 67 cm. Late 18th or early 19th century. CB-TJ-1927-90.*

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Further reading

Hareven, Tamara K. *The Silk Weavers of Kyoto, Family and Work in a Changing Traditional Industry*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 2002.

Loveday, Helen. *The Baur Collection, Japanese Buddhist Textiles*, 5 Continents Editions, Geneva/Milan 2014.

Manastir rugs and kilims

Gavin Strachan

The tale of Manastir weavings is a complex one. That is not surprising as the Balkans, whence they originate, have a convoluted and complex history. In brief, it is thought that Manastir (but some call them Monastir) rugs and kilims were made by Anatolian settlers in the Balkans when they were part of the Ottoman Empire, but as a result of the empire's decline from the second half of the 1800s, these communities began to move yet again.

There are two types of Manastirs: knotted pile rugs and kilims. Apart from the obvious difference between a pile rug and a flatweave, and while many of both types are for use in prayer, superficially they are not that similar, unlike a Senneh pile rug and a Senneh kilim for instance, although there are some characteristics that the two Manastir types share. It is their simplicity and their bold, naïve imagery which makes them so likeable, at least to me. They are relatively coarsely woven, made by the weavers for their own use, and while some were donated to local mosques, they were never considered as pieces for sale.

Manastir prayer rug. Second half 19th century and showing signs of use for prayer. 162 x 130 cm. The curly pile, two-ply wool warps of brown and white strands, the four thin yellow wefts between each row of knots and the design suggest it is Macedonian in origin. Private collection.

Manastir prayer kilim probably made in East Bulgaria about 1900 but on stylistic grounds it could be earlier. 1.65 x 1.14 cm. There are indications that it has been restored. Slit tapestry weave, mostly brown warps. Six warps are of brown and white plied together. Warps plied in this fashion are often seen in Manastir pile rug production. There are five rows of Anatolian-like borders at the top and bottom. Private collection.

Where were Manastirs woven?

The exact geographic and cultural origin of these weavings has been a matter of debate, as they have been attributed to the Balkans and Thrace as well as to Anatolia. As textiles they show both Balkan and Anatolian influences. The trade knows them as Manastir. Monastir (with an O) is the former name of Bitola in what is now North Macedonia, while Vilâyet-i Manastır was an administrative district (vilayet) of the Ottomans, the boundaries of which now lie in Greece, North Macedonia and Albania.

The Vienna-based collector, Erhard Stöbe, co-author of *Manastir Kilims: In Search of a Trail* (2003) writes: 'That the word 'Manastir' as a name for a weave has anything to do with the word 'monastery' is just one of the many tales that are told to add a bit of colour to the unknown. What remains is the assumption that the city formerly known as 'Manastir' was once the trading place that gave this kilim its name.' However, Stöbe goes on to show that most extant Manastir kilims were probably woven elsewhere, and Tim and Penny Hays, collectors in USA, and major aficionados of and researchers into Manastir weavings, have said that while older Manastir rugs are generally thought to be from the Macedonian region, and some later ones are from Turkey, East Bulgaria is the Manastir heartland.

The Balkans in 1913 showing the changes in territorial distribution of parts of the Ottoman Empire following its decline.

French map of Bulgaria and the surrounding countries. To the south-west is present day North Macedonia and to the south-east Anatolian Turkey. Monastir, now Bitola, is just off the map to the south-west of Prilep. The heartland of Manastir kilim weaving is in the Razgrad area in north-eastern Bulgaria to the north of the Stara Planina mountains.

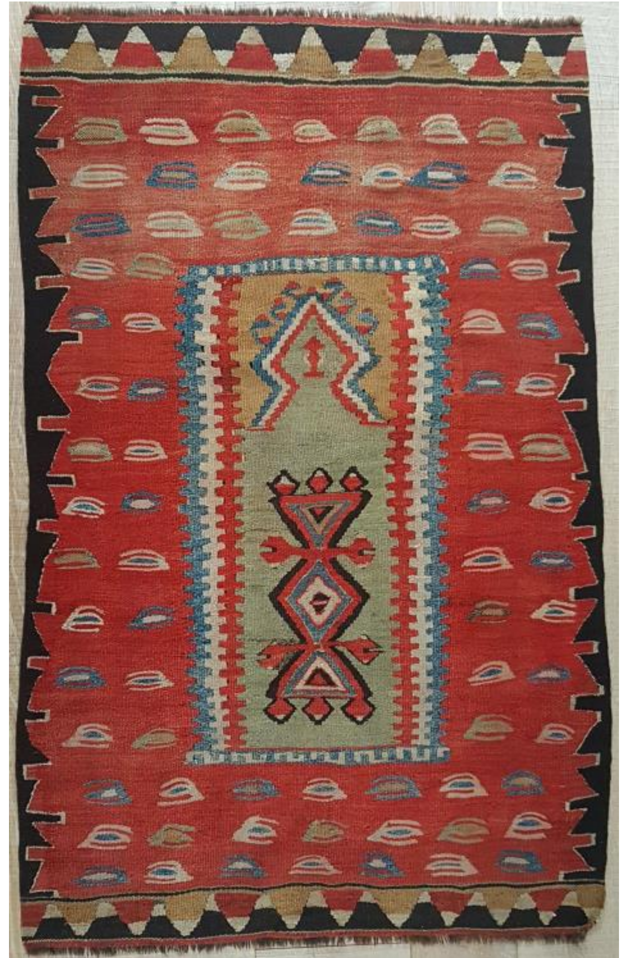
Fifty years ago, Manastir kilims were known to the Istanbul trade and named as such, but since flatweaves were neither studied nor collected scant regard was ever paid to them. For kilims as a whole, that changed in the 1970s when their merits were begun to be understood. The Turkish economy was also on its knees, and these fantastic works of art were cheap. In 1977, David Black and Clive Loveless published their short but trend-setting book *The Undiscovered Kilim*. Two years later, in 1979, Yanni Petsopoulos published the much more serious *Kilims*, which looked at the flatweaves of Anatolia, the Caucasus and Persia. Describing their different designs he sought to identify where each type of kilim was made. Then, Petsopoulos placed Manastir kilims in the areas around Izmir, Akhisar, Usak and Alasehir in Anatolia, but he never mentioned any remigration from the Balkans. A little later, in 1982, Belkis Balpinar and Udo Hirsch in their *Flatweaves from the Vakiflar Museum Istanbul*, do, however, ascribe Manastirs to immigrants from the Balkans, and the authors comment that the wool, colour and textures of these kilims differ from all other Anatolian weaves.

The West becomes aware of Manastir weavings

Manastir kilims were inevitably introduced to the western market. Davut Mizrahi, an art dealer in Vienna, co-authored with Erhard Stöbe the only publication on Manastir kilims in English (the publication is in both English and German). *Manastir Kilims: In Search of a Trail* was published in 2003 and accompanied an exhibition held that year in Vienna's Museum für angewandte Kunst. Both were reviewed in a short article in Hali 129. In the book, Mizrahi recalls seeing his first Manastir kilim in 1988 in an exhibition in the gallery of Vienna-based Muammer Kirdök.

However, it is worth recording that seven years earlier, in July 1981, Lefevre & Partners of London sold, at one of its six specialist textile auctions that year, what was described as a Manastir kilim dating to the first half of the 19th century. Lefevre hedged his bets in the description: 'Kilims such as this one, with a rare and unfamiliar design, are difficult to identify. The attribution to the Manastir group was suggested by Yanni Petsopoulos, who published the piece as plate 102 in *Kilims*. There are few known examples of Manastir kilims…' The estimate was £2,000/£3,000 (there was no buyers' commission at that time) and it sold for £1,900 which was probably the reserve, but still a substantial amount at the time.

Manastir prayer kilim, 19th century, being shown at the International Hajji Baba Society in 2011. Brown wool warp, plain weave, tapestry, slit tapestry and brocaded bands. 182 x 102 cm. This kilim is illustrated as plate 13 in Stöbe et al., Manastir Kilims: In Search of a Trail.



The colours and style of this kilim are distinctly Manastir, but the bird motifs suggest Sarköy/Pirot influences. Probably Bulgaria about 1900. Extensive damage (repaired 2020) to the edges and central area suggest it was used for prayer. Dark brown wool warps. 155 x 96 cm. Private collection.

