

# *A Sense of Pattern*

Textile Masterworks from the Yale University Art Gallery





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*A Sense of Pattern*

Loretta N. Staples

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*Cover: Shawl, catalogue no. 25*



## Foreword

The Yale University Art Gallery's encyclopedic collection of textiles, approximately 3,000 objects, is largely the gift of a single donor, Mrs. William H. Moore. Although some textiles were already among the Gallery's holdings at the time, Mrs. Moore's initial gift of some 1,500 textiles in 1937, now part of the Hobart and Edward Small Moore Memorial Collection, provided Yale with a diverse collection of scholarly and aesthetic interest. Particularly interested in textiles of the Near and Far East, Mrs. Moore had built an impressive collection of fine fabrics from all over the world. Louisa Bellinger, who went on to pioneer studies in fabric structure at the Textile Museum in Washington, was the first Gallery staff member to work with the collection, and in 1938, Mrs. Margaret T. J. Rowe was hired as its curator. Mrs. Rowe worked actively with the Gallery's textiles for almost twenty years, during which time Mrs. Moore and other donors greatly expanded the scope of Yale's holdings. Donors of textile gifts to the museum have included: Francis P. Garvan (B.A. 1897), Mrs. Charles B. Doolittle, Frederick Sheffield (B.A. 1924), Mr. and Mrs. Fred Olsen, Mrs. Paul Moore, Dr. Sidney N. Paly (M.D. 1952), and Katharine Ordway. Additional Yale textiles of note are the ancient textiles from Dura-Europos which came to the Gallery after the Yale-French Academy of Inscriptions and Letters excavations in Syria in the early 1930s, and the Harriett Englehardt Memorial Collection, assembled by Anni Albers during her tenure as professor of weaving at Black Mountain College in North Carolina; this collection of Latin American textiles was eventually purchased by Mrs. Paul Moore, who presented it to the Gallery in 1958.

While the Art Gallery's textile collection has been ignored, for the most part, since Mrs. Rowe's retirement in 1955, its re-emergence as an actively used collection began in 1975 with the exhibition, *The Kashmir Shawl*, followed in 1979 by *Cloth & Class: The Prestige of Fabric*, and in 1980 by *Technique and Tradition in Indonesian Textiles*, all under the auspices of the Gallery's Oriental Department, which currently oversees the collection. The present exhibition and its catalogue are the work of Loretta Staples, curatorial assistant in Oriental Art. She has been responsible for the textile shows of the past few years and for renewing the Gallery's interest in caring for and exhibiting its textile treasures.

Alan Shestack  
Director



## *Acknowledgements*

The talent, tolerance, and encouragement of many individuals came into play in the completion of this exhibition. I would like to thank them here. Alan Shestack and Mimi Neill enthusiastically supported the exhibition, permitting it to be scheduled with relatively short notice. Sara Ohly, who has worked closely with me on the textile collection for the past year and a half, invaluable aided in the completion of the catalogue, writing entries on the Persian, Turkish, and Greek textiles included. Rebecca Stone similarly contributed the entries on the pre-Columbian material. Lucie Weinstein, Mohsen Fardmanesh, and Pallas Lo helped with problems in identification and translation. Joseph Szaszfai's excellent photographs, expertly printed by Geri Mancini, grace the pages of this catalogue, designed by Ann Harakawa. Robert Soule and his staff handled the difficult installation with their usual skill and expertise, while Karen Clark undertook necessary measures in the re-mounting of many of the textiles. Pat Kane, Florence Montgomery, and Milton Sondag made helpful suggestions regarding the selection of the exhibition's objects.

Finally, affectionate thanks to Robert Horvitz, whose inspiration, criticism, and good-humor saw me steadily through the duration of this project.

*Loretta N. Staples*



# *Introduction*

Relatively unencumbered by a self-conscious critical tradition, textile art has woven its way through the whole of human history in a combined expression of aesthetic preference and technology. For the cultures who produced them, they functioned as elementary forms of shelter, as wealth, as sacred intermediaries between the material and spiritual worlds, as embellishment. For those who first collected and studied them, they provided opulent glimpses of little known cultures and tangible evidence from which to reconstruct them. Today, within the context of an art museum, textiles enter yet another sphere of consideration, as visually compelling objects which delight and provoke us, and which challenge us to consider their proper place within the realm of human artistic activity.

## Textiles and Utility

Undeniably, textiles have useful qualities which have influenced the course of their development throughout history. They are flexible, durable, and relatively lightweight; their surfaces highly textured, or flat and even; opaque, or semi-transparent. The fibers out of which they are made can be coarse or fine; their colors left their natural hues, or transformed into a brilliant spectrum through the use of dyes. All of these qualities combine to produce a versatile medium well-suited to human adornment, and indeed, the vast majority of extant textiles reflect this efficacy, created to function as assorted garments and furnishings. But apart from their physical utility, textiles have served as symbols of everything from material wealth to spiritual power.

As reflections of wealth, textiles appear again and again in inventories of ownership. In colonial America, fancy textiles were a woman's contribution to her family's riches. In Greece, India, and Morocco, fine costumes and textiles which often took years to make, constituted a woman's dowry. On a grander scale, inventories of court textiles from China, Persia, Mughal India, and Europe, reveal the prominence of local and foreign textiles as eagerly-sought objects of wealth and prestige. Christian, Buddhist, and Taoist vestments—often fashioned out of opulent, courtly fabrics—displayed the material prosperity of various religious orders while symbolizing the sacred.

In the sacred realm, textiles have functioned as manifestations of the spirit world, imbued with powers to heal and to protect during periods of heightened vulnerability. Many Indonesian fabrics operate within this sacred domain, shrouding the newborn and the dying, delimiting ritual spaces, mapping lineages of kinship in cosmological diagrams.<sup>1</sup>



The richness of such sacred textiles no doubt stemmed from considerations different from those which informed the opulence of courtly fabrics. The former was concerned with more transcendental powers and with the expression of traditional identities, while the latter focused on stylish ostentation and the assertion of an elite sensibility. Traditional garb—its cut, fabric, and ornament—changed quite slowly through time. Fashionable garments, on the other hand, were fueled by wealthy economies which stimulated innovation, and thus, obsolescence.<sup>2</sup> In some instances, fabric designs shifted concurrently with changes in silhouette. In others, they were simply the easiest means by which to introduce the effect of newness. Although Europe pioneered rapid changes in the cut of clothes, in France, as late as the eighteenth century, the fabric designer, not the tailor, generated most of the excitement in the world of fashion, introducing an array of new fabrics year after year.<sup>3</sup>

Elsewhere, wealth churned through the veins of the economy more slowly, and thus, change received relatively little economic impetus. The costumes and fabrics of many cultures continue to look much as they always have. While a fashionable mid-eighteenth century European dress bears scant resemblance to anything worn in Europe today, Central and South American women's garb displays a startling continuity of form and ornament which has persisted for centuries. Pre-Columbian clay figurines and personages depicted in ancient codices display finery virtually identical with that still worn today.

The passing of patterns directly from one generation to the next surely fostered a sense of cultural continuity which was less easily maintained in competitive mass-marketing ventures. With the input of producers, designers, and distributors, textiles could hardly have expressed the unified voice of tradition, stranded somewhere between outmoded trends and anxious speculations.

The Kashmir shawl's "identity" is all but lost due to its widespread popularity in Europe and Persia, as well as India. Originally associated with Mughal nobility, Kashmir shawls first entered fashionable European circles in the late eighteenth century, and shortly thereafter, shawls began being produced on drawlooms and Jacquard looms in Great Britain and France. While these were popular, the Kashmiri originals possessed a certain unmatched prestige, especially admired for their fineness of wool and meticulous weave. Consequently, French designers flocked to the Himalayas in the mid-nineteenth century with sketches for Kashmiri weavers to interpret in their own laborious twill-tapestry technique. Meanwhile, back in Europe, British designers copied the innovative machine-made shawls of the French. By the end of the nineteenth century, printed European versions dealt the Kashmir shawl its final blow — what had begun as an elite symbol ended as a mundane remnant of the industrial age.<sup>4</sup>

If the Kashmir shawl represents one extreme in its myriad transformations, the garments of the Ch'ing dynasty represent the opposite. When China was overtaken from the north in 1644, its conquerors, the Manchu, used clothing to affirm their own cultural identity while reinforcing the fact of Chinese subjugation.<sup>5</sup> They imposed the cut of their national dress upon the Chinese, while retaining Chinese ornament, and they strictly

regulated the garments of all those in the service of their throne. Ch'ing dynasty costume, emblazoned with the dragon as the symbol of imperial authority, remained more or less constant in both silhouette and decoration until the close of the dynasty in 1912.

### Textile Patterning

Structurally, textiles are simply accumulated interlacings of thread. Their patterning, however, is a matter of greater complexity since a fabric's decoration can occur as a result of its structure, or be applied to its surface, or both. Its ornament may be predominantly influenced by the fibrous medium at hand and its techniques of manipulation, or derived from images popularly depicted in other media.

The fit between technique and appearance is capable of suggesting the primacy of one medium over another. And in textiles, this relationship often discloses the importance of painting as a source of imagery. While curvilinear forms rendered in fluid dyes upon a woven ground seems an appropriate application of materials, the translation of such forms into a structural pattern created by intersections of warp and weft<sup>6</sup> seems a roundabout method of achieving roughly the same visual effect. Many Persian textiles of the Safavid period did just this, borrowing their ornament from manuscript painting, with human figures, animals, and foliage rendered through complex structural manipulations. In Mughal India, this sort of imagery was more often rendered in painted dyes, but woven decoration of a painterly sort was immensely popular as well.

This primacy of painting is often most clearly evident in tapestry. Though the term has been used casually to describe a number of fabric types, technically, *tapestry* describes a fabric in which discontinuous wefts define color/pattern areas. The created images are usually visually allied with painting and drawing, both of which often aided the weaver at the loom: guidelines were often drawn onto the warps, or "cartoons" (actual size sketches of the design) placed beneath them.

Indeed, much of tapestry's overall popularity seems to have come from its pictorialism coupled with its functional value as cloth. It was in many ways a "painting" with the added virtues of warmth and sturdiness, and thus ideal for clothing and interior furnishings such as wall-hangings and rugs. Function, however, was not uniformly a basis for its appeal.

During China's Sung dynasty (960–1279), silk tapestry *k'o-ssu*,<sup>7</sup> emerged as a prominent art form, highly regarded by connoisseurs who compiled albums of fine examples in quite the same manner as they collected paintings. And indeed, the subjects and styles of *k'o-ssu* were virtually identical with those of painting, replicating even calligraphy. Early *k'o-ssu* displays an extremely deft handling of colored threads, creating subtle gradations of tone. And the brilliance of color which dyed silks must have afforded surely rivaled contemporary mineral and water-based pigments.

Unlike *k'o-ssu* much ancient Peruvian tapestry, while having visual counterparts in other media, conveys a pictorial style that seems largely influenced by the peculiarities of weaving. Its pattern areas may have been numerically designated by the counting of warps, and if so, the drawings and paintings so crucial in directing the efforts of European and Chinese tapestry weavers would have been superfluous. Individual motifs display a



characteristic angularity, echoing the right-angled intersections of warp and weft. Their distribution is extremely regular and usually columnar, again echoing the fabric's inherent grid. The standardized motifs become obscured in seemingly relentless variety through the rhythmic use of ungraded color, and by the close inter-fitting of elements. The patterning of pre-Columbian tapestry suggests the weaver's direction in its sheer regularity of repeat—once underway, the pattern's inherent logic seems to sustain it.

Among dye-ornamented cloths, *ikat* and *plangi*<sup>8</sup> exploit the possibilities of applied color very differently from painted decoration. In *ikat*, a fabric's threads are measured and systematically resist-dyed prior to being woven, and the completed cloth is characterized by an energetic striation in the blurred delineation of color areas. Similarly, *plangi* also involves binding and subsequent dyeing, but of an already woven cloth rather than bundles of measured thread. Its puckered surface and subtle irregularities produce a richly tactile visual field.

Fabric's sculptural possibilities are most elegantly presented in simple double-cloths, which utilize two sets of warps and wefts woven simultaneously at the loom. The threads intersect to create a double-faced fabric whose decoration stems from the surfacing and disappearing of entire planes rather than single threads—a magnified diagram of the undulating structure of woven cloth. In addition, the color arrangement of one face is inverted on the opposite. The entire fabric skillfully balances its component features to create an integrated sculptural form which is visually exciting and conceptually satisfying.

## An Appreciation

As an artistic genre, textiles have suffered from art historical biases against utility and pattern. Admittedly, practicality may direct one's attention away from subtler perceptual effects, and the efficacy of the medium discourages its placement within the hyperspace of "fine" art. Within the discipline of Western art history, pictorial compositions tend to take precedence over those which insist on "decorative" repetition. And finally, individualistic expressions of genius are regarded by many as being somehow more profound than the rhythmic anonymity so often presented in textile form. Perhaps the very ease with which patterns satisfy and delight their viewers has been enough to make them seem banal to some. Not idiosyncratic enough to make an issue of their presence, they recede, more or less comfortably, into the regularity of perception.

Analysts of form and structure tend to overlook the multitude of conscious decisions which give rise to objects, and to neglect a consideration of objects as by-products of social forces. On the other hand, studies of social context ignore the extent to which objects do indeed influence the form of other objects, substituting instead, an illustrative approach in which artifacts describe their respective cultures as pictures which tell stories. All artifacts, despite the biases of their interpreters, affirm their desirability in their continued existence, and in this sense, the whole of the man-made world is more an aesthetic manifestation than a self-conscious treatise on the techniques of culture.

No single interpretation need be ruled out in the consideration of any object. We may have no real way of knowing whether something's social uses are more, or less, important than its aesthetic qualities, or in which direction the causal forces have pressed. Thus, the most satisfying perspective would seem to entail the consideration of every context in which an object might find itself when filtered through human perception and transformed by biases toward meaning. Textiles are self-contained forms as much as they are cultural documents. They are objects of lesser status within the hierarchy of art historical studies as much as they are proud affirmations within the heterarchy of human products.

The art museum, as an institution, is a container into which favored objects are placed, and thus it affords its audience an insight into the very processes of selection as well as a view of the artifacts selected. While it undeniably reflects the tastes of an elite, it additionally preserves a single thread of preference, a lineage of forms which discloses a pattern of choices through time. Textiles, fortunately, have found a place within this realm of choices. This exhibition celebrates the whole of circumstance which made their persistence possible.

#### Notes

1. See Mattiabelle Gittinger's *Splendid Symbols* for a comprehensive study of Indonesian textiles from artistic and anthropological points of view.
2. See Fernand Braudel, "Costume and Fashion," in *Capitalism and Material Life 1400–1800*, trans. Miriam Kochan (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, Harper Torchbooks, 1974), pp. 226–243.
3. Peter Thornton, *Baroque and Rococo Silks*, pp. 17–18.
4. The Kashmir shawl's fascinating history has been most thoroughly summarized by John Irwin in *The Kashmir Shawl*.
5. Ch'ing costume's political context has been amplified by Schuyler Cammann in *China's Dragon Robes*, and more recently in John E. Vollmer's exhibition catalogue *In the Presence of the Dragon Throne*.
6. The warps are the threads stretched and held under tension vertically on the loom. The wefts are the filler threads horizontally interlaced with the warps and carried on a shuttle or bobbin in the course of weaving.
7. Unfortunately, *k'o-ssu* is not represented in the exhibition. See Jean Mailey's *Chinese Silk Tapestry: K'o-ssu* for representative examples from the Sung through the Ch'ing dynasties.
8. *Ikat* and *plangi* are the widely used Malay-Indonesian terms for these techniques.





