

Original Research Paper

The Impact of Region and Culture on the Creation of Needlework Motifs in Local Clothing of Turkmen Women through the Lens of Cultural Identity and Ethnic Genealogy

Mostafa Rostami^{1*}, Tahereh Mir², Bibi Rabeh Mami³

1. Associate Professor, Department of Handicrafts and Research in Arts, University of Mazandaran, Babolsar, Iran.

2. Ph.D. Student in Islamic Art, Tabriz Islamic Art University, Iran.

3. M.A. in Research of Art, Administration of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism, Golestan, Iran.

Received: 05/06/2023

Accepted: 22/10/2024

Available online: 21/11/2024

Abstract | The motifs used in Turkmen needlework are influenced by climatic, cultural, and historical conditions as well as the customs and traditions of different Turkmen ethnic groups. Turkmen needlework artists create patterns on local clothing based on their perceptions of beliefs, culture, historical background, and nature and the environment, containing explicit and implicit meanings. This descriptive study attempts to analyze the characteristics of the patterns used in Turkmen needlework, to analyze the factors affecting the creation of patterns of women's clothing in that country, and to answer the question of how land and culture influence the creation of needlework patterns used in traditional Turkmen women's clothing. The results of the research show that the visual phenomena hidden in the mentioned motifs have different meanings and the effect of natural inspirations on them is sometimes achieved in such a form of abstraction that it is difficult to recognize an equivalent for it in the surrounding phenomena. Considering the historical background and the type of beliefs and culture prevailing in the Turkmen Sahara region, as well as the special nature of this land, the motifs used in the traditional needlework of women's clothing in this land reflect the mindsets of Turkmen artists and influenced by factors such as culture (e.g. customs, traditions, and beliefs), animals, nature and the environment and also express the characteristics and identities of tribes and abstract perceptions of current elements in their lives.

Keywords | *Pattern, Needlework, Turkmen Women, Traditional Clothing, Land and Culture.*

Introduction | The way of life of every nation and tribe is full of customs, ideas, and bitter-and-sweet history. Each ethnic group has its own attitudes according to the type of life and daily activities and the way of social communication with other ethnic groups and societies. Every nation has its own epics and myths that are sacred and respected. In the history of human life, a lot of symbolism has been used in all beliefs and religions, and without exception, they have used a lot of symbolic language and forms in all of them. Because human beings can better visualize concepts that cannot be defined and understood in other ways by way of symbolization in the form of abstract motifs. The Turkmen, like other ethnic groups and human societies, have their own symbols, which are preserved and passed on to the next generations

in various forms, including needlework motifs used in women's traditional clothing. Based on the seen, heard and very limited sources, various factors such as animals, nature, culture, and living environment have influenced the creation of the role of women's clothing. The purpose of this study is to fully examine the Turkmen needlework motifs; It also attempts to find cultural factors and sources of inspiration to shape patterns. Studying the motifs and artistic structures of Iranian peoples is quite a difficult task due to their vastness and diversity, and it is necessary to preserve the cultural identity, which is the most important factor for the survival of a nation. The results of the research indicate that the various customs and traditions of the ethnic groups grandstanding more than anything else in their works. Many of the motifs are derived from nature and the surrounding environment and its connection

* Corresponding Author: 09111144844, m.rostami@umz.ac.ir

with the living space, which the Turkmen artist shows in an abstract form in his art, thereby establishing an unbreakable link with his beliefs and the cultural identity of the living environment.

This article tries to investigate the characteristics of motifs used in Turkmen needlework, to analyze the influencing factors and how they affect the creation of motifs for women's clothing in that country in the form of typology of motifs influenced by those factors.

Research Background

The review of the research shows that no significant research has been done on the analysis of the cultural factors influencing the needlework materials used in the local clothing of Turkmen women, and hence the importance of conducting this qualitative research among these two Iranian ethnic groups. Some research has been done with general attitudes, and here, almost similar researches are discussed briefly. There is not much information about Turkmen needlework, but a few studies have been conducted with general perspectives that the authors have benefited from.

Rostami and Mir (2021) in an article titled "The Influence of Religious Beliefs and Beliefs on Turkmen Jewelry Arrangements" attempted to identify the types of decorations used in Turkmen jewelry based on Turkmen beliefs.

Ghavi Panjeh (2015) in the article titled "Pattern and Color in the Clothing of Turkmen Women", investigated some motifs used in Turkmen needlework and found nature as the origin of art among the Turkmen. In addition to native, social, and geographical identity, clothing in each nation reflects occupational and trade union, political and religious affiliation, social, economic, and class status, and age and gender differences. Values play an important role in maintaining social and cultural identity and the continuity of the historical life of generations.

Kabiri and Amirhajilo (2014) in an article entitled "Study of Animal Motifs in Turkmen Carpets", introduced the types of Turkmen carpet designs and maps. In this article, they classified motifs pre-Islam and post-Islam. The continuity of some of them started before Islam and continued after Islam, and sometimes changes were seen in them based on the religion of Islam. For example, the pattern of the yellow scorpion, which was used before Islam, was changed to the pattern of a spider to respect the historical event of the Prophet Muhammad hiding in a cave and weaving a web in front of the cave by the order of God.

Zabbah and Hatam (2014) in their article entitled "Inquiry on the concepts of the needlework motifs of the Turkmen of Kaus Dome" described some animal figures. In this article, Turkmen needlework motifs can be classified into different groups based on their appearance and elements that are inspired by them: animals, elements of nature

and the surrounding environment, ideas and beliefs, work tools, and war tools. Some motifs are based on ethnic beliefs and ideas, and some are abstract interpretations of surrounding creatures and objects. The mythical creature ram, which is a symbol of power, is the only motif that has a mythological aspect and has been formed in numerous forms. Ram, the mythological creature, which is a symbol of power, is the only figure that has a mythological aspect and has taken many forms.