Petsopoulos places this particular kilim amongst the Mut pieces in his book. Mut kilims were produced in the Taurus Mountains south of Konya. Petsopoulos ascribes them to the Manastir group because of their 'chromatic similarities'. Erhard Stöbe, co-author of the previously mentioned *Manastir Kilims: In Search of a Trail*, believes that only one of Petsopoulos' pieces is really a Manastir, and makes no comment at all on the kilim illustrated as plate 102.

Our understanding has moved on in the last 40 years, and the piece described by Lefevre and Petsopoulos as a Manastir would not be described as such today. What is of interest is that one of the theories about the origin of the Anatolians who moved to Macedonia is that they came from Ermenek and Mut in the Taurus Mountains, which is where Petsopoulos places the piece that he illustrates as plate 102, so his 'chromatic similarities' might have something.

Researching Manastir weaving history

The literature on Manastir pile rugs is limited to an article written by the Swedish collector, and prominent member of Gothenburg's Oriental Rug Society, Sonny Berntsson, which appeared in Hali issue 112. Called *Balkans and Back Monastir Prayer Rugs*, Berntsson's article focuses entirely on Manastir pile rugs with prayer niche designs. He first came across them in Turkey in 1974 when he visited his future wife's family in Endis in east-central Anatolia. In Endis he saw a Greek Orthodox church being used as a grain store.

An elderly woman in the village explained some of the history: 'They called us refugees (*muhadjir*) when we arrived here from Florina [a town in north-western Greece, about eight miles south of the border with what is now North Macedonia] in Monastir Province and had to swap homes with the Christians who had lived here for several hundred years. A member of our family, Demir Bey, was the governor of Monastir

Province and was responsible for administration and collection of taxes on behalf of the Ottoman Sultan.' She went on to describe her memories of how Bulgarian Christian soldiers had burned Muslim villages in the area and massacred the inhabitants.

Berntsson then recounts that 'A few days after hearing this account [from the elderly woman in the Endis] I was invited to visit the home of the village chief (*muhtar*) where I saw some 'primitive' looking prayer rugs, a few of which I was told had been woven by earlier generations of women before the villagers had moved to Endis from Macedonia.'

Tim and Penny Hays, in a lecture on *Manastir Kilims and the Balkan Weaving Context* at The Textile Museum, Washington DC in September 2011, stated that, citing Velev and Stankov, which I have not yet managed to source (blame COVID), the earliest known Manastir weavings date to the early- to mid-19th century. Muslims appear to have begun leaving Macedonia as early as the mid-1850s, following the decline in Ottoman power and their disastrous wars with Russia. The Turks as a colonial power withdrew from Macedonia in 1912. In 1923 the Treaty of Lausanne finally agreed what should happen between the Ottomans and its enemies, such as France and Britain, following the end of the First World War, as well as dealing with the aftermath of the Greco-Turkish War of 1919–1922.

The treaty defined the much reduced borders of the modern Turkish Republic, as well as providing for the simultaneous expulsion of Orthodox Christians from Turkey to Greece, and of Muslims from Greece, particularly from the north of the country, to Turkey. These resettlements involved about 1.5 million Anatolian-based Greeks, and 500,000 Greek-based Muslims. During some five centuries of Ottoman rule, many Macedonian Christians converted to Islam to qualify for public office and tax relief. The treaty reflected Ottoman conceptions of nationality, so that religious affiliation rather than actual ethnic origins were what was important. That meant that many Muslims from Greek Macedonia and Epirus (NW Greece and into modern-day Albania) were classified as Turks and forced to leave their homes although many spoke little or no Turkish and could well have been descended from Ottoman-era Greek converts to Islam.

Turkish immigrants from the Balkans arriving in Anatolia in 1912. FotoArşivi. Unknown photographer.

A friend of Berntsson, Ramzi Akinci, was born in Monastir Province and had investigated the history of his people. Akinci's family belonged to the Karamanoglari, who from the early 13th century were a large tribal confederation in the region of Ermenek and Mut in the Taurus Mountains. However, they lost a crucial battle with the Ottomans in the mid-15th century, and those who did not flee eastwards were resettled by the victors in the Balkans, which had been captured by the Ottomans in the drive to spread Islam into Europe. Berntsson believes that they mostly settled in Macedonia, around today's Bitola, formerly Manastir, in what is now called Northern Macedonia.

Berntsson describes going to Turkey on buying trips with a Mrs Cruickshank who had a carpet gallery in Gothenburg and collected Anatolian prayer rugs. In the spring of 1979 they were shown by a dealer in Istanbul's Grand Bazaar, Hidir Kalkan, 'a strange white-ground prayer rug with a wine-red star medallion. He called it a 'Bergama-Monastir' … our first Monastir was purchased.' They enquired of the older dealers in the bazaar about the origins of Manastirs and 'inevitably we were told several different stories' but eventually found that the best information came from an Armenian dealer named Robert Ohanisian from whom they bought some 'original' Monastir prayer rugs. Berntsson was led to believe that the most significant re-settlement areas for those returning from the Balkans were Izmir and its surroundings, Çanakkale, Kütahya, Bursa, Eskişehir, Denizli and Tokat (the location of his wife's family). Over several trips to Turkey Mrs Cruickshank went on to buy about 80 Manastirs.

Manastir rugs and kilims

However, Davut Mizrahi and Erhard Stöbe, lecturing to the International Hajji Baba Society in 2011 on Manastir kilims, and as recorded by R John Howe, stated that the settlers moved to 'the Balkans including possibly the Macedonian province of 'Monastir' (the term has its root in 'monastery', and one of the legends of the Manastir rugs and kilims is that they were woven in monasteries in various geographic locations).' They went on: 'However, we now know from further research that the Manastir weavers were primarily resident in eastern Bulgaria. These weavers lived in proximity to large numbers of Christian Orthodox folk of Slavic origin.'

I have not sighted the primary sources for the evidence that Manastir weavers were mostly resident in eastern Bulgaria, but many Manastir kilims come from Bulgaria. Stöbe wrote in his 2003 book 'Today, Bulgaria is considered … the richest source of Manastir weaves ... The following could well be the real reason: large segments of the ethnic group obviously did not return to western Anatolia as muhajir, but remained in the Balkans in Turkish settlements. They apparently took along with them all their household goods, which is why their old textiles could be bought in Bulgaria, and also why their later products show strong Bulgarian influences (cotton warp, pattern elements, etc.).'

As the makers of these weavings obviously relocated, local living conditions and the availability of raw materials would dictate how they were made, such as whether brown wool warps or cotton were used, and which dyestuffs were employed. Muammer Kirdök, the dealer who played an important part in introducing Manastir kilims to the Viennese market in the 1980s, wrote in a 1992 catalogue, which I have not sighted but which is summarised by Stöbe, that because of diverse influences, the techniques and motifs of the Manastir group are not homogeneous, but there are interconnected similarities in colour use and the dealing of the pictorial space.

Manastir kilims

As we have seen, Manastir kilims originate from Eastern Bulgaria as well as from areas in Western Anatolia to which the Balkan immigrants returned. They were woven for personal use or for menfolk when conscripted, as Ottoman soldiers were required to have a prayer kilim in their bedroll on campaign. They are usually simple pieces, but bold, woven in contrasting colours. Generally they have sparsely-filled open fields of solid colours, typically red or yellow. Many have a prominent abrash. They are frequently of plain and slit tapestry weave. The weaving makes little use of eccentric wefts or interlocking techniques. The warps may be brown, beige or white wool, or a mixture of these, as well as cotton, but analysis of the warps helps determine the date and location of their making.

Tim and Penny Hays say that the blue of Bulgarian kilims is from woad, the red from Balkan kermes, or perhaps cochineal, but they add that as there are many shades of red, from pale pinks, purple reds, to brick red, it is possible that beetroot, rose root, and cherry skins were also used. The Bulgarian yellows are from weld and vary from a strong ochre to the colour of wheat. Greens are woad blue overdyed onto yellow. However, Anatolian production seems to use the dyes typical of the areas to which the weavers relocated: red is from madder, blue from indigo, while yellows could come from several dyestuffs.

Manastir pile rugs

Manastir prayer rugs are characterised by having muted and limited colours and rustic designs. They were the only pile rugs made in the Ottoman Balkans before the end of the 19th century. The loosely-woven, pale -ground Manastir prayer rugs have a blend of Christian motifs, usually eight-petalled rosettes in the border, and a characteristic Muslim mihrab. Sometimes these mihrabs have a shape which might suggest influences from Christian architecture. The combination of the symbols from two different religions makes them a powerful reminder of the turmoil that has characterised the Balkan people over the centuries.

