KAZAKHSTAN'S CRAFTS AND CREATIVE ECONOMY

Paul Michael Taylor & Gulmira Shalabayeva
Editors

Kazakhstan's Crafts and Creative Economy

Proceedings of an
International Symposium

Paul Michael Taylor
Gulmira Shalabayeva
Editors

Kasteyev State Museum of Arts
Almaty, Kazakhstan
in association with the Asian Cultural History Program,
Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., USA

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Layout and design: Leonid Bairamov

Compiler: Yekaterina Reznikova

Publication arrangements Nurzhan Satybaldy

Translation: Tatyana Ossennikova

English editorial assistance: Robert Pontsioen, Evan Wainright
Jared Koller, Matthew Arnold

Photography: Aizhan Bekkulova, Asiya Bodrova
Clara Isabaeva, Igor Kochetkov
Marc Bretzfelder

Cover design: Karina Azimzhanova (Krylova)

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This book compiles the proceedings of the first international scholarly symposium on Kazakhstan's Crafts and Creative Economy, held in Washington, DC, on October 4, 2019. The event was co-organized by the Kasteyev State Museum of Arts (Almaty, Kazakhstan) and the Asian Cultural History Program, Smithsonian Institution (Washington, D.C., USA), and brought together researchers from both institutions. The symposium was held at the National Building Museum, during the annual Smithsonian Craft2Wear Show, at which members of the Union of Artisans of Kazakhstan displayed their Kazakh craft works with substantial press coverage and critical acclaim.

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Preface by H.E. Erzhan Kazykhanov,
Ambassador of Kazakhstan to the United States

We welcome this creative collaboration between the Kasteyev Museum of Arts and the Smithsonian Institution and share their vision and values rooted in preserving heritage and introducing a new expertise. Kazakhstan's Crafts and Creative Economy gives the readers a glimpse into the nomadic life of our ancestors, broadening a deep knowledge about Kazakhstan and its cultural and historic legacy.

I hope this research will contribute to strengthening cultural exchange and fostering people-to-people relations between Kazakhstan and the United States.

Introduction
Kazakhstan's Crafts and Creative Economy

The International Scholarly Symposium on Kazakhstan's Crafts and Creative Economy, held in Washington, D.C., on October 4, 2019, was an important landmark in cultural and academic relations between Kazakhstan and the U.S.A. For many years prior to this, our two countries had exchanged international exhibitions and training programs. Yet the idea of jointly conducting an international scholarly symposium about the arts and culture of Kazakhstan in the U.S.A. was still, in 2019, quite an innovative form of dialogue. The Kasteyev State Museum of Arts, working with the Smithsonian's Asian Cultural History Program, thought that an ideal venue for our joint symposium about Kazakhstan's craft traditions would be a major annual event held in Washington each Fall -- the Smithsonian "Craft2Wear Show," which brings together crafters, marketers of craft, and craft specialists from around North America for an annual juried exhibition held in Washington's National Building Museum. The internationally known event is organized each year by an active and experienced group of volunteers, the Smithsonian Women's Committee.

We decided to schedule our symposium during the 2019 Craft2Wear Show because its many visitors formed a huge potential audience for learning about crafts of Kazakhstan. Yet we realized they would surely also want to see some examples first-hand, in addition to enjoying the opportunity we could offer for our symposium. We were very fortunate that Aizhan Bekkulova, Head of the Union of Artisans of Kazakhstan, visited Washington in early 2019 and toured the National Building Museum along with representatives of the Smithsonian Women's Committee and Asian Cultural History Program, allowing us all to envision a unique arrangement for October 2019, in which craft artisans from Kazakhstan would display their crafts from Kazakhstan in the auditorium area, near where the scholarly symposium on Kazakhstan's Crafts and Creative Economy would take place (see Figures 1-22, below). The resulting magnificent Kazakhstani craft exhibitions held during this annual event presented a wide range of "wearable craft" types, beautifully displayed during four days of the Show, and drawing considerable attention from the American craft artists, marketers, and otherss who attended. We received much-appreciated support for this combined scholarly symposium and craft display, held at the National Building Museum, from the Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, and especially from Chevron – which has been a longtime friend of the Smithsonian's partnerships with Kazakhstan's cultural institutions. The symposium's co-organizers sincerely thank the Smithsonian Institution Women's Committee (organizers of the Craft2Wear Show), and its Coordinator, Heidi Austreng, along with Sharon Block, Fran Kamerow Hamberger, and Susan Labovich, who were Co-Chairs of the 2019 Smithsonian Craft2Wear Show. At the Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, our sincere thanks go to Ambassador and Mrs. Erzhan Kazyhanov, and to many helpful Embassy staff including Abai Besken and Zhandos Imanaliyev. Sincere thanks also to many supporters at Chevron including Amy Conroy in Washington, and to Corporate Affairs Manager Yerkin Zikibayev as well as to Maina Nugmanova and Leila Aitmukhanova in Kazahkstan.

This book compiles the proceedings of that first international scholarly symposium on Kazakhstan's Crafts and Creative Economy, held in Washington, D.C., on October 4, 2019. The forum was arranged by Prof. Gulmira Shalabayeva (Kasteyev State Museum of Arts) and Dr. Paul Michael Taylor (Smithsonian Institution) with support from Chevron and from the Embassy of Kazakhstan in the U.S.A. It brought together researchers from both institutions, the Smithsonian and the Kasteyev State Museum of Arts. As mentioned above, this joint symposium was the most recent of a long series of collaborative activities and scholarly exchanges between our two Museums. We gratefully acknowledge and appreciate the frequent support, in past years, from the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Embassy in Kazakhstan for "people-to-people exchanges" that made possible many prior Smithsonian visits to Kazakhstan, and very memorable and productive past seminars and joint activities held there, including those hosted at the Kasteyev State Museum of Arts.

Our Washington symposium was designed to bring together researchers from both institutions, with five speakers from each museum presenting preliminary versions of their papers included in this volume. As the host institution, the Smithsonian's role was to provide the venue for the topical papers from Kazakhstan, and also introduce our Kazakhstani guests to the Smithsonian itself and to our other guests. Thus we decided to structure the seminar such that the scholars of the two institutions presented papers of quite a different nature, as reflected in the resulting papers published here. Each of the five speakers from Kazakhstan discussed an important aspect of the Crafts and Creative Economy of Kazakhstan. Then, due to the limited amount of time available, and the great interest on the part of all the audience in the crafts of Kazakhstan, each Smithsonian speaker

served primarily as “respondent” or “discussant” of the Kasteyev speaker's paper. Thus Smithsonian speakers were given only a few minutes to discuss and respond at the symposium itself, and were also asked to very briefly describe (for comparative purposes) the approach to craft studies that the speaker was applying at the Smithsonian, identifying common areas of interest and potential future areas of research. This brief response at the symposium was later expanded by each Smithsonian speaker into the full paper presented in this volume, about the Smithsonian author's approach to craft studies.

The five symposium speakers from the Kasteyev State Museum of Arts were: Prof. Gulmira Shalabayeva, Director; Yekaterina Reznikova; Clara Isabaeva; Gulaim Zhumabekova; and Oxana Tanskaya – with each paper surveying important aspects of the craft traditions of Kazakhstan. The Smithsonian speakers (respondents) and contributors to this volume are Paul M. Taylor, Jasper Waugh-Quasebarth, Inigo Acosta, Robert Pontsioen, and Jared M. Koller – each summarizing a particular approach to craft studies outside of Kazakhstan (in the USA, Thailand, Japan, or elsewhere), as used in the work of these speakers, considered relevant to the work of the Kazakhstani participants, and presented as part of their introduction to the Smithsonian and its activities on the occasion of their visit. In addition to these ten speakers, the editors solicited relevant papers for our topic from six additional authors, including Aizhan Bekkulova, the above-mentioned head of the Union of Artisans of Kazakhstan. The other authors contributing important papers on Kazakhstan's craft traditions are all from the staff of the Kasteyev Museum: Nataliya Bazhenova, Amir Jadaibaev, Svetlana Kobzhanova, Galina Syrlybayeva, Nurzhamal Nurfeizova. We are also grateful to all the members of the Union of Artisans of Kazakhstan who displayed their artworks in Washington, including the head of that Union, Aizhan Bekkulova, as well as Serik Rysbekov, Ulbossyn Daulenova, Gulmira Terlikbayeva (Gulmira Ualihan), Talshyn Koken (Talshyn Kokenova), Serikkaliy Kokenov (Сериккали Кокенов), Ikramzhan Rafikov (Ikram Rafikov), Dulat Ashimov, Serzhan Bashirov, Iliya Kazakov, and Almas Mustafayev (Almas Serikuly). We gratefully thank Dr. Tokjan Balderstom for local support in Washington, for the artists' visit.

The theme of the event (and of our symposium), Kazakhstan's Crafts and Creative Economy, refers to a very important range of phenomena, including art historical studies of individual craft forms, examinations of balancing preservation of traditional crafts with production of creative transformations of those crafts within today's global economy, surveying the importance of crafts as icons of local and national identity, and even the reflexive realization that this conference and exhibition constitute examples of how crafts play a role in cultural diplomacy between nations. We see in papers presented in this volume that authors attempt to comprehend and preserve traditional values that historically identify a nation or ethnic group. while also seeking to describe the modifications of those same craft traditions in light of a global community with varying outlooks and preferences. These intersections and counterpoints make this symposium and its topic an important forum for discussion among scholars.

This book, comprising research by American and Kazakhstani scholars, is a tangible result of our serious and continuing cooperative work and a testimony to this important international event. We look forward to continuing our cooperation and hope that the research we present here will contribute to broader understanding of Kazakhstan's crafts and its creative economy.

Gulmira Shalabayeva
Director, Kasteyev State Museum of Arts

Paul Michael Taylor
Director, Asian Cultural History Program
Smithsonian Institution

Figure 1. Attendees at the preview reception October 2, 2019, at the Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan in Washington. Third from left: master artisan Gulmira Ualikhan. Fourth from left: Mrs. Danara Kazykhanova, spouse of H.E. Ambassador Erzhan Kazykhanov. Fifth from left: Paul M. Taylor. Ninth from left: Curtis Sandberg. With volunteer models of Kazakh wearable craft.

Figure 2. Silversmith and master crafter Serikkaliy Kokenov at a preview display of his artistry held at the Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Washington, D.C., Oct. 2, 2019.

Figure 3. L to R: Kazakshtani master artisan Ikramzhan Rafikov with Paul M. Taylor, Embassy of Kazakhstan preview reception, Oct. 2, 2019

Figure 4. Aizhan Bekkulova, head of the Artisans Union, at one of the displays set up during the Oct. 2, 2019, reception at the Embassy of Kazakhstan.

Figure 5. Decorated gourd craftworks displayed at the Craft2Wear Show and symposium, Oct. 4, 2019.

Figure 6. Volunteer models wearing some of the Kazakhstani “wearable craft” fashion designs at the opening event of the Smithsonian Craft2Wear Show. National Building Museum, Washington, D.C., October 3, 2020.

Figure 7. L to R: Dr. Paul Michael Taylor and Dr. Katerina Reznikova at opening reception, Craft2Wear Show, Oct. 3, 2019.

Figure 8. L to R: Abai Besken (Embassy of Kazakhstan), Aizhan Bekkulova (head of the Union of Artisans of Kazakhstan), Paul M. Taylor (Smithsonian), Oct. 3, 2019.

Figure 9. Oct. 3, 2019 opening event for the 2019 Smithsonian Craft2Wear Show. From left: Katerina Reznikova, Aizhan Bekkulova, Paul Taylor, Clara Isabaeva, H.E. Ambassador Erzhan Kazykhanov, Gulaim Zhumabekova, Tokjan Balderston.

Figure 10. Master artisan Iliya Kazakov (3rd from left) stands near his craft display with three volunteer fashion models at the Craft2Wear Show, Oct. 4, 2019. National Building Museum.

Figure 11. Volunteer models circulated throughout the exhibition areas of the craft specialists gathered for the 2019 annual Craft2Wear Show in the National Building Museum, wearing their compelling Kazakhstani fashions or "wearable crafts" and holding signs encouraging participants to visit the auditorium for the Kazakhstan exhibits and symposium. Oct. 4, 2019.

Figure 12. Paul M. Taylor (second from left) introduces and hosts a discussion with artisans after the international symposium, Oct. 4, 2019.

Figure 13. L to R: Paul M. Taylor (Smithsonian), Aizhan Bekkulova (head of the Union of Artisans of Kazakhstan), Tokjan Balderston, Katerina Reznikova (Kasteyev State Museum of Art). Embassy of Kazakhstan, Oct. 2, 2019.

Figure 14. On display at the National Building Museum, Oct. 4, 2019.

Figure 15. Master artisan Serzhan Bashirov at his display,
National Building Museum, Oct. 4, 2019

Figure 16. Dr. Paul M. Taylor (L) introduces and interviews Aizhan Bekkulova (Center), head of the Union of Artisans of Kazakhstan, as part of the public presentation and discussions with crafters from the Union of Artisans, which followed the symposium in the auditorium of the National Building Museum, Oct. 4, 2019. (Interpreter at right.)

Figure 17. Dr. Oxana Tanskaya delivers her paper on “The Treasures of the Great Steppe: Kazakhstan's Tutankhamun.” Oct. 4, 2019

Figure 18. Dr. Robert Pontsioen of the Smithsonian Institution discusses and responds to the paper by Dr. Gulaim Zumabekova, briefly also introducing his approach to craft studies expanded upon later in the paper in this volume.

Figure 19. Prof. Gulmira Shalabayeva welcomes attendees and presents her own paper on "Carpet Weaving as a Global Cultural Phenomenon."

Figure 20. Opening of the symposium, Kazakhstan's Crafts and Creative Economy. L to R: Dr. Katerina Reznikova, Dr. Gulmira Shalabayeva, Dr. Paul Taylor.

Figure 21. Dr. Jasper Waugh-Quasebarth (Smithsonian Institution) discusses and responds to the paper by Dr. Gulmira Shalabayeva, also briefly introducing his own approach to Appalachian craft studies as further described in his paper in this volume.

Figure 22. Symposium presenters and participants (L to R): Katerina Reznikova, Gulaim Zhumabekova, Oxana Tanskaya, Clara Isabaeva, Gulmira Shalabayeva, Paul Michael Taylor, Jasper Waugh-Quasebarth, Robert Pontsioen, Supamas Snitwongse. Auditorium, National Building Museum, Oct. 4, 2019.

Carpet Weaving as a Global Cultural Phenomenon: Revisiting Ethnic Peculiarities and Intercultural Commonalities in Crafts

Prof. Gulmira Shalabayeva,
Kasteyev State Museum of Arts

Civilizations make modern-day peoples similar while cultures incorporate their differences.
Georgy Gachev

In 2016, Kazakhstan celebrated a landmark in its history – the 25th anniversary of the nation's independence. Once independence has been established, every nation must examine pivotal questions relating to its history and culture, including understanding its origins, defining its place globally, and promoting awareness of its own cultural heritage. This process requires difficult self-evaluation by the newly-independent's citizens. This spiritual self-assessment is expected to address two important tasks that promote national unity: 1) that of giving up pseudo values and false stereotypes, and 2) that of restoring and maintaining cultural and spiritual treasures. These unifying goals are why our contemporary efforts, as museum professionals and scholars, to rethink the history of Kazakhstan remain important and relevant.

In the 21st century, all post-Soviet nations should aim to engage with the larger global community, while continuing to embrace its own cultural heritage and the achievements of its ancestors. Museum professionals and scholars from Kazakhstan are well-positioned to inspire pride in the cultural heritage of Kazakhstan locally, and to promote this heritage to the wider world.

Folk art and carpet weaving, in particular, are means of expressing spiritual, cultural and historical achievements of Kazakhstan in several ways: (1) identifying, (2) cerebral, and (3) cultural. The first way (identifying) points to culturally distinctive styles that are unique to a specific place and/or region. "Cerebral" means how an artist transmits spiritual, cultural and religious beliefs or information during creation. The final dimension is cultural, which includes how cultural practice influences the creation of crafts both in the present and in the past. For example, artistic traditions of Central Asia continue to evolve, even as we acknowledge the rich heritage and origins of Kazakhstan. As Kamola Akilova rightfully puts it, "It [Central Asia] is still home to Achaemenid, antique, Turkic, early-medieval, Muslim, and European traditions." [1]

The cultural commonalities of Turkic peoples are not only those determined by linguistic similarities. They also reflect the parallels in an artistic understanding of the world, in a poetic language, and in an underlying aesthetic mentality. Diamond-shaped floral patterns, for example, are common to almost all Turkic peoples. The same is with the preference of all shades of red, from cinnabar to maroon. The red color, which is loved by crafters so much, symbolizes fire and the sun, and wards off the evil eye and evil spirits.

Craft traditions have often evolved over time and been passed down from generation to generation, embodying the nation's philosophy and understanding of the world, as well as its own unique features. The peculiarities of the Kazakh crafts are determined by its people's nomadic identity and include a wide range of techniques used to work with different materials, as well as original patterns and decorations typical of the region. I argue that Kazakhstan's ancient craft items are the most important part of its cultural heritage.

A nomadic perception of the world is fully represented in a yurt – a unique and ancient portable dwelling of the people whose life has been historically associated with perpetual movement from place to place. Nomads view the yurt as a miniature model of the universe, with carpets being the most important element of its interior. Often the items inside of a yurt (and the yurt itself) are expressions of nature and its surroundings. The spatial orientation of everything inside a yurt is also relevant. All items there are visible, just like the wide vistas available to one outside on the Steppe.

The Craft and Textile Collection at the Kasteyev State Museum of Arts

The Kasteyev State Museum of Arts is over 80 years old, with around 5000 traditional Kazakh crafts in its collection. The Kazakh crafts section of the museum is among its key exhibit displays. Upon entering this permeant exhibit, a visitor first encounters a room that introduces Kazakhstan's roots and national traditions of the past. Here a visitor learns about how the crafts

examples on display in the museum influenced the development of the professional school of arts in Kazakhstan.