Gokalan (2013) in a book entitled "Religious Customs and Traditions of Turkmens" presented a detailed description of the Turkmen people and the religious customs of the Turkmen such as holidays and religious ceremonies.

Khamoshi (2007) in an article entitled "The Evolution of the Use of Decoration in Baluch and Turkmen Needlework in Traditional and Modern Ways", focused on the patterns of some decorative motifs used in Turkmen and Baloch needlework.

Rezaii et al. (2008) in an article titled "National and Ethnic Identity Tendency among the Iranian Turkeman" discussed the relationship of solidarity between cultural heritage, language, land, and history.

Kalte and Agh Atabai (2003) in a book entitled "Turkmen Needlework" examined the Turkmen needlework and common patterns to some extent.

Azadegan (1993) in a book entitled "Research on Totemism" examined the religion and religious roots of pre-Islamic Turkmen in detail.

Esfandiari (1992), in his book under the title "An attitude towards the Trend of Needlework in Iran", scrutinized the historical and cultural status as well as the characteristics of needlework art in Iran.

Bigdeli (1989) in a book titled "Turkamans of Iran", mentioned the knowledge of Turkmen ethnic groups and also to some extent the knowledge of Turkmen handicrafts.

Considering the research that has been conducted that is not very relevant to the present study, the present article seeks to examine how motifs used in Turkmen needlework have been influenced by various cultural, historical, and environmental factors. This study analyzes the influential factors and their impact on the motifs of women's clothing in that region to come up with the typology of motifs influenced by those factors.

Research Method

To examine and analyze field and library data in this article, a descriptive-analytical research method was used. For content analysis, in addition to collecting scientific data using written sources, observation of Turkmen needlework in different regions and interviews with expert figures, including the late Professor Niazjan Niazi, were used.

The Hypothesis of the Research

The visual phenomena hidden in the motifs of the traditional clothing of Turkmen women, under the influence of cultural factors and deep-rooted beliefs around them, have concepts that are different from reality and sometimes in line with them, and the effect of natural inspirations on them sometimes reaches such a form of abstraction that it is difficult to recognize an equivalent for it in surrounding phenomena.

Research Principles and Literature

Nation and identity are related concepts and a nation with today's features must form a national identity. National identity is the most comprehensive and extensive social identity at the level of society and consists of "a set of geographical, historical, cultural, epic and ethnic characteristics and attachments that encompass human life and that members of society are proud of and proud of" (Roh al-Amini, 2004, 22). Ethnic identity is a type of social identity and is "a special set of objective, mental, cultural, social, ideological and emotional factors that manifest in a human group and differentiate it from other groups (Altaie, 2003, 158), in this type of identity, the emotional relationships of the members are more and they are more integrated than the general society. Accordingly, the ethnic identity is at a lower level than the national identity. The Turkmen have characteristics that separate them from other ethnic groups. Although some of these characteristics may be present in other ethnic groups in a similar way, their presence together only identifies an ethnic group with the name Turkmen. Turkmen language, Turkmen horse, dotar and fiddle, Makhtum Qoli Faraghi, Hanafi Muslim, Sahra Turkmen, Turkmen carpet, etc. are the names and words that remind the name of Turkmen (Rezaii et al., 2008, 121-122).

In terms of genealogy, the Turkmen are one of the Muslim tribes of Turkic origin in Central Asia, who mainly live in Turkmenistan, northwestern Afghanistan, and northeastern Iran. Since ancient times, they have lived a nomadic life in the vast deserts of the lower reaches of the Seyhun River and between the Aral Sea. Until about the 7th century AD, the Turkmen were part of the Turkic peoples. During these years, a group of Turks called the Aghuz, migrated from the Arkhun region to the Aral and Syr Darya (Shad Ghazvini & Hejazi, 2021, 5).

Turkmen are Sunni Muslims of Hanafi religion. Their Islamic and religious beliefs are so strong that they have a genealogy that traces their lineage back to Adam. The Turkmen in Iran are divided into four main tribes, of which Yamut and Gokalan are the most famous. Apart from the various Turkmen tribes and clans, the Turkmen have four other tribes, Sheikh, Makhdoom, Ata, and Khoja, known as the descendants. These four tribes are considered the most sacred

Turkmen tribes. The Turkmen tribes achieve this by changing their tribal identity through changes in clothing, ornaments, and symbols. Teke is the largest and most powerful tribe of the Turkmen, whose influence was felt not only in neighboring countries but also among the entire Turkmen people. The growing power gave them the leadership of the Turkmen for many years. A large part of these tribes live in Turkmenistan. In Iran, these tribes also settled in the Sarakhs and Torbat Jam regions of Razavi Khorasan and in the Jargolan region of North Khorasan (ibid., 6).

The traditional beliefs and beliefs of the Turkmen before Islam played a major role in the creation of their motifs and symbols, and after the adoption of Islam, they were used with changes and restrictions. Before Islam, the Turkmen people believed in rituals such as totemism and shamanism. Signs of totemism can be seen in t Among the motifs used in Turkmen art and clothing is the ram motif, which has a symbolic and totemic meaning and has become a practical, ritual, and religious form as a symbol of strength and masculinity, fertility, and courage. The ram's horn is a practical, ritual, and religious symbol in Turkmen culture that has existed since the beginning of Oghuz (Turkmen) totemism. The most common symbolic meaning of the ram's horn among Turkmen is goodness and blessing, authority and a symbol of the spirit of ancestors (Kasraian, 1999, 20). The patterns of felt, carpets, and o in addition to the ram motif, many motifs can be seen in clothing, handicrafts, and related arts. Patterns such as spiders, scorpions, gonads, rabbits, camels, snakes, fish, sun and moon, etc., each of which has a symbolic meaning derived from totemistic beliefs. The Turkmens were a warrior and nomadic people who, after centuries of massive migrations to the Middle East and Southeast Asia, caused great changes in these areas. They then settled in the deserts of northern Iran and on both sides of it. Among their tribes, we can mention "Salur", "Arsari", "Tekke", "Yumut" and "Sarykh", the most important of which are "Teke" and "Salur" (Kabiri & Amirhajiloo, 2014, 40) handicrafts of Turkmen art. The word "Turkmen" appeared for the first time in the Chinese encyclopedia in the 8th century AD. The Turkmen have lived in northern Mongolia for several thousand years. Until about the 7th century AD, the Turkmen were part of the great Turkic people. In these years, following the collapse of the Gog Turkic Empire, a group of Turks called "Oghuz" separated from them and migrated from the Arkhun region to the Aral and Syr Darya. The origin of the word "Turkmen" also dates back to about the 9th century AD. The Turkmen were mainly nomads until the early 20th century, but then they gradually became villagers and urban dwellers (Gokalan, 2013, 100-101).