There are two recognisable varieties of Manastir pile pieces: those woven before the early 20th century, and those woven by weavers whose families returned to Anatolia. Suggesting a common place of origin, the pile of tightly spun wool of the Balkan pieces tends to have a grainy, curly character, probably because the wool used is from the Balkan Zackel, a short-stapled breed.

The warps can be dark brown wool, beige or white wool or a ply of white and brown. The colours of the Balkan pieces are softer than the pieces woven later in Anatolia. They make use of the naturally coloured wool as well as kermes red, weld yellow, and woad for blue. Woad has less pigment than indigo and the Manastir blues are not that intense. The pistachio/olive greens are particularly associated with Balkan weaving, and are made from mixing blue and yellow; as woad produces the blue, the resulting colour is muted. Unlike the kilims, yellow is rare in old Manastir pile rugs, but when present has a bleached look. However, the wefts are often yellow, and there may be between two and seven thin wefts between each row of knots.

Manastir rugs and kilims are wonderful examples of folk art, and they resonate with the burden of history that is the Balkans.

Manastir prayer rug, woven in Macedonia. 19th century. 163 x 125cm. The dealer offering this piece, Robert Mosby in the USA, wrote 'This is one of the most archaic architecturally beautiful rugs that I have ever seen in my life'.

Manastir prayer rug, probably woven in Macedonia, late 1800s. 116 x 83 cm. Two-ply beige and white wool warps with three and four shots of single ply weft between each row of knots. Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, New South Wales. 85/1901.

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https://raymondj.wordpress.com/2011/05/16/erhard-stoebe-and-davut-mizrahi-on-manastir-kilims/

Penny and Tim Hays on Manastir Prayer Kilims. September 2011.
https://rjohnhowe.wordpress.com/2011/12/08/penny-and-tim-hays-on-manastir-prayer-kilims/

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Industrialisation and the Importation of Cotton

Emma Slocombe, Textile Curator, National Trust

For many thousands of years, the production of cotton cloth was a domestic enterprise, where the white, fluffy fibres of locally grown cotton were spun into yarn, woven into fabric and decorated with embroidered or printed patterning in communities across the Americas, Africa and Asia. Even so, Indian cotton textiles were traded globally and Europeans had, since the seventeenth century, become familiar with fabrics such as muslin, chintz and calico through the imports of East Indian trading companies.(1) Cotton was decorative, versatile, cheap and easily cleaned and so ideal for furnishings and clothes. In the 1700s, it would have been hard to imagine that, less than 100 years later, the demand for cotton products would spark European industrialisation and the development of a global industry founded on the production of cheap cotton grown by enslaved peoples from the West Indies and North America.

In England, where there were established wool, silk and linen industries, merchants, weavers and spinners in the eighteenth century saw the popularity of imported Indian fabrics as a threat to their livelihoods. Petitioning Parliament, they persuaded the government to pass the Calico Act (1700), banning imports of finished cloth, while domestic use was made illegal in 1721.(2) Despite this, manufacturers saw the potential of the fibre and shifted production to focus on expanding export markets in British colonies and West Africa. Plain Indian calicos continued to be imported for an emergent printing and dyeing industry whilst raw cotton from Turkey and plantations in the Caribbean was woven into fabric such as cotton check, an important commodity used for bargaining and exchange by slave-traders along the coast of West Africa and also worn by enslaved populations in the Americas.(3) The repeal of the acts in 1774 resulted in large-scale investment in cotton manufacture.

A cloth shop in 18th century India. Shelfmark Add.Or.2531. British Library.

Samuel Greg (1758–1834) was among a new generation of textile entrepreneurs seeking to profit from the lifting of restrictions. From a family of affluent Manchester textile merchants , the wealth that financed Greg's early career was in part generated by a wider family business interests in plantations in Dominica and St Vincent which he and his brother Thomas (1752–1832) later inherited. Traditionally contracting Lancashire cottagers to weave 'fustian' (a legal cotton and linen fabric), the Gregs' success owed much to their global business connections and to eighteenth-century technological advances. John Kay's flying shuttle (1733), for instance, doubled a handweaver's production rate, while James Hargreaves's spinning jenny (1764) spun eight times more thread. Yet it was Richard Arkwright's water frame (1769), a water-powered cotton-spinning machine, that revolutionised production. Acquiring the family business in 1782, Greg built Quarry Bank Mill, now in the care of the National Trust, at Styal in Cheshire two years later, specifically to operate water frames. It was just one of many mills that appeared across the North West, the Midlands and Scotland heralding industrialisation in Britain.

Mechanisation only increased demand for raw cotton. Planters in the British Caribbean colonies responded, with Barbados becoming the centre of production after the destruction of its sugar crop by a hurricane in 1780; the French Caribbean islands and Brazil followed suit.(4) These colonies all cultivated cotton using enslaved labour, as

Quarry Bank Mill, Cheshire. NT Image reference 1493986.

'The First Cotton Gin', an engraving from Harper's Magazine, 1869, depicting enslaved Americans using a roller gin, which preceded Eli Whitney's invention of 1793.

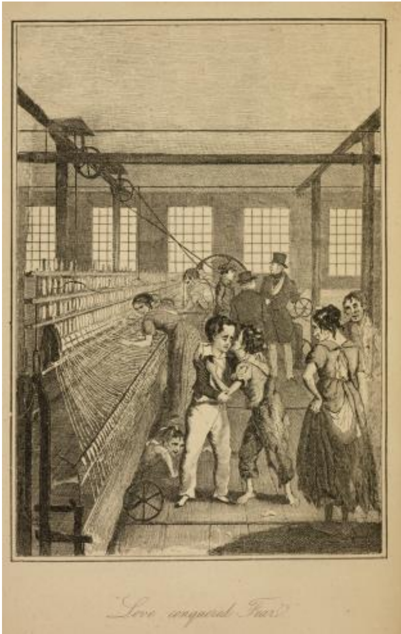
intensive production was believed to be unprofitable without such exploitation. Moreover, slavery enabled great fortunes to be made by European merchants, plantation owners and manufacturers.

Even so, the availability of raw cotton continued to fluctuate. The 1791–1804 revolution in the French colony of Saint-Dominque (afterwards known as Haiti), freed thousands of enslaved people but also reduced cotton imports to Britain by a quarter.[5] The solution was North American expansion. Departing from the old tobacco estates of Virginia and South Carolina, white settlers moved into Louisiana, Alabama and Mississippi, taking the enslaved population with them to cultivate cotton in vast regions previously occupied by indigenous peoples.[6] In 1793 Eli Whitney developed the cotton gin, mechanising seed-removal from short-staple cotton and thereby freeing labour for cultivation and speeding up processing. Commercial success rested on chattel slavery, and with it came the creation of an internal slave trade and a distinct culture based on slave-ownership. By 1850, 2.5 million bales of raw cotton were produced by 2.4 million enslaved people, some 60 per cent of the American South's subjugated population.[7]

The back of a copper-plate-printed cotton gown showing scenes from The Adventures of Telemachus, the son of Ulysses c. 1795-1800 (the Snowshill Collection at Berrington Hall). The selvedge of the cotton fabric is marked with three blue threads, a mark introduced to distinguish British fabric from Indian imports. NT Image reference 52272.

Shipped across the Atlantic, most slave-grown cotton was discharged in Liverpool before being transported to the mills of Lancashire to be turned into yarn and cloth. Between 1811 and 1851, the weight of annual cotton imports rose from 65 million pounds to 452 million pounds, necessitating the expansion of the Liverpool docks to a length of 2.5 miles.[8] Mechanisation, a cheap labour force largely of women and children, and a global trading network in which to sell finished goods combined to create a cotton boom. The Lancashire landscape proliferated with large textile factories and mill towns, establishing Manchester as a hub for local textile production and the global export trade. Thus, cotton had become the engine of the Industrial Revolution, and Lancashire factories a model for a new form of industrial capitalism that would spread the world over.[9]

At Quarry Bank Mill, Samuel Greg looked again to new technology to boost production. Power to drive textile machinery was essential and his installation of a second water wheel in 1796 enabled the number of spindles to rise from 2,425 to 3,452.[10] The mill was extended in 1810 and then doubled in size in 1818–20 to accommodate new machines as the entire manufacturing process mechanised, powered by a new 'Great Wheel' of iron.[11] The outcome of Greg's investment – and that of thousands like him – was that by 1825, it took British workers 135 hours to produce 100 pounds of cloth compared with 50,000 hours to produce the same by hand in India.[12] heFurthermore, concurrent advances in mechanised printing following the development of Thomas Bell's rotary printing machine (1783) advanced the production of patterned calicos to between 5,120 and 12,800 metres a day, compared to, the estimated two weeks an Indian craftsman took to paint and print 7 metres of fabric. [13] The high investment required for European manufacturing was offset by the profits from bulk manufacturing and a dominant global export network