The Kasteyev's large collection of textiles, comprised of over 1,000 items, is second only to the jewelry collection. This collection includes traditional felt *tekemets* and *syrmaks*, pile and flat-woven carpets, colorful inwrought *alashas*, embroidered *tuskiiz* wall rugs, and ornamented *shim-shi* mats. In addition to rugs, the Kazakhs also wove a great deal of household items such as hanging bags (*ayak kaps*), saddlebags (*korzhyns*), chest covers, and bales. Each of them is multifunctional, as, in addition to having a practical use, they also adorned the interior of a yurt.

Ornamented Felt Items

The display of Kazakh folk handicrafts at the Kasteyev Museum begins with ornamented felt items. Felt was used to make *tekemet* and *syrmak* carpets, as well as *tuskiiz* wall rugs. It was the most widespread, multipurpose and affordable material for nomadic tribes from ancient times. In Kazakh crafts, the making and processing of wool were of paramount importance and were improved upon through time. Wool's naturally light weight and ability to seal airtight provided needed protection in the Steppe's extreme climate fluctuations. The outer cover of the yurt frame, for example, is made from a special grade of wool, which produces a thick, water and lightproof fabric. Historically, it appears that felt was more extensively used before the 20th century, both for exterior and interior yurt decorations, as evidenced by archaeological excavations of the Pazyryk burials (3–5th century B.C.).

One popular type of floor carpet used in yurts are *tekemets*, which are made by rolling patterns onto prefelt. Designs made using this technique look somewhat blurred. Felted onto the base, the pattern has no clear outline, its lines blending with the background, as if painted in watercolor. In most cases, *tekemets* are large fabrics with a clear pattern. It is the rhythmic arrangement of colors and designs in these simple felt items that make them true pieces of art. When creating designs for a *tekemet,* a crafter needs to maintain a good balance between the background and the pattern, as well as that of colors. The pattern needs to both stand out against the background and remain its integral part in terms of composition, which is always symmetrical. There are usually no more than four or five colors used in *tekemets*. The elements of the composition are typically large, and the main motif is zoomorphic. These patterns suggest a specific worldview of the people who made them – a worldview that simultaneously influences and is influenced by greater cultural influences and traditions.

Because of the felting technique, *tekemet* designs don't have a clear outline and look a little bit blurry. The center field of the rug is usually decorated with three to four diamond-, cross- or solar-shaped medallions with astral, or cosmogonic, symbols, placed horizontally. In this sense, Kazakh patterns, as a conveyor of the nation's artistic and historical memories, are an endless source of information about the surrounding world.

The center field of a decorative *tekemet* from Western Kazakhstan is adorned with four solar circles that seem to radiate cosmic energy from the sun. The solar circle, the world mountain, a cross, the tree of life, a diamond, and a square are all archetypical Kazakh symbols that express ancient beliefs and cosmogonic myths, while also symbolizing harmony and the perfection of the universe.

Felt carpets have different uses. A *tekemet*, for example, is used to cover the floor. It also can be overlaid with blankets or sometimes even other carpets. A *syrmak*, the most valuable piece in terms of design, adorns the walls of a dwelling or covers a bed. Its function is more decorative, although it can also have more practical uses.

Syrmaks are a different type of floor carpet that are produced using an inlay or applique technique. They were made from ready felt of contrasting colors. The white and dark pieces of felt are put one onto another, with the design cut using a knife. These cut pieces were then stitched together with their joints ornamented using a woolen cord called a *zhiyek*. For this reason, the outlines of the design on *syrmaks* are graphical and clear.

One display at the Kasteyev Museum presents two *syrmaks* made in a similar fashion that consist of symmetrical halves. Their almost square compositions represent the four cardinal directions – north, south, east, and west. The zoomorphic motif on one of the rugs is a stylized image of flying birds. Another *syrmak* is ornamented with a pair of horn-like patterns, referring to the tree of life. Felt items made of wool have a direct association with the image of a ram – a symbol of fertility and wealth in Kazakhstan. It's not a coincidence that the most prominent design element in Kazakh rugs is *koshkar muiyz* – a ram's horn – signifying well-being and prosperity. Every household item in Kazakhstan, for example, is intended to convey good luck, especially designs coded by crafters into textile design elements.

Figure 1. Exhibition of Kazakh applied arts at the museum

Figure 2. *Tekemet* (felt carpet). 1970s, Shymkent Region. Wool, felting. 220x379

Figure 3. *Tekemet* (felting carpet). 1960s, West Kazakhstan. Wool, felting. 136x296

Kazakh patterns can be grouped by types – cosmogonic, geometrical, zoomorphic, and floral. Zoomorphic motifs are the most popular in felt making. They certainly originate in the "animal style" –the depiction of birds and other animals, or parts of their bodies. The replacement of the figure of an animal with the image of a part of it was associated with the transformation of realistic and expressive images into ornamental motifs.

In addition to the semantic features of a pattern, colors play a significant part in conveying its meaning. The dominating red is interpreted as a symbol of beauty, youth, and health. White refers to milk

– the color of purity, truth, and joy. Yellow symbolizes happiness, green hope and bloom, blue the sky of Tengri, and brown the earth.

Kazakh Embroidery

Kazakh embroidery, which was used to decorate *tuskiiz* wall rugs and other items, is very special. Crafters used different types of embroidery techniques to complete a rug. *Tuskiizs* are embroidered wall rugs that are of particular interest. They usually have symmetrical compositions and bold colors. A *tuskiiz* has special compositional features – a wide embroidered border and a center field in local colors. This created a powerful decorative effect. The dominating pattern is floral, referring to the rebirth of nature and the cult of fertility. In the past, these rugs were made of felt and fine leather. Later, in the Middle Ages, crafters began to use imported fabrics – velvet from China, silk from Bukhara, and woolen cloth from Russia.

A *tuskiiz*, regarded by the Kazakhs as a protective item, had a special place in a yurt. It symbolized a happy family and was an integral part of a bride's dowry. Girls were taught to embroider from their early years and mastered all the necessary tools – needles, crochet hooks, and threads of various colors. The custom required that a bride embroider the rug on her own and bring it to the groom's house so that his family could judge the skills of their son's future wife.

A true masterpiece of folk art from the Kasteyev Museum's collection is a "coral" *tuskiiz* purchased by the museum during a special expedition. Its center section is made from scarlet velvet and its wide and dark border is filled with a garland of wildflowers embroidered in a satin stitch. The thin silver plates added to the composition contrast with the black velvet and blend perfectly with the intricate pattern of flowers and stems. The main decorative elements are the raised coral flowers that emphasize the dark background and the soft texture of the rug.

Weaving

A third type of carpet used by Kazakhs in their households were rugs woven from woolen fibers or, less often, cotton threads. These covered the floors or adorned the walls of a yurt, both to decorate it and keep out the cold. Woolen items have been widespread in the territory Kazakhstan occupies today from the Bronze Age as evidenced by Andronovo tribes using looms and spindles for weaving. Kazakh geometrical designs emerged in the 2nd century B.C. when pile and flat-woven carpets appeared.

In terms of techniques, Kazakh carpets are divided into three groups: pile, flat-woven, and sewn (*alasha*). The traditional center of pile carpet making was the south of Kazakhstan, where the craft flourished under the influence of Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The most notable among Central Asian carpets are those made in Turkmenistan and praised worldwide for their exquisiteness and quality. The main difference, in my opinion, is in that Turkmen carpets have specific designs attributed to the geographical distribution of the ancient tribes: Salor, Teke, Pendin, Yomut, and Ersari, among others. Moreover, researchers point to the fact that specific patterns were used in different types of rugs. Carpets differ in their ornamentation from region to region, which is especially obvious in *gyol* (floral) patterns.

Kazakh pile carpets bear no special features that would attribute them to a certain tribe or region for two important reasons: they were made in two regions only – southern and eastern Kazakhstan and all of them are almost identical in terms of composition. What most of them have in common are a wide border, the dominating red color as the symbol of health, beauty, and fertility, and three or four large medallions in the center field. Four to nine colors could be used in Kazakh woven rugs, their symbolic meaning already described above.

Pile carpets were made using the *ormek* loom. Making an item of two by three meters in size would take two to three months. The most common pile rugs were *kalyklems*, from Persian *galy* – a carpet. Their distinctive features were the lines of repeated geometrical or floral patterns and a border with diverse decorations. Turkmens and Uzbeks also have similar carpets. The number of medallions placed horizontally one under the other may refer to the symbolic meaning of numbers. The geometric patterns prevailing in pile carpets usually have a balanced and proportionate composition of elements. The number four referred to the four seasons or cardinal directions, while

the number three symbolized perfection and trinity. Using linear designs and combining a limited range of geometric elements in patterns, crafters managed to produce a host of compositions. The key solutions here were the repetition and combination of elements and a laconic and simple composition. The widespread *zhuldyz* (star) pattern belongs to Islamic symbols associated with the idea of the starry sky and the endless Universe. The border was intended to protect against external forces.

Flat-woven carpets, including *palace* rugs, were made in almost all regions of Kazakhstan. Beautiful *baskurs* – woven strips – were intended to fasten and reinforce a yurt. Crafters tried to vary patterns throughout the length of this household item, which could reach 20 to 25 meters. Different weaving techniques are used to produce flat-woven rugs. Their compositions are usually traditional and include square or diamond-shaped medallions in the center field and customary Kazakh patterns such as ram's horns, a bird's beak, a camel's eye, amulets, and many other things.

The Kazakhs attached special value to traditional woven rugs and regarded them as luxury items. They were an essential part of a bride's dowry or a special present given to nobles. However, their main value lies in their uniqueness and nomadic traditions based on the deep understanding of the beauty and harmony of the surrounding world.

Conclusion

The limits of my presentation won't let me go in deeper detail about the variety of styles, techniques and artistic features typical of Kazakh carpets. What I spoke about is a brief overview of the main types of carpets in Kazakhstan. True folk crafts need to be thoroughly supported in the modern world and we must preserve the knowledge of craftsmanship, as well as the beauty and spirituality conveyed by these works of art and culture.

An interesting phenomenon in the area of carpet making is that of the group of the "Kazakh" carpets made by Azeri crafters. As we know, historical names appeared for a reason, backed in all cases by an underlying semantic meaning, or an objective historical background. Researchers emphasize some unique features of the "Kazakh" carpets made in Azerbaijan. They suggest these were an expression of Turkic and, in particular, Central Asian influences, which may be traced in both composition and design. This issue is awaiting thoughtful researchers.

There is a real need for studying the original artistic traditions of the Turkic countries and the Orient as a whole. "While keeping in mind all the ethnic and cultural influences of different historical periods, it should be understood that local artistic traditions played a significant part in building up this symbiosis. Today's studies into the traditional culture of the region as an ethnic and cultural phenomenon suggest many points of discussion and research that need to be clarified or deepened." [2] Cultural self- identification is the only way for a people to find their place in the world. In this, the aspiration for a panhuman, or universal, culture seems unsound and doubtful. "With all the diversity of ethnic characters, such a panhuman culture would result in either satisfaction of purely physical needs, with the spiritual ones totally disregarded, or would impose on all the peoples the forms of life typical of a single ethnos." [3] National culture is set to preserve itself and its potential to expand is limited by borders. Highlighting these borders is a process to identify a culture's special and unique character. The one who continues a cultural tradition makes it an element of their spiritual being, thereby recreating it again and again.

Here is where we face the issue of interpretation of age-long artistic traditions. In this regard, what we need is intercultural cooperation, such as international conferences including groups of artists, staff exchange, and joint research. The fact that this international conference is taking place in Washington and the interest from the international community confirm once again that traditional carpets, as works of decorative and applied arts, remain a grand heritage of peoples' culture.

Importantly, as urbanization and globalization dissolve borders and complicate national culture, many of these traditions are at risk of disappearing. This is why we need to preserve cultural authenticity, and the unique pieces of crafts are the critical sources and historical evidence of the wisdom of the past.

An important mission of museums is to keep the cultural and historical memories of peoples, and the Kasteyev State Museum of Arts is no exception.

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Figure 4. *Syrmak* (felt carpet). 1950s, Taldy-Korgan Region. Felting, appliqué. 138x230

Figure 5. *Syrmak* (felt carpet) 1960s, Almaty Region. Felting, appliqué. 130x253

Figure 6. *Tuskiiz* (wall carpet). Early 20th century. Semey Region. Velvet, corals, silvered plates, colored threads, smooth surface. 133x267

Studying Crafts in Legacy Museum Collections: The Importance of Archival Sources and Clues

Paul Michael Taylor
Asian Cultural History Program
Smithsonian Institution

This paper derives from the joint Smithsonian Institution-A. Kasteyev State Museum of Arts symposium *Kazakhstan's Crafts and Creative Economy*, as one example of the Smithsonian's contributions in response to the outstanding papers presented by our Kazakhstani colleagues about that topic. Our joint conference was held at the National Building Museum, Washington, D.C., USA, on October 4, 2019. As is true of all the other Smithsonian papers presented, this paper "responds" to the approaches applied by our colleagues from the Kasteyev museum to Kazakhstan's crafts, in their papers, by briefly presenting some aspect of current Smithsonian craft studies by researchers in the Smithsonian's Asian Cultural History Program. We can all benefit from sharing ideas and methods about our various approaches to the study of traditional crafts and their contemporary transformations. Certainly all the conference participants, and all who hear or read the papers delivered at this conference, benefit from learning about the rich craft traditions of Kazakhstan so well presented by our colleagues visiting Washington from Almaty.

My goal in the present paper is to present a few examples I have found in my own work, specifically on studies of craft within legacy museum collections like those of the Smithsonian, illustrating the importance of integrating the study of museum objects with careful attention to associated archival records. Because of my experience with this phenomenon based on studies in Smithsonian collections, I am often surprised at the number of published craft studies or papers in which original written records about field collections, including field notes or correspondence by the collectors, have not been included within published reports. In visiting collections at many institutions, we may discover the names of collectors of objects, but due to the nature of how scientific or historic data is recorded and kept, the field records of collections, along with correspondence or other written records from their collectors, is not available for study at the same institution.

Within the Smithsonian, a complex of twenty separate museums along with other research or repository institutions including a separate Smithsonian Institution Archives, there are often multiple locations from which a researcher must compile records relating to individual collections. This paper presents a few examples drawn from my previously published studies of our collections, to illustrate ways in which integrating archival studies can be quite useful.

I begin with a prominent example that I have described elsewhere (Taylor 2018b, 2020), of a work of art from Thailand that was located from archival records long after we had completed and published a study of our Thai collections based upon examining all the objects (collections) in storage (McQuail 1997; cf. Taylor 2018c). It is the "Royal Seal" or coat of arms of King Chulalongkorn, Rama V, of Thailand, from the Smithsonian collections for which I serve as curator (Figure 1). Gifted by the King of Siam (Thailand) to the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition of 1876, this large so-called "Royal Seal" (as it was named in the original 1876 Exposition's gift lists) is made of lacquered wood with layers of gilded plating. It is in composition a very western-style coat of arms, whose component elements however are all traditional Thai royal symbols. Its escutcheon's three subdivisions show Erawan the three-headed elephant, a single elephant, and the crossed kris daggers, representing respectively central, northern, and southern Thailand. Above the shield are the seven-tiered Royal umbrellas; below is a Pali motto sometimes translated "Unity brings happiness." The elephant lion is seen on the royal seal's dexter side (on the left as we view it), while on the opposite (sinister) side is the king of lions. These mythical animals represent respectively the ministry of defense (military), and the ministry of interior within the royal government.

The occasion of this gift was the celebration recognized as America's first World's Fair, held in 1876 at Philadelphia to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the signing of America's Declaration of Independence there. Siam was one of 37 participating foreign countries. The U.S. Navy, responsible

Figure 1. "Royal Seal" (Coat of Arms) of King Chulalongkorn, 1876.
Wood, gilding, lacquer, and paint
Gift of King Chulalongkorn, 1876. Siam Exhibit, Centennial Exposition
E27388 (Originally National Museum no. 27,388)
137 cm height x 130 cm width x 21 cm depth

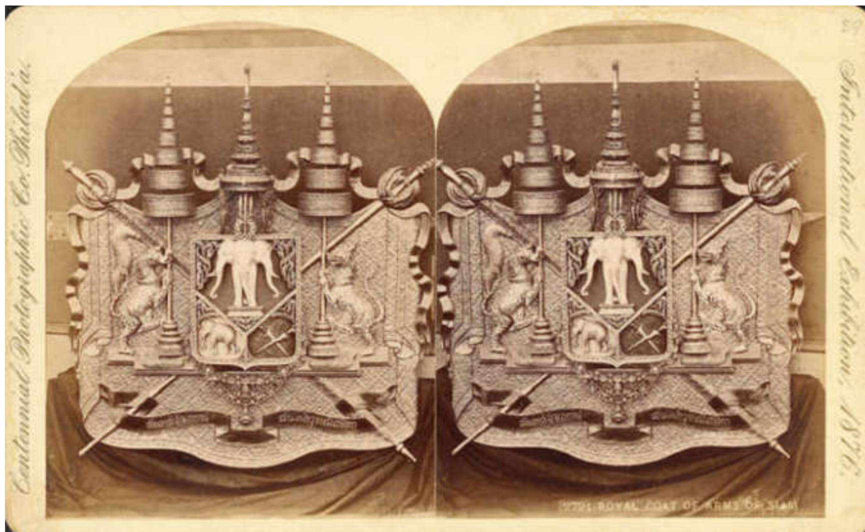


Figure 2. "Royal Coat of Arms of Siam," Philadelphia Centennial Exposition, 1876.
Stereograph (stereoview) photograph, mounted on backing board.
Centennial Photographic Co., 1876. 11 X 18 cm.
Centennial Exposition Archives, Philadelphia Free Library, No. c062791.

for bringing the exhibition from Bangkok to Philadelphia, first published the list of items given by King Chulalongkorn (U.S. Navy 1876). This was surely prepared from an original (now lost) list in Thai.

Undoubtedly intended for prominent display at Philadelphia in 1876, this artwork is absent in almost all archival photographs of the Siam exhibit. Nevertheless, one stereoscopic photograph now in the Centennial Exposition archives of the Philadelphia Free Library (Figure 2) did show this recently rediscovered "Royal Coat of Arms of Siam" seemingly mounted on a wall or platform.

