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# TAJIK EMBROIDERY

ACADEMY OF SCIENCES OF THE TAJIK SSR

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Editor:  
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Many believe that a hallmark of genuine art, regardless of where or when it was created, is that people always understand and feel close to it. Folk art, in all its forms and manifestations, fits this description. Its foremost characteristic is its close connection with its native land and with the natural world, which provides the cues, as it were, for the great variety of shapes and forms that this art can take. From ancient times, decorative and applied art has been the branch of art most beloved by Tajiks. The bright, distinctive ornamental compositions of their embroidery, the grace and delicacy of their carving and painting on wood, the virtuosity of their metal work, their jewelry and unique ceramics – all these have preserved a wealth of original shapes and marvelous colors for their descendants, as well as the interesting stories associated with them that convey the life of the nation, its history and culture.

The humble art of embroidery, the most common decorative art among the Tajiks, offers much scope for artisans' creative imagination.

The art of decorating textiles has been practiced by the Tajik people for centuries. Archeological excavations at the Sogdian castle on Mount Mugh uncovered a great number of textiles dating to the

1 M. P. Vinokurova, "Textiles from the Castle on Mount Mugh," *Izvestiya AN Tadjikskoi SSR. Otdeleniye obshchestvennykh nauk* [Bulletin of the Academy of Sciences of the Tajik SSR. Department of Social Sciences], no. 14 (Stalinabad, 1957): 27–32.

7th – 8th centuries<sup>1</sup>. These helped researchers to detect parallels with embroideries from the 19th – 20th centuries in the details and overall character of their ornamentation.

Because embroidery is relatively easy to do, it was always widespread and popular. The people's tastes, aesthetic ideals and attitudes were reflected in large part in embroidery. As one of the most popular occupations, it is no surprise that it is often a theme of dances, while poems and songs are written about it as well:

In the heat of midday, my darling,  
What are you making with your  
needle<sup>2</sup>?

Embroidery has always been the basic element used to decorate Tajik clothes and houses. In every home without exception there will be some beautifully embroidered object, large or small, kept lovingly by the lady of the house.

The interiors of traditional Tajik homes in the flat plains areas are remarkably colorful, their components assembled over the course of centuries. (Furnishings among the mountain Tajiks are much skimpier.) Sometimes the *mehmonkhona* (room for receiving guests) can be dazzlingly bright, full of fantastic colors and forms. In line with national traditions, rooms in houses have niches of various shapes and sizes. Ornamented with

carving and painting on wood and ganch [alabaster plaster], they are used to store all sorts of decorative folk-art objects: ceramic pitchers, bowls, plates, metal trays, decorated chests, sometimes dried flatbreads molded in fancy shapes, and whole mountains of colorful quilted blankets folded in neat piles. Sometimes the niches are curtained off with special embroidered drapes called *borpush*. The floor appears to be a continuation of this riot of color: it is covered with carpets and woven palas, with the warm restful color of earth intermittently visible between them. The wooden ceiling painted over with intricate patterns complements this joyful picture.

Every remaining bit of wall space apart from the niches is covered either with various kinds of small embroidered objects – bags to hold combs, mirrors (*oynakhalta*) or tea (*choikhalta*) – or with large hangings called *suzanis*. Embroidered runners, *zardevor*, are mounted on three walls of a room (the end wall and two lengthwise walls).

During wedding festivities one can also see embroidered skullcaps and the bride's dresses on the walls, contributing further to the artistic ensemble of this room for guests to admire. Much importance is placed also on men's sash belts (*rumol*): they are hung along the walls too, as if

2 *Tajik Folk Songs*, vol. 1  
(Dushanbe, 1966), 59.

demonstrating the bride's care for the groom, seeing as she prepared all these *rumols* for him.

There is no furniture as such in a traditional interior (not counting chests placed deep in the niches, and occasionally built-in shelves called *sandal*). Although the space is open, the room does not feel empty. There is such a concentration of ornamental furnishings on the walls, ceiling, and floor that any object of furniture would seem superfluous here.

With their exceptional sense of artistic taste, the Tajik people's solution to embellishing interior spaces relies on a balanced distribution of decorations over the flat inside walls. Embroidered pieces in a variety of shapes, colors and motifs are hung side by side, but never produce an impression of chaos. The rhythms of their colors merge into a rich, bright unity. In large part, this effect is determined by the placement on the walls of the large, principal embroideries. The biggest ones – *suzanis* and *borpush* – are hung on the wall opposite the entrance. They are the first things that someone entering the room sees. The remaining, smaller pieces, as the visitor grows more aware of the interior furnishings, add to the initial overall impression. Each room arrangement has its own character: despite the fact that almost every embroidery piece has its own

traditional place, one can sense the underlying desire to make each room individual and unique.

Such freedom of conception is strongly characteristic of all the artistic productions of the Tajik people, and in particular of the ornamentation of their embroideries. Embroidery has always played an important role



SUZANI  
URA-TYUBE  
END OF 19th  
CENTURY

in Tajiks' daily existence; it accompanies them throughout their lives, from their earliest years, when they first come into contact with art and beauty. It is a remarkable fact that, however difficult the circumstances that embroideresses in the past might have found themselves in, their creations always stood out

thanks to their bright, joyous colors permeated with a great feeling of optimism.

Tajik embroidery unfolds before us a whole world of poetical images. Notwithstanding an infinite variety of patterns available for compositions, and the uniqueness of each individual piece, the embroideries are united by having a common set of basic design motifs, standard shapes used often to produce the same ornament, and the same sewing techniques.



*BORPUSH*  
URA-TYUBE  
20th CENTURY

Local women, with their fine appreciation of nature, portray the colorful world around them in their embroideries in an altogether unique way, communicating their feelings and experiences through them.

Tajik embroidery is distinguished by its multiplicity of types and the diversity of its decorations. This diversity of artistic shapes and

images, color combinations and rhythmic patterns, derive from the natural environment of Tajikistan itself. The severity and grandeur of the Pamir Mountains alternate with the gentle tranquility of green valleys; bright yellow steppes give way to gardens and forests; noisy, turbulent rivers create quiet crystal lakes; and cool alpine meadows exist alongside torrid plains. Such richness of nature, with its sharp contrasts, beauty and abundance of plant life, was obviously reflected to the full in the art of the nation, and particularly in embroidery.

The bright, at times burning colors of an embroidery in one region of Tajikistan switch sharply and abruptly to the delicacy and finesse on an analogous embroidery from a different region. The linear precision of ornamentation among the mountain Tajiks is totally at odds with the soft decorative compositions of the plains Tajiks. Therefore, Tajik embroidery is divided into two schools, mountain and plains. Despite substantial artistic differences, their influence on one another is clear to see.

Amidst the vast range of folk embroidery there are, of course, individual artistic centers that stand out due to certain particular eye-catching attributes of their local productions. In the flat plains areas that means the ancient cities and their environs – Samarkand, Bukhara<sup>3</sup>, Ura-

3 There reference here is to embroideries executed by Tajik artisans living on the territory of Uzbekistan.

Tyube, and Leninabad; in the mountain districts it means Kulyab, Karategin and Darvaz, and the Pamirs. The embroideries produced in towns like Kanibadam, Asht, Penjikent, Nurek, Isfara, Karatag and Nurata, and the village of Sina, are extensions (in terms of their stylistic features) of one or another of these artistic centers. Not all of these centers have been equally well studied, however. Until recently, most attention has been paid to Bukhara, Samarkand<sup>4</sup>, and a few mountain areas of Tajikistan<sup>5</sup>. Many regions where the art of embroidery is also widespread have been overlooked by researchers.<sup>6</sup>

Each of the above-mentioned centers has its own most common decorative motifs, colors, and favorite kinds of embroidery. They are differentiated by the character of their execution and the material on which they are produced.

Up to the present day, decorative embroideries are made primarily for large family celebrations, especially weddings, which have an important place in the everyday life of the local people. Embroidered pieces are always part of the dowry or bride-price. For this reason, every mother starts working on them pretty much from when their child is an infant.

Wedding parties or other popular celebrations bring together folk

music, dances, pantomimes, games, songs, costumes and of course embroideries, which serve as the decorative background to these bright, colorful spectacles.

The houses of the bride and grooms are full of activity starting long before the weddings: mothers and grandmothers take old embroidered pieces out of chests, often recalling their own weddings at which these same embroideries were hung. The wedding embroideries certainly



include some new pieces as well, in the creation of which the bride-to-be herself takes part.

As a rule, girls in Tajik families begin to learn this skill from the age of 10–12. In past times needlework was practically the only occupation a woman had, so learning it was obligatory. Nowadays the tradition is beginning to disappear, particularly among the urban population.

4 G. L. Chepelevetska-ya, *Suzanis of Uzbekistan* (Tashkent, 1961); O. A. Sukhareva, "On the History of the Development of Samarkand Decorative Embroidery," *Literatura i iskusstva Uzbekistana [Literature and Art of Uzbekistan]*, no. 6 (Tashkent, 1937): 119–134; Ye. M. Peshchereva, "Bukharan Gold Embroiderers," *Sbornik MAE [Journal of the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography]*, vol. 16 (Leningrad, 1955): 165–282.

*BORPUSH*  
URA-TYUBE  
20th CENTURY

5 N. A. Belinskaya, *Decorative Art of the Mountainous Region of Tajikistan* (Dushanbe, 1965).

6 This present volume includes Tajik embroideries made outside the territory of Tajikistan.

7 The draftswoman is called a *kalamkash*. In the past, the art was passed on from mother to daughter following a special ritual of induction into the ranks of *kalamkash*. See O. A. Sukhareva, "On the Question of the Genesis of Professional Cults Among the Tajiks and Uzbeks," *Trudy AN Tadzhijskoi SSR [Proceedings of the Academy of Sciences of the Tajik SSR]*, vol. 120. Essays dedicated to the memory of M. S. Andreyev (Dushanbe, 1960).

If a family is not able to embroider all the required items in time for the wedding, they invite relatives and friends to assist: it takes 5–8 women working together to embroider one large piece, usually a *suzani*. To make the work more manageable, they take the huge central field (its design is drawn by a special draftswoman) and tear it into strips, which are then sewn together again when the embroidery is finished.<sup>7</sup> First, there is an energetic discussion about the embroidery's pattern, color combinations, material, sewing techniques, etc. Many genuine

conversation naturally feeds into the work of the embroideresses as well, and is reflected in the overall tone of the piece being sewn.

Although they are embroidering a pattern that has already been drawn for them, each woman adds her own personal touch to the work, expressed in the colors or manner of execution. For this reason, such embroideries turn out to be outstanding lively, as if composed from a multitude of colorful stories.

Tajik artisans apply to every sort of embroidery their own special methods of sewing and special threads which, in olden times, were dyed at home.

As a rule, each kind of embroidery is produced using a particular kind of stitch. Thus, large-sized pieces are executed in *kanda-khayol* stitch (large vertical stitches), *sidergaduzi*, and *basma* (a tightly executed satin stitch, with equally sized stitches lying parallel to one another). A rarer stitch is *kuniangushpona* (small stitches squeezed tightly together).

Small-sized pieces are embroidered in *chinda-khayol* stitch. This is another variant of the satin stitch, and makes tiny dots in a checkered pattern on the reverse side of the fabric. A number of other types of stitches are also used in different areas.