As an organized movement, religious Taoism began in China at the close of the Han dynasty (206 B.C.–220 A.D.), evolving into an esoteric body of secret teachings complemented by popularly held doctrines. During ceremonial rites, the Taoist master donned generous tapestry-woven or embroidered robes emblazoned with emblems of alchemical power. Here, the dragon is the predominant motif. Three large frontal dragons adorn the shoulders and back of the robe within the brilliant red-orange field. Those at the shoulders are positioned beneath disks symbolizing the sun and the moon. The third dragon clasps *lu* and *fu* characters, denoting prosperity and happiness; the *shou* character, for longevity, hovers above the creature's head. The "flaming pearl" floats beneath the chins of all three creatures. Smaller serpentine dragons writhe within the dark blue bands enclosing the garment, alternating with lotus sprays and cloud forms. A narrow border of stylized waves ornaments the hem of the robe while a single *yin-yang* symbol, positioned on the back of the neck band, completes its decoration. Throughout, the embroidery echoes the garment's woven patterning: cloud forms are articulated by the weave of the red-orange silk; dragon roundels are rendered in the blue border.

The dragon pervades Far Eastern art as a divine symbol of water, thunder, clouds, and rain, hence the supplementary motifs visible here. In China, it became a prime symbol of cosmic renewal and transformation. Early texts describe the creature as an omen of the birth of a great or holy man. Its inclusion on this priest's robe and on imperial garments, especially of the Ch'ing dynasty (1644–1912), confirms the dragon's use as an emblem of divine authority.

# 1 *Taoist priest's robe*

China late 17th century  
Navy and red-orange silk pattern weave  
with couched gold and red, green, and  
blue silk embroidery  
142.5 cm (56 in) back length  
The Hobart and Edward Small Moore  
Memorial Collection, Gift of  
Mrs. William H. Moore  
1947.213

“Mandarin squares,” colorful textile badges, were used to denote the ranks of court officials during the Ming (1368–1644) and Ch’ing (1644–1912) dynasties. Matched pairs were worn on the front and back of simple, dark robes. Early badges prominently featured the bird or animal which signified its wearer’s rank. In later years, however, the framing landscape, increasingly cluttered with auspicious symbols, took precedence—an ominous shift of emphasis which saw the close of imperial China. These badges display the transition from the heraldic boldness of the late Ming and early Ch’ing period towards the more meticulous, miniaturized formats of the nineteenth century.

2 *Rank badge with hsieh-chai,  
for Censorate official*

China late 17th century  
Navy silk satin weave with couched gold  
and multicolor silk embroidery  
36.6 x 38 cm (14½ x 15 in)  
The Hobart and Edward Small Moore  
Memorial Collection, Gift of  
Mrs. William H. Moore  
1947.212



3 *Rank badge with crane, for first-  
degree civil official*

China early K’ang-hsi period  
(1662–1722)  
Grey silk satin weave with couched gold,  
peacock feather filament thread, and  
multicolor silk embroidery  
32.6 x 32.7 cm (12⅞ x 12⅞ in)  
The Hobart and Edward Small Moore  
Memorial Collection, Gift of  
Mrs. William H. Moore  
1947.207





4 *Rank badge with ch'i-lin, for  
first-degree military official*

China 19th century  
Dark blue silk satin weave with couched  
gold, peacock feather filament thread,  
and multicolor silk embroidery  
28.4 x 30.5 cm (11¼ x 12 in)  
The Hobart and Edward Small Moore  
Memorial Collection, Gift of  
Mrs. William H. Moore  
1947.208



5 *Rank badge with bear,  
for fifth-degree military official*

China 19th century  
Blue-grey silk gauze with couched gold  
and multicolor silk embroidery  
28.7 x 31.2 cm (11¾ x 12¼ in)  
Gift of Schuyler Van Rensselaer  
Cammann, B.A. 1935  
1941.110



Manchu conquerors overtook China from the north in 1644, installing a new imperial lineage—the Ch'ing dynasty—which was to remain in power until 1912. For the Manchu, textiles served not merely as ornament, but as a political tool capable of asserting and reinforcing Manchu identity and supremacy in the midst of a newly subjugated foreign people. The *ch'i-fu*, a semiformal court robe, synthesized the silhouette of Manchu riding garb with Chinese ornament to become the garment most characteristic of the dynasty.

This embroidered example includes emblems which, by 1759, were reserved for the robes of the emperor. The Twelve Symbols, as they are known, represent the principal elements of the universe, and include the sun, moon, constellation, and mountain; the “flowery bird,” dragon, axe, and *fu* symbol; and finally, the two libation cups, water weed, fire, and grain. Additional Taoist and Buddhist symbols decorate the robe, scattered among the waves encircling the lower part of the garment, and hovering amidst the stylized clouds above.



## 6 Imperial Twelve-Symbol *ch'i-fu*

China 19th century

Yellow silk gauze (neck and cuff bands of navy silk gauze) with couched gold and multicolor silk embroidery

140 cm (55¼ in) back length

The Hobart and Edward Small Moore Memorial Collection, Gift of Mrs. William H. Moore

1947.446

Chinese embroidery, like *k'o-ssu* (silk tapestry), derives its pictorial style from painting, an affinity given special impetus during the Sung dynasty (960–1279). Under the patronage of Emperor Hui-tsung, embroidery explicitly shared painting's format, style, and subject matter, as scrolls and album leaves of landscapes, figures, and bird-and-flower scenes. It was also during the Sung dynasty that the renewed Bureau of Fine Textiles at Ch'eng-tu gathered together hundreds of the country's best needleworkers to produce decorative regalia for the court.

During the Ming (1368–1644) and Ch'ing (1644–1912) dynasties, embroidery continued in a painterly vein, technically elaborated, however, and increasingly florid in style. Professional embroiderers produced an abundance of decorative furnishings, while court ladies embellished their own garments and accessories with needleworked patterns in silk floss and gold. This hanging scroll, reflecting the late Ch'ing predilection for picturesque embroidery, is meticulously worked in fine satin stitches, staggered to create subtly gradated areas of color.

## 7 *Hanging scroll*

China 19th century  
White silk satin weave with multicolor  
silk embroidery  
109.5 x 72.9 cm (43 x 29 in)  
The Hobart and Edward Small Moore  
Memorial Collection, Gift of  
Mrs. William H. Moore  
1937.5600



The pieced construction of *kesa* simulates patched tatters, thus symbolizing Buddha's renunciation of worldly enticements. Nevertheless, these priest's robes represent some of the most lavish of Japanese textiles. While they are usually made from dazzling metallic brocades, this unusual robe is delicately embroidered and resist-dyed. *Kesa* were often fashioned from kimono and Nō robes donated to Buddhist temples by wealthy adherents. This robe, probably made from a kimono, was mostly pleated rather than seamed, in order to maintain the continuity of the composition. The scene is elegantly broken by the insertion of a single panel which bears the patched family crest, or *mon*, of its original owner.



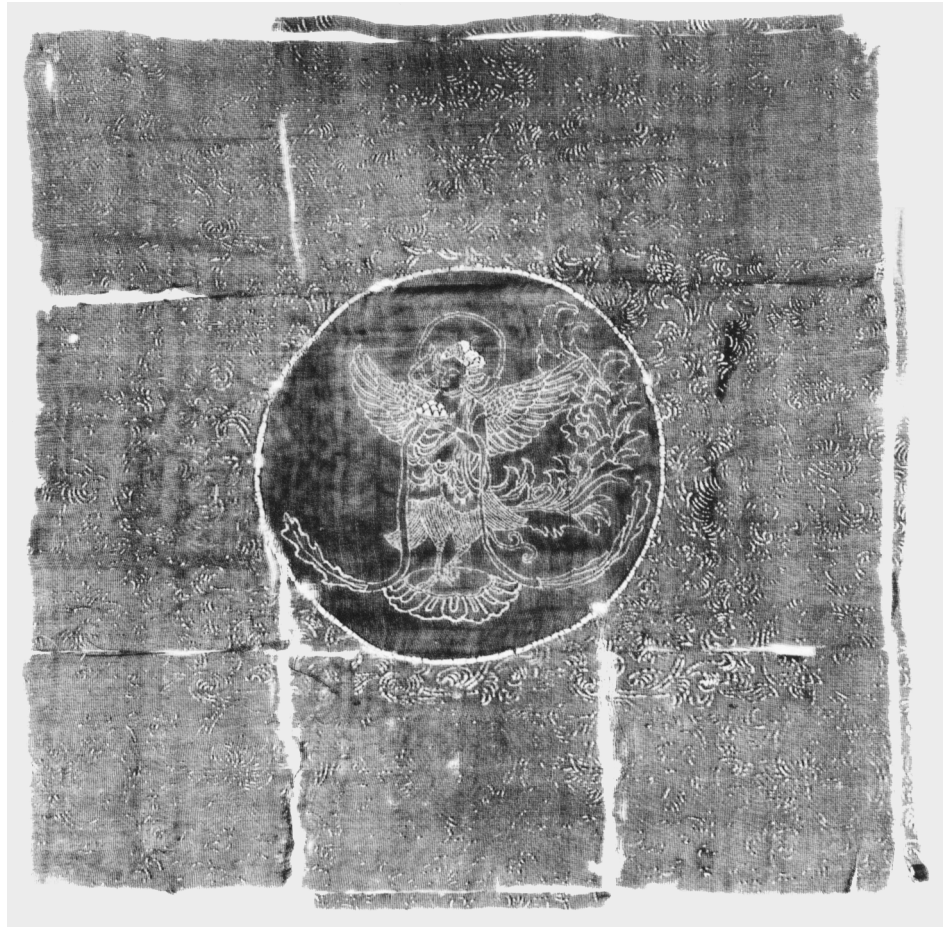
## 8 *Kesa* (Buddhist priest's robe)

Japan 19th–20th century  
 Blue silk crepe, resist-dyed with couched  
 gold and multicolor silk embroidery  
 105 × 184 cm (41¼ × 72½ in)  
 Helen Wells Seymour Collection,  
 Gift of Mrs. Charles B. Doolittle  
 1954.11.175

The *karyōbinga* is the celestial being represented on this twelfth century textile. Although the half-human, half-bird deity originated in Indian folklore, it was later incorporated into Buddhist mythology. It is especially associated with Pure Land Buddhism, which encouraged the attainment of salvation through reliance on Amitābha, one of the highest ranking Buddhas of the Mahayana pantheon. Notable depictions of *karyōbinga* in other media occur on an early twelfth century stone relief in the temple of Chūson-ji, and on a lacquered document box at Ninna-ji, dated 919. This rare textile representation, in painted lacquer and applied gold filings, surrounds the *karyōbinga* with a stylized floral pattern, *hōsōge*.

## 9 Painted gauze fragment

Japan Heian period, probably  
12th century  
Purple silk gauze weave; design in  
painted lacquer with applied gold filings  
(*makie* technique)  
31.5 x 30.5 cm (12<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 12 in)  
The Hobart and Edward Small Moore  
Memorial Collection, Gift of  
Mrs. William H. Moore  
1937.5625





Nowhere is the Japanese weaver's mastery of complex woven structures more apparent than in the brocaded costumes of the Nō theater, a classical dramatic form. Since the cut of the costumes remained constant, different types of fabric, of silk and often metallic threads, denoted the various male and female roles. All tended to be stiff and rather heavy, qualities which heightened their dramatic impact on the stage by transforming the rounded contours of the human figure into flattened, shifting fields of pattern. Three separate patterns of *kara-ori* fabric (signifying a female role) comprise this robe, apparently much worn and mended.



10 *Nō robe*

Japan 18th century  
 Silk and metallic thread compound  
 weave; predominantly orange, beige,  
 and brown, with multicolor  
 supplementary weft patterning  
 147 cm (58 in) back length  
 Gift of Mrs. Jared K. Morse  
 1952.40.26

The simple cut of the Japanese kimono emphasizes the fabrics out of which these garments are made, and the repertoire of Japanese textile art ranges from vibrant, structurally complex brocades, to subdued, sparingly embroidered plain weaves.

*Kosode*, small-sleeved women's kimono, were traditionally made of elaborately patterned, monochrome silks called *rinzu*, exquisite in their minute detail and supple drape. *Rinzu* serves as the base fabric of this *kosode*, which has been additionally decorated with resist-dyeing and touches of embroidery. Japanese textile artisans often superimposed patterns of different scale. Here, a landscape complete with pavilion, streams, and foliage, rests on a ground of woven fretwork and flowers.

## 11 Kimono

Japan ca. 1780

Resist-dyed silk pattern weave;  
predominantly blue and white, with  
couched metal thread and multicolor silk  
embroidery; orange silk plain weave  
lining visible at hem

159 cm (62<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> in) back length

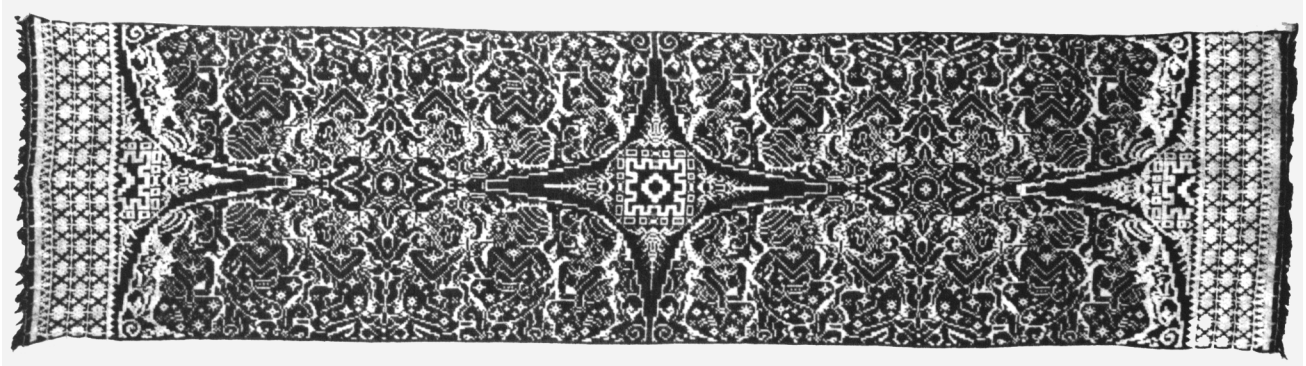
The Hobart and Edward Small Moore  
Memorial Collection, Gift of  
Mrs. William H. Moore  
1937.5889



Traditional textiles have gauged shifts in Indonesia's cultural climate perhaps more sensitively than any other artistic medium, gracefully absorbing an extraordinary influx of foreign materials and design concepts while stabilized by a religious context which ensured their quality and symbolic significance. The protective and healing powers of this textile make it the most sacred among Balinese fabrics.

*Ikat*—a method of resist-dyeing a fabric's threads prior to weaving—has been employed here in both the warp and weft yarns to produce a dramatically graphic, complex image. Within each of the cloth's four quadrants, triads of silhouetted human figures kneel, presumably engaged in ritual activity. While their forms are thought to be related to stone carvings in ancient Javanese temple reliefs, their full meaning has yet to be fully deciphered. About twenty different patterns of *geringsing* have been identified, many of their motifs similar to the angular rosettes of Indian *patola*.

*Geringsing* are made only in the town of Tenganan Pageringsingan, and their making is a complex, lengthy process governed by prescribed ritual.



