

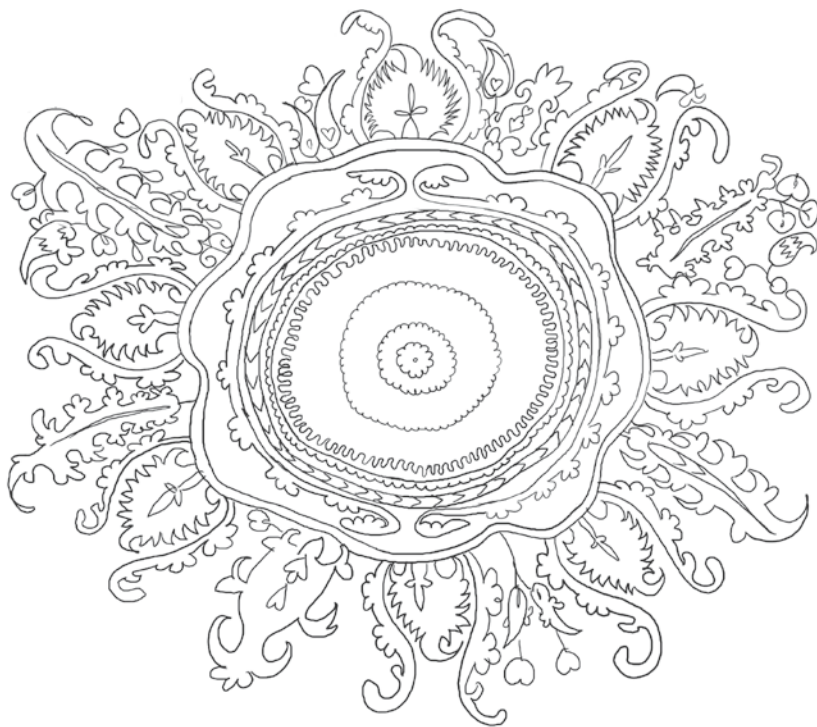


SUZANI

CENTRAL ASIAN DECORATIVE EMBROIDERY

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR CENTRAL ASIAN STUDIES

SAMARKAND STATE UNITED HISTORICAL-ARCHITECTURAL
AND ART MUSEUM



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CENTRAL ASIAN DECORATIVE EMBROIDERY

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PREFACE

I started studying suzani-type embroideries in 1934 when I got a job at the Samarkand Museum (now the Samarkand State United historical-Architectural and Artistic Museum Culture Preserve)¹. In the period under consideration this sector of the Central Asian folk art remained practically unexplored; no literature was available. Museum's directorate at the head of I.A. Sukharev who acted as deputy scientific director engaged me with exploring a large collection of embroideries that included undocumented specimens: identify embroideries by place and time, uncover their role in everyday life and prepare them for a museum exposition and scientific purposes, as well as replenish them with new specimens. The work lasted till 1946. Over this same time a collection rose manifold, and went on increasing, largely thanks to efforts of M.F. Kaplunova who ran Museum's holdings. Suzani was described by regions of their production, separate specimens put into museum's exposition, an exhibition was arranged to reflect a history of Samarkand suzani from the mid-19th century to the October revolution.

Besides Samarkand suzani with adjacent rural district, I succeeded in exploring embroideries of Urgut, Chelek (Samarkand region), Bukhara and some areas of Bukhara region (mainly Vabkent); in the 1920s I happened to watch embroideries Ura-Tube in everyday life, true, of later period: information about Ura-Tube embroideries was obtained from old local antiquarians.

Owing to the processing of museum collections, a work was done to study Taskent suzani by M.A. Bikzhanova at the Art Museum of the Uzbek SSR (now the State Art Museum of Uzbekistan) and A.K. Pisarchik at the Art Museum of the Uzbek SSR and the Samarkand Museum.

Soon after my work tended toward a historical research. Information accumulated made it possible to start studying suzani from historical-ethnographic point of view and cover issues of their manufacture. In 1937 the first publication on the subject appeared²; later on a monograph on Samarkand suzani was written. However, the Samarkand Museum had no opportunity to publish it. Meanwhile, the Art Museum of the Uzbek SSR showed interest in the monograph, and I was suggested to prepare the monograph for publication. Later 1940, the monograph was discussed and approved by the academic council of the art Museum and caused debates on separate questions. However, the Great Patriotic War made it no possible to publish the monograph, and the manuscript was shelved for nearly 40 years. Scores of researchers familiarized themselves with the manuscript, particularly, G.L. Chepelevetskaya who referred to this

¹ Further in the text—Samarkand Museum

work when writing her book¹ and cited my scientific description of embroideries from the collection of the Samarkand Museum. Afterwards I left Samarkand and started working over other questions notwithstanding, suzani was, nevertheless, studied; new facts and field material accumulated; embroidery collections from different museums explored. In the 1950s, the Institute of Art History of the Uzbek SSR (now the Khamza Scientific-Research Institute of Art Criticism) made an attempt to create a collective work on folk art of the Soviet period, and I took part in the work, in particular, I wrote a part "Embroidery"², as well as an appropriate part in a separately issued album³.

When preparing my work for publication, I made certain that despite scant works of other researchers, the monograph has not lost its scientific importance mainly thanks to inimitable ethnographic materials having been revealed in the earlier years. Information provided by the generation that lived in the second half of the 19th century enabled me using an ethnographic method (solely effective in the given case) to study the Samarkand suzani from the mid-19th century to the Revolution (no earlier, reliably dated specimens are available).

The Samarkand material helped uncover directions and dynamics of evolution that added a historical trend to the research, made it possible to understand a genesis of this art, reveal its significance for people's life. Note that a general concept of the work has not become obsolete even nowadays: facts I dispose of after 1940, equally with published and unpublished works of other researchers, reaffirmed conclusions I came to in the period that I wrote my first article, and later an initial variant of the monograph. However, much effort was still required to finalize the work and complete its editing.

The present text has primarily been compiled anew, an introductory chapter presented in another wording; the second part of the book came into being — an essay on some other local types of Central Asian suzani.

O.A. Sukhareva
Moscow, 1982

¹ Sukhareva, 1937

² Chepelevetskaya, 1961

³ Folk Decorative Art, 1954



INTRODUCTION

Unusually bright, rich, different-styled art of Central Asian decorative embroidery is one of prominent manifestations of the artistic culture of nations of this region.

Embroidery fancywork is one of the most ancient ways of cloths' decoration; it requires neither machinery tools nor complex technical methods and should have forerun patterned weaving—the creation of patterns using the system of weaving of multicolored threads of the basis and weft¹. However, patterned weaving was not typical for Central Asia though it had been applied here in the ancient times² and existed yet at the end of the 18th century³.

Later on, it became absolutely out of use. Embroidery fancywork, for its part, has kept its position in folk domestic life up to nowadays and has been subdivided into several independent branches. Embroidery was used to decorate dresses and headdresses, small domestic things and some parts of horse dresses; it was also used to decorate dwellings.

Of other branches of embroidery art in several Central Asian regions with the Tajik and Uzbek population, there was distinguished the making of large decorative embroideries—panels—that became famous in Russia and Europe under the name of “suzani”. The name of “suzane” that is so spread in literature references is wrong. Given that the term of “suzani” (needlework, as “suzan” is the Tajik for needle) in Samarkand and some other locations was applied to designate just one kind of embroideries, it is used in the text advantageously in this narrow meaning while the conditional term of “large decorative embroidery” is used as a summarizing one.

1. THE HISTORY OF STUDY OF CENTRAL ASIAN DECORATIVE EMBROIDERY

In suzani we see one of those “most original, root manifestations of art and style” that was seen by V.V. Stasov in “Central Asian woven and embroidered items”⁴. But in contrast to Central Asian carpets, which suzani-type embroidery is similar with in terms of either dimensions or artistic dignities or the importance in the old folk domestic life, suzani started drawing researchers' attention rather late. They were only mentioned in pre-Revolution references. While Central Asian carpets were represented in a luxurious album edition by A.A. Bogolyubov⁵, described in a review of above⁶ and with them-devoted considerable references⁷, suzani works were not mentioned; their images were not shown even in such special edition as the album by N.E. Simakov⁸. No references about suzani appeared in abroad at the time. Only an exhibition of a collection of Oriental arts held in Stockholm at the end of the 19th century consisted, apart from other things, of suzani works (Bukhara and Nuratin) that later on were mentioned while some specimens were represented in the exhibition-related reference book issued by F. Martins⁹.

¹ Folk Decorative Art, 1955

² Supposedly, the ornamentation of dresses depicted on ancient terracotta statuettes and wall paintings dating back to the 6th–7th centuries was embroidered

³ Belenitskiy, Bentovich, 1961; Belenitskiy, Bentovich, Livshiz, 1963

⁴ Efremov, 1950, p. 26

⁵ Stasov, 1894, p. 695–702

⁶ Bogolyubov, 1908; 1909

⁷ Veselovskiy, 1912, Semenov, 1911

⁸ Felkerzam, 1914, Dudin, 1928, Moscow, 1970, etc.

⁹ Simakov, 1883

Nevertheless, suzani specimens had been collected in either Russia or European countries, in particular, England and Germany since the end of the 19th century; very numerous compositions were collected in Russian and Central Asian museums as time went. Embroidery fancywork specimens were collected by private individuals as well. There had existed relatively good collections in St-Petersburg and the oldest Central Asian museums by the beginning of Soviet era; however, the specimens had no, as a rule, even most primitive passport; the origin of suzani and their role in the domestic life of Central Asian nations remained quite unknown.

As the museum business developed after the Revolution, the collections of suzani were supplemented and studied in accordance with the plan; the collections saw appearance of a relatively large number of certified specimens.

In the postwar period, the number of museums having collections of suzani increased at the expense of either new state-run museums or numerous provincial and district ones.

Currently, Russia is of possession of fine collections of suzani-type embroideries kept in Sankt-Petersburg (The Anthropology and Ethnography Museum of the Russian Academy of Sciences; The State Hermitage) and Moscow (The State Museum of Arts of Oriental Nations; The State Historical Museum, The Museum of Folk Arts). The State Museum of History of Uzbekistan and especially the State Museum of Arts of Uzbekistan have not bad collections; several valuable specimens of old suzani were acquired by the Museum of Applied Arts of Uzbekistan. There is a large collection in the Museum of Samarkand, and there are interesting specimens in district—Bukhara and Fergana – museums. In Tajikistan, there are collections of embroideries at the Museum of Ethnography of the Academy of Sciences of Tajikistan, the Historical Regional Studies after K. Bekhzad, the Museum of Arts of Tajikistan, and the Historical Regional Museum of Khudjand (Khodjent).

After being collected for many years, Central Asian suzani works acquired certain popularity and became known among either specialists or amateurs. Early summarizing works devoted to Central Asian arts, which appeared just in the Soviet period, regarded suzani as a special branch. In his work “Central Asian Arts” (1927), B.P. Denike devoted only one page to embroidery; nevertheless, the page was voluminous—it called different kinds of embroideries (suzani, golden needling, the embroidery by mountainous Tajiks); decorative embroideries are shown in local options, i.e. in accordance with regions of origin; and their peculiar nature is appraised primarily in correspondence with the truth. Several words, frankly speaking, incorrect were told about the role of embroideries in domestic life. In his book under the same name, B.V. Weimarn¹ devoted only paragraph to embroidery; nevertheless, the book contained photographs of several specimens with the indication of place of their production. However, the author erroneously ascribed them to the Uzbeks: the works had been performed in Tajik embroidery regions and appeared in the territory of Uzbekistan only later.

V.L. Voronina who takes into account only one designation of embroideries—the decorating of walls of dwellings—examines suzani under a specific angle of view (in connection with architecture) as an element of interior².

Central Asian decorative embroidery is also mentioned in such more generalized works as a book by N.S. Sobolev devoted to the history of ornamentation of cloths of different countries of the world³. However, the attribution of one and the only Central Asian embroidery work depicted in the book is wrong: suzani is called Bukhara one and is dated back to the 17th century. But in reality, it is to conclude from the description of colors that this is a Samarkand suzani dating back to the very end of the 19th century. Mistakes above are explainable by that

¹ Martins, 1897

² Weimarn, 1940

³ Voronina, 1951

Central Asian suzani works were examined extremely poorly at the time. Nevertheless, a capital work devoted to the arts of Uzbekistan (where embroidery is not examined at all as the work is devoted to an earlier period, specimens of which we are not aware of) defines the only drawn specimen wrongly: a suzani shown in Table 381 is called a Jizak one, but in reality it has nothing in common with the style of Jizak suzani, which is so peculiar that can no way be taken for anything else (Suzani shown in the table (it is owned by the State Museum of Arts of Uzbekistan) is a Samarkand one and dated back to late 1880s. Probably, it is embroidered by Uruna Umurbayeva; the Samarkand Museum has a truly certified similar suzani made by her)¹.

Embroideries were collected and studied primarily by ethnographers. Art critics who joined the study at a later period referred, as a source, primarily to the museum collections and descriptions composed by collectors. For ethnographers, it was extremely important, apart from studying the very suzani, to obtain field materials—information received from the creators of embroideries, often simultaneously with the acquisition of specimens for museum collections. The descriptions reflect information collected by many persons from population and antiquarians for long years. These descriptions, performed more or less thoroughly, in detail, with more or less knowledge of the subject, have been serving as a valuable source for examination of embroideries and have been used widely by all researchers, either native or foreign ones who, unfortunately, do not refer, as a rule, to either descriptions themselves or their authors.

Not bad basis for researches and publications, specially intended for decorative embroidery was created in our country due to common efforts in the Soviet era— and such publications did appear. Apart from article above (the earliest work that specially examines suzani), the author publicized, as mentioned above, chapter “Embroidery” in the collective work “Folk Decorative Art of Soviet Uzbekistan” containing some specific data about traditional styles of suzani². Later on, there were publicized three articles of ornament painter A.N. Tarasov, who had examined Central Asian ornament for many years³ and a book of G.L. Chepelevetskaya⁴ that for the first time ever classified Central Asian suzani works by styles and places of production. The value of this book seems even more important as it has numerous illustrations (colorful tables and photographs) and tables of types of ornament compositions and motives. To tell the truth, it was difficult, despite of common efforts, to highlight different issues to the same extent or prove the said provisions rather convincingly at the stage of study that was designed to cover all types of embroideries; nevertheless, the issue of this book is a great success. The author summarized all that had been done in the study of embroideries and played a considerable role in the propaganda of this fine art.

A useful publication was a brochure by R.Y. Rassudova who described the techniques of different stitches in details and exactly, and selected good specimens for illustrations⁵.

Examination of Tajikistan’s embroideries took its start later, in 1970s; however, the publications contained a lot of mistakes⁶.

Foreign researchers of folk art also display interest in Central Asian decorative embroideries: there are quite a lot of fine old specimens in museums and private collections across Europe. In 1924 and 1956, there were issued works of German scholar H. Bossert devoted to

¹ Sobolev, 1934

² Pugachenkova, Rempel, 1965, p. 389, table 381

³ Folk Decorative Art, 1954, p. 101–147

⁴ Tarasov, 1957, 1958, 1958a

⁵ Chepelevetskaya, 1961. Unfortunately, the nature of the book did not allow its author giving description of sources, in particular, her own field materials and used museum descriptions and manuscripts and hence, identifying strictly scientifically, with references to the source, the offered definitions of embroideries by place of production and deciphering of the semantics of patterns.

⁶ Rassudova, 1961

oriental art¹. In a later work that represents a complementary re-edition of the first one there are shown, apart from other works of Central Asian folk applied arts, embroideries: four colored tables contain details of embroideries of Bukhara, Nurata, Shahrizabz and Tashkent and other regions from the collection of the Berlin Museum of Folk Studies. In Munich, studying the embroideries and preparing the albums for publication was Frantz Besh².

In England, embroideries are studied along with other branches of Central Asian decorative art. In 1975, there appeared the initial publication of materials we are interested in: an album-type book under the name of “Uzbek” contains a special chapter about *suzani* written by Michael Francis and Robert Pinner; the chapter is illustrated by colorful images of six embroideries (including two incomplete ones), four black-and-white photographs and several tables. A brief text contains information about the principal embroidering regions and materials used for embroidery and their ornament³. The authors-offered division of embroideries into two types—western one and eastern one—is acceptable in principle but is not always convincing in practice. In particular, referring Samarkand embroideries to the eastern type cannot be recognized as a substantiated one: embroideries of this region are distinguished for their clearly expressed stylistic peculiarities and the absence of eclecticism that is more likely attributable to Bukhara group embroideries. Yet less correct is the thought that some of Samarkand ornamental motives date from the art of “Kyrgyz cattle-breeding tribes”. Despite errors stemming from either insufficient study of the matter or incomplete nature of the study, this work is a considerable step forward in study of Central Asian embroideries in abroad.

Publications of specimens in foreign works should also be welcomed. In addition, the authors, who for the first time ever in Western scientific literature examined Central Asian embroideries from historical-cultural point, continue their study. Michael Francis collected a great number of materials—photographs and colored slides—depicting excellent specimens of Central Asian embroideries. The English scholars admit that they based upon Soviet authors’ works in localizing the embroideries and that their principal task was to make a formal analysis of embroideries and elements of their ornaments (reported in the course of a conversation in Moscow in September 1975).

So, we are of possession of great riches inherited from past generations; however, the riches still remain unexplored, to a considerable extent, and insufficiently understood. Even the performed studies based upon now unique evidences of contemporaries of past stages of the history of this art are still kept at archival shelves⁴. As shown above, studies covered far not all embroidering regions and raised far not all issues. Study of embroideries should be continued and intensified. Given that the traditions of this art, which is caused by the past domestic life that has lost its original basis at the moment, are not forgotten yet, the most urgent task is to continue making field researches, including the mapping of embroideries (as well as of some of their typical features and specific motives) and making a comparative study of embroideries from historical-cultural point. A special task is study of Soviet-era large decorative embroideries. Of particular interest is the spread of their production in a postwar (1950–1960s) period in those regions and among those ethnical groups, which had been unaware of this art but borrowed it and, in addition, created a lot of peculiar, original works.

¹ N. Isayeva-Yusupova issued first a small article and then an album-type book devoted to Tajik embroidery (Isayeva-Yusupova, 1979; *The Tajik Embroidery*, 1979).

² Bossert, 1924; 1956

³ This information is based upon personal letter of F. Besh who asked the author for a consultation. F. Besh visited the Soviet Union and examined collections and materials of museums.

⁴ Uzbek. The authors visited the Soviet Union, examined museum collections and took use of literature references publicized in our country and of consultations that they later referred to with no particular accuracy.

2. SOURCES OF STUDY

At that far time when the author started acquainting with embroideries it was unclear how exactly they should be examined. It was essential to find a key that could have helped reveal their secrets: embroideries and their production seemed a real secret at the time. For an ethnographer, it was natural to apply to the medium where embroideries were created and used, and to people who made it. It became evident very soon that the world of embroideries could be revealed not by embroideresses: the key was kept in the hands of pattern designers who were the true creators of this art and keepers of its traditions. Exactly, it was painters who gave the most valuable information that allowed studying the history of embroidery.

It became evident that painters remember perfectly either patterns that they painted for embroideries of their customers (especially those of the number of close she-relatives) or the whole set of embroideries performed for their own dowry no matter how long their wedding from nowadays is. Painters, who have the perfect skill of the technique of drawing and are of possession of irreproachable feeling of proportions, turned to be able to reproduce these sets from memory, in a reduced form. Cloth drawing was most suitable, comfortable thing for them. After a corresponding preparation, different-age painters from different blocks of Samarkand composed whole albums of drawings and compositions for the museum, which they performed at different years of life and decorated embroideries of definite, real women (the period of their marriage, anyway, the beginning of marriage corresponded to the period of existence of a certain embroidery depicted by a painter). In such a manner, there were collected materials that allowed identifying exactly what Samarkand decorative embroidery in the second half of the 19th century—the beginning of the 20th century had been and tracking its evolution step by step. Apart from such Samarkand-related materials, fullest ones representing the creativity of several different-age painters, similar albums were composed on other embroidering regions (A.K. Pisarchik, a work on Nurata).

Interesting information also was obtained from embroideresses.

Being aware well of *suzani* were not only its creators: there were embroideries in every family, and that's why practically all women who had received compulsory sets of embroideries for their wedding at different times had a good knowledge of embroideries. Every woman, who looked through museum collections, was able to point out to embroideries similar to that spread in her young years and sometimes even point out to specimens looking like the ones inherited by her from the mother or grandmother. In 1930–1940, interlocutors of the author included such women who had married yet in the past century; their reports allowed dating Samarkand embroideries, starting from the middle of the 19th century, rather exactly.

It also became possible to obtain valuable information from local antiquarians who sometimes offered antique things, in particular, embroideries for sale to a museum. As a rule, they were very old people who had bought/sold antique things yet before the Revolution. Antiquarians, who moved, for the reasons of acquisition, to regions they knew well and famous for their handicraft industry, often could say where these things were from because they were not bad connoisseurs of antique things. Their reports served as one of the sources of our initial knowledge of embroideries and embroidery regions. However, this source should be regarded rather critically because the antiquarians knew exactly only bazaars where they had bought embroideries and only seldom applied to the direct creators of embroideries. For this reason, their reports always needed to be further specified

and could be used only as initial data. Nevertheless, this source should not be ignored as expeditionary field researches remained poor at those years. To the honor of informers of this category, their reports largely turned to come true in the course of a following examination. In Samarkand, valuable informers-antiquarians were David Yusupov (a Central Asian Jew) and Tursun Ibragimov (a Tajik). Both they knew well and were great connoisseurs of embroideries (and of course, they managed to keep their interests observed in doing business). A lot of useful information was obtained from them. David Yusupov, in particular, frankly told what methods antiquarians had applied to fake antique things such as ceramics and embroideries.

That the author, who had started studying embroideries at her young age, was lucky to receive information from people who had been born somewhere in the middle of the 19th century attaches particular value to these materials. The oldest informers caught (at a time when their independent life had already begun) times, which had not been affected yet by the results of Central Asia's joining Russia, development of capitalist relations. At the time, in folk life there had been no changes, which affected local culture in a strongest possible way just several decades later. Embroideries, which existed in the young years of these informers, had preserved a lot of features established long before they were born. The bigger part of the most ancient layer that we discovered in embroideries became known to us exactly from such reports and from embroideries depicted by the oldest painters, which have not been existing for a long time already and once were part of their dowry. At the end of the 20th century, such features of the deep antiquity could be found only in memories of old people from faraway areas where the old-style domestic life had survived much longer. But in Samarkand it disappeared without a trace, and antiquity here now is kept only in the specimens of earliest embroideries. It became possible to throw light on the ancient content of ornament and the then role of embroideries in domestic life only thanks to materials collected in 1930–1940s. It is no possible to receive such information at the moment.

Such studies are interesting not only for Samarkand. Development of this kind of art in every embroidering region was distinguished for its specific peculiarities and quite not in everything—especially in terms of pace of change—was similar to that in Samarkand. However, it elsewhere had a common basis: economy and culture traditions were similar, and the *suzani* art evolved at the background of a common historical process. Therefore, conclusions obtained due to a detailed study of the Samarkand embroidery either are of local importance or can serve as the basis for the understanding of the history of embroidery in other regions. The ethnographic studies also will be useful for study of art and archeology, a science whose sources start “speaking” involving analogies from adjacent areas, especially ethnography.

One of the core tasks of this book is a detailed examination of Samarkand's large decorative embroideries, their history covering a period from the middle of the 19th century to the Revolution. Apart from description of the very embroideries, including the semantics of their ornament (primarily, its understanding by the population in the studied period), there will be described the production of embroideries—the work of painters and embroideresses, and application and significance of embroideries in folk life. No embroideries applied for the reasons of decoration of dresses and small things will be studied.



3. GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT SUZANI-TYPE EMBROIDERY

Large decorative embroideries were made not throughout the region but only in ancient centers of settled culture and urban civilization. In regions with the ancient irrigated farming, there are no suzani-type embroideries in, for example, Khorezm. There is no single report confirming that this tradition existed in Surkhan Darya. It is still unknown whether suzani were made in Kashka Darya though antiquarians claim embroideries of a specific type (see below) are Karshin ones. There is no such tradition in South Tajikistan where, as is known, embroidery art is very much developed but applied basically for the reasons of decoration of dresses. Suzani also were not made in either Tajik-populated mountainous areas or mountains, foothills and steppes where Turkic-speaking groups (Uzbeks, Kazakhs and Kyrgyzs), which had been nomadic and semi-nomadic ones in the recent past and kept tribal division, lived.

All regions where the production of large decorative embroideries is confirmed reliably enter the area of Sogdiana. Perhaps, the place of origin of this peculiar art should be sought exactly within its boundaries.

Producing suzani were only Tajik and Uzbek-Sart plains-residents, two ethnographic groups that lived in the areas of ancient irrigated farming and had common elements of ethnical genesis: natural-economic conditions of their lives also were similar. Here, there were located ancient large and small towns and ancient settlements of urban type. A peculiar art was established and was represented in a richest possible way exactly in such environment; in villages, the number of embroideries was smaller, and their quality was lower.

Despite significance differences in local styles, all suzani took origin undoubtedly from the same source, have the same roots and generally the same development. Therefore, it'd be wrong to say, in contrary to frequent assertions, that embroideries are divided into Uzbek and Tajik ones: suzani embroiders that were produced in different locations where the Tajik and Uzbek population compactly reside had common features rather than differences. Only local peculiarities are expressed clearly: no ethnical peculiarity is felt. The latter is displayed only seldom, in single cases when an embroidery is made in another ethnical environment, for example, in the environment of Uzbeks with tribal division for whom suzani were not a traditional art and were performed only occasionally, undoubtedly as a result of influence of borrowing. Such, for example, is a red calico suzani (stored at the Museum of Samarkand) acquired from Uzbeks-Turks of the Loish (currently Ak Darya) region of the Samarkand district. Its ornament, typical for colorful suzani, included a motive of two large pair curls looking toward opposite sides, which is interpreted as the image of lamb horns and spread widely in the ornamentation of carpets of other items of the past nomadic or semi-nomadic nations (this motive is also met at embroideries of Uzbeks-Sarts and Tajiks but there it usually serves as a small supplement to the main pattern.)¹

As to embroideries in traditional embroidery regions, it is very difficult to outline either Uzbek or Tajik ones; it is only possible to identify the ethnical belonging of population who produce embroideries but not peculiarities of the very suzani or their patterns. Thus, division of suzani into Tajik and Uzbek ones, as practiced in some museums, seems inexpedient. This art was created by the both nations in the process of interaction; their separate groups, after having joined another ethnical environment (the Uzbeks' joining the Tajik environment and vice versa) over centuries, dissolved into it and brought its own

¹ Moshkova, 1970, Table XV, 4; Table I, 6, 9, 12; Table VIII, 15; Table IX, 5, 7, 9, etc

cultural traditions. This process was particularly intensive in urban locations and what we stated above relates primarily to the conditions of formation of urban culture.

Suzani should be classified according to their local styles. Embroideries in different regions differ one from another by many style features such as coloring and elements of ornament and its composition used for identification of specimens in cases when an embroidery has no exact certificate; however, such not always can be done absolutely sure because, firstly, not all local options have been studied in details and, secondly, similar-type embroideries can be met in different regions, not to mention direct borrowings of or mixing of features. The latter was observed in cases when an embroideress moved to another region and subsequently explored some features of local style but did not give up in full the style that had been established in her native land. That is, for example, an embroideress who had taken origin from Tashkent and then moved to marry in Urgut where she lived all her life and painted patterns for suzani and embroidered skullcaps and was known under the name of “Toshkandi”¹.

In addition, it is difficult to identify the exact origin of suzani because every thing here is unique, no copies exist; every suzani contains a print of individuality of its creators, and that’s why, as a rule, a suzani differs from other specimens produced in the same place approximately at the same time. But such become evident if we go in for details and, generally speaking, local styles are quite definite.

No matter how separate specimens, especially those taking origin from different regions are peculiar, with their clearly expressed local distinctions, Central Asian suzani-type embroideries are so typical in terms of either technique or coloring or ornamentation that they can no way be mixed with embroideries from other regions, even the neighboring countries in the Orient. They form a special group: all they are typical for primarily vegetable pattern that is strictly subdivided into a floral one and a deciduous one. Only Tashkent suzani called *palak*, especially their later specimens are an exception: their patterns seem to have been blown by astral motives such as stars and the Moon.

The degree of ornamentation of motives and loading of panels with pattern could be not the same in different regions: a lot of non-sewn background was left in the Fergana Valley; it almost does not ooze at Tashkent’s white-textile suzani but in some later specimens the textile is sewn entirely; in some regions, main ornamental motives were very large but in others, on the opposite, they were small, elegant. Nevertheless, typical features of the composition of ornament are common for all the regions. The composition was determined by similarity or even identity of the primary meaning of embroideries—its base that gave birth to kinds of embroideries and the nature of composition solutions.

Suzani-type decorative embroideries, after having been represented to us as applied art works, initially were caused by vital needs: they were used for laying a bed, their main kinds emerged as a bedspread, a bed-sheet and a pillowcase; such designation of embroideries was also reflected in their names: suzani, in the narrow sense, means “embroidered bedspread”, *ruyidzho* is “a bed-sheet”, and *bolinpush*² is “a pillowcase”.

Given that Central Asian people used to sleep on the floor and that bedclothes of a whole family were taken away and kept in pile in daytime, the question is about use of embroideries for sleeping: indeed, people slept on them and used them as a cover. Such was compulsory for newlyweds; in Samarkand, embroideries remained in use until a set of a bride’s dowry was worn out (people used to say, “*doshta darrondem*”—torn in use).

¹ Albums containing Toshkandi-made patterns are stored at the Museum of Samarkand

² Old word “bolin” is out of use in Tajik spoken language; it is replaced by it-equated word “bolisht”. Both options are met in Tajik medieval literature. That the composition of the name of embroidery is inclusive of old term may be indicative of an earlier origin of this kind of embroidery (the terms are given in the Samarkand option).

However, the domestic use of embroideries also had its peculiar, ritual nature related to the survivals of ancient folk beliefs: either embroideries on the whole or their separate patterns, as people understand them, carried, as we can see below, the magical character, served as a talisman for a newlywed pair and saved from the evil eye.

The magical importance of embroideries was not only laying a bed of newlyweds. In some locations (Tashkent, Ura-Tube), a bride was brought toward a fiancé's house under a suzani as a canopy; in Samarkand where a bride was ridden on a horse, she was covered with suzani with her head under it because she was to leave her parental house for her new family's house. Both rituals were considered a defending, magical means.

The aforesaid three kinds of embroideries, which were main ones, at different times were added by several kinds of second importance, such as *joynamaz*, a bedding for a prayer (no prayer should be read on a naked floor or earth), *sandalipush*, a tablecloth laid on a low table (*sandali*)¹, *gavorapush*, a cradle spread, *zardevor* and *zebi takhmon*, embroidered friezes that decorated the upper part of room walls; and *bugdjoma*, "a knot of dresses"—a bedcover cloths, either spare ones not used daily or ones that are brought somewhere (usually in the course of leaving for summerhouses).

In the beginning of the second half of the 19th century, in Samarkand there existed two more kinds of embroideries that disappeared later: *buyro-kars*, a mat cover, and *koshakars*, pair belt scarves embroidered on the same cloth and fully covered with embroidery: they were used first as a decoration of the walls of a wedding room along with other kinds of decorative embroideries and then were cut and wore as a belt until worn out. In Tashkent, the number of embroideries of second importance (primarily similar to that in Samarkand) included *kirpech*, a small elongated embroidered cloth designed for covering the middle narrow niche in the front wall of a room, a typical feature of the architecture of living buildings in Tashkent. In Bukhara, embroideries of second importance were inclusive of small square *dastorpech*, a cover for smart turban (*dastor*) that was put off the head not uncoiled and kept carefully in a wall niche. There were neither embroidered friezes nor *sandali* and cradle cover embroideries in Bukhara.

All kinds of embroideries above were domestic things; however, they acquired not utilitarian but rather artistic significance since they started being covered by embroidered patterns long ago.

Residents of embroidery-producing regions could not imagine the interiors of houses, especially that of newlyweds without embroideries. However, embroideries, as a means of decoration of dwellings, were used differently in different regions. In some of them, for instance, Samarkand, they were put on the walls of a wedding room covering the entire walls. In other places, for example, Bukhara, embroideries were laid on a high bride-bed: numerous blankets and mattresses, as a dowry, were put one onto another alongside with embroideries. Each of the latter was laid onto several blankets so that only the border of the embroidery that was laid under a higher layer of blankets was seen, and only the upper, top embroidery was seen in full.

No matter how embroideries were used in domestic life, they everywhere were made as beautiful works of art. Their ornamental design was compositionally completed; all motives of a composition were strictly balanced in strict but not dry subordination to a whole.

As this art developed—undoubtedly, it has long become one of the main spheres where the artistic creativity of the female part of Central Asian community was displayed—exactly this role of suzani went to the forefront and became the main one. At the same time, idea of their magical importance has almost reduced to zero.

¹ *Sandali* is a low broad table put above a floor niche filled in with hot coals and covered with a blanket. They warmed hands and legs under *sandali* in wintertime.

Part 1

SAMARKAND'S DECORATIVE EMBROIDERY AND ITS HISTORY



1. EMBROIDERY IN DOMESTIC LIFE OF SAMARKAND RESIDENTS STAGES OF ITS DEVELOPMENT

Samarkand-made *suzani* represent one of the most developed options of local styles of Central Asian decorative embroideries. That was primarily due to the important position embroidery occupied in the traditional domestic life of Samarkand.

Its role was especially great in the wedding ritual.

First, *suzani* were hanged in a bride's house where the Moslem wedding ritual and the bride's first rendezvous with the fiancé took place. Then, *suzani* were hanged in the fiancé's house where a separate room had been prepared for newlyweds. A bride's removal and transportation of her dowry in Samarkand occurred late at night, under torchlight. Before the wedding train was ready, embroideries hanged at the house of a bride's parents were put off the walls and knotted; then they followed the bride's way. The embroideries were hanged on the walls straight after the bride arrived in the fiancé's house. At present, these wedding rituals continue to be observed in many Samarkand families in a bit changed form.

The dwelling of newlyweds remains decorated with embroideries for a very long period of time. In the past, when urban residents used to leave for summerhouses for a whole summer, their leaving meant the end of such decoration: embroideries were put off, then packed in a trunk and were not hanged in such a quantity any longer. In modern period, when there is no resettling. Embroideries are kept hanged for a much longer period, up to 1 to 1.5 years even if newlyweds give birth to a child within this period. Nevertheless, a couple of embroideries continued to decorate the room further. In daytime, they covered the bedclothes in the middle or two pair big niches of a front room, according to a Samarkand custom. Sometimes, embroideries were simply thrown onto a high pile of bedclothes and sometimes they were nailed to the wall covering a niche. For this purpose, most often there was used *bolinpush*, with its dimensions similar to common proportions of a niche.

In Samarkand, the use of *suzani* for the decoration of walls resulted in an extreme spread and abundance of embroideries here, especially since the end of the 19th century. They were produced in huge quantities: the poorest dowry at the end of the 19th century-beginning of the 20th century included no less than 3-4 sets of compulsory kinds of embroideries (*suzani*, *ruyidzho*, *bolinpush*, *joynamaz*) performed at cloths of different colors; the richest dowries were inclusive of 9 to 12 such sets. This alone established conditions for a stormy development of pattern creativity and made it necessary to develop new coloristic solutions, since every background that became fashionable at a certain period of time was characterized by its own color. All this gave the Samarkand embroidery an honorable place among other local styles. Its richness and diversity made it an extremely interesting, gratifying subject of study that allowed settling numerous theoretical and

specific matters common for the entire Central Asian embroidery, and established basis to opinion ways of development of the whole ornamental art.

Let's give a brief description of a town where this option of Central Asian embroidery was born, the historically established ethnical medium, at whose cultural traditions this phenomenon was formed.

Samarkand is a town with a predominantly Tajik population. Of 85 blocks of the town, the Uzbeks whose ancestors had come here at the end of the 18th century—beginning of the 19th century resided in not more than 10 blocks. The same was the population of Samarkand's rural district in the radius of 8–9 km, beyond the boundaries of which there had stretched, up to Penjikent, a non-irrigated steppe inhabited by semi-nomadic Uzbeks. The composition of residents of large urban-type settlement Urgut located 45 kilometers southeastward where there were also produced decorative embroideries similar to the Samarkand style was similar to that of Samarkand.

As is known, Samarkand remained in decline in the first half of the 18th century. In the course of coping with devastation, it was inhabited by new residents, largely Uzbeks who occupied deserted parts of the town's territory. Their descendants learnt Tajik language, though some groups spoke Uzbek in domestic life, advantageously in conversations with older people, especially when displaced persons formed a large, compactly residing group. On the whole, the period of devastation and its being coped with did not influence substantially upon Samarkand's population: the Tajik layer is seen strictly in the whole image of Samarkand residents, the old ethnical-cultural tradition was not interrupted¹ here. With this in mind, the Samarkand embroidery and similar Urgut one should be regarded as the Tajik embroidery, by taking the ethnical origin of its carriers in consideration. Unfortunately, peculiarities of embroideries, which were performed by Uzbeks who had moved from Tashkent to Samarkand at the end of the 19th century and occupied the town's southeastern part where they formed four "toshkandi" blocks, have remained unstudied. This group was so great that its residents contacted primarily each other. In particular, their marriage links, as a rule, were limited by this medium due to a wide spread of kindred marriages throughout Central Asia. Supposedly, as regards embroideries (note that Tashkent had its own distinctive style), here there were preserved the traditions or at least echoes of the left motherland though, probably, under certain strong influence of local traditions. This matter requires a separate study.

The second half of the 19th century-first decades of the 20th century (the period examined in this work) in Central Asia's history was a period of radical changes. The country transited from the undivided domination of the feudal system to embryos of capitalism. Its being economically and culturally isolated from the rest nations and countries, especially those behind its western boundaries was changed by Central Asia's joining the composition of the huge Russian Empire and development of first trade and then cultural links to its nations. By the end of the 19th century these links became one of the most important factors of the historical development of Central Asia. The process developed gradually and not similarly everywhere: it developed rapidly in large town centers and covered different vital activities; however, such changes reached the country's remote parts with a great delay. A railway to Samarkand was built by 1888; this accelerated its development to a larger extent: the town transited to various kinds of innovations comparatively early.

Studies have demonstrated that these processes reflected in full on the Samarkand decorative embroidery as well. In accordance with stages of local community development, the studied period of history of the embroidery art is subdivided into three periods.

¹ The history of establishment of population of Samarkand after the 19th century is analyzed by O.A. Sukhareva in article "Essays about History of Central Asian Towns" (see: Sukhareva, 1977)

Prior to the beginning of 1880s, embroideries kept many archaic features that probably had emerged long before the middle of the century. The style of embroideries started changing since the end of 1880s. That was a transitional time: specimens performed in those years still contained old features and motives but in a modified form, in another coloring. By the beginning of 1900s, there was fully established a new style, which later on was kept up to nowadays: at this period, *suzani* continued to be used in the domestic life of Samarkand residents but lost their past importance and were spread among not all strata, since they were badly compatible with modern dwellings. As a matter of fact, this art dies out or at least does not develop: there appeared new techniques of decorating of dwellings, there was introduced machine embroidery, and the old-style decoration became obsolete. Nevertheless, the tradition of embroidering the newlyweds' dwellings and rooms where wedding guests are received has been preserved up to now, especially in rural localities.

Typical features that distinguish *suzani* of the said three periods run out so strictly and definitely that now, following the conduct of the study, the Samarkand embroidery can no longer be generally examined and described with no division of its evolution into stages.

Such "micro-periodization" undoubtedly would be revealed in all embroidering regions. Naturally, the degrees and speeds of changes were different and depended on specific local conditions: in large trading town's innovations it manifested itself stronger and earlier while the old things at deep outskirts continued to remain longer. Anyway, new features of social life and changes in consciousness influenced upon folk applied arts.

Decorative embroidery fancywork responded through giving birth to a new style; note is that this was a branch created by hands of women who stood far away from public life and production activity at workshops or rural communes in the old time.



2. MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUES

Materials used for the reasons of embroidery—cloths and threads—were not the same over total extent of the studied period; they reflected the changes that occurred in the economy and material culture of population of either Samarkand or the whole Central Asia in the second half of the 19th century—the early 20th century.

In 1850–1870s (we are unaware of older embroideries), cloths, threads and dyers of nearly exceptionally local origin were used for making *suzani*. Cloths were made of local yarn either in domestic conditions or at hand looms by craftsmen. An embroideress herself often made and dyed threads; sometimes, this work was done by a dyer-craftsman. Vegetable dyers also were primarily of local origin. However, two very important, dyers used widely in the middle of the 19th century (and, probably, much earlier) were imported. From India there was imported indigo dyer that yielded all shades of blue and dark blue, green shade in combination with yellow and violet shade in combination with red and crimson. Another dyer for crimson color was cochineal that was imported from Iran or India.

However, some cloths and early synthetic dyers started entering local market through the western trading network, mainly from Russia¹ right this time, i.e. in first decades of the second half of the 19th century and reached Samarkand and other localities where they were used for the making of embroideries.

¹ Catalogue of the Turkestan division, 1872, p. 68

2.1 Cloths

Embroideries relating to the first, early period are met at white, red and yellow cloths. A white cloth *suzani* was usually made of a local handicraft cotton fabric—*karbos*—that is known in Russian literature and used by Europeans under the name of “*mata*” (“*mato*” is the Arabic for goods). Before being embroidered, this fabric was whitened by handicraft specialists (*shushtagar*) and then it was called *shushta* (whitened), literally, “washed” is from “*shushtan*” and “to wash” is from folk’s “*shushtan*”.

Samarkand-made *mata* usually was not more than 25-centimeter wide. Embroideries on a 53-centimeter wide *mata* are met here only seldom. This *mata* reportedly was woven by *Iranis*¹ who resided in Samarkand’s Bagishamal district. It was called *karbosi ironiti*. Sometimes, there are met old embroideries on a white manufactured cloth. Manufactured white cloths generally were called *suf* (*suf* is the Arabic for woolen cloth; this name was not applicable to woolen cloths in Central Asia). Bukhara *Irani* Salikh Yusupov, who had worked all his life starting from 1880s at Russian merchants-owned shops in Bukhara, said this cloth had been brought to Turkestan primarily from Afghanistan being packed in wooden boxes, with each box containing ten pieces; it was very much appraised by local people who called it *sufi sakchob*. A 40-arshin long piece of this cloth was sold for 5–6 rubles. In Samarkand, such cloth had the name of *sufi nasreddin-shohi* as it was spread in the years of rule of Afghani shah Nasreddin.

Three early uncertified embroideries on such a cloth dated back to approx. 1850–1860s are stored in the collection of the Museum of Samarkand. Two of them were acquired from a young woman, who had inherited them from her mother, Kamber-oy Abdukadirova, who had been born in the early 1870s and married at the end of 1880s. This evidence, along with the style and ornament of the embroideries allow dating these specimens back to 1885–1888, i.e. the very beginning of the second, transitional period. However, such cloths had been removed from the Central Asian market decisively by the Russian right by this time. We only have to suppose that the cloth had been bought by the family much earlier and was kept until it became necessary to prepare a dowry for the daughter. Usually, mothers starting preparing dowry for their daughters since the latter’s early childhood when they were just several months old. Cloths were purchased gradually. The one designated for the main embroidery sometimes was painted immediately for the sake of wishing well, given to a painter, who put ornament onto it, and sometimes embroidered it; but most often a cloth was left uncut until a girl grew up and was proposed to somebody as a wife. One of the said embroideries carried two trademarks: one of them is the English one having the form of a small triangle and the name of “Trade Mark” and Latin motto “*Lamatos sum*” while the other trademark is a mark of a Persian merchant, upon whose order the cloth was fabricated at an English manufacture. This is a very large trademark depicting (in the center of it) the image of Persian lion with a sable in the front paw, behind which there is depicted a sun discus with dispersing rays. The Persian inscription says the following: “Order by hodji Mirzo Muhammad Nafi Shirazskiy”.