BORPUSH  
GANCHI DISTRICT  
LENINABAD PROVINCE  
19th CENTURY

treasures of folk art, masterworks of imagination, were created by means of this collective process (a *hashar*, as the people call it). Female artisans, gathered together, teach one another embroidery, enjoy interesting talks, share their innermost thoughts. This atmosphere of sharing and intimate

## EMBROIDERY OF THE PLAINS REGIONS

**Suzanis.** One of the most characteristic of the large Tajik embroideries is the *suzani*. It occupies an honored position not only in the decoration of the house but, it may be said, in the life of the nation; it holds pride of place among its folk art. The remarkable variety of ornamentation on *suzanis*, their harmonious proportions, the beauty and expressiveness of their individual elements, and, last but not least, the perfect integrity of their decorative conception deservedly call forth astonishment and admiration for the mastery of the hands that made them. *Suzanis* are the most imposing decorative embroidery in terms of size (200 x 300 cm, 300 x 400 cm, 500 x 400 cm), and as works of art their qualities are no less impressive than those of carpets. They were sewn on homespun cloth (*karbos*), satin or silk. They almost always had a lining, and were edged without fail, either with strips of black material or braid. The most common design is a closed composition with one large rosette stretching the length of the *suzani*, or a composition of 6–9 rosettes in a strict symmetrical arrangement. Occasionally instead of rosettes there are motifs featuring all sorts of shrubs. The latter are seen especially often in pieces made in Leninabad, Isfara, Samarkand, Bukhara, and Kanibadam. The

entire *suzani* composition is always framed in a wide, smart border giving it a finished look. Like other kinds of embroideries, *suzanis* produced in different districts of the republic exhibit clear differences in the style of their patterns, sewing technique and color palette.

The *suzanis* from Ura-Tyube can rightly be regarded as some of the most beautiful in Tajikistan. They attract the eye with their



*BORPUSH*  
URA-TYUBE  
20th CENTURY

originality, and amaze the onlooker with the unusual, impressive power of their individual shapes and their composition as a whole. The color schemes, mostly based on sharply contrasting combinations, unusually bright and bold, sometimes are simply dazzling. There are two types of *suzani*: older ones, characterized by small-scale ornamentation and tight embroidery covering the

whole field of the ground fabric (found rarely), and later ones, dating to our times, featuring large, spare patterns. *Suzanis* dating to the 1940s are interesting, with compositions consisting of nine large rosettes, each of which contains a complex multilayered vegetative pattern. Multi-petalled, cherry-violet rosettes with rose flowers at their centers are

blossoms. The whole embroidery design is set off effectively by a black background. There is a sense of monumentalism and expressive restraint about the entire composition: the impression is created by the strict rhythm of the large cherry-violet rosettes and the little spots of blue flowers, together with the bold outlines of the powerful white stems.



SUZANI  
URA-TYUBE  
19th CENTURY

surrounded by rings decorated with the same flowers. Thick white stems with big, juicy leaves wind around the rosettes. Distributed in the spaces between the rosettes are little blue flowers, around which there are yellow trefoils with shining petals, and red flowers (*toji khurus* “cock’s comb”) behind them. The *suzanis* have a thin border around their edges, composed of a winding white stem interspersed with *toji khurus* flowers and yellow, five-petalled

*Suzanis* with a single large rosette covering their whole surface are very original, characteristic productions of Ura-Tyube; they were popular a century ago and remain so today. The emotional effect of such a composition on the onlooker can hardly be overstated.

The multiple rings making up the rosette, usually contrasting in color with the embroidery’s background (black against white, red against black, burgundy against yellow), seem to move towards the viewer. Thanks to the variety of their interior embellishment they create an impression of endless, turbulent movement, reminiscent of a living, vibrant organism.

One feels keenly that these embroidery compositions were done by hand and not on a sewing machine. It is precisely this that gives each piece its unique charm. One can look at dozens or hundreds of embroidery designs of the same type, and each one has been sewn with a flavor all its own.

The large-scale patterning of Ura-Tyube *suzanis* with their massive look is in sharp contrast to the light, delicate compositions from Kanibadam, Leninabad, Isfara and Asht. They have none of the overawing monumentalism of Ura-Tyube *suzanis*. But the finer-grained refinement of the designs, the elegance of their decorative motifs, their fluid, even arrangement over the fabric, and their unusually large palette of colors produce a delightful impression of colorful festiveness. Here, too, the basic decorative motif is floral. Various shaped and shaded flower patterns are transformed by the embroideresses' imagination into lush bushes and fabulous bouquets. Bushes and bouquets are the basic compositional elements in these *suzanis*. Like rosettes, they are ordered in strict patterns, with ten, eight or six of them set at intervals. Sometimes small branches or flower rosettes are interspersed among them. Often there are only a number of bushes (6–9) positioned over the field of the fabric without any additional decoration around them. Compositions of this kind have all their elements pointing in the same direction – they all have an “up” and a “down” – and usually create a sense of peace and stability.

One *suzani* from Kanibadam, for example, has 12 symmetrical

shrubs (three per row) that fill out the whole field, arranged in a smooth, relaxed rhythm. These shrubs – exuberant, intricate – are firmly “planted in the ground.” This impression is achieved largely thanks to the depiction of a root under each shrub. This manner of depicting them is characteristic of all the Tajiks' decorative and applied art.



*RUIJO*, PENJIKENT, 20th CENTURY

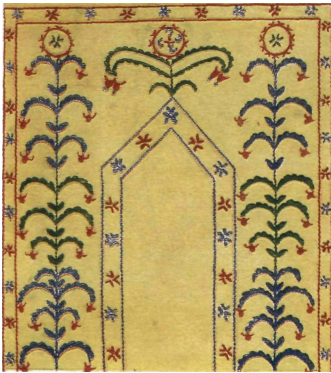
*RUIJO*, ISFARA, 19th CENTURY

In parallel with *suzanis* whose overall composition was calming, Kanibadam embroideresses also produced pieces in a totally different vein. In one of them dating to the 1950s, the basic motif is bouquets of light blue, pink and white flowers, artfully woven together by the black curls of a leafy stem. There are 12 such bouquets on the *suzani*. Again, they are spaced evenly over the entire yellow background of the embroidery,

interspersed with small, graceful blossoming branches that are distributed according to a strict symmetry. The branches' contours are suggestive of swirling rosettes (this motif is a common one in the ornamental schemes of many nations, particularly the Kyrgyz, Uzbeks, Turkmen, Kazakhs and Bashkirs).<sup>8</sup> They give a surprising vivacity to the overall rhythm of the composition, infusing all its decorative elements with a subtle sense of movement. Hence we can

with one large rosette in the middle are spread over a huge black background (300 x 400 cm). All the rosettes are decorated differently inside, and are of different sizes as well, giving an impression of depth and space to the composition. This embroidery looks a bit like the starry sky.

Each of the rosettes is filled up with tiny ornamental patterns in yellow, white, purple and green. The optical effect of combining these colors makes it seem like they are twinkling brightly in the sky.



JOYNAMOZ, KANIBAD-AM, 20th CENTURY

RUIJO, ISFARA, 19th CENTURY



*Suzanis* from Nurek present an interesting picture. The typical features of their compositions seem to derive from two sources at once: they share characteristics of the mountain school of embroidery yet continue the trend of the plains school, distinguished by the density of the overall patterning. Usually small, graceful flowers and leaves, distributed equidistantly over the fields of these *suzanis*, are gathered together here and there within small encircling rosettes or branches; the four corners of this closed composition are decorated with four identical, symmetrically placed bushes. The favorite color here is red. It frequently appears as the background color, and is used in a variety of shades in the decorative composition itself. The total effect of a Nurek *suzani* is like that of a mosaic panel, in which everything fuses into one

say that the embroideresses' skill and imagination are unbounded. The same ornamental motif can be interpreted in individual ways and look completely different within the general schemes of different embroidered pieces, communicating serenity, tranquility, stately dignity or stormy motion. Many *suzanis* from Leninabad are filled with happy, playful motifs. In one example, small, delicate rosettes

<sup>8</sup> S. A. Avizhanskaya, I. V. Bikbulatov, R. K. Kuzev, *The Decorative and Applied Art of the Bashkirs* (Ufa, 1964), 241.

overall bright spectrum of color. Samarkand *suzanis*<sup>9</sup> are rich in ancient ornamental motifs. Many of them, with their large, spare designs, remind one of *suzanis* from Ura-Tyube. Here, too, the base motifs are large rosettes, single or multiple, in a variety of forms, with inner concentric circles, framed by a strong leafy stalk. The great number of variations of this motif produce extraordinarily colorful effects, as well as evoking admiration for the unbounded imagination of the embroideresses. Combinations of contrasting colors (yellow with dark blue, purple and crimson; red with black and yellow; pink with light blue) make for taut, resonant color schemes which are also native to Ura-Tyube embroideries. But in the Samarkand pieces the color contrasts are further emphasized by a thin outline (yellow or some other bright color) drawn around every element of the design, and executed in tambour stitch.

There are beautiful *suzanis* with luxuriant bushes symmetrically arranged in several rows. However, the shrub motifs in Samarkand embroideries differ sharply from those in pieces from Leninabad, Isfara and Kanibadam. Samarkand women invest their exuberantly blooming shrubs with an inner force – with power. In their overall shape they are reminiscent of the rosettes just mentioned, but the design details differ. Lush stems

and leaves are smoothly and evenly entwined around flowers of the most varied shapes.

The combination of black and red, characteristic of Samarkand embroideries, is found on many *suzanis*. For example, on one early 20th-century piece we see two rows of three large burgundy rosettes, completely filled in with *basma* stitch, on a white background (400 x 300 cm). The backing cloth is



only slightly visible amidst the general ornamentation. In the center of each rosette is a small red pistil surrounded by a red crenellated circle. Set around each circle are six crenellated rosettes, again red. And surrounding these large, round patches of burgundy-red is a succulent black stalk: it twists and turns around them restlessly, densely filling in the background, making a lot of

JOYNAMOZ, KANIBAD-AM, 19th CENTURY

RULO, LENINABAD, END OF 19th CENTURY

9 Chepelevetskaya, *Suzanis of Uzbekistan*; Sukhareva, "On the History of the Development of Samarkand Decorative Embroidery."

hook-shaped zigzags, and finally splitting at its ends into profusions of curly twigs. The shape of these twigs looks like the silhouette of some fairy-tale flower with many symmetrically spaced petals and shoots. This wide, twining black stem creates an openwork background encompassing the entire embroidery; it and the burgundy red rosettes together make a harmonious colorful display. The total composition is enclosed by a wide border

and harmoniousness. The inner details of the designs (primarily rosettes) are also rich and fine. In later *suzanis* the patterns began to be dominated by a more ornamental esthetic.<sup>10</sup>

The decorations used in Penjikent contrast sharply with the luxuriant compositions of Samarkand *suzanis*, redolent of the aromas of the native gardens and fields. In Penjikent the rosette disks are not wound around with a juicy plant stem, but surrounded by a lot of secondary rosettes of various sizes, the same color as the primary ones. Penjikent rosettes do not have a multi-tiered decorative scheme, but are typically solid and dense. Most commonly the rosette's interior field is divided up into a number of concentric, starlike rings, the color of which matches that of the primary field. Here one finds colors which otherwise are used rarely in Tajik embroidery: brown, grey, and pale pink. The color selections are quite sophisticated. On one *suzani*, for instance (19th century, 250 x 350 cm) there are six large white and light orange rosettes, alternating in strict order, arranged on a black background. Inside the white rosettes are pink and pale brown starlike rings, while inside the orange rosettes the rings are pale light blue and red. Arbitrarily, even carelessly scattered around them are small white, pink and yellow rosettes of different sizes,



OYNADON, DAKHKAT VILLAGE, GANCHI DISTRICT, LENINABAD PROVINCE, 19th CENTURY

OYNADON, NUREK, 20th CENTURY



consisting of the same twisting black stem with burgundy-colored pistils between its curls. The embroideress' skillful hands have managed to create a richly colored picture employing a minimal palette (black, burgundy and red).