12 *Geringsing wayang kebo*

Bali, Tenganan Pageringsingan

19th century

Beige cotton plain weave, double  
*ikat*-dyed brownish purple, with metallic  
embroidery

209.5 × 54.8 cm (82¼ × 21½ in)

The Hobart and Edward Small Moore  
Memorial Collection, Gift of

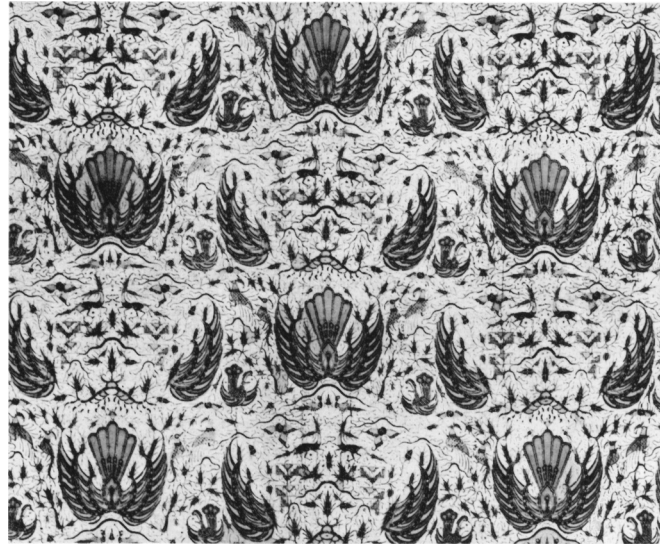
Mrs. William H. Moore

1937.5440

Plant and animal forms interlock in a network of mutual support within this microcosmic sacred landscape. The stylized wings and tailfeathers of the Garuda—Vishnu’s legendary mount—alternate with deer and undulating mountain peaks, all amidst a pattern of delicate, leafy tendrils called *semen* (from the Javanese word *semi*, which means “to sprout”). While the refined imagery and subdued coloring of this fine *kain panjang* mark it as traditional, many later examples of Javanese *batik*—a method of resist-dyeing with wax—display a preponderance of foreign elements, often brilliant in coloring and novel in subject matter and composition.

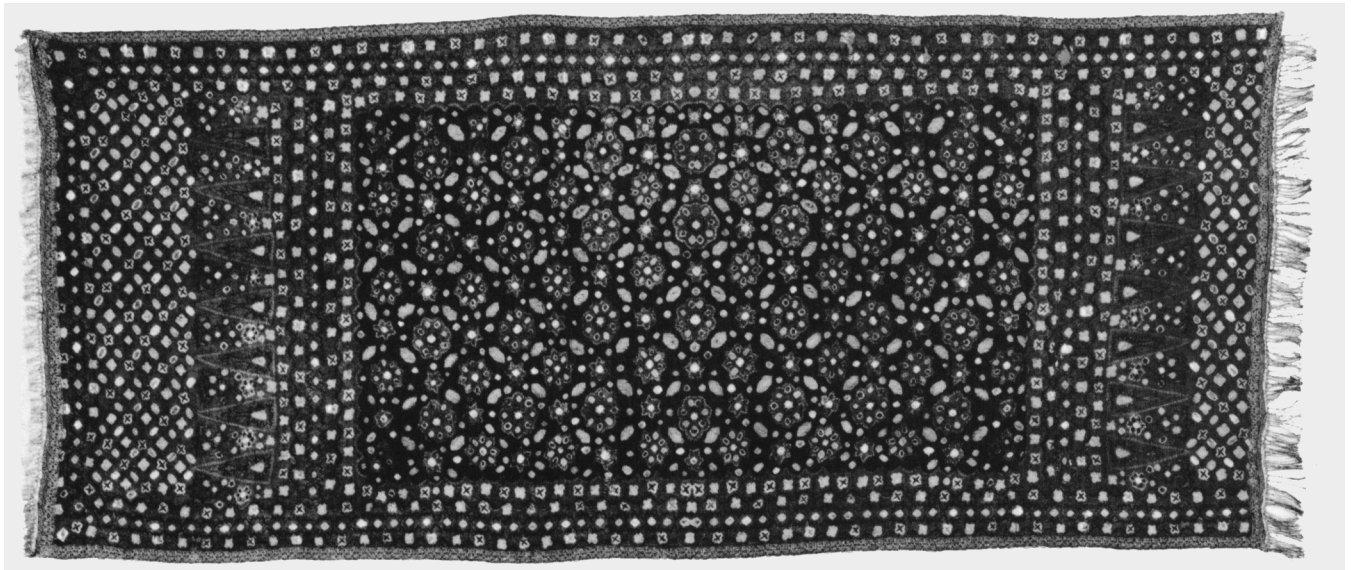
### 13 *Kain panjang* (skirt cloth)

Java, Jogjakarta 19th century  
Natural color cotton plain weave, *batik*-  
dyed in a pattern of blue and light brown  
244 × 107 cm (95¾ × 42 in)  
The Hobart and Edward Small Moore  
Memorial Collection, Gift of  
Mrs. William H. Moore  
1937.5452



### 14 *Slendang* (shawl)

Sumatra, Palembang region  
19th century  
Silk plain weave, with *plangi* and *tritik*  
(tie-dyed) patterning in purple and dark  
red, with orange, blue, yellow, and  
green; edged with European metallic lace  
trim  
210.3 × 84 cm (82½ × 33 in)  
The Hobart and Edward Small Moore  
Collection, Gift of  
Mrs. William H. Moore  
1937.5437



Weaving flourished in the Sasanian period, reviving earlier traditions and influencing textiles in Iran and Europe long afterwards. As the Parthian Empire declined, the noble family founded by a Zoroastrian priest, Sasan, gained precedence and in 266 A.D., Ardashīr I took the throne. The Sasanians deliberately sought their cultural roots in the Achaemenids who had built the first Persian empire. Sasanian weavers developed the style and motifs of the period before Alexander's conquest, shunning Hellenic influence.

The leaping ibex on this tapestry appears to be a royal icon, so designated by his collar, with its jewels and fluttering ribbons. The ibex has an affinity to the wild goats found on prehistoric painted pottery, but is depicted here in an Achaemenid manner: haughty, with characteristic double lines around the almost human eyes, the neck drawn stiffly back.

The awkward palmettes jutting from the beast's neck and breast are stylized versions of a lotus blossom and a pomegranate. The palmette garland, found as a decorative element on the palace at Persepolis, is assumed to have been an Achaemenid textile ornament. The isolated examples seen here prefigure the decorative motifs made far more elaborate on Safavid court carpets.

Sasanian art was an inspiration to later nationalist revivals under the Muslim rule that followed, and thus its weaving traditions endured in a limited way until full flowering under the Safavids.



### 15 *Tapestry fragment*

Persia, Sasanian 6th–8th century  
Wool dovetailed-tapestry weave;  
predominantly white, blues, brown, and  
yellow on a red ground  
38 × 27.5 cm (14<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 10<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> in)  
The Hobart and Edward Small Moore  
Memorial Collection, Gift of  
Mrs. William H. Moore  
1937.4604



Although most carpets in Safavid Persia were pile rugs woven in wool, under Shāh ‘Abbās I (r. 1588–1629), luxurious silk carpets were increasingly in demand, some woven in the tapestry technique. These *kelims* often restated the ornament of pile carpets, with animals set against a pattern of interlacing stems and palmettes, leaves and flowers.

Safavid *kelims* were once thought to have been woven exclusively in Kashan, based on evidence which substantiates the making of two Kashan *kelims* for Polish King Sigismund Vasa, in 1602. The surviving examples, however, differ enough in style and technique to suggest *kelim* production in more than a single weaving center. Isfahan, seat of the Safavid court during the reign of Shāh ‘Abbās, has been suggested as an additional source of silk *kelims*.

16 *Rug fragment*

Persia 16th century  
Silk tapestry weave, predominantly blue  
with multicolor patterning  
171 × 79 cm (67¼ × 31 in)  
The Hobart and Edward Small Moore  
Memorial Collection, Gift of  
Mrs. William H. Moore  
1951.51.96



The imperial ateliers of Shāh ‘Abbās I (r. 1588–1629) produced many of Persia’s most admired silks, an astonishing range of velvets, brocades, tapestries, and complex multiple cloths. Unlike the contemporaneous silks of Ottoman Turkey, which were boldly severe in their decoration, Persian silks displayed a marked delicacy of ornament. Subjects from miniature painting were skillfully transposed to the woven medium, with human beings, animals, and landscape elements rendered through complex manipulations of warp and weft. Here, niched panels enclose small scenes of a horseman, a man kneeling by a brook, a tiled pavilion, paired ducks, an ibex, and two gentlemen flanking a cypress tree. The panels alternate with inscribed cartouches which read:

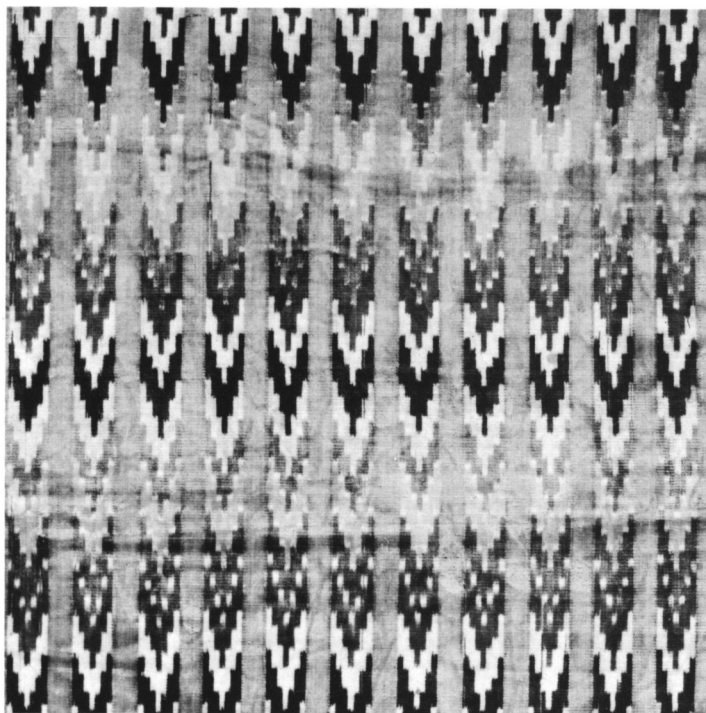
The manifestation of thy figure, by virtue of its comeliness,  
Has breathed life into the body of grace.  
Thou wouldst have said that this was woven of thread spun from the soul.  
Cloth could not be so comely as this.

Trans. Minavi, in Pope and Ackerman, p. 2098



### 17 *Textile fragment*

Persia late 16th–early 17th century  
Double cloth in red and white silk with  
silver metallic thread  
67.6 × 34.8 cm (26½ × 13¾ in)  
The Hobart and Edward Small Moore  
Memorial Collection, Gift of  
Mrs. William H. Moore  
1937.4625



# 18 Velvet panel

Persia, Kashan 18th century

Twill-cut silk and cotton velvet,  
*ikat*-dyed in a pattern of coral, green,  
yellow, violet, white, red, and blue

80 × 47 cm (31¼ × 18½ in)

The Hobart and Edward Small Moore  
Memorial Collection, Gift of

Mrs. William H. Moore

1937.5190

# 19 Textile fragment (detail)

Persia, Isfahan early 18th century

Compound weft twill weave with  
supplementary weft patterning;  
predominantly blues, pinks and gold on a  
silver metallic ground

37.6 × 72.3 cm (14¾ × 28¾ in)

The Hobart and Edward Small Moore  
Memorial Collection, Gift of

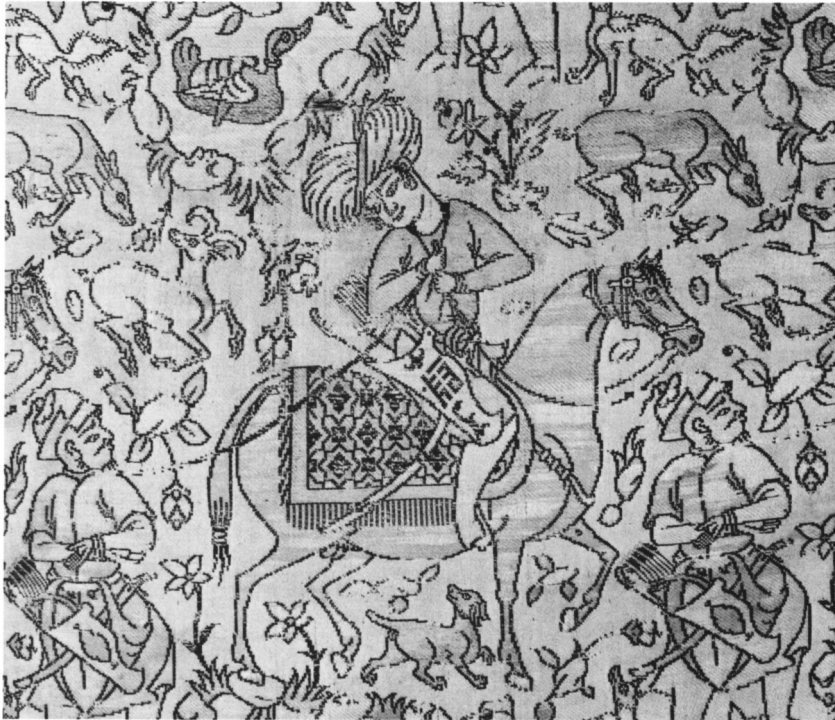
Mrs. William H. Moore

1937.4871



Textile designs of the Safavid period (1502–1736) were often borrowed from miniature painting, and their subject matter taken from poetry and legend. The prisoner motif of this example might describe an episode in Ferdowsī's *Shāh-nāmeh* ("Book of Kings"), in which the hero, Rostam, has spared the life of his enemy, using him instead to locate the mountain retreat of the White Div, a demon.

Personage patterns of romantic and heroic scenes apparently were first produced in Tabriz, and then Isfahan. This textile bears the signature of its designer, 'Abdullāh, on the quiver slung from the hips of the rider.



20 *Textile fragment (detail)*

Persia mid-17th century  
 Silk compound-satin weave in brassy  
 yellow, with black, pink, and white  
 51 × 34.7 cm (20 × 13<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> in)  
 The Hobart and Edward Small Moore  
 Memorial Collection, Gift of  
 Mrs. William H. Moore  
 1951.51.86

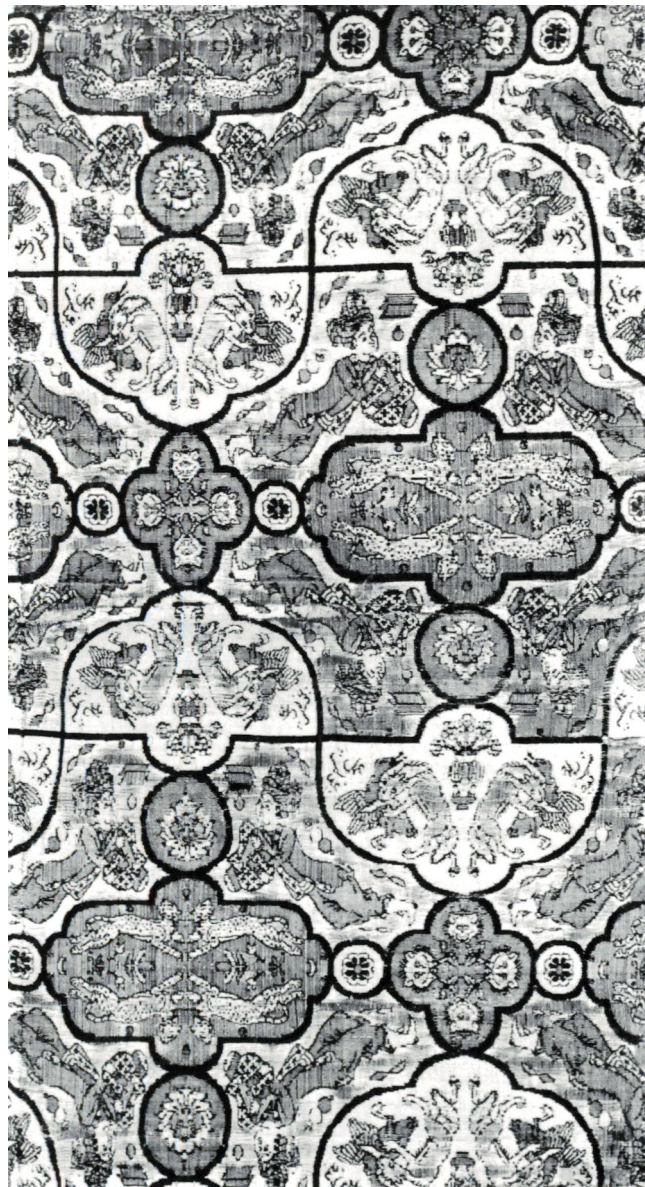


Poet, painter, mystic, and master weaver of the court of Shāh ‘Abbās, Khwāja Ghiyāth ad-dīn ‘Alī is the most famous of the Safavid designers whose textiles bear their signatures. Scholars first noticed his name on a small number of silks early this century, and since then his fabrics have emerged as some of the finest Persian textiles ever made.