As recounted in Taylor (2020), in 2017, I began writing a paper about the Smithsonian's Thai khon masks, used in the Thai masked dance drama recounting stories from the Ramakien, or Thai version of the Ramayana. I decided rather than working from the objects in the collection, I should go back to the original archival lists of gifts given – then, despite some ambiguity in the naming of the gifts (including many that have not survived), concluded that twelve khon masks were gifted in 1876, of which eight survive now in the Smithsonian's collections. I also conclusively showed that one mask, previously thought to be given in 1876, arrived from another source. This "Royal Seal" was listed alongside the khon masks within a group of 71 artworks, and tools used for their production, collectively termed "Theatrical Images." I set out to match up the original archival list's names with the surviving objects in our collection, and to explore this concept of "theatrical images" uniting these objects as a group.

There is a surprisingly "Indiana Jones"-like quality to exploring legacy collections in museum storage, holding copies of archival documents in one hand and opening drawers with the other. Following archival leads led me to the "oversize pod" of the Smithsonian's Suitland, Maryland, storage facility. Among "oversize" boats and palanquins, far from our Thai collection storage, was this magnificent Royal Seal. After the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition closed, this object had been transferred to the Smithsonian, but due to its large size had been stored separately in an asbestos-contaminated attic – until it got wrapped up and moved, as part of a general move and asbestos-decontamination project in the 1990s, to the "oversize" pod in Suitland. During the move its original catalog number from the 1876 gift list was recorded, making it possible now to locate. Yet it was at the topmost level of tiered "oversize" storage. In 2017, after I arranged for a forklift to bring it to ground level, we unwrapped it for the first-ever recorded photographs of it since 1876, which I published in *Arts of Asia* (Taylor 2018b:116). I believe many more discoveries await within the legacy collections of our museums.

Most examples of "discoveries" made through incorporating archival studies into research on traditional crafts or artworks in legacy museum collections are less dramatic, but may be no less scientifically important. I include here several examples of archival findings that have helped me understand the ethnographic materials assembled for the Smithsonian by an important American "naturalist" collector (that is, a collector of natural history specimens including ethnographic artifacts as well as biological collections), William Louis Abbott (1860-1935) (Figure 3). Abbott was by far the Smithsonian's most prolific collector of Indonesian and Malaysian artifacts (Taylor 2002; Taylor and Hamilton 1993; and examples in Taylor and Aragon 1991), and a major collector of ethnographic and biological specimens (mostly mammals and birds) from every region in which he traveled. These examples are a few of those I have described in studies of his vast collections (see Taylor 2002, 2014, 2015a, 2015b, 2016, 2017, 2018a, 2018b, 2019, 2020; Taylor and Koller 2018).

Yet the only publication Abbott himself authored about his lifelong series of collecting expeditions is an article on his ethnographic collections from East Africa (1887-89) within the Smithsonian's annual report for 1892. That publication (Abbott 1892) included a catalogue of 247 objects collected, grouped into categories such as "Dress and Adornment," "Architectural Objects and Furniture," "Culinary Utensils," et cetera. Thirteen objects were illustrated by line drawings within the catalogue. Abbott never prepared such a catalogue for any of his biological collections, nor for his ethnographic collections from any other place.

As a result, the Smithsonian's ethnographic collection contains large still-unpublished collections assembled by Abbott in South, Southeast, and Central Asia, as well as east Africa and Madagascar, and a few other places. In writing about this material, I have found that careful attention to archival information has been essential to understanding the legacy collections he left behind. This led me, in fact, to postpone much of the ethnographic collection study until after I had transcribed a large body of Abbott's field notes and correspondence stored in several Smithsonian repositories. Each subsequent article about various collections draws upon this archival research on Abbott's widely scattered correspondence and notes (see Taylor in press), primarily with his family and with Smithsonian officials, regarding his lifelong series of expeditions which began in East Africa, and

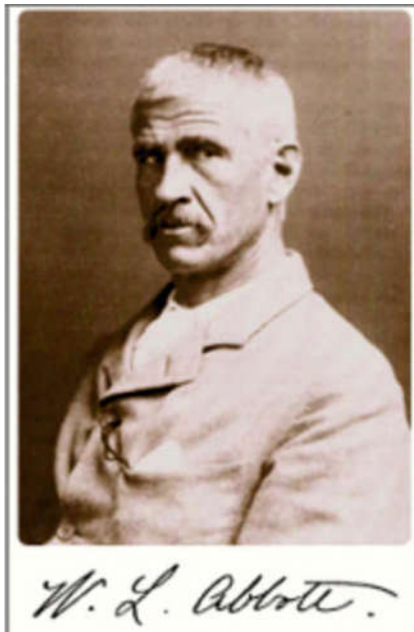
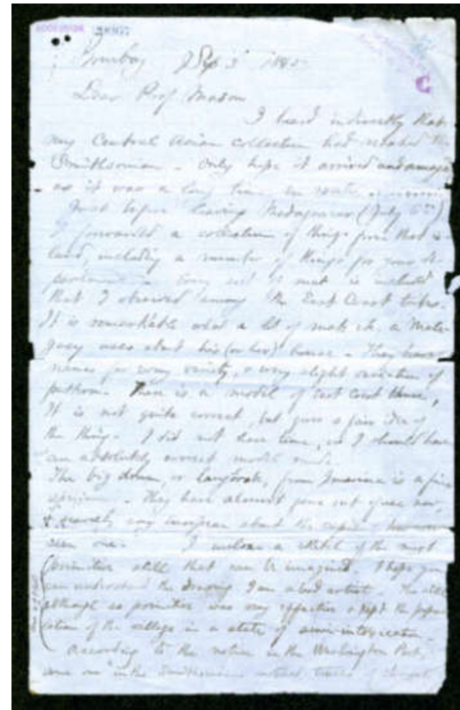


Figure 3. William Louis Abbott (1860-1936)
National Anthropological Archives,
Smithsonian Institution.


Bombay Sept 3rd 1895

Dear Prof Mason

I heard indirectly that my Central Asian collection had reached the Smithsonian. Only hope it arrived undamaged as it was a long time en route.

Just before leaving Madagascar (July 6th) I forwarded a collection of things from that island, including a number of things for your department. [illegible] that I observed among the East Coast tribes. It is remarkable what a lot of mats etc. a Malagasy uses about his (or her) house. They have names for every variety, & very slight variation of pattern. There is a model of East Coast house. It is not quite correct, but gives a fair idea of the thing. I did not have time, or I should have an absolutely correct model made.

The big drum, or [illegible], from [illegible] is a fine specimen. They have almost gone out of use now, & scarcely any European about the capital [illegible] seen one. I enclose a sketch of the most primitive still that can be imagined. I hope you can understand the drawing. I am a bad artist. The still although so primitive was very effective & kept the population of the village in a state of semi-intoxication.

According to the notice in the Washington Post, [illegible] in the Smithsonian [illegible]

Figure 4. Letter, W.L. Abbott to Smithsonian anthropologist Otis T. Mason,
September 3, 1895.
Smithsonian Institution Archives.

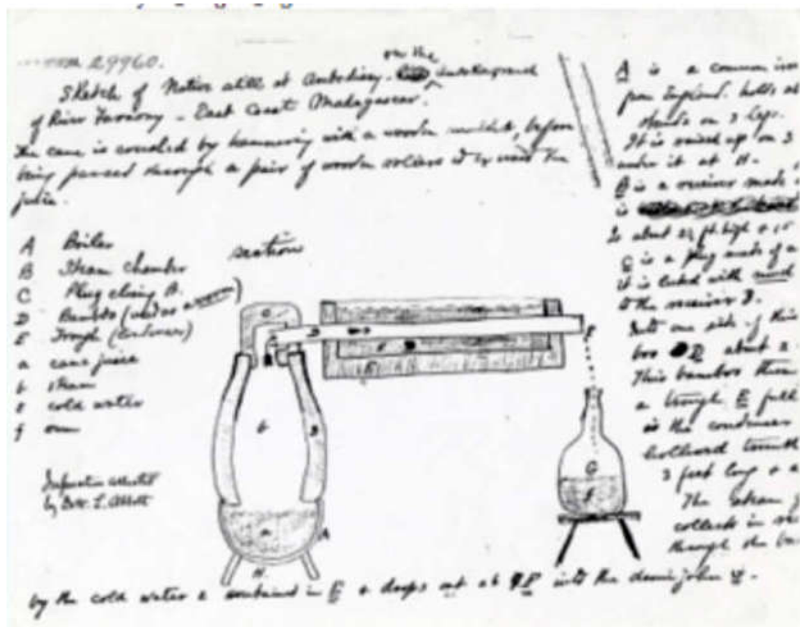


Figure 5. Abbott's sketch of an uncollected Malagasy “primitive still.”
September 3, 1895. Smithsonian Institution Archives. (From: Taylor 2015b:37)

continued in Madagascar and other Indian Ocean islands then Central Asia before he first arrived in Southeast Asia and began his longest period of explorations there. Abbott's collecting was entirely self- financed, since at the age of 26 Abbott received a large inheritance upon the death of his father (1886). His papers are now found in the Smithsonian's National Anthropological Archives, and in the separate Smithsonian Archives, as well as in field records stored in the Smithsonian's Mammals Library and its Botany Library; all four of these repositories contain material relating to his ethnographic collections.

Studying these archival documents has led to a much better understanding of Abbott's reasons for selecting the localities where he chose to collect, the types of objects he found important to send back to the museum, and the kinds of data that he should record about them. There is ample evidence there, for example, to better understand the centrality of the concept of evolution within this nineteenth-century naturalist collector's decision-making about collecting. Abbott understood that the ethnographic objects he collected should be sent to a museum for comparative study and classification that would inform the understanding of the evolution of human societies from most primitive to most advanced, just as the animal and plant specimens would inform taxonomists about the evolution of the various species (see e.g. Taylor 2014:146-147; 2016:619-621).

Besides gaining a better understanding of his collecting philosophy and biases, another good reason to include Abbott's archival notes and correspondence within any study of Abbott's collections is that information found in these documents will supplement or correct information gained from studying objects or their associated original object labels. Substantially more context is provided by considering the entirety of Abbott's archival documents, including memories written down long after he left the collecting location. For example, in a September 3, 1895 letter to anthropologist Otis Mason sent from Bombay (Fig. 2), Abbott writes from memory about collections he had sent to Washington earlier from Madagascar, that "every sort of mat is included that I observed among the East Coast tribes. It is remarkable what a lot of mats etc. a Malagasy uses about his (or her) house. They have names for every vanity, + every slight variation of pattern." The difficult-to-read handwriting in this sample letter will also indicate the time-consuming but important role of properly transcribing such documents as part of the study of this collection.

Along with that letter from Bombay, as noted in Taylor 2015b, Abbott sent one of his many sketches of uncollected ethnographic objects that he observed (see Fig. 3), this one from the east coast of Madagascar. In this case his archival sketch of an uncollected object effectively adds to our understanding of the material culture of the Madagascar ethnic groups whose artifacts he was collecting:

> I enclose a sketch of the most primitive still that can be imagined. I hope you can understand the drawing[.] I am a bad artist. The still although so primitive was very effective & kept the population of the village in a state of semi-intoxication.

Though Abbott never reached Kazakhstan, he did carry out a long collecting expedition into "Chinese Turkestan" (1893-1894) during which he briefly and surreptitiously passed over the border into Russian-administered territory in what is today Kyrgyzstan, as I have described in another paper drawing heavily on archival documents (Taylor 2016). In those years Smithsonian scientists were strongly urging Abbott to write about his expeditions and collecting in a book, even proposing book outlines and offering to contribute their own descriptions of the museum's collections he had assembled. On July 15, 1896 Abbott wrote to Smithsonian Assistant Secretary G. Brown Goode, politely declining his request that he write such an account, "I must thank you very much for your kind letter [...] in which you spoke of publishing some of my work in book form. I sent you from Penang a month ago, the notes of my Turkestan trip, they are the only notes of any of my trips that I had with me & have mislaid the others." In fact that handwritten journal from the Turkestan trip is the only one that seems to have survived, and with that Turkestan exception, after his leaving East Africa in 1887 there are no longer any references in his correspondence to keeping any such a journal, probably because his long letters to museum scientists and to family superseded his earlier practice of writing in a journal then extracting from it to write his letters.

On June 14, 1893, he wrote to Smithsonian ornithologist Robert Ridgway that he would leave for Central Asia the next day, "marching via Ladakh the Karakorum pass to Yarkand" and expecting to be gone about 15 months. "Have got everything ready & if the Mammalia & avi-fauna of Kashgar don't suffer it will not be my fault," he joked. The same letter neatly summarizes his main reason for this trip:

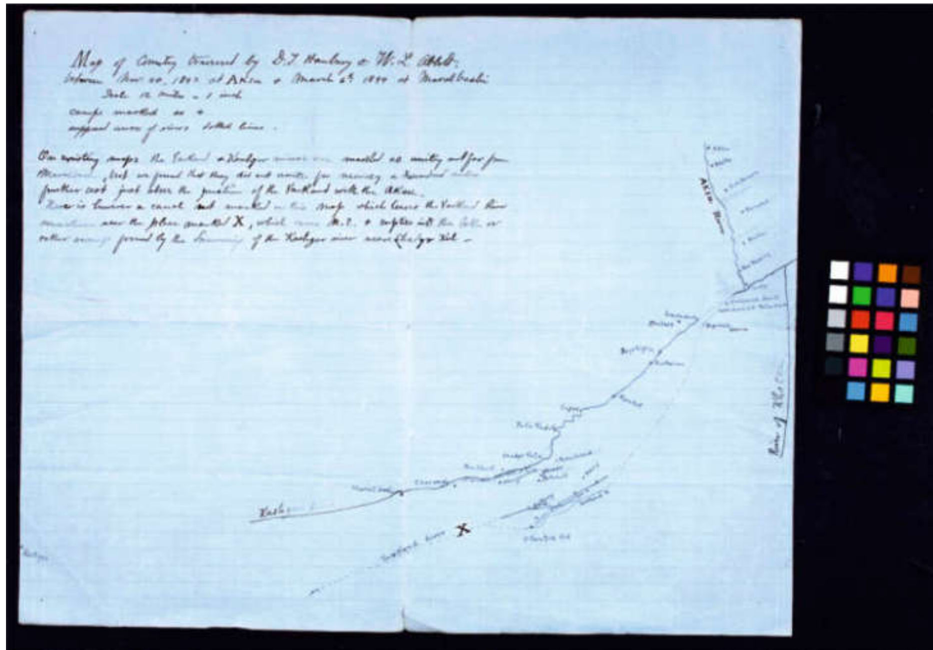


Figure 6. Original Abbott's hand-drawn "Map of Country traveled by D.T. Hanbury W.L. Abbott." Smithsonian Institution Archives.

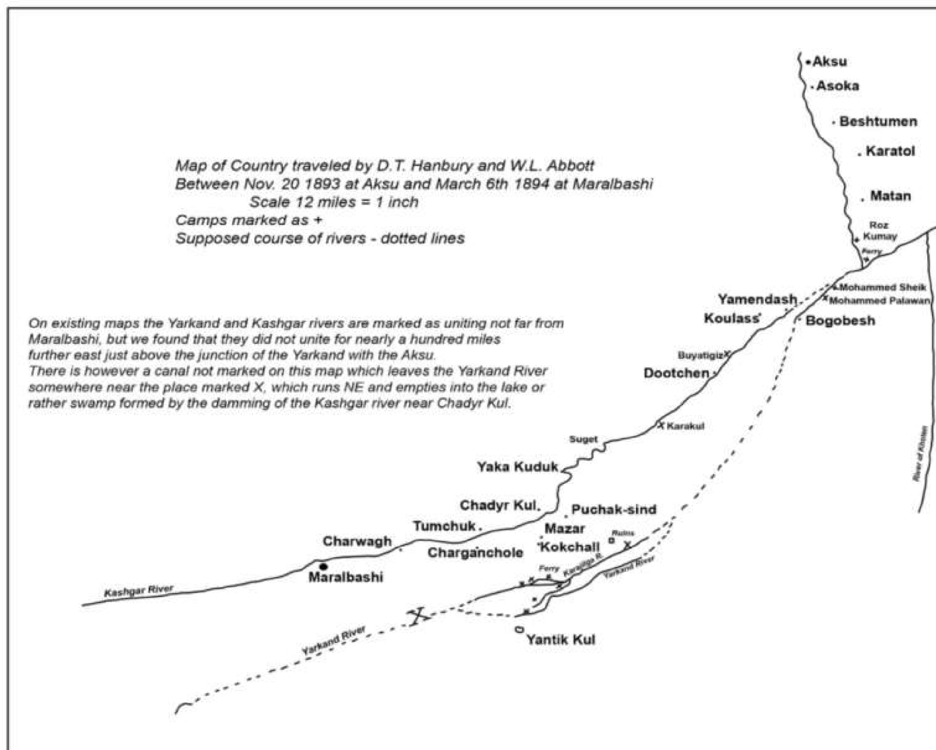


Figure 7. Line drawing of archival map, re-drawn from original archival "Map of Country traveled by D.T. Hanbury and W.L. Abbott."
(Map by Taylor Robinson, from Taylor 2016:269.)

"Kashmir seems thoroughly gone over—so is all India I believe. Of course Central Asia is far less known than India. Hoping some of the species will prove new to the Museum." (Abbott to R. Ridgway, June 14, 1893.) This assessment is consistent with Abbott's lifelong preference for visiting places that had not previously been "worked over" by naturalists, where new species and previously unknown peoples could be found.

The first pages of Abbott's journal are especially revealing as to his motivations for the trip. Probably written at Leh sometime after his arrival July 1 and before his departure on July 13 for Turkestan, or possibly added later after the trip, these few pages (775 words) have the handwritten title "Trip to Yarkand etc. by W.L. Abbott" and are the only parts of this unpaginated document written in essay format. After this introduction the journal continues as a series of dates followed by very brief, present-tense notes, or sometimes less (e.g. a thermometer reading for that day without further text).