Apart from England-manufactured cloths, Russian cloths, either manufactured or handicraft ones started penetrating Central Asia relatively early. Small embroidery having the exact certificate dated from 1854 acquired by the Museum of Samarkand had been performed on a 25-centimeter wide Russian handicraft paper cloth. However, earlier embroideries on imported white cloths are just an exception. At a time when calico and other manufactured cloths became quite a usual material for urban population’s dresses (especially for brides’ dowries)

¹ *Iranis* are descendants of Iran natives who settled over Central Asia at different times. They constitute a small ethnographic group inhabiting Bukhara, Samarkand and rural localities surrounding these towns. Bukhara *Iranis* are Iranian-speaking while Samarkand *Iranis* largely are Uzbek-speaking.

yet in 1860–1870s, white cloth embroideries yet in 1890s continued to be made on local handcraft *mata* though a mass of textile materials had been brought to Central Asia at the end of the 19th century and finally conquered the market. Perhaps, local *mata* was preferred due to its cheaper price as compared to that of manufactured cloths; even the military commandment of Turkestan put *mata* in use for the making of underclothes for Russian soldiers.

That said, local handcraft *mata* remained the basic material for white cloth embroideries within the entire first period (from 1850s to 1880s inclusively). There are met suzani on a reddish-brown *mata* made of local special brand cotton, with its grain having natural yellowish color. However, embroideries on such a *mata* (usual for Bukhara) are met in Samarkand only as an exception.

According to certain information, *mata* painted red dark or brown (the former, probably, was madder) also was in use in the studied period; it was used solely for embroidered *bugjoma* that should be not showing the dirt.

Red calico of different sorts and dyed calico (the latter appeared at a later period) were used for the making of red cloth embroideries in the second half of the 19th century. Both they, undistinguished by local population, were known under the name of “avlon” (*alvan* is the Arabic for dyers (plural form)). According to some information, red calico initially was made in Central Asia and brought from there and, starting from the 18th century, started being made in Russia, in particular, Kazan where, according to 1788 data, there were “red calico manufactures” each having 3 to 20 looms. The yarn was imported “from Bukharia; madder from Astrakhan was used as a dyer”¹. Yet in the 19th century Russian industrialists knew well where red calico production had penetrated Russia from: in welcoming a Bukhara emir, who examined the Prokhorov Manufacture in 1893, the manufacture’s owners praised Bukhara residents who had taught Russians to produce red calico. Production of paper cloth painted red by madder existed in Bukhara yet in the 10th–12th centuries. Above-mentioned Bukhara resident Salikh Yusupov, who was very well aware of trading issues, said he remembered how Bukhara dyers, the owners of large dyeing shops, had dyed Russian-manufactured calico into red and blue at the end of the 19th century—the beginning of the 20th century.

However, red cloth embroideries in the second half of the 19th century were made using Russian-manufactured red calico. We are unaware of red-dyed *mata* embroideries (similar to the red cloth of the 10th–12th centuries). But of course, this does not mean at all that such embroideries were not made earlier, for example, in the first half of—the beginning of the second half of the 19th century. No one specimen has been preserved from this period, but probably for the reason that red *mata* embroideries, as easier soiled, were used for household reasons more frequently and worn out earlier than white cloth embroideries did. Anyway, the fact is that among Samarkand early red cloth embroideries we are aware of, there is no single local cloth—they all are made on manufactured cloths. Urun-oy Umurbayeva (born in 1860) testifies that Russian red calico appeared in Samarkand yet when her sisters, who were ten or more years older than she (i.e. were born in around the middle of the 19th century or earlier), were young. This red calico was thinner and used primarily for the making of embroidered skullcaps. However, the dowry that apparently dates back to the middle of 1860s (its owner was born in around 1850) right then consisted of a red calico suzani and a suzani made on Russian rough cloth that was given to local craftsmen-*shushtagars* for the reasons of whitening. Apart from unfigured red calico, in sale in 1860s also was patterned red calico, with a light pattern of a paler red color (*avloni guldor* or *avloni shohdor*), which had a higher value than the unfigured one. It was used primarily for dresses; however, patterned red calico embroideries also were met seldom.

Apart from red cloth (red calico or dyed calico) embroideries, there were seldom met yellow cloth embroideries in 1850–1870s. According to reports, initially there appeared the

¹ Buttakh, 1811, p. 1–5, 8–10; Zinovyev, 1937, p. 224; Lyubomirov, 1935

so-called “yellow calico”—*avloni zard*—yellow-orange cloth, with its making similar to that of red calico, and then there appeared yellow-dyed calico. Appearing then were yellow lancort and, 3–4 years later, yellow lasting (the latter was much better and more expensive). All these cloths were called in Samarkand the same—*sufi zard*—yellow *suf*. The dowry of Nusratoy Mir-Sayidova (born in 1850) included two manufactured cloth *suzani*, one of which was made on a rough calico whitened by local craftsmen and the other one was made on red calico. According to her, some families already made yellow cloth embroideries at the time; however, such embroideries were less spread and met far not in every dowry.

Appearing in 1890s were unfigured pink and dark red paper cloths (*sufi gulob* and *sufi bjigari*). Embroideries on such cloths also were made in the very beginning of the 20th century when appearing in sale were sateen and calico, which very soon ousted all the rest manufactured paper cloths used for *suzani*. As to the appearance of sateen, Maktob Mukumova (born in 1888) from suburban settlement Kaftarkhona tells that when she was 15 years old, i.e. in 1902, her uncle, a blacksmith, brought 12 arshins of dark red sateen to her from Termez. She made a *suzani* of it, and that turned to be one of the earliest embroideries on such a cloth in Samarkand. Soon after that, all shops in the town turned to be full of sateen of most different colors; sateen immediately became the favorite material for colored cloth embroideries and, in such a role, remained the most used material all third period long. But initially, sateen cost so expensively (25–30 kopecks per arshin) that only rich people could afford buying it; all the rest were satisfied with a cheaper calico.

Appearing in 1880–1890s were embroideries on either manufactured or handicraft silky cloths, something that was not accustomed in Samarkand before, though silky cloths of local production, primarily, red-violet ones were used for the making of particularly rich embroideries in other locations such as Bukhara and Shahrizabz. In Samarkand, silky cloth embroideries had been spread only by the beginning of the 20th century when a set of them became the necessary part of dowry of even not rich brides.

Violet (*gunapsh*, *bunapsh*) silky cloth embroideries and dark green (*zangor pistaki*) silky cloth embroideries are common for Samarkand. They are met rarer on pink (*gulob*), orange (*pushti piezi*—onion leaf color), red (*surkh khinogi*, literally, the color of henna) or yellow (*zard*) silky clothes, with two latter colors getting out of fashion by the beginning of the 20th century.

For white cloth embroideries in late 19th century–early 20th century, there were used all kinds of manufactured cloths ranging from calico to linen cloth, which often had a double width (the so-called sheeting one). All they were united under the same name of *suf*, *sufi urusi* (Russian *suf*).

Dimensions of every kind of embroideries were established exactly by a custom in strict accordance with a respective period; everyone knew well what exact quantity of cloth should be bought and how wide cloth to be sewn should be.

2.2 The making of threads for embroidering purposes

Threads used for the reasons of the embroidering in 1860–1870s were primarily silky of homemade and rarer handicraft production and dyeing, woolen and sometimes paper (both were not local but imported). Silky threads usually were made by women of a family that prepared a dowry¹. Women themselves grew silkworms and then uncoiled cocoons, sometimes, perhaps, inviting those women who could do it well, similar to how it was done in other localities, which there is information about². There were two methods of making threads from cocoons.

¹ Sukhareva; Bikzhanova, 1955

² Narshakhi, 1897, p. 29–30



Under the first method, whole cocoons were boiled in water with a mixture of potash (a half of piece of local soap was put per cauldron of water if it was needed to obtain a purely white silk). When cocoons became quite soft they were washed in cold water and stretched by hands, and then a thread was pulled from a whole 5–6 cocoons, something like they in Russia spin yarn or wool. This process was called “to make a little wick” (*pilta kardan*). A thick, slightly twisted thread obtained in such a way was stretched at ordinary spinning-wheel (*charkh*) with its handle twirled from oneself; later on, two threads were twisted together through twirling the handle toward reverse side (this technique was called *chappa-tanob*). Initially, the thread appeared to be rough, knotted and thus, required additional processing. The smoothening of a thread was called *rishta-ya rishtakhor kardan* (*rishta* is a thread; *khori* is the root of verb *khori*dan—to scratch or to be scratched). This technique was as follows: tips of a part of a thread folded in two were taken by left hand, with the stitch kept by big toe. Then, after having put a spindle between the threads, they moved it strongly, quickly up and down along the threads. Under this, rough places disappeared and the thread was getting plain, brilliant. After having ended one cut of thread and wined it into a ball, they started processing a next one.

Under the second method of production of silky threads for embroideries in Samarkand, they used silky wadding as a raw material. They made it themselves through pulling cocoons apart and more often bought it at a bazaar. A silk wadding thread was called *bershumi nukcha*—the silk of a thread’s tip: the wadding was made of a cocoon’s internal layer that yielded lower quality silk. It was not used for the reasons of weaving; they say it was possible to buy it from hired craftsmen—*halfa* – who sold it secretly from the owner of a silk-winding shop. However, such silk most often was imported from other towns (from Kokand, informers say) where the production of silky cloths and silk-winding were developed better.

Silky wadding was rolled in “little wicks” (*pilta*) and subsequently spun at ordinary spinning-wheel in the way cotton was spun. Then, the thread was smoothened by the method of *rishta-ya rishtakhor*.

The smoothened threads were twisted in two: a strongly twisted silk was always used for embroideries in Samarkand as such made a thread a bit rigid and reduced its shine, a typical feature of local *suzani*.

Woolen threads, always bright red (no such threads apparently were used in the previous period) also were used in embroideries in the second half of the 19th century, up to 1880s. Bright red woolen yarn, called here *sholi surkh*, reportedly was imported in the form of big balls from India; they in Central Asia could dye neither wool nor silk in such color at the time. Given that such threads became out of use by 1880s, their presence in embroideries may be indicative of the latter’s dating.

Among *suzani* in 1880s, there appear red-dyed handicraft paper threads that preserved the old name of *ip shol*, the Uzbek for “paper wool”. Silk started being dyed bright red apparently not earlier than the second half of 1880s after artificial dyer was brought to Central Asia.

Handicraft or homemade silky threads remained the basic material for the embroidering of *suzani* till the end of the 19th century; like in 1850–1870s, there was used advantageously silk made by the very embroideresses by the method of *nukcha* (“torch”).

Manufactured threads—*bershumi farangi*, which literally means “French silk” or metamorphic “foreign” or “manufactured”, appeared in embroideries at the end of 1890s. These threads were distinguished for their nice shine and quality but were very expensive (48 rubles a pood) and thus, were not applied widely. Soon after that, appearing on the market was another sort of paper threads, which was worse and cheaper and was called *oydori farangi* “local foreign”, a kind of twisted, less shining and a bit stricter thread. Before use, it had to be processed (probably, to be washed or boiled); it was done by

craftsmen-*shushtagars*. After this, a thread was uncoiled into two parts each having four lines; the latter was spun at a spinning-wheel first separately and then together with the spinning-wheel twirled toward the reverse side; only once this was done, threads were ready for being embroidered.

Later on, there appeared manufactured paper threads in the form of small balls of “the size of an inkpot” (local ceramic inkpots are meant). They received the name of *burshumi tubcha* (tub, tubcha is a ball). Paper threads also had other names such as *bershumi darakht* (wooden silk), *bershumi armanigi* (Armenian silk) and *bershumi Warshawa* (Warsaw silk). In 1907 (the year of wedding of Maktob Mukumova who reported the bigger part of information about the technology of embroidering), all shops were full of these threads, which started being used in embroideries very widely. Initially, manufactured paper threads were valued equivalently to the real silk but very soon they became cheaper: their use revealed that they fade and lose their shine quicker than silk does. Nevertheless, the convenience of work with them and the ability to avoid an additional processing, which became particularly burdensome after a custom of preparing a huge number of embroideries for a wedding spread all over Samarkand, often forced people to prefer them to silk.

In the majority of suzani in the early 20th century, part of the ornament is made with manufactured paper threads. Even at white cloth embroideries that always were made using best materials, the ornament’s deciduous part, starting from the second decade of the 20th century, were usually made with manufactured paper threads. However, floral rosettes still continued to be embroidered with handicraft-processed and dyed silk: the diversity of colors of imported threads did not include a good, deep crimson that was so common for Samarkand embroideresses and made an excellent contrast with the black color of deciduous ornament—the main beauty of Samarkand’s third-period embroideries.

So, the first period in the history of suzani we outlined is typical for a whole pattern’s being embroidered with homemade silk and the use of red woolen threads: the second period marks the embroidering of a whole pattern, including a red one, with silk; the third period is typical is for domination of manufactured paper threads (in deciduous motives).

2.3 The dyeing of threads

In 1850–1870s, either silky or paper threads for embroidering were dyed primarily by vegetable dyes. However, artificial dyes started penetrating Central Asia yet in the beginning of the second half of the 19th century.

Thread homemade dyeing in Samarkand stopped early. When the dowry of Urun-oy Umurbayeva was under preparation, i.e. in 1870–1875s, the whole silk to be embroidered was spun at home from wadding of different colors bought at a bazaar. Later on, after aniline, which is very easy to work with, was put in use, part of threads started being dyed at home again. Nevertheless, this did not concern embroideresses; in Samarkand, at this period they apparently again were delivered silk wadding by dyers-specialists: *rangrezes* used the hot technique, *kautgars* (*kabudgars*) dyed, through using the cold technique, indigo dyer that gives shades ranging from dark blue, almost black, to blue¹. Cochineal continued to be used for the traditional crimson; bright red silky threads, part of rosettes of white cloth embroideries, were dyed with aniline (alizarin, which was also in sale at the time, was used only for the dyeing of paper yarn and most often was used for the making of printed cloths).

¹ *Rangrez* is a dyer who dyed in all colors but shades of blue; *kautgar* is a dyer specialized in dyeing using indigo.

In early Samarkand suzani, the main color of rosettes was crimson—*pushti guli baland*—the dark tint of the color of rose-petal inner side. That was a very dark, cold color (a warm one typical for Bukhara and Nurata suzani practically is not met at Samarkand embroideries). Nevertheless, it'd be wrong to think it was accidental or, for example, could be explained by the poor quality of homemade dyeing. No, it was specially strove for. Cochineal dyeing was made by specialists-dyers, who accommodated themselves to embroideresses' demands. How did they get the needed tint? In Khodjent where, like in Samarkand, rosettes traditionally should have the dark tint of crimson, it became possible to receive trustworthy information on the dyeing technique and see homemade dyed threads. It turned out that the needed dark tint was obtained here through adding black dye or pomegranate peel to cochineal. Supposedly, Samarkand dyers also used certain special additions and their own techniques of cochineal dyeing that allowed getting the typical lilac tint of crimson, which differed from either warm Nurata-Bukhara one or cold Khodjent one.

As for Samarkand suzani of the beginning of the second half of the 19th century, there was also used a light tint of this color obtained due to a weaker cochineal solution. This color was called "the pale tint of the color of rose-petal inner side" (*pushti guli past*).

Bright red color *khinoga* (the color of henna) or *shamya* (the color of candlelight) in old embroideries was observed only at imported wool, as stated above. Madder yielding red color most likely was not used in Samarkand for the dyeing of silk, though it was known well here: it was used for the printing. Anyway, here we do not find the warm red or reddish-brown color that is so typical for Nurata and Bukhara embroideries.

Yellow color (*zard*) in old times was obtained through the *isparak* (*isfarak*) or *tukhmak* dyeing that gave various tints¹. No reports about Samarkand home technique of threads or silky wadding dyeing in yellow were obtained since natural dyes here had long ago been replaced by aniline ones. No deep blue color is met at Samarkand early embroideries. There were used two tints of blue named according to the dye—*nelobi*—indigo. Light tints were called *past* and dark tints were called *bland*. Green color of various tints was yielded by silk dyeing in indigo solution after it was dyed in yellow. Dark green color—*pistoki*—was used for the deciduous part of patterns of old Samarkand suzani.

It was defined as the color of tobacco (*nos*) put under the tongue. Light green warm tint *zaynabi* (derived from feminine name Zaynab) was obtained through putting yellow silk in a weak indigo solution. In old embroideries in many regions, including Samarkand, there is met marsh-green color, predominantly in the mount of deciduous ornament while bright green cold tint is met in insignificant volume. Nevertheless, the name of the latter color—*zangor*—contains fo hint on ordin'ry technology: *zang* is rust (probably, here is meant the color of copper vitriol). Yielding bright green color in later embroideries (the end of the 19th century—the beginning of the 20th century) was aniline.

Reddish-violet color—*nofarmon* (diskbedient, obstinate; the semantics is not quite clear)—was obtained through the same technique of subsequent dyeing, cinchinal and indigo, respectively. At the end of the 19th century, this color was obtained very deep, more likely reddish-black.

In addition, cream-grayish color—*chirki dandon* (the color of dental plaque) was used for small details of a pattern in old times; however, the technique of its making has remained unclear since it disappeared from embroideries long ago.

¹ *Isparak* is delphinium, larkspur, a kind of perennial yellow cup grasses. Yellow dye is prepared from flowers of this plant. *Tukhmak* is Japanese *Sophora* of papilionaceous family. It is up to 25-meter high tree, like acacia. It has small, yellow inflorescence, in large panicles. According to I.I. Krauze, it was used for the making of green dye (see: Krauze, 1872, p. 209).

Black color (*siekh*) appeared only in embroideries of the latest, third period; nevertheless, they in Samarkand had been able to get it since ancient times: it was one of the two basic colors in printing. But as concerning this production, they dealt with paper cloths¹; silk was not dyed in such a technique; black color was replaced (for example, in weaving) by a very dark blue color obtained from indigo dueling.

2.4. The putting of a pattern

Suzani were embroidered according to a preliminarily drawn cloth pattern. Self-made soot ink was used for light cloth embroideries, and a bright-colored substance, for example, clay, sometimes with a light mixture of syrup was dissolved in water for the making of dark cloth embroideries.

The drawing of patterns was performed by she-specialist graphic artists (*kelamkash*, *kalamkash*). They drew with cane pen (also used for writing) or little pointed stick. The techniques of drawing were peculiar. They first drew straight lines limiting the border—*oba* (*ob* is water)—from both sides and finally designated and drew all the rest. Initially, they put marks for large rosettes, around which the whole composition of panel was built. The place of rosettes was determined through measuring distance between their centers by fingers or a stick or laying the cloth far and wide several times: in such event, the places of intersection of cloth bends were marked as centers of to-be rosettes. Then there was pointed an external edge of a rosette: equal distances from its centers also were measured by fingers or a little stick.

Then, after having drawn a small rosette in the center, they placed vertical elements around it on radiuses. Having connected their edges with a wavy line, they received scalloped contour of a rosette's next circle, above which there again were put radial motives connected, for their part, by a scalloped line. The correctness of contour of an external circle was provided by preliminarily put marks. Benchmarks inside a rosette were radial motives. Using this technique, a graphic artist put relatively correct round rosettes onto the cloth referring to no stencil and reached the needed symmetry while the traditional nature of embroideries, starting with their dimensions and proportions that changed only following change of a style, eased all calculations. Though it was not difficult to make stencils, only one she-graphic artist we are aware of used this technique while working in the early 20th century: she drew rosettes by outlining a circle cut from a piece of cardboard.

Once main rosettes were drawn in details, fully, around them there was put a deciduous setting, which usually had had the form of a ring in earlier embroideries. A graphic artist, with the rosette contour in mind, drew in one line a ring, both sides of which she set with scallops and dents put by free, light movements of a pen. In first- and second period embroideries, a thin unfigured strip of contrast color, with straight, sharp dents dispersing from its both sides, often passed the center of deciduous ring. If such core of "leafs" was planned ahead, it was put in first turn: first, there were drawn dents on both sides of central unfigured strip, and then there was drawn the motive's exterior part. A deciduous pattern was put with no any marks. The hard hand and sharp eye, great experience and the very tradition of putting a drawing allowed *kelamkash* artist to draw complex, many-element patterns completely at once: no redrawing, especially at white cloth was possible because inks were very steady and could never be washed out.

Once all core elements of a composition were drawn, motives of second importance were put in the remaining incomplete places, also measured by eye. A graphic artist got the

¹ Narshakhi, 1897, p. 29–30

even distribution of patterns across the field and at the same time avoided the field's being overloaded.

As we can see, the technique of local graphic artists, studied on the example of the Samarkand material, radically differed from the European techniques of drawing that proceeds from a whole to particulars. On contrary, embroidery patterns were put onto a cloth starting with details.

Every graphic artist had her peculiar way of drawing. While some of them stretched cloth on a flat pillow (Urun-oy Umurbayeva), others kept cloth by weight by putting one its tip under the right knee and holding the other tip by left had. That is how Melik-oy Karimova drew: she says her grandmother, who taught her to draw, had also kept cloth so. Some Samarkand graphic artists put patterns by stretching the cloth by feet and keeping it by big toes. That is how a graphic artist in village Shahristan, North Tajikistan whose work I observed in 1926 drew.

Once a pattern was put, the marked cloth was ripped up, and every canvas was embroidered separately, sometimes by different people. Once the work was over, all strips were sewn together to make sure that patterns fit well.

2.5 Embroidery stitches

In years when the study of Samarkand suzani began, the technique of embroidery stitches was quite unstudied, and the author found out all the techniques embroideresses applied with their help and under their guidance. There was also studied the practical experience accumulated by Samarkand embroidering artel "The Labor of Woman", productions of which won a relatively broad glory. But in years when this book had the form of a manuscript, there were issued works containing description of embroidery stitches that distinguished Samarkand suzani¹.

The bigger part of Samarkand suzani is embroidered with *basma* stitch representing a kind of spindle stitch. The flooring thread—*nakh* (the Tajik-Persian is for thread)—is put slantwise a cloth and is stretched from the right hand to the left one, from one edge of a motive to the other one. Even when suzani as well as their patterns had their dimensions enlarged as a result of changes so that a rosette's circle reached to 60–70 centimeter diameter, the thread it had been embroidered with was stretched along the entire area of the circle. Once a needle at the tip of stretched thread was put onto right side, the thread was sewn to the cloth by rather frequent stitches—*zakhm* (the Tajik for stroke). Under this stitch, the cloth's wrong side also turns to be sewn rather densely, and that's why *basma* stitch requires hard work and considerable spending of threads. The stitch's manner is created by either diagonal rows of spindle stitches or flooring threads remaining in blank spaces between the spindles.

Basma is sewn toward hand (*peshi dast*—toward hand) and has several types depending on the following kinds of spindle stitches: elongated (*zakhmash daroz*), round (*zakhmash lunda*) and double (*kushma zakh*); as for the latter, two spindle stitches are put near and two next ones are put through a blank space.

Samarkand *basma* strongly differs from Bukhara or Nurata one. In Samarkand, a strongly twisted flooring line was stitched tightly to the cloth: stitch spindles formed a relief. In Bukhara and Nurata where silky thread is twisted weakly and is a bit flabby, the flooring is put freer while the cloth, on contrary, has spindle stitches sewn to it, so that they turn to be lower than the flooring that forms rollers.

¹ Sukhareva, 1954

The second kind of spindle stitch is *kanda-khayol* (in Samarkand-*khiyol*, a tear away *khiyol*), which differs from above by that stitches are put much rarer and moved onto the cloth's right side as if surrounding the flooring thread; only small, rare stitches appear to be at the wrong side. Such embroidery requires less silk, and the work is done quicker. *Kanda-khayol* is sewn from hand (*pushti dast*-by hand). In the studied period, this stitch was used in Samarkand poorly; it was used only for the embroidering of straight lines limiting the border. However, it apparently was spread much wider at older times. In large embroideries dated from 1850–1860s, *kanda-khayol* stitch is used for sewing small motives of the composition and rarer for sewing of floral rosettes or them-surrounding deciduous ornament. As an exception, there are met Samarkand small embroideries—*bolinpush*, *joynamaz*—wholly performed with this stitch. They are old-time white *mata joynamaz* from the Shahi-Zinda Mosque and Bukhara silk *bolinpush* dated back to 1890–1895 (both embroideries are from the collection of the Museum of Samarkand).

Kanda-khayol stitch was used wider in some other localities, for example, Urgut (near to Samarkand) where no *basma* was used for the embroidering before the Revolution and village Shahrstan (North Tajikistan) where in 1926 the author managed to see the embroidering with this stitch (no old embroideries were seen there, perhaps, because the village had been robbed many times by basmatches).

Specific type (see below) *suzani* are embroidered wholly with *kanda-khayol* stitch very artistically. Unfortunately, the place of production of such *suzani* is not reliably localized; however, technical peculiarities demonstrate that they were made no later than early decades of the second half of the 19th century.

In Samarkand, *kanda-khayol* gradually became out of use; however, it is to conclude from facts above that exactly this kind of stitch had been used for the embroidering here before. Probably, *basma* forced it out first from large embroideries and then from small ones, and it continued to remain only in strips limiting the border. However, these strips also started being embroidered with *basma* at the end of the second decade—the beginning of the third decade of the 20th century. This kind of stitch, which fully replaced *kanda-khayol* in Samarkand, probably, had been a later invention. However, we are unaware of facts to verify this.

The third kind of spindle stitch was called *chinda-khayol* (collectable *khayol*). That was a two-sided stitch applied for embroideries that also could be seen from the wrong side, such as belt shawls and towels (*tanpokkun*). Both they had been ornamented strongly in earlier periods and hanged on room walls along with larger embroideries.

Chinda-khayol stitch was made toward hand. A thread moves in ordinary stitch “needle forward” from one edge of a motive to the other, and the same happens on the wrong side; however, stitches had to fill the blank spaces between the right side's stitches. All they had to be of the same length; otherwise, a stitch turned to be rough.

Ordinary stitch also was known in Samarkand. Sometimes, it was used for the embroidering of skullcaps; but in large embroideries it was used only for the embroidering of smallest elements such as a pedicle or a small leaf.

Apart from flooring stitches, there were also applied special mounting stitches: they were used to outline deciduous elements while floral elements especially rosettes were never outlined. There were two kinds of mounting stitches: *ilmak* and chain-stitch. *Ilmak* (stitch) stitch, the Turkic *ilmak* for “hook” had, for its part, two kinds: *ilmak yaktarafa* and *ilmak dutarafa*, one-sided stitch and two-sided stitch, respectively; as to the former, a stitch was made from one, right side, as to the latter, a stitch was made from both

sides. This technique is described in details by R.Y. Rassudova¹. *Ilmak* stitch was used in Samarkand only in 1850–1860s and later became out of use. However, in some other regions, for example, Jizak, it continued to be used for the mounting of deciduous elements yet in the Soviet era.

Chain-stitch—*yurma*—made by hook that was balled *bigiz*, which is the Uzbek for awl had become the main mounting stitch in Samarkand since old times. The chain stitching was made after a *suzani* was completely ready and it-composing threads were sewn together again. A cloth was stretched in parts onto big round tambours—*chambarak*—that were put vertically when in operation. A thread, hold by left hand, was put onto a hook at the wrong side and, in the form of a small loop, was put onto the right side. The loop was strengthened with a next stitch. Chain-stitch is possible to be made with a needle; however, such was not practiced in Samarkand. Probably, the technique of tambour came here later and forced *ilmak* out. Nevertheless, in Samarkand it never occupied a position similar to that, for example, in Bukhara where a tambour (a hook) sometimes was used for the embroidering of a whole pattern of a *suzani*. Supposedly, in Samarkand we managed to catch the very last moment of *ilmak* stitch's being forced out by tambour.

To end talking about stitches that were used for decorative embroideries, we have to mention the method of application and the use of sewing-machine, with its stitch also used form in making the *suzani*.

The method of application sometimes was used for the making of *oba*. This was practiced when embroideries were made in a hurry and when there was shortage of silk. Woolen tapes of different colors that appeared in 1880s were used in Samarkand for this purpose. Sewing-machine stitch, as an element forming embroideries, started being applied, probably in 1890s or a bit earlier after sewing machines emerged in Samarkand.

Sewing-machine stitch occupied quite a definite place. Every embroidery with lining as a necessary attribute (*suzani*, *bolinpush*, *gavorapush*, and *joynamaz*) had, as a rule, an edge of slanting strip of another color and quality called *mazg* (inner); it was sewed in between the cloth and the lining. Often, an edge was sewed to embroideries of kinds above and also in cases when no lining was made, for some reason.

An edge requires a more attentive description since it was used by connoisseur anti-quarians for the dating of embroideries: *suzani* style and technique were steadier than that of kinds of cloths that went out of fashion quicker. At early embroideries, an edge was made of local silk and semi-silk cloths (*bekasab*, *olchinbar*, *adras*, and Bukhara *kanaus*). As soon as the early manufactured cloth Central Asia imported were put in use, they started being applied for the making of edges as well. That could be either red calico or red printed cotton with floral pattern of a brighter tint or a pattern with thin white strip. After that, they started making black edge at white cloth embroideries, yellow edge at red cloth embroideries, and red edge at yellow cloth embroideries. Sateen-made black edge was typical for later embroideries.

Unpretentious pattern made by sewing machine stitch, with threads of different colors, was put on such an edge. Though this fashion disappeared soon in urban localities, it did remain in rural ones, especially remote villages where it was used widely for the decorating of dresses as well.

¹ Rassudova, 1966



3. MANUFACTURE OF EMBROIDERIES EMBROIDERESSES AND GRAPHIC ARTISTS

The technique of production of embroideries within the studied period did not remain permanent. Applied decorative art was one of the kinds of work that resulted in the creation of material values and simultaneously spiritual culture values. It was subordinated to general course of economic and cultural development. The patriarchal-feudal system of the middle of the 19th century and the capitalistic system that replaced it at the end of the 19th century—the beginning of the 20th century determined either technique of production of embroideries or production relations inside this branch.

In 1850–1880s, when the number of embroideries made as a dowry was insignificant and embroideries were comparatively small, a considerable part of them was produced in a family with the direct participation of a bride if she turned to be relatively adult (such happened not always because girls usually had to marry very early). Part of embroideries was made by a bride's she-relatives, primarily, closest ones; however, participation of far relatives was not denied as well. Their work was not paid; however, there was a strict stocktaking of embroidered items; the family that had been rendered this service was obliged to pay for it by doing the same to the helpers. When it was necessary to hurry up for a wedding, the family of a bride arranged “helping” that gathered the bride's female relatives, neighbors and girlfriends, who made common efforts to end the work as soon as possible. “Helping” also was arranged when the only or beloved daughter was to marry, since parents wanted to make her wedding as solemn as possible. In such cases, the entertaining of those who had come “to help” acquired the scales of nearly a wedding feast. They tried to arrange it in summer using the abundance of fruits that were served in unlimited quantity prior to the traditional pilaf cooked in “a big cauldron”—the fact that measured scales of a feast. This “helping” had a special name—*chokduzon* (literally, “the sewing of the cutout”)¹. It is to conclude from this name that “helping” included the making of either embroideries or all the rest attributes of a dowry such as dresses, hats, etc.

Probably, the collective preparation of a dowry once was one of compulsory rituals fore-running a wedding. Later on, it was out of use and remained in people's memory as a survival and was recalled only in specific, exceptional cases. This is to conclude, on the one hand, from the existence of a special, very typical term similar to the names of other wedding rituals² and, on the other hand, from scales of entertaining that far exceeded everything served during “helping”, especially female one if it was arranged for the making of ordinary homework not related to wedding.

According to available information, ritual *chokduzon* stopped being obligatory a very long time ago. It was not such in the young years of artists Nusrat-oy Mirsayidova (1860s) and Urun-oy Umurbayeva (1870s). But as an exception, it had been observed till the early 1890s and then was quite forgotten. Urun-oy told that the last *chokduzon* she remembered had been performed prior to her niece's wedding in around 1890. She does not recall a single case of a later performance of this ritual. It appears from facts above that in the earliest period the author studied (1850–1870s), the production of embroideries had a clearly expressed nature of a pre-capitalistic organization of labor, most likely a family-clan one. However, purchase

¹ Term *chok*, literally “cut”, “cutout” designates any incomplete needlework, including embroidery under work

² Compare *parchaburron*—“the cutting out of dresses”, *rubinon*—“examination of the newlywed's face”, and *domodtalbon*—the invitation of a fiancé (more exactly, young son-in-law).



Fig. 1.
Graphic artist Melik-oy Karimova.
She draws a pattern having stretched
the cloth by fingers. Samarkand,
1938.

of readymade embroideries, sometimes at a bazaar and more often from an older female relative was practiced relatively broadly in Samarkand right then. Information about the dowry of graphic artist Urun-oy (1870s) is very illustrative in this regard: out of 10 embroideries she reported about, six were performed specially for her wedding (one of them was made by a female neighbor on paid basis), two were bought from relatives and two were bought at a bazaar. Later on, three embroideries of her dowry were sold to a she relative and a she-neighbor either upon their insistent request as they hurried to end preparations for the wedding or at the moment of need. This is to conclude from this information that a relatively considerable part of embroideries designated for dowry could be bought either from female relatives and neighbors or from a bazaar yet in 1870s. To tell the truth, Urun-oy had been an orphan since her early childhood, and that's why her dowry was prepared not too thoroughly or in beforehand. A dowry, including embroideries, usually was prepared since the very childhood of a bride. The first embroidery, often as the one wishing well (*niyat karda*), started being prepared when a daughter turned five. Of course, homemade embroideries constituted a bigger part of a dowry in such cases. Despite certain exclusiveness of example above, it does not lose its importance. There is a particularly remarkable fact of purchase of two embroideries from a bazaar that illustrates how early embroideries were put on the orbit of trade relations, which, following development in 1880–1890s, changed the nature of production of embroideries substantially.

Exactly in this, second period, a larger number of *suzani* for dowry started being ordered to professional embroideresses who were paid for their work. Nevertheless, the situation, as we could see, remained very motley till the end of the 19th century: along with making

embroideries for payment, embroideries went on being made by a family, often with the involvement of female relatives and sometimes through using the old ritual of *chokduzon*.

The situation changed fully by the beginning of the 20th century. Such an increase of the number of embroideries—especially in rich families—along with the enlargement of their dimensions made it quite impossible to produce a whole dowry at home, in a family. In addition, capitalistic relations that affirmed themselves in all vital activities shook ties of relationship. Compulsory participation of a bride's she-relatives in the production of embroideries was minimized gradually; only the closest relatives were an exception. Social differentiation broke up local society to a larger extent: wealthy families enjoyed hired work of professional embroideresses, who were growing poor layers of urban population. In several last decades prior to the Revolution, the bigger part of *suzani* was embroidered by hired embroideresses.

The making of embroidering a handicraft—the process that began in 1890s—became quite definite by the first decade of the 20th century. For example, nearly all embroideries of Urun-oy's elder daughter who married in 1906 were performed by embroideresses for payment. In the same way, to order, there were produced nearly all embroideries for her younger daughter though she married very late (as accustomed here), at 24 and thus, the family had had enough time to prepare her dowry at home. Nevertheless, out of 20 embroideries, as part of her dowry, only 3 small ones were made by the bride herself with the help of her girlfriends.

Following the appearance of professionals, who embroidered *suzani* to order, there was worked out a system of payment for their work. Maktob Mukumova recalls that at her young years, i.e. the early 1900s, payment was made in accordance with weight of silk spent for an embroidery. In making a *suzani* with *basma* stitch, the densest one, an embroideress received one *tanga* (equivalent to 15 kopecks) having spent as much silk as ten *tanga* weighed¹. If an embroideress worked using *kanda-khayol* or *chinda-khayol* stitch that was considered more difficult but required lesser threads, she received the same *tanga* having spent silk weighing not ten but eight *tanga*. To check whether an embroideress was honest, a cloth for *suzani* was weighed prior to and after it was embroidered. Given that silk was given for every kind of embroidery in compliance with strict, practice-proven calculation, this was enough to reveal even most insignificant theft. Later, probably, after 1905–1910, the system of payment for embroideresses' work changed a bit: payment started being defined depending on not silk weight but number of standard balls called *kalova* that weighed approx. 80 grams each. One *tanga* was paid for every spent ball of silk. This way of payment was called *kalova-bay*—"payment for a ball".

Embroidery art in Samarkand, after having finally become a separate branch in the very beginning of the 20th century, nevertheless, did not become a handicraft industry, a small trade industry. The making of *suzani* for market purposes, for an unknown buyer had no time enough to spread broadly; only small things such belt shawls and embroidered skullcaps to be sold at bazaar had been embroidered since old times. Urun-oy tells that her elder sisters, when they were young girls, earned for living by embroidering skullcaps—that was yet at the late 1850s—early 1860s. Of large embroideries, in sale at bazaar were separate specimens-*suzani* performed for someone's wedding and later one used in the wedding ritual and sold at hard time.

A special occasion for sale of embroideries was the intention to cure barrenness: the cure was considered to be more successful if it was undergone for money earned from sale of embroidery from a someone's dowry. Therefore, market price for embroideries was always very low, and production costs were not recuperated. Of course, such situation should have changed, and embroideries and so should all the rest inevitably should become a market goods. There are registered single facts demonstrating that such change had taken place in Samarkand at the end of the 19th century. According to artist Urun-oy, certain woman Amina-Sokhib, who

¹ I.e. around 30 grams

appeared and started trading textile goods (*bazzaz-zanak*) in Samarkand at the end of 1890s—in the beginning of 1900s, ordered embroideries to artists and embroideresses and subsequently offered them at a high price to rich houses where they hurried to conduct a wedding and had no time enough to prepare the needed number of sets. Urun-oy herself, as an artist who drew patterns, drew up to a hundred of different embroideries to Amina-Sokhib's order, while her elder sister, a hand tambour specialist, made the tambour mounting of patterns performed by another embroideress. According to other women's evidence, sometimes, orders also were received from traders of readymade dresses who also sold embroideries. Unfortunately, the tellers could not draw a single specific example (and that's natural), and their reports do not allow judging scales of such a practice.

Nevertheless, embroidering was not a profession till the end of the 19th century; practically every woman embroidered, and they in families used to teach every girl to this.

Artistic dignities of embroidery depend considerably on a level of technique. Apart from good quality of embroidery threads and their color, stitch quality was the most important thing fully determined by artistic skills of an embroideress. As to coloring, it depended on an embroideress to a very insignificant degree: it was defined by tradition that dominated at a certain period. An embroideress often received a patterned cloth from an artist: if cloth's ornament was complex, an artist sewed separate motives with colored threads to show what coloring it should be embroidered with. An embroideress could display her initiative only in regard to certain small details. Often, she embroidered only part of a panel: as we remember, after a cloth was patterned, it was ripped up, and every stitch was made separately sometimes by different people, especially if relatives helped a bride's family prepare a dowry. Under this, each of embroideresses, under work, did not see anything whole: very often, a piece she worked at was only part of a motive.

In other words, the embroidering was neither pattern-making nor, as a matter of fact, art: it was just a skill. However, artistic image of thing depended on it. Skilled embroideresses worked out their own "hand" that could easily be distinguished from others' works.



Fig. 2.
An option of *kordi-osh*
(kitchen knife) motif.
It is typical for the late 19th
century—early 20th century.
A drawing by Urun-oy
Umurbayeva.
1935

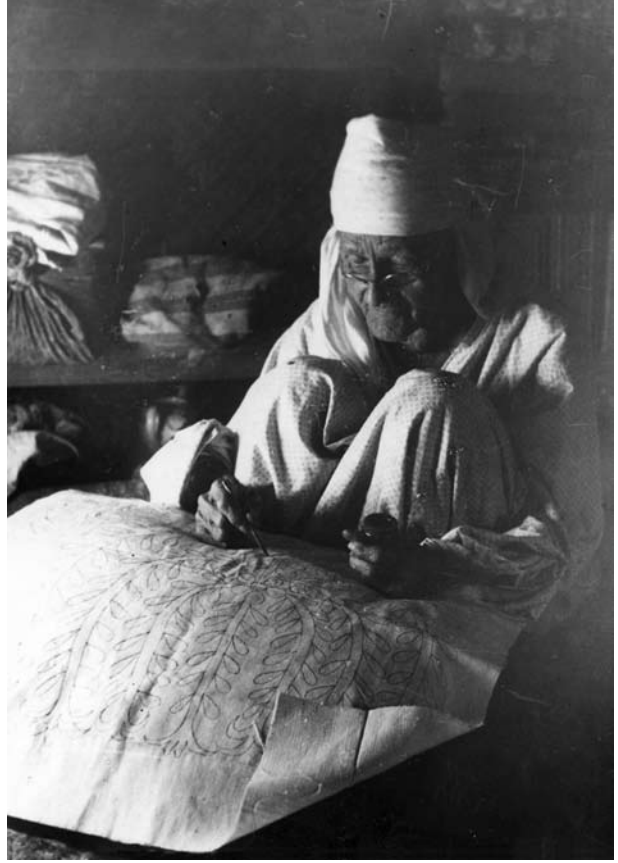


Fig. 3.
Artist Urun-oy Umurbayeva.
She puts a pattern having
put the cloth onto a pillow.
Samarkand, Guzar Suzangaron.
1938

Perhaps, the circumstance that the embroidering was neither a handicraft nor a profession but was considered an ordinary homework explains the lack of its link to ancient institutes and notions. No any traces of professional cult (for example, the funeral repast of a tutoress who taught them to embroider) have been discovered. This is to conclude that the embroidering of patterns appeared comparatively late when the labor process no longer was regarded as a magical process implemented with the help of supernatural forces. No such notions, as concerning the labor of embroideresses, were established. The only thing that can be noted is that an embroideress feared the evil eye. To be saved or save she who an embroidery was designed for from the evil eye, sometimes, they sewed a small black bead with white spots (*kuzminchok*) against the evil eye among patterns¹. Insignificant, purposefully ignored defects that could be seen in almost every embroidery were explained by the fear of the evil eye: usually, a certain insignificant part of a pattern was not embroidered or embroidery was made with an insignificant technical defect so that viewers neither were too much astonished with its perfection nor too much praired an embroideress's skill. It was accustomed to leave embroideries a bit incomplete so that families could see no end of holidays (weddings and circumcsions) which the embroideries were prepared for.

That said, embroidery art was not related to beliefs or notions that could have indicated that it took its origin from the depth of primitive system.

¹ Sukhareva, 1975

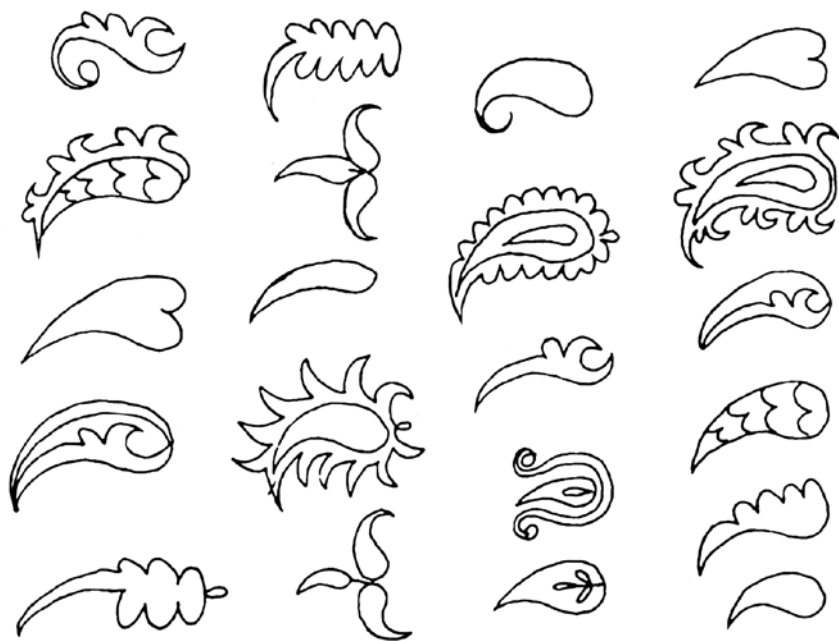


Fig. 4. Options of *kalamfur* (cayenne pod) motif. It was in spread since the middle of the 19th century. Drawing by Urun-oy Umurbayeva. 1935

As to the handicraft of a pattern artist, the situation is quite different: a whole number of notions and beliefs was related to it. Frankly speaking, at that its stage that we caught at the end of the 19th century—the beginning of the 20th century when old-time beliefs declined considerably and, the most important thing, strict understanding of embroidery's magical role was lost, this handicraft preserved not so many features that could allow identifying its primary nature. However, it is evident that here we deal with a phenomenon having stages that differ absolutely from that of embroidering.

According to some reports—for example, by excellent connoisseur of the old lifestyle Maktob Mukumova from suburban settlement Kaftarkhona who was born in approx. 1890—not every woman with artistic skills could draw *suzani* patterns, especially for strange persons for payment. A woman had to inherit her profession: to be taught fully by an old seamstress to the technique and methods of drawing and receive the permit prayer (*fotiha*), a kind of initiation, from her.