Earlier Samarkand *suzanis*, dating to the beginning of the 19th century, commonly feature a more restricted range of colors. They are distinguished by their elegance

10 Chepelevetskaya, *Suzanis of Uzbekistan*.

symbolizing planets in the sky. Altogether the embroidery has a serene appearance which is very pleasing to look at. That feeling is achieved mostly by the gentle color combinations (white and light brown). The entire composition is enclosed in a narrow frame of white pistils alternating with orange branches curving symmetrically in opposite directions from one another.

The border of a Penjikent *suzani* almost always consists of separate plant forms, not connected by any leafy stalk: it is one of its characteristic features.

The *suzani* embroideries made not in Penjikent itself, but in the surrounding villages, are particularly varied. Their decorative designs are sometimes reminiscent of those in Ura-Tyube or Kanibadam. Yet in many cases (especially in early 19th-century pieces) their color schemes run totally counter to them, inclining toward a gentler and subtler gamut of colors.

The decorative compositions of Bukhara *suzanis* are astonishingly diverse and rich.<sup>11</sup> They are famous for their remarkably lush, perfectly composed vegetative ornamentation and the technical virtuosity of their execution. Silk threads are used very frequently in Bukharan embroideries; their shininess and shimmering effect

create especially subtle transitions from one color to another, and help create a general impression of colorful brilliance. The decorative compositions are also of many different kinds. Their basic motifs remain the same, traditional rosettes and bushes. But one also finds diamond-shaped grids covering the whole central field, with flower shapes in each of the grid spaces. These ornamental motifs in Bukharan embroideries



OYNADON, NUREK, 20th CENTURY

OYNADON, NUREK, 20th CENTURY

are treated in a great variety of ways, with apparently no end to the number of new variations. Outlines can be in the form of serrated or pointed stars, or soft smooth palmettes with remarkably variegated interior decorations.

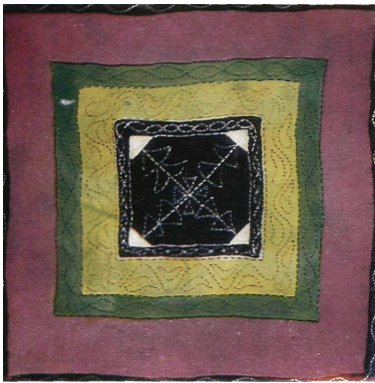
Plants stems or shrubs, slender and delicate, sporting an abundance of tiny flowers, buds and leaves, are wreathed around

11 A. I. Tarasov, *Bukharan Embroideries in the Interior Decoration of the Peoples of Uzbekistan*. Abstract of Candidate of Sciences dissertation (Moscow, 1959).

the main decorative elements in such a dense yet unconstrained manner that, looking at the scene, you cannot help believing it is real. Within the intricate coils of this amazing foliage, you hope to catch the voices of birds and the smell of live flowers.

The colors enhance the fineness and intricacy of the ornamentation: it is hardly possible to find, on any other Tajik embroideries, such

We may take as an example a *suzani* (beginning of the 20th century, 270 x 200 cm) in muted orange-red tones. The composition is filled with minute plant motifs surrounding a finely decorated central rosette, which can barely be distinguished amidst the general design. At first glance the *suzani* seems to be decorated only with orange and red flowers. On closer examination, though, the viewer can make out a multitude of small ornamental elements – light and dark blue, green and grey – cool drops of rich color that freshen up the embroidery’s warm tones. An interesting feature is the flowers with interior patterning looking almost like mosaics: they are made up of lots of tiny dots squeezed together, similar in tone and color. Soft colors are used in these flower shapes; one instant they show a warm glow, the next instant a cool gleam. This *suzani* is also adorned with many small, graceful branches with berries that add a free, loose movement to the general design. A wide framing border serves as a kind of continuation of the pattern in the central field, visually merging with it.



OYNADON, DAKHKAT VILLAGE, GANCHI DISTRICT, LENINABAD PROVINCE, 20th CENTURY



OYNADON, GANCHI DISTRICT, LENINABAD PROVINCE, 19th CENTURY

delicate and varied combinations of grey with light blue, lilac with pink, pale yellow with ocher, or white with light orange.

These subtle combinations are always found together with crimson, green, red and dark blue, and are inserted throughout the pattern in a way that tricks the eye, making the entire spread of colors look softer.

Old Bukharan pieces (19th century) were famous for their gold embroidery<sup>12</sup>, which produces a magnificent play of colors. Their general color scheme – bright gold, with accents of dark blue, green, pink, red and purple – creates the impression that the textile itself is

12 Peshchereva, “Bukharan Gold Embroiderers.”

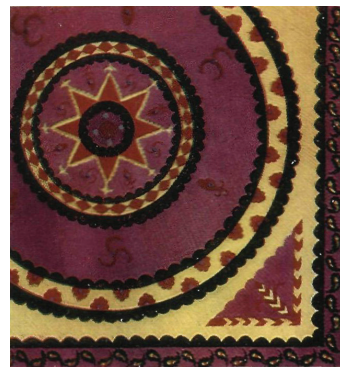
a highly precious material. Gold embroidery on velvet and thick silk is especially beautiful.

Examples of *suzanis* from the flat plains areas of Tajikistan allows us not only to categorize the fundamental characteristic features of each school of decoration, but also to confirm how close their embroideries truly are to one another. Their artistic proximity is apparent from the principles behind their technical execution, their compositional methods, their common ornamental types and forms, and their superb mastery of line and color.

Yet at the same time it is easy to see how different they are in the colors used for the patterns, in their sizes, and in the proportions of the decorations as a whole. These latter points indicate the unusually wide variety of local approaches to the art of ornamentation.

***Borpush.*** Large decorative embroideries other than *suzanis* can be found in the plains regions of Tajikistan. Each type has its own characteristic features, discernible in its overall artistic composition, making it possible to identify it with one or another of the schools of embroidery. The *borpush*, *ruijo* and *kars* are closely related pieces to the *suzani* in terms of their designated purpose.<sup>13</sup> They too are used to adorn walls, and to cover beds and piles of folded bedclothes. Each type also plays

a role in wedding and funeral ceremonies. These items are much smaller than *suzanis* (200 x 200 cm, 200 x 150 cm, 100 x 300 cm), but sometimes surpass them in the wide range of their patterns and color schemes. The composition of these embroideries similarly depends on a central field and a border. As a rule, *borpush* exhibit a fully integrated composition: there is usually a large decorative component in the center (a plant motif or geometrical figure), and



*DAVRI*, NUREK, 20th CENTURY

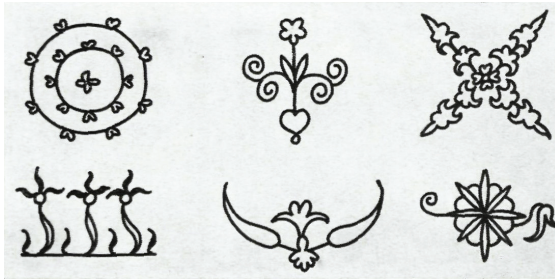
*SUZANI*, URA-TYUBE, 19th CENTURY

ornamentation without fail in all the four corners. However, there are some examples where the central field consists not of one large decorative component, but several symmetrically arranged designs. A host of possible elaborations spring from these two possibilities, with contrasting patterns and different color schemes applied to the individual elements.

*Borpush* are usually very similar to *suzanis* as far as artistic composition

13 These items have various names in different places. *Borpush*, for example, is called *bolinpush* in Penjikent, Bukhara and Samarkand.

is concerned. The outliers are the ones from Ura-Tyube; they stand out with their idiosyncratic decorative patterns. They are striking demonstrations of the deep understanding that embroideresses had of how to work with decorative



ORNAMENTAL MOTIFS  
URA-TYUBA SCHOOL OF  
EMBROIDERY

14 S. B. Lunin, “Zoomorphic Subjects in Ceramics with Stamped Decorations from a Pottery Workshop of the 12th – Early 13th Centuries in the Ceramists’ Quarter of Ancient Mery,” *Izvestiya AN Tadzhikskoi SSR. Otdeleniye obshchestvennykh nauk* [Bulletin of the Academy of Sciences of the Tajik SSR. Department of Social Sciences], no. 1 (Stalinabad, 1957): 19; N. Kh. Nurdzhanov, “Ancient Pantomimes of the Tajiks,” *XII Mezhdunarodnii kongress antropologicheskikh i etnograficheskikh nauk* [12th International Congress of Anthropology and Ethnography] (Moscow, 1964).

blobs of color, which are extremely characteristic of the Ura-Tyube school of embroidery.

For instance, one Ura-Tyube *borpush* from the early 19th century has an austere, rigid composition – with a large figure of the *ajdakhor* dragon in the center, ornamented corners, and a border frame: the design is impressively imposing.

Its decorative effect comes essentially from its use of strong, bold crenellated lines. The huge *ajdakhor* in white stands out sharply on a black satin backing. The dragon’s contours are extremely stylized, pitcher-shaped. They are traced out with a convoluted plant stem, at the ends of which are four yellow flowers. At its center is a depiction of the

flower called “night beauty” (the four o’clock flower, *Mirabilis jalapa*), often found in analogous embroideries, here enclosed in a circle with ornaments looking like snake scales. All of these decorative elements make up the shape of the dragon, whose outlines are similar to an elegant geometric figure. This design motif is a favorite among the embroideresses of Ura-Tyube, which they employ frequently in a variety of interpretations.

Nature’s flora and fauna are transformed by artisans into sumptuous decorations with forms that point to their original sources of inspiration in the real world. It is common to see designs on *borpush* from Ura-Tyube representing snakes, scorpions, dragons, etc. Such motifs are intrinsic to Tajiks arts – not only applied and decorative arts, or fine arts, but the folk art of pantomime whose archaic features, retained to this day, are especially obvious. This is additional evidence of the ancient origins of embroidery and its inextricable connection with all other forms of art.<sup>14</sup>

One often finds motifs on Ura-Tyube *borpush* displaying natural phenomena and depicting heavenly bodies, particular the Sun. The approaches are usually realistic, but with a large amount of individuality in the way that the subjects are artistically treated. Thus, the disk of the Sun consists of a number

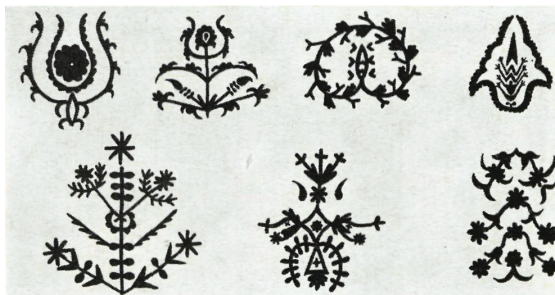
of rings spurting out small zigzag tongues of flame. The zigzags, evenly spaced around the circle, are pink, red, yellow, crimson and white: they create a bright picture full of color and movement, and the resulting illusion really is evocative of the Sun.