Scene in a Manchester factory. Hervieu 1840, Shelfmark YA.1994.a.7128. British Library.

that now included Asia and reversed the trading pattern established two centuries before. (14)

Despite the Slavery Abolition Act (1833) ending slavery in most British colonies, the cotton industry remained reliant on cheap, raw cotton cultivated by enslaved people in the American South. Writing in 1857, the economist J.T. Danson concluded that 'there is not, and never has been, any considerable source of supply for cotton, excepting the East-Indies, which is not obviously and exclusively maintained by slave-labour'.(15) The nineteenth-century economies of Britain and North America were centred on cotton production, inextricably linking the populations of each across the Atlantic. By the 1860s, 20–25 per cent of the population in England worked in the cotton industry, producing 50 per cent of the nation's exported goods from 800 million pounds of cotton, 77 per cent of which was slave-cultivated.(16) The value of cotton exports to the American economy was worth $192 million – 60 per cent of its total exports.(17)

This reliance was tested by the American Civil War (1861–5). Fought between northern and southern states along an approximate line that divided free and enslaved people, it was as much about the economics of slavery and cotton production as it was the survival of the union.(18) During the war, blockades halted exports, resulting in almost all cotton production in Lancashire ceasing by 1863, causing over half a million workers to seek poor relief.(19) The end of the war brought freedom to four million enslaved peoples and permanent change to the global cotton industry. (20) Expanding cultivation in Egypt, India and Brazil transformed their societies and economies, although Brazil continued to exploit enslaved labourers until 1888.

The National Trust has made a commitment to research, interpret and share the histories of slavery and the legacies of colonialism at the places we care for. This article is an extract from a *Report on the Connections between Colonialism and Properties now in the Care of the National Trust, Including Links with Historic Slavery* exploring the emergence of cotton as a global commodity viewed through the lens of the development of Quarry Bank Mill, a National Trust property at Styal in Cheshire.
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Katagami: Just a Paper Stencil – Part 2 Japanese chintz: who ever would have thought?

Mamiko Markham

Katagami for chintz in Japan

Japanese Katagami stencils seized the imagination of European collectors from the earliest days of Japan's opening to the world in 1854. However, it is not generally well known that Katagami collections in the west contain stencils for producing Japanese versions of Indian block-printed chintz. Equally unfamiliar is that the Japanese had been creating their own style of chintz within Japan's period of isolation, 1641-1853.

Japanese Wasarasa of Chinese floral pattern, Kyoto, 19th century. Kumagai Hiroto, Wasarasa Collection.

Japanese chintz, a multi-coloured stencil print fabric, is called 'Wasarasa': "Wa (Japanese)", "Sarasa (Chintz)". This article looks at the way in which design ideas inspired by foreign chintz were adapted by the Japanese using Katagami stencils, from the late 18th to the early 20th century. Craftsmen working on Wasarasa incorporated Japanese motifs and methods and design ideas from imported chintz for kimonos, futons and fabrics for Japanese consumers.

The growth of chintz in Japan

When the popularity of imported chintz in Europe threatened local textile industries in Britain in the 17th century, the industrial revolution intervened. The importation of chintz was restricted and European manufacturers introduced commercial roller printing, which famously sped up domestic mass production. At around the same time in Japan, the 'closed country regime' was being enforced to protect Japan from the dual threats of Portuguese and Spanish dominance in international trade and Christianity. This encouraged the development of an 'industrious' revolution in textiles. Following the success of cotton cultivation in many parts of Japan, a Japanese version of chintz was manufactured locally using Katagami stencils for mass production to promote domestic self-sufficiency.

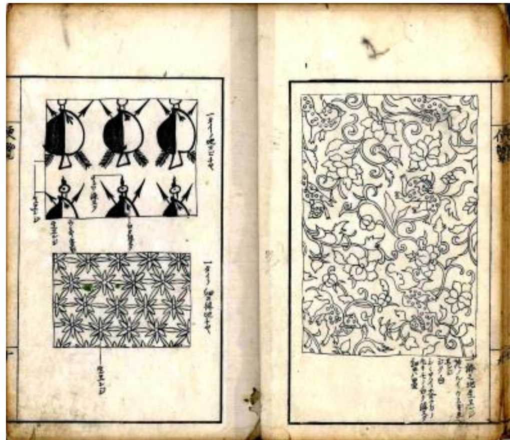
As in Europe, Indian chintz had been introduced to Japan in the late 16th and 17th centuries by Portuguese merchants. The upper classes were attracted to the vibrant, durable colours and exotic designs, as well as the lightness and softness of cotton chintz. In Japan this facilitated the start of the Nanban trade (1543-1639), the first international trade with Europeans. Portuguese merchants sold not only Indian chintz, but also spices from Southeast Asia, gold, Chinese silk, European gunpowder, guns, and woollen goods, which were exchanged for Japanese silver, lacquerware, Japanese swords and mother-of-pearl inlay, as well as Japanese and Korean slaves.

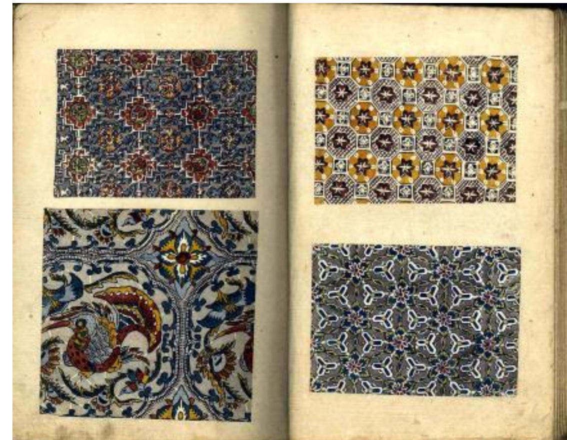
Imported chintz was initially admired by feudal lords, high-ranking samurai and wealthy merchants and they proudly used it for their ostentatious bags, pillow covers, f*uroshiki* wrapping fabrics, and Kimono jackets. Ownership of these exotic textiles signified wealth and taste; they were expensive and out of ordinary people's reach.

Wasarasa Kimono jacket. 19th century. Kumagai Hiroto, Wasarasa Collection.

Katagami: Just a Paper Stencil. Part 2

In the 18th and 19th centuries this situation began to change with a wider variety of designs and techniques being introduced, allowing access to these textiles for common people. A major contribution to this was the publication by master class dyeing designers of innovative textbooks about Japanese Wasarasa, describing techniques inspired by foreign chintz and including swatch books.





Left: Wasarasa textbook, Sarasabenran *(catalogue compendium of Wasarasa designs).1778. Kumagai Hiroto, Wasarasa Collection. Right: Wasarasa swatch book. 19th century. Kumagai Hiroto, Wasarasa Collection.*

Craftsmen were strongly attracted to India's chintz manufacturing process, vivid colours and fast dyeing methods. Unfortunately for them it was difficult to import Indian resist wax and bright pigments. The Japanese process relied on Japanese pigments, indigo and plant dyes to apply to Wasarasa, with accompanying mordants for fixing the colour using gelatine, alum, and soybean juice. The ratio of ingredients was a secret of the craftsmen.

Black itome *Wasarasa. 19th century. Kumagai Hiroto, Wasarasa Collection.*

Wasarasa is characterized by very fine outlines called *itome*. Three different techniques were employed for producing these outlines: hand-drawing, stencilling with Katagami, and the combined use of Katagami with woodblock printing. In general, despite there being several techniques available for applying colour, by the 19th century the bulk of patterning was implemented using Wasarasa Katagami stencils. This was due to the encouragement by the Shogunate of increased production.

Before the advent of Wasarasa chintz, Japanese Katagami stencil dyeing was essentially single-colour dyeing, using only one or two katagami stencils. The stencil itself resisted the dye. Kata Yuzen, however, is a technique used in kimono decoration to produce detailing on silk using katagami stencils carved with openwork designs to apply a paste resist. This regularly required hundreds of Katagami per kimono, as a separate Katagami was needed for each colour, whether for printing a resist or a dye. The Kata Yuzen technique was adapted for Wasarasa patterning on cotton, by using both resist and direct printing and in large quantities, different stencils being required for each colour.