Here, Ghiyāth’s rendering of the figural elements enclosed in the pattern’s compartments betray his predilection for miniature painting. Reclining gentlemen, fox attacking geese, confronting cheetahs, lion’s heads, and assorted plant forms are typical of the elements which made up the personage textile patterns (nos. 17, 20) so popular during this time. In this design, however, Ghiyāth has ingeniously arranged the motifs within a non-pictorial space. The use of curvilinear compartments is unusual in lightweight silks of this kind, and may have been taken from carpets of the period.

## 21 *Textile fragment*

Persia 17th century  
Triple-cloth; predominantly pale blue-green, pale orange, and white  
41.5 × 22.6 cm (16¼ × 8⅞ in)  
The Hobart and Edward Small Moore Memorial Collection, Gift of Mrs. William H. Moore  
1937.4626



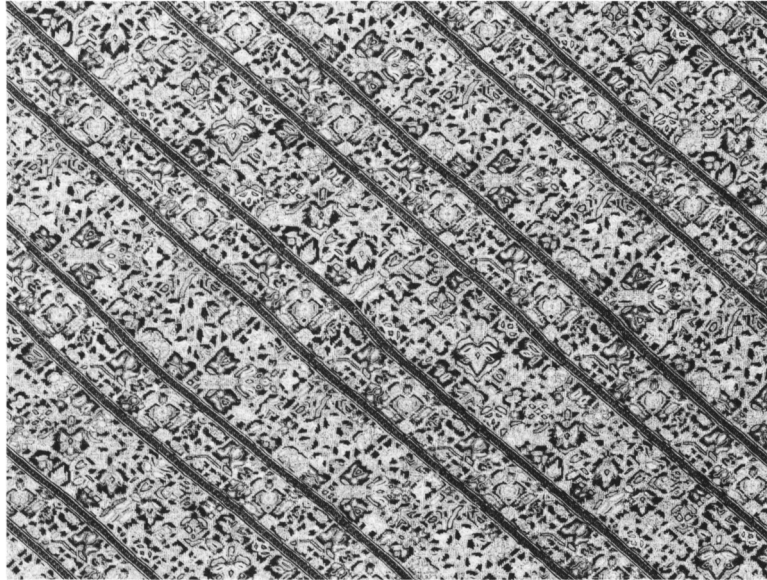


22 *Coat*

Persia 18th century  
Blue silk plain weave with  
supplementary weft patterning in red,  
white, green, and gold  
109 cm (42¾ in)—back length  
The Hobart and Edward Small Moore  
Memorial Collection, Gift of  
Mrs. William H. Moore  
1949.139



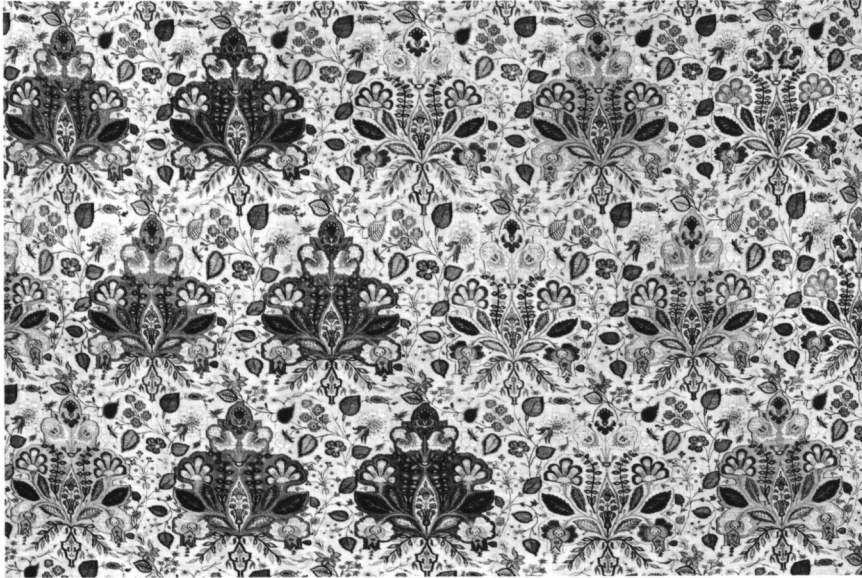
In nineteenth century Persia, women's trousers were made of densely embroidered fabric called *zileh* or *naqsha*. These cloths, comparable to European *petit point* in their meticulous execution and minute scale, were uniformly patterned in angular floral forms arranged tightly within diagonal bands.



23 *Embroidered panel*

Persia, Shiraz 19th century  
Silk embroidery on cotton plain weave;  
predominantly blue, tan, and orange  
63.8 × 56 cm (25 × 22 in)  
The Hobart and Edward Small Moore  
Memorial Collection, Gift of  
Mrs. William H. Moore  
1937.5233

Although fine wool fabrics of the interlocking twill tapestry weave are most often associated with Kashmir shawl production, a few specific examples have been isolated which differ so markedly in design that they have been attributed to Persia, particularly to the wool weaving centers of Kirman and Khorasan. In this exquisite tapestry, richly-colored bouquets are enclosed within pink, brown, red, yellow, and beige panels. These panels rest against a pale green field densely filled with delicate stems bearing a multitude of flowers, buds, and leaves.



24 *Tapestry fragment*

Persia, Khorasan 18th century  
Wool interlocking twill tapestry weave;  
predominantly pale green, with red,  
yellow, pink, brown, and beige  
130 × 138 cm (51 × 54 in)  
The Hobart and Edward Small Moore  
Memorial Collection, Gift of  
Mrs. William H. Moore  
1937.5249

In the early years of Mughal rule, India turned to Persia for artistic guidance, encouraging the emigration of Persian artisans who brought with them the sensibilities of the Safavid court. Nevertheless, Indian weaving evolved separate styles and techniques which came to rival those of Persia. The textile arts were given great impetus under the Mughal rulers Akbar (r. 1556–1605), Jahāngir (r. 1605–27), and Shāh Jahān (r. 1627–58), whose imperial ateliers produced exquisite shawls and sashes prized both in India and abroad.

The shawl here, a masterwork of design and technique, features a dense network of flowers compacted within narrow bands of red, white, and black. The geometricized blossoms, flattened and made angular by the twill tapestry weave, brilliantly tile the cloth's surface, successfully integrating the fabric's structure with its ornament.

25 *Shawl*

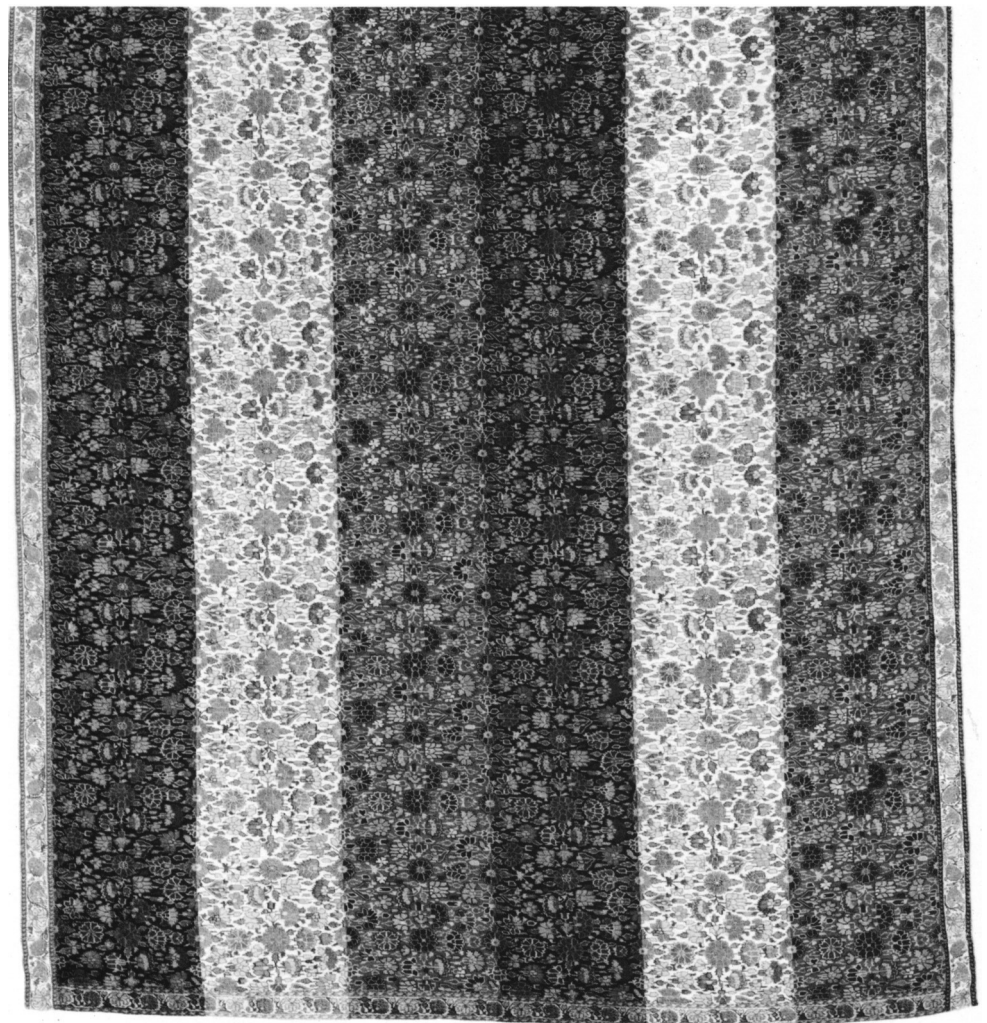
India, Kashmir, or Persia

late 18th century

Goat's wool interlocking twill tapestry  
weave; predominantly black, white, and  
red, with multicolor patterning

331 × 107 cm (129<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 42 in)

The Hobart and Edward Small Moore  
Memorial Collection, Gift of  
Mrs. William H. Moore  
1939.640



Mughal art shared with Persia an intense fascination with natural forms, reflected especially in the careful depictions of foliage in paintings and textiles of the seventeenth century. Floral representations that were to become highly geometricized abstractions in later years, were rendered quite naturalistically during this period, often small clusters of blossoms atop gracefully undulating stems.

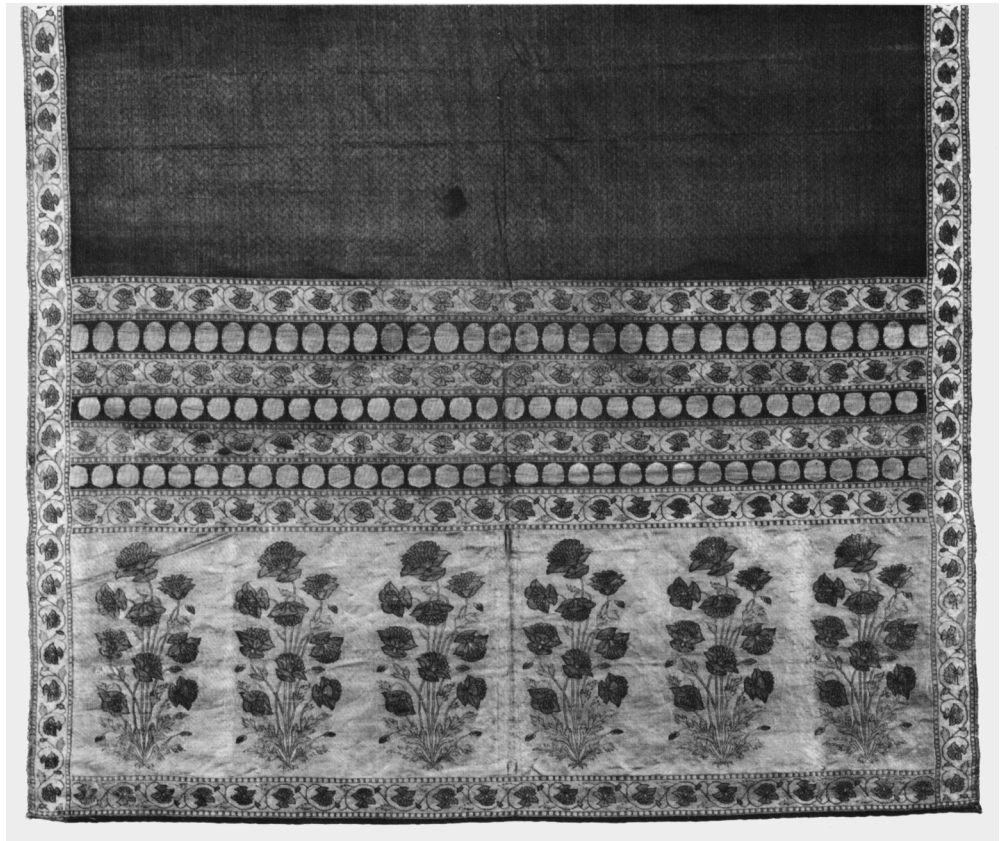
The sash here typifies naturalistic floral ornament in Indian textiles of the seventeenth century, the blossoms, leaves, and intertwined stems of each plant cluster, or *buta*, individually poised against the metallic ground. The configuration of flowers depicted on the eighteenth century hanging is essentially the same, though the symmetrical distribution of conventionalized blossoms flattens the overall visual effect. This standardizing of earlier floral motifs and increasing emphasis on two-dimensional effects typifies later Mughal textile ornament.