Such a realistic treatment of the motif of the Sun's disk is only found on Ura-Tyube *borpush*, and is undoubtedly connected with ancient folk rituals and beliefs.<sup>15</sup>

There is an altogether similar motif, but one which does not admit more individual interpretations, much beloved in Tajik embroidery, and practically permeating it as a leitmotif: it lost its cultic significance over time, and came down to our day in the form of *yak lola* ("one tulip") – a single flower – and as a rosette, which can be either large or small, richly decorated with plant patterns.

The rosette or circle is one of the primal, original ornaments found both on embroideries from the plains of Tajikistan and on pieces from the mountainous areas; but it has specific features in each place. This motif, used universally in every branch of Tajik decorative and applied art, was passed down to embroideresses from ancient times. Researchers have traced its origins back to Sogdian art (7th – 8th centuries AD).<sup>16</sup> The role of color in Ura-Tyube

*borpush* is very important. The combinations of colors are always chosen to be as reverberant and contrasting as possible (white with black, bright pink with dark blue, yellow with crimson). In large part it is precisely through these color



ORNAMENTAL MOTIFS  
URA-TYUBA SCHOOL OF  
EMBROIDERY

combinations that *borpush*, though relatively small in size, make as strong an impression as much bigger pieces.

*Joynamoz*. Prayer carpets called *joynamoz*, to stand and kneel on while praying, are widespread in the northern region of the republic. Their decoration is embroidered in the shape of a Π (an upside-down U), usually sharpening towards the top, thereby reproducing the form of a mihrab, the niche in the wall of a mosque indicating the direction towards Mecca. The character of the ornamentation on *joynamoz* is redolent of the patterns on *suzanis*, *borpush* and *ruijos*. It is delicate and intricate, with an abundance of flower shapes and tiny leaves of every kind of construction – as, for

15 A. A. Bobrinskii, *On Certain Symbols Common to the Primitive Decorations of all the Nations of Europe and Asia* (Moscow, 1902).

16 S. V. Ivanov, "On Certain Traditions of Sogdian Decorative Art in the Ornamentation of the Tajiks and Uzbeks," *Materialy vtorogo soveshchaniya arkheologov i etnografov Srednei Azii* [Materials of the Second Conference of Archeologists and Ethnographers of Central Asia] (Moscow, Leningrad, 1959): 222.

17 A. M. Belenitskii, *New Depictions of Ritual Objects in the Murals of Ancient Penjikent* (Dushanbe, 1960), 44.

18 According to folk belief, a barren woman should eat a worm so that God will send her children (as told by a 90-year-old woman from Ura-Tyube).

example, in pieces from Bukhara, which display dozens of original carpet designs with infinitely many variations; or in pieces from Samarkand, Ura-Tyube and Penjikent, which are strikingly colorful and bold, with separate shapes arranged and balanced to create harmonious patterns.



BORPUSH, PENJIKENT,  
LATE 19th CENTURY

19 M. G. Khamidzhanova, "Some Ideas of the Tajiks Connected with Snakes," *Trudy AN Tadzhikskoi SSR [Proceedings of the Academy of Sciences of the Tajik SSR]*, vol. 120 (Dushanbe, 1960).

There is a certain directness and intimacy about the decorative schemes employed on *joynamoz*. Much of that is probably due to the purpose of the carpet – its emotional associations with the person using it, and with the thoughts that arise during prayers. Hence, the decorative elements forming the niche often include symbolic motifs such as

pomegranates (*anor*)<sup>17</sup>, symbols of happiness and fertility, all sorts of worms<sup>18</sup> and centipedes, believed to help someone's wishes come true, snakes<sup>19</sup>, goat horns, tea pots and samovars (emblems of hospitality, adopted in Soviet times).

There is a curious red *joynamoz* (early 19th century) from Penjikent whose decoration includes pomegranates (*anor*), a popular Eastern motif. The Π-shaped composition involves ten identical, evenly-spaced pomegranate tree branches. Each branch is drawn as a horizontal line, with five parallel threads hanging vertically down from it, and pomegranates strung on the threads. The dark blue branches and dark red pomegranates make a very beautiful picture; the branches are regularly balanced, heavy and luscious. The total decoration of the *joynamoz* is interesting for its elegantly stylized pattern, as if embodying the fertile abundance of the artisan's native land.

**Kars.** A *kars* is an embroidered textile used as a bedspread, or to cover bedclothes folded and stacked in a wall niche. It is rare. A *kars* can be up to 350 cm long, and 150–170 cm wide. Each of its ends is embroidered on both sides, front and back.

The finished *kars* is folded horizontally so that both embroidered ends are on the same side, one slightly overlapping

the other. Occasionally only one end is decorated. The central field is left empty. Its border, which is where the decoration is concentrated, is adorned with a rich abundance of ornamentation. It is always framed along its three outside edges by a double ribbon, straight and wavy – a traditional figure that is characteristic for Tajik embroideries. The basic decorative elements on *kars* pieces are floral motifs. Frequently they are interspersed with stand-alone symbols stylized to look like Arabic letters. These are skillfully intertwined with the pattern and give it a unique look.

Interestingly, rosettes are never used in the decoration of *kars*.

The ornamentation found on one *kars* from Ura-Tyube is very successful. Large flowers on a stem are attractively surrounded by plant elements, separate leaves and bushes. The main design is bounded on two sides by a thin border in the form of a twisting stem. Its dark blue veins set the tone for the whole composition, which is topped off by two cockscomb flowers and luxuriant flowering shrubs. Dark blue vertical and horizontal lines signify water to the minds of the embroideresses; they are needed here to water this multicolored garden.

Folk artisans would invest their designs with images reflecting the

real world. Perhaps that is why the embroidery ornamentation sewn by their hands always seems alive, somehow blossoming and fragrant.

*Ruijo*. There is hardly a single popular ceremony celebrated without the *ruijo*, which is a covering for the bed. It has an especially important part in the marriage rite, when it is solemnly



DAVRI, NUREK, 20th CENTURY

spread on the newlyweds' bed. It is common throughout the plains regions of Tajikistan. The embroidery composition on the *ruijo* is spare and II-shaped. The decorations are bordered on three sides by a double strip.

There are very many different forms of ornamentation and background. Floral motifs are most frequent, but they come in

innumerable variations. Little flowers, leaves and stems of every kind are put together in dense, intricate bushes and bouquets, which alternate with large and small rosettes, and are supplemented by many more individual flowers that give the overall pattern a feeling of lightness and openness. This type of embroidery is particularly widespread in Kanibadam, Isfara, Leninabad and Asht. There can be such a diversity of decorations on a single *ruijo* that it is almost as if they had been gathered from every possible embroidery item and then thrown together in one brilliant, elegant design.



*SHEROZ*, FRONT OF A WOMAN'S DRESS, KARATEGIN, 20th CENTURY

## EMBROIDERY OF THE MOUNTAIN REGIONS

**Dresses.** There are characteristic features of the embroidery of Tajiks living in the mountains that differentiate them completely from the embroidery of those living in the plains.<sup>20</sup>

When you visit the mountain regions of Tajikistan, you cannot help feeling that a festival atmosphere reigns on the streets of local towns and villages. The feeling is due to the eye-catchingly bright, decoratively embroidered clothing of the women and children, and to some extent of the men as well. It is as if the whole fabulous world of embroideries that adorn the homes of the plains Tajik has come out of the houses and onto the street. For the most part they are long and loose-fitting (with very wide sleeves extending below the hand), although sometimes, in certain areas of south-west Darvaz, they are slightly tapered at the waist, broadening out below (in which cases the sleeves are narrow).

The decorative patterns on the dresses come in a number of variants, all of which are notable for their large, bold designs. Dresses for special occasions have their whole fronts, from the shoulders to the hemline, covered in embroidery, and sometimes part of their backs, too. In most cases the embroidery forms two wide, vertical strips running from shoulder to hem. There are some dresses with embroidery that circle the collar and then extends down to the waist (generally in the shape of a pointed arch). Others have a wide, embroidered border (from 20 to 50 cm) decorating only the hemline and sleeves.

Very wide, long sleeves are always

20 Belinskaya, *Decorative Art of the Mountainous Region of Tajikistan*.

embellished with embroidered ornamentation that melds with the other embroidered parts of the dress into a single, artistic whole.

A few other compositional variations are possible on dresses. Some of them are based on traditions stretching into the distant past. However, we will restrict ourselves here to the most common types still found throughout the area today.

Dresses are usually sewn from yellow, burgundy, and red silk, or from white or cream-colored *karbos* (hand-woven cotton cloth). The most popular embroidery technique for dresses is a kind of *basma*, a stitch used throughout Central Asia to produce embroideries. Additionally, one finds simple satin stitches; cross-stitches are rarer. Embroidery is usually done in silk (which the women dye and twist themselves), although occasionally one finds paper threads, which naturally affect the quality of the overall look of the ornamentation.

The decorative motifs on dresses have much in common with the motifs on *suzanis*, *borpush* and *ruijos*. The most basic shared elements are straight lines called *ova*, with wavy lines called *kungra* beside them (these mark the boundaries of the decorations, so to speak). All sorts of geometric patterns involving squares,

diamonds, triangles, little circles, etc., feature in embroideries from the mountainous areas, much more prominently than in those from the plains. However, they are usually interwoven with floral motifs of the types already familiar to us from embroideries from the plains – rosettes, twisting stems, palmettes, almonds, pepper pods, shrubs, and branches.



DAVRI, NUREK, 20th CENTURY

Rosettes of many different sizes are the most common decorations found on dresses. The ornamentation within their circumferences varies. Usually the rosettes are arranged in two vertical lines, symmetrically

equidistant from a central axis, each consisting of 4–5 rosettes arranged within a continuous band or ribbon of decoration. Of course, each dress has its own, unique selection of rosettes.

One especially impressive type of dress has two large rosettes in front, 70–90 cm in diameter. In this case, there is no ornamental border along the hemline, but the sleeves are embroidered all over,

with decorative compositions of this sort can often be seen in Tajikabad District.

The dresses worn by women in Kulyab and the areas around it are customarily sewn with small rosettes, usually shaped like pinwheels. Their hemlines are not adorned with any decorations as a rule. In Karategin and Darvaz, however, where patterns with geometrical motifs predominate, the hemlines are never without a wide, ornate border that is stylistically close to the embroidery on the front part of the dress.

Another, very popular embroidery motif in the mountainous areas is *islimi* – vegetative shoots and stalks of various kinds, an essential component of all Tajik decorations. It consists of plant forms of all shapes and sorts, not mention embedded objects and zoomorphic elements. They affect the character of the pattern in different ways, sometimes rendering it dynamic, sometimes static, sometimes smoothly flowing.