The permit prayer could be accommodated more or less solemnly and was accompanied by the sacrificial entertaining to do favor to the spirits of the deceased ancestors—graphic artists of past generations whom either the initiating woman or the initiated one took their origin from. This sacrificial entertaining had the name of *bushim taft* (the smell of the scorching), similar to that of all the rest bloodless sacrifices available in the animistic practice of either Samarkand or other localities. It was the duty of the initiated to bring foods for the ritual entertaining; however, all rituals, including the cooking of meals for the sacrificial entertaining, were performed by the old seamstress. The initiation not always was accompanied by such ritual: sometimes, for example, in the event of an old seamstress's deadly disease, the permit prayer could be read only through pronunciation of a ritual formula. The young, initiated woman later on arranged the sacrificial entertaining by herself through inviting other artists to attend it.



1. *Bolinpush*, motif *chorchiroq*,
Samarkand, 1850-1860



2. Djoynamaz, motif *chiroq*, Samarkand, end of the 19 -beginning of the 20 cc.



3. *Djoynamaz*, end of the 19 century



4. *Djoynamaz*, motif *otash-aroba*,
Samarkand, beginning of the 20 century



5. *Djoynamaz*, Samarkand, 1930



6. *Djoynamaz*, Samarkand region,
beginning of the 20 century



7. *Kars* (head shawl), Samarkand,
beginning of the 20 century



8. *Bolinpush*, Samarkand region, Urgut district, end of the 19 century



9. Suzani, motif *abri bahor*, *tegcha*, *chong*.
Samarkand, second half of the 19 century



10. Suzani, Samarkand region,
beginning of the 20 century



11. Suzani, Samarkand,
end of the 19 -beginning of the 20 century



12. *Bolinpush*, Bukhara, end of the 19 century



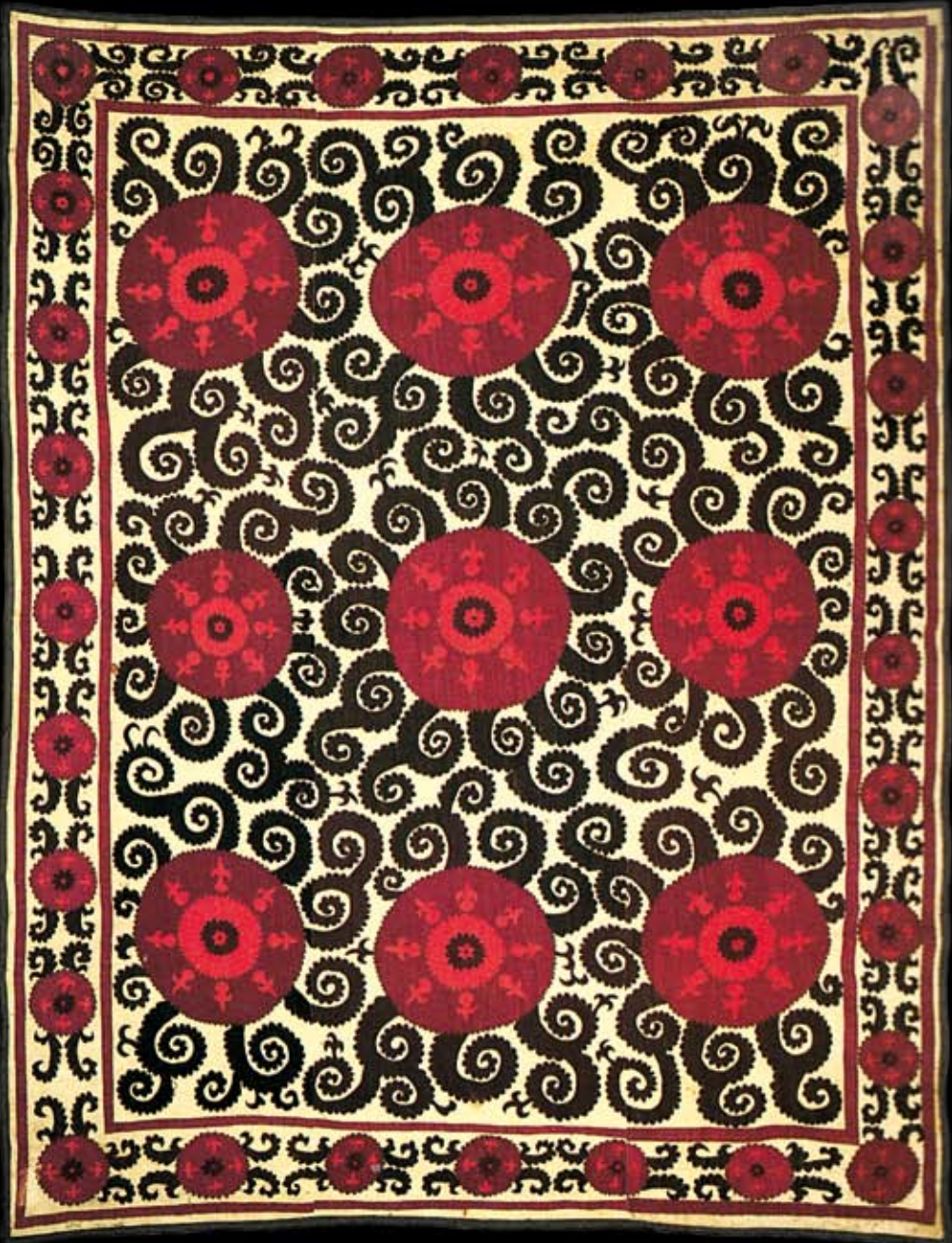
13. Suzani, Samarkand, beginning of the 20 century



14. Suzani, Shahrizabz, about 1900



15. Suzani, Nurata, about 1900



16. Suzani, Samarkand, about 1900

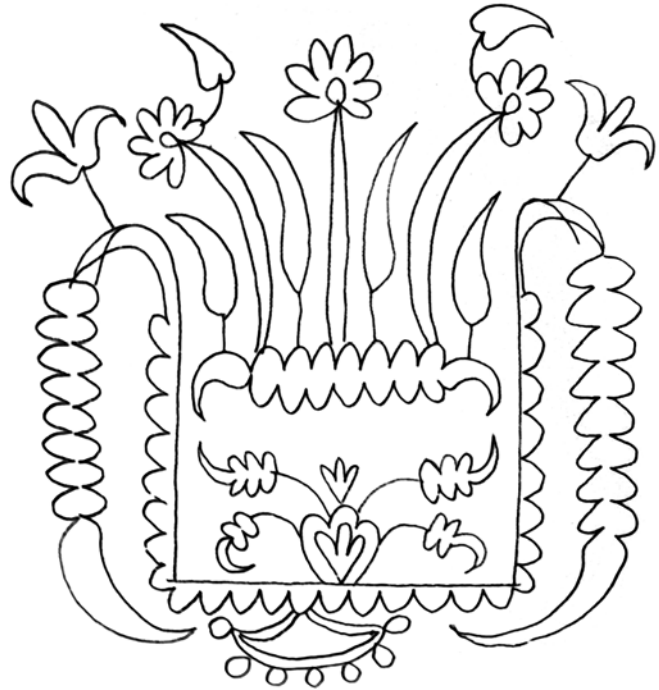
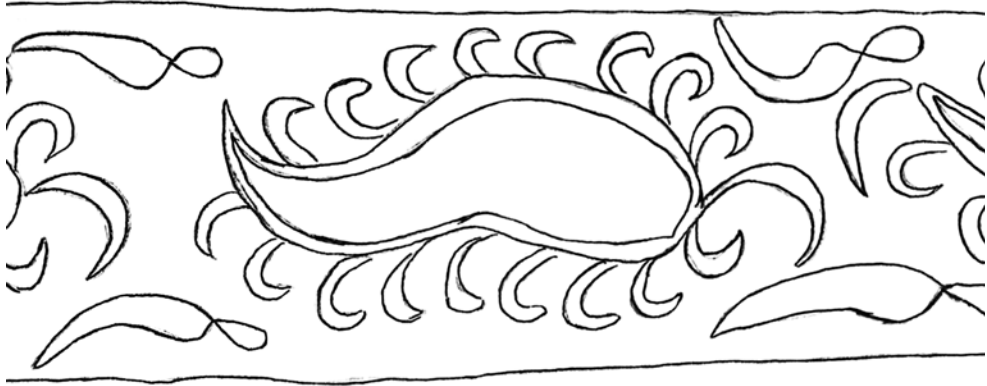


Fig. 5.
Sanduk-nuska (trunk)
composition.
It is typical for the first
decade of the 20th century.
Drawing by Urun-oy
Umurbayeva. 1934

The author also knows a case when, after having been satisfied with the permit prayer given allegedly in her sleep, resident of suburban settlement Kaftarkhona, Melik-oy Karimova, when she was yet a young girl, was taught by her grandmother to draw patterns. After having married and left for her husband's house, she gave up drawing. The grandmother died, and Melik-oy did not see her before she died and thus, received no permit prayer. Nevertheless, Melik-oy started drawing patterns again soon after that. She used to tell that her grandmother came to her in her sleep, ordered her to continue her business and gave her the permit prayer. Such cases reportedly were not single, and people regarded such kind of initiation as the lawful, valid one. Nevertheless, a pretender had to decide herself whether she could regard such a sleep as a permission to go in for this handicraft.

As believed, drawing patterns at *suzani*, especially for payment was either unethical or dangerous if no blessing was obtained: spirits of the deceased artists of this family could punish severely with a disease. Maktob Mukumova told that she remembered a story of a heavy disease that Hikmat-oy, an artist who became famous afterwards, had been taken with: she had her hands and feet so cramped that she could not straighten them. Her mother, who was a neighbor of Mukumova, used to tell that Hikmat-oy was punished by *pirs*, the handicraft's patrons, for that she had started drawing patterns for customers when her mother was alive, continued to draw herself and, therefore, could not give her daughter the permit prayer. The recovery, according to the teller, came after the mother arranged the sacrificial entertaining at the expense of Hikmat-oy, who asked her mother to forgive her, put a gift in front of her and told her the following: "Be satisfied". Having recovered, Hikmat-oy did not go in for drawing for several years. Her mother lived long: only when she became too old and could no longer display her art at full, she conceded the handicraft to her daughter having given the permit prayer to her. Only then, Hikmat-oy could become a professional artist. Nevertheless, she did not feel calm



and, while her mother stayed alive, systematically gave part of her earning and permanently made gifts to her in order not to make the mother disgusted.

That drawing is a profession inherited by succession is its important feature. Usually, drawing was succeeded on female, primarily straight line—from mother to daughter and sometimes, from grandmother to granddaughter. Only in rare instances, if a daughter turned to be unable to draw to did not want to go in for it, an artist was succeeded by a sister or a daughter-in-law, who, according to the custom, most often turned to be a in blood relationship with her mother-in-law and belonged to the same kin¹. For example, Urun-oy succeeded her handicraft from her elder sister instead of the latter's daughter who had married a rich man and did not want to work as an artist.

Cases of refusal from such a profitable female occupation at the time were, however, an exception. Sometimes, on contrary, there were two pretenders: two daughters or a daughter and a daughter-in-law; however, the permit prayer could be given to one of them only. It was believed that even if the old artist, in a move not to offend anyone, gave initiation to both pretenders, anyway, only one of them two would do good while the other one would not see things going well and would not receive any profit, so that she will have nothing to do but give up drawing.

The inheritance of any professional occupation by succession, extremely spread in male handicrafts, was connected, certainly, with the necessity of being taught. Naturally, pupils were primarily closest relatives, usually sons or daughters of a master or a seamstress. The passage of a profession by right to succession was particularly important in secluded feminine medium. Inborn abilities, of course, played a considerable role in such profession as drawing. Exactly such abilities usually determined, in the event of existence of several daughters or granddaughters, transition of the handicraft to one of the. For example, of two daughters of Urun-oy, her handicraft should go over to the younger one—Sharofat—who had drawn under the mother's observation for a relatively long period time, acquiring skills and the ability of kalam. She was reported to have reached a success in this; however, after her several children died, she gave up drawing as she feared that the misfortunes had been caused by the black color of patterns she had put onto cloth.

The ideological substantiation of transition of the handicraft of artist by right to succession proceeded from understanding that this work could not be done without help of the spirits of artists of past generations, primarily, the spirit of the deceased mother or grandmother. Such

¹ Sukhareva, 1975, p. 118–132



Fig. 6.

An option of *kordi-osh* (a piece of meat between knives). It is typical for 1880s. A fragment of ruidzho composition. Drawing by Kanoat Razykova

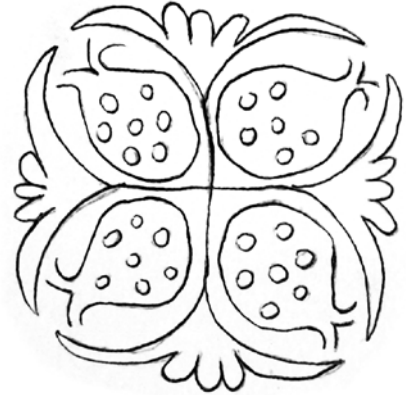


Fig. 7

Guli-anor (pomegranate flower) or *olma-anor* (pomegranate fruit composition).

It is typical for the second half of the 19th century. Drawing by Kanoat Razykova. 1938

understanding was related, probably, to idea spread widely in Central Asia that the spirit of a deceased ancestor has gotten into her successor and manages his work with his hand and directs his actions. Sorceresses, under the performance of rituals, said, for the example, the following: “This is not my hand by the hand of a certain” and called the name of she who they had received initiation from. This also explains the idea that it is no possible to pass a handicraft, regarded as a wonderworking one, to more than one person. Naturally, under strongly developed blood relationships, such a person was selected from a number of closest relatives. As to my question of whether an artist could teach to draw and give the permit prayer to a non-relative, I was replied, “she will not agree to do this” (in-ba rozi na meshud) proceeding exactly from the idea that the inheriting of a handicraft was something indivisible.

By permitting her successor to go in for her handicraft, an old artist promised that, after she dies, her spirit would help the initiated one in work. An artist, if she gave such prayer to a strange woman in the detriment to her relatives, as if would have passed either her own skills or the patronage of spirits of the past generations of her family artists by right to succession.

There is very illustrative text of the initiation prayer given by artist Hikmat-oy, who was under death, to her daughter Mukaddam. The prayer is written according to the latter’s words: “Kasmama Mukaddam-oy-bo donam. Hunaram-ba sohib shau, ba, daz sari man. Ruh-u arvokho rozi. Badaz sari man aovokham omada madam mekunad. Omin, oblokh akpar! Kamar bastam va nomi Shokhi-Mardon. Dili gamnoki moro shodi gardon” (I passed by business to Mukaddam-oy. Own my handicraft after I die. Spirits of ancestors agree (with this). After I die, my spirit will come and provide help. Amen, Great Allah. I girded in the name of Shokhi-Mardon, and make our pained hearts glad).

The belief in help provided to an artist by the spirit of her mother or grandmother who passed the handicraft to her induced customers to prefer that seamstress who had received initiation from a good, famous artist and had had a longer list of predecessors. Melik-oy Karimova told the author that “she is brought a lot of work as she is considered a successor (artist)” (“mana mirosi gufta-ba kalam mul mebiyoran”).

After having taken a handicraft over and earning due to it, every artist was obliged to spend part of her earning, from time to time, for the sacrificial entertaining to commemorate the spirits of the deceased seamstresses.

According to a belief, if an artist forgets or deviates from this, the spirits surely will remind her with a disease. In those rare cases when they started drawing for payment not having received the initiation, if, for example, an old artist could no longer draw but neither gave her profession

up nor passed it to another one, the young one thought she was obliged to arrange the sacrificial entertaining from time to time. However, she, as the one who has received neither initiation nor blessing by ancestor, had no right to perform the ritual. After having prepared everything for the entertaining, she asked the woman she had to succeed to perform the ritual. According to Mukumova, that is how artist Hikmat-oy, a daughter of her neighbor did; however, this did not prevent her diseases regarded as punishment by spirits. Maktob Mukumova observed all this personally as she was a neighbor of the Hikmat-oy's mother from who she received her knowledge of an artist as she herself had no relation to it. She also told the author about belief she was aware of: the handicraft of an artist should not stop in that family where it has existed since ancient times.

If an old artist died not having left her successor, she looked for a substitute after she died. "Her spirit appeared in a sleep of a certain relative she had selected, gave her the permit prayer and ordered her to continue to do the business of ancestors". If a successor of a deceased seamstress, after having received initiation from her in such a manner, turned to be lazy or refused to do work she was brought, "the spirit of her mother (or grandmother) was not rest in peace, thinking that the handicraft was humiliated" (arvokhi biyesh notindzh meshud, in khunar khur shud gufta), appeared in the careless women's sleep and, giving her an inkpot and kalam that the deceased used when she was alive, told her: "Take it, do not keep it under your feet, and take care of it". The latter, after having felt asleep, thought, "Perhaps, the spirit of my mother (grandmother) is not rested in peace, and that's why I saw this sleep". Then, she started painting not daring to give up the orders she was brought. Motives that forced the spirits of the deceased artists to get their business continued so stubbornly were, as believed, that they were afraid to be not commemorated and wanted to be provided with permanent reception of sacrifices.

So, the drawing of patterns for suzani (as concerning other kinds of embroideries, this matter remains quite unstudied) joins the system of ancient cults-born ideas that regards the real activity, including producing one also as a religious duty and serving to the spirits of those who taught to this profession.

This most ancient idea ascending to the idea of feeding of spirits influenced upon handicraft cults as well. A profession, more exactly, art of a suzani patterns painter and male feudal handicraft seem to be similar, to certain extent, something that allows to identify a very old, undoubtedly common basis. Apparently this basis is the root of ideas and rituals that made feudal handicrafts, to a known extent, a religious service and cloaked it with a mist of magical ideas closely interconnected with the very labor process¹.

These common features incorporate drawing of patterns with the circle of all the rest feudal handicrafts, and this constitutes one side of the position of artists in a society.

At the same time, the handicraft of an artist is distinguished for its deep archaic features: the idea that it can be passed over only to one person in a family who, as it was understood, would act enjoying the help of the spirits of the deceased seamstresses, especially, the spirit of an artist who had given the initiation; the belief in the necessity of transition of the handicraft to the next generation, so that if an artist had no time enough to do it when she was alive, her spirit would not rest in peace until it selected a certain relative and gave her the permit prayer in her sleep. All this makes the handicraft of an artist similar to not female feudal handicraft but rather the professions of sorceresses, midwives, shamans and other persons who exercised animistic cults. But such puts the handicraft of an artist in quite another, non-production medium.

However, ancient notions about the handicraft of artist had disappeared by the end of the studied period almost fully while the modern generation is unaware of them at all.

¹ Sukhareva, 1960

The work of an artist was creative one. Although the ornament and the composition were strictly traditional, and an artist accumulated the knowledge of patters that had been drawn by seamstresses within her life, and though the composition of motives in fashion at a certain period of time was not too wide, each of the artists brought something of her own invention to the common box. Some of them improved the line and form of traditional ornament through attaching individual peculiarities to it-such was due to their practice but no way preliminary thought. Such was Urun-oy Umurbayeva. Being in contract with her over many years, under observation of methods of her work and permanent conversations with her on this topic, the author never heard from her that she had invented or introduced a certain motive. On contrary, she used to tell often that, when she attended someone's wedding, she kept her eye at suzani at walls and, if she liked a certain pattern, she drew it for memory at a piece of paper when she came home in order to use this pattern under the creation of further composition. It seems that she borrowed the very principle of a motive but created its form herself. Indeed, she had preserved a whole pile of such sketches that she showed to me recalling where and when she had seen a certain motive she liked.

Other artists, with a vivid imagination, invented or developed motives themselves; their work, not being of such high quality of Urun-oy's, drew attention by the originality of idea. Kanoat Razykova was such an artist. She was born two decades later than Urun-oy; her young years covered 1880s when embroideries tended to change, and the past power of tradition started getting weaker. This, probably, is the explanation for that she could afford certain liberties: she interpreted and gave an option of motives known at her time in her own manner. Frankly speaking, she did such experiments by drawing her own dowry that, upon a request by the author, she drew as embroidery by embroidery, in a bit reduced form. Whether she had repeated the same drawings for making embroideries for strange persons remained unclear. She decisively moved the old motive of "skimmer" that had the form of a round profile flower to a real household thing. The motive of "kitchen knife", also deeply traditional one, was drawn by her as a kind of still life: after having drawn two knives very stylishly, she put a piece of meat (exactly the one cut by such knives) between them two. The meat had to be embroidered with red (crimson) while the knives-with black. Probably, the motive looked very decoratively when it was ready. This artist also performed, to a museum's order, a lot of small drawings-patterns for skullcaps where she performed in her distinctive way the traditional motive of pomegranate fruits, figs that had never been drawn before, and some other new motives. She explained that when she was young and just started her career of an artist, the motives "escaped her heart" (*az dilam jushida meboramad*). Her drawing was a bit rough but everything was compensated due to her ability to mount real vital subjects into ornament.

The same features distinguished Melik-oy Karimova who also performed many drawings for a museum. Interpretations of the motives she drew are very interesting. One of them should have depicted *haus* (a reservoir) surrounded by thick *karagacha* trees (a kind of elm-tree). The drawing had the form of a rosette (that was exactly *haus*) with four stylized trees stretching from it on radius.

Another drawing depicted the ancient motive of cayenne pod (*kalamfur*) described in details below; she drew it in quite a new way with another thinking. She told that when she had been preparing a work for a museum she went to see her neighbor kolkhoz workers in a search of new motives. Having seen a luxuriant bush of cayenne, full of fruits, she decided, "I need to draw a kolkhoz cayenne". Melik-oy made the old motive of cayenne, always of second importance at earlier suzani, the main one in her composition that depicted the real plant in a stylized form.

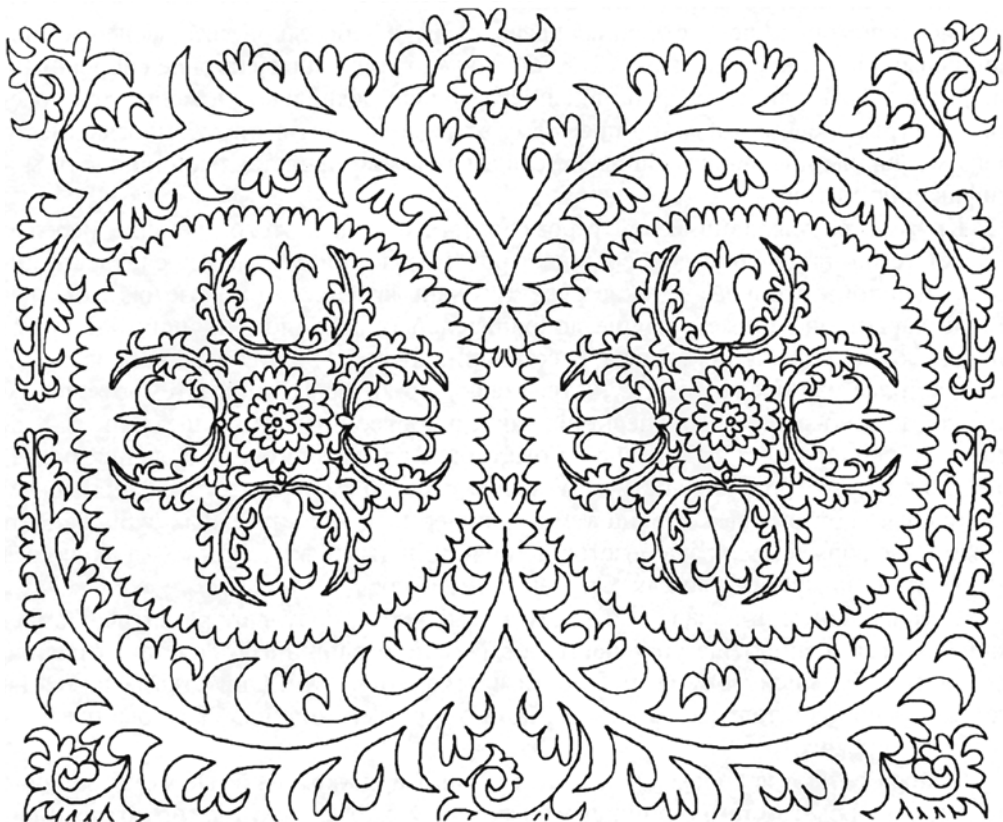
Artists recreated all these patterns much later than they put them onto the cloths of real embroideries. However, in recalling their compositions, each artist unwillingly reproduced the very changing conditions, in which she had been formed as a seamstress: Urun-oy, the oldest

of them, never receded from canonized ornament and its interpretations; Kanoat Razykova used traditional motives through transforming and enriching them with a new sense; and Melik-oy Karimova tried to create new compositions receding from the traditional understanding of motives (for example, by uniting a rosette and radial elements stretching from it into a kind of subject or landscape).

And what about numerous unknown artists? They worked to renew ornament, create many new motives and rethink old ones. We do not know their names, real conditions of their life and activity, concrete contribution of each of them to the common treasure, but it goes without saying the exactly they—the generations of artists—played the main role in development of the decorative embroidery art.

The study of large decorative embroideries, as a considerable branch of applied art and a specific production, uncovered the ways of its development at a time when the society was under transition from old, feudal and it-containing pre-feudal relations to capitalistic system. Rapid changes covered either the economy or domestic life. They also affected such a branch that seemed to be far away from market relations as the production of large decorative embroideries. Economic trade, in penetrating Central Asia's economy, concerned the embroidering as well. The family-clan style of production of embroideries transited first toward handicraft, work to order, and then to a market production.

Fig. 8. A *bolinpush* pattern with a *kuknor-nuska* (poppy head) motif (in the center of rosettes). Embroidered for the dowry of Urun-oy Umurbayeva's daughter (wedded in 1906)



4. COMPOSITION AND ORNAMENT

The composition of patterns for every kind of embroideries was defined by the latter's practical designation and was strictly traditional. Its principles remained common for all embroidering regions, an indication of the similarity of genesis and history of development of embroideries of this kind. Insignificant differences existed just in few places.

Border was an organizing matter for the arranging of a pattern. It dictated the format and proportions of a panel, settled relations of the sides and outlined the area where a pattern, with all its components attached, could be placed. Proportions worked out by many generations of artists and embroideresses were the starting point of the process of creation of every specific composition. Artists' peculiar manner of starting a pattern exactly with border indicates how important the role of border in the arranging of patterns was. They could not build a composition if there was no border.

The placing of border depended on a specific kind of embroidery. If an embroidery work was typical for ornament's even distribution throughout the cloth (*suzani*, *bolinpush*, etc.), the border covered it like a frame. Early white cloth embroideries dating back to the first period often depict a composition with two rows of border: one of them, the outer one (*kuri beruni*) stretches along the edge while the other, inner one (*kuri daruni*) divides the panel into two rectangles of the same dimensions. The inner one can be regarded as the central field of embroidery; the bigger one is visually considered a broad, multi-row border. Such a composition is illustrative of general features of Samarkand and, for example, Nurata embroideries typical for a broad, multi-row border. Influenced, probably, by this analogy, G.L. Chepelevetskaya calls a fragment of an old Samarkand *suzani* drawn in her book a border¹, but this is a mistake: the nature of the fragment leaves no doubt that the table depicts part of the embroidery's central field enfolded between the outer border and the inner one.

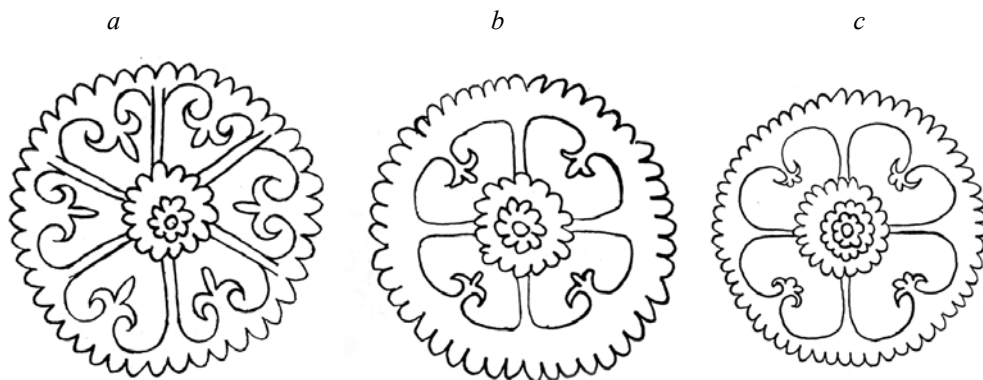
Difference between Samarkand *suzani* having such a composition and Nurata ones (as well as Bukhara ones and some kinds of Tashkent ones) is considerable. While the patterns of the border and central field of the latter are different and strictly borders the canvas, there is no such contraposition in Samarkand *suzani*: the composition's main elements—rosettes bordered by deciduous ornament are of the same form, color and size—are placed evenly throughout the panel, as if no inner border exists at all. So, it does not break the integrity of the main pattern. Typically, Samarkand seamstresses themselves always meant only a narrow border under *kur* (border) that, in their view, can be either inner or outer.

At embroideries having free center not sewn by ornament (*ruyidzho*, *joynamaz*) where the pattern stretches along three sides of the cloth in the form of a broad strip, the border limit it from both sides. In approaching the fourth (narrow) side, the border and so does main ornament interrupts and thus, makes the composition a bit incomplete.

However, it goes without saying that this composition was not occasional by specially designed. Its incompleteness was explained by not lack of taste or understanding but a serious, in seamstresses' view, reason.

The symbolism of the whole marriage ritual, with embroideries as its indispensable attribute, prompts what this reason could be. When *ruyidzho* was laid on bed, border-free side was put toward the newlyweds' feet. Probably, such had a certain relation to idea that ornament's being reserved, close could disturb, according to the law of magical participation, the lucky destiny of newlyweds, cause of a loss of ability to have children since such could have been caused, according to a belief, by the locking up by an enemy under the conduct of wedding

¹ Chepelevetskaya, 1961, p. 32, col. Table X



ritual. Such cases were often rumored among women when such a way hurt a fiancé's potency or a bride's barrenness. "The opening"—*kushoish*—was a formula of good exorcism while expression "*bakht kushoda shavad*"—"let happiness be opened"—was a common wishing well to a girl or a young woman.

Joynamaz, as a kind of embroidery, appeared evidently later (it did not join the composition of indispensable set), and its ornament's being open-ended imitated, probably, a *ruyidzho* composition. However, the designation of *joynamaz* made its pattern's being open-ended logically justified: under a prayer, they stood with their feet at free space so that the image of lancet arch (*mihrab*), reproduced in the form of a pattern appeared in front of the eyes of the praying man who would have bent his head toward it under making a bow.

The ancient kind of embroideries that disappeared at a later period—*buyrokars*—also had free, not sewn center; however, unlike *ruyidzho* or *joynamaz*, the embroidery covered the whole canvas in the form of a comparatively broad frame, a kind of complex border, the middle of which was filled in by the main, larger ornament, and both sides of which were bordered by two narrow strips, one regarded as inner one and the other one regarded as outer one.

Embroidered friezes decorating the upper part of a wall—*zardevor*, a longer one, and *zebitakhmon*, a shorter one (known in Samarkand only at the latest period)—were, like *suzani*, framed by a border from four sides. The panel, usually made of the same part of manufactured cloth, was covered with solid row of small arches formed by border above; a pattern, usually having the form of a small bush, was arranged inside every small arch.

Cradle bedspread—*gavorapush* (a kind of embroideries also known in the latest, third period)—was also surrounded by border frame; the same border divided its inner field into four parts in accordance with form and dimensions of a cradle: two parts located on each side had the form of elongated parallelograms; two other ones that covered head of the bed and foot of the bed represented isosceles triangles. A pattern was arranged separately in each of the parts. As we can see, it also had inner and outer border.

Bugchapech embroidery was of bigger sizes as it was designed for the rolling of soft things such as bedclothes and dresses. It was ornamented only in the middle that was seen when a pack of things was put onto a trunk. In putting a pattern, an artist laid a canvas in an angular position in the form of big rhomb. A pattern was designed in the middle; at equal distance from the corners, within a square or a rectangle whose dimensions depended on the size of trunk. The embroidered ornament was framed by border.

That said, border was the indispensable component of all kinds of Samarkand embroideries as it defined the design of ornament. Border could be either inner or outer; however, the



Fig. 9. Samarkand suzani rosettes (a, b), Urgut *bolinpush* rosette (c); typical for 1870s

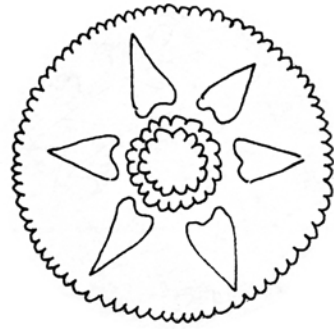


Fig. 10.
A rosette with vegetable (*shalgam*—turnip) motifs

steady peculiarity of Samarkand embroidery was that it always was made narrow. The bigger part of a panel was designated for patterns.

General nature of the composition of Samarkand embroideries changed quite insignificantly within the studied period. The most principal change is that inner border disappeared from the composition of suzani and *bolinpushs*. As for the rest kinds of embroideries, it was compulsory due to the very nature of composition. At old-style suzani and *bolinpushs*, the inner border also was not accidental: that is, probably, how creators of compositions tried to make kinds of embroideries that required no inner border join general course. However, inner border, with no artistic necessity here, went out of use gradually.

The ideas of how the space of panels should be filled were different in different regions. The degree of a field's being filled in with ornament and its importance in the artistic image of cloth showing through patterns was a substantial feature of each local style. In Samarkand, a cloth was put with ornament rather densely; however, the background was always visible and united motives into a pattern. Cloths of modest colors were used as a background at different periods; specific gamma was developed for each of them for the reasons of embroidering; as a rule, a background had to contrast the coloring of ornament.

Ornament consisted of numerous separate motives. The latter included small ones (more or less simple) and large, complex ones inclusive of several elements that could be met in different combinations. As stated above, the tradition's demand was that all elements of ornament should be attached floral form; that's why motives, for rare exception, were divided strictly, especially at white cloth embroideries, into floral ones and deciduous ones. At white cloth embroideries, this also defined coloring; at colored cloth embroideries, it was more conditional- deciduous motives there not always were distinguished for a corresponding color.

Main patters, bigger and brighter ones, occupied strictly determined positions in a composition and dictated the very nature of the composition. Some of supplementary patterns that were relatively large and localized also played an important role. A composition was supplemented by all kinds of small motives—*bachki* (probably, derived from *bochagi* (childish), i.e. “small”); their position and role were not regulated: they were placed at blank spaces between patterns. Every region practiced its general norm of filling in the panel's area; but anyway, neither “gaping” nor overloading of ornament was allowed. Exactly the freedom, with which artists could choose and place small motives, explains while not traditional forms but recreated ones are met among them. For example, at embroideries in some regions, especially Nurata, it is possible to see quite realistically (though schematically) depicted jugs, small birds or

even human figures¹. Such was untypical for Samarkand. The absence of such details is one of peculiarities of the Samarkand embroidery: prototypes of motives here were so ornamented that it was no possible to add a certain realistic subject to an embroidery work.

Nevertheless, motives were attached specific sense (strengthened in their name); in artists and embroideresses' idea, they depicted the real world though in conditional form. However, being united into an integrated composition, they did not form a common subject—such was absolutely ruled out according to the traditions of Central Asian decorative art. In combining various motives at a panel, seamstresses never cared of making them either semantically close or logically interconnected. A bush could have depicted pomegranate fruits, cayenne pods and a motive depicting a jewelry work. The composition of rosette—“a tulip”—included the motives of knives, fruit and vegetables (turnip or carrot at later embroideries) and even symbolized the images of a train (*otash-aroba*). Even in cases when ornament consisted of plants of the same kind, for example, vine (*joynamaz* of the early 20th century), the composition was not regarded as the image of a vineyard: each bush existed by itself as a separate motive not connected with the rest ones; part of the bushes could be replaced by rosettes or “*samovars*” to the same success. The fact that a *joynamaz* ornament consisted of quite the same vines more likely illustrates that the new style of Samarkand embroideries tended to uniformity of pattern elements.

Motives at a panel were united not logically, with a plot but just in compliance with the beauty canons that were established and dominated in a respective embroidery region at a certain period of time. This principle of building of ornamental composition was typical for the whole Central Asia. Literature references assumed interpretation of the Kyrgyz ornament as a kind of pictographic writing, “narration”². Nevertheless, the whole experience of ethnographic study of traditional forms of applied art does not confirm such a belles-lettered interpretation of ornamental compositions.

Patterns designed for white cloth differed from that designed for colored cloth by either coloring or ornament nature or even compositions. In Samarkand, these differences were so substantial that it is expedient to examine white cloth embroideries and colored cloth embroideries separately, by tracing the historical dynamics of both.

4.1 White cloth embroidery

White cloth embroideries always were considered most important, valuable ones. They were performed more thoroughly, sewn denser and required a greater volume of silk: that's why they were more expensive. The white background provided better opportunities for coloristic solutions and, naturally, the artistic quality of these embroideries was higher.

The basis of pattern of white cloth embroideries, at all three stages of its history, was large, densely sewn rosettes and them-combining deciduous borders. These two elements of the ornament, especially rosettes, with their strict symmetry, defined the whole nature of a composition.

Let's examine in details elements used for the creation of white cloth panel compositions: separate motives and patterns.

One of ornament's principal elements, a rosette in Samarkand and so was in some other localities was called *lola*, “a tulip”. However, the initial meaning of this word was forgotten long ago; seamstresses understood it as the name of a round floral motive having no pedicle that would have reported the form of a profile flower to it. (Motives of profile flowers are met

¹ Chepelevetskaya, 1961, p. 84, Fig. 53, table 7, 9, 36, 37, colored table XIV

² Artist M.V. Ryndin who received backing from other art critics; see: Ryndin, 1948, Chepelev, 1939, p. 42 and archeologist A.N. Bernshtam (see: Bernshtam, 1948)

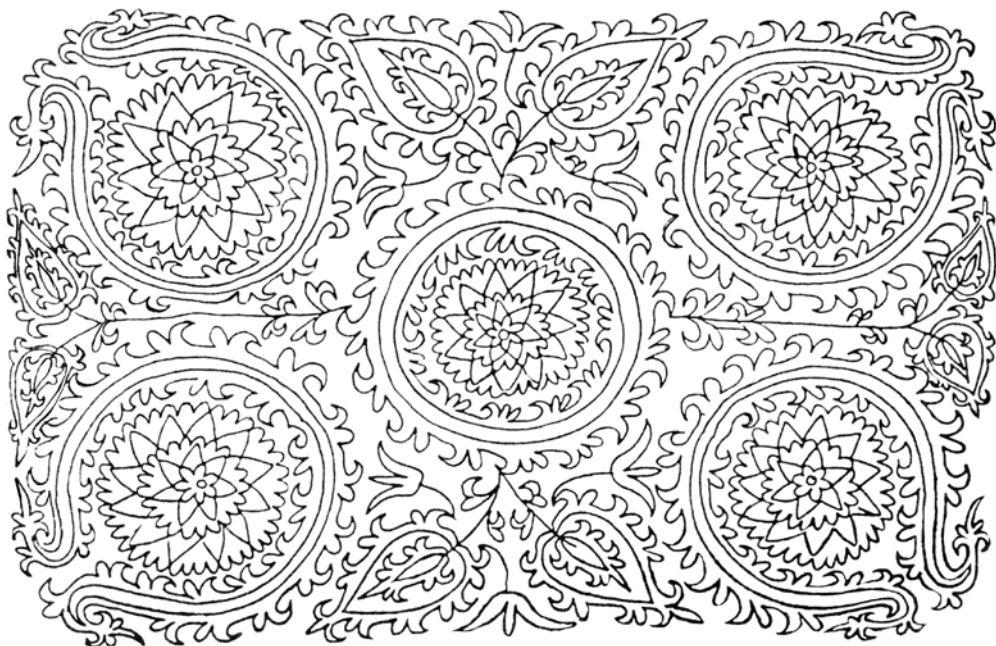


Fig. 11. A *bolinpush* white cloth composition typical for 1850–1860s

at Tashkent white cloth embroideries¹, but are not typical for Samarkand *suzani*). Apart from large rosettes that serve as the basis of a composition, the composition of a pattern could be inclusive of small elements in the form of a circle (usually with scalloped edges) called *lola-cha* (the diminutive from *lola*). The following names of rosettes—*oy* (the moon) accustomed in Tashkent, and *oftob* (the sun) accustomed in Bukhara rural localities in regard to small rosettes—were not known in Samarkand. This semantics that can be related to astral motives was strange for Samarkand embroidery ornamentation.

A rosette (or a small rosette) could have quite a simple form of a one-color circle, similar to large rosettes of Tashkent *palaks* (*palyaks*) and Jizak *suzani*.

But in Samarkand, such was typical, not always, for small rosettes only. Large ones, which occupied the main position in a composition, usually themselves were peculiar compositions where the form of a circle united a lot of separate elements or motives. Having the most complex structure and coloring were the rosettes of old-time white cloth Samarkand *suzani*. They consisted of 5 to 7 concentric rings of different colors. The outer one that always occupied a substantially larger area than others, indispensably was crimson, of deep lilac tint that defined the whole cold coloring of a rosette and yielded the determinative spot in the color gamma of a composition. The next ring, situated closer to the center, was either bright red (as we remember, it was performed with wool in earlier embroideries) or light crimson, almost pink (this color was obtained from dyeing of silky threads in a weak cochineal solution after other threads were dyed dark crimson in it). Then, there followed a reddish-violet ring, also very dark, or a blue ring. Further, colors could recur.

¹ Chepelevetskaya, 1961, tables 38, 39

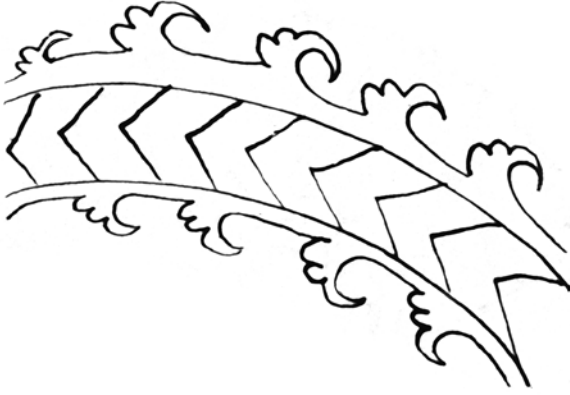


Fig. 12.
Deciduous ornament
with *abri-bakhor*
(spring cloud) core

On radiuses from the background of broad outer crimson ring, there stretched motives that were very typical, we can say indispensable for earlier period embroideries. Most popular motive of such a composition is lancet-shaped and called *tegcha* (the diminutive from *teg*—blade, knife). The second motive resembles an anchor-shaped figure with its blade upwards; it could be a small bush ending with two small leaves sharply straightened out toward opposite directions and a scallop between them. This detail stopped being reproduced at Samarkand embroideries so long ago that even very old women knew neither its name nor its designation in 1940s. After long questions, only one of the artists, with the help of other old interlocutors, recalled that this motive was called *chong* and that it was the name of a certain tool, like scraper used for currying (no such name is available at dictionaries).

Rosettes of another composition are also met, frankly speaking, seldom at old embroideries. The number of them-forming rings is not large; nevertheless, the size of outer ring increases at their expense. In rhythmical recurrence, it has enough place for a relatively large element in the form of straight cross that reportedly had the name of *chillik* or *chorchillik*. This word means “tip-cat” (a small stick thrown up by a longer one in child’s play). The cross is formed when the small stick is seized by the edge of the longer one to be thrown up. The same is the name for cross designated for the spinning of coarse woolen threads, accustomed, for example, by the mountainous Tajiks¹; no such production was known about in Samarkand.

In 1880–1890s when the dimensions of white cloth decorative embroideries, especially *suzani* had increased very much, their rosettes also became larger. At the same time, they became simpler by structure and stricter by coloring. The number of them-forming rings, including a small ring in the center, decreased to 3–4. The colors of rosettes continued to keep only three tints of red: remaining the principal one is crimson, but this time of a deeper carmine tint, with no previous lilac tint; it is combined with bright red (this time performed by not imported wool but silk dyed by local dyers with the help of artificial dyes); and there is a little portion of dark cherry blossom, almost brown-*dolchini* (literally, *dorchin* is cinnamon). Red elements, still inclusive of *tegcha* motive, are placed radially on crimson outer ring; sometimes, instead of this motive we can see a relatively luxuriant bush representing a modification of *chong* motive.