## 26 *Hanging*

India 18th century  
 Silk embroidery, predominantly green,  
 yellow, and white, on a ground of red  
 cotton plain weave; quilted  
 173.7 × 119.5 cm (68¼ × 47 in)  
 The Hobart and Edward Small Moore  
 Memorial Collection, Gift of  
 Mrs. William H. Moore  
 1937.5333



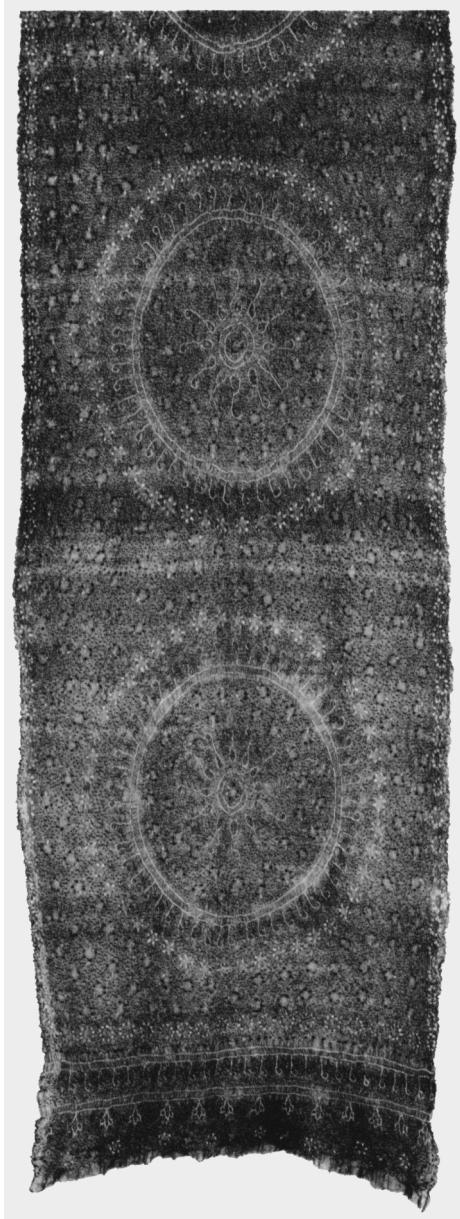


## 27 *Sash*

India 17th century  
 Green silk twill weave with  
 supplementary weft patterning in red,  
 orange, yellow, and gold metallic thread  
 331.2 × 59.6 cm (130 × 23<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> in)  
 The Hobart and Edward Small Moore  
 Memorial Collection, Gift of  
 Mrs. William H. Moore  
 1937.5307

India's caste system organized its population into a complex hierarchy of classes, divided (among other distinctions) along occupational lines. Since movement between castes generally was limited, occupations were inherited. Textiles are among the labor intensive goods which benefited from the caste system of labor, since it fostered such a high degree of specialization and helped ensure skilled workmanship at every stage of production.

In India, the art of the dyer is a major one, and dye-ornamented fabrics of all kinds have long been popular in India and throughout the world. The districts of Gujarat and Rajasthan are especially well known for *bandhana* (tie-dyed or *plangi*) cloths like this one. Hundreds of tiny peaks articulate the surface of this silk scarf, which, if flattened, would bear greater resemblance to the Sumatran *slendang* (no. 14) which shares its technique.



28 Scarf

India 20th century

Silk plain weave; turquoise with *plangi* patterning in red, orange, blue, and white

305 × 69 cm (120 × 27 in)

The Hobart and Edward Small Moore Memorial Collection, Gift of Mrs. William H. Moore

1937.5409



29 *Dress*

India, Kalat State 19th century  
 Dark red silk satin weave with multicolor  
 silk embroidery and couched metal cord  
 119 cm (47 in) back length  
 The Hobart and Edward Small Moore  
 Memorial Collection, Gift of  
 Mrs. William H. Moore  
 1937.5352

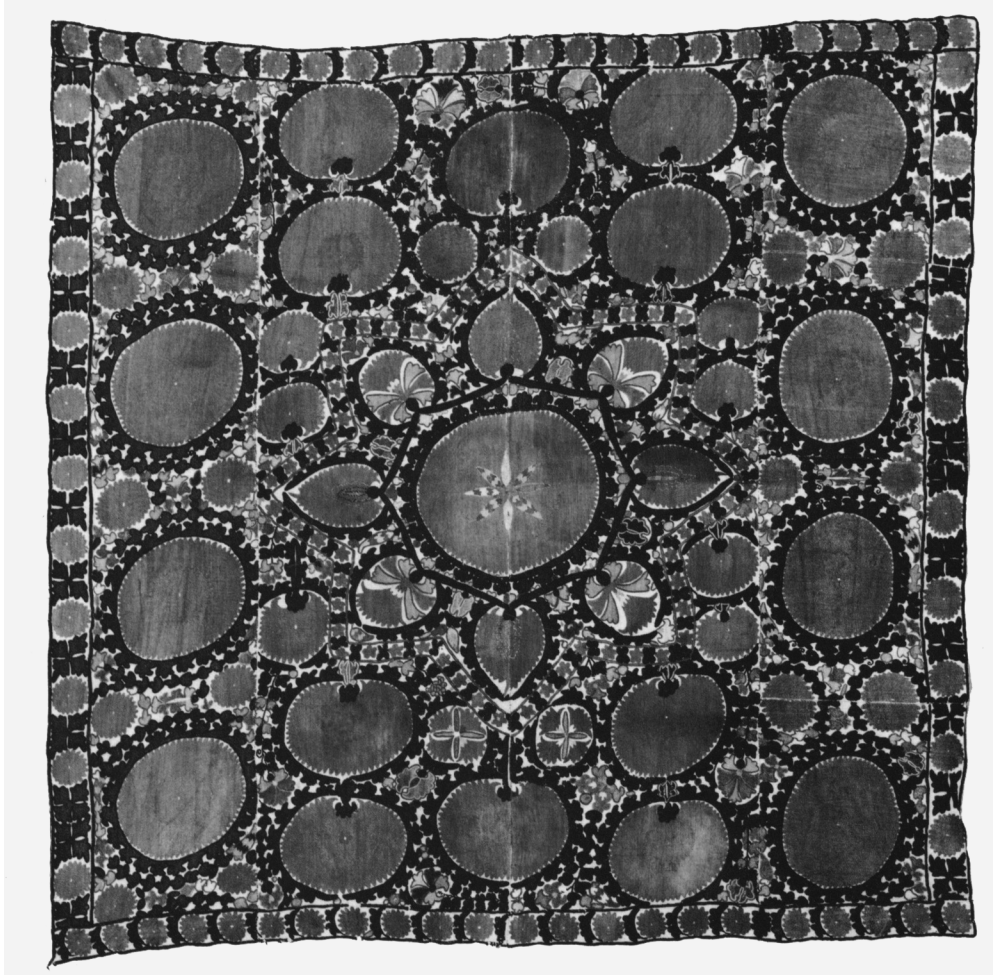
The *chalat* was so highly prized a garment in Turkestan that it was sometimes worn several at a time as an indicator of wealth and prestige. The boldly patterned, *ikat*-dyed fabric out of which it was made is among the textiles for which Central Asia is best known. Usually woven of silk, or of silk and cotton (*mushru*) in keeping with Islamic proscriptions which forbade the wearing of pure silk, these textiles are ornamented with an assortment of large roundels and flame-like motifs.

30 *Chalat (man's coat)*

Turkestan 19th century  
Silk plain weave with multicolor  
*ikat*-patterning; silk and cotton (?) plain  
weave lining *ikat*-dyed purple and white  
129.4 cm (51 in) back length  
The Hobart and Edward Small Moore  
Memorial Collection, Gift of  
Mrs. William H. Moore  
1939.636



Central Asian embroideries display the same striking sense of scale typical of silk ikats of the same region. Large, embroidered hangings like this one, called *susanis*, often adorned the walls of well-to-do homes in Bokhara. Smaller versions served elsewhere as prayer mats.



31 *Susani (hanging)*

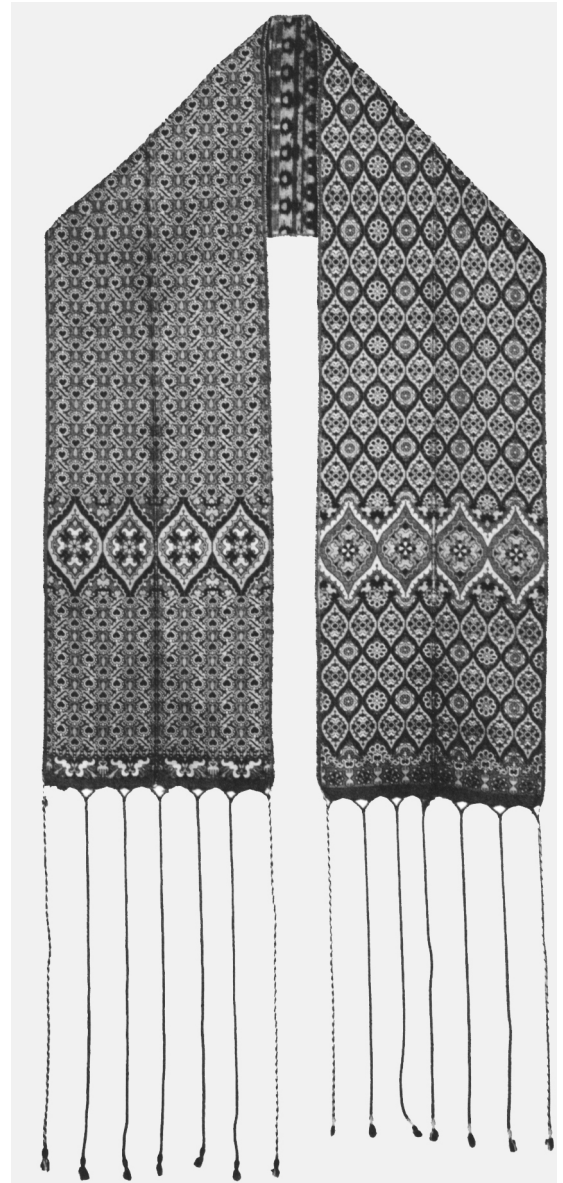
Turkestan, probably Bokhara  
19th century  
Silk embroidery, predominantly red and dark blue, on natural color cotton plain weave  
150.9 × 158.6 cm (59¼ × 62¼ in)  
The Hobart and Edward Small Moore Memorial Collection, Gift of Mrs. William H. Moore  
1937.5243



The finest examples of Moroccan silk weaving exist in the form of women's belts, geometrically patterned in tiled repeats reminiscent of those found in Hispano-Moresque architecture. Here, the regularity of repeat is abruptly broken by ogival inserts at each end, and by a change in patterning at the belt's mid-point.

32 *Mashla (coat)*

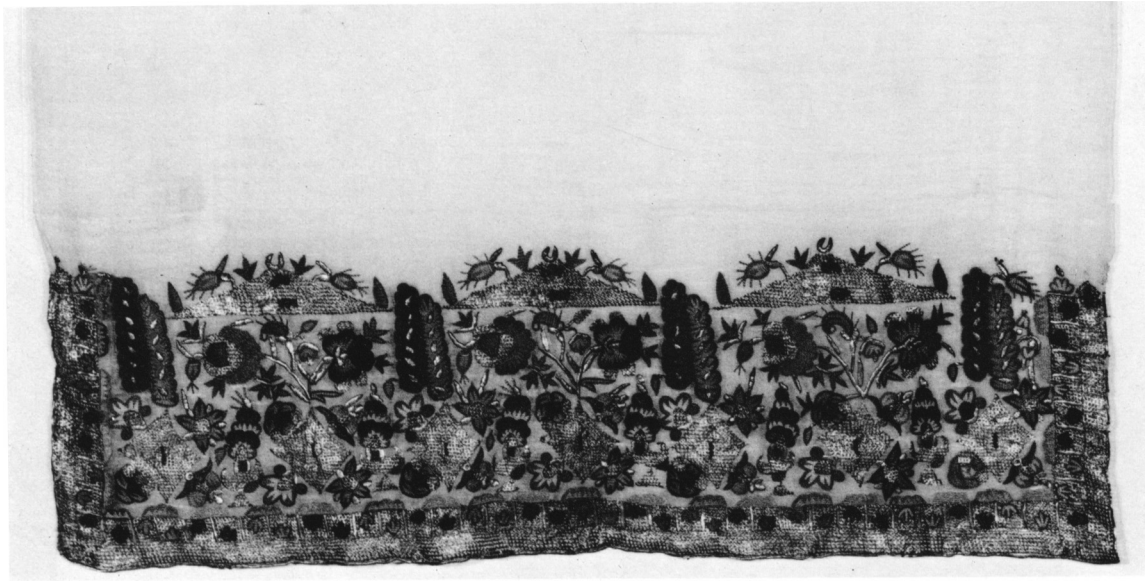
Syria 19th century  
Tapestry weave; predominantly red wool with metal thread and multicolor silk patterning  
82.3 cm (32½ in) back length  
The Hobart and Edward Small Moore Memorial Collection, Gift of Mrs. William H. Moore  
1939.639



33 *Hazam (belt)*

Morocco, Fez 18th century  
Silk compound twill weave, predominantly red with multicolor weft patterning  
219 × 30.5 cm (86 x 12 in)  
The Hobart and Edward Small Moore Memorial Collection, Gift of Mrs. William H. Moore  
1937.5562

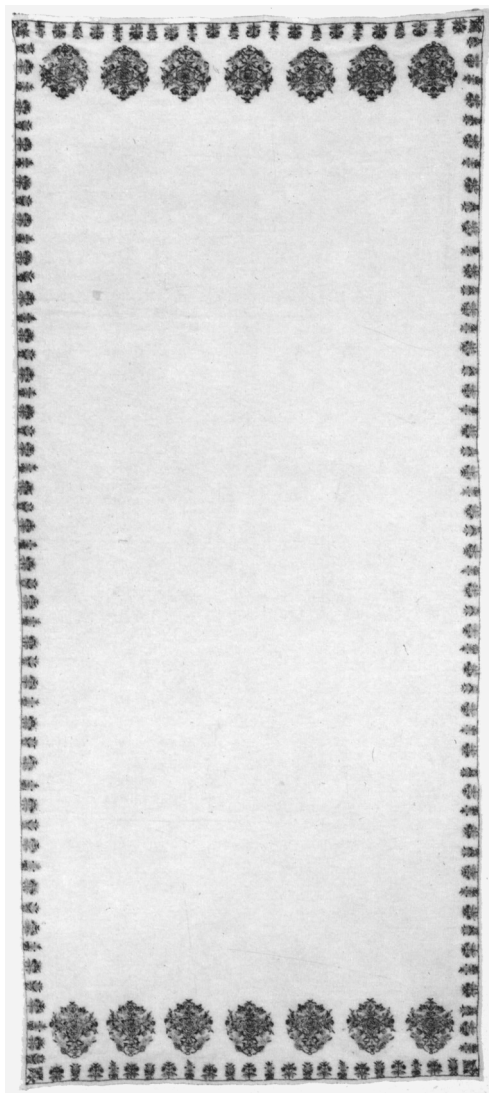
Though termed “towel” or *peshkir*, embroidered cloths such as this were multipurpose, functioning as head scarves, ceremonial napkins, offerings to honored guests, wrappers, and as towels for the drying of hands and feet following the ritual ablution required of devout Muslims. In this example, a charming, stylized landscape emblazons each end of an otherwise vacant length of sheer cotton cloth. Such landscapes usually include buildings flanked by cypress trees and flowers, often against hills and waterways, suggesting a summery scene on the shores of the Bosphorus.



### 34 Towel

Turkey 19th century  
 Multicolor silk and metallic embroidery  
 on natural color cotton plain weave  
 130 × 55 cm (51 × 21½ in)  
 The Hobart and Edward Small Moore  
 Memorial Collection, Gift of  
 Mrs. William H. Moore  
 1937.5534

The bold stylization typical of much Turkish embroidery has been replaced here by subdued coloring, sparse composition, and a more naturalistic style of rendering. The Turkish tendency toward highly conventionalized depictions of flowers was periodically influenced by the more naturalistic style of the Persians and the Europeans, predominantly the Venetians and the Genoese, who traded with Asia Minor. The oval bouquets here echo the ogival patterns of earlier Ottoman and Italian brocaded silks.



35 *Towel*

Turkey 18th–19th century  
Silk, predominantly pale pinks and blues,  
and silver metallic embroidery on natural  
cotton plain weave  
148.5 × 64.4 cm (58¼ × 25¼ in)  
Gift of Mrs. F. M. Whitehouse  
1939.502

The early patterns for Turkish embroideries were largely derived from the rich silks and velvets of the Ottoman court, adapted by needlewomen in the seclusion of their own homes, in the Harem tradition. Another source was the strong geometry found in the rugs of the peasants and nomads. This example typifies the tendency in Turkish embroideries towards a dense mosaic of ornament. Here, a few stylized motifs—the carnation, the tulip, a small blue bud, and leaves, linked by a thin stem—are diagonally repeated to cover most of the cloth's surface.