SLEEVE DECORATION  
OF A WOMEN'S DRESS,  
NUREK, 20th CENTURY

RUMOL, KANIBADAM,  
20th CENTURY

with embellishments extending from the shoulder to the cuff, sewn in a color that chimes with the colors of the primary decorative scheme. This arrestingly bright embroidery manages to achieve an amazing grandeur of artistic conception, and conveys a sense of completeness. Sometimes it seems simply unbelievable that the embroideress was able to fit so many colors and ornamental forms onto a single dress. Moreover, it is all accomplished with exquisite taste and skill. Attractive dresses

## EMBROIDERY OF THE PLAINS AND MOUNTAIN REGIONS

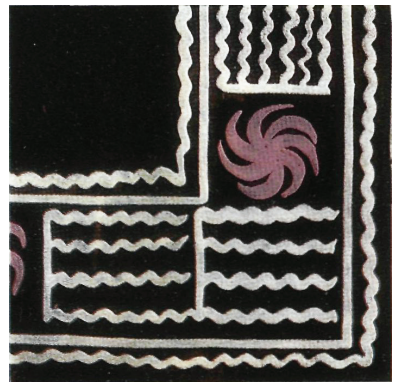
**Braid.** Braid is used widely in the embroidery of both the plains and mountain regions. In the northern districts of the republic it is called *zekhak*. It is an essential part of the costume of men, women and children, and of their headwear; it beautifies small everyday decorative objects. There are different techniques to produce braid. It can be done with a hook on a thin strip of fabric (1–6 cm) using twisted threads, embroidered in tambour stitch, or woven on a loom. In its finished form, braid is a strip of fabric with a delicate, ribbon-like pattern, dots and flecks of color, and a raised texture. Sometimes (in Kulyab and the Pamirs, for example) braid is embroidered in dense cross-stitch.

There are very many kinds of braid ornament. Its clear contours, sharp colors, and repetitions at regular intervals give it a geometrical character. It typically consists of simple (occasionally, more complex) geometrical figures. The shapes of everyday objects, animals and plants are also possible, but they too take on a geometrical look, evidently a result of the technique involved.

Braid ornament is unusually flexible: it easily incorporates new elements which combine

with ancient, traditional motifs in interesting ways.<sup>21</sup>

The colors of braid are bright, resonant and cheerful. Frequently we find traditional color combinations such as toxic green with crimson, orange with yellow and black, purple with pink. Black and white are used almost always to make a thin border running along the outer edge of the design.



RUMOL, URA-TYUBE, 20th CENTURY

RUMOL, KANIBADAM, 20th CENTURY

The coloristic effect of braid can only be fully appreciated once it is sewn to the textile. Braid, whether on a woman's dress or a man's robe and skullcap (usually around the collar, along the side of the robe, or as a band at the bottom of a skullcap), gives the piece an exceptional, artistic finish.

A thin strip saturated with strong color, trimming an article of costume, makes it look rich; in recent years it has become

21 A. K. Pisarchik, "On the National Applied Art of Tajikistan," *Iskusstvo tadzhikskogo naroda. Sbornik statei [The Art of the Tajik Nation. Collected Articles]*, vol. 2 (Dushanbe, 1960): 74.

increasingly common to add braid even to contemporary Western clothing. Embroideresses love braid everywhere in Tajikistan but it is particularly popular on pieces from the mountain regions.

**Rumols.** Embroidery plays a big role in men's sash belts. The sash belt is worn in every corner of Tajikistan, both on the plains and in the mountains. Every place has its own name for it. It is called *rumol* in the plains areas, *rumol miyon*

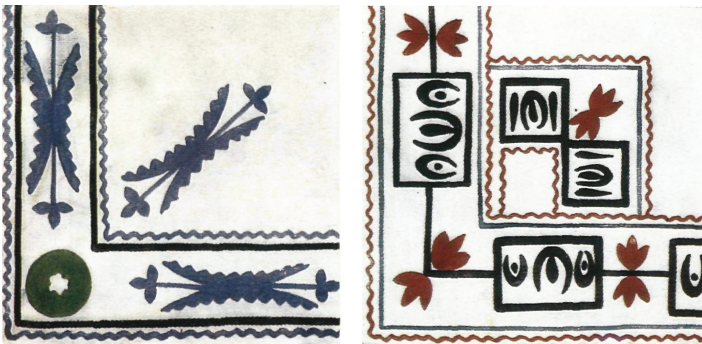
separate pattern elements are located in the corners. The border ornament is always enclosed on both sides by a pair of smaller, narrow borders. In addition, sometimes there is a parallel frieze of tiny floral elements.

Sash belts are usually executed in *basma* stitch or double-sided satin stitch. Generally, the pattern is composed of geometrical and vegetative motifs. That said, there can be epigraphic decorations (employing writing) and zoomorphic representations as well.

The geometrical motif of a small circle accompanied by dots, usually in a shape of a chain, is very popular on *rumols* from the plains areas. Half-circles and half-moons are also common. Various kinds of curling or twisting motifs are archaic in origin: *shokh* (ram's horns or tree branches) is evocative of Arabic writing<sup>22</sup>, as well as stylized animal footprints like *poi murghobi* "duck feet" and pictures symbolizing the female sexual organ.

The mor motif (a wriggling snake) can be seen very frequently on *rumols*. This design is rendered as a zigzag or wavy line, and is encountered in every type of Tajik decorative and applied art dating back many millennia.<sup>23</sup>

The floral ornamentation on *rumols* is not particularly diverse, but remarkable for its animated



RUMOL, LENINABAD,  
20th CENTURY

RUMOL, URA-TYUBE, 20th  
CENTURY

or *miyonband* in the mountainous areas, etc. Men wear these sashes from childhood. A *rumol* is folded diagonally in half, then twisted around the waist so that one of its corners hangs downwards. It is worn over the robe. This method of wearing a *rumol* as a twisted belt has dictated how the embroidery is positioned on it. It is concentrated in an embroidered border (10–20 cm wide) with a continuous decoration that runs along the edge of the (square-shaped) *rumol*. Meanwhile

22 Horn-like shapes in ornamentation are traditional for many nations including Kazakhs, Uzbeks, Kyrgyz, and people from the Altai Republic.

23 Ye. M. Peshchereva, *Pottery Art of Central Asia* (Moscow, 1959), 103.

motion. Blossoms and branches are especially popular.

The embroidered border on *rumols* usually incorporates separate, alternating designs. Although they have no connective elements they look like a single, harmonious ornament: it can be very delicate and flowing, or, on the contrary, rigid and angular, stressing its linearity.

All the elements making up the ornamentation on *rumols* are produced by means of very simple shapes, yet are depicted in such unique juxtapositions and rhythms that they sometimes give the impression of being a complex, original pattern. This is one of the most important qualities of folk art; and to a great extent the embroidery on *rumols* is exemplary of this. Vegetative ornamentation and the so-called *gazali* motif (the term relates to ghazal-style poetry), which is a stylized interpretation of Arabic script, are often found on *rumols* produced in the mountains (Kulyab group).

The color scheme of the embroidery on sash belts is somewhat restrained. The color and quality of the fabric itself can be of all sorts. Sometimes *atlas* silk with an *abr* (cloud-like) pattern is used. In that case the embroidery is usually executed in threads of one color only, most commonly black. In fact, black is used very often to decorate *rumols*. There is

no pattern that does not have some black in it. Monotonal embroidery usually works on the principle of contrast: thus, black thread on a white background, red on a black background, and purple on a yellow background.

In addition to floral or geometrical elements, one can see on *rumols* – more than on other kinds of Tajik embroidered pieces – images rooted in archaic notions about animals.



RUMOL, NUREK, 20th CENTURY

UREBCHA, GANCHI DISTRICT, LENINABAD PROVINCE, 19th CENTURY

For instance, on a *rumol* from Ura-Tyube with a bright orange background, there are embroidered curlicues with thick black contours, surrounded by black dots.

Such hook-shaped curls are found very often on pieces both from the plains and mountain regions. The motif is called *kushkorak* (curly ram's horns).

The explanation for such images featuring in the decoration of both

ancient and modern *rumols* is that, even recently, Tajiks harbored ideas that the ram possessed sacred healing powers. Tajiks regularly place the horns of argali mountain sheep on graves as an important memorial offering, while in mountain villages they fix them to the doors of houses to protect them from evil. According to folk beliefs, a *rumol* with such an embroidered image also serves to guard a man from the evil eye and disease.<sup>24</sup>



UREBCHA, URA-TYUBE,  
20th CENTURY



UREBCHA, PENJIKENT,  
20th CENTURY

All kinds of animals, or parts of their bodies, depicted in an extremely stylized way, are organically and masterfully woven into *rumols*' decorated borders. They include beautifully arched caterpillars grouped in a lively dance-circle; snakes, big and small (symbols of protection for the wearer); sequences of dainty *poi kaftarak* (bird tracks, most often of doves); and *koshi kaftarak* (dove's eyebrows). There are a few pattern

motifs that relate to human beings, such as *nokhunak* (fingernails), *chashmkho* (eyes), *kosh* (eyebrows), and *mizha* (eyelashes).

Elements known as “Takhir and Zukhra” are common: these are hook-shaped couplings linking individual motifs. The analogy here, according to embroideresses, is the close connection between the hearts of the two famous lovers.

Another set of motifs used to decorate *rumols* are those representing objects that people see around them: scissors, samovars, airplanes.

The elements comprising them are usually primitive from an artistic standpoint, and do not seem to deserve attention at first glance. But if we consider the significance invested in them by the embroideresses, we can understand once again the masterful ease with which objects that they have observed have been transformed into simple, stylized shapes.

Besides *rumols*, in olden times men wore a so-called *futa* – a piece of material 150–200 cm long and 50–60 cm wide. Men girded the *futa* around them, with one of its ends loosely hanging down on the side. There were passages of embroidery about 30–50 cm long at both ends. The character of the embroidery was lushly floral, bright, and highly detailed and variegated.

24 Ibid., 100.

**Urebcha.** The patterns embroidered on women's kerchiefs (called *urebcha* or *rumoli doka*) were composed in just the same way as on *rumols*. However, the ornaments had a number of specific features that differentiated them from the pieces worn by men. Women's kerchiefs made of white muslin (*doka*), which has a light, delicate, almost airy texture, were found mainly in the plains areas of Tajikistan, particularly Ura-Tyube, Isfara, Kanibadam and Leninabad. They are usually embellished with an abundance of embroidery, incorporating rich colors and all sorts of ornamental shapes. Their borders are also very neat and graceful, although sometimes overloaded with a lot of separate figures. It might seem that the widespread use of bright, deep hues, including black on a white background, would make the decoration appear too crudely contrasting and harsh. But in actuality the overall color schemes are exceptionally refined thanks to the skillfully devised lacy patterns.

Some embroidery decorations on *urebchas* are notably archaic. The motifs collectively known as *kiyomat nuksa* ("infernal embroidery") are of ancient origin. There are many different interpretations of them. Each artisan approaches them in her own way, introducing her own individual understanding of this difficult, "infernal" type

of embroidery. A common denominator here is the form of the composition itself: the border is almost always divided up into equal square sections, which are then filled with a variety of pattern elements in asymmetrical, agitated arrangements. Often they look something like Arabic letters, half-moon shapes, rams' horns, bird silhouettes, snakes, or simply circles and dots of many



RUIJO, KANIBADAM, 20th CENTURY

different sizes. Floral motifs are secondary here, used only to complement them.

The ornament symbolizing the female sexual organ is interesting, and rendered in numerous ways; frequently it is represented as a floral pattern, rich and bright. *Urebcha* embroidery known as *tillo nuksa* (gold embroidery) is

quite unique, in that it consists of geometrical decoration that imitates goldwork embroidery, complete with occasional gaps left between the silken stitches so that the ground fabric peeps through, intensifying the play of colors. The design leaves an impression as rich as that produced by gold threads.