The small ring that constitutes the center of a rosette of the then embroideries often is dark cherry blossom, thus giving rosettes the deep; this can be considered an artistic invention since such rosettes were very beautiful. Rosettes of this period are also typical for the presence of supplementary scallops stretching above the edge of outer ring, at a certain difference one from another. We also meet them at either earlier specimens where the deciduous

¹ The Tajiks of Karategin, 1966, p. 219, fig.s 7, 9



Fig. 13.
Deciduous ornament
with *tir-u kamon*
(rainbow) core

pattern is embroidered dark green with bright red-green core or later ones, this time with black deciduous pattern. Serving an example are very large *suzani* (4m/5m) where rosettes' diameter reaches to 50 centimeters or over. Going behind their outer crimson ring is a ring of dark cherry blossom supplementary dents. This technique—the supplying of rosette edges with additional scallops—was also met at earlier colored cloth embroideries.

These new features developed later, in the beginning of the 20th century. Samarkand seamstresses simplified the form and limited colors and tints to reach a great monumentality and decorativeness. They give up either supplementary scallops or red's third tint-dark cherry blossom.

Only crimson and cinnabar red colors now remain. Therefore, the presence of dark cherry blossom in rosettes' coloring may be indicative of dating.

Bright red motives located radially continued to play an important role in the composition of rosettes of white cloth embroideries made in the very beginning of 1900s. But this time they became rather large, massive. Initially, they were elements resembling a vessel-shaped fruit narrowing toward its neck where it ends with three dents. The names of this motive—*guli anor*, “flower (more exactly, fruit) of pomegranate” and *kuknor*—“poppy head”—reveal its prototypes. The first of them—pomegranate fruit—was certified at many early artistic monuments; its symbolism is clear: a pomegranate full of seeds was considered in either ancient times or the beginning of the 20th century a talisman designed to provide fruitfulness. The same is the importance of poppy fruit full of small seeds.

As far as these figures seemed too large, on both sides from them there were placed thin, upward-looking shamrock *poiyi murg*—“the pad of a bird (hen)” or “the pad of a falcon” if two leaves are upward and the third one is downward. These motives were very popular in Central Asian ornamentation¹.

Pomegranate or poppy motives went out of fashion rapidly. They were replaced by large images of vegetables: carrot, turnip and tomato (*sabzi, shal gam, bakarajon*). The form of the first one resembles, to extent, old *tegcha* motive but, unlike the latter, the element's lower tip is not hidden by the edge of a next one that is closer to the center of ring; thus, a whole vegetable is visible. Perhaps, there is no succession here at all: the prototypes of “carrot”, “turnip”, and “tomato” motives were, indeed real: the latter succeeded a small hollow in the lower part from the real tomato.

Rosettes were placed at *suzani* in rows, at equal distances one from another, in strict order one under another and thus usually formed three horizontal and four vertical rows (when hanged,

¹ Pisarchik, 1975



Fig. 14.
A pattern *chorchirok*—
“four-wicked oil lamp”.
Typical for the 1870s.
Drawing by Urun-oy
Umurbayeva.
1935

the shorter size is considered a *suzani*'s height). As a rule, all rosettes were of the same size. At *bolinpush* embroideries, the rosette placed in the center often was bigger than other ones; such made the composition centralized. At a later period, such rosette often was made so large that it ousted all the rest rosettes and remained the only one: combining with it were only the deciduous border and smaller patterns put in corners in the form of profile flowers. Rosettes at *ruyidzho* and *joynamaz* ornaments had the same size and were placed in two vertical rows. Sometimes, a supplementary rosette of the same size and composition is placed in the middle of a *ruyidzho* ornament, at a place where a P-shaped border forms horizontal bar.

The deciduous part of ornament of Samarkand-made old embroideries is dark green and thus is called *pistoki* (“dark green”). This term designated all patterns of deciduous nature (options had their own names). The deciduous framing of rosettes initially was rather monotonous and met in three options.

At the oldest embroideries, the framing most often represented a not wide ring surrounded from both sides by sharply downward-looking curls on comparatively long stems. Such was the deciduous pattern of a *suzani* in the dowry of Nusrat-oy (wedded in 1875): this pattern still remained in use at the time but was considered outdated one: for this reason, Urun-oy did not want to make it at her embroideries (the patterns were drawn by either her or her elder sister). The majority of informers called this pattern *gardani shutur* (camel's neck). Urun-oy did not know this name and thought the pattern was just “a curl”—*djinghila*; names of such sort usually were given when the semantics of a motive was forgotten or unknown as the motive was a borrowed one. That the name of “camel's neck” was not occasional is to conclude from the presence of this term in ornamentation of carpets in either Central Asia¹ or Turkey². In both cases, the basis of the pattern represents downward curls. The Turkish option reveals a motive's apparent closeness to the natural one.

¹ Moshkova, 1970, table XXIV, 77, 9

² Budagov, 1869, p. 486

The second kind of deciduous pattern of old embroideries (chosen by Urun-oy for her *suzani*) resembles a luxuriant garland decorated with relatively long dents and scallops from both sides. It was known under the inexpressive name of *davra-pistoki* (round-green) or *doyra-pistoki* (green in the form of tambourine); there was also used the name of *chamberek* (tambours), which were round in Central Asia.

In the third option, the deciduous framing at embroideries of the first, earliest period also could consist of two semicircles covering rosettes and with tips almost closed in. From both sides the semicircles were decorated with scallops and pointed dents. The upper tips of semicircles sometimes are bent toward opposite sides. This allows assuming their genetic link to the conditional images of knives, as shown below. Deciduous ornament in the form of two semicircles was applied, probably, primarily at smaller size embroideries—*bolinpush* and *joynamaz* ones. It was not seen at earlier embroideries.

With its dark green basis, a deciduous pattern usually was not solid: the middle of it was run by another color ring that constituted a kind of a “leaf’s” core. At early embroideries, this core was of two kinds. In one of its options, it was comparatively wide, with unfigured edges and divided by a wavy line into transversal sections embroidered with different colors. Artists regarded this detail as a special motive and they in Samarkand called it *abri-bakhor* (spring cloud). Supposedly, the technique of coloring of this motive ascended from the image of rainbow, as concluded from idea that it should have been seven-colored (*khafrang*). But in practice, the number of colors is smaller—three. The genesis and semantics of this pattern, more exactly, of its coloring are not quite clear: term *abr* or *abri bakhor* acquired its second, technical meaning—motley coloring in all (as such it joined the name of motley Central Asian so-called *abr* cloths ornamented with spun basis). In embroidery art, the designing of motives with different-colored transversal strips was accustomed in nearly all regions. *Abri bakhor* pattern was particularly developed in Shahrissabz. In Samarkand, it was used, apart from coloring of the core of “a leaf”, for coloring of predominantly small motives, including ones as parts of large rosettes.

Another option of the core of “a leaf” is more complex: a deciduous ring is run through by thin red line (it always was embroidered with red wool at the time). Relatively large light-green warm tint dents stretch from its both sides in the form of zigzag. In Samarkand, such core of the deciduous part often also was called *abri bakhor*, probably, in the sense of “motley” but also had its own name—*tir-u kamon*. Literally, “an arrow and a bow” in Samarkand meant a rainbow (other Tajik groups called rainbow *kamoni Rustam* (Rustam’s bow). Motive under the name of *tir-u kamon* was also discovered by archeologist G.V. Grigoryev among

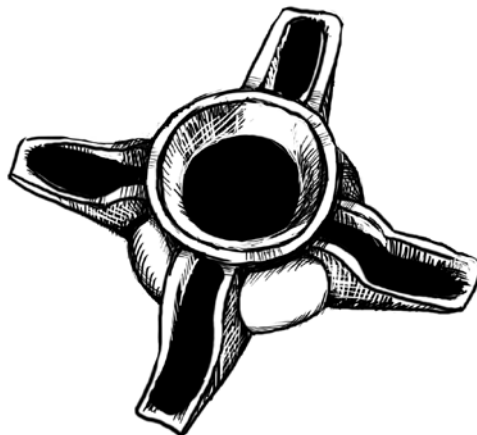


Fig. 15.
Chorchirok—prototype

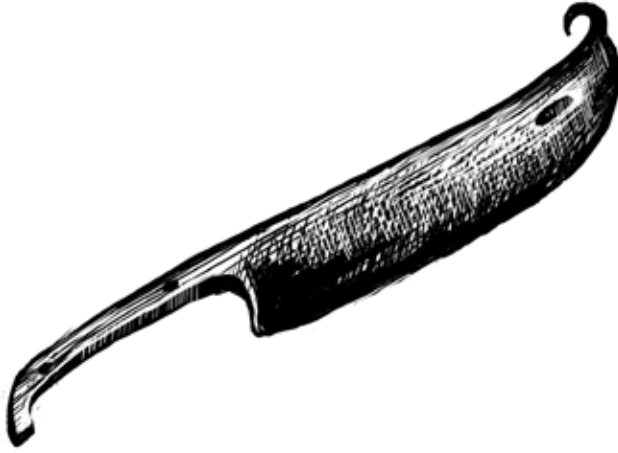
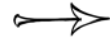


Fig. 16.
Kordi-osh—prototype

Fig. 17.
Variants
of *kordi-osh* motif.
Spread since the second half of
the 19th century. Drawings by
Urun-oy Umurbayeva, 1934



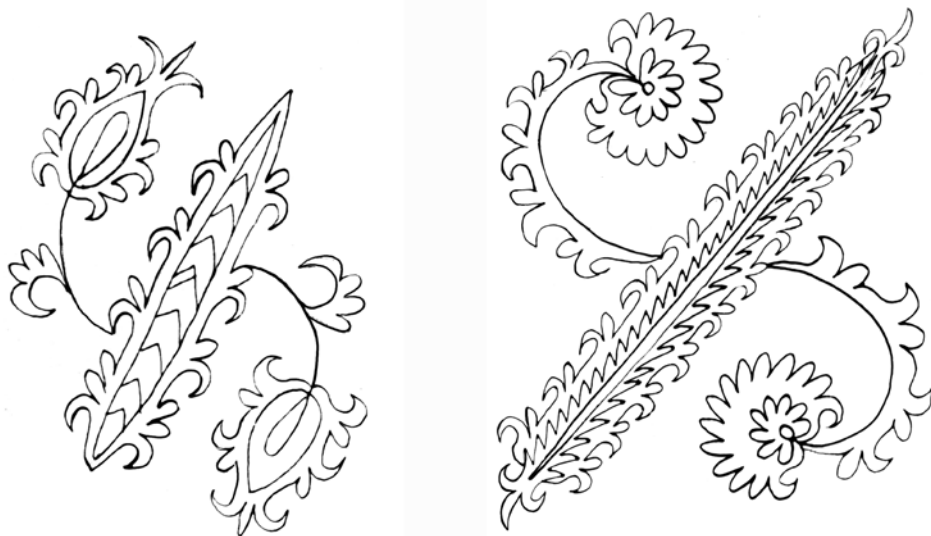
ornaments at modern wattle and daub walls near to Samarkand. It also had the form of broken line. G.V. Grigoryev, proceeding from the etymology of the motive's name and its form that resembled a widely spread image of a lightning (for example, the one in Zeus's hands), stated in private conversation that in Central Asia, broken line could ascend to the image of a lightning. This assumption seems true.

Comparison of the semantics of this pattern to that of *abri bakhor* motive reveals their links to astral images that once could have certain cult significance.

Although the names of these motives often were mixed, they were the conditional images of different natural phenomena: a rainbow and a lightning. Confusion and taking one name for the other one could be explained by that these motives (now one, now the other one) occupied the same place in a composition and therefore, could replace one another in the consciousness of artists and embroideresses. Mess in the names seemed even easier given that the initial artistic sense of these motives had been wiped off long ago; the names became the conditional designations of ornamental forms (or, in all, of motley coloring).

Main elements of composition above—rosettes and their deciduous framing—at early period embroideries were supplemented with smaller size motives, which, however, were no less indispensable and important for a panel's artistic image. There were two such motives. Usually one of them was present at a panel; in rare cases it was supplemented with part of the second one. These two complex motives consisting of several parts are always met in the same location: between rosettes with their deciduous framing. It seems that an artist could use any of them at her own discretion but could not avoid using them.

The first of the two motives has the form of oblique cross-shaped four similar figures consisting of several different-colored concentric ovals. The color of its outer oval—crimson—testifies that these motives were regarded as floral ones. Such was also stressed by the fact that they usually were surrounded by green leaves while the very ovals sat at stems or pedicles. The motive carries the meaningful name of *chorchirok*, a four-wick oil lamp throwing light toward four sides. Central Asian oil lamps—*chirok* or *chirak*—are also known well either due to numerous archeological discoveries or among ancient household appliances: they were applied for household purposes till the appearance of kerosene lamps just in the last quarter of the 19th century (in urban localities only). There were several options of *chirok*



lamps-one-wick, two-wick and four-wick, with oval or round oil storage. *Chirok* lamps were made of earthen or metal (cast iron or bronze). Apart from their purely household functions, *chirok* lamps also were used for the reasons of rituals: a burnt *chirok* lamp, for example, was led around the heads of a fiancé and a bride under their first wedding rendezvous. Apparently, exactly this thing was depicted at embroideries and subsequently acquired the traditional form of vegetable ornament and kept prototype traces in its name. Apart from four-wick lamps, patterns are indicative of pair figures (like *chorchiroks* divided into two parts) and single ones as a small motive supplementing a composition. In such form, *chirok* is combined, for example, with the motive of “kitchen knife” that plays the role of “a leaf” while *chiroks* play the role of profile flowers connected with “the leaf” by elegant stem.

This motive became absolutely out of use by 1880s and was not met at any specimen of a later period. Its early disappearance may be indicative of that this motive was relatively old, not to mention that cultural phenomena in old times changed very slowly.

The second indispensable, despite of being of second importance, composition motive represents an elongated figure put slantwise among the main rosettes; its left tip is turned downward and its right tip-upward. Unlike *chorchirok* motive, this figure is interpreted as a deciduous element: it is embroidered primarily dark green, and its core and so is the deciduous framing of rosettes is formed by either transversal multicolored strips *abri bakhor* or zig-zag dents *tir-u kamon*.

The most remarkable, typical feature of this motive is its upward right tip and usually downward left one. The name reveals the motive’s semantics: *kordi-osh* “kitchen knife”. That it really proceeds from the image of knife (converted into a plant, according to ornamentation law) is to conclude from the silhouette of its tips resembling the specific image of Central Asian knives, in particular, a kitchen one made of a thick, heavy peace of iron and used by women for the cutting of meat and other foods. Quite clearly, the motive reflected the kind of knife that is permanently held by women: artists, who died long ago, had used exactly this motive as a prototype of pattern with a very important semantics and role.

Profile flowers of different shapes, including, as noted above, *chirok* in the form of single figure disperse from both sides of figures that depict knives. Sometimes, the same composition is inclusive of larger figures in the form of profile flowers called *rafida* (this term designates

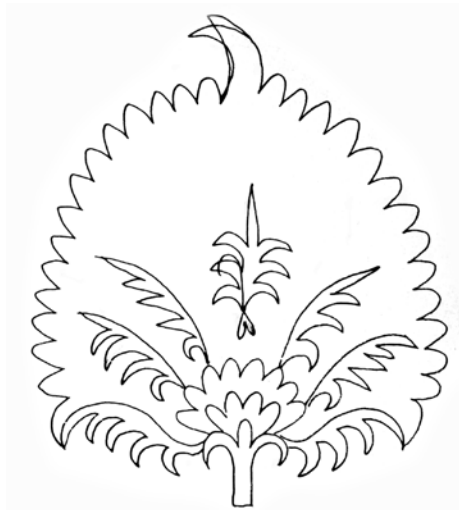


Fig. 18. Option of *rafida* motif—"the small pillow for putting flat cakes into furnace". Spread since the second half of the 19th century. Drawing by Urun-oy Umurbayeva

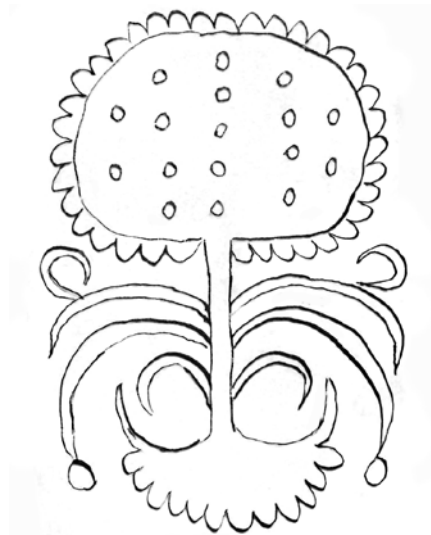


Fig. 19. *Kafgir* motif—"skimmer". Typical for the 1880s. Drawing by Kanoat Razykova. 1935

small pillow that is put onto hand to protect it from a great heat when flat cakes are stuck to scorched furnace (*tanura*). *Kafgir* (skimmer) motive, similar to the mentioned one, is also met in this position; the only difference is the technique of forming of "flower's" upper edge: *rafida* motive has a bit bent sharp dent oozed among scallops while "skimmer" motive has its whole edge formed with scallops and has no dent.

Both figures—*kafgir* and *rafida*—have the coloring of floral patterns: their outer corolla is crimson while the white figure, like a *chirok*, consists of several concentric differently-colored parts.

In contrast to *chiroks* that go out of use early, "kitchen knife" motive lived long: it is met in embroideries till the beginning of the third period.

This motive developed particularly in 1880–1890s: the whole deciduous ornament of embroideries consists of "knives", this time of huge dimensions resembling huge sabres. As far as they had replaced the previous deciduous motives, "kitchen knives" had to bend out to cover rosettes. General viewing of a panel shows that they form something like broken wavy lines and cover rosettes, now upward, now downward. Thus, the motive's position and significance in a composition changed radically: it became the second main component from a supplementary one. The color of the deciduous part of ornament became denser at this period: blackish-green in the beginning, it became simply black at the end of 1890s. The bright core of "a leaf", typical for old embroideries, was preserved in the beginning of this period but only in one option—red, this time silk-embroidered core surrounded by sharp green dents. The color of dents became brighter, of cold sharp tint. The size of inner elements of the deciduous ornament increased, dents occupied the bigger area of "a leaf" so that its dark color at some specimens looks like a not wide framing of bright green part. At the end of the century, this ornament started being embroidered with black only, with no colored core.

This style had no time to become stable because of the transitional period. Approximately in those years there were performed embroideries whose deciduous ornament kept the form

of a luxuriant garland or ring covering rosettes—the very ornament that decorated suzani of Urun-oy's dowry (1875). This motive had only appeared in her young years but was considered a bit outdated at the end of the century and, possibly, was used most often by residents of suburban villages but not urban residents (that it remained in use in the early 20th century was reported by artist Melik-oy Karimova from village Kaftarkhona).

Another option of the deciduous motive of this period embroideries represented separate massive, large curls twisted toward one side and stretching directly from the edge of a rosette. The author did not see such motive at earlier embroideries; nevertheless, there is trustworthy report about this: a woman born in 1875 had a suzani with such a pattern in her dowry. It was bought readymade and therefore, the date of its production apparently was earlier. Dark green color of curls allows dating its back to no later than 1870s or even earlier period. Another woman, who married at the end of 1890s, had also had a suzani with this deciduous motive, this time with black curls, in her dowry.

In Samarkand, this motive was known under various names: it was called *deg* (cauldron) in Suzangaran district, *kuchakbacha* (puppies) in Nurabad district, and *mushtakcha* (fisticuffs) in suburban village Kaftarkhona.

The second name is the most interesting one. I was explained that a pattern in the form of large, sharply bent curls depicts heads of puppies; this name could have been considered random one, given in a certain not obligatory connection; however, Pamir Kyrgyzs connect a similar pattern with a dog: it is called “dog's tail” there; M.S. Andreyev, who had discovered the pattern, said it very much resembled the tail of local breed dogs¹. Given that under Zoroastrianism a dog was regarded as defender of a human from the evil eye, reasons that could prompt such a motive to seamstresses become evident.

Apart from previous patterns that played the role of deciduous elements in a composition, new patterns related, however, to traditional ones, emerged by the beginning of the 20th century. In particular, there was developed an ornament having the form of deciduous rings (or garlands)—both options are met; in the early 20th century, deciduous rings were interconnected into an uninterrupted chain; this pattern received the name of “train” (*otash-araba*) since its elements were coupled like wagons. Such deciduous border was used for *ruyidzho* and *joynamaz*, with its ornament very much fit exactly to this motive. It was not met at suzani or *bolinpushs*.

“Kitchen knife” motive that continued to be performed at embroideries in the beginning of the century had absolutely lost similarity to its prototype and acquired the form of a luxuriant bush with diagonally bent stem with large curls. That this was a transformation of the previous motive is to conclude from either its name or stem's inclined position or typical upward bend of its upper pointed tip and downward bend of the lower one toward the opposite side. This ornament was depicted, in particular, at double *joynamaz* of Urun-oy's daughter who wedded in 1906. The second option of “knives”, supposedly in the form of two semicircles covering a rosette, became alike the initial form to a larger extent. Their “genealogy” can be detected only in the form of tips bent toward opposite sides.

Relatively early—right in 1905—white cloth embroideries started depicting deciduous ornament that later on ousted all the rest motives and became favorite one, up to nowadays.

This pattern is called *palak*—“lashes of melons”². In justifying its name, this motive consists of having neither beginning nor end flexible, twisted stems lashing symmetrical rosettes. Semicircular leafs with short stemmed scalloped edges stretch from stems now there now here.

¹ Reported in the course of examination of this work's edition at the Museum of Arts of the Uzbekistan Soviet Socialist Republic in 1940. About importance of a dog as a means saving from the evil eye. See: Andreyev, 1953, p. 55

² Grigoryev, 1937

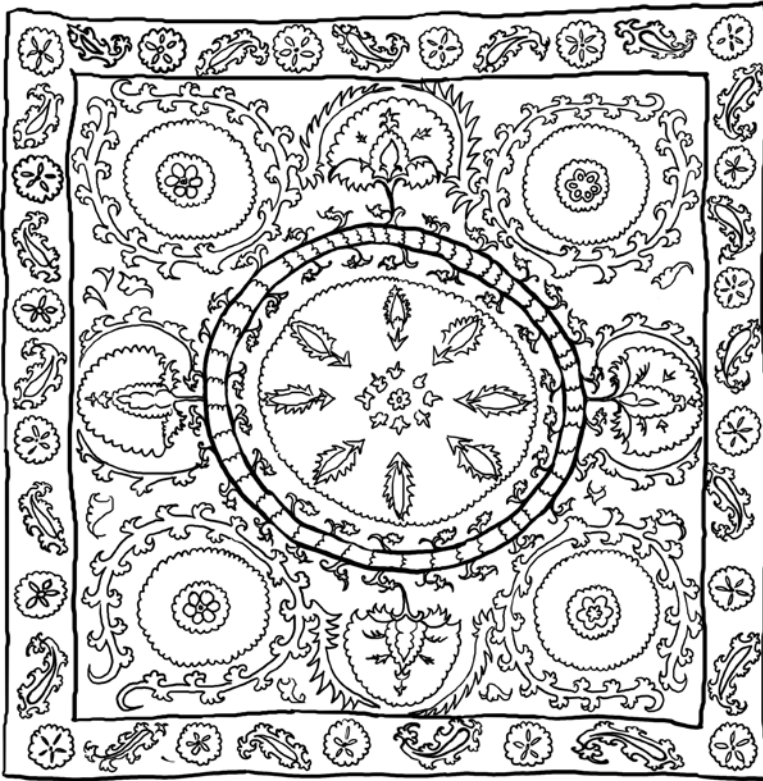


Fig. 20.
Bolinpush with
profile flowers
(*chirak? rafida?*)
1888–1890

Initially, lashes were made relatively thin, and ornament made an impression of something dynamical, streaming. However, soon after that, the aspiration for making a panel as much luxuriant and filled in as possible and ornament as large and bright as possible led to that lashes started getting thicker and leaves started getting larger. The ornament started getting more massive, and its dynamics reduced.

Having developed fully by the middle of the second decade of the 20th century, *palak* ornament existed unchanged long years up to nowadays.

In a post-Revolutionary period, the significance of embroideries reduced: gradually, they stopped being produced by every new wedding; there were used specimens of the mother's dowry; one and the same embroidery decorated wedding rooms of several relatives and sometimes was borrowed by neighbors. New embroideries became very seldom but, if a family did it, it embroidered exactly vegetable ornament *palak*.

Postwar years saw reappearance of many traditional forms of household decorations (it should be noted that the custom of hanging *suzani* at the wedding room's walls in Samarkand had never disappeared); embroideries, primarily, white cloth ones restarted being produced. Under this, new specimens hanged onto the walls of dwellings of modern Samarkand newlyweds often turn to have been bought at a bazaar, from Urguts. It seems that urban she-residents now find more interesting, profitable occupations; but in Urgut, the women not engaged in agriculture find it appropriate and profitable to embroider *suzani* for sale. As far as Urgut embroideries are similar to the Samarkand style, they are easily in demand at town's bazaar.

As to small supplementary patterns placed among main, indispensable elements of composition of early Samarkand embroideries, they are primarily small rosettes and various options

of “cayenne” (*kalamfur*) and “almond” (*bodom*) motives, either one-colored or motley, with transversal strip (*abri bakhor*), or sometimes surrounded by deciduous ornament. White cloth embroideries dated from the boundary of the centuries (when enlarged rosettes started being surrounded by bent “knives”—sables) had so little room between patterns that supplementary motives disappeared almost completely. Nevertheless, small rosettes were put among the main elements of the then embroidery compositions with a deciduous pattern in the form of curls—“puppies”. Over several next decades, after the deciduous ornament of white cloth embroideries acquired its final form—“lashes of melons”; their twists filled in the central field so densely that supplementary elements became unnecessary. In rare cases when empty space “gaped”, an artist put a small curl onto it, organically with the whole composition.

4.2 Colored cloth embroideries

Colored cloth embroideries developed particularly at the end of the 19th century—the beginning of the 20th century. Nevertheless, they had been produced yet in 1850–1860s, in comparatively insignificant scales.

The exact date of appearance of colored cloth embroideries is known yet poorer than that of early white cloth panels.

Anyway, colored cloths appropriate for embroideries were made by Central Asian craftsmen yet in the 10th century. Narshakhi, in his “History of Bukhara”, informs that Bukhara residents made paper cloths (*karbos*) of white, red and green color (*sabza*, yellowish-green). Central Asian green paper cloths, called *zenden* by Russian sources (Narshakhi calls them *zendenichi*¹) were famous in the 19th century. They were either used in Central Asia or exported to other countries, in particular, Russia².

However, we are unaware of a single early specimen of large decorative embroideries at such cloths in either Samarkand or other embroidering regions. May be, such embroideries were made but, being more practical and not showing the dirt, they were put in use first of all and worn out quicker than others at a time when more valuable white cloth embroideries were cared by families and passed to the next generations.

As to Samarkand, use of colored cloth for embroideries, probably, was untypical for local artistic tradition. For example, reddish *mata* (*mala*, *mallya*), a cloth made of special brand cotton, having natural color resembling camel’s wool and very popular in other embroidering regions, especially in Bukhara and Nurata, was not used here.

In addition, early Samarkand embroideries lack local handicraft silk specimens that were used relatively widely for gorgeous embroideries in Bukhara and Shahrisabz (reddish-violet or crimson silk). Colored cloth embroidering appeared in Samarkand primarily in 1890s when the art of decorative embroidery endured considerable general changes.

Samarkand’s oldest colored cloth embroideries were made of imported manufactured cloths: red calico ones and yellow ones called here “yellow calico” (*avloni zard*). Evidently, exactly the spread (yet before Central Asia joined Russia) of manufactured cloths became the basis of local tradition of colored cloth embroidering.

Given that this tradition emerged late, we received the opportunity, at the example of Samarkand, to trace gradual formation and development of the art of colored cloth decorative embroidering.

The earliest embroidery of such sort we are aware of is an original red calico *suzani* bought by the Museum of Samarkand from a woman who married in the very beginning of 1870s.

¹ Narshakhi, 1897, p. 30

² Nebolsin, 1856, p. 26

However, the suzani is much older: it was not made for her wedding but had been purchased for her dowry from her older relative whose marriage date, along with date of the suzani's making was not identified exactly. In the view of Urun-oy, a close relative of both owners of the suzani, the ornament of this embroidery was drawn by her elder sister. Urun-oy herself was not eyewitness of the making of this suzani; her assumption about the author of the drawing is based, supposedly, upon (apart from her awareness of blood relationships) peculiarities of "hand" of an artist: in our observation, women knew well the manner of drawing of each seamstress of their time and district.

This suzani differs from all the rest Samarkand colored cloth embroideries; its peculiarity is that it is close to the ornamentation of white cloth embroideries. The suzani's field consists of twelve large rosettes surrounded by dark green rings of deciduous ornament of aforesaid kind of "camel's neck" that is met at the earliest white cloth embroideries of the first period. The rosettes have a relatively complex composition. Let's start describing them with inner parts, exactly how the process of drawing started. Eight yellow lancet-shaped figures, which resemble *tegcha* motive, known at early white cloth embroideries, but are narrower, disperse from the rosette's center in the form of rays. "Rays" are crowned with small white shamrocks. They are folded by "a corolla" of eight figures drawn similarly to the dark cherry blossom supplementary scallops that decorated the upper edge of rosettes of white cloth embroideries dating from the second period. But in this case, scallops close in one another with their extreme dents, thus forming a solid ring. Its lower edge, also scalloped, covers white shamrocks with a row of semicircular arches.

Though the corolla is comparatively dense, the rosette looks delicate, since red cloth oozes in spaces between its all elements. The corolla is blue, of two tints: the upper half of it-composing figures takes dark blue and light blue in turn with the lower one. Such alternation enriches the coloring extremely, creating an illusion of twinkling.

Smaller-size rosettes are placed in empty spaces between large rosettes with their deciduous border. Their white scalloped corolla is based upon four thin white "columns" interconnected in the form of straight cross and considered a kind of continuation of lower scallops. This form was very interesting from the point of history of ornament: it is also met at either Samarkand other early embroideries or embroideries of regions similar to Samarkand. In examining the suzani and its ornament, Urun-oy told that such rosettes had been at white cloth embroideries as well but disappeared later. Indeed, after she drew the ornaments of all embroideries of her dowry by memory, both *buyrokarses* she drew had rosettes of this specific form. Probably, such rosettes not accidentally decorated exactly *buyrokarses*, the kind of embroideries that was to go out of use yet in those years. Apparently, they had been made for the dowry of Urun-oy long before she wedded, when she was a child. Such was accustomed.

Rosettes of the same form are also met at other embroideries of the Museum's collection: at an old white *mata* embroidery, probably, made in the very town, and at a red calico suzani that differed a bit from Samarkand ones made in one of rural localities having a propensity for Samarkand, probably, Urgut.

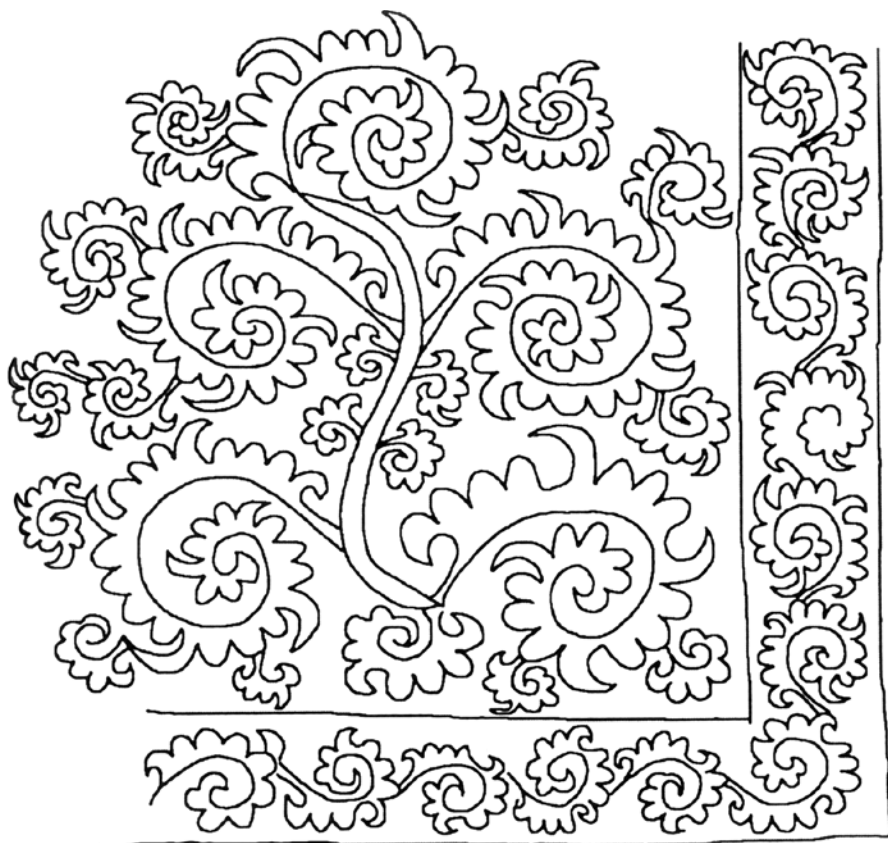
It is very interesting to analyze the coloring of this suzani from the point of history of decorative embroideries. Dark green color of its deciduous patterns (and so is the frame of circular rosettes) apparently is copied from earlier white cloth embroideries though dark green color is poorly "read" at a red cloth. The blue corolla of a rosette also has the direct parallel with the coloring of floral motives of older white cloth embroideries. With crimson as the main color (it, of course, for not good for red calico at all), blue was the second important color. Exactly blue was chosen the main color of rosettes of red calico suzani. Noteworthy is that such combination of colors (blue with red) is also prompted by white cloth embroideries where blue directly neighbors crimson (blue details at the background of crimson outer ring).

Suzani described above was not the only example of such succession. In its collection, the Museum has a yellow manufactured cloth (yellow calico) *ruyidzho* ornamented with six large motives *rafida* in the form of profile, primarily crimson flowers covered by luxuriant dark green semicircles of deciduous ornament, with its core formed by large light green dents and them-dividing red strip, i.e. *tir-u kamon* technique used widely for white cloth embroideries. This *ruyidzho* embroidery is not certified but, according to its ornament, can be dated back to the beginning of the second, transitional period, more exactly, early 1880s.

It is evident from examples above that the experience acquired by seamstresses under the making of earlier white cloth embroideries was used in the solution of coloristic problems of Samarkand early colored cloth, primarily, red calico embroideries.

Another *suzani* I saw at a local resident can be regarded, to extent, a reminiscence of patterns and colors selected for white cloth embroideries in accordance with folk tradition. It was made of yellow manufactured cloth and ornamented, as accustomed in that period, with rows of rosettes with no deciduous framing. Nevertheless, the rosettes were the incarnation of features typical for the ornamentation of either colored cloth or white cloth embroideries. Similarly to the latter, the whole middle part of the rosettes was embroidered with crimson silk and then followed by a delicate corolla consisting of triangular paddles interconnected by extreme dents, as accustomed for colored cloth embroideries.

Fig. 21. Composition for *joynamaz* with *otash-araba* ("train" in the form of bush) motif. Typical for the beginning of the 19th century. Drawing by Mumovar Nosirova. 1935



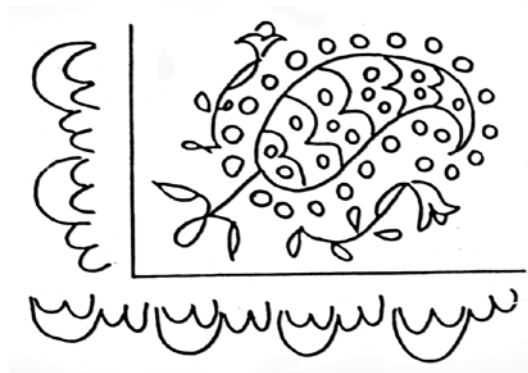
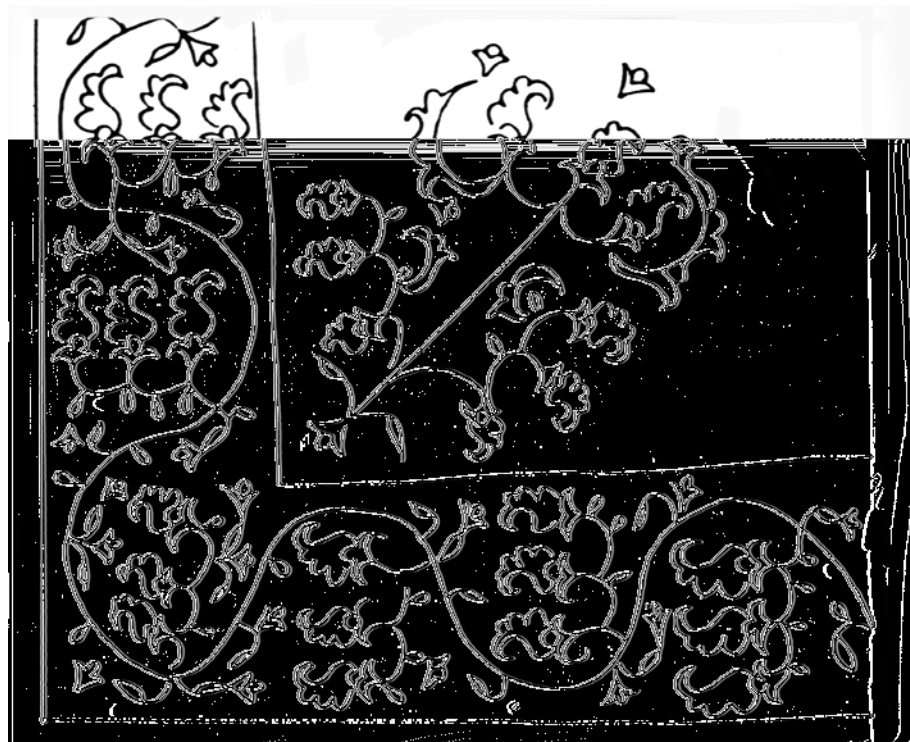


Fig. 22.
Variants of *bodom* motif composition—
“almond”: a) *se bodom*—triple almond
(spread in the second decade of the
19 century), b) *bodomi ranga*—color
almond (spread earlier 20 century). 1938.
(Bukhara?)

The form of delicate rosettes designed specially for colored cloth embroideries evolved. Such embroideries dating from the first period and the beginning of the second one had rosettes of two options. The first, supposedly, earlier option (it takes origin from the ornamentation of the previous period) was described by denser rosettes and the important role of blue in their coloring (that is how corolla of rosettes of the earliest red calico *suzani* was colored, as we saw).

Excellent specimens of embroideries decorated with rosettes with primarily blue corollas are three *suzani* with the same pattern and coloring (and with insignificant differences in small supplementary elements). Two of them are made of red calico and the third one is made of yel-

low handicraft silk. On the happenstance, all they got to the Museum¹; moreover, one of them was bought from a woman whose dowry it had been embroidered for; this allowed certifying it reliably. Its owner was a woman who married Urun-oy's brother in 1888, and that's why the suzani was made no later than the middle of 1880s. Drawing the pattern was Urun-oy (the bride was her close relative). The ornament of the two other suzani, as it appears from "the hand", was also drawn by Urun-oy, apparently approximately at the same time (the silky suzani, probably, was made a bit later). This pattern apparently either was to customers' taste or enjoyed by her so much that she wanted to repeat it. Such cases are rarest exception: as a rule, every embroidery is unique. Even if an artist was asked to repeat, copy a drawing from the readymade item, she usually varied the pattern unwillingly because every time she built a composition as if anew, with no specimen in consideration but proceeding from the format of canvas, kind of embroidery and her own creative imagination. But in the given case, the ornament of all three suzani is so similar that they can no way be regarded as options: they are copies.

The field of the suzani is occupied by twelve large rosettes with a relatively dense corolla formed by "paddles" interconnected by extreme dents. The coloring of corollas alternates: it is blue at one rosette and black-violet at another one. Inner, smaller rings of rosettes of both red cloth suzani are embroidered with yellow and of yellow suzani are embroidered with red.

Apart from the described embroideries that inherited the dense corolla of a rosette and the important role of blue in its coloring from earlier ones, there are met other specimens, also dated from the middle of 1870s, with more delicate, lighter rosettes. This style, typical for colored cloth embroideries of 1880–1890s, apparently had been formed yet by 1870s. At a "yellow calico" suzani embroidered for Urun-oy's dowry (she recalled its ornament and coloring), the colors of rosettes alternated: one of its had blue corolla with black-violet ring closer to the center; a neighboring one, on contrary, had black-violet corolla and blue smaller ring. Central small rosettes were bright green and violet: such colors had only appeared at the time, due to the spread of synthetic dyes. The middle of one rosette was crimson-pink and of the other one was pink-crimson (such alternation of colors was one of the principles of coloristic solutions).

Exactly such pattern of delicate rosettes was spread and developed later in the ornamentation of colored cloth embroideries. Their colors evolved as well till it was established firmly: white and yellow started being alternated in corollas and central small rosettes; a rosette with yellow corolla had white middle and with white corolla had yellow one. One of smaller rings was violet-black; as to blue, it was fully excluded from red cloth embroideries as time passed.

At two early red cloth embroideries—a suzani and a *bolinpush* of a dowry—I managed to see another, very original solution of the structure of rosettes. Their corolla was formed by profile flowers on straight stems of the same length that dispersed from the central rosette; thanks to this, the flowers constituted the right circle. Prototypes of this form are visible at the composition of inner part of rosettes of old red cloth suzani above: there, they were lancet-shaped *tegcha*, crowned by white shamrocks, that dispersed radially from the center; here, *tegcha* became stems, as stressed by small leaflets on them. The stems lost their lancet-shaped form; however, a parallel with *tegcha* motive that occupied the same position in the structure of the earlier suzani's rosettes is evident: the very principle of formation of ring was common. Such rosettes are very beautiful; their composition is either witty or expedient: traditional attaching of indispensably vegetable nature to motives. Nevertheless, this artistic invention had not been strengthened by a later practice, and we did not see other specimens with such ornament.

The tradition of ornamenting of colored cloths saw a break at the end of 1880s: rosettes started being replaced by branches and bushes. The new ornament was affirmed not at once: till the beginning of the 20th century when it gave the upper hand, some embroideries continued to

¹ Pugachenkova, Rempel, 1966, table 381

display new features while others- old, traditional ones. Sometimes, a composition combined both, a typical peculiarity of transitional periods.

Initially, bushes or branches timidly occupied the positions of small supplementary patterns. At above-described yellow silk suzani (a copy of two red calico embroideries), there are small bushes instead of rosettes at the very edge, near to the border: this is the only substantial difference in the ornament of three same specimens.

Form of bushes and branches and their placing at a panel were determined not at once. Stages of establishment of anew ornament can be traced through comparing several embroideries dating from the transitional period.

Initially, there were embroidered branches, often bent ones. *Ruyidzho* red calico ornament (1890s) consists of branches bent toward opposite sides alternately. The stems are crowned by large profile flowers composed of five "cayenne" figures. The vertical row of such branches stretches along a P-shaped border in the form of a wide strip, as practiced for a composition of *ruyidzho* patterns. The ornament's deciduous part is black. The flowers have alternating colors: one of them is violet with yellow-blue core, the other one is green with black and yellow. This *ruyidzho* specimen got to the Museum uncertified; but it became possible to date it due to a report under its examination by a group of women. The family of one of them owned a *ruyidzho* with the same pattern embroidered for the dowry of the mother who wedded in around 1890. The teller said it differed from the Museum specimen by simpler flowers: at her mother's embroidery, flowers consisted of not five but three "cayenne" figures.

The collection of the Museum of Samarkand consists of three suzani that describe well stages of formation of the new style. All the suzani are made of violet silk; two of them are reliably certified. The first suzani is bought from a woman, who had succeeded it from the dowry from her mother, who married in 1888. That was, probably, one of the earliest Samarkand silky embroideries since silk, as noted above, was not used here for this purpose earlier. The suzani is decorated with nine figures, with their silhouette resembling spades. The silhouette is formed by splendidly bent leafs that meet one another by nearly closed in tops. The leafs are covered by large complex profile flowers, with their shape resembling *rafida* motive but not identical to it.