> I had been wandering about in Kashmir for about a year, shooting & collecting birds, not being very successful in either occupation. Like most sportsmen who go to Kashmir, I got filled with a drive to cross over to Yarkand & visit the Pamir for Ovis poli an animal which for some reason or other is more desired than any other by Indian sportsmen. Most of the sportsmen who visit Kashmir are officers on leave who rarely get a long enough furlough to allow them to make the journey. A year at least is necessary. In the first place a Chinese passport must be obtained, then one has to write to the Foreign office of the Indian Govt. & get its permission to cross the frontier.
>
> The shortest & quickest route is via Gilgit & Hunza Nagar to the Tag[h]dumbash Pamir. But this route is generally closed to European travellers for military & political reasons. So that it is necessary to go via Leh & the KaraKorum route to Yarkand, a distance of over 800 miles, 250 of which is through as desolate & barren a region as can be found upon this earth outside of the Frigid zones.
>
> I had intended to start in June 1892, but getting a bad attack of mountain fever in Kashmir, I had to put it off until the following year. (Journal, "Trip to Yarkand," SI Archives.)

Abbott's earlier correspondence described the "military & political" reasons for the closure of the Pamirs when he wrote of the Russian eviction of Younghusband from the Pamir region, cited above. Yet Abbott's Turkestan expedition benefitted from the extensive existing network of traders and travelers who had preceded him. At Leh Abbott hired a Yarkandi servant "Mohammed Joo" who had previously served the Scottish trader Andrew Dalgleish, and had been present when Dalgleish was murdered by an Afghan crossing the Karakorum Pass in 1882. His journal shows how Abbott benefitted from the extensive extant trade network for financing such trips (see Taylor 2016:264-265).

Within Smithsonian archives there is a hand-drawn map on which Abbott plotted his travels (Figure 3); here presented alongside my re-drawn version with printed text (Figure 4). Abbott's original, difficult-to-read handwriting (as shown) indicates the time-consuming but important role of properly transcribing his archival documents for the study of these collections.

Examples from this trip illustrate the level of associated information in Abbott's original handwritten labels; supplemented by further information in archival documents. Figure 8a shows a set of boots, for which Abbott provides the local name "Chirrocks" and the annotation "Worn by both sexes"; collected at Yarkand. Figure 8b shows a close-up of Abbott's original handwritten label. Such original information recorded by Abbott about his ethnographic collections is also seen in his handwritten label for the woman's cap, also collected at Yarkand, shown in Figure 8b. Such original information recorded by Abbott about his ethnographic collections is also seen in his handwritten label for the woman's cap, also collected at Yarkand, shown in Figure 9 (examples from Taylor 2016:270-271).

A final example of how the comprehensive search for archival documents can help inform analysis of individual craft objects in legacy collections comes from my study of a small but important early collection of artifacts Abbott brought from his visits to the "Chow pah" or Maniq Negrito tribal people in the Trang-Patthalung border highlands area of Thailand. Abbott's is one of the earliest recorded visits to this small but distinctive Negrito population in southern Thailand; few 19th-century collections or even observations are known from this group. One object Abbott collected is a

now fragile and damaged net consisting of plant-fiber netting strung between two wooden poles. Due to its current fragility this net can no longer be expanded for photography into a shape like that of its original likely use. Nevertheless, the net as it looks now in storage can be seen in Figure 10. Though no original label hand-written by Abbot survives on this net, the shipping papers for the entire shipment, now among accession records in the Smithsonian Institution Archives, include an undated piece of paper written in Abbott's handwriting, completely out of context among the shipping invoices with which it apparently got stored upon the shipment's arrival. The notes on this paper refer to a net – surely this one, since this is the only net we know of that Abbott collected anywhere in Trang (Thailand), from which he shipped the collection. The entire text on that page, containing information completely unavailable from any other source about this tribal people, reads as follows:

> Net used in fishing & also for catching birds. When used for birds, a decoy tame bird is used – Forest partridges etc. & the nets (4 or 5) stood up around this decoys cage. The nets stand so they will fall easily. The wild birds come up to interview or fight the captive & run or fly against the nets & get entangled. Used in fishing by standing them up in shallows & driving the fish towards them. – Trong. Malay Peninsula.

This concluding example well illustrates that archival scraps of paper, sometime found in the unlikeliest places, can be filled with clues that help us decode and bring life to our legacy museum collections of crafts and other material culture.

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Figure 8b. Original handwritten label for Catalog no. E-175118. Information recorded on original handwritten labels is often not included within the online database information about museum collections; finding it may require visiting the collections in storage.

Figure 8a. Boots (local name "Chirrocks"), collected at Yarkand by W.L. Abbott either in August 1893 or in July, 1894. Abbott's original handwritten label is at right; the recent barcode inventory label at left. Dept. of Anthropology, Smithsonian Institution, catalog no. E-175118.

Figure 9. Woman's cap (local name "Chinitawar"), collected at Yarkand by W.L. Abbott either in August 1893 or in July, 1894. Abbott's original handwritten label notes "Chinese manufacture." Dept. of Anthropology, Smithsonian Institution, catalog no. E-175109.

Figure 10. "Chow pah" net used both for fishing and for catching birds. Length of wooden poles: approx. 101 cm. Collected by W.L. Abbott, 1899. Catalog number E202850. (Taylor 2015a:178)

Colors and Designs in the Felt Carpets
from the Collection of the Kasteyev State Museum of Arts

Svetlana Kobzhanova
Kasteyev State Museum of Arts

Abstract:

The Kasteyev State Museum of Arts' unique collection of the 19th and 20th-century Kazakh folk crafts is part of the nation's treasury of ethnic arts. The items in the museum's collection include a wide variety of patterned felt and woven pieces, embroideries, mats, as well as exquisite examples of metalware, and wooden, leather and bone pieces. Collecting folk handicrafts was one of the key areas of the museum's work until the early 1990s. From 1978 to 1991, the Department of Applied Arts arranged over 20 expeditions to gather Kazakh folk crafts in different regions of Kazakhstan, as well as in Russia's Tyumen and Omsk Regions where the Kazakhs also lived. At present, this interesting and most valuable section at the museum comprises over 5,000 exhibits. Among them is the collection of 267 felts of significant artistic and scientific value.

Household felts played a key part in the life of the Kazakhs. The museum's collection comprises 117 *tekemet* carpets, 104 *syrmak* rugs, and 41 small items made of sheep wool. These include the traditional *tekemet* and *syrmak* floor carpets, *ayakkap* and *kesekap* bags for tableware, *sandyk kap* chest covers, *jer jastyk* hassocks, and *shaikiiz* tablecloths. As for the palette, a Kazakh yurt was a place that had no color dissonances as felts were colored with natural dyes only, including walnuts and extracts from the steppe plants. The *tekemet* floor carpets usually impress with their monumental and picturesque designs while the *syrmak* rugs usually bear symmetrical and clear patterns.

The unique felts from all regions of Kazakhstan are convincing evidence that the applied arts in the 20th century have inherited the greatest traditions of the ancient nomadic culture. The felt carpets in the museum's collection are decorated with diamond and vortex designs or, less often, solar rosettes. The core element of the design is the *koshkar muiz* hornlike curls symbolizing wealth and prosperity. The other widely used patterns are plant motifs, including palmettes, as well as tree- and leaf-like designs.

This article describes a rich variety of felts in the museum's collection and explores how Kazakh crafters interpret various patterns, compositions, and figurative symbols and fill them with symbolic meanings.

- In 1973, a museum's field expedition acquired a felt floor carpet not typical of our region. The original composition and laconic *irek* patterns make this *tekemet* by crafter Zhansakova a unique piece in the collection.
- Research into the art of *tekemet*-making suggests that these carpets fulfill a protective function as they contain all the elements of the cosmos as understood by the Kazakhs and each of them bears figurative information about the surrounding world.
- A felt *tekemet* by Kyzgygai Stybayeva (born in 1886), a crafter from Chymkent Region, has a very picturesque structure with a clear graphical design, a rich color palette, and an exquisite layout of ornamental motifs.
- A *tekemet* by Nesipeli Moldabayeva (born in 1926) made in the 1960s was acquired in 1972, during an expedition to Chymkent Region. This piece has a black-and-white composition that reflects the dualistic understanding of the world and impresses with its monumentality. The stylized animal and skeletal motifs in its design may be associated with rock engravings. Many felts in the museum's collection contain references to similar primeval symbols.
- A black-and-white *syrmak* with the pattern of deer antlers by Maisara Yernazarova from Semipalatinsk Region bears the influence of the animal style invented by the early nomads of Kazakhstan.
- A *tekemet* made by Dymys Konysheva in the 1960s was acquired in 1975. Here, the design is created by five contrasting colors. The crafter depicted solar signs enclosed in a stylized form of the sun as if radiating its cosmic energy.

Keywords: museum, collection, felt, pattern, design, *tekemet, syrmak*

The Kasteyev State Museum of Arts' unique collection of the 19th and 20th-century Kazakh folk crafts is part of the nation's treasury of ethnic arts. The items in the museum's collection include a wide variety of patterned felt and woven pieces, embroideries, mats, as well as exquisite examples of metalware, and wooden, leather and bone pieces. The collection began to form in 1970 when the first expedition to collect folk crafts was arranged by Kulakhmet Khojikov, Director of the Republican Museum of Applied Folk Arts. A distinguished artist and expert in the traditional culture, he headed ten ethnographic expeditions that made an enormous contribution to the collection. In 1976, the collection of the Museum of Applied Folk Arts and that of the Taras Shevchenko Gallery were united in a new building, which was built for the State Museum of Arts of Kazakhstan later named after the renowned Kazakh painter Abylkhan Kasteyev.

Collecting folk handicrafts was one of the key areas of the museum's work until the early 1990s. From 1978 to 1991, the Department of Applied Arts arranged over 20 expeditions to gather Kazakh folk crafts in different regions of Kazakhstan, as well as in Russia's Tyumen and Omsk Regions where the Kazakhs also lived. Currently, this interesting and most valuable section at the museum comprises over 5,000 objects. Among them is the collection of 267 felts of significant artistic and scientific value. The nomadic peoples that inhabited the territory that would become Kazakhstan mastered felting in ancient times. They used felt to build yurts and make carpets, clothes, shoes, and household items. A bride's dowry comprised a yurt, *tekemet* and *syrmak* carpets, as well as *ayakap* storage bags. The lining of the *saukele* headdresses was also made of felt. These traditions were passed on from generation to generation.

As for the palette, a Kazakh yurt was a place that had no color dissonances as felts were colored with natural dyes only, including walnuts and extracts from the steppe plants. Household felts played a key part in the life of the Kazakhs. The museum's collection comprises 117 *tekemet* carpets, 104 *syrmak* rugs, and 41 small items made of sheep wool. These include the traditional *tekemet* and *syrmak* floor carpets, *ayakkap* and kesekap bags for tableware, *sandyk kap* chest covers, *jer jastyk* hassocks, and *shaikiiz* tablecloths. The *tekemet* floor carpets usually impress with their monumental and picturesque designs. The technique used to make these is similar to that of making single-color felts.

A crafter spreads wool of a certain color on a mat, which already bears a thick base of felt. This will form the background of a *tekemet* carpet. Then she lays out strands of other colors that will form the pattern. The next step is to cover the prepared item with a cloth so that the wool doesn't move and pour hot water onto it evenly. After the would-be carpet gets soaked with water, it should be tied up and then rolled with feet or arms and elbows throughout the day. It also needs to be opened from time to time, turned with different sides up and sprinkled with hot water. A ready carpet is spread to dry on a flat surface. The finished item may serve for up to twenty years.

Another type of felt carpets – the *syrmak* rugs usually bears symmetrical and clear patterns. The technique used to make these is extremely efficient. The very choice of the mosaic technique – the insertion of felt cuts of one color into the felt of another color – corresponds to the utmost extent to the designated use of this carpet, which usually covers the floor but can also be used to adorn the walls in a yurt. Neither applique nor embroidery suits this task because the pattern and the background need to form an even surface so that the carpet wouldn't wear out too quickly. The *syrmak* carpets are very durable. If made carefully and thoroughly, they can last for fifty or more years. A crafter lays felt pieces of one color onto another one, outline the design and then cut both layers of felt at once following the pattern. White felt is then inserted into the dark one, and vice versa to produce a piece with two mirrored ornamented surfaces. The pieces of the combined felt are then sewn together, laid onto another – simple and coarse – piece of felt, and firmly fastened. Stitches run parallel to the pattern. A colored cord is sewn onto the carpet where the pieces of felt join each other. The colors used in the *syrmak* rugs are usually calm and simple.

The unique felt items from all regions of Kazakhstan are convincing evidence that the applied arts in the 20th century have inherited one of the greatest traditions of the ancient nomadic culture. Felt is a versatile material that was widely used by nomads as early as in the 1st millennium B.C. Beautiful felt carpets with patterns and genre scenes were found in the Pazyryk burials (5th century B.C.). Interestingly, Kazakh crafters use similar inlay and applique techniques in designing the *syrmak* rugs. The felt carpets in the museum's collection are decorated with diamond and vortex designs or, less often, solar rosettes. The core element of the design is the *koshkar muiz* hornlike curls

symbolizing wealth and prosperity. The other widely used patterns are plant motifs, including palmettes, as well as tree- and leaf- like designs.

The diversity of natural sites and landscapes of Kazakhstan has had an indisputable influence on the development of the color palette in the Kazakh applied arts. People attached different meanings to colors: red symbolized fire and joy; yellow gold and wealth; green prosperity, longevity, and eternal youth; white purity and wisdom; brown earth; black night and darkness; and blue the skies.

Since the 1950s, art historians and ethnographers have arranged expeditions to the regions where the Kazakh crafts flourished to study techniques, patterns, as well as compositional and color approaches. Valuable findings by Sabit Mukanov, Alkey Margulan, Kemal Akishev, Shaizada Tokhtabayeva and museum researchers U. Ayazbekova and Damegul Mukhamed were fundamental for the studies of felt making in Kazakhstan.

This paper describes the variety of felts in the museum's collection and considers how individual Kazakh crafters approach the interpretation of patterns, compositions, images, and symbols in their original and creative ways.

Chest covers and household items made of felt, such as hanging bags for bedlinen, complemented other ornamented pieces in a yurt. In 1973, a museum's field expedition acquired a felt floor carpet not typical of our region. The original composition and laconic patterns make this *tekemet* by crafter Zhansakova a unique piece in the museum's collection. Here, the light background is adorned by an *irek* zigzag brown pattern that divides the space into the center field and the border. "The crafter designs a sacralized confined space with a border as a symbol of stability. The continuous *irek* zigzag line forms an enclosed rectangle, which, according to the beliefs of the Turks, can be conventionally approximated to a square and reiterates the idea of the modeling and creating of a cosmos and inhabiting its space," U. Ayazbekova writes in her paper (Ayazbekova: 159).

The Kazakh *irek* motif is one of the most ancient geometric patterns dating back to petroglyphs and meander decorations on Bronze Age vessels. The philosophy of this pattern is deep and boundless but, still, it has obvious characteristics such as a zigzag line similar to the meander and referring to the flow of waves, or the world's river as a core of the universe, or a road that connects the upper, middle and lower worlds. The straight and curved lines repeat horizontally and vertically as if demonstrating the way of life of the Kazakh people – the idea of migration as a repetition of natural cycles, or a symbolic movement along a magic circle.

The key motif in the composition of a *tekemet* carpet refers to the idea of chaos and harmony. Research into the art of *tekemet*-making suggests that these carpets fulfill a protective function as they contain all the elements of the cosmos as understood by the Kazakhs. The very shape of the carpet is associated with the four cardinal directions – north, south, west, and east. The center field decorated with a geometric pattern is interpreted as an enclosed space of the universe – the symbol of harmony that protects a clan, a tribe, or a family against chaos and evil spirits. The zigzag border symbolizes chaos where darkness and evil reside. This suggests an analogy with the everyday life of nomads who, when forced to make an overnight stop in the steppe laid a horsehair lasso around themselves to protect themselves against poisonous snakes and spiders (and these creatures, indeed, didn't dare to cross the line) and create a guarded space that would grant them confidence and calmness.

Ayazbekova believes that such *tekemet* carpets were used to crown rulers. It is true that the shape, color and material of the rug may echo the ancient rite of enthroning khans by raising them up on a white felt carpet. Each piece made by a crafter conveys a great deal of information about the surrounding world encoded in artistic symbols.

A felt *tekemet* by Kyzgygai Stybayeva (born in 1986), a crafter from Chymkent Region, has a very picturesque structure with an uneven, slightly blurred outline of the patterns. The monumental and expressive red and black pattern consisting of two diamonds and vortex rosettes is outlined with a dark margin and contrasts with the yellow center field. The carpet has a clear graphical design, a rich color palette, and an exquisite layout of ornamental motifs.

Another *tekemet* by Nesipeli Moldabayeva (born in 1926) made in the 1960s was acquired in 1972, during an expedition to Chymkent Region. This piece has a black-and-white composition that reflects the dualistic understanding of the world and impresses with its monumentality. The stylized animal and skeletal motifs in its design may be associated with rock engravings. Many felts in the museum's collection contain references to similar primeval symbols. The practical magic should

be an analogy with the "magic" movement of a sacrificed animal to the world of the dead. The idea of the primevalness of creativity is typical of many pieces in the collection. A black-and-white *syrmak* with the pattern of deer antlers by Maisara Yernazarova from Semipalatinsk Region bears the influence of the animal style invented by the early nomads of Kazakhstan. "The pieces that can be regarded as typical of entire Kazakhstan, excluding its western regions, include black-and-white cloths with monumental and expressive designs. The black-and-white carpets were made to protect a family against any harm, including the evil eye, diseases, and misfortune," Shaizada Tokhtabayeva writes in her book (Tokhtabayeva: 22-23).

A *tekemet* made by Dymys Konysheva in the 1960s was acquired in 1975. Here, the design is created by five contrasting colors. The crafter depicted solar signs enclosed in a stylized form of the sun as if radiating its cosmic energy.

Contemporary Kazakh artists continue to explore ethnic traditions and create felts. The works by Aizhan Bekkulova, Saule Bapanova, Almagul Menlibayeva, and other artists are known both in and beyond Kazakhstan. Today, however, there's no such notion as the "Kazakh art of felt making" as these artists pursue different styles, techniques, and ways of self-expression. Yet, we may remain confident that Kazakhstan has preserved its art of felt making, which originated from the fine specimens that are part of the rich and diverse collection of the Kasteyev State Museum of Arts.