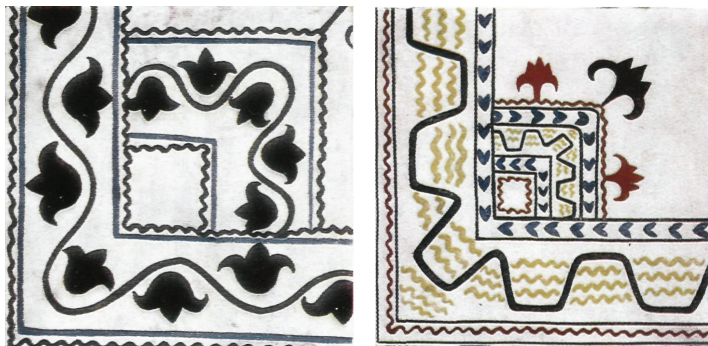
The ornaments mentioned above, surviving into our times over the course of many centuries, are favorites among embroideresses to this day. Traditional as they are,

beyond its borders. They are worn by men and young women, on ordinary days and for celebrations, both with national costume and modern Western clothes. And while it may be true that certain kinds of folk embroideries are on the way to becoming obsolete, the popularity of skullcaps, on the contrary, has remained high.

As with all categories of Tajik embroidery, there are many types of skullcaps, with different shapes and embroidered decorations depending on the district.

Until very recently it was still possible to tell where a person was from by his skullcap. However, in recent years all the types of skullcaps associated with the plains Tajiks have become widespread throughout Tajikistan and assumed the status of the national headgear.

The black-and-white men's skullcaps called *chusti* (after the small city of Chust in the Ferghana Valley in Uzbekistan) are very popular everywhere. They are embroidered in white silk or mouliné on a black background. The embroidery design on such headwear is a traditional one: a *bodom* (almond) or *kalamfur* (pepper pod) placed in each of the four segments of the skullcap. These four separate, white, almond-shaped decorations are positioned in a central field surrounded by an arch-like ornament, also sewn



UREBCHA, GANCHI  
DISTRICT, LENINABAD  
PROVINCE, 20th CENTURY

UREBCHA, GANCHI  
DISTRICT, LENINABAD  
PROVINCE, 20th CENTURY

nevertheless they are continually being enriched with new details in their execution. Many ancient motifs lost their meaning long ago as far as the artisans are concerned, who use them exclusively for their aesthetic qualities, bringing out the beauty of every detail and line of the pattern.

**Skullcaps.** Skullcaps are well-known not only throughout the Republic of Tajikistan but far

in white thread, along the bottom edge of the cap. Caps of this type are square and stiff, with a thin lining. Each of the segments is textured with *piltas*<sup>25</sup>, which are stitched pointing towards the crown. Narrow piping made of black velvet or silk *atlas* provides a decorative finish. The *chusti* skullcap is very elegant with its remarkably fine, delicate embroidery. At first sight all these skullcaps may look similar to one another, but in fact the great variety of interior embellishments of their basic decorative element, the almond, make them surprisingly different. The outline of the *bodom* is also rendered in a variety of ways. It can be gracefully elongated (*daroznuská* “long”) or slightly rounded and compact (*mushnuksa* “mouse-shaped”).

Embroideresses fill all of these designs with a multitude of details, all of which have their own traditional names (such as eyelashes, eyebrows, moustache, birth mark), and they combine them in interesting ways to make beautiful ornamental compositions.

Fancy four-cornered skullcaps with flat tops and bright floral patterns are very popular among women.

They call them *iroki*. They embroidered them in a stitch rather like a Russian cross; there are colorful bouquets of flowers in

each of the four segments of the crown, while the ground fabric is completely sewn over using white or green thread. The decoration stretches from the main field of the skullcap down to the bottom, which is edged in thin velvet braid. This kind of skullcap became popular many years ago and now is worn everywhere. It is especially common among women in cities, who successfully combine it with Western-style dresses. The skullcaps of this type exhibiting the most artistry on the



territory of Tajikistan are those from Leninabad and Ura-Tyube. On one such example, four festive bouquets are symmetrically arranged around the crown and densely fill the field with bright, saturated colors. Rich, burgundy-red roses are set off by the delicate light and dark blues, or pinky-purple color, of little flowers placed amidst dense vegetation of many hues. A gentle mixture of

*PUPAK*, URA-TYUBE, 20th CENTURY

*PUPAK*, URA-TYUBE, 20th CENTURY

*PESHI KURTA*, KARATEGIN, 20th CENTURY

<sup>25</sup> Twisted strips of paper, inserted between the fabric and lining using a knitting needle.

light and shade gives the pattern depth and articulation.

Colorful *iroki* skullcaps embroidered in satin stitch are also interesting. They come in two forms: four-cornered, or round (either conical or flat-topped). In the case of the former there is a smooth transition from the crown to the bottom enlivened by bright colorful ornament embroidered in satin stitch. The patterns can be different. Some are unbounded, free-form decorations, placed in

of this type of skullcap accounts for its popularity, particularly among people in the mountains.

In the Pamirs one finds round, flat-topped skullcaps having wide bands decorated with multicolored braid – sometimes a double braid. The number of different possible color and pattern variations is rather large.

The Pamir hats adorned with free-form geometrical patterns are particularly striking. As a rule,



SHEROZ, LENINABAD,  
20th CENTURY

SHEROZ, LENINABAD,  
20th CENTURY

separate sections around the hat. Here the design elements and shapes used in the composition are very simple: all sorts of closed figures, circles, rhombuses, twigs, buds, ovals and flowers, depicted in innumerable color variations. Narrow braid with a delicate, polychromatic design is sewn around the bottom of the skullcap. The exceptional, colorful brilliance

the motifs here are lattice-like, cruciform or diamond-shaped; the color combinations are remarkably sophisticated.

Children's skullcaps can be found in almost any corner of Tajikistan. They are embroidered in satin stitch, using colorful silk thread, on dark blue, burgundy, brown or green velvet. The decorations

are floral and highly stylized. Embroidery using colored beads and *pulakchas* (sequins) is also characteristic of children's skullcaps; the dark velvet background more effectively brings out the beads' glitter. There is an astonishing abundance of both ancient and modern motifs employed in the embroidered decorations on skullcaps. The ethnographer A. K. Pisharchik, analyzing the embroidery on the skullcaps she collected on her expeditions, writes: "We managed to collect more than 200 examples of ornaments, among which were ancient flower designs (for example, willow leaves, and the large leaf called *shobarg*). However, many of the designs were new, with exceedingly interesting names and shapes, representational but highly stylized. Examples are the motifs called 'tank,' 'the globe,' 'bicycle,' 'gramophone,' and others."<sup>26</sup>

Finally, there is the famous gold-embroidered skullcap<sup>27</sup>. It is native to Bukhara. The old, Bukharan skullcaps, densely embroidered on dark velvet, their stitches protruding in relief from the surface of the ground fabric, are extraordinarily beautiful. Their large yet graceful goldwork patterns are distinguished by the precision of the designs and the richness of their decorative elements. The gold-embroidered skull-caps made by the old masters are interesting.

Round or flat-topped, they are made without linings or braid, yet the patterns on the crowns are embroidered so densely that no light at all shows through them. Often gold and silver are used side-by-side, creating a brightly glittering surface relief, enlivened here and there with colorful dots of sequins (*pulakchas*).

The production of gold-embroidered objects goes on today in the Republic of Tajikistan, applying and continuing the tradition of ancient Tajik embroidery.



Mainly they are produced by the Dilorom factory in Dushanbe.

The variety of Tajik embroidery is inexhaustible, and its quality as decorative art is of the highest level.

Notwithstanding specific local characteristics, many common elements can be observed in Tajik embroidery that unite it in a single artistic whole possessing its own unique, defining features. One of these is color. At times, its bold and

MAN'S SKULLCAP (*IRO-KI*), LENINABAD, EARLY 20th CENTURY

MAN'S SKULLCAP (*IRO-KI*), LENINABAD, 20th CENTURY

<sup>26</sup> Pisarchik, "On the National Applied Art of Tajikistan," 77.

<sup>27</sup> Peshchereva, "Bukharan Gold Embroiderers."

lavish assortment of colors pushes the color scheme of embroidered pieces to maximum intensity. The colors in Tajik embroideries are always wrestling, contending



SUZANI, KANIBADAM,  
19th CENTURY

28 Peshchereva, *Pottery Art of Central Asia; Bobrinskii, On Certain Symbols.*

29 Belinskaya, *Decorative Art of the Mountainous Region of Tajikistan*; A. K. Pisarchik, M. G. Khamidzhanova, “Decorative Products Made from Pieces of Fabric (*Kurama* or *Kurok*),” *Tajiki Karategina i Darvaza [The Tajiks of Karategin and Darvaz]* (Dushanbe, 1970): 203–224.

with one another, but never create the feeling that they are shrilly clashing. Favorite colors are red, shocking pink and green. These are effectively contrasted with yellow, lilac, dark blue and black colors. The chromatic combinations frequently match the reality of Central Asia’s colorful natural world, making every embroidery feel true-to-life.

The planar, decorative character of the embroidered patterns is achieved in large part by the almost excessive use of color, free

of nuance or subtle transitions. The compositions of the decorations are basically symmetrical, and demonstrating much virtuosity in the way their components are placed. For all their differences, embroidery patterns incorporate the same set of themes and motifs, and despite their wide variety they share characteristic features: for example, medallions with ornaments extending off them, silhouettes of almonds or cucumbers, trefoils, dots, zigzag-shaped stalks and twigs. The profound connection of Tajik embroidery with the everyday life of the people gives its themes a wholly natural air; meanwhile, the freedom with which the embroidery is executed makes it a joy to look at. Its decoration always smacks of authenticity, filled with images taken from real life; it is closely linked to folklore and mythology. Emblems and symbols<sup>28</sup> are widely used in the decorative motifs of embroidery – something it has in common with other types of applied art<sup>29</sup>. Such elements play an important role in Tajik patterns (for instance, *tumorcha* “amulet,” *oftob* “sun,” *morak* “snake,” *sitora* “star,” *mihrab* “niche,” and *shokh* “ram or goat horns”). Integrated organically into the design, lately they appear more and more frequently beside new motifs such as bowls, teapots (symbols of hospitality) and doves (symbols of peace).

Embroideries embody the Tajik people's conceptions about the world around them, legible in the semantics of their decorations. Practically every ornamental component carries a meaning. The plant and animal kingdoms are especially well reflected (the latter usually being represented in purely plant-like forms. Researchers attribute the popularity of this way of rendering the animal kingdom to the fact that fewer canonical rules developed about how animal shapes should be depicted)<sup>30</sup>. The embroidery of the Tajiks is a folk craft, closely associated with its decorative and applied art. Despite its uniqueness and originality, parallels can be found between some of the details within its overall decorative scheme and the art of other nations, particularly Uzbeks, Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, Bashkirs and Turkmen.

## EMBROIDERY OF THE PAMIRS AND NEIGHBORING DISTRICTS

**Ruband.** The embroidery of the districts neighboring the Pamirs, and in the Pamirs themselves, is amazing for the sheer abundance of its decorative forms. It is primarily used to embellish clothing:<sup>31</sup> men's and women's shirts (around the collar and vertical neck-opening), women's headbands (sarbandak), brides' facial veils

(*ruband*), and men's and women's belts (*kamarband*, *takband*). The embroidery from these districts stands out for individuality of its decorative style, which tends to favor geometrical shapes.