The figures are of alternating colors: one of them has white leafs and primarily green flower while the other one has yellow leafs and black-violet flower. The ornament of this suzani is already put aside the traditional rosettes; however, this is not bushes yet, this is still separate closed in figures. Undoubtedly, this is the inheritance of the old composition that consisted of rows of rosettes and similarly closed in figures separated from the rest elements of pattern. Along with that, spade-shaped figures that constitute the ornament of this suzani are formed by leafs and already foresee a transition to rows of branches or bushes.

The second suzani got to the Museum uncertified. However, under its examination by a group of women, who always were involved in identification of embroideries, it was identified by a daughter of famous artist Hikmat-oy, the late at the time, from block Kosh-haus. She said the suzani had been drawn by her mother, who apparently intended to circumcise her elder son, at around 1900. Later on, the mother put the suzani into her elder daughter's dowry and, after the latter died half a year later, it returned to their family: the husband of the deceased returned it to his mother-in-law as "payment for milk" (*hakki shir*). Later on, the suzani became part of the dowry of the younger daughter and, having passed through several hands, got to the Museum. This embroidery is very distinctive and, we can say, unique: it is no possible to trace prototypes of its ornament at colored cloth embroideries of the preceding period; in addition, this line did not find its continuation later as well. The suzani's ornament consists of twelve figures in the form of highly stylized bushes in lyre-shaped form due to bent lateral branches and is enriched with numerous small elegant details. Small leafs are

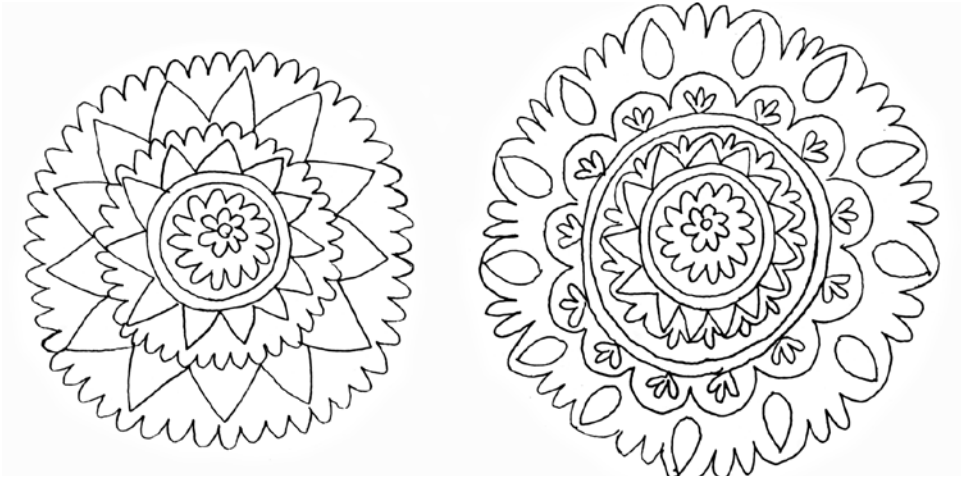


Fig. 23. Suzani rosettes on color tissues. 1850–80s.
Drawings by Urun-oy Umurbayeva

embroidered with black-violet that differs from the cloth's color quite insignificantly; however, the leaves are visible well due to a contrasting white framing. Among the leaves, there are spread small red floral motive; red “poppy” figures are crowned by two basic stems outlining a lyre-shaped figure on its left and right sides. Four small white rosettes with red middle are located separately, in the center of the “bush”.

The third suzani, despite of being prepared for a 1906 wedding of Urun-oy's elder daughter, also carried features of the transitional style. It is decorated with three rows of large, predominantly white rosettes; however, in contrary to the traditional solution, it depicts lines of slightly bent not long white branches with three large profile yellow flowers located between the horizontal lines of rosettes. These branches cannot be regarded as enlarged supplementary patterns (*bachoks*). *Bachoks* at embroideries of all three periods were placed in empty spaces between the main patterns; however, branches at this suzani belong to the main elements of the composition. This is to conclude from either their large size and bright color (similar to that of rosettes) or the place they occupy: each branch is put under and above a corresponding rosette.

Though this suzani was made in years when the new style of ornamentation of decorative embroideries had been developed fully, much in it goes from the old tradition; rosettes continue to be the main motive of its composition; its multi-colored nature also resembles an earlier stage; apart from the pattern's main color—white—that contrasts with violet, playing an important role is yellow of warm, saturated tint and, on top of that, small details are embroidered predominantly with red.

The described suzani, with its pattern designed and performed by such consummate seamstress as Urun-oy, is distinctive for its considerable artistic dignities. It has a successful combination of the old motive (rosettes) with the new one (branches), a fine color: yellow flowers with red cores look very effectively. However, the technique and composition the artist found were not backed by customers: it was never repeated and no its new option appeared; this embroidery remains unique one in terms of its composition and ornament.

Specimens where the new style is displayed in full absolutely lack rosettes as an indispensable element of composition: this motive is used only as a supplementary small detail in the form, for example, of flowers decorating bushes.

One appropriateness seems evident in the development of new style ornament: initially, there appear branches distinctive for their freer image and a bent stem; then, there start appearing bushes with straight central stem and strictly symmetrical location of branches and sometimes with the images of roots.

As to the coloring, multi-colored style was given up and substituted by monochrome one: the new coloristic solution is built upon the contrasting between the pattern and the background, due to which a panel looks more graphical. It goes without saying that transition to the monochrome coloring went step by step, with retrievals: at this period, there were also embroidered other panels where the main color of ornament was slightly added by a couple of other colors. For example, dark green sateen *suzani* pattern decorated with *sanduk-nuska* (trunk) motive was embroidered primarily with white silk; however, small red and pink branches are put among white branches and leaves; the framing is yellow. Sometimes, a whole pattern is embroidered with one color while the framing (or just slanting strip border embroidered in between an embroidery and its wrong side) is of another color. The collection of the Museum of Samarkand consists of a violet silk *suzani* with pattern *tillo-kosh* (golden eyebrows), i.e. a forehead jewelry. The whole pattern is embroidered with white, the border-with yellow.

However, the full monochromatism was reached evidently only at *bolinpushs* or *joynamazs*, smaller things.

It seems that larger-size embroideries, for example, *suzani* needed strict graphics softened, at least through having border color differing from that of ornament and panel.

The monochromic principle of coloring developed most of all at dark cloths, of which violet was most popular one. At a lighter cloth (yellow or pink), the ornament was of at least two colors: black and blue. That is, for example, the embroidered yellow sateen *ruyidzho*: black rings of its rosettes are inclusive of blue elongated ovals interpreted as the image of grapes of *khusayni* brand. With embroidery cloth of an unusual color, a seamstress often proceeded from a more ordinary specimen through borrowing the color of the latter's pattern for the new one.

Fig. 24.

Fragment of monochromic *suzani* with *samovor*—"samovar" motif.
The beginning of the 20th century

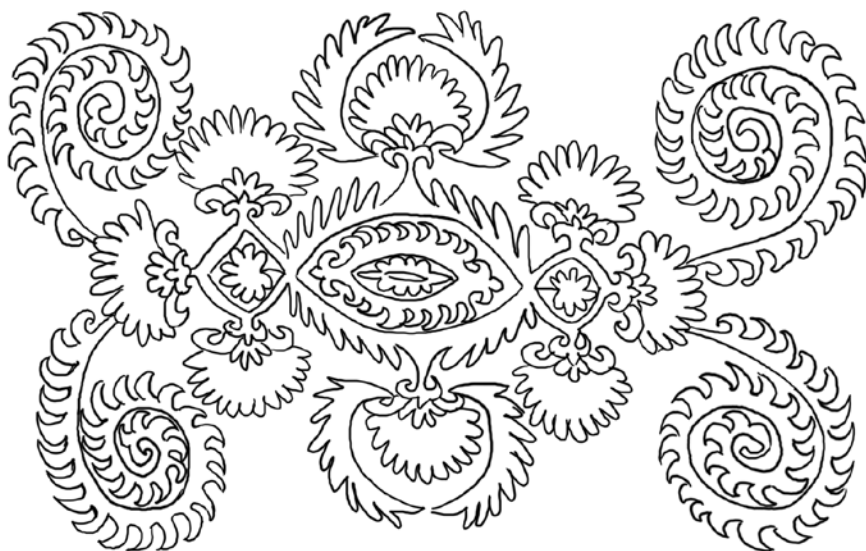
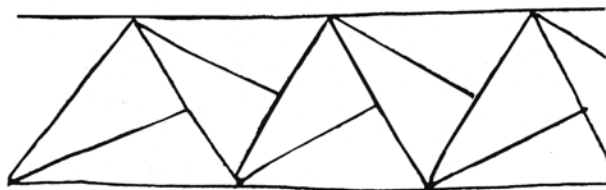


Fig. 25.
A motif that reproduces
a pattern of alabaster border.
Samarkand



For example, a pink silk *bolinpush* is ornamented with black and blue bushes; however, the pattern is inclusive of insignificant volume of red and violet (sometimes, the latter appeared at later yellow cloth embroideries as well).

After embroideries with one-colored (or multicolored) pattern became fashionable, some families continued to prefer a richer coloring. For example, Urun-oy, in giving her daughter away in marriage in the second decade of the 20th century, made for her a green silk *suzani*, with its pattern, apart from basic, white color, embroidered in red and crimson. The same was the coloring of a *bolinpush* drawn approximately at the same time by artist Hikmat-oy for her daughter: violet cloth consists of largely white bushes, however, decorated with red and pink small flowers. It is interesting that the pattern's idea was borrowed by the artist from a rather bad Kazan lithograph depicting tree of life. The lithograph was kept by Hikmat-oy's daughter; I managed to make sure that the *bolinpush* drawing very much resembled the lithograph, up to the coloring and the image of tree rootlets seen at the lithograph as if through the soil. However, the artist managed to cope with the anti-artistic nature of that specimen and arranged all elements of the main motive—bush—in the spirit of Samarkand ornamental traditions of her time; so that the original work was much improved. That the embroidery depicted, apart from other things, roots of plants apparently also came to taste: this element was also met at other embroideries of that period. Probably, the depicting of roots attracted with their being close to nature, reality that artists aspired for relatively definitely in vegetable compositions of colored cloth embroideries of the early 20th century.

Hikmat-oy either borrowed compositions or created her own original ones. That is how she performed a pattern of a cradle bedspread: small elegant branches, decorated with cherries, are arranged successfully in four separate parts of her-made *gavorapush*; the pattern is embroidered at purple red sateen with primarily white; rosettes of the composition are yellow and so is the framing.

The study of Samarkand colored cloth embroideries allowed tracing evolution of their style. The starting point of this evolution was a transition, though incomplete one, to colored cloth patterns created for more traditional white cloth embroideries, and the ending point was a transit to particular compositions depicting nearly realistic images of bushes, even with sorts of plants identified at some of embroideries. However, in the newest period, there were still embroidered, apart from bush motives, panels with rosettes typical for the previous period of the history of colored cloth embroideries, a period when the system of ornamentation of such embroideries, distinctive from that of white cloth embroideries, had already been formed.

As to coloring, it evolved toward giving up the principles of coloring adapted for the white cloth and later on, giving up, in all, the multicolored nature of colors. There was initiated transition to graphics, monochromatism or at least nearing it. In this regard, colored cloth embroideries evolved greater than white cloth ones did. It was harder for white cloth embroideries to be in line with this tendency: the large dimensions, density of their rosettes made monochromatism unfavorable, from artistic point. Therefore, two tints of one color—crimson and

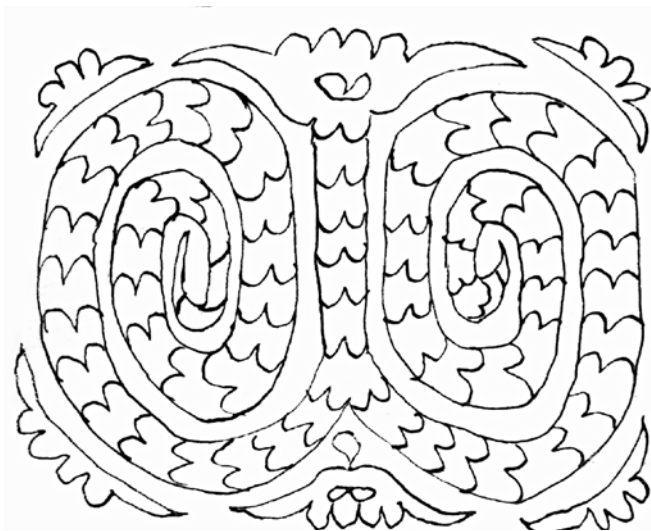


Fig. 26.
Kuchkorak
("little ram" or "ram's horns")
motif. Spread in 1880s.
Drawing by Kanoat
Razykova.
1938

cinnabar-red—were left here with a great tact. One-colored compositions fit well colored cloth embroideries, with their lighter, more delicate ornament. The Samarkand embroidery, with its dark coloring of red and green tints, had a propensity for graphics since old times. Exactly this artistic tendency determined the style of the latest, third period. This dominating tendency that moved the development of art of large decorative embroideries forward was realized best of all at not its main direction (white cloth embroidering) but more utilitarian colored cloth embroideries, especially of dark tints established later.

Before we start examining motives and their semantics, let's make a necessary digression. It concerns some details and techniques of designing of embroidered panels.

A typical peculiarity of large decorative embroideries in different regions was that the mount (*davonak*) of motives was made with a specific stitch. The mount played an important artistic role through making the contours of patterns stricter and correcting their potential distortions under either drawing or embroidering. The mount had its own peculiarities in different regions at different period of time and thus, can serve as one of the means helping to certify specimens.

Only deciduous patterns were mounted in all regions; in some localities, there were mounted profile flowers or other figures of the same position and role in a composition. Rosettes, especially large ones designed with scallops or dents were not mounted.

In white cloth embroideries, the role of mount is modest—it just defines a shape. In colored cloth embroideries, its role increases: in tinting and stressing colors, it takes a more considerable part in the solution of general coloring.

The mount of Samarkand early white cloth embroideries was chain-stitched with warm olive-colored silk. Such mount disappeared by the end of the first period. In 1870s, mount started being made by hand round tambour. In 1870s and especially in 1880s, it became usual to make a contrasting mount: patterns embroidered with light colors were framed with dark mount, while dark-colored patterns had light mount. However, patterns of relatively dark blue or sometimes dark green color are framed in compliance with the principle practiced for light-colored patterns: here, the mount is dark, almost invisible. This is explainable, probably, by that in the whole gamma, dark blue inherited the position previously occupied by pale blue that

was excluded from the coloring as a result of evolution; at a time when mount color typical for it – dark blue—remained.

The contrasting tambour mount was preserved till the beginning of the 20th century when it was replaced by tambour mount with its color similar to that of ornament. According to numerous reports, one-colored mount was borrowed from Tashkent. However, this change also could have local roots, as it proceeded from the logic of evolution of the Samarkand embroidery and requirements of its new style under formation: a clear aspiration for making patterns massive, dense. The artistic effect of new, one-colored mount was realized perfectly by seamstresses. One of them said, “If mount is of different color, the pattern becomes empty, but if it is of the same color, the pattern becomes full” (“*davonakash degar boshal, nuska puch mashud, a ham-rangi khudash boshal-purra*”).

The special designing of strips—*oba*—that limited the mount from its both sides also was a typical feature of 1870/1880s colored cloth embroideries; the strips are stitched with tambour stitch, homemade paper threads in five rows, with extreme rows dark blue and three middle ones (in the form of a simple pattern) black and white. Such *oba* were called *kundaly*, the term that designated top quality brocade with a convex pattern, or convex ornament in literature references¹. *Kundaly* are so typical for embroideries of this period that it can be used for identification of their dating: prior to and after this period, *oba* were embroidered with a needle, with *kanda-khayol* stitch, and were one-colored.

4.3 The semantics of ornamental motives

An analysis of the semantics of ornamental motives, which are typical for different stages of the history of Samarkand’s decorative embroidery, reveals an interesting situation.

Things served as subjects of a series of important, indispensable elements of the ornament of early embroideries—a knife, a blade, a lamp, cayenne and almond—were considered talismans the evil eye was afraid of, according to a folk belief. Knife as well as other cutting tools was considered the strongest talisman. It was opinioned that it for safe for men to hunt at night (a time when evil spirits supposedly went for a hunt and waited for an occasion to hurt a man) because men had a knife at belt: a sheathed knife was the obligatory part of a man’s traditional dress. I was lucky to make sure how strong the belief in the knife’s defensive strength was. I lived in the Tajik village of Brichmulla in the Bastandyk region of the Tashkent district in 1925. One day, when I had to go home late, in the darkness, the landlady was very much worried and told me: “Repeat “*kordi osh, kordi osh, kordi osh*” (kitchen knife) when you walk, and then no spirits will dare to approach you².

Fire was considered a no less strong talisman: in the ornament it was embodied by the images of lamps. *Chorchirok* fire directed toward the four sides had to secure newlyweds. The motive of cross, either slanting one (it could ascend to the image of a man or a deity³) or straight one also performed the protective function. Apotropaic importance of cayenne is known well: threaded cayenne pods were hanged onto a room’s doors to safeguard a recently confined woman and her child from evil spirit *albasti*. Almond has the same meaning. For a long time I could not understand why it was considered a talisman, as it was daintiest food while spirits were afraid of everything unpleasant, such as pungent or bitter, according to safeguarding magic laws. But everything became clear when the author saw, in a Tajik mountain village, a child with arm-bracelet consisting of threaded beads, including the fruits of wild mountainous

¹ Pisarchik, 1975, p. 120–123

² Sukhareva, 1975

³ Andreyev, 1953, p. 59; Peshereva, 1959, p. 112

almond; a very bitter one (as is known, cultivated almond may also be either bitter or poisonous). Archeologist G.V. Grigoryev illustrated very convincingly that figures having the form of cayenne pod or almond might ascend to the cult image of a bird ¹.

Ethnographic facts have confirmed that his hypothesis is true. It is very likely that *kuchkorak* (little ram) motive depicting spiral-bent horns of ram (*kuchkor*) was of apotropaic meaning. *Kuchkor* was considered a talisman safeguarding from the evil: *kuchkor* was kept in a family's flock and, if infant children in a family died, the newly born one was given the name of *Kuchkar*.

At later embroideries, the name of *kuchkorak* (*kuchkorakh* for carpets²) is attached to dispersed curls: the image's link to the real prototype disappeared. Nevertheless, the sense of this motive was traced quite evidently in the ornament of a *ruyidzho* of 1880s: this is to conclude that its initial semantics had not been forgotten. Drawing this ornament was Kanoat Razykova, who had a greater, than other artists had, propensity for realistic, naturally, transformed, images of subjects.

That motives ascending to the image of a rainbow or a lightning, indispensable for the first period embroideries, could be of cult, astral significance was shown above. Quite an indispensable, especially for white cloth embroideries, element such as a circle rosette also could have link to astral cults. Besides, an ornamented rosette is often regarded by researchers, on a substantiated basis, as a solar sign, the image of the sun. As concerning embroideries, significance of a rosette as a solar (or lunar) sign is confirmed: as shown above, large rosettes in some regions (for example, Tashkent) are called *oy* (the moon); small rosettes in Bukhara rural localities are named *oftob* (the sun).

However, in Samarkand and some other localities (no exact area identified), rosettes are attached semantics: "tulip"—*lola*. This name also seems to have the deep sense, as it takes origin from certain ancient ideas and beliefs. E.M. Peshereva described "a tulip holiday" in Isfar, through publicizing her discovery in two special articles. She, in particular, supposed that this custom ascended to mysteries related to the worshipping of a dying/resurrecting natural divine being ³; as concerning Samarkand, this cult was evidenced by ancient Chinese sources⁴. That a tulip is depicted often at embroideries and wall paintings in these localities may be indicative of a certain particular attitude to a tulip, according to E.M. Peshereva. However, she probably means not rosettes but profile flowers of a form similar to that of a tulip but this is quite another matter: while rosettes undoubtedly are one of the most ancient, most important elements of ornament (at least, at *suzani*-type embroideries), profile flowers are not ancient motives of cult importance and seem to have appeared comparatively late.

The tulip holiday is described by E.M. Peshereva as a narrow local one, timed to a certain mazar, with tulips growing in its outskirts. Indeed, the custom she described was not observed in other localities. However, the use of toponym *Lolazor*—"Tulip field"—that was, for example, the name of a Samarkand's suburban village that later on joined the town—in many localities deserves attention. The author managed to hear term "*lolazor*" in the sense of "feminine (or youth) festive"⁵. This demonstrates that tulip-related rituals (genetically ascending to the ancient cult of nature's awakening) most likely were not of narrow local nature. Facts above, possibly, confirm that the semantics of the name of *lola* for rosettes—the

¹ Grigoryev, 1937

² Moshkova, 1970, tables 1, 6, 9, 12, tables VIII, 15, tables IX, 5, 7, 9, 12, etc. (the carpets of Samarkand Uzbeks) and tables XV, 4 (the carpets of Nurata Turkmen Uzbeks)

³ Peshereva, 1927; 1963, p. 218

⁴ The Almanac of Works of the Orkhon Expedition, 1903, p. 133; this evidence by a source was interpreted by S.P. Tolstov (Tolstov, 1948, p. 204)

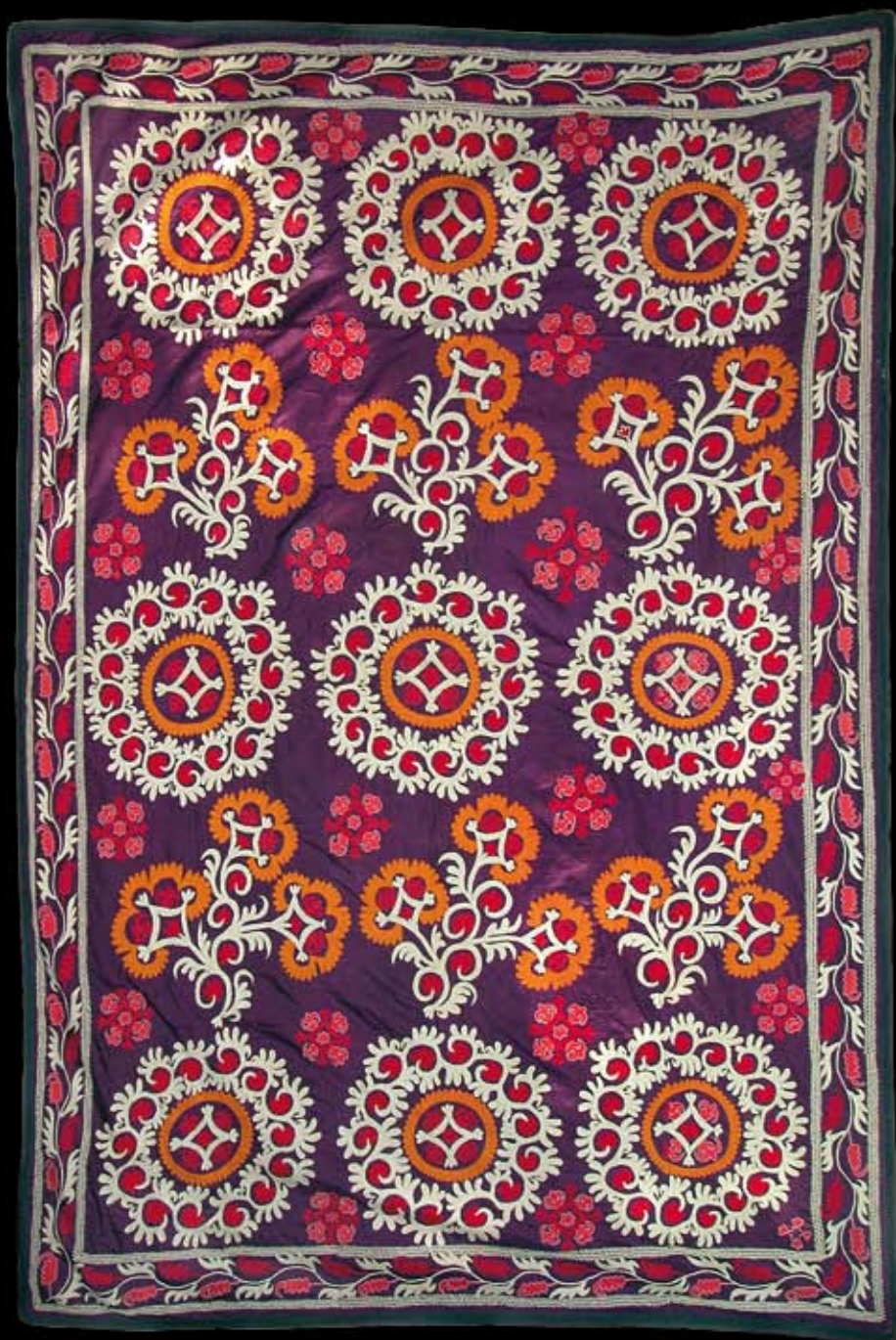
⁵ Sukhareva, 1986, p. 37–38



17. Suzani, Samarkand, beginning of the 20 century



18. Suzani, Samarkand, 1870-1890



19. Suzani, Samarkand, beginning of the 20 century



20. Suzani, Samarkand, beginning of the 20 century



21. Suzani, Samarkand, about 1900



22. Suzani, Ghijduvan, end of the 19 century



23. Small suzani, Ghijduvan, end of the 19 century



24. *Bugdjoma*, Nurata,
second half of the 19—beginning of the 20 century



25. Suzani, Nurata, first half of the 19 century



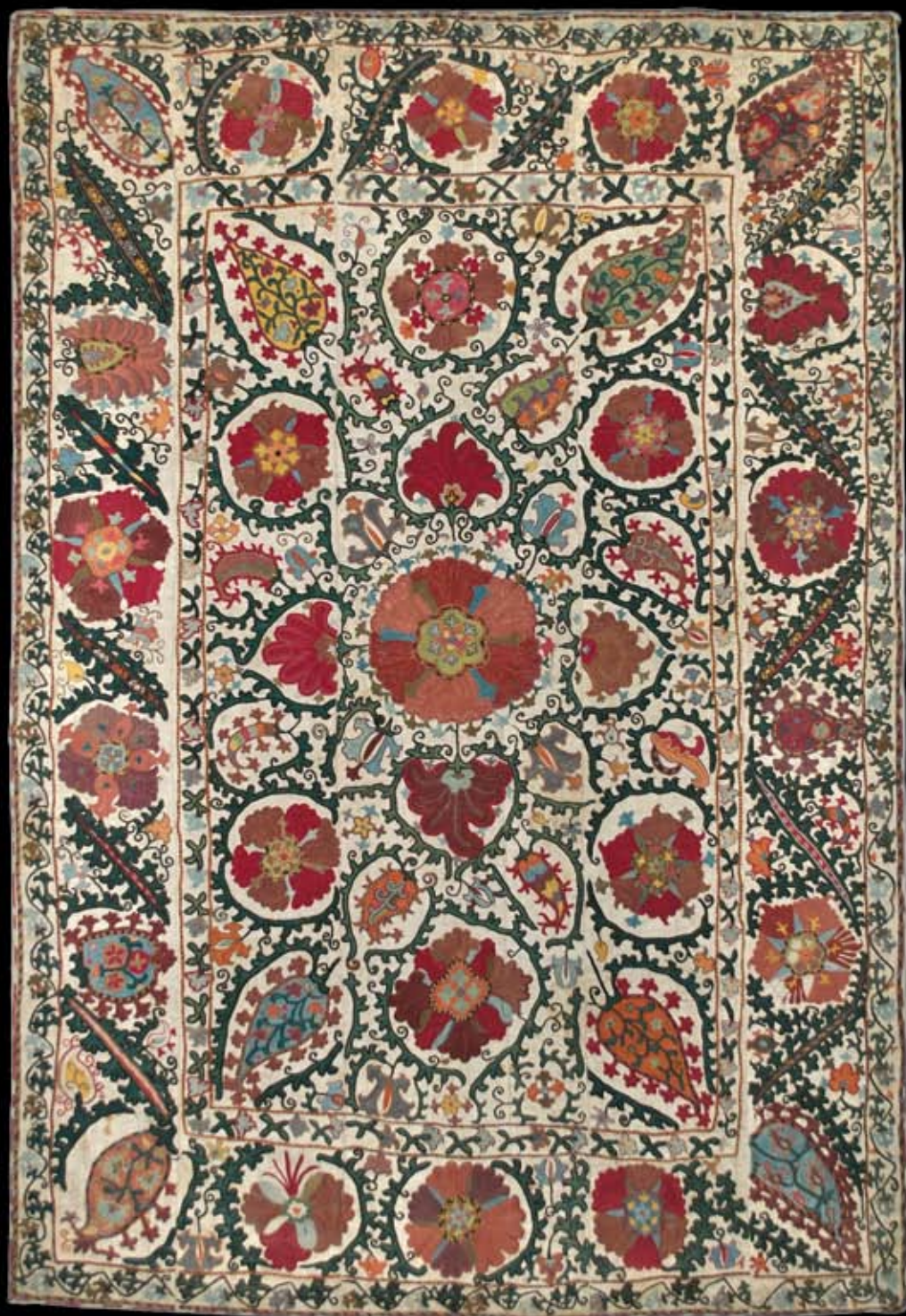
26. Suzani, Bukhara, second half of the 19 century



27. Suzani, Shafirkan, end of the 19 century



28. Small suzani, Shafirkan, 2005



29. Suzani, Shafirkan, end of the 19 century



30. Suzani, Nurata, 2005



31. Small suzani, Nurata, 2005



32. Suzani, Nurata, 2005

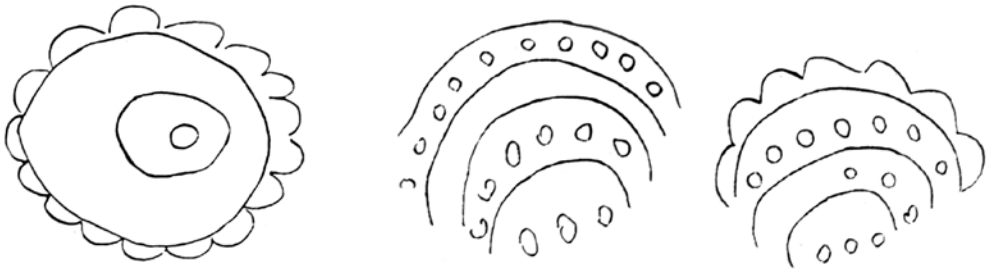


Fig. 27. Astral motifs: *oftob*—“sun”; *oy-nuska*—“month pattern”; dot in the middle—*yulduzlar* motif—“stars”. Vabkent region, Bukhara province, 1937

main, key motive of large decorative embroideries—was born by ideas similar to that of “the tulip holiday”.

In disclosing the magical meaning of motives constituting the main, indispensable part of ornament of early embroideries, we should also remind general apotropaic meaning of large decorative embroideries of *suzani* type. As mentioned above, *suzani* are used as curtains of a wedding room (or a room designated for circumcising ritual), are put onto the head of a bride who leaves for a fiancé’s house; an embroidery work is kept above her in the form of canopy when she is let enter the wedding room; a *ruyidzho* is used as a bedspread of the bed of newlyweds, who use it in their further life. All these rites related to embroideries pursue one goal: to safeguard a young couple from the magical evil that may deprive them of happiness and children.

Apart from talisman motives in old embroideries, we also find talisman motives designated to promote to the receipt of the desirable. The white color of embroideries that played the main role in the wedding ritual was considered a one designating happiness, lucky life; pomegranate and poppy fruits had to provide fertility. The vegetable nature of ornament—with a number of motives of flowers, greens and fruits included into it – was based upon, probably, more distant by similar associations.

That is the semantics and essence of the ornamentation of old embroideries. It was established in relatively old times: the magical meaning of pattern-forming motives was not realized even by women, who belonged to the adult generation in the second half of the 19th century. They simply thought that these patterns were “useful” (*khosiyat doral*) and of good quality like a whole embroidery work: well-being of a young couple could be threatened if they were not.

The full assortment of magical motives was typical only for white cloth embroideries (the very color, as shown above, was considering a one designating wellbeing). Such motives did not play an independent role at colored cloth embroideries, even earliest ones and, as details, entered the composition of complex figures, primarily, rosettes.

Talisman motives were kept throughout the second period: they went on being embroidered primarily on white cloth. The motive of knife that developed particularly in this period remained the main one. Later on, the motive lost its artistic sense, was no longer understood, and finally disappeared at all.

The ornament of the latest, third-period either white cloth or colored cloth embroideries reflected the changed living standards. At this time, seamstresses tried to make the ornament inclusive of new things (such as samovar or railway) and things symbolizing wealth (a trunk-

box and jewelry items) or abundance (fruit, vegetables, and luxuriant vegetation). The very nature of the style changed after the ornamentation of colored cloth embroideries became inclusive of straight bushes. Earlier, the Samarkand style was distinctive for its clearly expressed ornamentation: traditionally, too realistic motives were not permitted in a composition. Now, the vegetable ornament became more realistic. To tell the truth, a bush represented a specific plant only in rare cases: artists did not strive for this, they put different fruits, flowers and even plant-stylized subjects onto it. However, there also appeared patterns depicting quite definite plants such as weeping willow, curved stem willow, and a bush of *khusayni* brand vine.

Being closer to the nature, these motives were stylized strongly in the spirit of the Samarkand traditions: weeping willow branches, for example, were raised upward while they should have been put downward; a vine bush had a firm vertical stem and looked quite alike a flexible vine. Nevertheless, this was a great step toward direct graphics untypical for the Samarkand traditional patterns, vegetation form of which often was of quite another semantics.

Probably, the transition to new motives and patterns was caused by their better ability to reflect the direct link of a form to the content. They allowed observing tradition-required ornamentation and at the same time approaching the real vegetable prototype.

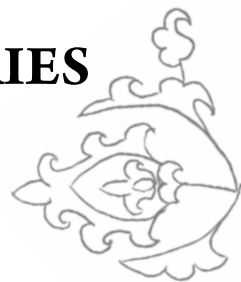
Palak motive became so popular not accidentally: its flexible, twisting lashes gave enough room to observe two opposite tendencies: on the one hand, the demand of keeping a traditionally ornamented form and, on the other hand, the demand of renovation and refusal from tradition's limiting norms.

Fig. 28.
Working women. Baysun



Part 2

LOCAL TYPES OF EMBROIDERIES AND HISTORICAL DATA



Retraced comprehensively in its domestic, stage-by-stage development against the background of artistic achievements and losses, the decorative embroidery in Samarkand is just a branch of the needlework art of Central Asia. With so much in common, *suzani* produced in various regions of Uzbekistan had its own local distinctions and, hence, combination of local types and styles.

As has been noted above, differences between these local types have not been accounted for by ethnic identity of their creators: it is impossible to distinguish between Uzbek or Tajik embroideries.

In this respect, the art of *suzani* is universal, for it demonstrated ancient ties between Tajiks and Uzbeks-Sarts, including ethnic roots as well. It would be appropriate to remind that contributing to the ethno-genesis of the both nations were some common components. In turn, similar life and economic conditions favored the consolidation and development of identical features in the cultures of Uzbeks-Sarts and Tajiks that had their effect on the traditional applied art, particularly, the art of decorative embroidery.

That's why the author thinks it is improper to insist on Uzbek or Tajik *suzani* only. Alternatively, the point is about a specific people that populates a needlework-manufacturing region.

Typical conservative features make it possible to single out several types of *suzani* (styles or schools as set forth in the art literature) in towns and large populated localities. Basic features have been described by Y.Z. Chepelevetskaya¹. However, the researcher touched upon the most developed *suzani* centers with their best specimens being concentrated in museum collections only. Yet-unexplored local variants manufactured by embroidery centers of Khodjent, Ura-Tube, Kanibadam and Khadjikent have been described and published (some of them) by Tajik art historian N. Isayeva-Yusupova; however, the description is indistinct and largely erroneous, so the variants above have not properly been defined so far².

It would be appropriate to note that *suzani* was manufactured in many rural areas, even those populated by offspring of tribal Uzbeks, for whom this art seemed to be alien.

The study of these provincial *suzani*, far from aesthetic acme, created in an ethnically and culturally different environment, is of great interest for the history of decorative embroidery and identification of regularities that contributed to its perfection.

For many groups of rural population, the art of *suzani* seems too unoriginal, adopted, not mechanically thought. As soon as any groups did apply *suzani* in their traditional mode of life and manufactory, they immediately started devising their own version of pattern and design to comply with different artistic traditions. Of great interest is the *suzani* mentioned above and purchased from Turks-Uzbeks for the Samarkand museum in Loish, a village in the same region.

It is different from urban *suzani* on calico by its provincialism, "Kishlak" variant, while its ornament is supplemented by effective pair curls, which are never found on Samarkand *suzani*

¹ Chepelevetskaya, 1961

² Tajik Embroidery, 1979

or those manufactured in ethnically urban environment. It is rather a variant of sheep's horns, i.e. a motif typical for Turkic-language, formerly nomadic peoples, particularly, Turkmen carpet-makers. At the same time Chelek embroideries, a village close to Loish territorially, located in place of a large ancient site, show no nomadic traditions: this is a well thought-out, refined with excellent stitch, suzani originating from regions noted for their ancient farming traditions.

Beyond any doubts, Chelek, Loish, Urgut, as well as oasis villages are not all needlework regions of Samarkand region with its varied population composed of aborigines and representatives of different ethnic groups that arrived here following the 18 century devastation and desolation processes. No targets of exploring cultural traditions, including the art of embroidery of the said groups, have so far been attained regarding the entire Central Asian region. It was the work over this book, three years later after its first variant had been written, that the author realized that the art of suzani was not confined to major centers, for this phenomenon became widespread and, hence, mattered most for the history of cultural communication of varied components of the Central Asian population.

In an effort to expand regional borders of the decorative embroidery research, the author does not aim to explore its production minutely. A systematic approach was applied to collect materials from other regions due to the stocking of museum collection and its scientific description but, unlike Samarkand, the specimens were not analyzed on the basis of primary sources, i.e. statements of the population engaged in the needlework or execution of respective orders. The information of this sort might be obtained from a production site only. Besides Chelek and Urgut, the author managed to visit rural regions of Bukhara, Jizak and Khodjent; however, in some cases, the author had to confine himself to desultory information, valuable though, obtained from locals, old antiquarians.

At any rate, as a result of years-long museum work in Samarkand and an acquaintance with suzani collections at other museums, the author picked up an essential material that substantially supplemented the one already available in the published works. The below-stated is notes on local types of suzani and does not claim to be exhaustive.



Fig. 29.
Violet silk suzani
fragment with
kadj-bed
(curved willow)
motif.
The end of the
19th century—
the beginning
of the 20th century

1. DECORATIVE EMBROIDERY OF SAMARKAND-KHODJENT STYLISTIC GROUP

Conventionally, local types of suzani are classified into two large stylistic groups.

Besides Samarkand, the Samarkand-Khodjent stylistic group includes decorative needlework of Tashkent, Jizak, and Khodjent. Forming a generic stylistic pivot of this group are a graphical design of ornament, pattern elements, high level of graphical motif stylization, cool colors, insignificant variability of design and composition.

1.1. Tashkent

Tashkent suzani was thoroughly explored and described by M.A. Bikzhanova¹ and later on by G.Z. Chepelevetskaya². Not much has to be added to the above.

Two different types of suzani coexisted in Tashkent, and the both in their oldest variants. Also, the embroideries are titled differently: *palak* and *gul-kurpa*. Note that the ornament and composition of *palak* are accounted for by well-defined canons: a panel is filled very densely with patterns while a design is based on symmetrically distribute crimson rosettes, or sub-rosettes (with a pedicle). *Gul-kurpa* is ornamented with freely distributed flowering bushes, or branches, reminiscent of Nurata suzani where this type of composition and related motifs are brought to perfection. Note that the Tashkent fancywork is somewhat coarser, denser, yet, excellent either. They are different from the Nurata suzani by a composition of floral motifs, in particular, they are deficient in “iris” motifs and of another colors: deciduous elements of the Tashkent suzani are of dark-green, the Nurata one is lighter, of greenish, warm tint.

Designs made of flowering bushes or branches, but of different type, are found as a specific kind of ornamentation in Bukhara and a motif of bushes not typical for earlier needlework against a white background.

In Samarkand, as has been stated above, it came into being just in the end of the 19 century, primarily on colored stuff; it is also found against a colored background (Shahrisabz) with “bushes” or “branches” acting as secondary, concomitant element of the composition based on rosettes with deciduous ornament³.

Execution of Tashkent *gul-kurpa* on mat with silk tintured by traditional dyes only, is illustrative that these are earlier specimens created in a period where no changes in the art of decorative embroidery had been apparent. In the meanwhile, Tashkent had been affected by this factor earlier as compared with the regions of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, in particular, there were used imported materials and dyes. Hence, the date of *gul-kurpa* execution on white mat may be attributed, at least, to the 1860–70s where old traditions of previous stage had still dominated.

The origin of *gul-kurpa* remains unknown, yet, they are strikingly different from the Tashkent suzani of *palak* type.

¹ Bikzhanova M.A. The Tashkent Embroidery of the 19–20 Centuries. Materials kept at the State Museum of Arts of Uzbekistan

² Chepelevetskaya, 1961

³ Suzani with its peculiar composition (flowering bushes included) is neither Tashkent, Nurati, nor Bukhara (generically though) and regarded by G.Z. Chepelevetskaya (Table 33) as Shahrisabz. Its localization is convincing not enough.

Whereas the first type—*palak* is characterized by excessive ornamentation of motifs when their real prototype is not perceived and their ornament may be construed as associated with ancient astral cults (suzani of this type must have been used as amulets, like in Samarkand), free, apparently vegetation motifs—bushes on *gul-kurpa* – carry no necessary message. In other words, realistic flowers and leaves are depicted while no pomegranate, fruit-talisman are found there. Some rosette circles interspersed with the composition of *gul-kurpa* may be termed as motifs of cult nature.

Not least of the factors is the coexistence in old Tashkent of the both types of suzani. These are likely based on the two different artistic traditions that coalesced into the culture of Tashkent residents due to the merging of differently emanated mediums. This is most apparent in Jizak's case where suzani is noted for its exclusive uniformity, unprecedented for other places.

1.2. Jizak

Both in old times and later on, they were embroidered with one type of fabric only: in the 19 century it was white *mata*; in the 20 century it was replaced by dense, factory-manufactured materials of orange, seldom yellow and very rarely—pistachio-green color (perhaps, in imitation of the ancient variant of *mata*—*zendeni* of the same color). A pattern of Jizak suzani is large, one-color crimson rosettes, two-three concentric circles with indented edge, not closed up with each other. This was typical for rosettes and Tashkent *palaks*; however, in Tashkent case the circles are closed up, while in Jizak case there remains a clearance in the form of thin, cream-colored strip, i.e. the fabric was translucent.

There is a deciduous setting of specific form around rosettes: two semi-rings with ends turned back outside in different directions. Perhaps, this element goes back to the presentation of knives. Note that the knives had a typical curve inherent in real knives of Central Asian form. A knife motif in Samarkand suzani has been referred to above (its magic meaning), including a motif transformation in the end of the 19 century when “knives” bent to embrace a rosette. As for Jizak, this transformation of the original form evolved into the form of semi-rings with unbent ends remaining from a real prototype. Note that two semicircles with ends turned down outside are retraced on all Jizak suzani even in cases where a cloth and a design left no room for this element (that was typical for *ruvidjo*, whose border-shaped ornament traditionally covered three sides of fabric while in Jizak one element was sometimes placed in the vacant middle). In this case, semicircles were put not together, with two lower and upper ends on both sides of the rosettes.

Note that the rosettes and related semi-rings make up a basis of ornamental compositions of Jizak embroidery. The earlier, smaller specimens were based on the above pattern. In four corners formed of border framework there are small figurines of triangular form with “pendants” called “*tumorcha*”—“amulet”, typical for Jizak. To all appearances, this motif indicates to a small amulet with its triangular form traditional for the Central Asia. “Pendants” on “amulet” of Jizak ornament are illustrative of a jewelry type widely spread in the region. Note that this minor motif was indispensable for Jizak embroidery as its distinctive feature.

It has to be kept in mind that the ornament of ancient Jizak suzani with its spacious and sophisticated design included an additional rosette framing, particularly central rosette. These included two types. Frequently, a narrow ring of green color (hence, a deciduous element was meant) was placed in between rosettes and semi-rings; also, there was a ring or two semi-rings executed by thin outlines; between them—small figures in the form of trefoils.