36 *Embroidered panel*

Turkey 18th–19th century  
Silk, predominantly coral and green, and  
gold metallic embroidery on natural  
color cotton plain weave  
91.5 × 67.4 cm (36 × 26½ in)  
The Hobart and Edward Small Moore  
Memorial Collection, Gift of  
Mrs. William H. Moore  
1937.5537

This panel, probably part of a bed curtain, is typical of the stitchery of the Greek Islands of Cos and Patmos. Within the wide horizontal bands, separated and edged with narrower rows of fretwork, large, multicolor plant-like forms are echoed by the similarly shaped, monochrome motifs with which they alternate. As with other examples of Greek embroidery, smaller plant and animal forms are compacted within the spaces left vacant by the larger foliated images. In this panel, the right-angled intersections of warp and weft have seemingly governed the pattern's characteristic angularity.



37 *Panel from a bed tent*

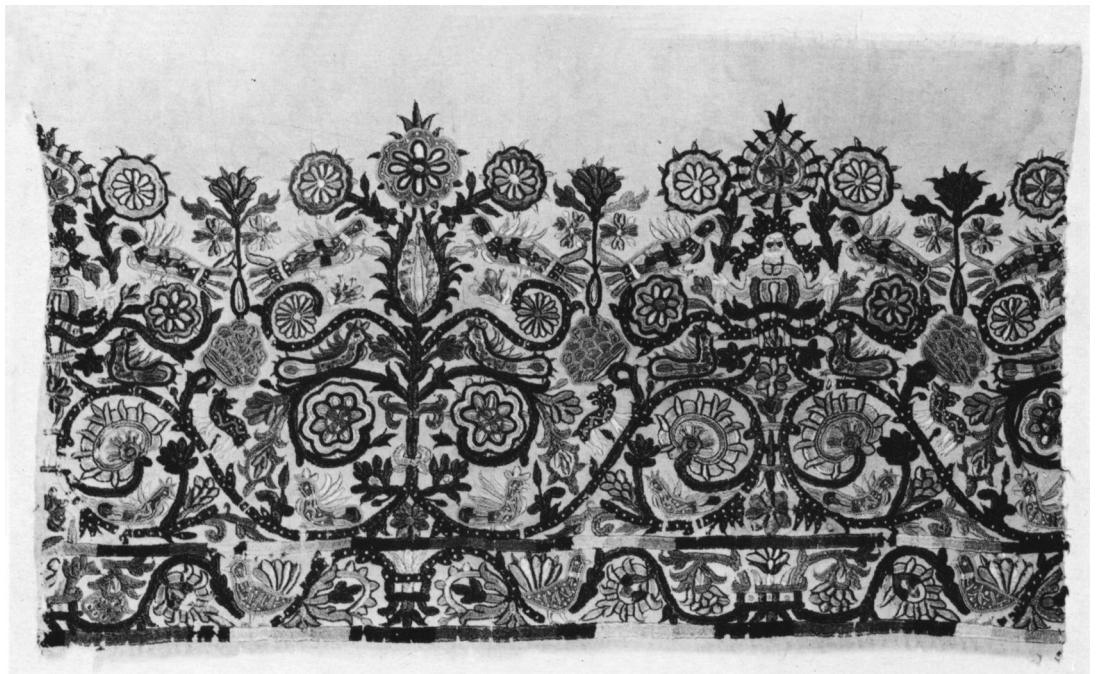
Greek Islands, Cos or Patmos  
18th century  
Silk embroidery, predominantly red,  
green, and tan, on natural color cotton  
plain weave  
53.6 × 50.4 cm (21 × 19¾ in)  
The Hobart and Edward Small Moore  
Memorial Collection, Gift of  
Mrs. William H. Moore  
1938.358

The best known embroideries from Crete are skirt borders, widths of linen worked in a variety of multicolor stitches. In this example, small female siren figures borrowed from Italian folklore, sprout from the scrollworked foliage while fantastic birds and animals nest within the leafy tendrils.

Unlike other Greek Island embroideries, Cretan needlework explicitly synthesized ornament from European sources, much of it suggesting an origin in Italian lacework. Patterns like this one, when worked in a single color, captured much of the effect of sixteenth century Venetian *punto in aria*, a needle-made lace.

38 *Fragment of a skirt border*

Greek Islands, Crete 18th century  
Multicolor silk embroidery on natural  
color cotton and linen plain weave  
37 × 61.1 cm (14½ × 24 in)  
The Hobart and Edward Small Moore  
Memorial Collection, Gift of  
Mrs. William H. Moore  
1947.139





Similar to the Cretan embroidery (no. 38) in its elaborate floral sprays, this section of a bedspread features an unusual palette of colors, including a greenish yellow, burgundy, black, tan, and a greyed blue. The shiny outlines of the Cretan pattern are replaced here with color areas solidly filled with diagonal rows of fine stitches.

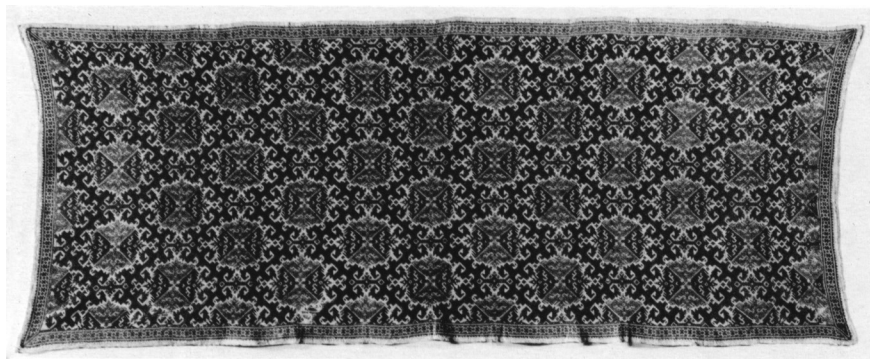
Since stylistic ambiguities simultaneously support and deny Skyros, of the Northern Sporades, as the place of origin, embroideries of this type have been attributed to the Cycladic island of Paros, which is linguistically affiliated with the Northern Islands rather than the Cyclades. An observation that styles of embroidery coincide more with dialects than with geography has been advanced to support this attribution, but it remains highly speculative, nonetheless.

39 *Part of a bedspread (detail)*

Greek Islands, Skyros or Paros  
17th–18th century  
Multicolor embroidery on linen  
plain weave  
38 × 155 cm (15 × 61 in)  
The Hobart and Edward Small Moore  
Memorial Collection, Gift of  
Mrs. William H. Moore  
1937.5524



“Naxos red-work” signifies the usually monochrome embroidery from the largest and wealthiest island of the Cyclades. Its distinguishing feature is the density of angular needleworked pattern which covers virtually the entire cloth. The flat stitches are woven among those which comprise the foundation cloth so that the reverse of the fabric reveals the design’s details in negative. The staggered, closely-worked rows of stitches are placed at right angles to each other within the separate units of the diagonally segmented pattern, capturing the light so as to create the effect of different shades of red. Close inspection reveals the basic simplicity of the design’s organization—interfitted symmetrical bands with zig-zagged edges. The distinctive angularity of this pattern is also visible in the leaves of the plant forms in the Cos or Patmos embroidered panel (no. 37).



40 *Wall panel or cushion cover*

Greek Islands, Naxos  
18th–19th century  
Red silk embroidery on natural color  
cotton plain weave  
123.5 × 44.7 cm (48½ × 17½ in)  
The Hobart and Edward Small Moore  
Memorial Collection, Gift of  
Mrs. William H. Moore  
1938.359

Stimulated by national economic reforms which encouraged the consumption of luxury goods, the French silk industry flourished in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as a manufacturer of fashionable dress fabrics. Year after year, French textile manufacturers dazzled all of Europe with a seemingly endless succession of sumptuous fabrics. Designers from Italy, Sweden, and England readily followed the leads established by the French.

Fabrics like this one, ornamented with meandering verticals separating variously textured areas of raised bars and lozenges, became especially popular during the 1760s.

41 *Panel of dress fabric*

France ca 1760–70  
Blue silk and silver metallic thread  
compound weave, with a border of gold  
metallic trim  
122 × 101.5 cm (48 × 40 in)  
Gift of Frederick Sheffield, B.A. 1924  
1956.36.13



The Jacquard loom afforded the French textile industry unprecedented ease in the production of highly variegated, intricately detailed fabrics. Although the much earlier drawloom was technically similar, the Jacquard greatly reduced the time and effort necessary to produce the same effect. With the drawloom, an attendant manually raised the warp threads necessary to create the pattern, while the rows of weft were inserted. With the Jacquard mechanism, hooks which were attached to individual warps were raised by a series of punched cards, one card per row of weft. The invention was the culmination of a series of drawloom improvements which Europe began pioneering in the early seventeenth century. Needless to say, the Jacquard created an uproar when it was introduced in 1805, since drawloom attendants lost their jobs as a result. But despite initial objections, no one could deny the Jacquard's economic advantages, and its potential as a design tool.

The European rage for Kashmir shawls coincided with the Jacquard loom's invention, and lavish shawls appeared in great abundance by the mid-nineteenth century, competing with the Indian imports. Kashmir-influenced shawls were manufactured both in Great Britain and in France, with Paisley and Paris as the main centers of production. While British designers exhibited a certain restraint in their shawls, the French fully exploited the Jacquard's possibilities.

The French shawl here is typically florid, with virtually its entire surface engulfed by paisley and floral ornament. The Paisley shawl, on the other hand, is more in keeping with the sparse decoration of earlier Kashmiri originals. The encroaching sensibility of the French is evident, however, in the lacy, floriated arabesques silhouetted against the central field and surrounding the cypress-shaped floral motifs, or *butas*.

## 42 Shawl

France ca 1855

Multicolor wool compound twill weave

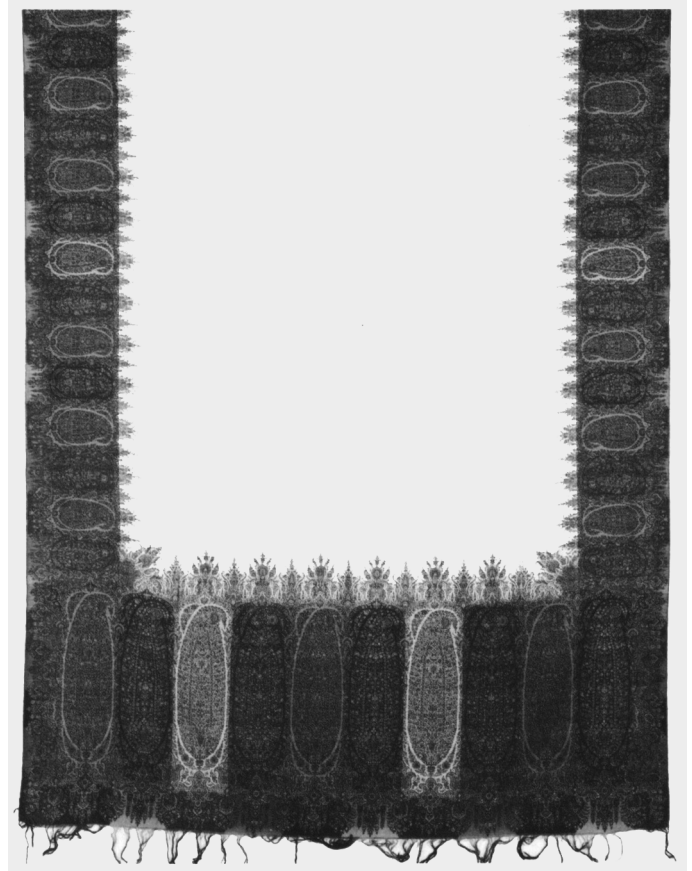
358 × 163.7 cm (140½ × 64¼ in)

Gift of Mrs. Albert H. Atterbury

1950.141

43 *Shawl*

Scotland, Paisley ca 1830–45  
Multicolor wool compound twill weave  
339.5 × 169.4 cm (113¼ × 66½ in)  
Gift of Mrs. D. V. Garstin  
1949.48



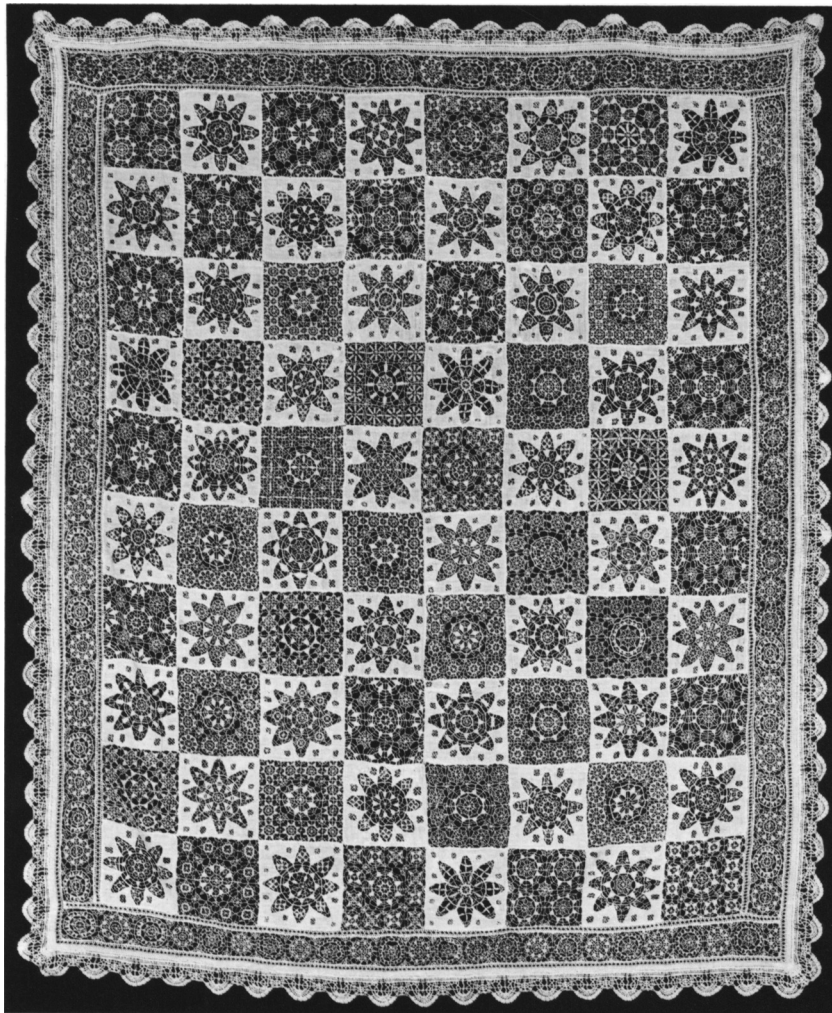


#### 44 *Lace panel*

Italy, Bologna ca 1930  
 Needlepoint lace (*punto in aria*)  
 12 × 22.4 cm (4¾ × 8¾ in)  
 The Hobart and Edward Small Moore  
 Memorial Collection, Gift of  
 Mrs. William H. Moore  
 1947.28

The visual possibilities of lace have been most thoroughly explored in Europe, and Italy is generally credited with the invention of needle-made (or “needlepoint”) lace, one of the two major varieties (bobbin lace being the other). Italy’s prominence in lace-making parallels France’s lead in silk designing, and pattern books by Italian designers of the late sixteenth century greatly influenced the course of lace design and production throughout the continent. Cesare Vecellio’s *Corona delle nobili et virtuose donne*, first published in 1591, was particularly popular, filled with fanciful designs for *punto in aria*, a curvilinear, freely-constructed lace, and *reticella*, a web-like geometrical lace.