Inspired by Indian chintz patterns, Katagami craftsmen were able to determine methods and techniques to create similar patterning, which also required *Okuri boshi*, the registration marks for accurate repeat placement of the stencils. Sometimes after the pattern colouring had been applied, glutinous rice resist paste would be applied over the patterning prior to dyeing with an overall background colour. The dyers used many complicated Katagami stencils to print onto the cloth.

. Japanese Indigo Wasarasa kimono. 19th century. Kumagai Hiroto, Wasarasa Collection.

Wasarasa was a desirable commodity which also played a significant part in the social history of Japan. At this industrious time the skilled Katagami carvers and dyers were driven not only by pride in achievement, but also by a desire to increase their income. They became more independent, selling their work directly to distribution merchants. Some emerged with high-level techniques and moved to the centre of trade in Edo (Tokyo) where there were dynamic manufacturing opportunities.

Keisai Eisen. 19th century. Ukiyo-e *featuring Wasarasa style kimonos. National Diet Library, Japan.*

So despite the termination of contact with the outside world, the Edo period (1603-1868) was characterized by an unprecedented increase in the variety of designs and decorative techniques, especially in terms of the Kimono textile industry which grew in line with cultural development for common people. Crucial techniques for dyeing and weaving for Kimonos were invented during this time and are still being used today.

Wasarasa were mainly used for futons, for kimonos inside layered kimonos and for night kimono wear, particularly for courtesans. Wasarasa supplies were gladly purchased by the patrons of high-class courtesans. Some of the work of woodblock artist Keisai Eisen (1790-1848) featured portraits of courtesans in Wasarasa kimonos. Seeing these Ukiyo-e, townspeople gained much admiration for Wasarasa, which they bought second-hand from street markets and took great care of.

Japanese Wasarasa of Chinese floral arabesque pattern. 19th century. Kumagaya Hiroto, Wasarasa Collection.

Present day observations

The 2020 V&A exhibition, 'Kimono: Kyoto to Catwalk,' included a 19th century Yogi Wasarasa futon, a sleeping coverlet kimono with fully sewn-up sleeve cuffs, with an enormous family crest dyed on the back. The crest asserted the status of a rich family, a prominent display of wealth and power to guests staying in that bedroom. It was made in Sakai, an area renowned for producing exotic Wasarasa patterns in the 19th century.

According to Shiro Nakano, a Wasarasa artist in both stencil carving and dyeing and a specialist in restoring historic Wasarasa such as the V&A Yogi Wasarasa futon, the Yogi futon pattern may have been applied using at least 10 to 12 Katagami stencils and was dyed in typical colours for the era: red iron oxide using 3 to 5 stencils, ochre with 1 to 2 stencils, green with 1 to 2 stencils, and a further 3 stencils for Prussian blue. Mr. Nakano pointed out that Wasarasa Katagami stencils made in the 19th century do not exist today in Japan, because they were recycled or disposed of.

Wasarasa futon, Yugi. 19th century. Photo courtesy of the Victoria and Albert Museum. Museum number FE.155-1983 .

The value of western collections

In the 19th century, during the Edo period, worn out Katagami stencils which were no longer serviceable for dyeing (typically those which had been used with indigo) were often stored as future design samples rather than being discarded by the dyeing studio. When the time was ripe at the end of isolation at the end of the 19th century, katagami were then sold in large numbers to the West. Katagami patterns such as carp and cherry blossoms had a great influence on designers in the Aesthetic Movement which emerged in the 1860s in the West. Wasarasa (Kata Yuzen) Katagami stencils, on the other hand, were rarely stored after they were no longer of use, because the individual stencils in the set were only a part of the overall pattern and had no artistic merit in themselves. Consequently, few were sold to the West and there are very few Wasarasa (Kata Yuzen) Katagami in either European or Japanese collections.

Fortunately, among the four hundred katagami in the Silver Studio Collection of the Museum of Domestic Design & Architecture (MoDA), Middlesex University, are a number of Kata Yuzen Katagami made in the late 19th century. According to Zoë Hendon, the head of collections at MoDA, it is not known how their Katagami were originally acquired, but it is possible that the owner of Silver Studio, Arthur Silver, may have bought them at the London store Liberty in the 1880s, or that they were given to him by his friend and business partner, Alexander Rottmann (Hendon 2009).

Katagami stencils in the Silver Studio Collection are largely characteristic of traditional Katagami stencils from the heyday of the Japanese dyeing industry during the 19th century and display a wide variety of the techniques used in their production. In world terms, the Silver Studio Collection is a rare collection. It contains Katagami which can be defined in three categories. The first is Chugata Katagami (for indigo kimono), with key patterns such as carp, chrysanthemum and cherry blossom made in Edo and Shiroko (Mie Prefecture) in the late 19th century. A second group is of export Katagami, made for the West during the Meiji period (1868-1912), after the end of Japanese isolation. These were of lower quality, with designs specifically intended to appeal to Western taste. Thirdly, the collection contains Wasarasa, or Kata Yuzen Katagami, which Japanese chintz craftsmen used in developing their techniques. These were made at the end of the 19th century. These Wasarasa stencils are still tied together as they would have been in the past to prevent the set of stencils from separating.

Chugata *Katagami, chrysanthemum pattern, Made in Shiroko, late 19th century, (Edo period), Silver Studio Collection, MoDA.*

Export katagami, late 19th century (Meiji period), Silver Studio Collection, MoDA.

It has been confirmed by both Hiroto Kumagai and Shiro Nakano that the three Katagami shown below are definitely Kata Yuzen.

Kata Yuzen Katagami, late 19th century (Meiji period), Silver Studio Collection, MoDA.

The presence of Kata Yuzen, of which there are many more than those indicated above, further highlights the importance of the MoDA collection. Arthur Silver seems have come to understand the graduated colour techniques produced in Kata Yuzen and Wasarasa textiles by disassembling and stencilling with Katagami, in effect reverse-engineering the patterns by studying his Katagami collection. Silver had much experience in creating patterns for domestic purposes. The work produced by Silver Studio demonstrates that stencils were made and used in developing their production techniques, and there can be little doubt that this was inspired by the Kata Yuzen Katagami.

Hendon points out:

> "[Silver's] use of stencils was probably inspired by his knowledge of Japanese Katagami ...beautiful effects could be created by stencilling...they favoured the use of graduated colour rather than flat blocks of colour ..." (Hendon 2009)

The Myralda Frieze, 1894-5, Silver Studio Collection. MoDA.

The gentle exotic depiction in the expression of classical figures in Silver Studio's 'The Myralda Frieze', displays such graduated colour techniques, which are often used with Kata Yuzen, with results characteristic of Kata Yuzen (Wasarasa). Curiously, Japanese Wasarasa craftsmen of the late Edo period also used graduated colour techniques to portray imagery of ancient Chinese classical figures, 'Karako-Monyou'. In the case of The Myralda Frieze, its creation was a way not just of exploring material and technique, but also of gaining a better understanding of Kata Yuzen Katagami.

Ancient Chinese classical figures 'Karako-Monyou' in Wasarasa, 19th century. Kumagaya Hiroto, Wasarasa Collection.

"Some of the Silver Studio stencilled friezes included classical figures, which clearly made them look even less Japanese. But they were praised by those who thought that they had successfully used a semi-mechanized production method while retaining the advantages of hand production" (Hendon 2018).

Thus, Katagami stencils contributed greatly to the development of Japanese chintz, Wasarasa, from which British designers, most notably Silver Studio, drew design inspiration.

Current practice in Japan

Today Wasarasa is mainly used for making kimono *obi* (belts). Nakano Shiro, mentioned previously, has been an independent Wasarasa specialist for 20 years, creating and restoring historical Wasarasa. He carves pieces of Katagami and uses them to dye fabric with a traditional *Marubake* (round brush) for each colour.

In his workshop, a length of cloth is fixed in position, using a thin layer of glue, on a long *nagaita* workbench. The katagami are correctly positioned and then the colour is rubbed on using the Marubake in a circular motion. During this process Mr. Nakano must take care to ensure that no spot is left undyed. If each step is not done carefully, the entire painstakingly cut katagami could be wasted. The task requires expert skill and exceptional sensitivity. Mr. Nakano says that he embodies the technical experience of past craftsmen through a project which has restored old Japanese chintz of the Edo period.

> 'For me, the creation of Wasarasa should engage long-established techniques as an affirmation of trans-cultural dialogues and sustainable designs'.