Facial veils for women, called *rubands*, worn solely for weddings, deserve special consideration. They have often attracted the attention of researchers due to their exceptionally bright, festive colors and interesting decorative motifs.<sup>32</sup> *Rubands* are one of the most ancient items of clothing worn by Tajik women from the mountains. (They are no longer used, however, and are found today only in museums.)

A *ruband* is a small rectangular or square piece of cotton material (75 x 75 cm or 90 x 75 cm) densely covered in embroidered decorations. In its top part at eye level there is a little rectangular mesh to look out of, made with white silk thread. Colorful tasseled straps are sewn to the two top corners to tie the *ruband* to the head (usually this covering is worn directly over a hat). All four sides are edged with dark braid made of plaited threads.

Generally, the embroidery is done using silk thread in a dense satin stitch, creating a smooth shiny surface that further emphasizes the flatness of the pattern. Remarkably, the technique

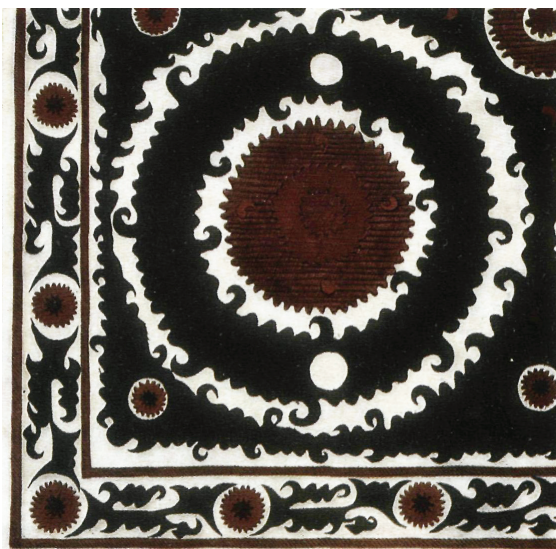
30 Belinskaya, *Decorative Art of the Mountainous Region of Tajikistan*, 47.

31 M. S. Andreyev, *Tajiks of the Khuf Valley*, vol. 2 (Stalinabad, 1958), 243–398.

32 N. A. Kislyakov, "Facial Wedding Veils of the Tajiks," *Sbornik MAE [Journal of the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography]*, vol. 15 (Leningrad, 1953); A. A. Bobrinskii, *Ornament of the Mountain Tajiks of Darvaz (Mountainous Bukhara)* (Moscow, 1906), 17; A. A. Semyonov, *Ethnographic Studies of the Zaravshan Mountains of Karategin and Darvaz* (Moscow, 1903), 30; M. S. Andreyev, *Ornament of the Mountain Tajiks and Kyrgyz of the Pamirs* (Tashkent, 1928), 17.

requires a minimum amount of thread: practically none is visible on the reverse side of the fabric.

The composition of the decoration on a *ruband* is dictated entirely by the rectangular or square shape of the piece itself. The accent is on a pattern of rectangles, one inside the other; the middle



SUZANI, SAMARKAND  
SCHOOL OF EMBROIDERY,  
URA-TYUBE, 19th  
CENTURY

one is elongated lengthwise and divided into horizontal lines (the mesh for the eyes being in the highest one). The variety of ornamental motifs on *rubands* is not particularly large. Basically, they consist of stylized trees, as well as many different kinds of geometrical shapes like triangles and diamonds, or geometricized flowers, birds and rosettes.

Some of the most interesting decorative elements on these embroideries are *khurus* “rooster” and *tovus* “peacock.” They come in a variety of shapes and interpretations, but genuinely look like the birds in question. The curved tail, raised high, sometimes appears as a lush, exquisite bouquet teeming with tiny birds. The neck is hook-shaped too, ending in a little head in the shape of a graceful twig, representing its beak and wattles. The entire outline is indented with a lot of little crenellations, emphasizing its geometricized contours, and giving the total figure a festive, stylish look.

Regardless of the general similarities, the “roosters” on every *ruband* are shaped differently. Some are slender, stretched out, on elongated legs; others are squat and heavy. Sometimes they are tranquil, frozen in place; at other times they are agitated with disheveled cockscombs and tails. “Roosters” are always embroidered in red thread. Many researchers have pointed out that the use of red here is not random: it symbolizes fire, which wards off danger and frightens evil forces away from the bride.<sup>33</sup> Red is always the principal, dominant color on *rubands*: all sorts of flowers, shrubs and trees are also colored red. It is precisely the red color that makes the embroidery celebratory, very rich and cheerful. In their emotional

33 G. V. Grigor'ev, “Tus-tupi,” *Zhurnal “Isskustvo”* [“Art” Magazine], no. 1 (Moscow, 1937).

register altogether *rubands* are very reminiscent of certain Russian and Ukrainian embroideries where red also dominates.<sup>34</sup> Separate details of the decoration are embroidered with differently colored threads – purple, yellow, green, dark blue – which truly make the pattern as a whole come alive. “Roosters” on a *ruband* are usually situated in the central rectangle in pairs, one facing the other (more rarely, one behind the other) with a tree between them. They are also placed along the edge of the cloth, all facing in one direction, where they form a wide ornamental border (the width of the border is different in every *ruband*). Inserted between the birds along the border are triangles with one serrated side, or the silhouettes of tiny birds. Triangles of this kind call to mind the little Muslim amulets (*tumorcha*) which are used to ward off evil. Apparently here too, on embroideries, they possess the same magical character. Similar amulet motifs (*tumors*) are found frequently as decorations in the plains regions, especially on *suzanis* and *borpush*.

Forms which are referred to as rosettes or flowers of various colors and shapes hold an important place in the ornamentation of *rubands*.

Actually, they look like the patterns in a kaleidoscope: opulent and finely detailed, while simultaneously clear-cut and geometric.

The elegant embroidery decorations of *rubands*, richly adorned with representational images, are interesting items of folk art. The eminent ethnographer N. A. Kislyakov noted, “As far as we know, neither among the nomadic or semi-nomadic peoples of the past, nor among the sedentary population of Central Asia, Iran and Afghanistan, where women wore the *paranja* veil or chador,



was there ever in the distant past (nor is there now) such a special, richly decorated facial wedding veil as the *ruband* of the mountain Tajiks.”<sup>35</sup>

**Clothing.** The motifs embroidered on *rubands* are often repeated in the ornamentation on the collars of women’s shirts. The decoration usually goes around the whole collar and passes down the long neck-opening in front. The same

OYNADON, GANCHI DISTRICT, LENINABAD PROVINCE, 20th CENTURY

34 I. Rabotnova, N. Koralek, *National Embroidery of the RSFSR [Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic]* (Moscow, 1959), 4.

35 Kislyakov, “Facial Wedding Veils,” 311.

birds (“roosters”) are depicted, with triangles (*tumorcha*) inserted between them.

A broad embroidered border on a white dress, generally sewn from a fabric like *karbos*, gives the long, wide, and rather formless garment an unexpectedly festive, colorful appearance. Embroidery is used on men’s robes only to adorn the collar: it is a modest decoration, executed in simple stitches, with motifs such as “partridge tracks,” “wolf tracks,” and “breast of an eagle.”<sup>36</sup> The technique of embroidering in cross-stitch has gained popularity in the Pamirs and neighboring districts.<sup>37</sup> It is used principally to sew braid on skullcaps and on the hem of women’s shalwar pants, and to embroider men’s belts (*kamarband*) and women’s headbands that are 15–20 cm wide. Sometimes a knife in a scabbard is sewn onto the belt using the same embroidery as employed on the belt itself.

The patterns on all these items consists wholly of floral elements – mainly flower pistils and twisting shoots. Due to the embroidery technique itself the ornaments turn out geometrical, and their compositional arrangement is very precise and clear. These embroideries are distinguished by their deep, rich color scheme. Much of the field is green, dark blue and purple; then, here and there, there are flashes of yellow,

pink, white and light blue where bright flower pistils emerge out of the background.

The color tones and decorative imagery of these embroideries are redolent of many embroidered pieces produced by the plains Tajiks.

Contemporary Tajik embroidery continues and develops the traditions from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. For the most part, the people have kept making only those pieces which are still closely linked to their traditional way of life and national customs. Thus, many embroideries have fallen out of use (such as the *zardevor* and *ruband*).

Because of its high artistic and aesthetic quality, folk embroidery is used with great success in the production in modern-day interior furnishing and to decorate clothing. There are a number of enterprises in the republic that are successfully making use of traditional motifs from folk embroidery. Some of them, even though they have not worked for long, have already become popular both in Tajikistan and far beyond its borders. One of them is Leninabad Sholkokombinat [Silk Factory]. The fancy fabrics that it manufactures are suffused with the rich colors of folk embroidery; motifs such as the tulip, “night beauty,” cock’s comb,” and

36 Andreyev, *Ornament of the Mountain Tajiks and Kyrgyz of the Pamirs*, 15.

37 Meshed cotton is not used in such cases. The cross-stitch count is done directly by counting the threads of the backing fabric.

rosettes made up of concentric circles are employed in new, original variations.

The areas where the art of Tajik embroidery is used are expanding every day. The professional art field in Tajikistan has been enriched in recent years by works incorporating the richness of the colors and decoration of this national folk art. It can be observed in large-scale theater set designs, in all branches of decorative and applied art, and even in formal easel painting. It is still early days to know what the interrelations will be between folk art and professional modern art in Tajikistan. But it is a pressing question for all Soviet art, which to some extent can only be resolved by providing creative workers with a serious and comprehensive introduction to all branches of folk art and a correct theoretical orientation.

The materials published in this book are mainly examples of embroidery from the late 19th and early 20th centuries, from the storage of the ethnographic section of the Ahmad Donish Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of the Tajik SSR; also from the storage of museums in Dushanbe, Leninabad, Penjikent and Samarkand; and also based on sketches done by the author directly during research expeditions around Tajikistan and

in parts of Uzbekistan where Tajik populations are living.<sup>38</sup>

The sketches of embroideries were done from nature, that is to say right in the interior setting where the piece in question belonged, against the background of all the room's traditional furnishings. Of course that context changes our impression of artworks of interest to us. This approach to collecting visual material about folk embroidery is the right one, in our opinion, since it makes it possible to appreciate subtler details specific to the piece, to feel all the nuances of the embroidery's color and tone, and to capture all that on paper more accurately.

While collecting so-called field material, much attention was paid not only to large decorative embroideries but also to the smallest ones decorating clothes and everyday objects. In the subsequent analysis of the material collected, the small embroideries played an important role in elucidating the specific local artistic hallmarks of each of the embroidery art centers; it was these embroidery pieces, more than the large ones, that retained their characteristic, purely local features.

This book focuses mainly on embroidered artifacts collected in Tajikistan's largest artistic centers and native to those districts. Some of these centers are represented by

38 The author participated in 10 expeditions organized by the art history section of the Donish Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of the Tajik SSR.

comparatively few objects; there were places which our expeditions did not manage to survey. But even if the material is not one hundred percent complete, all the examples of embroidery presented in the book reflect the main and most characteristic artistic features of Tajik folk embroidery and offer a very comprehensive view of it. The book should be of interest for the newness of its subject matter, and because it goes some way towards filling gaps in familiarizing a wider readership with Tajik folk art.