The delicate, figural panel here was made early this century by a Bolognese cooperative, Aemelia Ars, and takes its design directly from Vecellio. Four *punto in aria* figures, representing the seasons, stand poised within a delicate scaffolding embellished with coats of arms and candelabra. In the *reticella* table cover, linen inserts alternate with open-work squares, all patterned differently to create a lively sense of variety.



45 *Table cover*

Italy 16th–17th century  
*Reticella*, drawn-work, and bobbin lace  
 145 × 114.5 cm (57 × 45 in)  
 Anonymous Gift  
 1951.771



Embroidery was taken to one of its highest expressions in the funerary textiles of the south coast of Peru. Two thousand years ago, Paracas mummies were wrapped in bundles of up to a hundred ornamented cloths, some of which measured over eighty feet in length and fifteen feet in width. Most were smaller, and nearly all were embroidered with composite animal and human figures whose organization on the cloth created an almost musical sense of rhythm.

The floating or diving mythological personage in this fragment, painstakingly embroidered in precise stem stitch, is part-cat and part-human. It seems to wear a feline mask, sports a tail and wings, but has human legs and is dressed in a recognizable belted tunic and mantle. In its hands, also feline with their claw-like nails, it holds a *tumi*, or semi-circular knife, and plays a flute. (Some scholars, however, see these as a fan and a ringed baton.) Snake forms on the face, tail, and wings overlie the cat elements, while feline characteristics are in turn superimposed over human attributes. The composite nature of this image, multiple layers of animal and human, is typical of ancient American art in general and of Paracas embroideries in particular.

The predominantly curvilinear design seen here is made possible because the technique of embroidery is not molded by the warp and weft of the cloth but rather is applied to the finished textile with a needle. The earliest Paracas embroideries are strictly rectilinear in apparent imitation of loom techniques. Gradually, however, the possibilities of this additive method of textile decoration were explored and curvilinear outlines prevailed. This piece lies intermediate in this process; it combines both straight lines and curves. The treatment of the body parts is also a blend of conventions. Though most of the body segments are presented in their most recognizable view—the legs and feet in profile and the face frontal—an overlapping of parts occurs in the placement of the head over the shoulders and the flute over the chin, to create some believability of the figure in space. The harmonious mixture of opposites—human and animal, curvilinear and rectilinear, two- and three-dimensional—makes Paracas embroideries one example of ancient Peruvian sophistication.



## 46 Paracas mantle fragment

Paracas, Peru ca 200 B.C.

Llama or alpaca wool embroidery (stem stitch) in rose, gold, blue, red, and black on a dark purple ground

24 × 14.5 cm (9½ × 5¾ in)

The Katharine Ordway Collection

1980.12.5

An unusually large and well-preserved portion of a pre-Conquest tunic, this piece demonstrates fundamental principles at work in Peruvian textile design. A set sequence of colors and a single motif are combined so as to create a dynamic pattern. The active nature of the composition stems from the refined use of bright colors and the animated shapes of the figures who seem to move across the textile's surface. These figures are composite creatures who serve more as elements of pure pattern than as representations of recognizable animals or humans. Colored in a set order, white-olive-gold-olive-gold-black, they are placed in even rows over the whole piece. Yet because of the convention of moving the starting color of each row over one space, diagonals of same color motifs are made visible. The interplay of directions created within the simple scheme of one figure and six possible colors is remarkable. Peruvian textile artists of all periods and locales exploit the mathematical possibilities of patterning. Color changes constitute a major part of this elaborate manipulation of design elements.

The importance of color in Peruvian textile design is inextricably linked with the development of an extraordinary dyeing industry. Natural dyes from vegetable matter, minerals, and even animals, yielded over a hundred different hues which survive today despite the age of the textiles. Some greens, blues, and yellows have faded over the centuries while others, especially reds, remain extremely bright. The beautiful cherry red of this tapestry's background comes from the cochineal, a tiny beetle that thrives on a type of cactus indigenous to the Americas. The body of this insect, when dried and pulverized, creates one of the most permanent dyes known. The red from the cochineal was highly prized in the New World and coveted by the Spanish as well when they saw the glorious red robes of the Inca. In addition to commerce in melted down Indian gold art works, the Spanish profited from the sale of cochineal dye to their European neighbors. At that time, a strong red dye was gleaned only with difficulty from a fast-disappearing mollusk. Cochineal is still used today despite the introduction of synthetic dyes.

#### 47 *Tunic fragment*

Paramonga, Peru 1350–1550 A.D.  
Llama or alpaca wool over cotton slit  
tapestry weave; red background with  
black, white, olive, and gold  
repeated motifs

63.6 × 73.7 cm (25 × 29 in)

The Hobart and Edward Small Moore  
Memorial Collection, Gift of  
Mrs. William H. Moore

1937.4584



The three figures of this Nazca tunic fragment are formed by a deceptive compound weave in which a plain woven ground is supplemented with additional pattern wefts. The wefts of the ground and of the pattern alternate, but only the supplementary wefts are visible. Thus, the fabric appears to be a tapestry, in which the weft threads completely cover the warps; however, the cloth has greater structural strength than tapestry because of its compound nature.

The resemblance to tapestry and the type of figure represented relate this Nazca piece to Huari contemporary textiles (no. 49). Staff-bearing, running characters depicted in fine tapestry are the hallmark of the Huari artist. However, there are particularly Nazca elements present here as well: the great emphasis on outlining of the forms, the overall blockiness, the checkerboard teeth and prominent nose, plus the vegetal quality of the staff. Play with the coloration of various body parts is more extreme here than in the Huari example. Even the two feet of an individual figure do not share common hues. An overall pattern of color and shape is as important, if not more so, than the reality of the staff-bearers themselves. In the interest of decorative balance and variation, one figure is upside down in relation to the other two. All available space is covered with motifs. These conventions indicate that the Nazca artist did not intend to depict an actual scene, but rather, to present an ornamental assemblage of a probably mythological or symbolic nature. There may be reference here to the planting of maize and using a fish head as fertilizer, a method familiar to us from later North Amerindian practices, though this remains speculative. The importance of maize in the diet, ideology, and art of ancient America cannot, however, be over-stressed.

#### 48 *Tunic fragment*

Nazca, Peru 700–1100 A.D.

Llama or alpaca wool and cotton  
compound weave; figural pattern in  
blue, gold, brown, rose, black, and  
white, on red

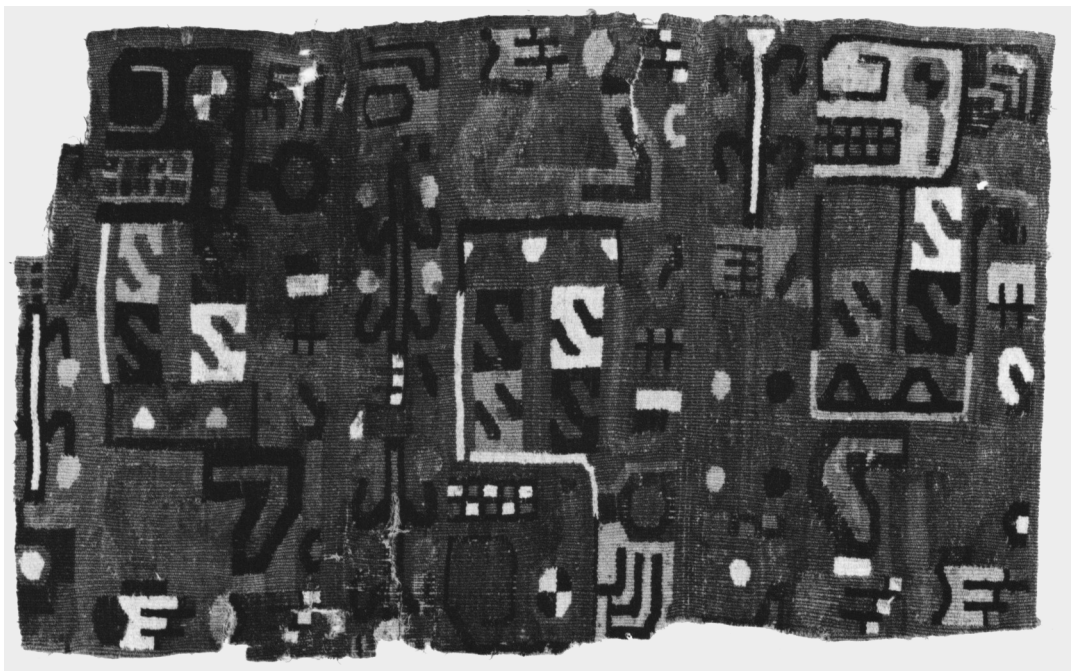
47.7 × 28.8 cm (18¾ × 11¼ in)

The Hobart and Edward Small Moore

Memorial Collection, Gift of

Mrs. William H. Moore

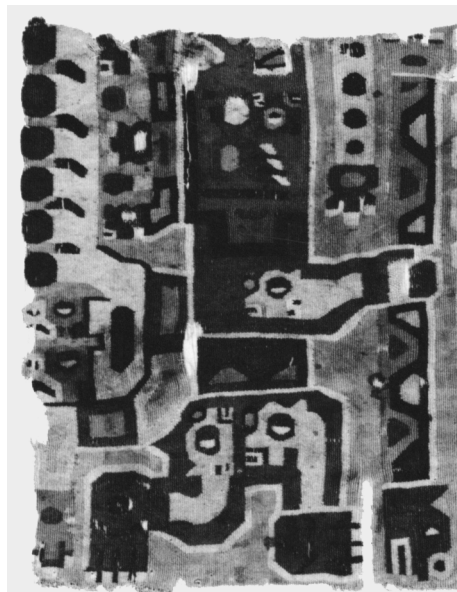
1937.4579



Tapestry was the preferred technique of weavers in Peru during the first millenium A.D. and was developed to a degree of virtuosity rivalled at few other places or times in the world's history. As can be seen in this fine piece, cotton and wool fibers were spun to be remarkably even, strong, and thin. Hundreds of weft threads per inch have been counted in these tapestries; here at least ninety wefts cross approximately forty-five warps in a single inch. In many cases, modern technology has been unable to match early Peruvian textile masterpieces.

The Huari, a religious and political movement that controlled most of Peru between about 700 and 1100 A.D., created as their main art form innumerable tapestries: shirts, wall hangings, and cloths of all kinds. The characteristic Huari geometric designs with which the textiles are decorated are so stylized that their decipherment can be difficult. Here, a single running figure, isolated from a series of five, discloses the characteristic features. The profiled head, with its octagonal black and white eye, is thrown back so that the features face upwards. The runner bears a long, ornamented staff before it and wears an elaborately patterned headdress. One can most easily decipher a Huari composition by looking for the striding legs of the typical staff-bearing figure, or by locating the black-and-white eye shapes and then reconstructing the rest. Later Huari artists further fragmented the figures into their component geometric shapes until the staff-bearers were no longer recognizable.

This reduction and stylization of the few motifs presented in Huari art prevents the potential monotony of their endless repetitions. The complex but ordered assignment of different colors to the various parts of the figures furthers the visual excitement of the composition. An overall, syncopated pattern results. The overriding geometry of the Huari decorative system is perfectly suited to the technique of tapestry weaving and may indeed stem from the constraints and capabilities of the medium. In tapestry, the pattern is formed in the grid of warp and weft as an integral part of the cloth's structure. Within these seeming limitations, Huari weavers created enduring textile works, masterpieces of both design and technique.

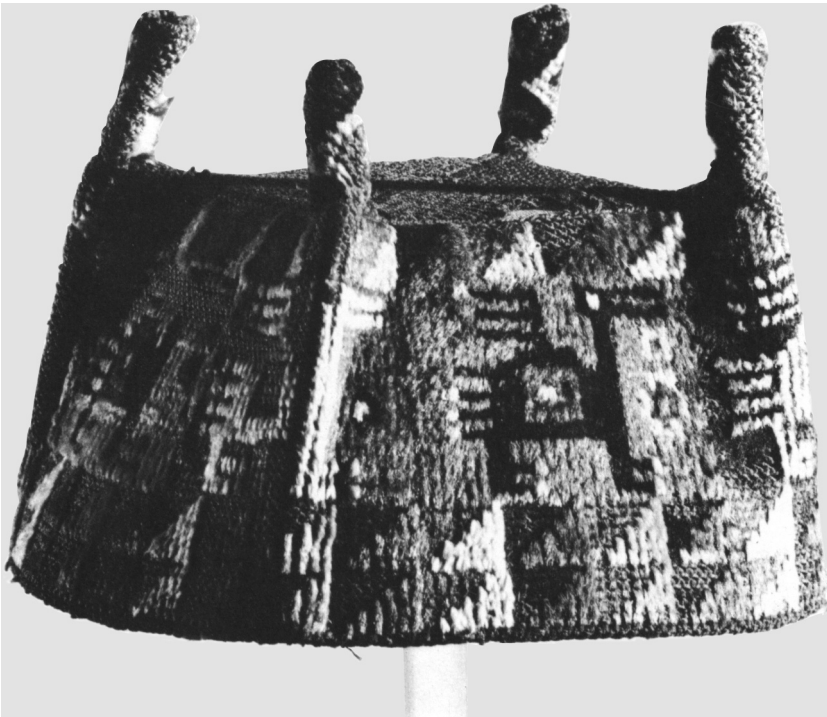


49 *Huari tunic fragment (detail)*

South Coast, Peru 700–900 A.D.  
 Llama or alpaca wool over cotton  
 tapestry weave; predominantly tan, with  
 rose, green, brown, and white figural  
 pattern  
 15.6 × 60.4 cm (6<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 23<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> in)  
 The Hobart and Edward Small Moore  
 Memorial Collection, Gift of  
 Mrs. William H. Moore  
 1937.4583

The appearance of this hat is deceptive; it looks as if it is a woven cloth with rya knots applied to its finished surface; however, it is made entirely of knots, ground and pile. The ground, seen most clearly in the blue top panel of the hat, is a very tight network of square knots. The tufts which make up the pile are intertwined, perhaps during the process of knotting the ground, with the square knots in a series of loops. These loops leave long ends that are then cut to form the shag. The yarn of the resulting tuft is untwisted in order to create the velvety texture seen here. The uniqueness of this procedure points to the characteristic tendency of Peruvian artists to originate many complex techniques for working in fiber.

Depicted in colors still vivid after over five hundred years are a frieze of stylized birds. Great precision of line is achieved throughout the design despite the fuzzy nature of the untwisted threads in the pile. The Nazca textile artist used a relatively small group of design motifs, arranged in regular sequences, to create subtle harmonies of color and shape. Such great attention and skill were often lavished on items of cloth meant to be worn. An estimated ninety per cent of all ancient Peruvian textiles were garments of some kind.



#### 50 *Wool Pile Cap*

Nazca, Peru 1100–1550 A.D.

Blue llama or alpaca wool and brown cotton (?) square-knotted network with wool pile in light blue, red, navy, white, black, yellow, and green

8.3 cm (3¼ in) height; 50.9 cm (20 in) circumference

The Hobart and Edward Small Moore Memorial Collection, Gift of Mrs. William H. Moore

1937.4589

Though the Spanish introduced the treadle loom to Guatemala in the late seventeenth century, it never supplanted the much simpler technology of the indigenous backstrap loom. Instead, its use was limited, for the most part, to the production of garments requiring lengthy panels of continuous cloth, and yardage for trade.

In a rhythmic play of color and texture, this extraordinary skirt cloth juxtaposes striated *ikat* motifs with brocaded lozenges, both organized within narrow bands which alternate with solid color stripes.