The Turkmen have some differences from other Iranians in terms of culture, customs, and traditions. Although these differences have become less pronounced in recent

years, this group of people has preserved many of its traditional cultural characteristics. For example, the type of clothing worn by women, unlike that worn by men, has been preserved despite major changes compared to the past, giving them a special identity compared to other Iranians.

“The Turkmen language is one of the branches of the Turkic languages in the Ural-Altatic language group. The Ural-Altatic languages are the languages of the inhabitants of Chinese Turkestan” (Bigdeli, 1989, 243). The Turkmen speak to each other in their local language, but many Persian words and concepts are found in the daily conversation of the Turkmen (Rezaii et al., 2008, 126). The Turkmen people got acquainted with Islam and became Muslims around the 10th century AD. The influence of Islam on these people has been such that it has even been said about the word Turkmen that this word appeared due to their conversion to Islam in the late tenth century AD (Irons, 2007, 233).

• Needlework and its Application in the Traditional Clothing of Turkmen Women

Turkmen women, like other regions, have kept their tribal and ethnic clothes with little changes. The components of Turkmen women’s clothing include work clothes, urban clothes, home clothes, and ceremonial clothes. They wear old clothes in mourning ceremonies and the color does not matter. Turkmen women give life to them by embroidering them on the fabric, the language of the patterns and images becomes expressive and speaks of customs, beliefs, and distant pasts, and even expresses their wishes. The ethnicity of the Turkmen is from the Gokalan tribe, and one of the most important occupations of Turkmen women and the Gokalan tribe is Turkmen embroidery (Rezaii et al., 2008, 125-126). Turkmen needlework, which is also known as black embroidery, has been widely used in the past, and in traditional Turkmen society, it has been used to decorate men’s, women’s, and children’s clothes as well as curtains (Zabbah & Hatam, 2014, 12). It is possible that in Farhmag and Turkmen language they call it “Sanjim” and they use more geometric patterns as influential factors and how they affect the creation of needlework motifs for Turkmen women’s clothing (Esfandiari, 1992).

• Influential Factors and How they Affect the Creation of Needlework Motifs for Turkmen Women’s Clothing

Various factors influence the creation of needlework motifs used in the traditional clothing of Turkmen women, the most important of which are as follows.

- Animals

From their living environment, the Turkmen have domesticated some of the animals to make a living and use them. Including camels, horses, rams, dogs, etc. These animals have always been their companions and companions among the Turkmen people due to their lifestyle (desert living), and

the importance of this issue has led to them taking on a sacred aspect over time. However, some of the motifs of dangerous or dangerous animals and insects have been used in their local weavings and clothing to control and ward off the evil of that animal or insect in their living environment or the space of the pavilion similes in a mental way (Esfandiari, 1992, 12).

Sari Ichiyan (Scorpion pattern): Sari Ichiyan means yellow scorpion. The Turkmen who lived in the plain of “Qara Qom” inspired this design from their surroundings. This pattern, which was called yellow scorpion in the pre-Islamic era, was called spider in the post-Islamic era according to a tradition. In the pre-Islamic concept, the scorpion symbolizes the decline of the sun and the beginning of decay and decomposition of plants (Kabiri & Amirhajiloo, 2014, 45). The Turkmen who lived in the plain of “Qara Qom” inspired this design from their surroundings. The Turkmen in the “Qara Qom” desert faced many scorpions due to the heat of the summer and were forced to leave the edges of the gazebo open to let in cool air. Scorpions seek shade due to the heat of the weather, and as a result, the inhabitants of the gazebo were constantly at risk of scorpion stings and may have even suffered casualties. After years of experience fighting scorpions, Turkmen mothers transfer the pattern of the scorpion to the edges of carpets, felts, and needlework to resist them, and the scorpion retreats as soon as it sees its image. According to their belief, the scorpion is the embodiment of warding off evil. This pattern, in addition to carpets, felts, and plush, this motif is also used abundantly in Turkmen needlework (Fig. 1).

Mooy Naghsh (Spider Design): Spider designs have been used to ward off the evil eye, and herders in the desert have seen this animal bite one of them and observed the toxic effects of the insect’s bite, as a result, fear has led to the emergence of this pattern in Turkmen embroidery and carpets, and artists have included these insects in their embroidery and carpet designs in stylized form (Fig. 2).



Fig. 1. Sari Ichiyan. Source: Authors archive.



Fig. 2. Mooy Naghsh (Spider Design). Source: Authors archive.

Ram's Horn (Shakh Ghooch): Among the Oghuz Turkmen clans and in a large part of Central Asia, "Aries" is a sign of strength and power, and a hunting eagle named "Qaragosh" is a sign of strength and speed. Of course, this symbol is a reminder of a period when the Oghuz Turkmen tribes, from the time of gathering food, became aware of the breeding and importance of rams by engaging in animal husbandry and began to depict their various forms in the manifestations of life, especially in the motifs of carpets, rugs, and felt, where ram's horns have been depicted in various ways, to the extent that in recent years they have carved ram's horns on tombstones and even placed their images (Figs. 3 & 4).