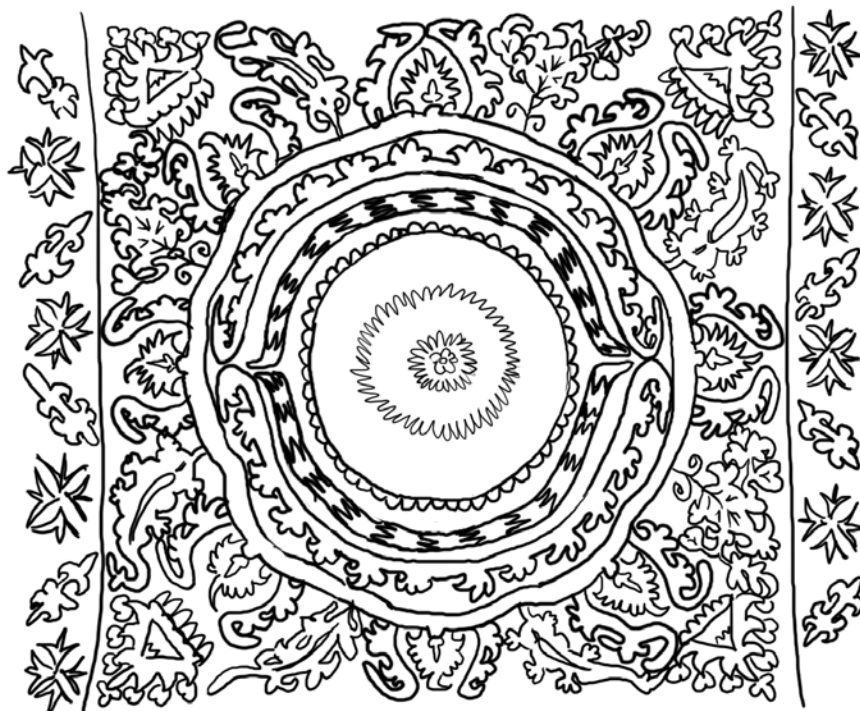


Fig. 30. A bolinpush. Jizak, 1907

Another variant of additional rosette setting has a form of narrow wavy line with unfigured, toothless and scallops-free edges of light blue or even blue color. The ring was titled *su*—a word which in addition to its basic meaning “water” had the second one “border”. Surely derivative, it became a widely spread special term, unrelated to “water”. However, the said ring of Jizak *suzani* with its soft, undulating bend and dark-blue color tended to be construed as a swift torrent. However, there are no grounds enough to insist on such an ornament interpretation.

It should be noted that the additional rosette setting is found on ancient Jizak embroidery executed on white *mata*. No additional rings around rosettes are found on later specimens of the embroidery ornament. As time lapsed, the design of Jizak *suzani* became simpler to grow monumental, severe, and concurrently watered down. The entire composition of later Jizak embroidery consisted of rosettes symmetrically bordered by deciduous ornament—semi-rings with edges turned back outside. There was an additional ring between them and the rosette that densely stuck to the latter. A free space between rows was occupied by small rosettes or oblong figures reminiscent of lizards, i.e. profile flowers on a blue ring changed out of all recognition. There are triangular small “amulets” in four corners and later specimens.

Note that all the elements of the composition of later Jizak embroidery became enlarged, while a cloth was sewn up densely.

As a color of *suzani*-designed fabric changed, so did a pattern color. Deciduous elements of old specimens are dark green, coldish; rosettes are of excellent crimson tint that came as a result of silk’s coloring with cochineal. Along with an expressive blue ring there

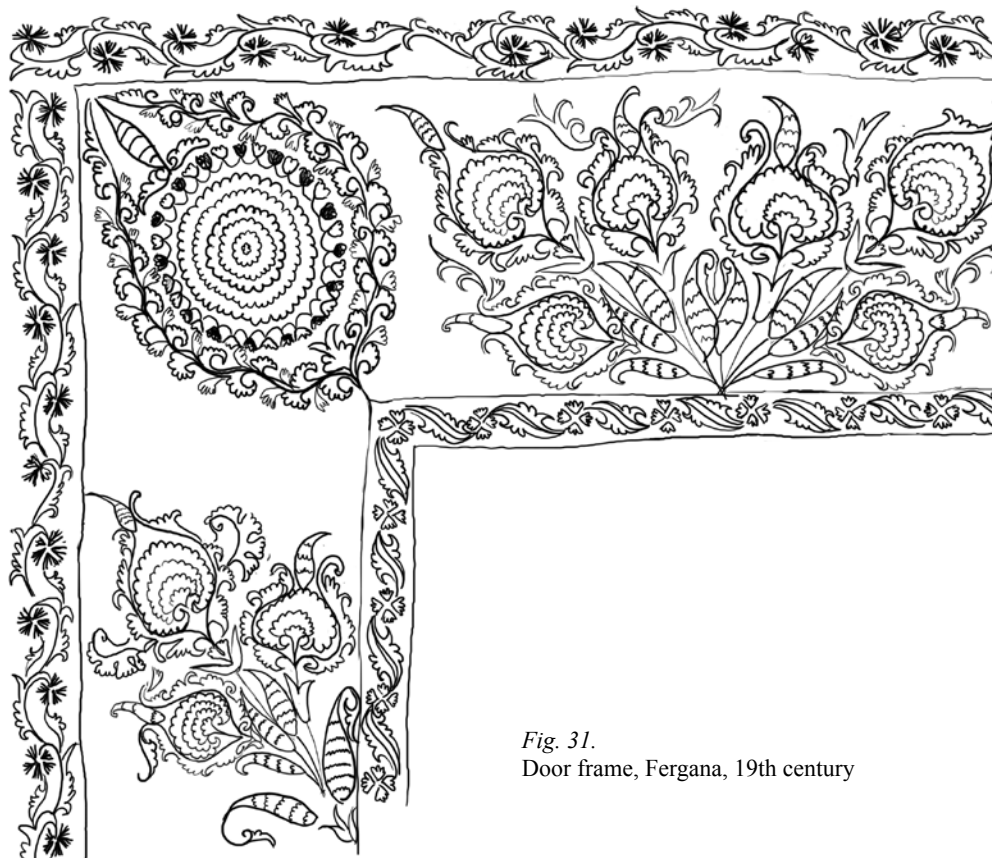


Fig. 31.
Door frame, Fergana, 19th century

were small additional motifs. All deciduous elements of the pattern are bordered by a narrow strip of the stitch (*ilmak*), which, as has been stated, was used for the same purpose in the earlier Samarkand embroidery. This method of the design of deciduous motifs was extant on the later specimens in Jizak; thickening of the deciduous ornament was accompanied by widening of mounting strip. It was the transition to the orange background that led to the substitution of green color in the deciduous elements for blue color, while the mounting was painted black. White color was used in smaller motifs, so later Jizak embroidery proved to be higher from artistic point of view as compared with the earlier one. Note that crimson rosettes, blue-black deciduous ornament excellently blend with warm, orange color of fabric. Its decorative nature notwithstanding, this *suzani* is deprived of colors' diversity, which was typical for later Tashkent *palak*, and of somber color characteristic of later Samarkand embroidery against a white background with sharp contrast of black deciduous and crimson-red flower motifs.

In all probability, no *suzani* was manufactured on other colored fabrics in Jizak, which was so characteristic of Tashkent, Fergana Valley (Hodjent and Ura-Tube included) and Samarkand. Jizak embroideresses declined from employing all the diversity of Russian factory fabric imported to the Central Asia. They focused on an orange, dense fabric, and remained loyal to their choice forever.

In addition to the typical Jizak embroidery, there was discovered (in 1946) in Jizak an unfinished suzani reminiscent of Tashkent *palak* (not identical with it though). It was embroidered by women from Toshkanlyk block populated by Tashkent descendants. No fancywork of this type had earlier been discovered in Jizak, perhaps, that was a single instance.

Identification of one type of suzani only in Jizak with one and the same pattern is a unique phenomenon: various types of fancywork were spread in all embroidery-developed regions. This is explained as being due to the fact that a single group of Jizak's population was responsible for art of suzani, and this group succeeded in creating its own style, set of motifs and compositional devices.

In considering that descendants of settlers from other places had always lived compactly in Jizak (blocks Uratpalik, Okhravotlik, Toshkanlik), one can suppose that the Jizak type of suzani was devised by the local population. Perhaps, its offspring populated the block Jizahlyk (ancient Dushzak is known to have been located in another place, not far from the present-day town, so a name of this Uzbek town stems from an oil Tajik word "*diz*"—"village", "fortress"; Jizak comes "*dizak*" ("small fortress").

In contrast, suzani of different type, elements of pattern and composition in one region may be accounted for by the fact that the population had been shaped of different-origin ethnic components and, hence, different traditions. Since ethnic components that contributed to the formation of today's population included bearers of either needlework traditions, in the course of their consolidation various types of suzani were integrated into common cultural depository. An eloquent testimony to this was Bukhara.

1.3 Fergana

Fergana valley has never been reputed a region with its own, peculiar art of embroidery, particularly, type of suzani. Yet, the needlework of this type was spread here as well. It was an original style, a specific, local type known under the title of Fergana embroidery. They were noted for filling a space with refined, delicate motifs, frequently in the form of bushes or branches, sometimes rosettes against a colored background: dark green, dark red, violet and black, a peculiar stitch of *basma* type¹.

Regretfully, the Fergana embroidery remains unexplored so far, some aspects of its history obscure. No its sub-types, or variants that differed due to different ethnic origin and cultural traditions, have yet been identified. Of importance is the fact that not a single Fergana *mata*-based embroidery is known to be used in everyday life or museum collections, in the silk painted by natural dye, supposedly earlier version. L.Z. Chepelevetskaya points out that white *mata*-based suzani was manufactured in Fergana till the 1880s, however, she refers to no source of this information, nor provides description of this Fergana-made embroidery, so it would be difficult to insist that the information of this sort had been reported by witnesses. That's why the origin of Fergana suzani remains unclear.

In all probability, ancient suzani disappeared in Fergana earlier than in other regions owing to the rapid development of capitalist relations here. That led to the degradation of patriarchal rites, including household and family manufacture of suzani as indispensable component of wedding ceremony. It is hardly probable that the Fergana's population adopted this art from other regions in later periods: it is too traditional with its own, local Fergana-type suzani. At present, we are aware of embroidery against colored background only. This type of embroidery is of much lesser importance for the history of this art not only because it goes back to later periods but also owing to the fact that the white fabric needlework had always been typical

¹ Chepelevetskaya, 1961, p. 40, fig. 48, 49

and decisive in all the regions. The specimens of this type enable us to judge about embroidery masterpieces, however, specimens above are not available in Fergana, so we have no opportunity to make our conclusions on the subject.

The situation is different in North Tajikistan: white mate suzani is spread in embroidery regions of Hodjent and Ura-Tube; related specimens are stored at museum collections and sometimes found among the population.

1.4 Hodjent

Of the two basic embroidery centers of North Tajikistan, the science is aware of Ura-Tube. The latter conserved its archaic features owing to its being separated from railway communications. A great number of antiquities that survived here after Central Asia's joining Russia was purchased by buyers-up. These were their efforts that helped the Ura-Tube embroidery get access to museums. The Hodjent embroidery was known as well, but to lesser degree, may be, because of new style embroidery that came up here very early, on factory-made materials or homemade silk which art-lovers appreciated lower, so the point is about the decline, not prosperity, of this art. An idea is that no made-based suzani was manufactured in Hodjent but it was allegedly imported from neighboring village of Kostakoz. The materials are illustrative that this view is wrong. Beyond any doubts Hodjent and Kostakoz with their uniform population belonged to one and the same historical-cultural environment as single embroidery area. Given staunch adherence to local forms of culture, original style of artistic handicrafts and trade, it was close proximity only that urged Hodjent residents to employ suzani purchased in Kostakoz, as evidenced by the Hodjent materials of the author. It has still to be clarified, how wide was this practice spread in the end of the 19-beginning of the 20 centuries.

Hodjent was among regions where it was ordinary to hang suzani out on the walls of a wedding room but, as compared with Samarkand, this suzani played a minor role in newly wedded couple's appointments. At first, suzani was hung out at bride's home, and after her move to bridegroom's home, it was hung out in three days only after a nuptial bed was removed. Embroideries remained for 2–3 months at newly married home (7–12 months in Samarkand), then their removal ceremony (*takhkanon*) took place, and they were placed into a trunk and stored till a new event—wedding or circumcision of former wedded couple's children.

It was a practice of decorating room's walls with embroideries that contributed to their manufacture. While an obligatory set of embroideries in Samarkand consisted of four items (suzani, *bolinpush*, *ruyidjo* and *joynamaz*) and the total number of sets in the married portion was, at least, three (rich men had ten), the set in Hodjent included three items (*bolinpush* excluded), and just one set made up the married portion of not rich brides; well-off brides had three sets. Thus, a wife of rich man Mirkomilbay, descending from a poor family (according to the custom, embroidery was manufactured by bride's side), had just one suzani on black sateen; one *ruyidjo* on white factory fabric and one *joynamaz* on the same fabric. Another marriage portion of well-off people had a very large suzani on white *mata*; second suzani on violet silk; one *ruyidjo* on red sateen and *joynamaz* on yellow factory calico (information about second copies of *ruyidjo* and *joynamaz* is not available). The third marriage portion of the well-off people included three sets: suzani and *ruyidjo* on white *mata*; second suzani on black sateen; third suzani on pink factory fabric; second *ruyidjo* was made of white factory fabric without embroidery and three *joynamaz* on green cloth embroidered in chain stitch on pink and white factory fabric. All the three marriage portions went back to the earlier 20 cen-

ture, i.e. period when it was prestigious to increase the number of items in marriage portions, including embroideries.

It was natural that the art of *suzani* became not so widespread in Hodjent, as was in Samarkand, due to the minor importance of embroidery as family's wealth indicator and the poor scope of manufacture. By the beginning of the 20 century, the importance of decorative fancywork inside a family appreciably dropped. When preparing a marriage portion, each family expected that a part of embroidery would be ordered or purchased. Note that many women were engaged in manufacturing *suzani* as their professional practice. It was the custom in the reviewed period to go to a neighboring kihslak Kostakoz for white *mata*—based *suzani*. Earlier 20 century, *suzani* as part of marriage portion (or circumcision) was embroidered by many Hodjent families. This was manufactured by bride's women and immediate relatives. The art of decorative fancywork did not decline here. Embroidery was largely based on colored fabric, particularly, silk; but in some cases, on white *mata* as well: if in the third marriage portion the both white *mata* embroideries were purchased (home-made) in Kostakoz; in the second marriage portion it was embroidered in Hodjent by a hand-finisher to order of bride's family.

It should be noted that a *suzani* from Hodjent and Kostakoz has a vegetable ornament. It is vividly echoed in embroideries against a white background with floral and deciduous ornaments. In days of old, colored background embroideries had a pattern in the form of sophisticated, openwork rosettes consisting of several concentric circles and a tightly sewn rosette in the center. Later on, colored fabric *suzani* had shrub- or branch-shaped patterns, i.e. their pattern radically changed. As distinct from the above, a white background *suzani*, especially the one on white *mata*, is noted for greater regularity of its components on all the specimens, including a single composition based on symmetrically arranged compact, practically one-color, dark crimson rosettes. The *suzani* of this type is called "*paipoki shutur*"—"a footstep of a trace of camel". A deciduous ornament around rosettes is uniform and has two semicircles with smooth internal and toothed and festooned external parts. Upper ends of semicircles are turned back outside while lower ends rounded.

Typical for "*paipoki shutur*" *suzani* is a fringing of deciduous elements of ornament with a wide black strip and double stitch. As a rule, rosettes are monotonous, dark-crimson, with a small motley core decorated with other flowers. A large, central *suzani* rosette (size up to 50 cm) is dismembered: in addition to a motley core there are vertical figures that radically divide it into four sectors, coincide in the center to form a straight cross. These figures are usually embroidered into two alternating colors, for instance, bright green and violet that are arranged along transversal festooned strips—a devise frequently found on ancient Samarkand *suzani*, the so-called "*abri bahor*"—"spring cloud". Information about names of Hodjent embroidery patterns is scanty and fragmentary. A trip to Hodjent (then Leninabad) in 1976 failed to find masters of patterns, through efforts had earlier been made on this track. Note that masters of patterns are proficient in local designs and their types and specificity. Meetings with *suzani* owners and their elderly relatives, sometimes with their daughters who, in their childhood, were involved in embroidery work as their mothers' mates, could not fill in the still, some information of scientific importance was available to supplement our knowledge of other regions' ornamentics. As some sources say, *suzani* rosettes from Hodjent, particularly, *paipoki shutur*, were defined as *kosa*—"bowl" (for thin meals) and *kosi kalon* ("large bowl"). Beyond any doubts, that's a technical term only to specify their dimensions; a primary title of white *mata*-based *suzani* rosettes—*paipoki shutur*—made it possible to rank them with numerous, widely spread motifs that depicted traces of various animals and birds ("a horse's hoof", "a mouse's trace", "a sparrow's trace", etc.). However, this associative

bond was forgotten in Hodjent, so *paipoki shutur* was not associated with rosettes but used conformably to a *suzani* type with this pattern as typical feature.

Spear-shaped figures placed cruciformly by radiuses on a nimbus of the large central rosette, are titled “*bodom*”—“almond”, though, as distinct from a usual form pattern “*bodom*”, they had no typical one-sided bend, characteristic of an element that represented “almond”, like its real prototype. In other cases, “*bodom*” patterns were found on Hodjent embroideries. By analogy with Samarkand *suzani*, the spear-shaped figure above should be associated in people’s consciousness with a knife or other cutting instrument, i.e. a motif of talisman widely spread in old ornamentals. However, no conception of this sort has so far been identified in Hodjent.

Open-work rosettes that formed a basis of embroidery patterns on colored fabrics, were treated not as an individual motif but complex composition: each constituent part had its own definition. The rings with one side smooth and restrictive were called “*oba*”. Depending upon their external edge, they were called “*oba dandona*” (with festoons); “*obi kala*”—“fortress”; with merlon—“*obi bodomcha*”, if almonds sat on merlons or festoons. Trefoils decorating rings were called either “*separra*”—“three-blades” (in Samarkand included) or “*saddacha*”—“tree” (“*sadda*”, a Karagach species). Figure ring constituents (conventionally) in the form of shovel separated from each other, so that figures of the configuration are placed between them. In the first case, they were called “*shona*”—“comb”; in the second case—treated as elements of “*hafaband*”—“necklace”. A complex motif of several elements (one of them resembled a chain of “pearls”) was associated with a jewelry “*bartak*”—“a diadem with pendants”.

Earlier 20 century *suzani* and *ruvidjo* patterns based on colored fabric consisted of “*shokh*” (“branches”) with straight-standing or slantwise stem. By analogy with the Samarkand one, this

Fig. 32. Composition of a *sandalipush*



type of pattern came up later and tended to supplant the composition out of complex open-work rosettes. A “branch” pattern opened up greater opportunity for authors of ornamental compositions to enrich, diversify and reanimate them with figures of profile flowers of varied forms, leaves and almonds. Motifs of “tulips” or “pomegranate flowers” are found on such branches. Sometimes, the ornament is a pomegranate (in some cases, it was called “anor”) or a boll of opium poppy—both motifs are spread in scores of embroidery regions. The same is true of an almond motif, which is found in different variants.

Certainly, information above is insufficient to judge about semantics of ornament motifs of the Hodjent decorative embroidery. It remains unclear whether some of the motifs had the meaning of talismans displayed so brightly in the earlier period Samarkand (later on, old-time patterns were replaced by quite distinctive ones, as we witnessed). The magic meaning of Samarkand suzani patterns was discovered due to information by old embroideresses whose adult life began decades prior to the end of the 19 century. Naturally, information of such sort was hardly collectable in Hodjent where study of suzani so much delayed, not to mention that changes in Hodjent’s population’s everyday life, in particularly, needlework art began earlier than in Samarkand.

Analysis of materials about Hodjent-Kostakoza suzani (one cannot differentiate them at this stage of study; all we know is that they proximate) leads to several conclusions. Naturally, the conclusions are only preliminary as we aware of a small number of facts and due to the fact that this embroidery region is practically unexplored.

1. The decorative embroidery of Hodjent-Kostakoza is one of local variants of Central Asian suzani; here there was formed its peculiar style, own principles of composition and peculiar set of ornamental motifs. But neither on its artistic development nor scales of embroidery production nor embroidery’s role in everyday life, Hodjent belongs to regions where this kind of art was not particularly developed nor had best specimens created. Probably, that’s why the Hodjent decorative embroidery did not become famous and was poorly represented in museum collections.

2. However, the Hodjent suzani are of good decorative quality. *Paipoki shutur* white mata-based embroideries are artistically most valuable and peculiar. They include rather old ones. Semantics of their patterns remains unexplored; in particular, it is unclear where they have link to folk beliefs, as that on Samarkand suzani. More widely spread colored fabric suzani strongly differ (by ornament) from *paipoki shutur* suzani and resemble other regions’ embroideries. All known specimens date back to a later period.

3. The style of Hodjent-Kostakoza suzani has proximity with Samarkand and Jizak ones. It is reminiscent of Samarkand suzani by the same dark coldish coloring and composition based on large rosettes located in correct rows. The rosettes are sewn tightly (their nimbus is not divided into one-color concentric parts with hardly visible strip of the background, which is a distinctive peculiarity of Jizak suzani). Sometimes, the interior of their rosettes resembles that of Samarkand suzani: elements located on radiuses connect each other in the center and form cruciform figures. Hodjent suzani have a common feature with Jizak’s: special form of the deciduous ornament of rosettes that is not met in other regions: the rosettes are covered by the deciduous ornament two semi-rings with ends bent outside. To tell the truth, only upper ends have such form (lower ones rounded) on Hodjent suzani while both ends are bent outside on Jizak suzani. Apart from this, the suzani of these two regions have the same fringing of the deciduous parts of ornament-wide black strip made with double stitch. Double stitch fringing is also observed on old embroideries of other regions, including Samarkand where, however, it is narrow, not black but green, sometimes olive and became out of use long ago unlike Jizak and Hodjent where it had remained.



2. DECORATIVE EMBROIDERY OF BUKHARA-NURATA STYLISTIC GROUP

The Bukhara oasis is one of the most interesting embroidery regions of Uzbekistan and Central Asia. Before the Revolution, embroideries were manufactured in different Bukhara blocks, each with its distinctive style, ornament and devises (more primitive and coarse in regions). They have been explored insufficiently. However, beyond any doubts, they belong to one and the same stylistic group that also includes Nurata embroideries and, may be, Karshi embroideries (the latter can not be identified exactly due to the lack of reliable information). The main features of this second group of Central Asian suzani are as follows:

1. Coloring built upon a rich picturesque gamma of soft tints, something that differs these embroideries from more graphical suzani of Samarkand, Jizak, Tashkent and Hodjent.

2. Smaller (than the latter's) ornamental forms, which are splendid and diverse; often, two rosettes of the same structure are not found on a single fancywork; and in case rosettes are the same, other elements of pattern are different

3. Less stylized, as compared with Samarkand-Hodjent suzani, ornamental motifs that depict much more realistic forms up to separate natural subjects (pots, birds or even a man) at minor elements of the pattern.

4. The compositional prevalence of border, which is often wide and complex and decorated richer than the central panel.

5. Diverse, complex devises of the composition and a rich choice of pattern elements make it hard to classify Bukhara-Nurata embroideries. Their diversity, great stylistic distinctions as well as the richness of ornament elements allow regarding this group's embroideries as a complex syncretistic phenomenon expressing various cultural traditions brought in by different-origin ethnic groups that contributed to the ethnic genesis of both town Bukhara and the entire Bukhara oasis.

Embroideries of this group have always been of great artistic interest: they became most famous at the international antiquity market and had been exported to abroad and Russia since old times. But despite such attention to them, the embroideries of this group, especially, the ones of Bukhara and its blocks have so far remained explored least of all (of this group's embroidery regions, Nurata was most fortunate, as shown below).

2.1 Bukhara

The embroideries of Bukhara and its regions were explored by the author on either museum specimens (the bigger part of them had been bought from Samarkand antiquarians) or polling the population on a trip to Bukhara and Vabkent region's villages in 1937. A substantial contribution was examination of embroideries at some Bukhara families where there was obtained the true information of specimens the families possessed. Then, there were bought some specimens of the embroideries; local embroideresses were ordered to paint white fabric patterns (all these materials went to the Samarkand museum). In addition, there were examined Bukhara Emir treasure's embroideries, 150–200 specimens of which got to the Bukhara Museum after the Revolution. Regretfully, the museum had been robbed twice later on, in years of war, and the bigger part of the embroideries disappeared: predominantly those stored at "Folk Art" collection of a Bukhara Museum's department have been preserved. Manager of the department was an old Bukhara resident who could protect the things he was responsible for from being stolen. He died in around 1950.

In later years, the materials became fuller as a consequence of study of Bukhara of the end of 19-beginning of 20 centuries; however, the author set quite a different task, and information about suzani was collected only incidentally. Nevertheless, it contributed substantially to exploration of the Bukhara embroidery.

A traditional set of Bukhara decorative embroideries has a rich, diverse composition. Apart from suzani, there were manufactured joypush—newlyweds' bed-sheet (it was titled *ruyidjo* in Samarkand). In Vabkent, this embroidery is titled *chodirshab*—night bed-sheet (this title is spread in Tashkent and Fergana in the form of *choyshib*). The ornament of Bukhara joypush represents a wide border on three sides of the fabric, sometimes in the form of lancet arch. The latter seems to have been a later form: it is formed by the border's being supplemented with two triangles forming the arch's tympanums. *Takiyapush*, as titled in Vabkent (or *yastukpush* as titled by Uzbeks) is a pillowcase. Its ornament has proximity with suzani, and is spread uniformly over a panel. The border is wide, luxuriant, especially at rich specimens. The composition of ornament of *joynamaz* is reminiscent of joypush; however, its arch—*mehrob*—is lancet-shaped and not formed, unlike joypush, by supplementing triangles to the border. The designation of the embroidery—to serve as the prayer carpet—explains reproduction of the form of *mihrab*, an indispensable attribute of mosque architecture. A tablecloth—*sandalipush* (*sandalipushak*)—is of square form and has pattern embroidered in the form of not broad border stretching along the ends. *Dastorpech* is small (75x75 cm) square embroidery designated for the wrapping of gala turban (*dastor*) is ornamented uniformly over the entire panel and surrounded by narrow border frame. *Rupokcha* are square-form kerchiefs of two types: waist-belts is of bigger size and handkerchief is of smaller size. The first one is fastened as a belt while the second one is kept in hands on gala occasions as part of gala dressing. Besides, in old times when silky fabrics, including silky kerchiefs, were not spread widely, embroidered female headscarves were manufactured in Bukhara as well as throughout Uzbekistan (in Samarkand, Urgut, Nurata, Brichmulla, Fergana valley, etc.) of white muslin (formerly, of course, of white mata). An excellent muslin headscarf of Bukhara origin, with readable inscription stretching along the entire border and interlaced with the ornament is stored in the collection of the State Museum of History, Culture and Art of Uzbekistan in Samarkand.

Tanpokkun—“body towel”—is an elongated one-sided fabric strip with ends decorated with wide, not densely sewn border. Such towels, manufactured on wedding occasion in two copies—one for husband and the other one for wife—were used by them under the performance of ablution and were of different sizes; so they were easily distinguishable (according to a folk belief, the use of one and the same towel cools relations between spouses). *Bugjoma* is an embroidered piece of fabric designated for the wrapping of dresses or bedclothes. The pattern corresponds to the embroidery's designation and is located in the middle in the form of either square blended with angled fabric or opposite branches, sometimes rounded with semi-circular ring on the top.

The use of decorative embroideries in Bukhara strongly differs from that in Samarkand. It was not accustomed in Bukhara to hang embroideries on the walls. Only the “lower” wall, i.e. the place of door was decorated with waist-belts that played both functional and decorative role. In accordance with this role, their ornament, in contrast to the ornament of waist-belts of Tashkent, Fergana and Samarkand, was comparatively bigger: the fabric's square was fringed with a broad border; all the four corners were sewn as well, like in *Shahrisabz*.

Large embroideries were laid on a very tall wedding bed consisting of all blankets available in wedding portion; their number reached to 40 in rich wedding portions. Embroideries were laid one per several blankets; their border was visible one under another. Later on, embroideries were put on bedclothes heaped in a pile (or a couple of piles) on a trunk that was placed near to entry door, according to Bukhara custom.

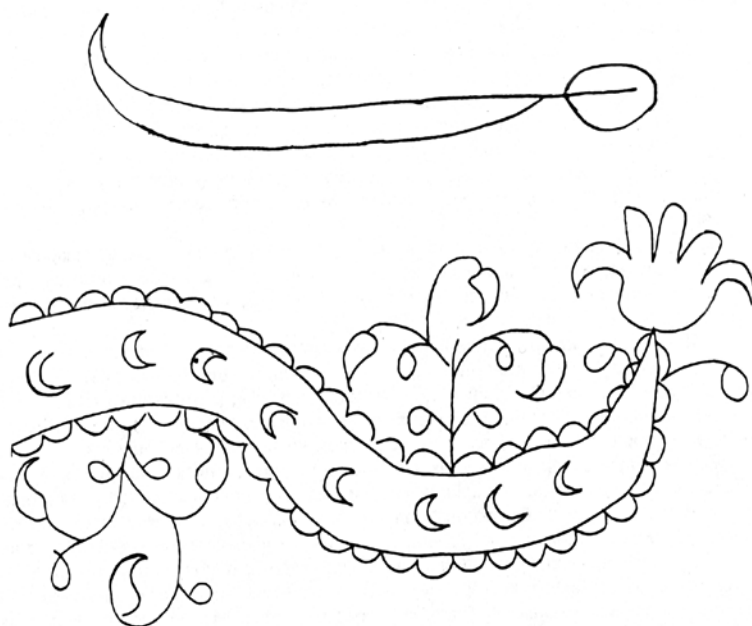


Fig. 33.
Motifs *osh-pichok*
“kitchen-knife” and
shof-u kilich—
“saber and sword”.
Vabkent region
of Bukhara.
1937

Thus, the “lower” wall was the only one in Bukhara decorated with embroideries. Such a transition of the room’s decorative center toward the entry door is explainable by peculiarities of the Bukhara architecture: the center of the front wall was usually the place for door leading to a box-room where family’s most valuable things were stored. In addition, it was a very spread custom in Bukhara to decorate the walls of rooms with fretwork and paintings, so hanging of embroideries was abundant. In Vabkent’s kishlaks, embroideries were put onto a pile of blankets simply unfolded, often on the wrong side. This either provided their better safety or was illustrative of little importance of embroideries in the interior of rooms. Being not as decorative as in Samarkand, Bukhara embroideries also were of smaller number. While there were 2–3 sets of such embroideries in Samarkand in days of old, and the number of sets reached to 12 in the colonial period, in Bukhara, the wedding portion often consisted of one set only, often consisting of *suzani* inherited from the elder generation, a mother or even a grandmother. This circumstance, typical for all places where information was collected, complicated the task of exploration of the Bukhara embroidery substantially: the owners of specimens were unaware of date and place of manufacture of the embroideries and knew nothing of importance of their ornament.

Bukhara oasis embroideries, including many old ones manufactured, probably, in approx. the middle of the 19th century or even earlier most often were manufactured on white *mata* or reddish *mata* titled *mallya*. Gorgeous silk embroideries consist primarily of pink or red-violet fabric (the latter is typical for Shahrissabz most of all) specimens. Home-made silk embroideries with indistinct patterns titled *shohi-abr* are met rarer. Of factory fabrics, in old times there was used *alvoni zard*—“yellow calico” as well as red calico and printed calico, often striped or even flowered. Later on, there were used various sorts of sateen.

Waist-belts and handkerchiefs (*rupokcha*) are manufactured against either white background or colored background; such has never been observed in other places. Embroideries (except for *joypush*) are usually supplied with a lining. In addition, gorgeous, accurately manufactured

specimens had a bit quilted thin wadding, a typical characteristic of Bukhara. An example is gorgeous, excellently manufactured Bukhara pink silk *takiyapush* that was bought during a 1937 trip and currently is stored at the Samarkand museum. There were met stitched embroideries and old mata-based embroideries. In particular, a white-mata Bukhara *joynamaz*, which was bought for a museum collection of Samarkand, is stitched.

As a rule, embroideries are silky: paper threads are practically out of use. Earlier embroideries are featured by Indian wool (pol) dyed bright red. In Samarkand, as has been mentioned, this wool had been typical for embroideries dating back to the middle of the 19 century-early 1890s and became quite out of use later on. Supposedly, Bukhara red wool embroideries have the same dating. Many Bukhara embroideries are manufactured of excellent, thin, shining silk made apparently of the cocoon's best part through unwinding. Exactly such silk was used on embroideries that may be referred to the very town of Bukhara; however, it is also met at specimens bought in kishlaks (it should be reminded that their origin quite not always can be identified; probably, they were imported from the town).

Forming a special group are pillya-duzi embroideries sewn with rough, friable, not brilliant silk titled by antiquarians pillyagi (cocoon one). It was no possible to find out in Bukhara how this sort of silky threads was produced. On the analogy with Samarkand whether this term is also used—silk designated by this term is of a much better quality, though—it is assumable that the Bukhara pillyagi is made by devise similar to Samarkand's but processed less thoroughly. In Samarkand, as has been said, it is made of whole cocoons boiled in water mixed with potash and then stretched out by hands, as a result of which there appears short, thick friable “wick”—*pilta*. The, the “wick” is spun into thin thread at the spinning-wheel, similarly to the spinning of paper threads of wadding “wicks”. This devise illustrates that the population had no silk winding traditions: no doubt, older cotton processing traditions were applied for the making of silk.

The silky thread used for Bukhara embroideries is twisted so weakly that it seems untwisted when in work, a sharp difference from thoroughly, strongly twisted silk of Samarkand embroideries. Nevertheless, the Bukhara silky thread is more brilliant and shining, in contrast to dull silk of Samarkand embroideries. Local antiquarians (for example, Bukhara Jew Abo Kuinov) have informed that such brilliance of silky thread gets stronger due to a special devise of its processing after dyeing: slightly humid hanks are beaten thoroughly.

Excellent coloristic qualities of Bukhara embroideries are explained solely by the development of the art of dyeing, especially in the very town where it was stimulated by silk-weaving. As is known, Bukhara was a center of manufacture of high-quality silky fabrics consumed primarily by numerous feudal aristocrats and exported to other regions. At old-time Bukhara embroideries, silk is dyed with vegetative dyes yielding exclusively pleasant, soft gamma of colors. Of dyes, there was widely used madder (*ruyan*) that yields various tints of red color ranging from brick-red and reddish to a pleasant red tint. Madder was extracted from the roots of the plant that was grown in Bukhara (in Vabkent, like in Samarkand, such was practiced almost till the very Revolution). In the latter, as pointed out by Mayev, the author of the published catalogue of the 1872 Polytechnic Exhibition¹, madder was grown at either single plots or vineyard patches, aryks, for the conditions of vine irrigation and growing were appropriate for madder as well. The author is unaware of whether wild madder roots were applied in Bukhara. Worthy of a note is a considerable difference of silk color dyed with this dye at different embroideries—such undoubtedly depended on a better or worse skill of its use. Pillyagi embroideries, as a rule, have no red color; instead of it, we can see only various tints

¹ The Turkestan Division Catalogue, 1872

of reddish; however, the gamma of colors seems to be particularly soft exactly due to this factor. Yielding yellow color was yellow larkspur (isfarak). Characteristic for Bukhara is a softer tint of this color, as compared with Samarkand embroideries where colors were denser and brighter. Apart from isfarak, a broth of dried apricot roots that yielded light ochre color with pink tint, very well fit to brick-red or reddish color was also used in Bukhara (apparently in its kishlaks).

India-imported cochineal that yields crimson color of coldish lilac tint was used greatly in the town. This color was appreciated very highly: on embroideries it was usually combined with red obtained with the help of madder.

Crimson is not met at all in poor kishlak-manufactured embroideries. There is no, in particular, this color on pillyagi silk embroideries. Apparently, cochineal was not appropriate for home-made dyeing. Possibly, *rangrezes* dyed this color of silk in the town. The third, bright red, very pure tint of Bukhara embroideries was obtained due to the above-mentioned wool imported from India.

Dark blue and blue played a considerable role in the coloristic solution of Bukhara embroideries. Both were obtained with the help of silk indigo dyeing; tints depended on dye's concentration and supplementary tinges. According to some reports, blue color was obtained through adding lime to a solution. However, this information is received from an amateur and, hence, whether this devise was used remains under question. Dyeing in dark blue color were kautgars (kabudgars), almost solely local Jews who dyed using indigo only, with the cold devise, in large earthenware pots—khums.

Combined colors were spread widely. Green threads, for example, were obtained from the following combination: silk, preliminarily dyed in yellow, was then dyed in indigo. A tint of green color depended on the concentration of solution: a weak solution yielded various warm tints ranging from olive to light green while a highly concentrated solution of indigo yielded dense, coldish green color. As far as indigo yielded staunchest color that could be neither faded nor washed out, frequent washing of green-patterned suzani saw gradual washout of yellow tints and appearance of dark blue. Black color was obtained through silk dyeing with pomegranate peel broth treated with a mordant of ferric oxide, and was used primarily for the fringing of the deciduous ornament. The used mordant destructed silk structure; long use of a fancywork made black-colored places spill out earliest of all.

Old antiquarians used this sign for the reasons of dating: they thought the embroidery with black-colored silk starting to spill out was around 100 years old. Naturally, such definition is not quite true, since threads could spill out much earlier as a result of violations of dyeing devise. Through dyeing yellow silk in madder broth, Bukhara embroideresses got various tints of orange color (if concentration of red dye was weak) or warm tint of red color (if concentration was high). Combined dyeing of threads with indigo and cochineal that was used so widely in weaving and yielded various tints of violet color (usually reddish) was met on Bukhara embroideries comparatively seldom. Finally, gray color titled chirki-dandon was attributable to Bukhara and Nurata embroideries; this color was used for the making of small patterns only and presented in embroideries just insignificantly.

In terms of embroidery devices, Bukhara oasis suzani can be subdivided into two big groups: suzani sewn with needle, in various stitches, and the ones sewn with chain-stitch.

In Bukhara as well as Shahrisabz and Karshi, there was spread predominantly chain-stitch device that was used very restrictedly in other regions (in Samarkand, for instance, it was used only for the framing of deciduous ornaments). In Bukhara, this device, known under the Tajik title of *darafi*, developed exceptionally.

Stitch reaches perfection in best specimens manufactured with this device. The stitch stretches toward different directions on the shape of patterns or forms patterns inside a certain

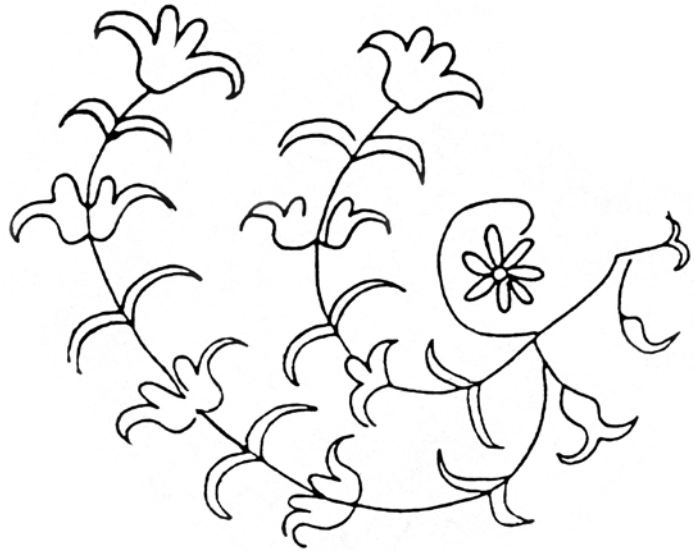


Fig. 34.
A composition
of *kushbodom*—
“conjugate almond”
and *panja*—“five
fingers” motifs

large element of ornament. When a rosette is sewn tightly with one color only it is divided into several sectors with each sector filled in separately; the stitch forms a kind of a variety of concentric triangles. Moving toward different directions and reflecting light differently, brilliant silk stitches yield various tints and gorgeous treatment of light and shade. This fine visual effect enriches the coloring of Bukhara embroideries extremely.

Along with perfect specimens manufactured with this device, there are a lot of ones where unskillful stitch neither discloses nor enriches ornament forms but on contrary, destructs and waters them down: chain-stitch that fills in rosette pattern goes in straight rows from one edge to another (for example, *basma* stitch). Such unskillful embroideries are characteristic for kishlaks (particularly, in the Vabkent region), an illustration of the absence of chain-stitch tradition there; probably, local rural population borrowed it from urban residents.

Basma was a kind of needlework stitches spread in Bukhara, had close proximity with the Nurata stitch, and differed from the Samarkand one. A slightly twisted silky thread was stitched freely on fabric while the thread of satin-stitches was stitched rather strongly. Therefore, stitch thread on Bukhara embroideries is located above satin-stitches and forms a convex roller. In contrast to it, Samarkand’s *basma* where silky thread was twisted strongly had a stitch tightly sewn on fabric while forming the convex relief are rows of diagonal satin-stitches.

Yakruya (one-sided) stitch, known in Samarkand as *kanda-khayol* is also a kind of satin stitch and differs from *basma* with that its stitch thread is put onto the fabric’s right side forming small stitches, which go onto the wrong side forming diagonal rows there. Accuracy of rows is the basic indicator of stitch quality. This kind of stitch is usually used for the manufacture of smaller embroideries such as *dastorpechs*, *takiyapushs*, etc., and is practically never met at *suzani* and *joypush*. *Duruya* (two-sided) stitch, in its Bukhara variant, represents a kind of combination of two stitches above: its right side is similar to that of *basma* while the wrong side is like *yakruya* stitch. In Samarkand, two-sided stitch is titled *chinda-khayol*. This is the most complex embroidery stitch used only at embroideries visible from both sides: waist-belts, handkerchiefs, headscarves and towels.

Ornament forms and pattern compositions of Bukhara embroideries are so specific that, despite their entire diversity and beauty, one finds no difficulty in distinguishing this local style

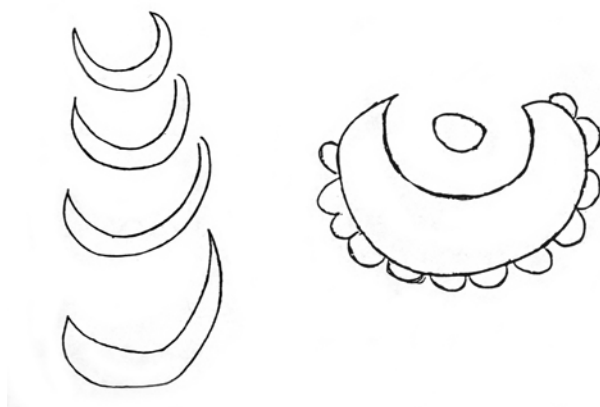


Fig. 35.
Variants of *ot-tiyogi*—
“horse’s hoof” motif.
Vabkent region of
Bukhara.
1937

from all the rest ones, except for those few specimens, which resemble Nurata embroidery and, probably were manufactured under the latter’s influence.

In terms of principle of composition, Bukhara embroideries can be subdivided into three types.

1. Embroideries with a pattern having the form of long, twisting stems with unsymmetrical branches framed by leaves, en face profile flowers of most different forms, particularly, the form of rosette, and sometimes pomegranate fruits. This type of composition is titled *darah-t-nuska* – “a tree pattern”. It has several different forms, sometimes representing one-root plant whose branches fill in the entire central panel of embroidery. In other cases, there are several stems; each of them is located at one of panels sewn together. That is, for example, the composition of pattern of *suzani* stored in the collection of Samarkand museum. It is embroidered with chain-stitch (*darafi*) on mallya color mata. Such a composition is typical for old embroideries on mata usually sewn in five stitches, of which two extreme stitches form the border and three middle ones constitute the central panel and are the place for three single stems.

2. Embroideries with a pattern having the form of small bushes usually placed inside rhombs of embroidery’s central panel. At some specimens, rhombs are composed through interweaving of slantwise, straight or figured lines; in some other cases, rhombs are composed through combination of single leaves placed onto imaginary slantwise lines. The size of rhombs at different specimens is different: at some of them, rhomb side length does not exceed 10 cm; at others, it reaches to 20 cm or even higher. For instance, a *takiyapush* stored at the Bukhara museum had only two rhombs at its central panel (146/112 cm).

In Bukhara, a composition of slantwise squares was spread extremely. One can find it at fine urban embroideries, for example, an old Bukhara *takiyapush* stored at the Samarkand museum (its crimson silk had been so much effaced that the embroidery had to be restored on the basis of dark-red sateen). This composition is also common for Bukhara blocks’ embroideries, even simple, low-quality *pillya-duzi* embroideries.