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The Images of Nomadic Civilization in Kazakhstan's Painting

Yekaterina Reznikova
Kasteyev State Museum of Arts

The entire period of the development of Kazakhstan's professional school of painting has been marked with an important tendency: artists continue to refer to the images of the Kazakh nomadic civilization and traditional way of living. A yurt and its *shanyrak* (the circular opening at its top), tableware, felt and embroidered carpets, harnesses, musical instruments, national costumes, jewelry, headdresses and many other things accompanied nomads in their everyday life and continue to live in the dimension of painting. The genius of the Kazakhs has fully expressed itself in their decorative and applied arts – the traditions and techniques used in working with materials emerged in antiquity and have been carefully preserved and passed on from generation to generation. Patterns and ornamental motifs were the main element of any crafted item. The approaches to decorating everyday objects – from a small *blezik* ring to long *tekemet* carpets – have evolved for ages and got enriched with aesthetic, semantic, and symbolic counterpoints. The leading artists of Kazakhstan have brought this cultural and historical heritage to the new artistic system and made it an integral part of their creative pursuits.

Kazakhstan's school of painting is rather young comparative to other traditions, beginning only about 100 years ago. The development of painting coincided with, and was largely determined by, new socioeconomic structure, the growth of industry and cities, and the transition to a settled life. These new conditions shaped new perceptions of the world associated with innovations in everyday life. This, however, did not prevent artists of various generations, from the first Kazakh painters to contemporary ones, from bringing the images of nomadic life into their works. They did so continuously as painting evolved in Kazakhstan, driven by the nation's immanent self-identity – a global idea that defined the essence and originality of Kazakh art through time.

What are the images of nomadic culture that Kazakh painters continue to refer to in their works? Why do they remain relevant nowadays? What are the stylistic approaches used by different generations of painters who continue to work with ancient nomadic symbols and images? These are some of the relevant questions that require further research.

The artists of the 1920-1930s – the period when the Kazakh school of painting began to develop – were the direct witnesses to nomadic communities in Kazakhstan, which historically had been the predominant way people lived in the region. Nikolay Khludov and Abylkhan Kasteyev became the true chroniclers of this epoch and recorded a host of encounters they observed and fell in love with. They tried to accurately reproduce the life of the Kazakhs, which had nothing insignificant or unimportant in it, in a most detailed and narrative way. The pictures of that time are, therefore, fascinatingly authentic.

Nature, with its steppes and mountains, appears as a harmonious universe and a background for ordinary life scenes captured by Kasteyev in his watercolors and paintings: a woman in a yurt, cooking, horse pasturing, sheep shearing, mare milking, or preparing the *kurt* (salty cottage cheese). Kasteyev poeticized the Kazakhs' habitual occupations, which are as ancient as time. Like *akyns* (Kazakh folk singers), he sang about the nomadic life and recorded every peculiarity of everyday routines in every detail. The organic connection between a human being and the surrounding world, the artist's attention to detail, the thoroughness of drawing and the modeling of light and shade – everything in Kasteyev's works is pierced with warmth, sincerity, and purity. His inspiration is inseparably fused with primitivism, as evidenced by the naïve and dutiful depiction of every object, the flat and frontal composition, the focus on the foreground, and the motionless "posing" figures. The sincere admiration for the fullness of life in all its manifestations determined the creative approach of this talented artist, a man of his people with the firsthand knowledge of their way of life. Introducing the items of a nomadic household into his compositions, Kasteyev both emphasized the environment his characters were surrounded by and explored their connection with the spiritual origins of traditions. It is no accident, for example, that he painted the Kazakh poet and musician Jambyl Jabayev with a dombra in a yurt surrounded by usual household objects – an ornate and colorful floor carpet, a *tusek-kap* felt case for linen, a carved *kebezhe* chest, blankets, a mat, and pillows. The colorful joints of the *kerege* – the yurt's outer wall – add integrity and completeness to this picture. The witnesses of the past and the invariable companions of ordinary life reflect the peculiar poetics of this great master of words.

Figure 1. Abylkhan Kasteyev (1904-1973). *Collective Dairy Farm*. 1936. Oil on canvas. 60x61

Figure 2. Kimeshek and Nikolay Khludov's *Portrait of a Kazakh Woman*

Figure 3. Kanafia Telzhanov (1927-2013). *Kokpar*. 1960. Oil on canvas. 150x325

Figure 4. Aisha Galimbayeva (1917-2008) *Dastarkhan*. 1959 Oil on canvas. 97x109

While keeping his focus on the traditional way of life, Kasteyev also scrupulously depicted the signs of the new time – there is a radio comfortably set in the yurt interior. Traditional costumes, songs and dances, or the offering of *kumys* (a mare's milk) to guests contrast with previously unseen agricultural machinery (*The Old and New Life*, 1937). An old-style carpet gets adorned with the portrait of the nation's leader (*A Present for Comrade Stalin*, 1950). Newly built cities appear behind vast grain fields (*Harvesting*, 1957). A traditional *kubi* bowl for whipping milk is replaced with separators. In other words, the artist witnesses how traditional life gets entwined with the new reality.

Nikolay Khludov, Kasteyev's predecessor and teacher, had a somewhat different approach. His paintings are filled with ethnographic features and the desire to accurately fix every detail of the ethnic types and elements of costumes, or typical household items and their functions. Khludov's works, as an alternative to photography, remain an important source of information, which helps to see the ordinary life of the Kazakhs at the turn of the 20th century. "The subject of most of his works is culture and everyday life of nomads, as the artist was especially interested in the unusual atmosphere and ethnographic peculiarities of the traditional life of the Kazakhs" [1: 17]. A careful observer, Khludov focused on typical details. He noticed, for example, a saddle covered with fur (*A Boy on a Bull*, 1907) that helped to travel long distances during migrations. In a *kimeshek* – a married woman's headdress – the artist takes note of the various ways of wounding a turban.

A yurt is a peculiar phenomenon in nomadic life and the artistic narrations about it. The unique portable dwelling encompasses all the nomads' key notions about the world. Its spherical form refers to the dome of the heavens that stretched over the people who had lived in the steppe for ages. Simply made, comfortable and practical, a yurt is an invariable object in Kazakh paintings that may be a self-sufficient symbol or a supplement to the overall picture of being. Khludov shows the yurt from outside, as part of the landscape. When painting its interior, he demonstrates its peculiar inner space and how objects are placed within it. The walls are traditionally formed by the diagonal *kerege* lattice. Ornate cases and *kebezhe* chests are located around the circular perimeter and the *shi* mat made of reed is rolled on the floor. The certain location of each object and the division of the inner space into the upper, middle and lower worlds, as well as the women's and men's sides, reflect the understanding of how the world is built and the key laws of harmony. The philosophy of everyday life and that of the world are indivisible.

In the center of a yurt there is a fireplace – the topographic mid-point and a functionally important and sacral place. A *kazan* – a large cooking pot – is a main component of the fireside and an indispensable companion for nomads that symbolizes the fullness of life and wellbeing. Khludov accumulated his impressions of the Kazakhs' life and created a collective image of these people using the materials he collected during his trips.

Russian artists who came to Kazakhstan also painted local people and their life. Two works by Alexey Bortnikov, for example, show a Kazakh woman in a yellow dress and a *kimeshek* turban, holding a spindle in her hands. In *A Letter from Kolkhoz Breeders* (1949), she takes part in a villagers' meeting with a native of their *aul* who has achieved significant success. The same woman appears years later in *Khludov on a Jailau* (1960). Here she is seen keenly interested in the work of the painter who is drawing a sketch *en plein air* and is equally attentive to what is routine for her. The features of nomadic life (a yurt, a *syrmak* rug, or traditional clothes) appeared in socialist realism paintings to convey local particularities and describe where a pictured event took place. It is evident that the scene in *A Letter from Kolkhoz Breeders* takes place in a Kazakh steppe. This was an aesthetic principle of the socialist epoch – "art should be ethnos-related in terms of its form and socialist in terms of its content."

The artists of the first generation who set a direction for the development of fine arts in Kazakhstan pursued similar goals in representing traditional Kazakh life. The nomadic elements that needed to be depicted authentically became the markers of Kazakhstan's school of painting. A review of the artistic techniques and approaches reveals commonalities in how the nomadic civilization was painted by Kasteyev, Khludov, Bortnikov, and other artists. Their desire to show the life as full as it was made them use their specific observations and be very thorough about detail.

The next generation of painters – that of the 1950s – developed another approach. Kanafiya Telzhanov, Kamil Shayakhmetov and Moldakhmet Kenbayev suggested their own interpretations of the phenomenon of nomadism. They were fascinated with romantic, festive and poetic country life and created an elevated, almost idealistic picture of being where people and nature lived in harmony. The idea of a man's inseparableness from nature is constant in how Kazakh nomads see the world, as they cannot think themselves existent beyond the natural environment.

Figure 5. Gulfayrus Ismailova (1929-2013) *Crafter*, 1967 Oil on canvas. 192x172

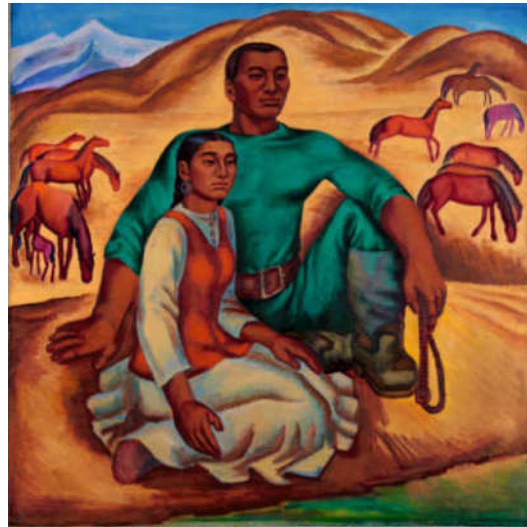

Figure 6. Salikhitdin Aytbayev (1938-1994) *Happiness*. 1966 Oil on canvas. 160x160

Figure 7. Togbolat Togyzbayev. *Kitchen*. 1972. Oil on canvas. 166x196

Figure 8. Saukele

Kanafiya Telzhanov – the leader of the 1950s generation – poeticized ethnic traditions by showing, instead of certain objects or images, large-scale cultural events such as, for example, an ethnic game (*Kokpar*) or musical and singing traditions (*The Sounds of a Dombra*). His favorite character was a horse rider portrayed dynamically and expressively (in this, Telzhanov was under the influence of his teacher Mikhail Avilov, as well as that of Yevsei Moiseyenko). The image of a horse rider is an archetype in Kazakh culture. A nomad spent a lot of time riding a horse and these skills were learned from almost infancy and were of huge importance. Horse-riding games offered a perfect opportunity to show a galloping horse and a rider who became one with it – that's how *Kokpar* (1960), *Kyz Kuu* (1966), and *Hunting with a Golden Eagle* (1964) appeared. The signs of the new time – a running train or power transmission lines going beyond the horizon – cannot displace the traditional way of life. The solemn spirit of the proud and beautiful characters and the objects of the nomadic life dominate Telzhanov's works both semantically and compositionally and symbolize the fundamentality of centuries-long traditions.

Aisha Galimbayeva's almost intimate way of picturing the Kazakh life contrasts with Telzhanov's elevated and heroized interpretations. A girl's cap with eagle-owl feathers, a wooden bowl for *kumys* or an *ozhau* ladle are not only the objects from the olden days or elements of the life in an *aul*, like in Kasteyev or Khludov's works. In her interpretation, these things acquire their own value and expressiveness, as well as unique beauty. She frees them from their household functions and puts them in the foreground, enjoying the intricate pattern and their charming shapes. The vivid and energetic colors, with the prevailing red and white, add festivity to these objects. Each element reflects the beauty and vital energy of natural materials, keeps the warmth of artisans' hands and conveys the wisdom and depth of ancient traditions. A *dastarkhan* – a festive table set for guests – is filled with the symbols of generosity and hospitality. A wooden *ozhau* ladle and a bowl for *kumys*, a *kese* tea bowl and a decorated felt cushion, ornate carpets and a painted ceramic jug are indispensable items of a Kazakh steppe household. Galimbayeva explores the philosophy of things used in nomadic being. In her works, calmness and harmony, as well as festivity and comfort refer to the creative energy of a woman who is the artist's main character.

The unique objects created by artisans not only add individuality to a dwelling. The patterns usedin each of them are intended to send good wishes to those who can read these coded messages. The tradition of passing on knowledge and spiritual values from generation to generation is fundamental for the Kazakhs. This theme is explored in several works, including *A Crafter with Her Apprentices* by Olga Kuzhelenko, and *A Fairy Tale* by Maria Lizogub. The work of crafters who create unique pieces of folk art is another significant phenomenon. The characters painted by artists are often real people and not just poeticized images. Gulfairus Ismailova in her *Crafter* (1967) portrayed her mother who had been a known carpet weaver. The old woman in white clothes, which contrast with her swarthy face and hands, is surrounded by *alasha, bau* and *baskur* carpets, their colors and patterns praising life as it is. Maria Lizogub's *Crafter* (1961) portrays Latipa Khojikova – a well-known artist – surrounded by the things she made. Here, the abundant colors of the background transform in an almost abstract field with an open, reassuring palette. Moldakhmet Kenbayev in *Felt Making* (1958) is an enchanted observer of the making of a *tekemet* carpet. Women in colored vests with their heads gracefully bent and their almost musical hands laying a red pattern onto a white warp, the monumental mountain landscape at sunset – the polyphony of colors make this picture of everyday life an expression of the pure idea.

The search for a new language of painting in the 1960s changed the approaches to colors and figurativeness. The pictures get more generalized, symbolic and rid of excessive detail. This generation offers a new understanding of the nomadic civilization. Salikhitdin Aitbayev's characters are presented as eternal people in an eternal and timeless steppe. Shaimardan Sariyev's enlarged silhouettes and flat forms, as well as laconic and contrasting colors, are an obvious reference to the Kazakh decorative techniques and patterns. Tokbolat Toguzbayev also makes references to the folk art by stylizing and generalizing the inner space of a yurt or a house and filling it with epic motifs. Both his still lifes and genre scenes get transformed into an elevated symbol, the expression of the ethnic idea.

Bakhtiyar Tabiyev depicts deliberately eventless scenes of everyday life in a realistic manner, with a bit of generalization. Realistic forms and abstract insets of the geometric patches of mud huts or felt carpets hung outdoors create a single colorful space and fuse together the earth and the sky, people and the surroundings.

Abdrashit Sydykhanov combines symbolic figures, ornamental motifs and *tanba* signs of a clan. This helps him to capture the quintessence of the ideas hidden in objects or occurrences – as in *The Chaban Sign* (1989), *The Korkyt Sign* (1992), and *The Symbol of Sholpan* (1995).

Important symbols of the nomadic culture emerge in the works by Amandos Akanayev. His *Saukele* (1992), for example, combines the sacral signs of the nomadic civilization – a bride's headdress soaring up towards a *shanyrak*. The artist experiments with collage to include decorative patterns and relief in the space of his paintings. The typical features of his works, as well as of those by other representatives of the Kazakh new wave of painting of the 1980-1990s, such as Bakhyt Bapishev, Askar Yesdaulet, and Marat Bekeyev, include a deeper philosophical approach, symbolism, and emphasized individualism.

The 2000s were the time of renewed interest in the images of the nomadic civilization entwined in the narrative of paintings. In battle, historical and epic scenes, nomadic objects acquire new meanings. Large and multifigured neo-realistic pictures get filled with the detailed images of weaponry, ammunition, military costumes, and musical instruments. A perfect drawing and an abundance of detail are the typical features of the artists of this period such as Nurlan Kilibayev, Meirzhan Nurgozhin, Talgat Tleuzhanov, Dauren Kasteyev, and Agimsaly Duzelkhanov. In addition to being extremely specific, the art of the most recent time offers a historical interpretation of the past and chooses, instead of an individual, people and heroes as its key subject.

Thinking about the everyday life of nomads is what determined the entire history of the Kazakh professional school of painting, having its peculiar features and approaches in each generation of artists. By incorporating the codes of the nomadic civilization, the painters explore the life of their people, which was a series of ongoing migrations. The objects of the past reflected their way of life, beliefs, traditions, rituals, and philosophy, bearing at the same time a sacral meaning and a connection with nature.

Despite a shift in the cultural paradigm, the images of the nomadic civilization remain relevant today and are continuously referred to in works of art. The evolution of the Kazakh painting has shown that painters use nomadic archetypes to express a multifaceted range of moral and ethical values. Kazakhstan's contemporary artists continue to revisit their ethnic, cultural and household traditions because their spiritual foundations remain unchanged and important in the past, at present, and in the future.

Beyond the Steppe: Craft and Artistic Movement through Time in Kazakhstan

Jared M. Koller
Asian Cultural History Program
Smithsonian Institution

On October 4, 2019 scholars from Kazakhstan's Kasteyev State Museum of Arts and from the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. came together for an international symposium on Kazakhstan's Crafts and Creative Economy, which explored approaches to the study of Kazakhstan's indigenous crafts from a global perspective. Many of the presenters at the symposium emphasized the important role that craft designs and symbols play in Kazakhstan's historic and contemporary culture. Clara Isabaeva, Gulaim Zhumabekova, and Oxana Tanskaya (among others) all connect pervasive symbols in *Saka* art and material culture with pastoral nomads of the past. These symbols and design elements are widespread in the archaeological record, but like any artistic tradition are continually altered and created anew through time. As Isabaeva notes in her paper, modern artists in Kazakhstan often find inspiration from ancient craft design and symbolism to produce new works that continue Kazakhstan's vibrant artist tradition and influence artistic communities globally. Some works by artist Amangeldy Mukazhanov, who was featured at the 2019 Craft2Wear show, were inspired by ancient petroglyphs, but retain an undoubtedly modern flare. Mukazhanov's jewelry often combines complicated shapes that could be interpreted in many ways, preferring to let his audience decipher their meaning. This article aims to present the scholarship of just a few influential thinkers, who examine how symbols, information, and people move and interact both historically and within modern contexts, and the ways that new research currently ongoing about Kazakhstan craft and archaeology contribute to these discourses.