Ghoosh Qanat pattern (Bird's wing): The symbol of the swan was chosen and drawn by Turkmen mothers as a symbol. When the pair of swans is killed for some reason, they commit suicide with him. Turkmen mothers were influenced by this emotion and transferred the swan in flight or, in the form of an analysis of the wings and toenails of this bird, as a symbol of a friend and helper to needlework and carpets (Fig. 5).

Tirana Burun: Tirana is the Turkmen word for the Caspian sturgeon or the Caspian sturgeon. This symbol is derived from the shape of this fish, which is caught in the Turkmen port, and its design is usually performed on hats and trousers (Kalte & Agh Atabai, 2003, 22) (Fig. 6).

Tushan Qulaq: In the Turkmen language, "Tushan" means rabbit, and "Qulaq" means "ear" because of the use of a rabbit's ear in the text of this pattern, it is known as "Tush Qulaq". The appearance of this animal in needlework designs can be influenced by the presence of elements around the living environment of the Turkmen over time (Fig. 7).

Diye Ng Orekji: In the Turkmen dialect, "Diye" means camel and "Ng" means a sign of dependence or kinship, and Orekji means hump. The camel hump is one of the famous motifs of Turkmen needlework, and the triangle is a symbol of the camel's hump among the Turkmen, and this animal, like the horse, is of great importance among the Turkmen (Fig. 8).

Diye Buin: In the Turkmen dialect, "Diy" means camel and "Buin" means neck, and the Diye Buin (camel neck) design is considered one of the oldest embroidery designs and reflects the importance of the camel in the tribal and nomadic life of the Turkmen. The Turkmen consider the camel a symbol of patience and endurance, and they pay special respect to this blessed and auspicious animal and use this motif in their art (Fig. 9).

Qaparqa Bulum: In the Turkmen dialect, "Qaparqa" means "a pillar of human ribs or four ends or similar and continuous shapes, and "bulum" means "part,

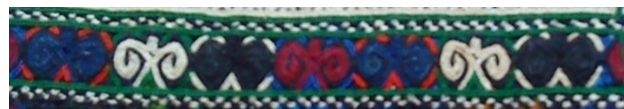


Fig. 3. Ram's Horn (Shakh Ghooch). Source: Authors archive.



Fig. 4. Ram's horn (Shakh Ghooch). Source: Authors archive.

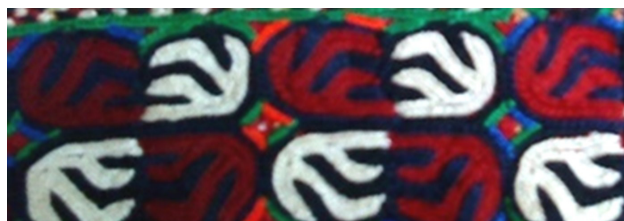


Fig. 5. Ghoosh Qanat. Source: Authors archive.



Fig. 6. Tirana Boron. Source: Authors archive.



Fig. 7. Tushan Qulaq. Source: Authors archive.



Fig. 8. Diye Ng Orekji. Source: Authors archive.



Fig. 9. Diye Buin. Source: Authors archive.

section". Due to the similarity of this pattern to a pillar or a pillar of ribs with four ends and the repetition of similar shapes, it is known as "Qaparqa Bulum". The important factors in the creation of this pattern are social and tribal factors and the fact that "Qaparqa" is one of the historical and social symbols of the Turkmen, especially in the early periods of their history (Fig. 10).

Ghooch Buroq: In the Turkmen dialect, "Buroq" means to be wrapped or gathered in itself. Here, the meaning is the ram's horn, which is designed intricately. "The ram's horn is a symbol of creation, a ray of light, war, and violence. In ethnic and mythological beliefs, this animal is the first sign of the zodiac (the month of Farvardin) and therefore, it is a symbol of new ideas and the dawn of a new era" (Rostami & Mir, 2021, 93). Social and cultural traditions and beliefs, and the importance of the ram's horn as a symbol of power and courage in the history and culture of the Turkmen, are among the factors that created this pattern in Turkmen needlework - especially on traditional women's clothing. The Buroq pattern is very old. The Buroq pattern is undoubtedly one of the oldest patterns in the history and culture of the Turkmen, and its history dates back to the time of the Oghuz in the 6th century AD (Fig. 11).

Ghooch Mizan: Among all Turkmen tribes, the motif of the ram, in addition to its mythological aspect, has a sacred aspect and is seen in all the arts of this community. This motif is taken from the shamanism of the Turkmen before Islam and has been used over time. This design is actually the ram's horn, which is designed in the form of a scale and is indicative of the concepts of the symbol of strength and courage (Fig. 12).

Yilan Aghzi: In the Turkish language and Turkmen dialect, "yilan" means "snake" and "aghzi" means "mouth". Environmental and geographical factors can be cited as factors that create this motif. The Turkmen use insects and vermin to control or repel evil in their living environment (Figs. 13 & 14).

Sari Qolaq: In the Turkish language and Turkmen dialect, "Sari" means yellow, and "Qolaq" means ear, and this pattern is mostly used on Turkmen rugs and has a long history. The structure of this pattern is geometric and subject to the abstract and mental thought of the weaver artist. The Turkmen weaver designs it without pen and paper and a pre-designed plan observes its proportions and artistically displays it in the Turkmen rug or rug. Due to their long life as livestock keepers, the Turkmen have made the ram their symbol, but before that, the "wolf" was their symbol. The wolf's characteristics are resistance and intelligence. When the wolf notices the presence of dogs around the flock of sheep, it takes advantage of sudden and intermittent attacks, because it hits, it runs

away and the wounded sheep are out of the shepherd's control and suitable prey is provided for the wolves. This wolf warfare tactic is widely used in Turkmen life, especially in battles. For this reason, Turkmen artists have used the wolf symbol in carpets and needlework. The ancient use of this motif can be seen in the Pazyryk carpet, which dates back to the Achaemenid period. In the ancient work, the wolf symbolizes liberation and also the protection of the family (Fig. 15).