In cases when small flowering bushes are put inside rhombs—such happens most often—a pattern resembles one of kinds of Persian carpets, the so-called “garden” ones (such carpets are described and analyzed by E.K. Kverfeld in his published article¹. This indicates on

¹ Kverfeld, 1940

a probable genesis of the composition; may be, it was brought to Bukhara by numerous settlers from Iran and Eastern Khorasan (Merv and North Afghanistan) whose descendants constitute a relatively considerable part of Bukhara population. Possibly, the same is the origin of *darakht* composition whose ornamentics sharply differs from compositions typical for the majority of Uzbekistan's embroidery regions. But for Iran, more exactly, Iranian carpet, ornament in the form of growing tree or bush is typical.

3. Central Asian own style that finds analogies in other regions undoubtedly is displayed in the third type of composition of Bukhara embroidery. This type assumes symmetric location (throughout the central panel) of rather large rosettes surrounded by rest elements—floral and deciduous—of the ornament. Sometimes, rosettes are rounded by rings, or placed inside rhombs as attributable to type of composition above.

The border of Bukhara embroideries is always complex, broad and consists of several strips: the middle one, with rather large, colorful ornament, and two narrower strips consisting of straight one-colored small strips and small floral ornament placed between them. The ornament of the middle, wide strip of the border represents the composition form of either wavy stem with flowers and leaves, sometimes with rather large rosettes in its bends, or rhombs with profile flowers or rosettes inside them.

The ornament of Bukhara embroideries, despite its wealth of colors and diversity, is explored quite insignificantly. That's why information given below is incomplete, poorly systematized and may be regarded only as initial part of study.

Like the ornament of embroideries of other regions of Uzbekistan (and in all, Central Asian ornament), Bukhara embroidery patterns depict largely floral forms—leaves, profile flowers and rosettes. However, some of these vegetative forms are viewed as the depiction of different subjects. Such phenomenon was observed under the study of embroideries of other regions. But in contrast to strongly stylized patterns of Samarkand and it-related entire stylistic group, the ornament of Bukhara embroideries is inclusive of some forms, which undoubtedly are the realistic depiction of a certain concrete plant: branches of pomegranate fruits, iris flowers, etc.

Rosettes, which are, for rare exception, largest elements of the whole ornament of embroidery, are comparatively small on Bukhara embroideries. Their diameter usually does not exceed 20 cm; most often, rosettes are of a smaller size (15–13 cm).

Like in Samarkand, they usually consist of several concentric circles that form the core, and outside circle with its panel consisting of radially placed elongated details, which divide the rosette into sectors, often differently colored. These details most frequently are of two types. The first one has a lancet-shaped form that very much resembles *tegcha* motif, which is characteristic for rosettes of practically all old Samarkand embroideries without exception. In Bukhara, this detail is titled *bargi-bed* (willow leaf) and differs from Samarkand *tegcha* with being narrowed toward its lower end while Samarkand embroideries see this element widening downward as it approaches the ring it takes its beginning from.

Bukhara native Begum Yusupova from block *Siyokoron* says this element there is most frequently titled *moku*—“shuttle” though she is also aware of its initial title. There, *moku* should narrow toward the end much stronger than that at specimens we are aware of.

Schematic depiction of *jug*—*oftoba* or *kugach* (*kuzach*)-*nuska* – as a radial figure is also spread widely: it has the form of broad oval bottom usually based on the rosette's foregoing circle, and high narrow neck that widens again to end with three festoons.

In some cases, there are met rosettes consisting of a large number of small leaves that form several rows around common middle and are usually sewn with threads of alternating tints: brick-red (madder) and crimson-red (cochineal).

To all probability, very simple rosettes divided by straight lines into 6–8 sectors of two alternating colors were common for the Vabkent region. As the use of cochineal, as has been stated, in this region was minimized, sectors were most often brick-red (madder) and goldfish-fawn (isfarak or dried apricot rind) colored. These two colors are supplemented insignificantly (an indication of good taste of embroideresses) with blue color used primarily for sewing of the middle. An old Tajik woman, who is a Bukhara native and lives in kishlak Mugyan of the Vabkent region, reported an interesting detail concerning the device of embroidering rosettes divided into sectors. As she explained, in an effort to make all sectors quite the same, a fabric is folded toward different directions several times, so every bend goes through the center of a to-be rosette. Lines separating sectors from each other are drawn on bends and hence, provide a very precise division of rosette.

It became evident from reports by several Tajik women-Bukhara residents that rosettes are titled *kosa-gul* (“flower-bowl”), *piyola-gul* (“flower-drinking-bowl”) and *tabak-gul* (“flower-saucer”). We were explained that these titles are given to certain rosettes depending on their size and have relation to the device of drawing: to make a rosette represent regular circle, its external contour is put through outlining an overturned drinking bowl (*piyola*), a bowl (*kosa*), or a saucer (*tabak*). If this is true, it'd be interesting to notice difference in the device of putting Bukhara pattern as compared with Samarkand one where no any stencil is used for this purpose, and contours are measured by embroideries in several places away from rosette center. In this connection, the device of embroidering of rosette elements changes as well. The Samarkand device, as we remember, is purely analytical: outside contours of rosettes are never outlined in beforehand in contrast to European practice; an embroideress starts with a small circle in the center of rosette and then embroiders elements on radiuses that she uses as the starting-point for putting them-surrounding rosette contour. All the elements are embroidered by hand, just with the use of small stick that measures distance from the center to the outside contour of rosette. In Bukhara, as embroidering of big circle contour was the starting point, the order of embroidering elements should have been opposite. Regretfully, this is not clarified; but beyond any doubts, application of stencil for embroidering a pattern was developed greatly in Bukhara.

As to other floral elements of Bukhara embroideries, they are, apart from smaller rosettes, different-form profile flowers, including *guldon* (“flower vase”) ornament that has oval form narrowing toward its end and ending in a small palmette. It very much resembles *oftoba* element but has a wider lower part. As a rule, this pattern on joypush embroidery is placed either in tympanums or in the very middle of lancet arch. In such case, ornament is made relatively large (approx. 15 cm high and 8 cm wide) while the core is either filled in with smaller floral ornament or composed in the form of differently-colored scales.

A similar-form, much smaller ornament is often met among small elements sewn usually in one color: blue or gray. In all, Bukhara embroideries and so are Samarkand ones are distinguished for two quite definite types of floral patterns: some of them are sewn with preferably red colors while others—with non-red (most often blue or gray) colors.

Among profile flowers on Bukhara embroidery, there can also be mentioned a motif resembling the image of iris of a very elegant form consisting of four parts. One of them, which serves as flower calyx, has the form of a small circle or oval of indispensably green color like the rest patterns of the deciduous faature and sits on thin stem that connects the flower with the rest ornament of embroidery. Diverging from the calyx is elongated oval with its tip either sharpened or end in 3 or 2 festoons, representing the form of *oftoba* or *kugach*—“small jug”—described above. Right and left on it, there are perpendicularly diverging complex elements in the form of palmetto with two leaves bent a bit downward and a big festoon between them. Usually, these parts of “iris” sit separately, touching the core with initial point only. However,

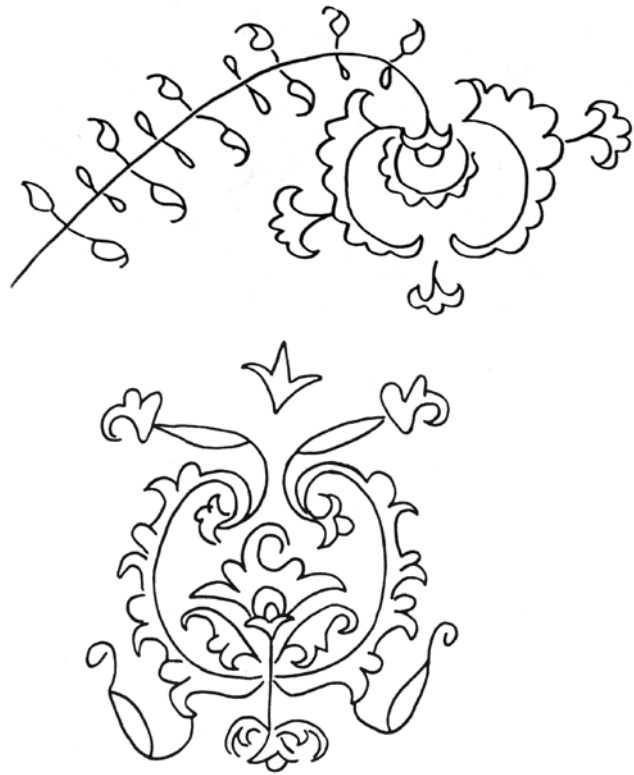


Fig. 36.
Variants of *ot-tiyogi*
composition.
1940

there is also another variant of thin pattern where leaves are tightly linked to elongated core, so no vacant, non-sewn background is visible between them.

As to other forms of profile flowers, it is essential to point out to a flower consisting of several leaves, sometimes with sharpened ends or sometimes with rounded ends that diverge from small round core fan-shaped. The leaves are usually colored with two alternating colors. Sometimes, the flower has a small oval calyx sewn in green color (“Chinese lotus”).

There are often met profile flowers representing an unfinished rosette. It consists of several concentric semicircles with a core sitting on a pedicle.

Forms described above are far from being the entire diversity of Bukhara embroidery profile flowers. Their meaning remains unknown. However, peculiarities of many floral motifs have so natural recurrence that they seem to have been prototypes of a certain real life motif, whose meaning is now lost or almost forgotten.

The framed deciduous elements have the form of a broken wavy line interweaving rosettes. In Vabkent, such deciduous ornament was titled *tanob* or *tanobcha* (“rope”, “string”). Above-mentioned Bukhara Tajik woman Begum Yusupova claims she knows this ornament under the title of *inshkandar-pechon* (“bindweed”).

The study of Samarkand *suzani* illustrates that the basic designation of embroideries, now almost everywhere forgotten, was to serve as a magic talisman for newlyweds in dangerous, in local population’s view, period, primarily, within first 40 days after the wedding.

As generally recognized, everyday use of Bukhara embroideries is designated to safeguard a couple of newlyweds from the evil use with the help of magic influence and, hence,

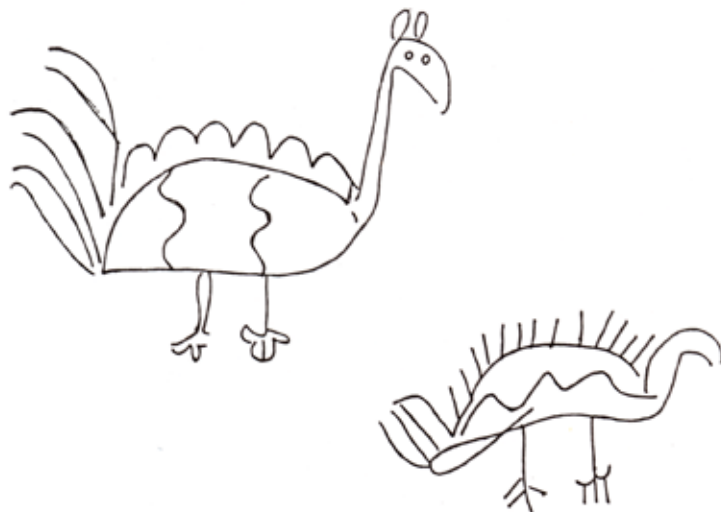


Fig. 37.
Khurus—“cock”
and *urdak*—“duck”
motifs.
Vabkent region
of Bukhara.
1937

provide the couple’s happy life. One of the elements of the magic safeguarding is making up newlyweds’ bed and its decoration. As has been stated, in making up bed in Bukhara, embroideries are thrown subsequently over wedding portion’s blankets put one onto another; above it, there is made up the so-called *bistar* (“nuptial bed”, “bed”), a thick mattress whose edges are made of expensive materials—silk or bright, motley velvet, while its middle is compulsorily white, made of mata or factory white fabric. Uzbek women from kishlak Saray have explained that the white middle should ensure a newlywed woman’s “white”, i.e. happy course of life (“yuly ok bulsun”). After the bed is made up, two pregnant women lie down on it; this should promote to swift pregnancy of a newlywed woman and protect her from barrenness.

The magic meaning of the rite of making up bed becomes clear from reports above. Frankly speaking, such meaning of bed-covering embroideries is not particularly outlined; however, it can easily be tracked on the analogy with other localities where these ideas had not yet disappeared from local residents’ consciousness (for example, I was told in Ura-Tube in 1927 that bride is covered with embroidery upon her arrival at bridegroom’s house “to be safeguarded from the evil eye”). The role of embroideries in Bukhara (Vabkent) wedding ceremony no way contradicts such interpretation.

The ornamentals of Bukhara embroidery carries a lot of patterns depicting things of magic importance and bear their names. It should be reminded that sharp items are regarded elsewhere in Central Asia as talismans safeguarding against the evil eye. In Vabkent region, local embroideresses embroidered *osh-pichok* (“kitchen-knife”), *kilich* (“saber”) and *shof-u shamsher* (“sword and saber”) patterns. *Kilich* pattern was embroidered quite realistically, something that questions its archaic character (under common law, as time lapsed, the image turned into generally recognized ornamental motif, became more schematic and lost its proximity with the prototype). The rest two motifs, especially the latter on, carry traces of a considerable transformation of original form, an illustration of long evolution.

It seems that having the meaning of talisman is also *panja* (“five fingers”) pattern, a floral element, which, nevertheless, depicts a hand with fingers spread wide relatively truly.

Such “five fingers” pattern, either copper-made and placed on long pole near to mazar, or cut of tin and put onto child’s necklace, or paper drawn or lithographed is a very popular talisman in Central Asia.

Probably, having the apotropaic character is also bargi-bed—“willow leaf” pattern that joins the composition of floral rosettes as a constituent element. To all probability, throughout Central Asia willow is considered a tree that safeguards against the evil eye: a diseased person is beaten with willow branch under the rite of driving out evil eye that caused the disease; child’s first cut hairs are dug near to willow root, etc.

However, like in Samarkand, the ornamentals of Bukhara suzani, apart from having motifs of safeguarding importance, have a large number of patterns that depict or once depicted, as it appears from their titles or sometimes form, more or less neutral things having no magic meaning (probably, they once had it).

In Vabkent region kishlaks—Shakarkent and Mugyan—we were shown patterns depicting the sun, the moon, and stars. “Sun” motif embroidered for us by a 60 year-old embroideress from Shakarkent had the form of ordinary rosette consisting of three rings (the festooned outside ring). *Oy*—“the moon” is embroidered in the form of semicircles placed primarily one over another, with either pointed or obtuse ends. “Stars” located within these semicircles have the form of small rings.

There are often met patterns depicting traces of birds and animals. In kishlak Khalyaj, an embroideress embroidered *tauk ayogi*—“hen’s leg” pattern used as a deciduous element. Another very popular motif in the Vabkent region is *ot-tiyogi*—“horse’s hoof” that has two kinds: one apparently depicts horse traces on the earth and consists of several (in our case, four) increasing horseshoe forms put one over another with concave side downward; the other kind of this ornament must lesser resembles the prototype. In some cases, this is a finished or unfinished circle framed with leaves and flowers and having a flower and several leaves in the middle as well. In such way, it acquires the form of a stylized branch or bush but not hoof. Possibly, this variant of the motif is a later one, as it was more than once noticed at embroideries manufactured in prewar years.

In addition, Bukhara embroideries depict the images of everyday practice: a teapot (*choynak*), a spouted jug (*oftoba*), and *chilima*- a smoking device. Usually, they all are just 4–6 cm high and embroidered with neutral, most often gray color or sometimes dark blue color (essentially not with red or green). On the realistic manner of depiction, they are strongly distinguished from the rest too stylized patterns. Of particularly wide use is “small jug” (*oftoba*) motif; in parallel with its realistic image, there is also more or less its stylized variant, which is not an accidental element of composition but plays a very important role as constituent or even main part of ornament.

Oftoba pattern joining the composition of floral rosettes and some profile flowers has already been mentioned. On top of that, we were shown a particular kind of ornament titled *oftoba-gul*—“flower-jug”, a relatively large ornament that constitutes the main pattern of some embroidery and is almond-shaped, with one pointed end slightly bent aside and another rounded end on a pedicle. It is surrounded by it-linked small floral elements and curls. The degree of stylization and, the most important thing, the location of this pattern, which radically differs from realistic variant above, has no compositional, style connection with the rest ornament and most likely contrasts with it, is illustrative of the existence of two quite different motifs of different origin that played unequal roles in embroidery ornament.

A very schematic *oftoba-gul* ornament represents, as it seems, such a strong stylization that it has almost lost features of proximity with the real prototype and, as a matter of fact,

has coincided with another motif depicting almond. An indication of this is its second title—*bodom-gul*—“almond flower”. As observed, both titles were used alternately by different families of a single kishlak; perhaps, because embroideresses were different.

Nevertheless, this motif, as part of the composition of main ornament, seems to have had a much lesser stylized form not long ago. Its original, more realistic variant has not yet been effaced, forgotten elsewhere: an embroideress from kishlak Arabon depicted *oftoba* motif so closely to its prototype that it was easily recognizable. She placed it onto a waist-belt in full compliance with the usual location of *oftoba-gul* (or *bodom-gul*) motif in composition; furthermore, it was the main and even the only element of pattern. Inside this very realistic image that had either handle or spout or neck there was placed element she called *bodom*, identical to strongly stylized *oftoba-gul* or *bodom-gul* above. May be, the drawing by the kishlak embroideress is illustrative of the way of the motif’s evolution that transformed the jug into *oftoba-gul*, almond-shaped form just slightly reminiscent of it.

Bukhara embroidery depicts the images of animals and birds apparently rarer than real things. On a trip to Bukhara, at kishlak Saray of the Vabkent region we bought small *takiyapush* embroidery depicting, at the background of common vegetative ornament having the form of green rings rounding small rosettes, three finished images of birds and three unfinished ones. These birds have an elongated body, with a tail bent upward and framed with small palmettos. The head with beak turned down and so does the tail represents an integrated part of the body and resembles a form, which is known in the Samarkand ornament as *kalyamfur*—“cayenne”¹. The bird’s feet have the form of herring-bone pattern with 7–8 “branches” turned down; the bird holds a green branch in its beak. Its body is embroidered with alternating colors in the form of concentric irregular ovals.

Patterns embroidered by the old embroideress from kishlak Shakarkent of the Vabkent region, which joined an album set up during the trip, were also inclusive of two images of birds: “cock”—*khurus* and “duck”—*urdak*; the embroideress explained that if duck body was made in the form of differently colored strips the pattern would be called *alo-urdak*—“motley duck”.

This embroideress also depicted a mouse-*taushkon*. According to her, there were similar images on old-time embroideries. However, we did not manage to see them at either specimens acquired during the trip or those stored at museum collections. Images of animals seem to have been met at Bukhara embroideries extremely seldom. The embroideress, who had depicted both the cock and the duck confidently, lacked her self-confidence when she had to depict a mouse and, finally, depicted it head over heels.

Depiction of a human on Central Asian embroideries has so far remained unknown in science and was believed to be something impossible due, on the one hand, to the specific character of Central Asian embroidery motifs and, on the other hand, to insignificant spread of human images in the whole Moslem art.

However, the image of a human do exists on embroidery specimen that we acquired from kishlak Saray of the Vabkent region. Samarkand antiquarian Yakub Yunusov, who had journeyed throughout Central Asia in a search of embroideries and other antiquities, testified that he had seen embroidery ornamented with several images of human figures in a kishlak of Nurata region. He failed to buy the embroidery.

The image of a man on the specimen we bought is of great interest due to its being unique; that’s why we think it is essential to give a more detailed description of this needlework. It represented (in the form we acquired) a piece of yellow *mata* of a bit irregular form, with the size or around 1.75x2 m. With its ends open, the sewn part is located only in the middle covering

¹ An effort of identification of origin of “cayenne” pattern on a bird-depicting motif was made by G.V. Grigoryev in his work “Tus-tuppi. About history of folk pattern in the Orient” (Grigoryev, 1937).

an area of approx. 0.75x0.75 m; apparently, that was a remainder of bugjoma. Its ends were effaced and cut and partially used as patches in two non-sewn corners.

Fortunately, the embroidery has not almost suffered except for a small piece cut from one of its sides; this, however, no way complicates the true understanding of general disposition of ornament. With its ends cut, bugjoma was transformed into *bugchapech*—embroidered cloth for knotting of clean dresses.

That was the exact designation of the embroidery we discovered at its latest owner, a young Uzbek woman, a resident and native of kishlak Saray. She could not tell exact information about it. She said she had inherited the embroidery from her mother in the form it was.

The lower line of ornament sewn in the middle of the panel is quite straight and sharply outlined and serves as the basis of the entire composition. It is built in the form of three pair spirals located on the composition's middle vertical, one over another. The spirals have the form of stems dismembered into transversal, differently colored strips; the stems are framed by light green, partially dark blue leaves in the form of palmettes and end with relatively large (22–23 cm diameter) complex rosettes. A rosette of the same size and form is placed in the center of the composition, between the first and the second pair of spirals. There is also another rosette but of a much smaller size (9 cm diameter) located between the second and the third pair of spirals.

A human figure crowns the entire composition. It is placed straight up from the point of connection of the upper pair of arched branches. Under this, the figure remains not embroidered and is kept only in a drawing made with ineffaceable inks. Traces of not embroidered patterns, which are often of vegetative character and identical to the embroidered ones, are visible on the rest part of the embroidery's ornament; they are made, as it appears, with the same inks the human figure is; this is illustrative of simultaneity of putting them onto the embroidery. The figure is 11 cm high. The 1.3 centimeter-diameter round head sits on a rather long (1.5 cm), thin neck. Down from the head's left side, stretching from the neck is a certain elongated, rounded-end appendix, which may be indicative of either long nose (which, however, is more reminiscent of a beak) or beard. The body represents two elongated ovals, with the upper oval longer and the lower one shorter and rounder; the ovals are interconnected by a thin isthmus that apparently depicts waist. Feet having the form of thin lines stretch along both sides of the lower oval and are 4 cm long; they apparently were put in high-heeled boots with upwardly bent toe supplemented with a brush having the form of a small hook bent downward in this case; i.e. it is a relatively exact depiction of rich male shoes of old time; such specimens are stored, for example, at Samarkand museum collection. Only a man who had no need in walking, i.e. a noble man could wear such boots.

The hands stretch from the large oval's upper end first upward (apparently depicting shoulders) and then go down in the form of rounded line. Like the feet, the arms have the form of thin lines, while the hands are depicted more definitely: all five fingers are clearly visible: a loop-shaped thumb is distinguished from the rest four fingers representing just small sticks.

Stretching from the lower oval are three small appendix either of phallic meaning or something depicting the lower part of dresses or waist-belt fringing. It is no possible to give a clearer definition of these details of the drawing due to the uncertainty of its outlines. To all probability, it may be identified in full only if analogous figure is detected on other embroideries. Despite rarity of human images, it unlikely could be a single instance.

In conclusion, we'd like to focus at another, extremely spread pattern of Bukhara embroideries. This pattern represents numerous curls placed by Bukhara embroideresses particularly willingly and abundantly in embroideries with small ornament in the form of stems, which, nevertheless, fill in empty spaces of embroideries with patterns consisting of large rosettes to the same degree frequently. In the latter instance, curls often round a rosette forming a ring

located 2–3 cm of the rosette. The ring is composed of interspersed curls turned toward rosettes; curls have larger or smaller side at different embroideries. The color of curls usually coincides with that of the border of deciduous ornament, i.e. in some cases it is black and in other cases it is greenish-brown or khaki-green. The same curls with the same color are also very often placed on colored background embroideries, in particular, the ones on red calico or yellow *mata* of ochre tint. The entire pattern of embroidery often represents branches that consist of curls only and only here and there are decorated with very primitive flowers in the form of “birds”, i.e. the form of two elongated, pointed-end leaves bent toward different sides. Such yellow *mata*-based *suzani* was observed by the author in kishlak Boylik of the Vabkent region, at the house of harvest council chairman Ahat-Khodja whose wife embroidered patterns she was aware of, including a branch of curls, for our album. In another locality (kishlak Mugyan), the author saw a white-*mata* *joypush* ornamented only with curls stretching along the entire border continuously. The interspersed curls were embroidered in a quite unusual way—with red color only.

In our observation, the application of curls in ornament was developed particularly strongly in the Vabkent region where this pattern started spreading apparently in the beginning of the 20 century when it became fashionable.

Of particular interest for the exploration of history of the Bukhara embroidery are several specimens acquired or seen at houses of Bukhara residents. In a number of cases, it became possible to receive the needed information about origin of these embroideries.

Of extreme interest are embroideries owned by an old couple (Mirzo-Kori, around 70, and his wife, around 60) who had lived in Pustinduzon block of Bukhara since they wedded at the end of the 19 century. Having no children, both they kept some of the embroideries they had received from parents on the wedding occasion. This small family “collection”, deserves particular description, which, no doubt, can be used as a valuable certified, unfinished though, material for the reasons of exploration of the Bukhara embroidery. The family owned three embroideries. Iron bed in the room was spread by *joypush*, which had been inherited from the husband’s mother who had had it in her wedding portion. It is embroidered on white *mata* and represents a mediocre work of this kind distinguished for neither richness of ornament nor stitch quality nor artistic dignities. Its ornament—a kind of *darakht* pattern—has remained unexplored.

The second embroidery that also represented a *joypush* had been inherited by the wife from her mother or grandmother. It is embroidered on yellow calico (*avloni zard*) and decorated with a very simple, ordinary ornament embroidered in chain-stitch representing big “knives” (*osh-pichok*) or “sabers” (*shof*) embroidered along the outline only and having small branches in the middle. The border’s pattern imitates Arabic written language and is titled by the owner *shiki tamanno* (the meaning of this title is unclear, may be it is “capricious love”).

The third embroidery represents a red calico white-stripped (*ran-zebo*) *joynamaz*; it had been owned by the wife’s grandmother and acquired by the Museum of History of Nations of Uzbekistan. The owner claims embroidering this work was her grandmother on the mother’s side for the wedding portion of her elder daughter (the informer’s aunt). The informer’s mother was four years younger than her sister and died in 1948 at 76. The embroidery was made in the years of the sisters’ childhood; proceeding from this report, it is to conclude that the work was embroidered in around 1870.

The Bukhara couple that owned all these very poor embroideries might not be regarded as the lower layer of urban population. The husband, who had received the spiritual education, was a *kori*—the reader of Koran prayers—and, hence, belonged to clergy. The wife was of higher origin: her father belonged to the service class of *sipo* (*sipoh*, *sipah*), as a result of

which he considered his daughter's marriage with a Koran reader misalliance and opposed it for a long time. However, his wife, at whose parents' house the work was embroidered, had originated from the family of a not well-off mullah and was married with a low-rank *sipo* either. She very much liked a young *kori* who had several times been invited to come to her house to read prayers, so she insisted on his marriage with her daughter. Later on, the family of the *kori* led not well-off but quite sufficient life; the couple did not regard modest embroideries above (two of them, by the way, were received by the couple from the *sipo* house) as the ones not corresponding to their status.

This circumstance is illustrative of generally undemanding style of life of Bukhara town residents in pre-Revolutionary period. People with medium incomes possessed apparently neither considerable quantity of silk nor valuable fabrics for the making of rich embroideries. Expensive, richly-decorated specimens that usually go to museums were owned most likely by the higher layers of urban population, Bukhara aristocrats and were not the mass items of everyday use they usually are considered to be. By the way, a collection of embroideries from the treasury of Bukhara ruler, which was passed to a local museum after the Revolution, was inclusive of a lot of quite not luxurious specimens, with its level similar to a white-mata *joynamaz* owned by the Bukhara spouses.

Apart from embroidered *suzani*, not embroidered ones were also in use in Bukhara, in contrast to the rest regions of Uzbekistan. Not embroidered *suzani* represented coverlets made of valuable, usually patterned local kinds of fabric. Local home-made velvet was in particular favor. A *suzani* was lined and had its end embroidered with tape (*zeh*). The circumstance that these things were also titled *suzani*, i.e. "needlework" makes regard them as secondary phenomenon originated, probably, by the exceptional development of Bukhara weaving handicrafts that yielded excellent ornamented fabrics that did not need to be embroidered with decoration.

2.2 Nurata

Nurata, a big Tajik settlement¹ located at the northern spurs of Nurata Mountains on the border with desert Kizil Kum was the most important large decorative embroidery center.

Nurata-made *suzani* are known well among specialists and art-lovers for their high qualities: excellent color, ornament, fine embroidery device. Many regarded them as the highest achievement of this branch of folk decorative art of Central Asia.

However, the Nurata embroidery is explored poorly. In her book, G.L. Chepelevetskaya devoted just a bit more than one page to it², which, naturally, made it no possible to describe the entire diversity of the Nurata embroidery, not to mention disclose its history for a period of at least several decades from the end of the 19 century-beginning of the 20 century.

A.K. Pisarchik, who visited Nurata several times and collected specimens, explored the Nurata embroidery on site, through contacting with embroideresses; other explorers were a team of the Museum of Art of Uzbekistan led by M.S. Andreyev (in 1937) and a team of the Samarkand museum (in 1940s). A.K. Pisarchik was engaged in exploration of the national dress, so embroidery was a theme of second importance to her. The specimens she took over were massed to the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography of the USSR Academy of Sciences (Leningrad)³. She also collected embroideries made pattern embroideresses to her order for

¹ According to 1924 data, the number of Nurata population was 4,144, including 3,043 Tajiks (see: regionalization materials, 1926, p. 256, table 5).

² Chepelevetskaya, 1961, p. 28–29

³ Nurata embroidery-related materials collected by A.K. Pisarchik are stored at the State Museum of Arts of Uzbekistan, the Samarkand Museum and the Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography

the Samarkand museum. Those who embroidered them are not alive at the moment; an album of their embroideries represents a unique material, and the only desire is to publish it in a certain form, along with the materials and conclusions by A.K. Pisarchik. The author of this work did not take use of these materials, except for the reports she received in personal letter from A.K. Pisarchik, in a hope that they would be published soon.

The author is based primarily on information she collected during work at the Samarkand museum and as a result of examination and exploration of collections of museums of Tashkent, Dushanbe, Leninabad, Bukhara, Moscow, and Leningrad. Regretfully, an overwhelming majority of specimens in these collections were not certified accurately: no place or date of their manufacture was reported. However, it goes without saying that the collections consist, as a rule, only of Nurata earlier embroideries made on mata, with all threads colored with vegetative dyes and cochineal only. As to Samarkand, this early stage goes back to 1850–1870s, with some specimens dating back to the first half of the century. In Nurata (given that the settlement was peripheral and hence, had a weaker trade and started importing goods later and in smaller quantity), the upper boundary of the stage covers, probably, later years of the last century. While changes in the embroidery art of Samarkand were observed in 1880s, in Nurata, they could start in 1890s but not later. However, this matter can be clarified only due to detailed studies or, may be, publication of materials by A.K. Pisarchik.

Furthermore, museum collections are inclusive of just one, main though kind of Nurata embroidery-suzani. It has no single specimen of either *ruyidjo* (or *joypush*) or *bolinpush* that traditionally joined, along with several other kinds of embroidery, the obligatory wedding portion. There is even no information of exact kinds of Nurata wedding portion¹.

Thus, here we can speak only about one stage of history, one kind of Nurata decorative embroidery.

In terms of artistic appearance, the old Nurata suzani are similar to Bukhara ones and constitute a common stylistic group with them, despite of having rather strict distinctions from all the rest regions: the Nurata embroidery is characterized by warm, relatively light tint of deciduous parts of a pattern that is beautifully combined with floral ornament of rather small patterns of soft colors and tints. They are predominantly crimson (cochineal) and red, of warm tint (madder); there are also used dark blue and blue (indigo), and insignificantly yellow, dark reddish-violet, olive and gray colors.

As to ornament composition, Nurata suzani are subdivided into three kinds. The first one, which is the simplest, represents horizontal rows of small bushes with flowers located in chess order (as to Samarkand, they are placed one under another). Such pattern usually has a not wide border framed with simple straight line.

The second kind of composition is more complex: relatively large, many-detail figure, which is most often star-shaped and rarer having the form of round or polygonal medallion, is placed in the middle of panel. This complex figure, as a rule, has a rosette in the middle, with eight small bushes stretching from it on radiuses. The bushes are outlined by zigzag line or a more complex line that forms “rays” of the star or medallion outline. Stretching diagonally from the central figure toward the four corners are relatively large branches or bushes decorated with small profile flowers, sometimes in the form of rosettes; smaller branches that also have flowers are located vertically toward corner-stretching branches. The border of this composition is usually wide, complex: its middle is run by a row of relatively large flowers (often having the form of rosettes), sometimes, profile flowers alternating with slantwise, diagonally

¹ According to A.K. Pisarchik, the portion consisted of *suzani*, *nimsuzani*, *takiyapush*, and *joynamaz*. Probably, *nimsuzani* is a later kind that emerged at a time when it became the custom to use *suzani* of such large sizes that they could no longer serve according to their direct designation

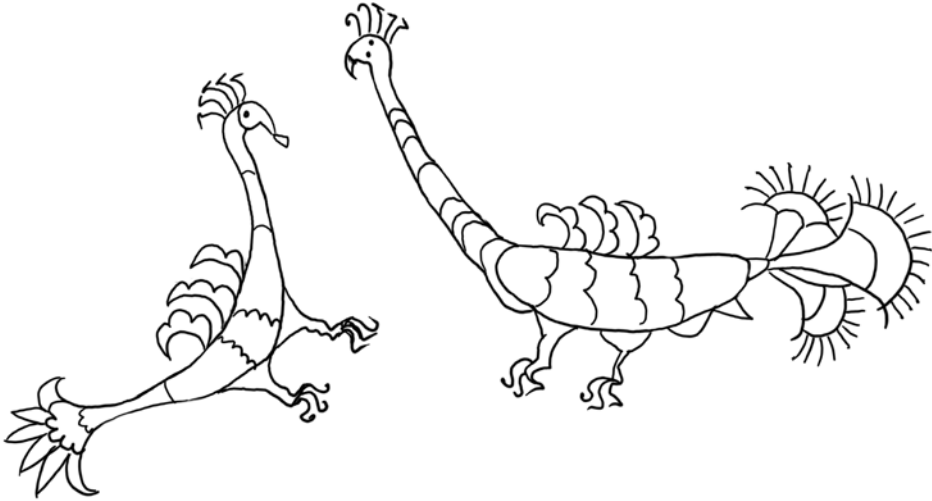


Fig. 38. Images of birds (peacocks?)

located leaves that form broken wavy lines stretching along the border. This core part of the border is framed with small floral-deciduous pattern from both sides. In embroideries with such composition the border is filled in with pattern much denser than the central panel: this plays the most important role in the ornament design. There is impression that exactly this part of embroideries should be visible under demonstration. Such could occur in cases when embroideries were not hung on walls during wedding ceremony but served as a coverlet of newly-weds' bed as it was accustomed, for instance, in Bukhara.

The third kind of Nurata suzani seems to have been represented in the form of the only but an exceptionally fine specimen owned by the State Museum of Art of Uzbekistan¹. The suzani has a densely embroidered middle panel and border to the same extent filled in with ornament. The panel is dismembered into rhombs formed by diagonally located "leaves", with small rosettes placed in the point of their intersection. Inside each rhomb there is a complex-structure rosette: six or seven radially located one-colored figures yield an impression of a more or less regular circle, inside which there is a core of another color. There is interesting one more pattern detail inside rhomb: rosettes are rounded by thin ring of curls or other figures. Border pattern also consists predominantly of rosettes (or sometimes, profile flowers) while the space between these floral elements is filled by deciduous pattern in the form of diagonally located long branches that form broken wavy line. Both sides of the border are framed with two narrower borders composed of two straight strips with small floral ornament between them.

Although this suzani is, beyond any doubts, Nurata one in terms of its color, stitch devise and composition of patterns (and so was considered by A.K. Pisarchik), it falls out of general local style so much and at the same time so much resembles the Bukhara one² that here one may assume direct influence of Bukhara, to which Nurata had had long, permanent links: for

¹ The specimen was bought in Nurata by A.K. Pisarchik and M.S. Andreyev.

² Particularly characteristic for Bukhara was embroidery's middle panel's dismembering into rhombs that roomed rosettes but not profile flowers, which are met much more often as the main floral motif of Nurata embroideries. Often, Bukhara suzani, including rural ones, depict ring of a thin line of curls that surrounds rosette inside a rhomb

example, dress designs penetrated from there¹. The embroidery apparently originated from a very rich house where there had been no need in digesting silk or labor. Probably, it was made for a bride from a noble family, which also included Bukhara residents appointed as officials here. When they stayed here long, they apparently brought their families as well. Embroideries for the wedding portion of these brides could also be performed according to Bukhara specimens, though, naturally, they were made by local embroideresses.

A typical peculiarity of Nurata suzani is that its main patterns depict smaller, realistically interpreted images of small jugs, birds or sometimes a human. They are placed among ornament main motifs so that they fill in the vacant spaces that have no room enough for a traditional motif. For example, a Nurata suzani acquired for the Samarkand museum depicts a small feminine figure dressed in long clothes and tall hat resembling kokoshnik. It filled in the empty space between vertically located bushes or branches and also stands vertically. The figure is not sewn completely: its part remains just drawn (no doubt, simultaneously with the rest part of the pattern), and this gives better understanding of embroideress's idea.

Inside the rhombic set the composition is based on, only two specimens, including one above, depict, instead of a rosette, a very skilful image of a horse: the beauty, exact silhouette of saddled foal. Stylization concerned only the image of ears. The figure of the horse is organically blended with general color composition due to the fact that its entire body is dismembered into rhombs embroidered with different-colored silks; each of them has core of alternating color.

Besides, the composition of this suzani is inclusive of two images of birds. They occupy the place of rosettes inside semi-rhombs at the end of border-adjointing rhombic net. Birds, which are described by G.L. Chepelevetskaya as ducks², in reality are peacocks. These is testified by the form of tail of one of the birds, no doubt, cock one, and crests on the heads of both birds (the hen one has a stricter crest).

As to whether this suzani originated from Nurata, it should be reminded that Bukhara embroideries also depicted more or less realistically interpreted images of things and living beings; such countered absolutely the traditions of Samarkand, Tashkent, Jizak, and Hodjent.

A unique, probably, the oldest suzani we are aware of—the one depicting peacocks as one of the main composition patterns (these images were of second importance at specimen above)—may be regarded as Nurata embroidery work owned by the State Museum of Arts of Oriental Nations (Moscow). Writing about it and describing its fragments was G.L. Chepelevetskaya who, regretfully, gave no clearer description and analysis of this rarity³.

That this specimen may be related to earliest ones or even be considered the earliest one and, hence, having exceptional scientific interest is to conclude from the technical and artistic peculiarities of the embroidery. The author defined this suzani as Nurata one after she examined a museum collection at the end of 1930s. Later on, G.L. Chepelevetskaya also specified it as the one of Nurata origin.