Among archaeologists, many argue that attempting to discern mental phenomena through symbols and the material record is an impossible task due to the insufficient amount of evidence that the archaeological record necessitates. Hawkes' ladder of inference (Hawkes 1954) formalized skepticism about symbolism in archaeological contexts as subjective and inaccessible markers of interpretation (Robb 1998: 329). Strict materialist methodologies however are only one avenue for understanding past human behavior. Clifford Geertz's work, particularly his essays in *The Interpretations of Cultures* (1973), has been a major influence on archaeological theory even until the present day. Geertz emphasizes symbols as vehicles that construct meaning for a given culture. More importantly, the acquisition of culture by individual actors is the result of the internalization of symbols available within the public space. This means that an individual's personal identity is exclusively tied to one's social context and cultural symbols. Geertz's approach to culture and identity is ideal for archaeological interpretation, especially if we accept the premise that material objects are symbolic. If they are, an archaeologist needs only to discover the meaning of these symbols represented through material objects found during fieldwork to uncover the behaviors and even thoughts of past people. However, the usefulness of symbols as a means for understanding terms like culture and identity are still under debate within anthropological circles. The French sociologist and anthropologist Pierre Bourdieu, among others, wondered if there are other ways of describing 'culture' and explaining how it changes or interacts with individuals.

Bourdieu in his *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1977) struggled with the importance of micro and macro explanations of human behavior and culture. Bourdieu was never able to resolve this debate in his own work, oscillating between favoring his concept of the habitus and his idea of a strategic actor as a more accurate representation of human interaction and cultural acquisition. The habitus is built upon individual decisions and not on any biological or intuitive universal human traits, nor are these decisions primarily the result of institutional restrictions (Bourdieu 1977: 72-77). However, Bourdieu also argues that an independent reality exists outside of human perception. Bourdieu made a distinction between field and habitus, by defining field as a social space that has its own rules that are outside of human influence (Bourdieu 1977: 83). Yet, the field is a space among actors where meaning is understood based on shared dispositions. The habitus is related to the field in that it encompasses all perceptions and thoughts found within everyday life. Essentially it is a system of shared dispositions that interact within the field, and those individuals who know the rules better are more likely to succeed.

Figure 1a, 1b. Ancient petroglyphs depicting zoomorphic figures in Tamgaly, Kazakhstan. Photo taken: June 24, 2012

Figure 1a.

Figure 1b.

Building on Bourdieu's generative model, Hefner (1985) argues that knowledge is both created and understood in different ways depending on the experience of each individual who is engaged in the process. Simultaneously, the process of knowledge acquisition shapes individual actors and affects how future information is internalized or rejected. Hefner contends that religion and religious communities are two examples of how these groupings of shared knowledge are created and perpetuated. By creating specific frameworks for distributing knowledge, these institutions or traditions of knowledge can influence behavior and create patterns of behavior whose meaning is only partially understood by the actors themselves. Hefner describes his encounters in the Javanese mountains with a Tengger Hindu community during a series of spiritual performances and rituals. Some of the people that Hefner met admitted that they did not know what the words to a specific aspect of a ritual meant, nor did they understand why performing the ritual was important (Hefner 1985: 212-213). However, their ignorance of specific phrasing did not deter these same individuals from continuing to properly perform those rituals in the future. "We cannot assume here an easy correspondence between action-in-the-world and meaning-in-actors-of-minds," Hefner writes, "as at least some interpretive approaches do. Such ideal typical characterization is at best only a heuristic approximation that can be refined only inasmuch as we recognize 'meaning' as an experience that assumes an active work of interpretation by real human beings" (Hefner 1985: 187). Hefner in particular, is skeptical about the descriptive value of terms like culture or religion. He prefers to use a variation of Fredrick Barth's concept of 'traditions of knowledge' to describe social phenomena (Barth 1993).

The Central Asian steppe has a particularly interesting artistic history given the mobility of people, objects, and ideas (PO&I) both geographically and temporally. It is clear that traditions of knowledge were consistently on the move in the past and that ancient economies throughout the world engaged in material goods manufacturing and extensive trade networks (Kahn 2013; Frachetti 2011). At its most fundamental understanding, an archaeology of migration, mobility or movement acknowledges that the archaeological record is not a static environment neither in its deposition nor in the history of the material culture found within it. Traditionally, mobility and movement have been used interchangeably by archaeologists, particularly when examining Mesolithic and Paleolithic peoples (Klein 1999; Smith 1992). Mobility and movement were often regarded as part of the hunter-gatherer subsistence strategy, and thus archaeologists looked to reconstruct mobility using patterns in the material record. After the Neolithic and the establishment of sedentary communities, mobility came to be understood in terms of population migrations or concerning the mobility of social classes (Preston and Schörle 2013: 1). Migration studies thus focused on many social conditions that archaeologists interested in the Mesolithic and Paleolithic might de-emphasize, including ethno-religious diversity and syncretism. This de-emphasis is often due to either a lack of evidence needed to reconstruct ethnic and religious categories or to the mobile nature of hunter-gatherer social organization.

Migration is often associated with the movement of people (Anthony 1990), which ignores deeper connections between people on the move and the material culture and ideas that they encounter during their migrations. Beginning in the 1990s, archaeologists re-examined the utility of migration in explaining major societal changes such as collapse (Renfrew 1982). The focus on migration as an explanatory force appeared after a long period when functionalist and structuralist explanations dominated the theoretical landscape. Diffusion and migration models were popular during the first decades of the 20th centuries, however they were incorporated into cultural areas explanations of the past (Kluckhohn 1936). Culture areas studies are problematic because "normative 'cultures' corresponded to 'peoples,' and migrations were seen as the activities by which they played out their destinies on the world stage" (Anthony 1990: 908). It would be inaccurate to describe an entire culture as having the ability to migrate, if for no other reason than because trying to define cultural borders remains elusive (and likely will continue to be so in the future). By the 1950s, migration studies were becoming increasingly sophisticated as archaeologists looked for patterns in cultural contact through socio-cultural anthropology, while also beginning to identify evidence of migration in the archaeological record itself. These two approaches were unfortunately never integrated into one approach before New Archaeology became the dominant paradigm in the 1960s (Anthony 1990: 896). By the 1990s and 2000s, the debate had shifted away from attempting to identify migration in the archaeological record. Descriptions of the variety of migrations that could potentially take place and a description of the environmental and social conditions that prompt migration became the primary foci of analysis (Anthony 1990).

Figure 2a, 2b. Ongoing archaeological excavations continue in Tamgaly, Kazakhstan, which are providing new evidence about movement in the past. Photo taken: June 27, 2012.

Figure 2a.

Figure 2b.

Figure 3. The Smithsonian database about the cultural heritage of Central Asia provided foundational data that helped produce numerous publications, including Durdy Bayramov: Life, Art, and Legacy (2017), which presents a selection of paintings by the acclaimed Turkmen artist Durdy Bayramov.

Currently, migration studies have returned to the unfinished task of linking a method for identifying migration in the archaeological record and incorporating socio-cultural theoretical discourse of migration (Burmeister 2000: 540). Stefan Burmeister (2000) explores North American colonization in order to identify an archaeological approach that is able to make this link. Burmeister relies on historical and anthropological explanations of migrations to help him distinguish aspects of the material record that are due to migration and those that are not. One way that Burmeister does this is by examining the social effects of immigration on both the migrants and existing residents of an area. One of his case- studies follows the 17th century German immigration into Hungary, which was on the whole peaceful and if examined from a regional perspective produced an archaeological record that did not separate along ethnic lines (Burmeister 2000: 545). German and Hungarian households were increasing similar through time and became nearly indistinguishable a few decades after the initial German migration. Burmeister relies on the work of Friedrich Heckmann, a sociologist interested in migration studies, to explain why ethnic diversity is not recognizable through the archaeological record in the 17th century Hungary example. Heckmann argues that immigrant communities often rely heavily on the construction of ethnic identities by continuing the cultural practices of the place that they recently left in occasions of conflict with the host community (Heckmann 1981: 208–18). Thus, in situations where immigrant and local populations are not violently opposed, ethnic boundaries might not be sharply defined and would result in a less heterogeneous archaeological record. Burmeister's theoretical interpretation of the archaeological record in Hungary is questionable because conflict is not the only reason why ethnic divide occurs. However, his work should be commended for attempting to establish a workable methodology for archaeological studies of migration.

Recently, mobility studies have explored new ways of utilizing mobility and movement as explanatory frameworks for transient communities. Beaudry and Parno's edited volume, *Archaeologies of Mobility and Movement* (2013), argues that in order to understand movement in the past, archaeologists need to begin approaching their questions in new ways. This new methodology "must break away from this stasis [of static analysis] and cut new pathways that trace the boundary-crossing contextuality inherent in object/person mobility" (Beaudry and Parno 2013: 1). By focusing on "flows and networks of connections" (Beaudry and Parno 2013:4) archaeologists can uncover relationships between people and objects in ways that are active and better suited to solving archaeological problems that are also dynamic, such as trade and the movement of ideas. Dynamic interpretations might include an analysis of personal choice as a theoretical avenue that connects things and people. Immonen, for example, introduces a compelling concept that he calls the "network of desire." These networks explain the reasons why certain objects are favored by specific groups of people in the past (Immonen 2013: 18). He argues that a desire is not a wanting for a specific object or trade good, rather "it is desire to be drawn into another world expressed by that object" (Immonen 2013: 19). By examining the acquisition of objects in this manner, where "objects can express various worlds and their values," archaeologists can begin to ask *why* individuals in the past acquired objects (through trade or local manufacture) and not just *what* those individuals acquired.

For his study, Immonen examines the transportation and use of brass kettles by indigenous peoples and British colonials in Lapland as evidence for his framework. Immonen demonstrates that the meaning of these kettles shifted through time without major stylistic changes occurring. The kettles are actually quite plain in décor and were brought over by British colonials in the 17th century for utilitarian use. The mundane design of these kettles in the eyes of the British meant that the colonists did not mind if indigenous populations, the Lenape, incorporated them into their kitchens and cooking traditions. Within a few decades, the kettles assumed a special role for the Lenape as identifiers of home and homeland. Immonen suggests that both the wide availability of the kettles for the Lenape and a prevailing opinion that copper-made objects were significant explain the transformation of the kettle's meaning for the indigenous population (Immonen 2013: 22). When the Lenape started regarding the kettles as special objects, their role in European life shifted as well. The transformation of the kettle's meaning in North America unsettled some Europeans, while others saw its transformation as an economic asset because these objects became valuable trade commodities in the local economy (Immonen 2013: 27). Immonen concludes that networks of desire are not governed by hierarchies of "macro and micro, or global and local" (Immonen 2013: 25). Desire is an independent factor to consider when looking at mobility studies; however its influence on mobile communities can create unexpected shifts in the meaning of things and identity.

Other archaeological frameworks reject that the notion that the personal desires and motivations of past peoples are discernable (Aldred 2013). Aldred envisions archaeological processes as an "Operational Chain," which he defines as an "unending spiral, the chain of practices constitutes a series of junctures within the operation" that can procure the meaning of people, objects and ideas (PO&I) that are in motion (Aldred 2013: 52). The operation he describes highlights the fluidity of meaning that PO&Is can inhabit. In some contexts these meanings can become sticky for a period of time. So while the meaning of PO&Is are constantly changing due to their interactions with one another, there are particular junctions or perhaps stopping points where multiple PO&Is converge and an archaeologist might be able to discern a reliable meaning or function based on their clustering. These junctions could be interpreted as "cultural traits," however Aldred's framework uses movement and not structure as its foundational principle. The question remains how and why do PO&I converge into these junctions. Aldred describes this attraction as resembling a gravitational force, which brings together PO&I that both "shapes and is shaped" by the objects that surround it (Aldred 2013: 60). Aldred implores archaeologists to focus on the process of this attraction and not on the motivations of the PO&Is that are being attracted.

I believe that Aldred's Operational Chain rejects Immonen's claim that archaeologists can understand the motivations or desires of human actors in the past. Criticisms can be made against both Aldred's and Immonen's frameworks. Aldred's explanation that the attraction of PO&Is is due to some unknown attractive force does not actually reveal why junctions occur. His explanation only describes the nature of cultural traits, but not the reasons for their grouping. Immonen's 'Networks of Desires' concept attempts to explain how human decision-making and the movement of objects can influence the meaning of each other. However, Immonen's interpretation that the appearance of kettles in the homes of the Lenape implies that the Lenape desire for kettles is a primary explanation for the kettle's meaning. Kettles were adopted in Lenape homes because the English placed such little value on them. It is true that the meaning of the kettles changed dramatically when they were adopted by the Lenape, however indigenous groups did not originally desire the kettles. The Lenape acquisition of the kettles needs to be understood within a context of colonial power and control over commodities. The British allowed the Lenape to acquire the kettles, and within that broad context, the Lenape began changing its meaning through desire.

Archaeologists who study mobility and movement require a dynamic interpretative framework for explaining past behavior that is outside of culture-area studies, which rely on cultural traits as crucial units of analysis. Aldred and Immonen provide noteworthy interpretations of how to explain the mobility of PO&Is because their analysis focuses on the relationships between PO&Is and not exclusively on their descriptions. Both frameworks acknowledge the difficulty that archaeologists have when attempting to assign cultural symbols or markers that identify specific cultural groups (including ethnic and religious groups). Aldred's Operational Chain posits that when people, ideas and/or objects become intertwined, archaeologists can detect larger patterns. These patterns are temporally-dependent because they can embrace new PO&Is or shed them through time. These patterns are also geographically-dependent in that they are comprised of different elements in different locations.

David Anthony suggests that migration and movement are concepts that archaeologists outside of Central Asia should reconsider. Influential Western scholars like Eric Wolf and Benedict Anderson oversimplify social organization among nomadic societies, describing ethnic identities in such communities as "unstable and unbounded" (Anthony 2005: 47). Anthony questions whether Western archaeologist's interpretations of nomadic identity are accurate descriptions about what was happening in Central Asia's past, noting the stability of material culture markers in Central Asian frontier zones from 4,000-6,000 BP (Anthony 2005: 47-48). He does not suggest that one can fully correlate consistencies in the archaeological record through time with specific ethno-linguistic cultures or genetic groupings, but that we should consider long-term cultural stability among nomadic communities as plausible explanations of social organization (Anthony 2005: 43). Moreover, many of the papers presented at the 2019 symposium on Kazakhstan's Crafts and Creative Economy in Washington, D.C. present examples of long-standing symbols that modern Kazakhstan has adopted and embraced.

The archaeology of the Central Asian Steppe has a rich history of scholarship and is well positioned to contribute to global discourses about the role that symbols, knowledge, and movement can play in explaining the behavior of people in the past. The 2019 symposium is just one example of collaborations between Kazakhstani and American scholars. Another was a US State Department

funded partnership between the Office of South and Central Asian Affairs and the Asian Cultural History Program (Smithsonian Institution) from 2012 to 2018 in part to develop a database that included bibliographic, ethnomusicological, craft-object, and archaeological materials about the cultural heritage of Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. With nearly 23,000 unique entries into the database,Smithsonian researchers have amassed a large amount of data that assisted in the production of numerous print publications (Taylor 2014, 2016, 2017; Bayramov et al. 2017). In addition to sharing this database with partner institutions in Central Asia, including with the Kasteyev State Museum of Arts, this data also provides new avenues of research. A spatial examination of Central Asian craft production and symbolism through time would provide evidence-based models of cultural and artistic exchange in the past and help link the movement of objects (and perhaps people and ideas) to modern craft traditions in Kazakhstan. These models in turn will provide robust datasets about the use and movement of symbols and ideas in Kazakhstan, and additionally make valuable contributions to global scholarship that hasn't fully considered unique lessons from Kazakhstan's past about movement and artistic expression.

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Ancient Symbols in Modern Kazakh Crafts and Designs

Clara Isabaeva
Kasteyev State Museum of Arts

In her article published in *Anatolian Studies* in 1977, "An Early Date for the Origin of Felt," British scientist Mary E. Burkett emphasizes that "The origin of felt is unknown. It is in all probability the earliest form of textile making. Like most textiles, it has a low survival rate in archeological conditions, so that specimens from earlier millennia rarely come to light" [1].

According to one roughly 8,000-year-old legend, the first felt carpet was created on Noah's Ark during the Great Flood. The wool of the sheep on the Ark fell, grew wet, and the sheep trampled it with their hooves. When the Flood ended, people found the very first or prototype of felt carpet.

In her article, Burkett also notes that "The earliest documentation of felt comes from China, c. 2300 B.C., but it is from Central Asian steppes that archeologists have so far found the earliest examples of it. It has been produced there ever since" [1].

Most Western and Eastern historians agree that felt originated in Central Asia and that since its inception, it has continued to be produced in the region by nomadic groups such as the Saka, or Scythians, the direct genetic and cultural ancestors of modern Kazakhs. In order to study and demonstrate Kazakhs' direct relation to the Sakas and Turks, this paper will analyze the Saka system of artistic and mythological symbolism through the works of various Kazakh artists and designers.

One of the oldest survived examples of felt carpet and horsecloths was discovered in a Pazyryk burial mound in the Altay mountain region (modern Russia). Within the burial mound, several carpets, each approximately 2,500 years old, were found. The high level of artistic sophistication on display among the carpets indicates that felt was being produced in the region long before the carpet and horsecloths found in the burial mound were created. The Pazyryk people were pastoral nomads who rode horses and lived on the Central Asian steppe. Pazyryk culture has since been connected to the Saka, whose similar tombs in the Berel, Issyk, Besshatyr, and other regions have been found across Kazakhstan.

Some widespread symbols characteristic of Saka art include solar signs, circles, rosettes, and other sun symbols, which indicate endless movement and energy, the revival of nature, gold, and wealth; koshkar muiz, horn-like ornaments that symbolize prosperity and wealth; the tree of life or axis mundi, symbolizing the source of life and power; plant ornaments, which serve as symbols of fertility; rhombi, or lozenge, another symbol of fertility; and the quillon, or the cross-guard, which can be a symbol of the four cardinal directions – east, west, north, and south, or the four elements – water, air, earth, and fire.