Katagami: Just a Paper Stencil. Part 2

Today, many textiles could be printed using silkscreen techniques and simple inkjet printing. However, Mr. Nakano perseveres with Wasarasa, with his extraordinary skills and ability to adapt to new trends or design applications while preserving the basic traditions, raising the profile of Wasarasa in Japan.

Above: Rows of marubake *brushes hanging on the wall while work is in progress at the Shiro Nakano workshop. Right: Shiro Nakano at work on the* nagaita *during the dyeing process. Photos*: *Tadayuki Minamoto.*

Katagami stencils for Wasarasa (Kata Yuzen) provide significant insight into the creation of pattern design application on fabrics with a cross-cultural fusion of design ideas, deservedly earning a substantial place in the history of fabrics.

There may well be more Wasarasa (Kata Yuzen) Katagami yet to be discovered in collections in the West. As they no longer exist in Japan, such collections could offer great scope for creative inquiry and imaginative interpretation, while addressing an incomplete narrative. In the past, multidirectional impact occurred in the world due to the creation of chintz. Today, there is a need for collaborative cross-border research to reveal further insights about Katagami inspired by chintz.

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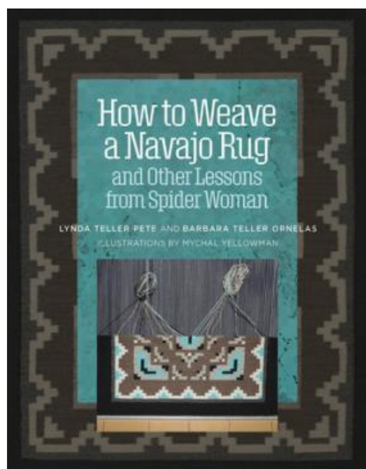


How to Weave a Navajo Rug and Other Lessons from Spider Woman

by Lynda Teller Pete and Barbara Teller Ornelas
Illustrations by Mychal Yellowman
Published by Thrums Books, 2020
Hardcover 141 pages
Library of Congress Control Number 2020933745

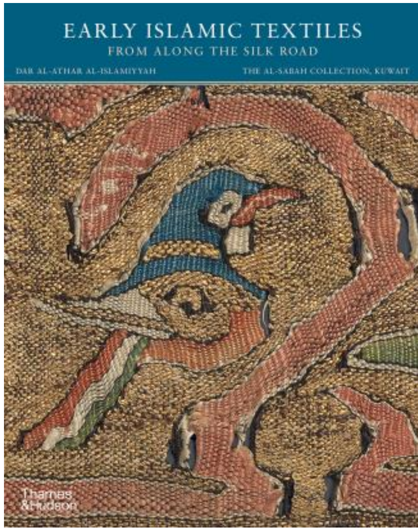
When Linda Ligon set up Thrums Books in 2007, she wanted to give a voice to the makers of traditional textiles. This small, pioneering publishing house has included spinners, dyers and weavers from Afghanistan, China, Guatemala, Mexico, Morocco, and Peru. In 2020 it fell to Diné weavers, Lynda Teller Pete and Barbara Teller Ornelas, to explain the cloth-making techniques of the Navajo Nation. Both authors grew up at the famous Two Grey Hills Trading Post in New Mexico. Dedicated fifth-generation weavers, they take immense pride in their cultural heritage. The motto they learned as children still holds: ‘You are only as good as your last weaving’. Already by the age of six they were learning basic skills from their mother; later, encouraged by their extended families, they mastered the intricate design constructions and subtle colour variations that make Navajo textiles so popular with collectors.

The authors are highly respected teachers. Keen to share their knowledge, they offer classes to Navajo and non-Navajo students. This book, however, allows them to reach an international audience. As they explain in their introduction, ‘Our mission is to ensure the future of the art, and to spread an appreciation of its beauty and meaning to as many people as possible.’ The result is a carefully planned and enormously practical book. Although it is primarily aimed at weavers, it cannot fail to interest textile-lovers who care about the way that cloth is constructed.

The authors include photographs of landscapes, sheep, weaving tools and a small number of finished textiles, but technical diagrams and how-to photographs form the visual core of this book. Have you ever wondered about the intricacies of warping on a Navajo loom, how to maintain a balanced weft tension, how to plan and measure designs? As the authors lead their readers step-by-step from the extremely basic to the highly complex, they ask them to ‘bond with the yarn’. The journey isn't without humour. ‘In a perfect world’, the authors explain, ‘the female is in charge, and the male is always right, at least in the Navajo universe.’ They then describe the roles of the heddle and the shed rod, regarded respectively as female and male. Of course weaving has a sacred dimension for the Diné. Spider Man made the first loom from ‘sky and earth, from sunrays, rock crystal and sheet lightning’. Spider Woman, present in the book's very title, showed Navajo women how to weave.

The authors offer wise words about appropriation — a ‘complicated and nuanced issue’. Because these are Navajo traditions, they belong to the Navajo people: ‘The designs that exist within our culture represent our identity, the journey of our people, the suffering we have lived through over generations, our survival and our sacred cosmology’. In generously sharing their knowledge, the authors want us to appreciate Navajo work, not copy it for commercial gain. This book has a companion volume in the Thrums series. Written by the same authors and published in 2018, *Spider Woman's Children, Navajo Weavers Today* provides social context and focuses on the importance of family and place. Taken together, both publications offer a uniquely intimate insight into Navajo art and culture in the 21st century.

Chloë Sayer



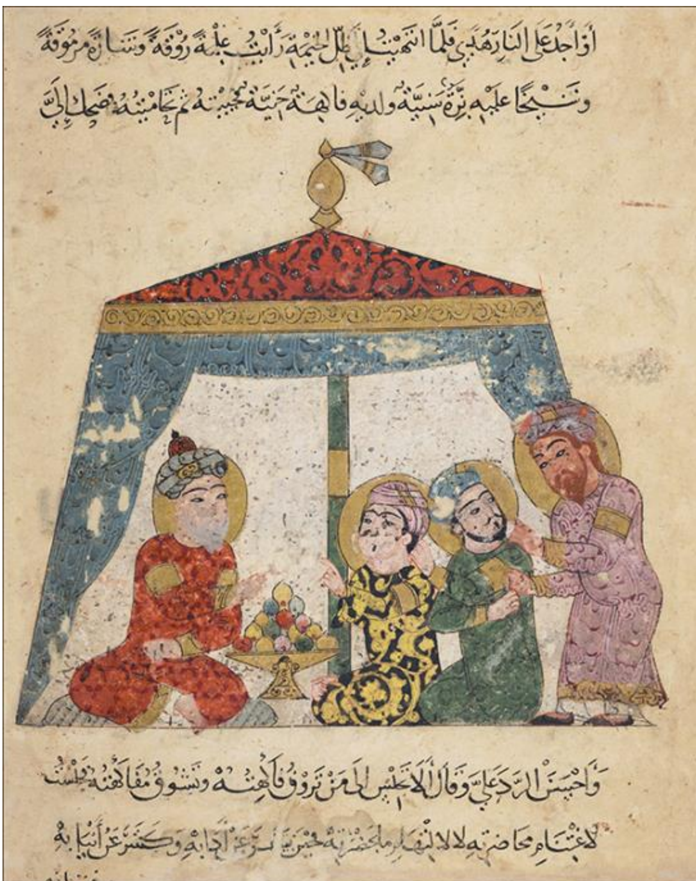
Early Islamic Textiles From Along the Silk Road

by Friedrich Spuhler

Published by Thames and Hudson, 2020
Paperback, 400 pages
500 illustrations
ISBN 9780500970843

As the next in the series of volumes by Thames & Hudson showcasing the al-Sabah Collection, Kuwait, *Early Islamic Textiles from along the Silk Road* is the third catalogue of textiles produced by Friedrich Spuhler and sheds light on an extensive group of medieval textiles. The breadth and quality of the textile collection is staggering, not least because the vast majority of pieces appear to constitute a rare and valuable corpus issuing from a single site in Samangan, Afghanistan. The town's location along the historic silk road was clearly the motivation behind the volume's title, despite being a bit misleading. The term 'silk road' more often denotes the heavily Buddhist trade networks that drove East-West exchange in Central and South Asia, most notably in the 6th-10th centuries, and this date range is further implied by 'early Islamic', generally a reference to the first centuries of Islamic rule. The textiles of this catalogue date from the 9th-15th centuries and to the Islamic period of settlement in Samangan. Neither should the reader expect discussion of the trade route as one might find alongside the textiles from Dunhuang, for example.