51 Skirt cloth

Guatemala ca 1936  
Cotton compound weave; predominantly  
black, with *ikat* stripes and multicolor  
supplementary weft patterning  
226.3 × 178.4 cm (88¾ × 70 in)  
The Hobart and Edward Small Moore  
Memorial Collection, Gift of  
Mrs. William H. Moore  
1937.4598



The name of the northern Mexican city of Saltillo has become synonymous with a kind of textile whose production flourished there in the eighteenth century. The Saltillo *sarape*, a tapestry-woven rectangular blanket, actually was produced in a number of Mexican cities from the seventeenth through the early twentieth century. During that time, it gradually became a much-prized symbol of nobility, and, after Mexico's independence from Spain in 1821, of Mexican national pride. A widely traded item, it was the prototype for many Southwestern American textiles, including the "eye-dazzler" blankets of the Navaho, and the Rio Grande blankets of New Mexico and Colorado.

The *sarape's* simple design organization places a large diamond-shaped or circular central medallion within a rectangular field framed by a narrow border. These three principal areas are usually filled with small lozenges of various colors, organized often in zig-zagging bands which are usually concentrically arranged within the central medallion.

The graphically executed Queretaro *sarape* here, in black and white with small touches of pale blue, is masterfully woven of fine silk, a fiber that suggests its relatively late date. The *sarape* from Saltillo draws its visual strength from the play of its vibrant colors against a subdued ground.



## 52 *Sarape*

Mexico, Saltillo, Coahuila

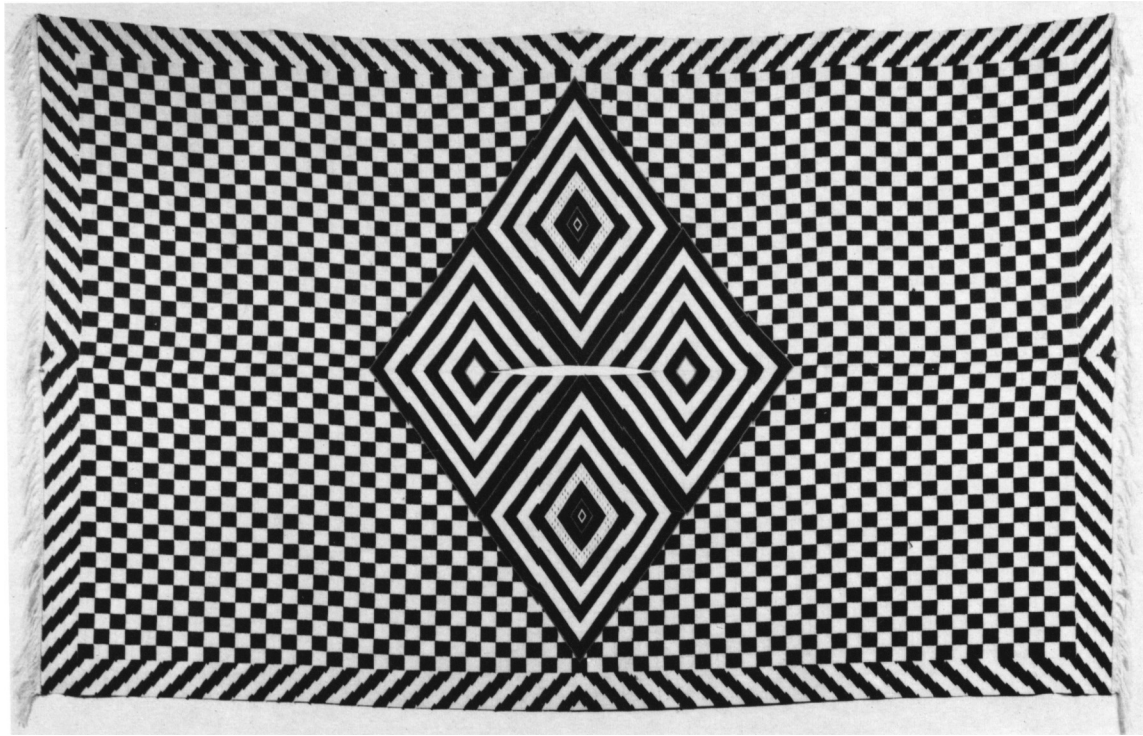
19th century

Wool over cotton tapestry weave;  
predominantly dark reddish-brown,  
with red, pink, blue, and green

229 × 127 cm (90 × 50 in)

The Harriett Engelhardt Memorial  
Collection, Gift of Mrs. Paul Moore

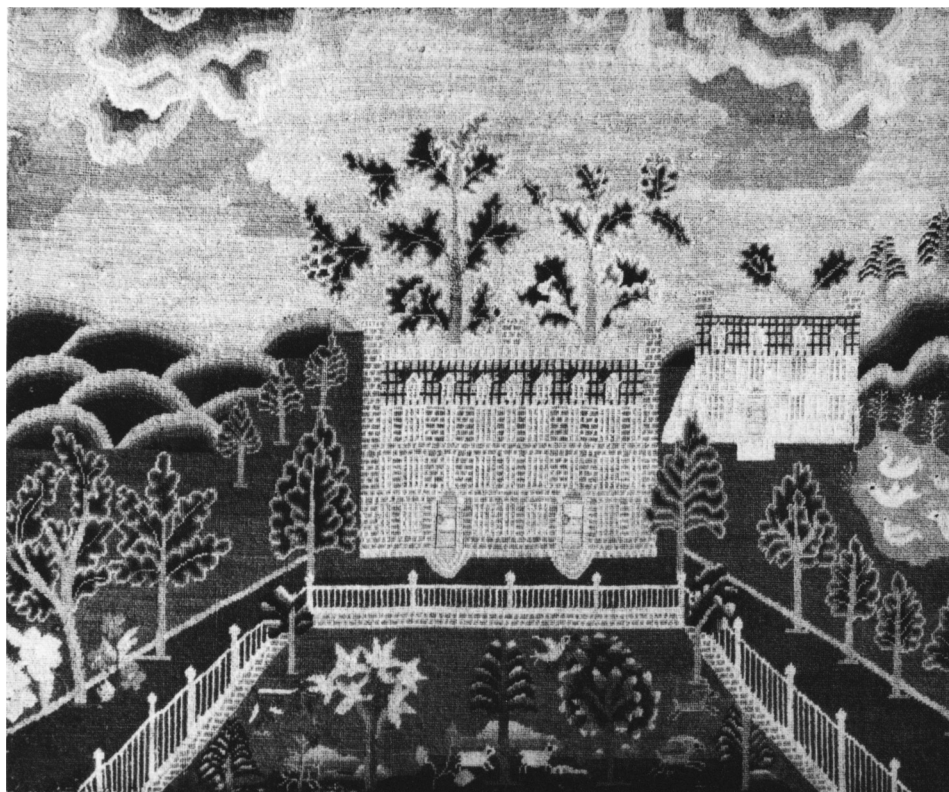
1958.13.21



53 *Sarape*

Mexico, Queretaro 19th century  
Silk over cotton tapestry weave, in black,  
white, and light blue  
206 × 127 cm (81 × 50 in)  
The Harriett Engelhardt Memorial  
Collection, Gift of Mrs. Paul Moore  
1958.13.22

Although the women of colonial America were generally skilled in needlework, the more elaborate efforts in embroidery—crewel work, needlepoint (or “canvas work”), and samplers—were usually undertaken by those who could afford special instruction. Canvas work pictures like this one were often completed in the course of a young woman’s schooling. The building in this textile resembles Yale’s Connecticut Hall as it appears in a 1786 print, but the charming landscape seems entirely to have been its maker’s fanciful invention.



#### 54 *Canvas work picture*

USA mid-18th century

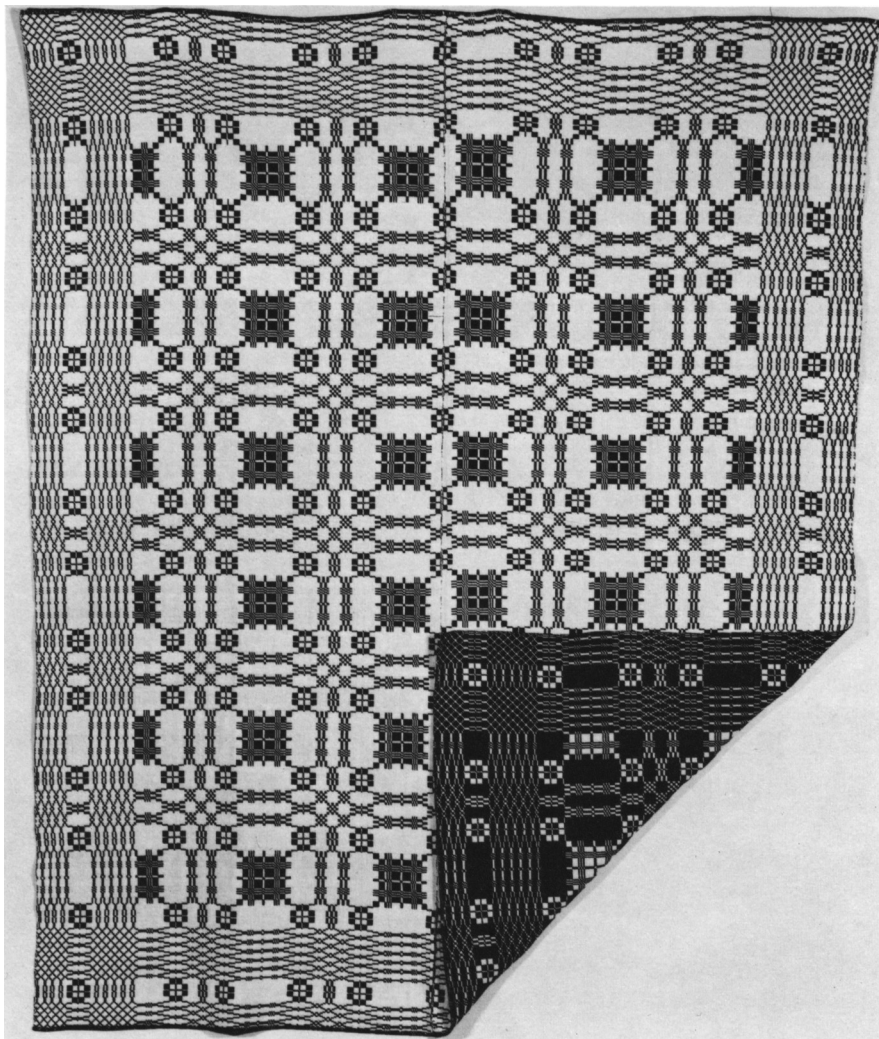
Wool embroidery (tent stitch) in blues, reds, and white on linen plain weave ground

45 × 55.8 cm (17<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 22 in)

Gift of Mrs. J. Amory Haskell in memory of her husband and her parents Mary Jackson and John Lawrence Riker 1941.310

Before the mid-nineteenth century, American woven coverlets were characteristically geometric in patterning, the right-angled intersections of warp and weft yarns diagrammatically enlarged in rhythmic repeats of stepped bars and squares. It was a kind of patterning that spoke explicitly of fabric's structure and of the relatively simple technology used to produce it, quite unlike the painterly patterns of so much woven textile art. Indeed, the fact that such patterns were exclusive to the medium of woven fabric at this time confirms the visual and technical efficacy of these coverlets—elegant resolutions of image and structure.

Double-cloth coverlets like this one ingeniously utilized two sets of warps and wefts to create a sturdy fabric with inverted arrangements of color on either of its faces.



55 *Double-cloth coverlet*

USA ca 1820–40

Double weave of blue wool and natural color cotton

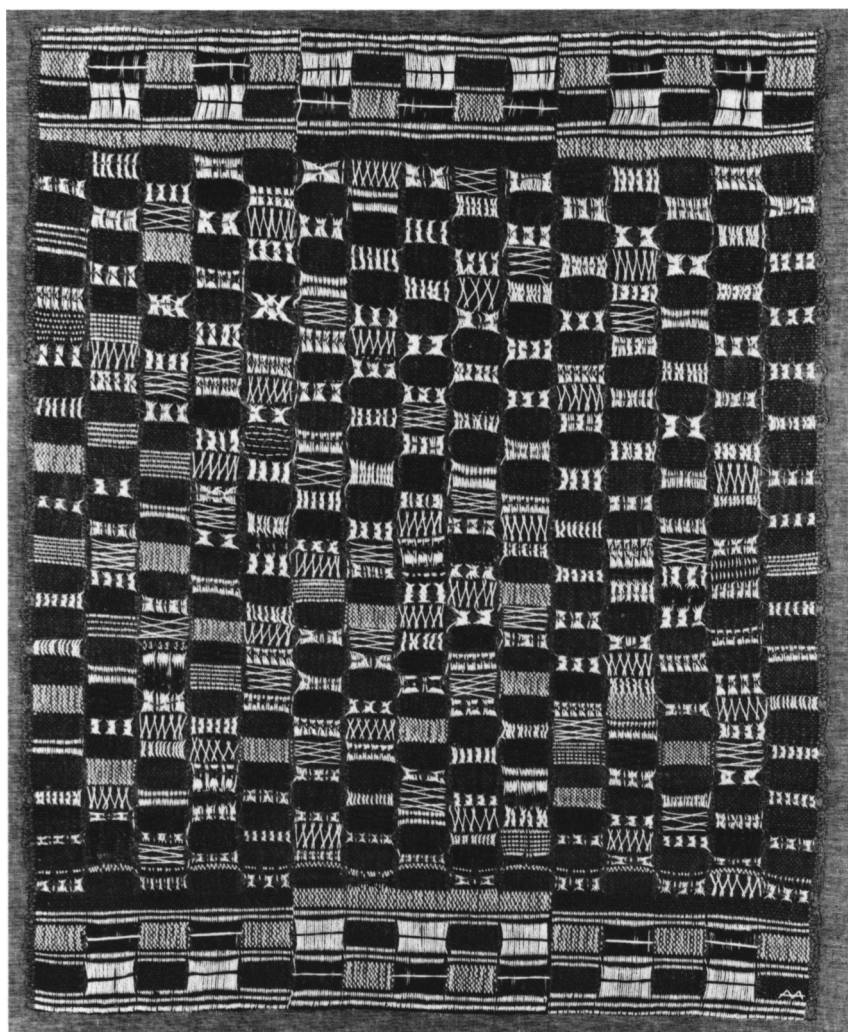
217.7 × 179.8 cm (87 × 69 in)

Gift of Earl Morris Holloway, Yale Divinity School, Class of 1953

1979.71

Anni Albers, perhaps more than any weaver of this century, has been instrumental in redefining the context of contemporary handweaving. From the 1920s through the 1950s she produced masterful fabrics which celebrated weaving's enduring heritage in an age of modernism. She did not deny the technical aspects of her medium, nor weaving's traditional utilitarian associations. Rather, she transformed these "constraints" into positive affirmations of the machine age, producing works of great conceptual elegance—visually striking and structurally astute. Early this century, in the textile department of Germany's Bauhaus, she designed innovative fabrics which heralded a new era for industrial textiles. Later, as an artist and teacher in this country, she created skillful works which, informed by the contemporary concerns of painting and sculpture, eloquently demanded for themselves a new sphere of consideration, and thus, new evaluative criteria.

*Thickly Settled* is the Gallery's only textile created in this modern spirit, and emblematic of handweaving's shifting context and sensibility in the twentieth century.



56 *Thickly Settled*, 1957

Anni Albers  
 American, b. Germany 1899  
 Cotton and jute pictorial weaving with  
 added stitches; predominantly blue and  
 white  
 79 × 62 cm (31 × 24<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> in)  
 Director's Purchase Fund  
 1972.83

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