Gulzhanat Kabizhanova is a modern artist who works with Kazakh crafts, specifically felt. She creates decorative felt wall hangings, or felt art pieces, in which ancient symbols are widely presented in various forms. Her favorite symbols to use are solar signs, sun symbols, horn-like ornaments, *koshkar muiz*, and the tree of life. Gulzhanat's exhibition at the Kasteyev Museum of Arts in April 2019 displayed felt art pieces that played with said symbols. According to Gulzhanat, solar signs impress a magical influence upon her. They are related to ancient Central Asian Tengrianism, and to the cults of fire and the sun. Spirals and curlicues are always explicitly or implicitly present in her work.

Even the horn-like motif present in Kazakh art, including Gulzhanat's work, is a sun symbol. Kabizhanova's wall hanging Sounds of the Tambourine reflects ideas of focus, energy, movement circling around a fire, and dancing to the silent rhythm of the tambourine. Through such pieces, Kabizhanova expresses her relationship to her ancestors and to the cosmos. In particular, the *shanyrak*, or the image of the sun at the top of a yurt tent, remains an unsolved mystery, consistently attractive and intriguing to artists like Gulzhanat. A great deal of her work has been dedicated to this theme. Her Harmony the Universe wall hanging expresses her inexhaustible efforts to understand this secret. Gulzhanat understands the unique Kazakh yurt as an image of an inverted sky, the doorway as symbolizing openness, and the *shanyrak* as a window to the cosmos.

The image of a tree is the focal point of Gulzhanat Kabizhanova's creative work. The crown of the tree, like the *shanyrak*, is a symbol of an inverted sky, while its roots symbolize the earth and its trunk a road, a link between the earth and sky. Gulzhanat also created the wall hangings Tree of Welfare, Tree of Wishes, Tree of Life, Tree of Reflection, and Tree of Abundance. The foundation for Tree of Abundance in particular was the idea of the abundance of the cosmos and Gulzhanat's captivation with the harmonious order of the world and its creation. The trunk and branches in the

wall hanging were designed with an association with Kazakh ornamental script, in which horn-shaped designs continuously change their shapes and form curlicues. According to Gulzhanat Kabizhanova, *kurak*, or different color rhombic pieces, enabled her to put her ideas about the diversity of the world, life, and emotions together. “Abundance” in this work is formed through multicolored “scraps,” deep and sonorous, in dark and light tones. As a silhouette, this is a person with hands prostrate toward the sky.

Gulzhanat Kabizhanova presents additional interpretations relating to symbols including the tree of life, deer antlers, and caravans. Another of Gulzhanat's interpretations of the tree of life is as a mountain that forms a camel's hump. For Gulzhanat, this symbol of the tree of life grows like a mountain on a camel's hump. In Pazyryk felting, the branched antlers of a deer serve as an ancient symbol of the tree of life. Similar tree-horn combinations can be seen in photos of petroglyphs on display at the Issyk Burial Mounds Museum. The caravan, too, is a complex theme that Gulzhanat Kabizhanova often deals with in her work. For Kabizhanova, it is a symbol of development, peace, and kindness, the mutual enrichment of various cultures, holidays, and movements, both day and night.

In Gulzhanat Kabizhanova's *Procession* wall hanging, the procession of an endless, colorful stream in the form of a caravan is on the one hand a reflection of shadow, and on the other hand an answering echo in colored spots. Grey cobwebs refer to the remoteness of space and movement through the ages.

The steppe is also one of Gulzhanat's favorite themes to work with, as the steppe is changeable, majestic, and mysterious. The steppe is continually reborn, refreshed, and rich in decoration thanks to the changes of the seasons and weather. Kabizhanova's Flowering Steppe wall hanging was created based on impressions gained from contemplating the expanse of the steppe in spring during the flowering of poppy blossoms. The steppe can remind visitors of a colorful carpet with islands of contrasting lush greens and crimson poppies. This ornamental carpet has a pattern of iridescent *bytpes* with openwork curls.

Figure 1. Gulzhanat Kabizhanova. *Flowering Steppe*

Figure 2. Gulzhanat Kabizhanova. *Sounds of the Tambourine*

Figure 3. Pazyryk Horseclothes

Figure 4. Pazyryk Felt Carpet

Figure 5. Photos of petroglyphs on display at the Issyk Burial Mounds Museum

Figure 6. Gulzhanat Kabizhanova. *Tree of Abundance*

In Kabizhanova's view, balance is nature's law, based on a foundation of harmony. Kazakh ornamentation has a unique method for bringing equilibrium to parts of a whole with patterns contrasting by color change places, adding and emphasizing one another. Kabizhanova's Balance wall hanging, which was created by applying this method, reflects an understanding of day and night, male and female, and the four cardinal directions. Within its black and white color palette, a number of colors can be seen shading as one and enriching their opposites. An aesthetic interplay of *koshkar muiz*, ancient horn-shaped ornamentation, is also visible and grows into a solar sign.

According to Professor Gulmira Shalabayeva, Director of the Kasteyev State Museum, "The understanding of felt from time immemorial has been that it had only an applied [art] character. Its main function was warming the home and only then as an aesthetic component. Gulzhanat Kabizhanova raises the level of the decorative and applied character of felt in her creations to the level of true works of art."

Gulzhanat Kabizhanova's practice and wide use of playing with ancient nomadic symbols from ancient felting is a vivid witness to Kazakhs' deep connection with this form of art, of its continuity with this ancient society which in reality never vanished, but rather always existed in Kazakh decorative and applied art, which is the true heir of this ancient form of felting.

Describing the border of Pazyryk felt carpets, Lyudmila Barkova, a senior researcher at the Department of East European and Siberian Archaeology at the State Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg, noted that, "The ornament of the border is formed from series of brown horn-shaped figures, among which is placed a shamrock. Such a horn-shaped curlicue later meets with the artistic creativity of the Kyrgyz and Kazakhs.

"Ancient Altay felt, carpets, fabrics and a number of wooden and leather items are a vivid witness to life in the nomadic world in its prime. These unique finds grant the opportunity to experience the beauty of the artistic culture of the ancient nomads of Eurasia. However, their talent did not disappear – it continued in the traditions which are alive today among the peoples of Central Asia, Kazakhstan and the Caucasus" [3, pp.47].

Ancient symbols of nomads are intensively developed by many modern Kazakh artists and fashion designers like Saule Bapanova, Aida Kaumenova, Aidar Kaliyev, Aizhan Bekkulova, and others working in neo-folklore style.

If we are considering the creative economy, one of the greatest successes was achieved by modern Kazakh designer Aidarkhan Kaliyev. He created a very famous brand not only in Kazakhstan, but widely in the world – the Aspara fashion brand.

Aspara is a very picturesque place in Merke district of Zhambul Region. Aidar named his brand in honor of this place. Aspara also was often mentioned in Chinese and Arab chronicles as a city situated on the Great Silk Road. This legendary place inspired the designer, who not only demonstrates his outfits at Milan, Paris and Berlin fashion weeks, but also intensively explores the market of China. Collections designed by him will be produced or sewn into the same fabrics as Valentino and Versace in South China. Aspara has its own fabrics and prints.

Aidarkhan Kaliyev is a designer and creator of many stylized ethnical but also modern outfits. He likes to play with ancient traditional Kazakh materials, ornaments and symbols. In his works we see a lot of interpretations of *koshkar muiz*, Kazakh jewelry ornaments, plants, geometrical and cosmogonic ornaments. He also authored two monographs about Kazakh traditional costume, and got his PhD in arts form the Ministry of Culture of Kazakhstan.

Another famous Kazakh designer is Aida Kaumenova. At first she creates the prints and then outfits them with Kazakh *ikat*, there lozenge, peaks, *ormekshi*, *shugla* and *bytpess* dominate, different hues of blue and dark blue – the colors of Tengri, and also the warm golden color of Sun.

Aidarkhan Kaliyev and his counterparts Aida Kaumenova, Saule Bapanova, Gulzhanat Kabizhanova and others are deeply convinced that national art transferred through centuries from our ancestors is of current interest today and they are proud that to be descendants of the nomads of Great Steppe.

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The Continuity of Nomadic Cultural Traditions in the Folk and Modern Jewelry of Kazakhstan

Gulaim Zhumabekova
Kasteyev State Museum of Arts

Abstract: This article considers the origins and development of Kazakh jewelry and issues around the semantics of pieces made in the 19th and 20th centuries. Kazakh metalwork and jewelry today are inspired by numerous historical influences, including the Scythian and Saka, Hun, Wusun, Turkic tribes, and even from the legendary Golden Horde. Unique animal-motif pieces made from gold found in the Issyk Kurgan (5-4th centuries B.C.) and the golden shaman's diadem from the Kargaly hoard (2-1st centuries B.C.) are just two examples of archaeological finds discovered in Eastern, Western and Southern Kazakhstan that point to a rich heritage. Kazakh traditional women's attire incorporates jewelry adorned with protective amulets, which display symbols associated with fertility, age, and social status.

Keywords: Kazakh patterns, continuity of cultural traditions, Kazakh jewelry, nomadic culture, Kazakh folk art, women's jewelry, museum collection.

The Kasteyev State Museum of Arts in Almaty has gathered a unique collection of Kazakh jewelry made during the 18th through 20th centuries. These examples vary in form, type and technique. The distinctive features commonly found on Kazakh jewelry are true masterpieces, which reflect a specific philosophical understanding of the world and demonstrate the great artistic abilities of the Kazakh people. Indeed, every detail and feature that comprises an individual piece of Kazakh jewelry, including its form, details, the material it was produced from, and patterns, has a specific purpose and meaning.

Kazakhstan's abundant supply of non-ferrous and precious metals, including gold and silver, encouraged the development of its metalwork for millennia. Casting, forging, molding, stamping and embossing techniques emerged as early as the second millennium B.C., during the Bronze Age, as did signatory traditional designs for jewelry worn by the Kazakhs historically and today. Saka treasures discovered in different areas of Kazakhstan – the Issyk Kurgan and the Besshatyr, Kargaly, Altyn-Emel, Tagisken, Uigarak, and Berel burials are true masterpieces. Scythian and Saka styles of animal motifs frequently found in the archaeological record during this time display masterful technique and precision. Bronze and golden torques, bracelets, rings, plaques, and clothing appliqués (beads) later became a single ensemble decorated with geometric patterns.

By studying jewelry, scholars can discern a great deal of important social, economic, and cultural information about the people who wore them. The style of jewelry changed during the Migration Period when the Huns moved westward from 47 B.C. till the 4th century A.D. Artisans applied fine metalwork to nearly all objects where metal was used – from jewelry, household items to harnesses. Nomadic people during this time possessed many items that contained silver, which was believed to hold a particle of the moon's light and influence events positively. Gilt was also frequently applied to jewelry, belt plaques and harnesses as symbols of prosperity and markers of high social status.

Jewelry was in high demand among all social groups for its aesthetic value, and for its magical functions within customary practices, social ceremonies, and religious beliefs. Jewelry was also believed to possess magical abilities. For this reason, it was actively used in rituals and ceremonies, including customary gift-giving, not only for celebrations (such as a wedding) but to mark other occasions as well. People exchanged gifts as a sign of sworn patronage and friendship, as evidenced by

(1) welcoming new guests into homes with gifts; by (2) giving gifts to persons who share good news (*suiynshi*); and (3) on occasions of encountering novel or new things (*baigazy*).

Examples of Jewelry in Kazakhstan from the 18th to 20th Centuries

Kazakh jewelry is exemplified by its decorative diversity and aesthetically pleasing impression. Some examples of Kazakh jewelry are austere, while others embrace colorful palates and ornate additives. Contemporary jewelry produced in Western Kazakhstan continues to exhibit stylistic hallmarks commonly found on examples historically attributed to the Huns. These include massive bracelets, rings, temple pendants, earrings, braid adornments, the *onirzhiyek* three-tier chest decorations, and the *kudagi zhuzik* matchmaker's rings with a setting in the form of the solar circle and

Figure 1. Earrings.
19th century. Northern
Kazakhstan Silver, glass, stamping

Figure 2. Breast pendants.
19th century. Western Kazakhstan
Silver, glass, stamping

two shanks. Jewelry from Southern and Central Kazakhstan features elements of the Scythian and Saka polychrome style. It has a multipart composition and a host of elegant coin pendants and insets of carnelian.

Northern Kazakhstan's pieces of jewelry are very diverse, their compositions and decorations echoing ancient beliefs such as shamanism and totemism. Of special interest are the *uki ayak* temple pendants where eagle-owl claws were mounted in silver. The Kazakhs worshipped the eagle-owl, the golden eagle and the common eagle as "the birds of the sun" and their claws were talismans to ward off the evil eye. In Eastern Kazakhstan, of special popularity were bracelets with a round cross-section – *zhumyr blezik*. The bracelets of this form were discovered in ancient Bronze Age burials. Crescent earrings (*ai syrga*, *shuzhik syrga*) were an ancient amulet protecting against devilry.

Kazakh etiquette required that girls and women wear jewelry at all times, as the lack of it symbolized mourning. A Kazakh saying goes that, "A woman without jewelry is like a tree without leaves." The first set of jewelry of a toddler girl included a small bracelet with four black and white beads and small earrings she began to wear at four. A mother-of-pearl plaque or a pendant with silver-mounted eagle-owl claws was attached to her headdress or vest. Small triangular amulets with a prayer from the Koran were sewn to the clothes of boys and girls on their first birthday to ward off the evil eye and diseases.

Older girls wore more jewelry and their shapes became increasingly complicated. When a girl reached the age of 13 or 14 – when she could be married – she acquired a full set of jewelry, including a necklace and chest amulets, earrings, silver braid pendants, bracelets, and rings. A bride's wedding headdress – *saukele* – was worn in Central Asia by Kazakh and Kyrgyz women only. It has the ancient conical structure symbolizing the World Mountain and preserved ornamental elements typical of Scythian rulers' headdresses.

Similar to wedding fashion found in the Bronze Age, brides during the 18th to 20th centuries dressed in attire sparkling with silver and colored stones from head to toe, which added to the festive mood of this important formal occasion. Yet, up until the early 20th century, the wedding attire of a Kazakh woman was fairly inornate compared to modern examples. Thus, brides wore many pieces of elaborate jewelry, in order to impress wedding guests and, simultaneously, to protect them against the evil eye and enable their ability for health, happiness, and fertility. A bride's wedding outfit was supplemented with jewelry bearing images of fish, seeds, fruit, the sun, ram's horns, and other forms to aid her during future pregnancies.

Protective Pendants

There are many examples of pendants that possessed protective abilities that I would like to present in this section. Girls and young women wore light and pretty *alka* necklaces with elegant pendants. The *alka* ornamentation consisted of silver spherical figurines, coins, openwork medallions, mounted stones, and coral, carnelian, or pearl beads. These necklaces were believed to have magical and miraculous powers due to the properties of their materials (carnelian, coral, and pearl) and the complexity of their arrangement, including using multiple types of beads.

Uki ayak temple pendants, which display silver-mounted eagle-owl claws, had a variety of decorations. These pendants were guarding amulets and usually had one or two tiers – which point to specific cultural markers. Kazakhs also attached eagle-owl claws to their headdresses. Ornate *shekelik* temple pendants were attached to the sides of a woman's or wedding headdress. These looked like large and heavy earrings of various lengths, sometimes falling below the shoulders.

Another popular protective adornment was the *tumarsha* amulet – a triangle plate with silver- mounted carnelian pendants, stamped pieces shaped like a spearhead, or other elements. The triangle has been considered for ages as a symbol of the World Mountain, embodying the cosmic elements and features.

Earrings, Bracelets, and Rings

Bracelets, rings and earrings supposedly acquired their recognizable style as early as in the Bronze Age, as evidenced by archaeological material discovered within kurgans located in Kazakhstan. Among these finds were bracelets with a round cross-section and with spiral decorations on both ends and other symbolic signs that had the guarding function.

Kazakh earrings were meant to emphasize a woman's beauty through their colors, shimmer, and through the movement of pendants. Flat earrings often took the shape of a crescent, star, spear,

Figure 3. Pendant-amulet. 19th century.
Northern Kazakhstan
White metal, corals, turquoise, glass, grain

Figure 4. Rings. 20th century.
Southern Kazakhstan
White metal, carnelian, embossing, granulation, filigree

diamond, ring, heart, circle, triangle, or oval. Volumetric ones were usually shaped like a circle, ball, drop, cylinder, cone, or bell. When a woman put ornate earrings into her earlobes, it was said, "Let your ears hear nothing bad and let your face be pretty." The earrings of would-be brides were adorned with reproductive motifs – the sun, the crescent, and a host of pendants shaped like seeds, petals, and grains. Like pendants, earrings were regarded as amulets preventing ill-will from entering a woman's ears. Women, therefore, wore earrings for their entire lives. However, the shape of earrings through one's lifetime would change, becoming less ornate over time. Earrings are an obligatory present for a bride at a matchmaking ceremony. Many Kazakhstanis today still follow this custom.

Bracelets were also an indispensable part of women's attire. Women and girls usually wore pairs of bracelets, sometimes two of them on each arm. Bracelets could be made of a rod with a round cross- section (*zhumyr blezik*), or two twisted rods (*burama blezik*). They could also be openwork (*seldir blezik*) or made of mounted stones (*tasty blezik*). There were also flat bracelets shaped like a watch (*sagat blezik*).

Some commonly held beliefs in the past were that wearing bracelets helped to prevent joint diseases, made the arms and hands clean, and warded off the evil but, most importantly, they were believed to retain one's life force. Kazakhs believed that if an evil spirit could enter a woman through her ears or hair, her energies would gradually drain away through her palms. For this reason, older women who feared to lose their strength wore bracelets at all times, as circular objects in particular were effective as protective symbols. This belief also explains a frequent practice of placing bracelets made of black and white (or red and blue) beads onto a child's arm.

Rings were also an essential feature of Kazakh attire prior to the 20th century, often presented during wedding ceremonies as symbolic gifts. Massive rings from Western Kazakhstan had two or three shanks (*kudagi zhuzik* – a matchmaker's ring) and symbolized the connection of two origins, or two families. Bridal parents typically gave these rings, which were regarded as luxurious adornments, to the woman's future mother-in-law, in exchange for protection and kind treatment from their daughter's new family. The *otau zhuzik* (family ring) cone-shaped rings were given to a young couple to celebrate the creation of their family and were believed to bring happiness and well-being to them.