- Nature and living environment

The nomadic Turkmen, with complete simplicity, drew the outlines and details of everything they saw in nature and the surrounding environment (means of life, tools, etc.) in their creative minds in a simple form and embroidered it in works such as carpets and kilims, jewelry, embroidery, and even in horse decorations and other living things.



Fig. 10. Qaparqa Bulum. Source: Authors archive.

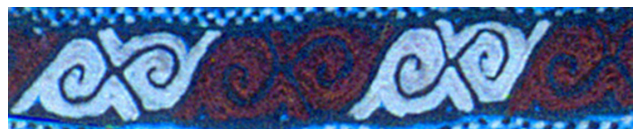


Fig. 11. Ghooch Buroq. Source: Authors archive.

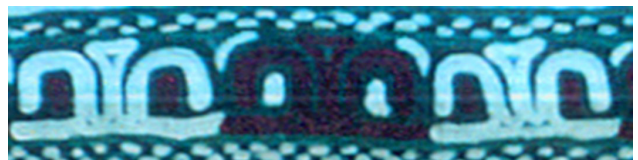


Fig. 12. Ghooch Mizan. Source: Authors archive.



Fig. 13. Yilan Aghzi. Source: Authors archive.



Fig. 14. Yilan Aghzi. Source: Authors archive.



Fig. 15. Sari Qolaq. Source: Authors archive.

Gun Naghsh (Symbol of the sun): In ancient times, light and fire were sacred among Iranians, and with the belief in the sun, the source of heat and light for life and the world, its worship has been customary among Iranians since ancient times. The Turkmen are divided into various tribes, one of which is the Bashir tribe in northern Afghanistan, which uses this pattern. The people of southern Turkmenistan also weave this pattern on the rug. In addition to the rug, the aforementioned symbol is also used in felt, carpets, embroidery, etc. (Fig. 16).

Yapragh Naghsh: This motif is a symbol of nature and it is sewn in a kind of sewing in forest areas and cultivated fields. The factors that created this pattern are the environment and the artist's deep look at his life. The settlement of the Goglan tribe can be seen as the most important factor in the introduction of some motifs such as Yapraq in handwoven and especially Turkmen needlework (Fig. 17).

Oy Naghsh: White pavilions (Aq Oy) have been the center and survival of Turkmen generations and "Aq Oy" is considered sacred in Turkmen culture. Throughout history, the Turkmen artist has carried his mobile home with him. This house has been so valuable to him that

he artistically embroiders the "Aq Ovi" symbol on his "Takhiye" hat and wears it (Fig. 18).

Bostan Naghsh: Turkmen mothers have created this pattern inspired by nature and showing the greenery of their living environment. The color scheme of this pattern is more diverse than other patterns. This pattern is mostly used in sewing hats (Fig. 19).

Gul Naghsh: This design is a symbol of "Marie Gul" design of Turkmen carpet and in the Turkmen needlework sewing method, it is mostly used in "Alin Dungi" (Turkmen women's headband). The women would see a well with several birds sitting around it and at that moment, with their calculating minds, they would simply and beautifully create the Gul Naqsh (meaning a well or water gathered in one place) with precise engineering (Fig. 20).

Burme Chegin (Burmese): In the Turkmen language, Burme means to tie, and "Chegin" means arm. Old Turkmen women believe that when a person is weak or faints, they tie his arm (chegin) tightly with a handkerchief so that the blood flows to the upper body. "Burme Chegin" design is sewn on the end of the leg of women's pants (balaq) and women's hat (alin dangi) (Ghavi Panjeh, 2015, 10) (Fig. 21).



Fig. 16. Goon Naqsh. Source: Authors archive.



Fig. 17. Yapragh Naghsh. Source: Authors archive.



Fig. 18. Oy Naghsh. Source: Authors archive.



Fig. 19. Bostan Naghsh. Source: Authors archive.



Fig. 20. Gul Naghsh. Source: Authors archive.



Fig 21. Burme Chegin (Burmese). Source: Authors archive.

Chaqmaq: The name of chaqmaq is inspired by the clasp device used in blacksmith shops, etc. The chaghmagh design is mostly sewn on women's trousers (*ibid.*) (Fig. 22).

Shelpeh Naqsh: Shelpeh means wine and pendant, and this design is mainly taken from the border motifs of Turkmen carpets and used in needlework (Ghavi Panjeh, 2015, 10). In addition to needlework, it is also used in Turkmen jewelry. In Turkmen culture, tassels and pendants of Turkmen jewelry are used to ward off evil (Fig. 23).

Alam Naghsh: This pattern is inspired by Turkmen carpets. The motifs of Alam in the carpet change according to the Turkmen clans and a special motif is used in each case. These patterns range from complex plant, geometric, and tree designs to simple geometric patterns. "Garmaj" or "Garmach" is one of the famous Alam designs, which Niaz Mohammad Niazi, a master Turkmen carpet weaver, interprets as follows: "Garmaj is a device that is stretched around the place where livestock stands" (Gharavi, 2008, 131) (Fig. 24).

Ambar Oy: "Ambar" in the Turkmen dialect means cutter and "Oy" means house here this motif is called "Ambar Ovi" because it imitates a manual sugar crusher called "Ambar Oy". The reasons and factors for the creation of this motif can be artistic talent, individual tastes, and social influences. This motif is currently common among the majority of the villages of Goglan in Kalaleh County (Fig. 25).