The ornament of this suzani represents lines of dispersed flowering bushes; the center of panel rooms a larger bush, around which there are four pairs of relatively large birds easily recognizable as peacocks. Each pair consists of the cock and the hen with their heads turned toward each other; the heads sit on long necks raised upward. It is interesting that these symmetrically located pair figures form a kind of ring whose outline resembles a star or a medallion usually placed in the center. If this is true, the pattern of this embroidery should be regarded as a forerunner or embryo of a motif, which has already been transformed from the realistic image

¹ Pisarchik, 1979, p. 117

² Chepelevetskaya, 1961, p. 28

³ Chepelevetskaya, 1961, p 28, tables 6, 7



33. *Dastorpech*, Bukhara,
end of the 19 century



34. Suzani, Gijduvan, end of the 19 century



35. Small suzani, Gijduvan, end of the 19



36. Small suzani, Shafirkan, 2005



37. Suzani, Shafirkan, end of the 19 century



38. Suzani, Shafirkan, end of the 19 century



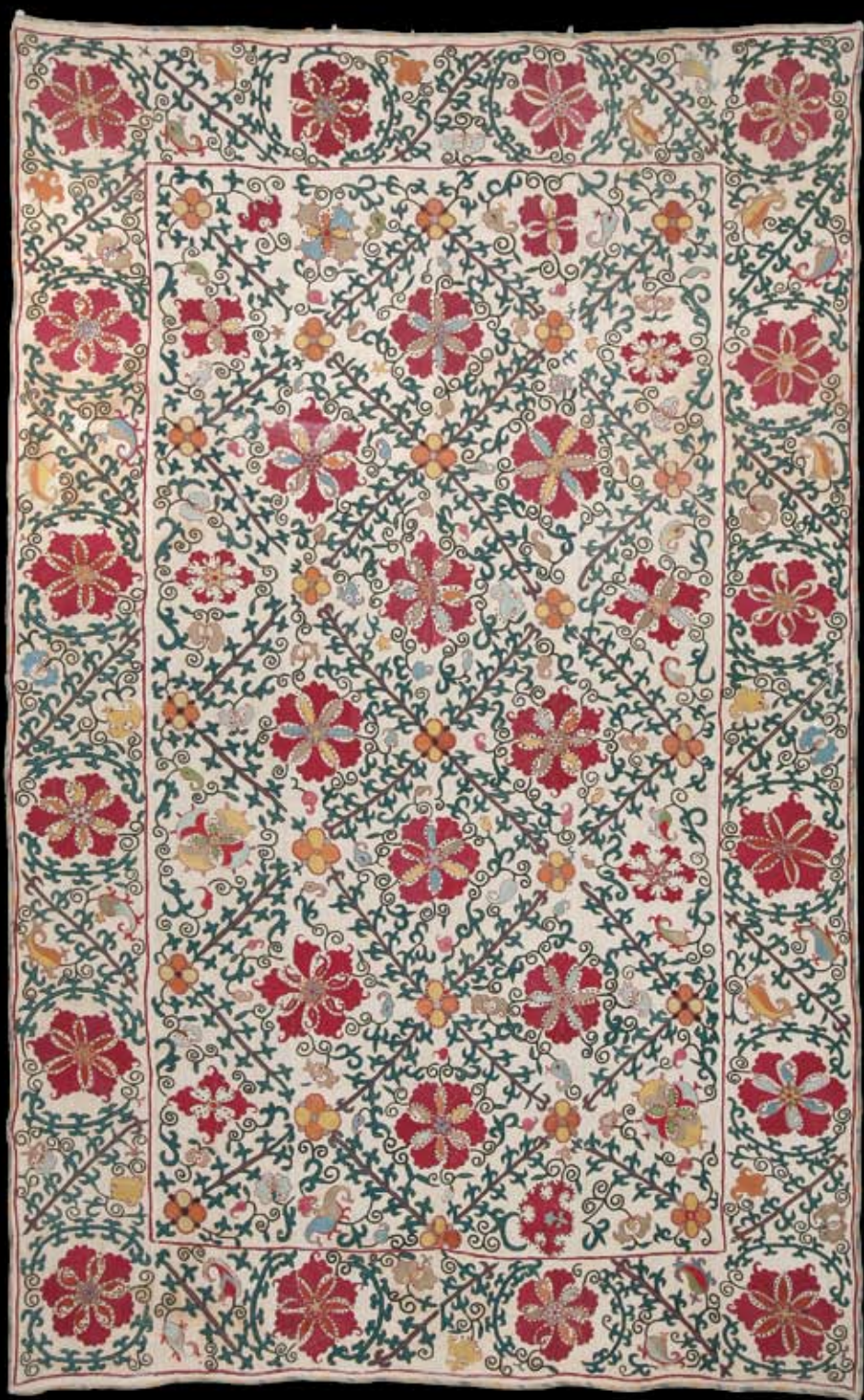
39. *Takiyapush*, (covering of the pillow), Gijduvan, 19 century



40. Suzani, Shafirkan, end of 20 century



41. Small suzani, Shafirkan beginning of the 20 century



42. Suzani, Shafirkan, end of the 19 century



43. *Dastorpech*, Bukhara,
beginning of the 20 century



44. *Takiyapush*, Bukhara region, Vabkent, 1910



45. Suzani, Shafirkan, end of the 19 century



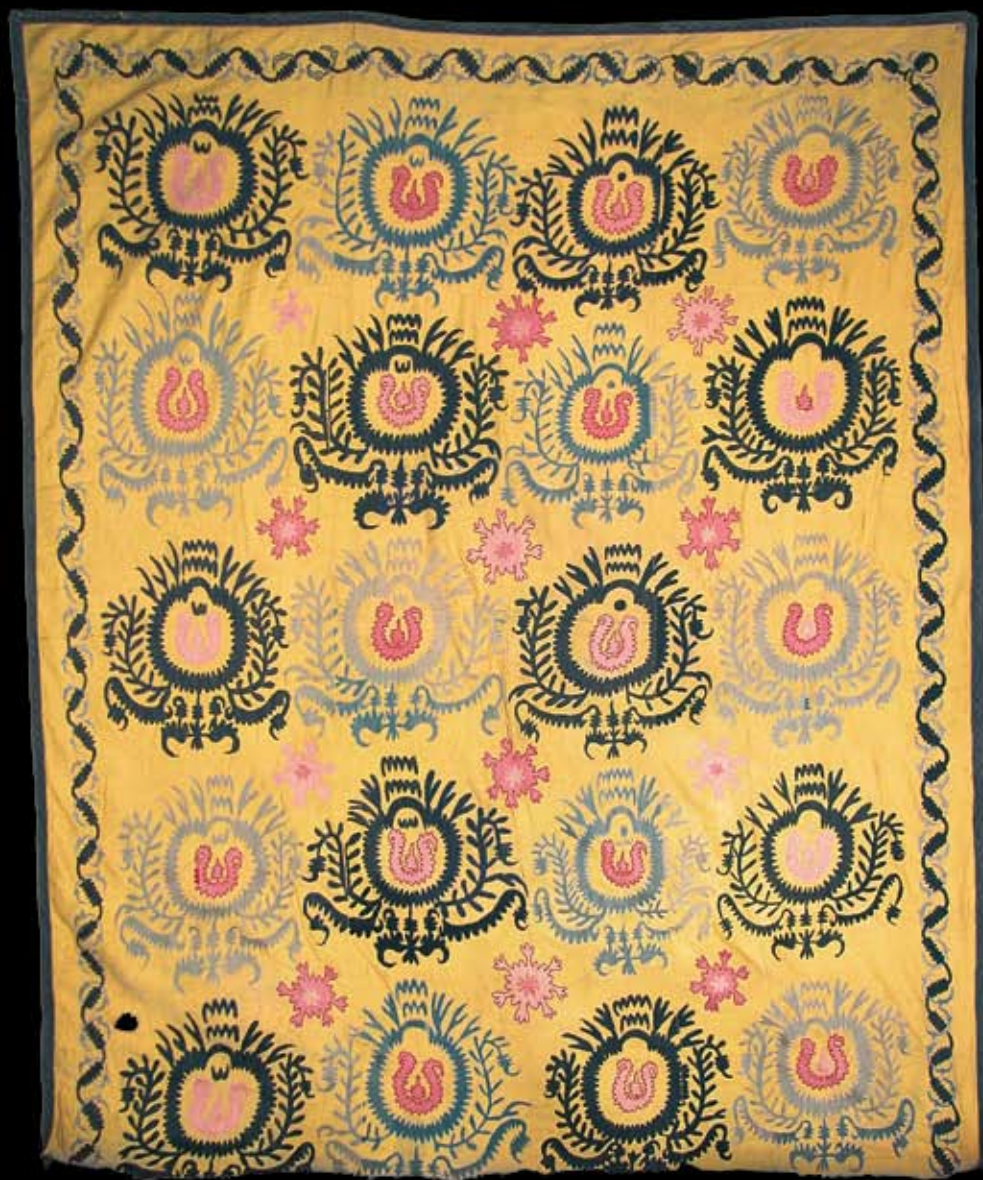
46. Suzani, Shafirkan, 2005



47. *Takiyapush*, Vabkent,
beginning of the 20 century



48. Dastorpech, Bukhara, 1910



49. Tanpokush, Bukhara, beginning of the 20 century



50. *Ruyidjo*, Jizak, beginning of the 20 century



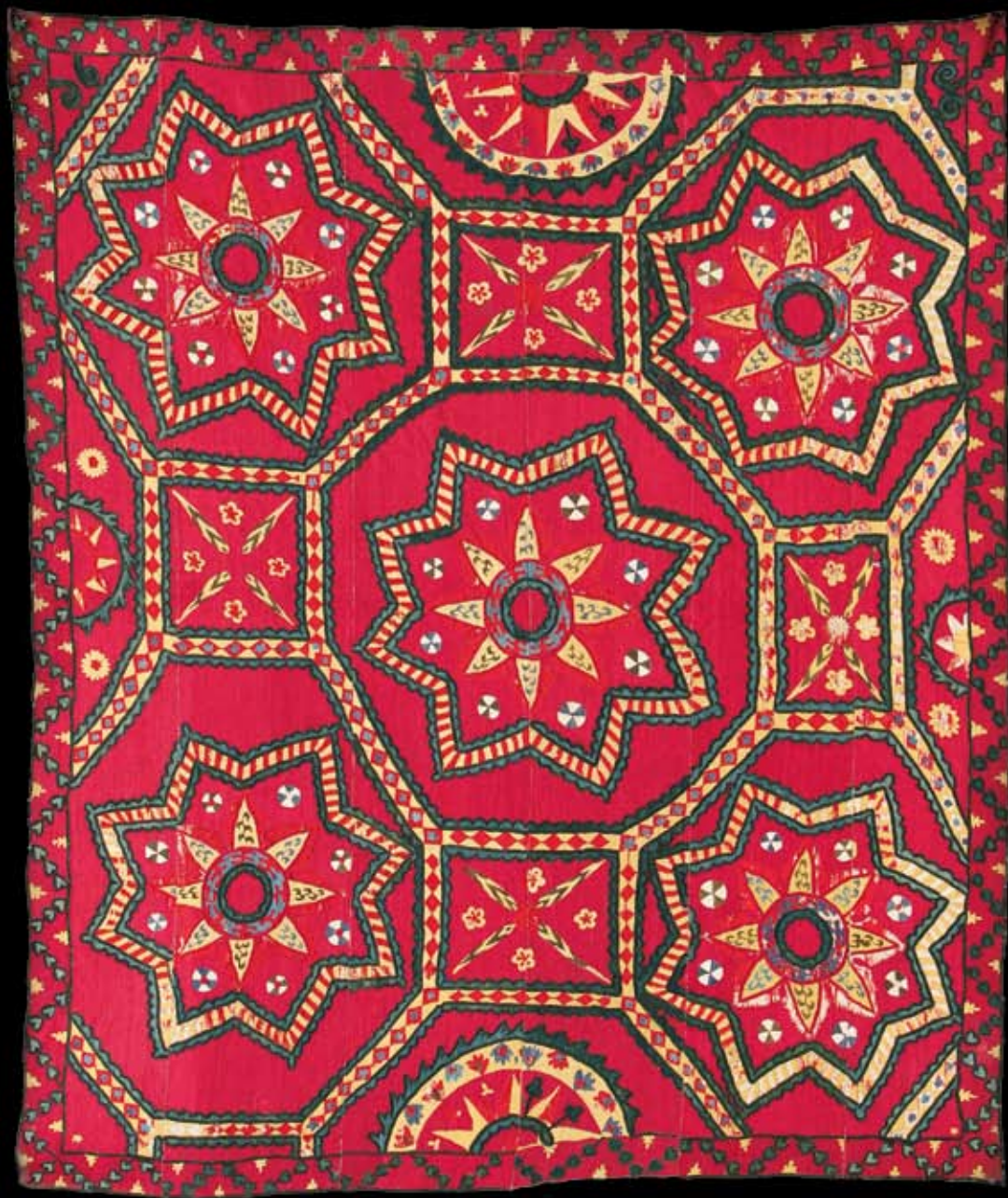
51. *Yakkandoz*, Jizak, beginning of the 20 century



52. Suzani, Baysun, 19 century



53. Suzani, Baysun,
end of the 19 century



54. Suzani (*yulduz palak*), Tashkent,
beginning of the 20 century



55. Suzani (*yulduz palak*), Tashkent,
beginning of the 19 century



56. Suzani (*oy palak*), Tashkent



57. *Djoyshab*, Ura-Tube, end of the 19 century



58. Suzani, Baysun, end of 20 century



59. Suzani, Baysun, end of the 19 century



60. Suzani, Khudjand, 1850-1860



61. Suzani, Baysun, end of the 19 century



62. *Djoynamaz*, Margilan,
beginning of the 20 century



63. *Djoynamaz*, Baysun, end of the 19 century



64. Suzani, Baysun, end of the 19 century

to the vegetative pattern, in accordance with the ornamentals tradition. It should be reminded that the evolution of ornament motifs toward a larger degree of ornamentation, schematization, and deviation from prototype is one of the core lines of development the author managed to identify through comparative study of embroidery patterns.

Another indication, apart from ornament, of the embroidery's early age (no analogues were found at later specimens) is stitch device. The pattern is embroidered primarily with *basma* stitch, i.e. in satin stitch (some of its thin parts are embroidered in ordinary stitch). However, that was not that well-developed *basma* stitch we are aware of on the example of old embroideries of Nurata and other regions but a kind of embryo form of this stitch: the stitch chain is put so rarely that it forms no flat grains typical for matured *basma* but plays a purely functional role: to keep long thread of stitch unmovable¹.

Another indication of archaic nature, probably, is that embroidery silk here is not twisted, in contrast to an overwhelming majority of Nurata embroideries, but is made in a simpler, primitive manner.

The aforesaid peculiarities of the Nurata *suzani* are indicative of its very early origin. Probably, this *suzani* was embroidered earlier than a *joynamaz* from Shahizinda mosque described in an essay about Samarkand embroidery. While Samarkand's *joynamaz* may be dated back to the beginning of the 19th century, the Nurata peacocks-depicting *suzani* should be dated back, probably, to not later than the 18th century. Naturally, the dating of such an old period is just presumable, as no comparative material is available.

No matter how early this *suzani* was embroidered, it can not be regarded as the initial stage of the history of the whole embroidery art, in particular, Nurata embroidery: here we see already strictly formed features of local style—canons of combination of colors and the entire gamma, a well found composition, and a definite character of ornament motifs. A lot of time needs to lapse to get all this ready; furthermore, with the traditional nature of folk, particularly female decorative art in consideration.

The meaning of Nurata embroidery patterns is unexplored. At first look, patterns, especially that at central panel, are of a clearly expressed vegetative, floral character. However, an example of better explored Samarkand embroideries illustrates how conditional this ornamental language is: plants may be an indication of quite different things and images. Worthy of a note is that Nurata embroideries depict images of concrete plants extremely seldom. An exception is the image of iris flower that is found so often at Bukhara embroideries. The majority of Nurata-related flowers are profile ones; nimbus in the form of a rosette is found seldom here. G.L. Chepelevetskaya calls one of the profile flowers carnation; however, this seems very doubtful: no carnation (at least, at gardens of common people) was grown in Central Asia. And exploration of the ornaments in better known localities has illustrated the embroideresses borrowed the topics of their motifs from the real world: that was the rule. If pattern above ascends to the image of carnation, this seems to be a motif borrowed from somewhere outside, which itself seems doubtful, by taking into account the intimate nature of decorative embroideries, their making by women's hands solely, and usage within a narrow family circle. That no way was a kind of gala art. It was not in vain that the embroideries seen by Klavikho at Timur court² were not illustrative of a single specimen resembling *suzani*.

At Nurata embroideries, like embroideries of some other regions, embroideresses openly disclose the meaning only of primitive realistic details above. The meaning of the rest motifs

¹ This kind of *basma* is found on other not numerous, apparently, later embroideries stored at this museum collection. In descriptions, they are titled *induzi*. The term, beyond any doubts, is erroneous; its right name is *khomduzi*, which means "embroidered in untwisted silk" or "embroidered in no satin-stitch" (in Central Asian embroidery, this term was used in such sense).

² Klavikho, 1881



is ciphered by their vegetative form, which is indispensable for the style developed. However, realistic images not only reproduce an item but also are related to notions, definite ideas usually originated by survived beliefs. Essays about Samarkand *suzani* described the sense of image of ornamented knife or cutting instrument in details. As to Nurata embroideries, there is a clearly expressed magic meaning of the peacock item. These are couples, and their image symbolizes a newlywed couple for whose bed *suzani* was embroidered. Beyond any doubts, the peacocks are not only a symbol or a magic talisman that should have united the newlyweds, according to magic of likeness. It is remarkable that apart from peacocks, the gorgeous Nurata *suzani* also depicts a horse; this motif, probably, is included in the ornament not only for beauty's sake but also has a certain meaning (cult of horse in Central Asia is traced according to ethnographic data¹). At *suzani* above, both peacocks and horse are placed inside rhombs and play an active role in the composition through occupying a place usually designated for rosettes or profile flowers. These motifs are located symmetrically (the peacocks are located in the middle of panel's upper end while the horse is at the middle of border-adjointing lower end) at a time when realistically interpreted motifs are usually located, as has been stated, without any appropriateness. In such case, their meaning, probably, is minimized unlike that of motifs placed as the main composition.

The image of peacocks—birds cultivated in Central Asia at gardens of the nobility only, as written by Narshakhi in the 10th century²—that recurs at Nurata embroideries was also a Zoroastrian symbol, according to G.V. Grigoryev, who explored bird image-related ornamental motifs³, and was often found at cult items in the ancient times. Noticing this was yet the first explorer of Afrosiab—V.L. Vyatkin⁴.

G.V. Grigoryev retraced gradual disappearance of real bird indications from patterns in connection with a larger degree of being ornamented and stated that a peacock was “an aristocratic” deputy of a cock, which, in turn, substituted an earlier motif of pheasant.

The peacock pair at Nurata embroideries has a clearly expressed relation to *murgon*, a very interesting motif attributable to the so-called “maiden carpets” (*kiz-gilam*) of Central Asian Arabs. At carpets, *murgon* motifs also formed pairs and depicted a male and a female

¹ Belenitskiy, 1978, p. 31–39, Sukhareva, 1975, p. 40–42, Karmysheva, 1987, p. 331–342

² Narshakhi, 1897, p. 20

³ Grigoryev, 1937, p. 134

⁴ Vyatkin, 1927, p. 52



Fig. 39.
Motifs “turtledove”
and “duck’s neck”



Fig. 40.
The motif of “embrace”
Urgut

(*erkek-murgon* and *urgachi-murgon*)¹. The very names alone gave V.G. Moshkova the opportunity to identify these images: they were so conditional and ornamented due to the application of carpet-weaving device either. However, birds above are clearly visible at an attentive look.

In the case of carpets, the magic meaning of the motif is beyond any doubt: it is similar to that of peacocks at the Nurata *suzani*. That the same motif is found at either descendants of ancient Persian population of Central Asia or Semite Arabs-carriers of different ethnic and cultural traditions should be appreciated as certain local ideas’ influence upon the latter. It is not in vain that the motif of birds depicted on carpets of Arabs, who kept on speaking Arabic or started speaking neighboring Uzbek, carries the evidence of its Iranian origin: the word “*murgon*” is Tajik in terms of either its lexicography or form: its has the formal indication of plural number-suffix “on”.

On the analogy with Samarkand and other embroideries, it’d be admissible to interpret one more Nurata pattern: it is a slantwise, elongated pattern, which is found at the border of almost all Nurata early embroideries (but not at the middle panel). It performs the function of deciduous ornament, as it may be concluded from its green color; it is assumable that this motif depicts a leaf-stylized knife or another cutting instrument.

We are unaware of how Nurata embroideresses interpreted this pattern. However, at old Samarkand embroideries it was one of obligatory patterns titled “kitchen-knife” (another variant is “edge”), and interpreted as the image of items above: the motif was attached magic, defending meaning². In rural areas of Bukhara, as has been stated, there was met “saber and sword” (*shof-u klych*) motif³. It seems that the same motif, but in modified form was presented at Hodjent and Jizak embroideries. As for Nurata, the transformed image of knife (if border’s “leaf” has exactly this meaning) very much resembles the form the Samarkand “kitchen-knife” acquired by the beginning of the 20th century after it was subject to a substantial transformation but lost neither resemblance with its prototype nor its title nor its understanding by the population.

As far as the Nurata pattern is related to the image of knife it should have had the defensive designation.

¹ Moshkova, 1970

² Sukhareva, 1937

³ Sukhareva, 1937, p. 123–124, fig. on p. 125, 127

High artistic dignities of Nurata suzani raise the following question: What could cultural-historical conditions of formation of this refined, peculiar, finished style be? What ideas were folk embroideresses inspired with? Why did so refined embroidered art form exactly in Nurata? The answer is related directly to destinies, opportunities and peculiarity of the whole decorative art.

We have to admit that science is not yet ready to give an exhaustive answer: it will be just partial, preliminary. Apart from the necessity of a more comprehensive historical exploration of Nurata embroideries, it is also essential to settle general theoretical matters. Here there may be only outlined, according to the author's abilities, the very specific atmosphere where these excellent embroideries were created and put in everyday use.

Nurata—in the past-Nur—was famous yet in the 10 century for its not economic achievements or handicrafts but sacred places. Muhammad Narshakhi writes that residents of Bukhara and other localities went there to worship to sacred places every year; upon worshippers' return, the town was decorated with garlands in commemoration of attendance of such a blessed place¹. It is to assume from the latter part of the story that pilgrimage occurred in spring or early summer and was related to the holidays of flowers described in literature.

Unlike his stories about other places that had a propensity for Bukhara, Narshahi gives no information about Nurata residents' involvement in either agriculture or handicrafts or trade. It is, therefore, assumable that Nurata was not known for its economic production at the time and had poor links to the then market relations, which according to Narshahi, were comparatively developed. It remained the same in the 19 century-beginning of the 20 century, and at a certain stage of its history was assigned Turkic prefix "ata" (the father: here, like in many other instances, this meant "sacred")².

Nurata, as a large settlement of Nurata beylik of the Bukhara Khanate, did not become a town. According to A.K. Pisarchik, Nurata residents were specialized primarily in farming and cattle-breeding and various handicrafts, including weaving as the most developed one³. It produced fine paper *alacha*; probably, it was commodity production due to its good quality. However, the settlement apparently exported *alacha* only to its outskirts but not urban markets.

However, in this latest period of its history Nurata was very famous throughout Central Asia: its mazar was glorified as a place curing people from hydrophobia; people bitten by rabid animals were brought here from elsewhere in a hope for survival. According to reports in Samarkand and faraway North Uzbek settlement of Brichmulla, the cure was that a diseased person plunged his head into the Nurata spring and tried to bite certain (probably, definite) stone under the water.

As has been said, Nurata was predominantly a Tajik settlement. Its not numerous Uzbek population (25% of total) took its roots here probably long ago, may be, after the 18 century's devastation. Nearby desert Kyzyl Kum was populated by nomadic Kazakhs while inhabiting valleys of the Nurata mountain ridge were Uzbeks-Turkmens, cattle-breeders and carpet-weavers. Thus, Nurata represented a kind of a Tajik island amidst Turkic-language sea and so did Samarkand and Bukhara.

The wonderful style of Nurata suzani was established in the said economic conditions and ethnic situation. Nurata residents used a lot of beautiful items in everyday life. There were fine local *alacha*, which, despite simplicity and apparently monotonous character, were noble and refined. Nurata women used their refined taste to decorate houses and dresses. They

¹ Narshakhi, 1897

² Information reported by K.A. Pisarchik who collected specimens of Nurata paper *alacha* for the Samarkand museum

³ The same

embroidered headscarves and handkerchiefs (the latter was compulsorily gifted to men during wedding ceremony), turbans and woman's hats, teabags and many other items. Their art topped in large decorative embroideries distinguished for their artistic dignities even among excellent embroideries of other regions of Central Asia.

How were such heights of folk esthetics achieved? Probably, this was due to steady ancient Tajik or, more likely, pre-Tajik traditions, which, despite of historical peripeteia, existed and continued to develop here over centuries. A taste of excellency the man faced with in everyday life developed his artistic skills. A week degree of production of goods, probably, also promoted to sophistication of folk art and allowed working over every item unhurriedly, thoughtfully, particularly, if an item was designated for person himself but not sale. Even when an item was manufactured for another family—a kindred or even alien one—an item was viewed by fellow villagers, and it was the matter of honor to make it properly. This caused a fuller manifestation of folk talents and allowed selecting all successful findings more thoroughly and giving up less successful ones. A man was not burdened by strict demands of commodity production that could have forced him to boost production to the detriment of quality.

Up to the end of the 19 century, Nurata remained, to a larger degree than other localities with developed economy, at the previous stage of its historical development, which went at low paces, in conformity with feudal formation laws. This allowed Nurata embroideresses, at least till the end of the 19 century, to preserve values of the traditions of past centuries.

Nevertheless, Nurata was not a remote province. Here, there existed its own traditional culture and its indigenous local production of goods of vital importance; residing here also were the former “capital”, Bukhara residents; local market imported fabrics, dyes, silks, i.e. all materials providing prosperity of artistic handicrafts and industry. Of them, the most remarkable kind was the Nurata large decorative embroidery.

2.3 Suzani of unknown origin

In conclusion, we have to examine suzani of unknown origin: two quite different specimens that belonged, beyond any doubts, to different regions. Their common feature is that both regions remain unidentified and that both types of suzani date go back to an old period when only local materials and vegetative dyes, either local or exported ones—indigo and cochineal—were in use.

Suzani of the first type is a very refined work often made on thin, well-processed white *mata*. Technical peculiarity of this suzani is that it is always embroidered with not *basma* stitch but *kanda-khayol* stitch of excellent quality.

The composition of their ornament is built, like usually, on the contrasting between the border and the middle panel. However, their border is wider than usually and that's why its sizes differ a bit from generally accepted ones.

In the artistic image of these panels, the border is of greater importance than the middle. It is complex, and its beauty is due primarily to unusually refined large “branches”, which stretch along the middle wide part from right to left and vice versa, thus forming a wavy line, a typical peculiarity of embroideries in many regions. However, here it is expressed quite unclearly as it is crossed by large flowers that sit on “branches” and alternate with leaves. This loud pattern rivets attention with its branch-decorating flowers and profile, various, and of exceptionally beautiful forms.

Some of the flowers are rounded by blue nimbuses (located symmetrically along the border) representing a kind of interspersed tops of flexible stems with not large fretted leaves.

Such location of flowers is found only at this type of embroideries. The general coloring of embroideries is a bit cool due to the tint of deciduous patterns; blue color only contributes to this impression. This coolness of the color radically differs suzani above from Bukhara-Nurata ones.

The middle part of the panel plays a less essential role in the composition of ornament. Although it is also filled in relatively densely, its pattern is developed insufficiently; the composition seems unfinished, with its motifs placed rather arbitrarily. It seems that embroiderers had planned to build a rhombic net, which, however, turned to be irregular, somewhere even unfinished. Impression of these embroideries does not worsen solely due to the artistic skills of embroideresses: an excellent stitch, ability to make pattern outlines strict, and fine colors.

The correlation between wide, luxuriant border decorated with excellently composed, always one-type pattern and a less integrated, less developed composition and middle panel patterns illustrates that it was not accustomed to hang suzani on walls in the region of this type of embroidery. To all probability, suzani were shown to viewers and decorated interior only/predominantly with their borders. In other words, the embroideries either served as coverlets of newlyweds' bed, with their decorated border hung on both sides of the bed (like in Bukhara) or several folded embroideries were put one over another, with their border as the most visible part.

This illustrates that embroideries above were typical primarily for Bukhara-Nurata but not Samarkand-Hodjent region.

Origin of these embroideries is unclear. G.L. Chepelevetskaya, in her book, supposes that they were manufactured in Karshi or Shahrissabz. The latter localization was made by G.L. Chepelevetskaya while the former one—by the author of this paragraph who gave a scientific description of the Samarkand museum collection of embroideries in 1930–1940s; this information was later on used by G.L. Chepelevetskaya.

Her assumption of Shahrissabz is unlikely true. The specific feature of the composition of these embroideries—border's prevalence over middle panel—allows regarding them as Bukhara-Nurata ones. And Shahrissabz, with its embroideries poorly explored as well, seems to have a propensity for the Samarkand-Tashkent style. However, the given suzani differ from type above by depicting bird figures sometimes.

Another version—Karshi—is not substantiated reliably as well. The only source of such localization of specimens was a report by antiquarians who sold them to the museum. Regrettably, they gave no detailed information: they disliked disclosing sources of acquisition, insistent questions only made them fear, and their story seemed unconvincing. Although information by antiquarians most often came true as a result of questioning on sites, it seems no possible to find out whether this report is true, as none of these people, who were old yet 40–50 years ago, is alive at the moment. And the most important thing is that no region where embroideresses or competent old women could have confirmed local origin of these embroideries has so far been identified. Even if home place of these suzani made no less than a century ago is identified now, it seems no possible to find any whole specimens to make identification. It is even more unlikely that anyone could recall stories about them once heard from mother or grandmother. To all appearances, localization of these masterpieces of folk art will never be identified.

Suzani of second type are not numerous: they are available only in the collections of the Samarkand Museum and the Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography.

The suzani are embroidered on coarse, thick white mata with a very thick homemade silk. The pattern consists primarily of large, up to 0.5 meter diameter almost round figures, which

sometimes are bent upward and have the form of profile flowers composed of several differently colored concentric elements.

Large floral motifs perfectly blend with large deciduous ornament that fills in the space among them. Everything is of pleasant faded, warm tints, a bit effaced: the embroideries seem to have been washed or used for a long time.

In the Samarkand museum there is also another specimen whose embroidery device resembles to that of above but has different color and pattern. It seems to be a later, quite unused one. Its pattern represents a large rhomb whose outward edges are decorated with pair curls turned toward different sides, a motif widely known in the applied art (embroideries, carpets) as “lamb’s horns”. The coloring is a combination of bright blue, brick-red and black. All the dyes are vegetative, with intensive tint. White fabric is translucent among patterns.

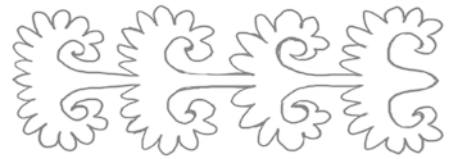
This suzani makes a very particular impression: only thick, homemade silk and largeness of ornament elements make it similar to specimens above. There is no single analogy of this specimen in a museum or published images of suzani. There is impression that it was embroidered in another ethnic medium (the one close to Turkic semi-nomadic traditions) to imitate embroideries of neighboring kishlaks.

Or, perhaps, this is a particular instance: for example, embroidering this suzani was a woman who had taken her origin from embroidery region and then, after she married, moved to another ethnic environment where she fell under the influence of the latter’s artistic traditions.

Fig. 41. An embroideress with her grandchildren. Baysun



CONCLUSION



Large decorative embroideries of *suzani* type in their local Samarkand variant have been studied variously, including cases with special emphasis on their role in everyday life and rituals, mode of production, their importance as spiritual culture phenomenon, artistic style and ornament as manifestation of spiritual life and world outlook.

The research covers a relatively brief period—second half of the 19-first quarter of the 20 centuries, that is a period of change in the history of Central Asian peoples. The annexation by Russia was followed by increased merchandizing of economy, and the feudalism with its archaic, traditional setup was replaced by incipient capitalism. These led to profound changes in all the spheres of Central Asian life conditions. Practically unshakeable mode of life that came from depths of feudal society and even went back as far back as to the primitive society, began losing its sustainability. Previous reticence within the framework of the region, its part or even a district disappeared; external influence affected the culture, particularly, art. Ethnographic materials made it possible to retrace changes in embroidery manufacture and dynamics. It was reports of numerous embroideresses engaged in needlework, women of different age (following which their individual experience belonged to different historical periods) that enabled researchers to uncover the role of embroideries in everyday life, identify pattern semantics, retrace the evolution of Samarkand *suzani* style decade-by-decade, and sort out reasons of this art development.

Beyond any doubts, *suzani* type embroideries are excellent works of ornamental art with their genesis going back to the family life. They sprang up and developed as household articles. Embroideries were manufactured mostly for beds of newlyweds in the form of complete set to include a coverlet — *suzani*, an embroidered bed-sheet — *ruyidjo*, lace pillow-cover — *bolin-push*. These were later supplemented by the needlework with different purpose, for instance, a prayer bedding *joynamaz*. As time passed, the set changed: till the 1870s — in addition to the four types of embroidery above there were a mat bedspread — *buyrokars* and double shawl — *kusha-kare*. New kinds of embroideries came up later 19 century to further spread earlier 20 century: wall friezes in two variants — *zardevor* and *zebi-tahmon*, a cradle coverlet — *gavora-push*, a counterpane for a low table — *sandali-push*. All the embroideries above were used in everyday life for their intended use, and even decorated residential space: in Samarkand they covered all the walls of a wedding room to hang there within a year.

When were household articles decorated with artistic embroidery and turned into works of art? This initial period in the history of *suzani*-type embroidery remained unknown not only for Samarkand but for other embroidery regions as well — we dispose of no sources to identify this.

Probably, the drawing of patterns preceded the embroidery: some facts testify to this, first of all, an etymology of a generic term that means a large embroidery—*kashta* = “drawn” (from a verb *kashidan*; in common parlance, *kashtan* = “to pull”, “to draw”).

The earliest samples of the Samarkand embroidery (these are analyzed more minutely than others) can safely be dated not earlier than the mid-19 century, except for Samarkand *joynamaz* that goes back to the previous period).

Still, all early samples of embroidery are evidence of the long evolution of the art. This appears to be as fully shaped: methods of composition were identified and improved, problems of color solved — certain combinations of colors, most appropriate to the national artistic taste, established, a standard set of ornamental motives selected by generations was introduced. To attain an appropriate level, the art of *suzani* must have passed a long path of search to gradually accumulate finds. By the mid of 19th century, the stylistic features both in Samarkand and other embroidery areas had already been formed, canonized, and became traditional.

The history of further development of the art in the second half of the 19—first quarter of the 20 century (apparently, the only period at modern researcher's disposal) is studied by example of the evolution of the Samarkand decorative embroidery. Three stages, or periods, of its development are singled out. The first one covered the 50s–70s of the 19th century, but it had begun in previous time.

Typical features of this period are the use of old methods—handicraft fabrics and home-made silk threads painted by vegetative dyes; archaic ornament which was understood as stylized images of guarding articles; the old, patriarchal way of manufacturing—embroideries were produced by family and relatives of a bride (by joint efforts); dimensions of the embroidery answered their utilitarian purpose.

The second period fell to the 1880–1890s. In the reviewed period, embroideries greatly changed. *Suzani* rose much in size (other kinds of decorative embroidery rose to a lesser degree). Embroideries began to lose their functionality. Basically, factory-produced fabrics came to be used, along with artificial dyes, which had appeared in the 1870s and became quite wide-spread by the end of the second period. The composition, color, and ornament changed. A greater portion of old motives disappeared, others transformed. The number of the said motives on a unit sharply reduced. Nevertheless, many features typical for embroideries of the previous period are extant in the samples of those years. It was a transitional stage in the Samarkand decorative embroideries' history (just as in the history of the other areas). The third period, covering initial decades of the 20 century, including Soviet times, was characterized by full transition to factory-produced fabrics of different grades and colors, partly to factory-produced threads, and to the use of synthetic dyes (of the old ones, cochineal was still used). The way of embroideries' manufacture changed also; professional embroideresses working to order appeared. The business of embroidery-making designed for sale came to develop. There was a new style that began to shape, and it came from no outside to promote to the further development and transformation of the old one. The ornament completely lost its protective meaning that made it possible to deviate from tradition and add new plots to patterns. The majority of old motives went out of use, many new ones appeared, and their semantics reflected changes in life (in particular, the emergence of new household articles).

The design of a panel as a whole and its separate elements changed. The color became different not only due to the application of new dyes and fabrics of various colors, but also because of changes in coloring concepts. The only constant feature was the vegetative character of the ornament which, during all three periods, became divided more or less precisely into flower and leaf patterns. This is especially clear on the embroideries against white background, which are most common in everyday life, most valuable and labor-consuming and most rich in art. It is decorative needlework on white fabrics that is the supreme manifestation of the style developed by Central Asian people. It concerns not only Samarkand, but also all other areas where large decorative embroideries were made. They are of greatest interest for the history of this art: they had appeared earlier than embroideries against color backgrounds, and were the initial form in the development of *suzani* art. Embroideries on color fabrics began to spread only in the second and third periods.

Note that the design of embroideries against a white background had always been based on symmetrically located large rosettes around which leaf motives were grouped. Originally the composition was complicated. Thus, on *suzanis* and *bolinpushes* of the early period there was, besides external edging covering the framework of all composition, the second internal one, which divided the panel into two rectangles, one inside another. Besides the basic pattern—combinations of large rosettes with leaf motives—there were many other elements of composition: large ones, which were obligatory elements, and fine ones which were not obligatory and were used to fill empty spaces.

Separate elements of a pattern were also characterized by diversity and complexity of structure. Rosettes consisted of several (up to seven) concentric rings, against whose background radial motives were placed. Dark green leaf patterns had a core made of special elements.

Later on, the composition became more strict and formalized. By the end of the 19th century, the internal edging and large obligatory motives disappeared, and the number of optional fine ones was reduced. The embroideries on color fabrics especially changed. At first, both the patterns and composition of white background embroideries had been transferred to them, however, as early as in the 1870s, special motives and principles of composition for embroideries on color fabrics were developed: delicate rosettes of complex structure were replaced by lines of bushes or twigs.

It should be noted that the coloring essentially changed. In early embroideries, there was a domination of the principle of picturesque coloring of the patterns. On white fabrics, the basic combination (crimson with dark green) was supplemented with other colors—blue, red, yellow, pistachio, grayish-olive—added in small amounts. On one article, different shades of one color were used for the motive: crimson and crimson-pink, dark and light blue, dark green of a relatively cold shade and light green of a warm one. Placed side by side, they did supplement each other.

Commencing from the second period, and especially in the third one, the principle of picturesque color combination increasingly gave up to the graphic principle. In the rosettes of white background embroideries, only two shades of red color remained intact: crimson and cinnabar-red; sometimes, in embroideries of the second period, there was one shade in addition—cherry-brown, but later on it also disappeared. The number of the rings forming the rosettes and that of radial motives against their background fell. The rosettes became more laconic. A remaining part of the composition became, at first, black-green, and then purely black. Certainly, it gave birth to austere and increasingly decorative color. The combination of black with deep crimson gives to late Samarkand embroideries a special charm, but they look well only in big rooms.

Also, embroidery against a color background underwent a coloring evolution—from the initial principle borrowed together with ornament of white background embroideries to graphic monochrome coloring where a color of a pattern is contrasting to blend with a background only. In the 1870s, when the pattern of embroideries consisted of delicate rosettes, its main colors were blue and black-violet. They were supplemented with white color, and with yellow against red background, or red (crimson) against yellow one. In 1890s, when the rosettes were replaced by bushes, and dark red (claret), dark green and violet backgrounds came into fashion, multi-coloring was replaced by monochrome: white pattern against a dark background (sometimes with small additions, for example, white pattern with yellow edging or yellow trim) became prevalent.

It would be appropriate to emphasize that the semantics of motives underwent changes as well. In Samarkand, *suzani* ornaments were regarded by embroideresses and graphic artists as images of real objects. A meaning of these conventional ornamental forms was clear in the female environment.

Graphic artists were aware of the meaning of patterns especially well. These women kept in mind a great number of old motives but, this notwithstanding, created new ones, using forms and their combinations according to the tradition. In patterns they saw a way to express a certain idea, certain content associated with the real life. The language of ornament was a universally known language of metaphors, whose usage and interpretation were determined by the tradition.

An idea dominated that each motive had its own meaning. In other words, if a pattern prototype remained unknown—whether its meaning was forgotten or a motive borrowed—in this case a name of the pattern either formalized (“curl”, “curve”) or specified a source of borrowing (“pattern of brocade”, “city pattern”). It looked as though they did not dare to give it a new

name, being aware that behind a conventional sign there is a meaning, as behind an unclear word of foreign language its true meaning is covered. The opposite phenomenon took place: sometimes old patterns were interpreted according to new conditions of life (for example, patterns, whose elements were connected as a continuous chain, have received the name “train”).

Changes were also typical for the content of ornamental motives in the period under consideration. It is no mere coincidence that the analysis of semantics and forms of old patterns, as well as the significance of the ancient embroidery is illustrative that, in mid-19 century, and earlier, the needlework had played a role of protective objects. Motives of an ornament had the same magical meaning: a greater part of old patterns went back to images of articles regarded as protective objects, i.e. went back to old beliefs still extant in the family life. These include “knife”, “lamp”, “pomegranate”, “almonds”, etc. Note that these motives were obligatory for earlier embroideries. Elements of ornament, such as “rainbow”, “lightning” and “moon” go back to astral motives, whose sources probably rooted in religious beliefs. Thus, the embroidery of the first period decorated with magical symbols appears to be original and artistically made amulets or talismans.

However, by the 1870s, a greater portion of motives depicting protective objects had gone out of use. A religious significance of embroideries was forgotten, though the very idea that they were still needed for wedding and circumcision ceremonies (a risky moment, for evil spirits or bad people could do harm), did contribute to the development of embroidery. Some magical motives transformed; still, they did exist to supplant all other patterns of leaf ornament. By the third period, embroideries and their patterns completely lost magical significance. From now on, the ornament lost ties with ancient beliefs and, hence, became instable. Graphic artists were no longer bound by religious tradition, so they created new patterns. The point is that they gained an offing to impregnate a new motive into an ornament, provided it would be given a vegetative shape.

For this reason the content of motives and their semantics completely changed. Note the very nature of ideas contained in the ornament changed. The motives of early embroidery depicting phenomena of the real world in their conventional form were not a simple stylization of physical shape of an object—they bore an appreciable semantic influence. A motive going back to the image of knife, for example, represented not only the form of a real object, but also the magical power that the real knife supposedly disposed of. Also, a real knife, its very image protected an owner against any magical harm and dangers from everywhere. This conventional and vegetatively stylized image was easily realizable in an embroidery-saturated environment, so those who created embroidered and beheld the pattern, experienced definite and fairly strong emotions. Ornamental compositions did stimulate imagination and entail a lot of exciting associations. Of course, that was a stimulus for the work of art to make an ornament vividly mirror the spiritual world of its creators.

Note that patterns of magical nature, obligatory for embroideries of the first period, were designed within a long period of time by numerous generations of female graphic artists. The most successful variants were improved and canonized, while all those failing to blend with traditional aesthetic canons and inconsistent with general style and its tendencies was eliminated.

On the other hand, the recurrence of identical motives involved negative consequences as well. Depictions of real objects were improved formally, but they were becoming increasingly ornamented and schematized. In other words, their bonds with the prototype and its figurativeness grew feeble, their emotional force lessened, to some extent, and the vivacity of ties eased. However, ancient beliefs were strongly kept among the native population during those periods, and it protected the ancient motives’ semantics from full oblivion.

At the intersection of the centuries, differently conditioned and differently based—new motives sprang up. They were noted for minor content, unrelated to the basic principles of the

world outlook. Riches and abundance came into the forefront: a greater portion of the patterns created in the last, third period includes the good things of the nature: fruits and vegetables. Compositions are full of stylized images of samovars, jewelry ornaments, including a chest as a symbol of abundance. As consistent with the style, all the objects impregnated into the ornament were imparted a vegetable image or a combination of flowers and leaves. In particular, an unsuitable object for an ornamental design, such as a chest, is treated as follows: it is transformed into a rectangle (basis of the pattern) framed by leaves and decorated with flowers and twigs.

No conditions and time were available to work over motives in the reviewed new period. Like old times, their basis was still formed by objects of material world stylized as plants. However, the search for ornamental images and the selection of successful decisions grew at priority rates. These processes faced interruption risks and unfinished nature, should a new plot come into fashion. Also, ideas and sentiments caused by new motives together with related associations, proved to be superficial and trivial. Under these circumstances, the perfection of patterns could not be as full as before. In Samarkand, that was perhaps a motive of “melon plant’s lash” that served the only example of this kind, for many years it became the most popular leaf pattern in embroidery against white background.

Note that the concept of abundance manifested itself not only in ornamental motives—the embroidery as such also indicated to the well-being of a family. They began to create them in an unreasonably large manner with numerous complete sets for every dowry. Everybody, within reasonable limits, tried “to avoid defaming family honor and being worse than others”. The latter had undoubtedly its effect on artistic quality of the later embroidery.

However, it was high artistic standards and sustained traditions that saved the art of decorative embroidery from degradation. High culture of ornamental art (clarity of compositional principles, precise rules of forms and color combination, fine skills of embroidery and pattern drawing, color flair, as well as a sense of lines and proportions)—all these enabled artisans to manufacture the embroidery of high artistic value. An eloquent testimony to this are numerous samples of later period.

As compared with Samarkand processes, all we are aware of the embroidery art in other regions (practically unexplored historically) is that under equal conditions and similar (not identical) dynamics of changes each region followed its own way to develop a new style. In Tashkent, earlier 20 century, large embroideries against a white background shifted to sharper colors that supplanted the previous monotonous and solemn ones. In Jizak, white needlework fabric was replaced by orange, while deciduous parts of composition were colored into dark blue instead of green, with wide black fringing. In Hodjent, a deciduous ornament, formerly dark green, and reddish-brown with black fringing on products of earlier 20 century. Refined, elegant and colorfully rich bouquet of old Nurati suzani changed into small shrubs located in staggered order.

A few aspects of art development are dealt with in the work, while no evolution of local needlework style has so far been a subject of study. It would be of great interest to detail about changes in other types of embroideries in terms of pattern-making and history of style formation (likewise a specific history of embroidery art of various regions with their heterogeneous population), as was the Samarkand one.

It was scores of embroideresses’ generations, largely unknown, who contributed to the flowering of the Central Asian embroidery as brilliant manifestation of lofty artistic traditions of the Central Asian peoples, particularly Tajiks and Uzbeks; descendants of ancient farmers in the manner accessible for woman’s creativity. A Central Asian woman showed her staggering artistic sensitivity, unsurpassed craftsmanship and creative imagination, contributed to undying artistic values that will take a niche in the world decorative art.



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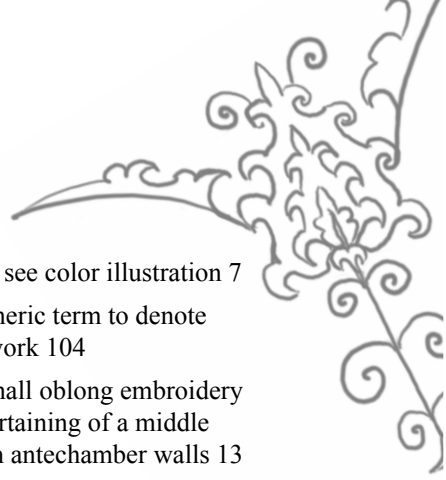
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ANNOTATED INDEX



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**mehrob*—an arch on *djoynamaz* of lancet form to reproduce a *mihrab* profile 79

**oba* (derivative of *ob*-“water”)—a fringe

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**adras*—local silk and semi-silk fabric 26

**alacha*—high quality home-produced cotton fabric (Nurata) 100

**bekasab*—see *adras*

**zendenichi*, *zenden*—Central Asian cotton fabric of green color

**karbos*—see *mata*

**karbosi ironiti*—a *mata*, 53 cm wide (usually 25 cm wide)

**mata*—a coarse home-produced cotton fabric 17, 18, 53, 70–75, 80, 84, 101

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**suf*—a generic name of factory-made fabric of white color 17, 19

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**sufi gulob*—a smooth cotton fabric of pink color

**sufi zard*—a fabric of yellow color: lankort, ticking, glaze 19

**sufi sakchob*, *sufi nasreddin-shohi*—see *suf*

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**zaynabi*—light green of warm tint (derivative of female name Zeynab) 22

**zangor*—bright green of cold tint

**zangor pistaki*—green

**zard*—yellow

**malle* (*mala*)—reddish

**nelobi*—indigo, blue

**nofarmon* (“disobedient”, “stubborn”) (semantics remains to be unclear)—reddish-purple 22

**past*—a generic name of light tints of different colors 22

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- * *chambarak*—a large round tambour operated vertically 26
- * *charkh*—a spinning wheel
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- * *bershumi Warsaw*—“Warsaw silk”; cotton threads 21
- * *bershumi daraht*—“arboreal silk”; cotton threads
- * *bershumi nukcha*—“silk of thread end”; a tread of silk wool made of internal layer of cocoon to produce a silk of lower sort
- * *bershumi faranghi*—“a French silk”; factory-made threads notable for good brightness and quality, very expensive that impeded their wider use 20
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- * *ip shol* (“a paper wool”)—home-made cotton threads dyed in red 20
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