Instead, a foreword by the recently deceased Sheikh Nasser Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah—co-founder of this astounding private collection alongside his wife Hussa Sabah al-Salem al-Sabah—states the aim of the publication: 'that this collection will be of service to scholars who have had to chiefly rely on historical sources describing fabrics and garments, as well as on representations in illustrated manuscripts' (page 7). This desire for accessibility is echoed in the catalogue's overall emphasis on documentation and evocation over analysis of individual historical periods. Although Spuhler's introduction alludes to historical issues, trends and themes of potential relevance to scholars, the evident objective of the work is to introduce the poorly known corpus and provide a baseline for future research.



13

INTRODUCTION

TEXTILES ILLUSTRATED IN EARLY ISLAMIC ART

TEXTILES IN EARLY ISLAMIC MINIATURE PAINTING

The origins of many of the spectacular textile motifs in this volume can be seen in the art of miniature painting from Iraq, the Iranian world, Syria and Egypt from the 12th–14th centuries. This period coincides with dates of a significant proportion of our textile fragments, most of which were found in the eastern Iranian world, or northern Afghanistan. As there are, however, few representations of textiles in Persian paintings prior to the 14th century, they can play no significant part in our discussion of early textile fragments from the Iranian world. We shall therefore turn our attention to the representation of robes in early Arab paintings.

The motifs illustrated fall into four basic categories:

vine-scrolls with floral and split-leaf motifs
geometric patterns
calligraphic decoration
"stylized drapery" motifs

One of the most remarkable finds among the textiles discovered in Samangan was a group of four different fragments featuring a motif that emulated "stylized drapery" (Cats. 42–45). What was surprising was not so much the cascade-like, stylized designs themselves as the fact that they had been incorporated into silk textiles. Formerly it was believed that this pattern might merely have been a stylistic device to illustrate the drapery or folds of monochrome unpatterned garments in miniature painting.

The distribution of motifs depicted on particular groups of figures in painting was, as far as we can tell, based purely on the requirements of the composition.

Fig. 1: *Maqamat* of al-Hariri, Syria, c. 1300, British Library, MS Add. 22114, fol. 96r.

Fig. 2: Portrait of a ruler, frontispiece of Abu Faraj al-Isfahani's *Kitab al-Aghani*, 1218–19 CE, Millet Kütüphanesi, FE 1566.

There is no indication that certain motifs are used systematically to denote rank.

The earliest representation of patterned textiles in miniatures can be seen in the portrait of a ruler found in the manuscript of Abu Faraj al-Isfahani's *Kitab al-Aghani*, painted in 1218–19 CE (Fig. 2). It is highly stylized.[1] A few years later, portraits of several famous Greek physicians were included in a translation of Dioscorides' *De materia medica*, dated 1224 CE.[2] A portrait of the royal physician Erasistratos, for example, shows him dressed in a robe decorated with strikingly large and elegant vine-scrolls, floral palmettes and split leaves.[3] The garment has additional decorations in the form of broad epigraphic bands around the figure's upper arms, while geometric motifs appear on the blanket he rests on, and

The presentation of material that follows is correspondingly straightforward. Chapter 1, 'Clothing and Accoutrements,' covers textiles whose form or use is still readily apparent. Chapters 2 'Patterned Fragments' and 3 'Patterned Textiles in Different Textiles' divide the Islamic material according to pattern type, separating in-woven patterning from other pattern structures. Of particular interest are the 'stylized drapery' scrolls that directly reference textiles rendered in Islamic manuscript paintings of the 13th and 14th centuries (94-97, Cats 52-55), as well as three compound silk fragments naming the Ghurid Sultan Ghiyath al-Din (r. 1163-1203) and another naming his brother and co-regent, Mu'izz al-Din (266-270, Cats. 224-227). The fourth and final chapter, 'Chinese Textiles from the Silk Road', covers the limited non-Islamic holdings, including the pre-Islamic period, from the 2nd-14th centuries. In addition to notes and bibliography, the volume closes with a table on the extensive carbon dating conducted and a concordance.

Analysis and dating largely draw upon iconographic features. The author overtly favours use as the 'ideal' mode of classification, dismissing the technical analysis of textiles as an expensive and time-consuming undertaking that provides 'little significant information regarding dates and locations' (page 17). A bizarre approach for a scholar of textiles, the attitude nonetheless explains the misidentification of structures peppering the text. The adjacent assertion that technical information interests only a 'handful of specialists' is more accurate. Nevertheless, it is only when specialists document technical features, and these data become more abundant, that enough evidence may be accrued to pique the interest of non-specialists. After all, such information would allow scholars—'who have had to chiefly rely on historical sources describing fabrics and garments, as well as on representations'—to use the collection, as per the stated aim, to advance scholarship.

Fortunately, the quality of image documentation is truly superb and compensates, in large part, for the missing technical information. Attention has been lavished on photography and includes many magnified details. The care taken in deciphering the many inscriptions, long and short, also sets this work apart. While a discussion of the collection's formation, or some sense of its specific links to Samangan would have helped to garner greater acceptance of the corpus among scholars reticent to accept unprovenanced works, the catalogue nonetheless offers an expansive view of medieval Islamic textiles. The collection's many rarities promise to fuel new research into the transmission of tastes, technologies, and goods.

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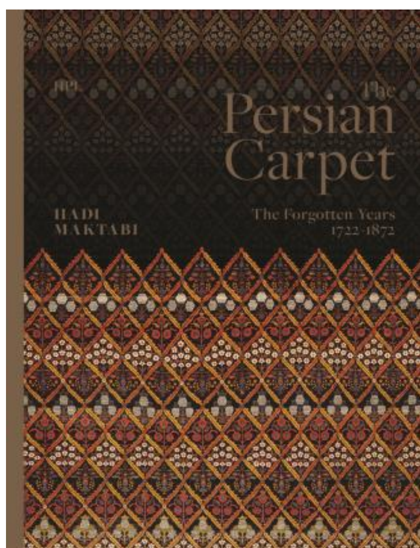


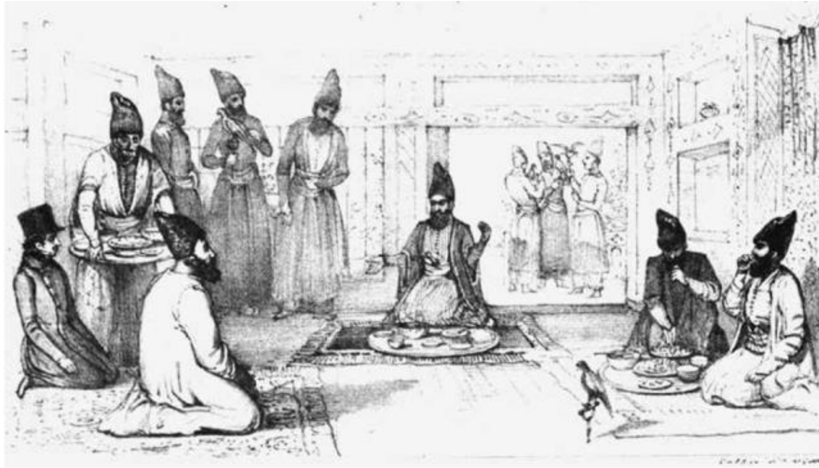
The Persian Carpet The Forgotten Years 1722-1872
by Hadi Maktabi

Published by Hali Publications, 2019.
Hardback, 304 pages
180 colour illustrations and 15 black & white
ISBN 9781898113867

The Persian Carpet, The Forgotten Years 1722-1872 is an important book. It is based on a D Phil that Maktabi took in Oxford. Many PhD theses that later become books retain a dryness, but while the welcome rigour of academic methodology remains, this particular publication is approachable as well as being absolutely riveting.

The two dates in the book's title, 1722 and 1872, mark respectively the downfall of the Safavid dynasty and the formal start of the restructuring of the Iranian carpet industry when it was fuelled by demand from Europe and America. In 1721 an Afghan band rebelled against Safavid rule and crossed into Iran itself. After a six-month siege, Isfahan fell in October 1722 and the Safavid Empire was no more. The outlying provinces dissolved into varying states of autonomy, and the power vacuum allowed Russia's Peter the Great to invade the Caspian littoral while the Ottomans occupied western Iran and the Caucasus. Divisions and warfare carried on for 75 years. Urban life declined, Isfahan and Kashan suffered, and the emphasis shifted towards rural communities such as those in the Farahan plain and Kurdistan.