The author expresses her gratitude to Doctor of Art History N. Kh. Nurjanov, Candidate of Art History N. A. Belinskaya, and Candidate of Historical Sciences N. N. Yershov for their academic supervision while working on this book.

# ILLUSTRATIONS



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9 *SUZANI*  
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10 *SUZANI*  
BUKHARA  
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11 *SUZANI*  
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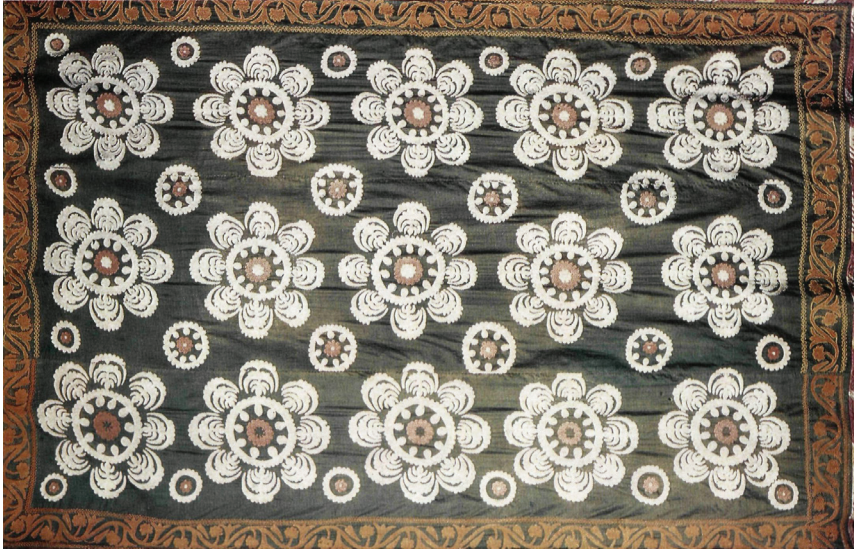
12 *SUZANI*  
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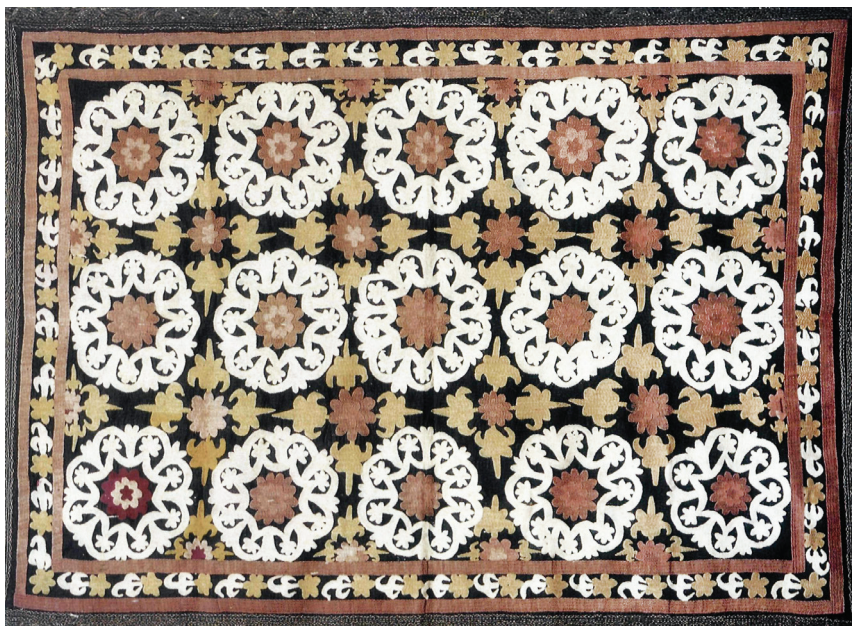
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21 *SUZANI*  
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23 *RUIJO*  
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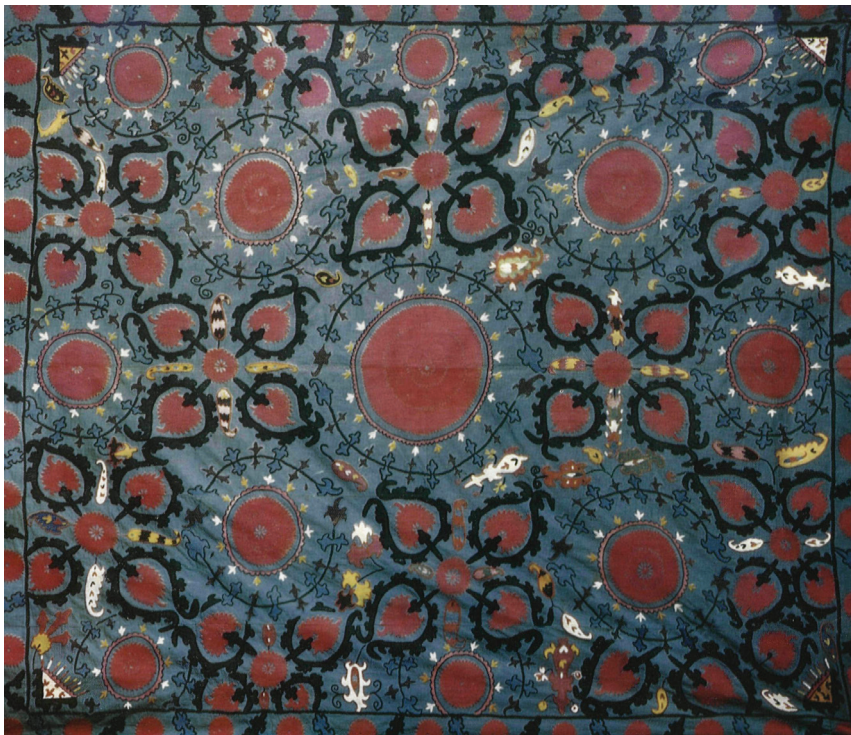
24 *RUIJO*  
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25 *RUIJO*  
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26 SUZANI  
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28 SHOTOKPUSH  
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29 BOLINPUSH  
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30 JOYNAMOZ  
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31 *SHOTOKPUSH*  
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32 *SHOTOKPUSH*  
URA-TYUBE  
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33 JOYNAMOZ  
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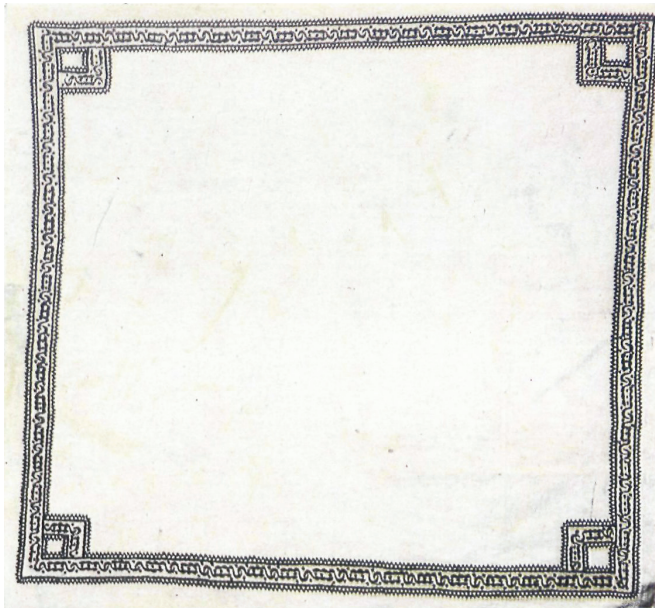
34 *ZARDEVOR*  
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35 *GOVORAPUSH*  
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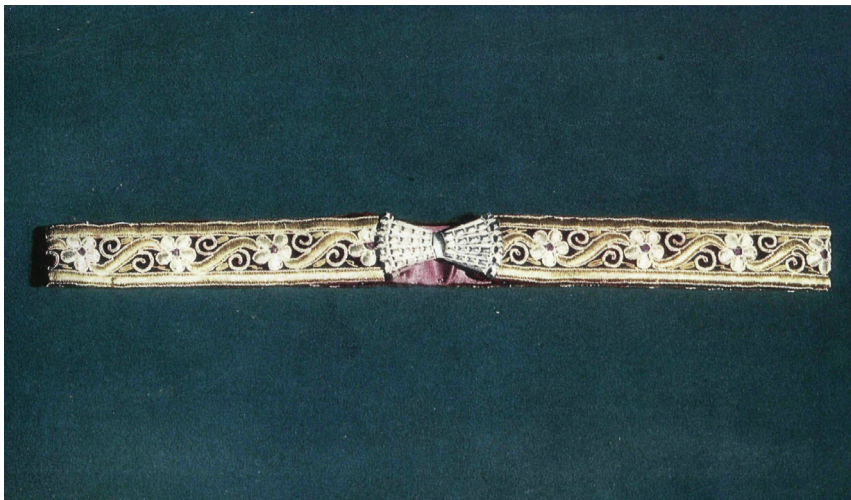
36 RUMOL  
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37 RUMOL  
BUKHARA  
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38 WOMEN'S BELT  
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39, 40 *OYNAKHALTA*  
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41 *KITOBMONAK*  
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42 RUMOL  
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48-52 *SHEROZ*  
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53 MEN'S SKULLCAP  
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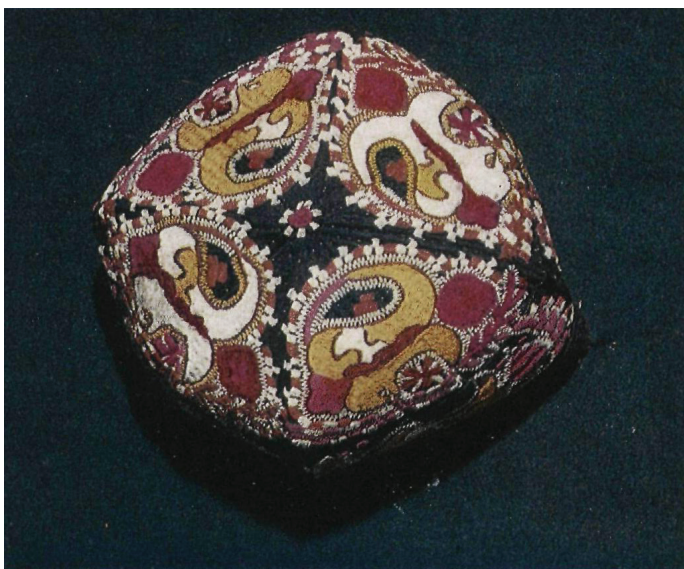
54 WOMEN'S SKULLCAP  
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55 WOMEN'S SKULLCAP  
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56 MEN'S SKULLCAP  
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57 *RUBAND*  
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58 *RUBAND*  
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59 *RUBAND*  
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60 WOMEN'S DRESS  
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61 WOMEN'S DRESS  
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62 WOMEN'S DRESS  
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63 WOMEN'S DRESS  
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65 WOMEN'S DRESS  
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67 WOMEN'S DRESS  
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68 MEN'S ROBE  
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69 MEN'S ROBE  
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70 WOMEN'S DRESS  
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73 WOMEN'S DRESS  
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74 WOMEN'S DRESS  
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75 WOMEN'S DRESS  
NUSHOR VILLAGE  
GARM DISTRICT  
20TH CENTURY





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