Ay Naghsh: "Ay" means moon in Turkmen and is a reminder of Turkmen history and culture in the era of totemism. The "Ay" motif is considered one of the motifs and seals and stamps of the Oghuz (ancestors of the Turkmen), which, apart from its influence on the traditional arts of the Turkmen, has remained in their social life, including the naming of newborns - especially girls - such as "Ay Tekin" (like the moon), "Ay Tan" (a body like the moon), "Altin Ay" (golden moon), and "Ay Gul" (moon motif) (Fig. 26).

Ghig Naghsh: In the Turkmen dialect, "Ghig" means "the side of the hill of Mahors or valleys with a low slope" and the purpose of its use is to use shapes that indicate the height and slope of the land. Natural and geographical factors can be mentioned as factors in the creation of this pattern. The life of the Turkmens among the plains and mountains in different periods, especially when they started to live together, has caused a new attitude of artists toward their surroundings (Fig. 27).

Ghangharq Naghsh: "Ghangharq" is a Turkmen term and it means a stick with one end bent and in the form of a hook. Without a doubt, tools such as wooden fishing hooks, tree branches, shepherd's staff, the use of wood as a hook, and the control of sheep herds by shepherds in the life of Turkmen have caused its motifs to have a significant impact on material and spiritual culture. Also, other geographical and social factors such as living by the river and resorting to hunting have been influential in the emergence of this motif (Fig. 28).



Fig. 22. Chaqmaq. Source: Authors archive.



Fig. 23. Shelpeh Naqsh. Source: Authors archive.



Fig. 24. Alam Naghsh. Source: Authors archive.



Fig. 25. Ambar Oy. Source: Authors archive.

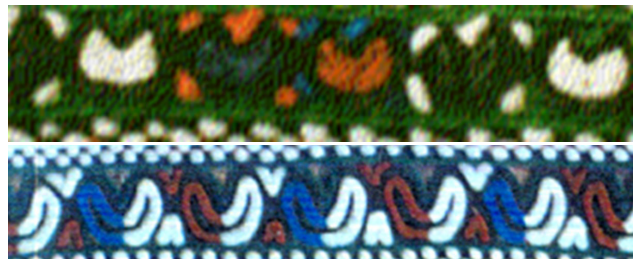


Fig. 26. Ai Naghsh. Source: Authors archive.



Fig. 27. Ghig Naghsh. Source: Authors archive.



Fig. 28. Ghangharq Naghsh. Source: Authors archive.

- Culture (customs, customs, thoughts, opinions, and beliefs)

Turkmen are among the ethnic groups that have a rich culture, customs, and traditions, and this is reflected in their designs and works including the Kajaveh that is tied to the camel to carry the bride or the pavilion in which they live and the traditional beliefs and rituals of the Turkmen before converting to Islam played a major role in creating their motifs and symbols and after converting to Islam and Accepting the Hanafi religion and religious and Quranic beliefs, they believed in rituals such as totemism and shaminism. Totemism was present in the Turkmen tribes until the seventh and eighth centuries AH and gradually disappeared after that, but signs of it can still be found in the means of life and folk works of Turkmen art: examples of it can be seen especially in Turkmen needlework (Azadegan, 1993, 22).

Gul Aydi: This flower is the first flower that is woven into carpet or “plus” and is also used in carpet and felt. An open flower that has nine petals. Because the number nine is considered auspicious in Turkmen culture, it is considered a good omen. For example, weddings and long journeys are held on days that have the number nine. Examples of this sacred number can be found in the dowry of girls called “Duguz” (born in nine months and nine days) and the Oghuz tribe who lived in northern Mongolia on the banks of the Tula River. This symbol was probably invented to represent the nine tribes living in the mentioned region. It is also the first symbol that appeared on pile fabrics after the advent of Islam. It was named “Ayet-e-Ligh” (the conqueror) because the corpse was carried with it, and thus it acquired the sacred name. Based on this principle, barren Turkmen women embroidered on their sleeves and around their collars and skirts, as if they had vowed to have children. They also embroider to achieve the honor of heroism in their husbands’ wars (Fig. 29).

Ashegh Naghsh: “Ashegh” in Turkmen refers to a piece of animal bone that was used as a tool for children to play. The Asheq game was one of the most common games for Turkmen children and adolescents, with which they played dozens of games, and families tried to preserve and maintain it with great interest. All family members helped to collect it for the children, and mothers wove a tuft called “Ashegh Turba” and even added Asheq to the dye in their hand-woven wool and made it into different colors. Families considered having Asheq to be a blessing and considered it one of the seven wonders of the world. This pattern was used symbolically in needlework (Fig. 30).

Yurek Naghsh: “Yurek” in the Turkmen dialect means heart and is known as York Naghsh because of the use of the heart shape in this design. It seems to mean sheep’s heart, which is one of the seals and medals of the livestock era in the history of Turkmen people. In Turkmen wedding ceremonies, the

heart of a sheep is cut in half and fed to the bride and groom as a kebab to unite their hearts (Fig. 31).

Tamdra Naghsh: “Tamdra” in the Turkmen dialect means dotar which is one of the Turkmen musical instruments. Among all Turkmen tribes, dotar is of great importance and its patterns can be seen in Turkmen art designs (Fig. 32).

- Characteristics and identities of ethnic groups

In examining Turkmen motifs, we encounter several factors in the creation of designs and patterns, the most important of which is “ethnology”. Turkmen are made up of various tribes, each of which has left behind certain traditional patterns in handicrafts, especially their own weavings, to show their identity, which are sometimes named after the tribe itself, including “Sarigh Gul” (an allusion in the footnote), “Arsari Gul”, etc. or with another name such as “Mari Gul” attributed to the Teke tribe, or “Ghabseh Gul” related to the Yamut tribe.