Twentieth-century writers of carpet history, starting with FR Martin in 1908, assumed that carpet weaving irretrievably declined during this period. The authoritative Arthur Upham Pope contributed to this by revering the Safavid period and then lionising the artistic revival under the 20th century Pahlavis, but did not really address the interim years. That Qajar art was unfashionable no doubt contributed to the lack of scholarly attention. Unfortunately, once a notion is established a fallacy is often repeated in spite of historical evidence to the contrary. By 1960 Kurt Erdmann firmly stated: 'The 18th century brings the general collapse of production in Persia'.



Dinner in Maku from Three Years in Persia: With travelling adventures in Koordistan, *by George Fowler.*

Maktabi is not the first to suggest that Erdmann's assertion is flawed. Jenny Housego was looking in the right direction, and just as Maktabi does in this book, she looked at diplomatic reports, trading records, and, using dated carpets and paintings, established there was a continuity of carpet weaving in Persia in the 18th and 19th centuries. In 1998, the Iranian-American Layla Diba, once founding director of the Negārestān Museum in Tehran (closed in 1979 by the revolution), was also influential as she put on the ground-breaking exhibition *Royal Persian Paintings*: *The Qajar Epoch 1783-1925* at the Brooklyn Museum. This allowed the Afsharid, Zand and Qajar periods to receive proper consideration.

The fundamental thesis of Maktabi's book is that carpet weaving in Iran did not decline after the fall of the Safavids, but continued steadily until its major expansion in the last quarter of the 19th century. Absorbing evidence comes from descriptions by visitors to Iran, such as diplomats, traders, and early tourists, many of whom were British, but the most important source for continuity of carpet production in the country is the extant carpets attributed to the period.

Kerman pictorial carpet (detail), south Persia, dated 1281 (1864-65). 1.43 x 2.45. Hadi Maktabi Collection, Beirut.

Flanked by a foreword and an introduction, and by a three-page conclusion, 12 pages of endnotes, 12 pages of bibliography, and an absorbing and descriptive appendix on the sources which inform the chapter on the documentary evidence, the core of the book comprises seven chapters divided into three sections. The first section chapters are the *Background* to the thesis; *Documentary evidence for carpet weaving*; and *Carpet depictions in Persian art*.

The second section looks at *Design migration and attribution* and also has the major chapter on *Carpets of the 18th and 19th centuries*. This illustrates just how rich carpet production was in Persia at this time. The chapter contains a multitude of beautifully-reproduced images of some of the surviving carpets. The author categorises these into a number of coherent design groups which he names as Lattice Carpets; *Mina Khani* Carpets – the more complicated variant of the lattice design; Herati

Portrait of Fath Ali Shah, signed by Mirza Baba, Persia, dated 1213 (1798-99). The British Library, F116.

Carpets; Afshan Carpets; Harshang Carpets; *Bid Majnun* carpets – named after the *bid* tree, a weeping willow; Shrub carpets; Garden carpets; and a small section on Other Groups. Maktabi shows that some carpet patterns evolved independently of both court styles and foreign fashions.

According to structural traits, the main urban centres of production were Khorasan and Kerman, and the most prolific weaving areas were Kurdistan, Azerbaijan and Farahan. The *Mina Khani* carpets were used at the Qajar court in the early 19th century, and, unlike the other design groups, there are no clear Safavid antecedents for them; nor do they appear to have been copied from other art forms.

The third part of the book has a fascinating chapter on *Carpets in Iranian society*, which includes references to the important role of felts in the Persian home, and there is a welcome chapter on *Carpet production and the economy*. Maktabi's investigations also look at the high proportion of Persian carpet patterns from the 1870s that at first sight appear unrelated to Safavid designs, but which evolved from them by a gradual process of copying and stylisation. Although the earliest examples were woven in the eastern provinces, the copies were predominately woven in the western half of the country.

Senneh carpet, west Persia, dated 1289 (1871-72). 2.23 x 5.10 m. Hadi Maktabi Collection, Beirut.

Maktabi comes from a Beirut carpet-dealing family and Beirut is the city from which he now runs his own establishment selling collectible carpets and art. His D Phil was supervised by the late independent carpet scholar Jon Thompson and the then Oxford Eastern Art professor James Allen, and other academics and museum curators are fulsomely acknowledged for their assistance. The volume presents a complete reassessment of weaving in Iran between 1722 and 1872, a period that had become a forgotten age in Persian carpet history. Indeed the author shows that this was a period of design evolution, thriving workshops and prestigious commissions. It is definitely not, unlike so many books in this field, a vanity piece adding little to scholarship.

The book is noteworthy for being written in very clear and readable prose, and it is copiously and beautifully illustrated, a credit to the publishers. Included are pictures of previously unpublished carpets, some of the more interesting coming from Hadi Maktabi's own collection in Beirut. However, while I have nothing but praise for the content of the book and the quality of the illustrations, it is unfortunately over-designed: gold type on white pages, as in the foreword and acknowledgements, and white on gold in some of the image captions, is difficult to read and is irksome.

The Persian Carpet, The Forgotten Years 1722-1872 plainly shows that the reiteration of old views misleads, and a scholarly approach is essential. For anyone interested in Asian carpets, Persian art, the history of trade and the transference of designs, this book is essential.

Gavin Strachan

To order a copy, you may like to visit the Hali website:

https://shop.hali.com/product/View/productCode/PERSIANCARP/the-persian-carpet-the-forgotten-years

ORTS trips and travels 2021

We are looking forward to the lifting of travel restrictions and the resumption of tours as soon as they become possible. Two UK visits planned for last summer have been rescheduled (see below) and there may be more. Although sadly last year's planned tour to Georgia had to be postponed, plans are afoot for the autumn, or as soon as possible thereafter, including a visit to Prague; discussions with curators there are under way. Look out for updates in the e-newsletters.

A photo from the archive: A group photo from the ORTS trip to Uzbekistan in September 1997. This was the first trip organised by ORTS as far afield as Central Asia. Members of the Museum Ethnographers Group were also in the group. Louise Teague is seated on the right with her husband Ken and the late Neville Kingston standing behind her. She is talking to Jane Wilkinson of the National Museums of Scotland. Photo courtesy of Elizabeth Bridges (third from left in back row).

Hali Magazine—spare copies?

Gavin Strachan writes to say that he has seven duplicate Halis of which he would be glad to send one, some or all to a good home in exchange for the postage costs only. They are the six issues 91 to 96 inclusive, published between March 1997 and January 1998, and issue 200, summer 2019.

Gavin is also missing several Hali volumes and is happy to buy any of them. He is looking for numbers 171, 174, 175, 177 and 184, which appeared between 2012 and 2015.

Please contact him on **gavin@firthpetroleum.com**

ORTS EVENTS PROGRAMME Spring to Summer 2021

Wednesday, March 24th 18.00. Dr Maria João Ferreira : Macau and its Textile Trade with Portugal, live from Lisbon via Zoom.

Sunday, April 18th Spring picnic in the Horniman Museum and Gardens, London. tbc.

Wednesday, April 21st 18.00. Annual General Meeting followed by committee members' Show and Tell. Via Zoom.

Wednesday, May 26th Time tbc. Maria Wronska-Friend: From Sarong to Sari: Rabindranath Tagore and batik. Via Zoom.

Tuesday, June 15th Visit to Lewes, Sussex to view Professor Paul Benjamin's collection of Southwest Persian rugs and bags. This event subject to lifting of UK government restrictions.

Wednesday, June 16th Visit to Brighton Museum to see textiles in the Green collection from Burma. This event subject to lifting of UK government restrictions.

Sunday, July 4th ORTS Summer Garden Party at Geoffrey Saba's home in South London. This event subject to lifting of UK government restrictions.

TALKS

Details for all Zoom talks are currently sent to members in advance by email.

Talks are normally held at the University Women's Club, which is behind the Dorchester Hotel in London. We do hope that they can resume there soon.

Buses 13, 16, and 36 go from Victoria Station to Park Lane. Bus 38 goes to Piccadilly, Hard Rock Café bus stop. Nearest tube stations: 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 complimentary nibbles and a pay bar.

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

ORTS COMMITTEE

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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

Deadline for content for summer issue June 1st 2021

Back cover: Detail of Japanese Wasarasa with floral pattern, Kyoto. 19th century. Photo courtesy of Kumagaya Hiroto, Wasarasa Collection. See article by Mamiko Markham on page 19.