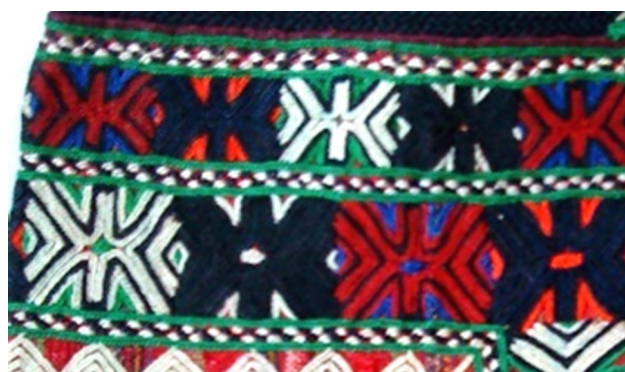


Fig. 29. Gul Aidi. Source: Authors archive.

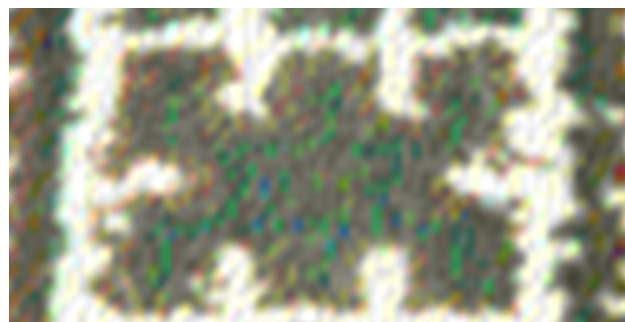


Fig. 30. Ashegh Naghsh. Source: Authors archive.



Fig. 31. Yurek Naghsh. Source: Authors archive.



Fig. 32. Tamdra Naqsh. Source: Authors archive.

Kord Naghsh: The Turkmen living around Quchan and Bojnourd, inspired by the patterns used in the handicrafts of that region, have created patterns such as Kurd Naqsh. Turkmen artists, with an intelligent eye, borrow some of the motifs used in their needlework from motifs used in the Kurdish art of North Khorasan and use them in their art (Fig. 33).

Teke Naghsh: Among the Turkmen tribes, several large tribes live in Iran: Yumut, Guklan, Nukhorli, and Tekeha. Tekeha lives mostly in Turkmenistan. Traditional Turkmen arts have diverse tendencies, with each tribe having its own motifs, ornaments, or special coverings that distinguish them from other Turkmen tribes. One of these motifs is Teke Naghsh which is common among the Teke tribe (Fig. 34).

Discussion and Analysis

Regarding the motifs used in Turkmen needlework in the mentioned culture, the summary of these factors in the form of important characteristics and criteria in each of the mentioned factors, along with their use in traditional clothing is presented in the following table. In Tables 1, 2, and 3, the common motifs among the Turkmen peoples are mentioned. This means that each motif has a specific meaning. According to the images in the tables, the motifs can be analyzed as follows:

1. Motifs taken from animals,
2. Motifs taken from nature and the living environment,
3. Motifs taken from culture and customs.



Fig. 33. Kord Naghsh. Source: Authors archive.

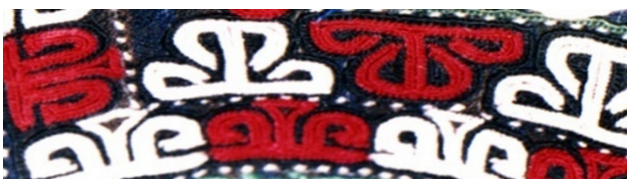


Fig. 34. Teke Naghsh. Source: Authors archive.

Table 1. Animal motifs in Turkmen women’s clothing. Source: Authors, 2019.

No.	The most important motifs	Sample image	Application type
1	Sari Ichiyayn		Pants
2	Moy Naghsh		Pants
3	Ram Horn (Shalkh Chiooch)		Pants
4	Ghoosh Ghanat		Pants
5	Tushan Quillaq		Pants
6	Diye Ng Orekji		Pants
7	Diye Buin		Pants
8	Ghapraqa Bulum		Pants
9	Ghooch Mizan		Pants
10	Ram Buroq		Pants

Table 2. The motifs of nature and living environment on the clothes of Turkmen women. Source: Authors, 2019.



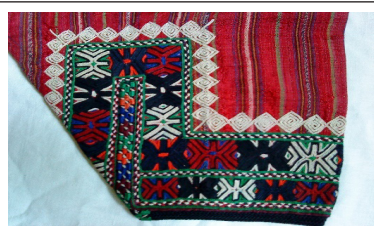
No.	The most important motifs	Sample image	Application type
1	Gun Naghsh		Shirt and pants
2	Yapragh Naghsh		Pants

Table 3. Culture and customs motifs in Turkmen women's clothing. Source: Authors, 2019.

No.	The most important motifs	Sample image	Application type
1	Gul Aydi		Bridesmaids' pants
2	Ashegh Naghsh		Pants

Conclusion

The abundant manifestation of Turkmen needlework, which is still very popular in decorating various types of clothing and other hand-woven items, gives the environment of the Turkmen people a sense of identity. The cultural affiliation of this community refers to the past of the Turkmen, whose cultural manifestations are expressed in the form of various motifs. The commitment of the Turkmen people to using local clothing and its decorations has created a distinctive cultural landscape and identity. The abundant use and frequent observation of this art on the local clothing of Turkmen women, due to the importance that this

community attaches to their cultural identity, has introduced these motifs as a cultural symbol of the community. The aesthetic and visual values of Turkmen needlework, from the perspective of motifs, are largely adaptable to the cultural and identity characteristics of this community. Turkmen needlework motifs are derived from various factors such as animals, natural factors, culture, and Turkmen tribes. Some of these designs are inspired by ethnic beliefs and beliefs, such as the ram's horn, a symbol of power in Turkmen culture, and some of these designs are abstract interpretations of animals and the surrounding environment. The Turkmen, like other Iranian ethnic groups, have their own customs and beliefs that they have inherited from their ancestors and tried to preserve throughout history. One of the designs that is abundantly seen in Turkmen needlework and other arts is the ram. The ram pattern is mentioned as a symbol of strength and courage in Turkmen culture. The Turkmen, not under the requirements of modern art, but in accordance with nature, have simplified the shape of everything, and at the same time, in all these designs, there is a concept hidden in the simplicity and a secret that, despite the passage of time, has become more valuable every day. Although these designs have adorned traditional Turkmen society in the past under any title, they can continue to exist in the modern world in the form of clothes, fabrics, and other modern items today. The visual phenomena hidden in the aforementioned motifs have different meanings and concepts, and the influence of natural inspirations in them sometimes is in a form of abstraction that it is difficult to recognize an equivalent for it in surrounding phenomena. Considering the historical background and the type of beliefs and culture prevailing in the Turkmen Desert region, as well as the special nature of this land, the motifs used in the traditional needlework of women's clothing of this land are a kind of symbolism and are derived from the minds of Turkmen artists and are influenced by factors such as animals, nature and the surrounding environment, culture (e.g. customs, traditions, thoughts, ideas and beliefs), and the characteristics and identities of the ethnic groups. The details of everything that exists in nature and the environment around the Turkmen are simply visible in Turkmen art, especially needlework, and also animals such as camels, horses, rams, dogs, etc., which have always been their friends and companions due to their lifestyle (desert living), have become sacred in the future and are used in Turkmen arts, especially needlework. However, the use of motifs of dangerous and insidious animals in Turkmen needlework is to get rid of any restrictions of nature and ward off disaster.

References list

- Altaie, A. (2003). *Ethnic identity crisis in Iran*. Shadegan. [in Persian]
- Azadegan, J. (1993). *Tahghigh dar Totemism* [Research on Totemism]. Institute for Studies and Historical References of the Heritage of Nations. [in Persian]
- Bigdeli, M.R (1989). *Turkamans of Iran*. Pasargad Publications.
- Esfandiari, S. (1992). *Negareshi bar ravand-e soozandozi-haye sonnati-ye Iran* [Selected Perspectives on the Trend of Iranian Needlework]. Farhang Publications. [in Persian]
- Gharavi, Z. (2008). *Risheyabi-ye anasor-e tasviri dar snaye dasti-ye ostan-e Golestan* [Finding the Origin of Visual Elements in the Handicrafts of Golestan Province]. [Unpublished Master Thesis]. Islamic Azad University, Central Tehran Branch.
- Ghavi Panjeh, Z. (2015). *Naghsh va Rang dar pooshesh-e zanan-e Turkmen* [Patterns and Colors in Turkmen Women's Clothing]. 2nd International Conference on Research in Science and Technology, Türkiye, Istanbul. <https://civilica.com/doc/505175/>
- Gokalan, E. (2013). Adab va rosoum-e mazhabi-ye Turkmen-ha [Religious Customs and Traditions of Turkmen]. *Habl al-Matin*, 2(5), 98-114. [in Persian]
- Irons, W. (2007). *The yomut Turkmeni a study of social organization among a central Asian* (M. Kanaanin, Trans.). Nashr-e afkar-e Jadid. (Original work published 1968)
- Kabiri, F., & Amirhajiloo, P. (2014). AA Study of Animal Motifs in Turkmen Carpets. *Applied Arts Journal*, (4), 39-50. https://aaj.semnan.ac.ir/article_378_a1a14e3ec0ff77563d6bf268237d2669.pdf
- Kalte, E. & Agh Atabai, M. (2003). *Soozandozi-ye Turkmen* [Turkmen Needlework]. Il-Arman Publications. [in Persian]
- Kasraian, N. (2001). *Turkmens of Iran*. Negar-e Tehran. [in Persian]
- Khamoshi, Z. (2007). Tahvol-e korbord-e tazein dar soozandozi-ye Balouch va Turkmen be shive-ye sonnati va novin [The Evolution of the Use of Decoration in Baluch and Turkmen Needlework in Traditional and Modern Ways]. *Scientific Quarterly Islamic Arts*, 5(9), 73-98. <https://www.sid.ir/paper/136812/fa>
- Rezaii, A., Riahi, M.E., & Sekhavatifar, N. (2008). National and Ethnic Identity Tendency among the Iranian Turkemans. *National Studies*, 8(4), 119-140. <https://www.magiran.com/p474106>
- Roh al-Amini, M. (2004). Mafhoumshenasi-ye hoviat-e melli [Conceptualization of national identity]. In D. Mirmohammadi (Ed.), *Gofar-ha-ei darbare-ye hoviat-e melli dar Iran* [Discourses on National Identity in Iran], Tamadon-e Irani [Iranian civilization]. [in Persian]
- Rostami, M., & Mir, T. (2021). The Influence of Religious Beliefs and Believing on Turkmen Jewels. *Honar-ha-ye Hoze-ye Caspian*, 1(1), 87-105. <https://www.magiran.com/p2270263>
- Shad Ghazvini, P., & Hejazi, M. (2021). A semiotic study of the ornaments of the Turkmen women of the Teke tribe. *Journal of Woman in Culture and Arts*, 12(3), 5-6. 10.22059/jwica.2021.308617.1469 <https://doi.org/>
- Zabbah, E., & Hatam, Gh. (2014). Research in the Meaning of Turkmen Needlework Patterns in Gonbad Kavous. *Negareh Journal*, 8(28), 69-76. https://negareh.shahed.ac.ir/article_132.html?lang=en

COPYRIGHTS

Copyright for this article is retained by the authors with publication rights granted to Tourism of Culture journal. This is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).



HOW TO CITE THIS ARTICLE

Rostami, M., Mir, T., & Mami, B. R. (2024). The impact of region and culture on the creation of needlework motifs in local clothing of Turkmen women through the lens of cultural identity and ethnic genealogy. *Tourism of Culture*, 5(18), 36-47.

DOI: 10.22034/toc.2024.400645.1123

URL: https://www.toc-sj.com/article_210979.html?lang=en