Kus muryn zhuzik rings, their settings resembling a bird's beak, also had special protective properties. This specific bird's beak motif originated in the Scythian and Saka period and appears in many other types of jewelry, as well as patterns used in Kazakh felts, embroideries, and wooden items. The *kus muryn zhuzik* ring was widespread throughout Kazakhstan and so far has only been found in this region. Scholars note some variability in style and structure of these rings within the borders of modern- day Kazakhstan, suggesting cultural markers that distinguish communities. Men wore the *baldak* rings with their central part compressed and expanded to form a square. Officials and the military had a personal engraved and embossed seal rings – *myorli zhuzik* – that substituted the owner's signature.

In addition to having a decorative function, stone insets and pendants in Kazakh jewelry were regarded as a "guarding eye." These were most often made of carnelian, coral, turquoise, and colored glass. Each stone had a specific function and was believed to have magic and healing properties. For example, carnelian was believed to protect against all dangers, including accidents and natural disasters. Corals were regarded as promoting well-being and fertility (usually placed within pendants). Color plays a crucial role in the protective abilities of a piece of jewelry as well. Turquoise was believed to bring happiness and luck. Turquoise jewelry also had the ability to communicate the specific emotions of the person wearing it at a given moment. For example, if worn by someone who is of ill health, the stone would change color and darken. Red is an especially powerful color capable of emoting multiple meanings. Red is the color of a clan's blood. It can also be a symbol for fire, energy, the sun, and warmth.

Hair accessories have traditionally been an obligatory part of a Kazakh woman's attire. Hair bands used in braids were of two pieces – *sholpy* and *shash bau*. Metal elements and pendants used in these accessories were shaped like spearheads, cones, bells adorned with wire fringe, small petal- or diamond-shaped (the symbol of fertility) danglings, coins (the symbol of wealth), domes, or balls. It was commonly believed that swinging and tinkling pendants could ward off the evil from possessing a woman, which is a widely held belief in other parts of Central Asia and the Near East.

Preservation and Continued Interpretation of Kazakhstan's Metalworking and Jewelry

For contemporary Kazakh jewelry and craft to continue to thrive, we must be stewards of our own cultural heritage through research and preservation, while fostering opportunities of cultural exchange with other nations. Just as modern artist draw inspiration from one another, so did past

examples of Kazakh jewelry flourish through the exchange of ideas outside of its borders. Many Kazakh ancient motifs, techniques and patterns were derived from Turkic stylings. Kazakh artisans of the past would adopt these motifs and add to them new designs and meanings.

Kazakh jewelers – *zerger*s – have preserved the centuries-long traditions of the nomadic material culture, but also participated in new creative movements within their own craft. The best pieces in the collection of the Kasteyev State Museum of Arts and other museums in Kazakhstan demonstrate an original style and represent a significant contribution to Kazakhstan and worldwide. The healthy exchange of creativity and ideas that exists within craft jewelry production today demonstrates that Kazakh jewelry is well positioned to continue flourishing into the future. The community of talented metalworkers and jewelers in Kazakhstan will continue to preserve important cultural traditions of nomadic communities in Kazakhstan, while providing new interpretations that further enrich the practice. A few members of this community that I would like to recognize here include Amangeldy Mukazhanov, Serzhan Bashirov, Serik Rysbekov, and other artists who continue to share Kazakhstan's metalworking and jewelry with international audiences.

Amangeldy Mukazhanov, for example, uses colored enamel, gilt, wood, bone, and stones to produce pieces of art that astonish with their integrity and imagery. In addition to ornamental and abstract interpretations, he creates compositions with totemic animals and birds. Human beings are also often present in this miniature world, yet not as main characters but as part of the whole. Some works by Mukazhanov were inspired by ancient petroglyphs. His pieces are both modern and archaic in how they interpret the picture of the world developed by ancient nomadic tribes. The jeweler manages to combine complicated shapes with a variety of symbols and signs, offering his audience an opportunity to decode the secret meanings on their own. Amangeldy Mukazhanov's works are a synthesis of jewelry, sculpture, and applied arts. He inlays his pieces with semiprecious stones, adores them with fine bone carving and uses ancient metal processing techniques such as granulation, stamping, or filigree.

Another notable artist, Serzhan Bashirov, is known for improvisation and experiments with materials and forms. Each of his works, panels, installations, or pieces of jewelry are inspired by cultural forms of ornamentation. The artist's favorite motifs are spirals and crosses – ancient symbols for the sun and fire, dating back to Zoroastrianism. His works are almost shamanically expressive and filled with the energy of the first elements – metal and wood, but he also often uses bone, the mother-of-pearl, and decorative stones. His interest in antiquity and the meaning of ancient symbols is manifested in the deliberately harsh forms he creates and the techniques he uses, which are the main distinctive features of his style. Bashirov asked himself repeatedly why the Scythians were traditionally associated with gold but the Turkic nomads preferred silver. He found a very simple answer to that: the settled nations preferred gold, which was connected with many mystical beliefs and associated with wealth, while silver is a purer and nobler metal. It is no accident that folk poets compared it to mother's milk. Kazakhs, like their nomadic ancestors, have favored silver and semiprecious stones for ages. They aimed to live in harmony with their surroundings by respecting and caring for the natural world.

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Following Global Flows of Craft Materials

Jasper Waugh-Quasebarth
Asian Cultural History Program
Smithsonian Institution

In today's global market for handmade goods, craft objects circulate far from the workshops and homes in which were created. Craft objects flow through museum collections and exhibitions, are sold at tourist attractions, decorate homes and workplaces, and are made and remade in new symbolic arenas, bringing craft objects into novel situations beyond that of their functions in everyday life. Emerging in unexpected forms of art and given political duties in official culture, craft objects travel throughout the world to live social lives of their own, subject to the demands and values of the world around them. From textiles (Basole 2015) to culinary practices (Tsing 2015), research continues to show the importance of the circulation of craft objects in global economies where their value rises and falls in context (Errington 1998), in social arenas where they have become symbols for nations and states (Herzfeld 2004; Taylor et al. 2013:25-27), and in environmental conditions that affect their physical states (Martinez-Reyes 2015). Anthropologist Anna Tsing's (2005) description of such global "flows" and "frictions" become useful as we try to conceptualize how craft objects are stitched into the fabric of our social and physical worlds.

Anthropological investigations of crafts in global contexts have shown how they circulate through various kinds of economies, passing through kinship networks, local exchanges, and commoditizing markets (Appadurai 1986). As they pass from hand to hand, their localized symbols and material expressions of place are transformed into symbols at larger scales and objectified by far-flung consumer desire. Craft objects flow toward markets driven by consumer desires for handmade objects in an era of mass-production (Chibnik et al. 2004; Nash 1993). However, because makers generally cannot follow the same paths as their mobile objects, gaps arise in the space between maker and object that create questions of authenticity and tradition unique to today's global economy (Cavanaugh and Shankar 2014). As a result, craftspeople must negotiate such global processes through the interpersonal and market networks their crafts pass through, representing themselves and their art to best communicate who they are and what they do.

Figure 1. A violin made with wood from the forests of Sub-Saharan Africa, Eastern Europe, and Eastern North America. (West Virginia, United States, 2017.)

While these circulations and negotiations often take place through trans-oceanic cargo ships and internet transactions, they are not unique to the 21st century. As papers in this volume show, we know that the flows of craft objects and symbols have always been a feature of the social world, especially in nomadic societies. Craft objects have always been a driver of economic exchange, migration, and demonstrations of group affiliation during times of migration and cultural encounter. Likewise, the materials that make up craft objects (for example, wool, clay, metals, etc.) have also circulated through networks connecting people in seemingly disparate locations. From the Silk Road (Abu-Lughod 1989) to the transatlantic trade of silver (Wolf 2010), crafters' desire for high-quality materials has worked together with craft consumers' desires for high-quality objects to drive the trade of craft materials far from their original sites of extraction or production. As such, a continued ethnographic attention to the materials of craft production demonstrates how interconnected craftspeople are to the physical environments and localized economies around them, as well as other far-off environments and economies. Rather than fixed in their shops or homes, they are connected and extended through global economies and international treaties that regulate and make possible the trade of materials that flow through their workspaces and out as recognizable craft objects (Pontsioen 2019).

But what drives the desire for certain craft materials and not others? Inspired by shifts in social theory to deeply consider the "materiality" (Miller 2005) of human existence, recent ethnographic studies have investigated the "materiality" of craft objects, that is, what it is about the material itself that makes craft objects important in our lives and carry such symbolic importance. Why do we prefer certain materials for certain crafts and eschew others? What does a specific material enable us to do in producing symbols of identity and power? Anna Odland Portisch's study of Kazakh *syrmaq* felt carpets (2010) demonstrates this attention to "materiality" notably. She shows how the material qualities of felt, mainly that the wool fibers can be pulled apart and re-constituted, enable the teaching and practice of the tradition of felt making. Thus, the material qualities of felt not only make the textiles they constitute unique, but they also help to structure the learning relationships of Kazakh craftswomen. Craftswomen, in this case, make felt textiles as a measure of their gendered identity, but are also "made" by the felt and its material qualities.

In conversation with studies like this, my research (Waugh-Quasebarth 2018) exploring the global trade of wood for musical instruments demonstrates how our sensory requirements for craft objects puts into motion the global trade of craft materials. Instrument makers in North America seek to replicate the sound of instruments made by legendary instrument makers, and thus seek tone in the same kinds of wood these makers would have used. North American makers thus seek out rosewood species (*Dalbergia spp.*) from South America to replicate the efforts of famous American guitar maker C.F. Martin, and spruce (*Picea spp.*) from the forests of Europe to emulate the great Italian violinmakers. Consumers of fine craft musical instruments have come to expect and demand such craft materials, driving instrument makers to continue to use these types of wood despite their increasingly unavailability. Musical instrument makers, thus, must negotiate global networks of the flow of wooden craft materials in order to continue the tradition and make a living practicing their craft.

The wood itself becomes an important symbol of the quality and authenticity of the craftsperson, and instruments are often judged for the wood used in the craft before their sonic quality is assessed. For a craft object whose seemingly most important quality is to "sing" musical notes, the importance of the craft material is not only in its ability to produce high-quality musical notes, but also the very materials it is made from. For example, in the craft of American steel-string guitars, the wood of the red spruce (*Picea rubens*) is often prized above more suitable alternatives because of its historical presence in notable in so-called "golden-age" instruments made in the early 20th century.

In addition to the symbols communicated through craft objects, the materials can also tell us about the changing environmental context from which craft materials emerge. Because of the relative paucity of high-quality spruce in the Eastern United States today due to centuries of logging, musical instrument makers look to the forests of Western North America and Eastern Europe as a source of musical wood. Instrument makers must extend themselves through global networks in order to find wood that can both suit their own personal ideals in the craft and the aesthetic demands of their consumer base and clients.

Jennifer Post's work with Central Asian instrument makers (2017) resonates with these findings. While tradition and consumers demand certain materials, deforestation and environmental change have required makers to look far and wide for craft materials, causing new circulations of craftspeople and changes to the materiality of craft traditions. Musical woods once common and

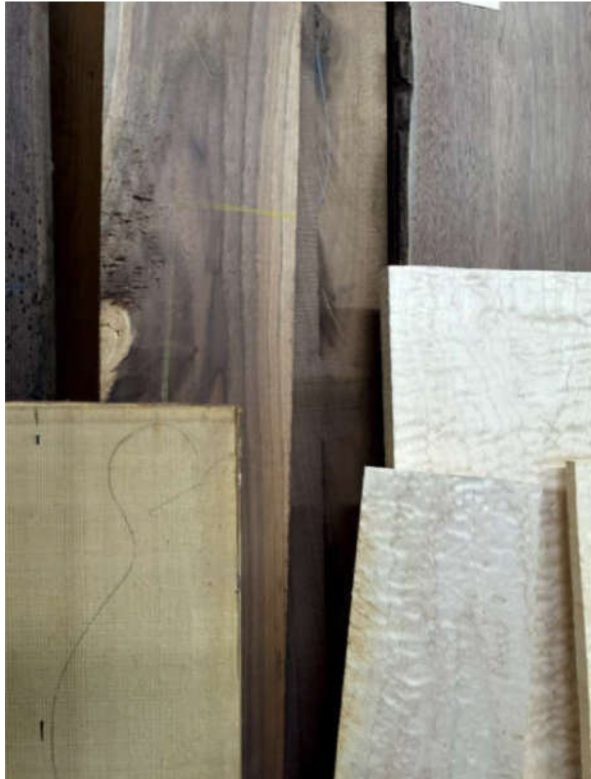

Figure 2. Various species of musical tonewood in a guitar maker's shop sourced from throughout North America. (West Virginia, United States, 2016.)

Figure 3. Mountain forests of the Appalachian Mountains in the Eastern United States that provide wood for a variety of craft practices, including instrument manufacture (West Virginia, United States, 2016.)

intrinsic to the production of Central Asian musical traditions have become difficult to find, forcing makers to encounter emerging flows of alternative wood resources and the frictions of transnational trade.

In light of the breadth of scholarship around the history and traditions of craft in Kazakhstan in this volume, how can we look at contemporary practices in Kazakh crafts and ask similar questions about the emerging flows and frictions of craft materials? How do synthetic and manufactured fibers and dyes enable new forms of expression in textile arts and displace traditional methods? How are changing economies and demographics also changing the fabric from which craft livelihoods are woven? As we make the flows and frictions of the globally inter-connected 21st century, what futures lie before us in the relationship between craftspeople and the materials they use in the production of enduring symbols of creative expression?

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The Art of Making Traditional Kazakh *Tekemet* Carpets

Aizhan Bekkulova
Chair of the Union of Crafters of Kazakhstan
Expert in Kazakhstan's ICH

Legendary Origins of Felt

A popular legend among felt makers is that this miraculous material first appeared on Noah's Ark, which bore a pair of sheep. During the long journey, the sheep lost their hair, which fell onto the floor and was trodden over by other animals resulting in the first felt.

The Turks have another, more romantic account of the origins of felt. Once there was a shepherd who tended sheep. He pondered for a long time how he might use their fleece, which he had in abundance. He squeezed and twisted it, but to no avail. Once, after a hard day, he began to cry out of despair. And his tear fell onto a piece of wool, which he continued to squeeze in his hands. The wool suddenly toughened, and this is how the first felt was produced. For this reason, the Turks believe one needs to work very hard to produce felt. This origin story is the one I like the most.

Yet another account of the origins of felt has been offered by one of the world's most renowned felt makers, Mehmet Girgich from Turkey. He believes that the process of wool's transformation into felt is very similar to a person's life. As a person is born helpless and shuddering at every touch and breath of the wind, so is the unprocessed wool – it is soft, feather-like, and ready to be blown away by any draft, which is why the felt maker needs to be very careful when setting out to work with it. This is similar to how you help a baby get onto his feet – you need to be assiduous and very patient. The wool then gets washed and soaked with water. This refers to the period of infancy. In the case of a baby, you need to teach and guide him on what you expect of him. You show him how to choose his own ways, build his character, teach him to overcome difficulties, and become as multifaceted as life itself. You need to help make him a wonderful person so that you feel no shame for him in the future. It is the same with wool. You need to patiently teach wool fibers to keep company with each other. Then your movements become stronger, much like the first hardships faced by a youngster. With time, life becomes more challenging and its rhythm denser and felt matures in a similar fashion… By forty years of age, felt needs hardships and even beating. And by sixty, you can see the result of your work – a quality piece of felt.

Figure 1. *Tree of Life*. 2016. Wool felt, 120x180. By Aizhan Bekkulova.

Figure 2. A *Variation on the Theme of Ornaments*, 2016. Wool felt. By Aizhan Bekkulova.

So, this is how you work with felt – patiently and mercifully at first before gradually building up your efforts; all while observing how it develops, knowing all its problems at every stage of making, and finally achieving the result of your hard work.

Traditional Felting Technique

For the Kazakh nomads, felt has always been the most widely used material and surrounded them throughout life.

Felting was a true feast of work, the participants of this feast being predominantly women. Before beginning their work, crafters needed to offer a "treat" to the wool – they sprinkled it with milk to purify it from dirt. The sheep hair was believed to have magical properties, so crafters tried to comply with every step of the ritual to make a good piece of felt. In particular, they believed that a felt mat would have its four corners fall apart if touched by a woman who is not in "harmony with the wool." When felt is being checked for readiness, crafters avoid talking aloud or asking openly about whether the material has matured. Instead, they talk about it as if it were a third person. They also ask the lead crafter if the felt maker (a woman) is satisfied. Big felts are produced by an entire community – the process known as *asar*, or community work.

For nomads, sheep – a symbol of prosperity – were the main source of raw material to make covers for their dwellings that protect them against the cold, as well as to produce many other items needed in a household. Importantly, the supplier of this raw material was always near and accessible.

Of special value is felt made of sheep hair, which was cut in the fall. For this reason, August was a very busy month. In modern felting, which involves the use of soap and needle-punching, the period of wool shearing is not that important.

The nomadic felting technique is extremely respected among crafters. It is used traditionally to produce big and thick pieces of felt that cover the yurt, or as floor carpets and other items that protect against wind, rain, and bad weather.

As a practitioner, I would like to share my experience in making a big traditional *tekemet* – a felt carpet where the colored pattern gets "felted" into the base. We made this *tekemet* in the settlement of Kyzylkain (Shiely District, Kyzylorda Region) in June 2016.

The workshop was arranged by the Union of Crafters of Kazakhstan as part of UNESCO's joint project with the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea. The facilitator was Umit Altayeva, a 72-year-old local crafter. I was a trainer for a group of ten to twelve felt makers from Kyzylorda Region. We also had Kultai-azhe, an 80-year-old local crafter, as our observer and adviser.

To begin, all the crafters took the wool that was sheared from sheep in the fall (*kuzem zhun*), thoroughly dried it in the sun, and separated it into colors. They also removed dust and dirt and cut burrs away. They then beat it over a wire netting with willow rods (*zhyngyldy*), which are usually cut in late fall or after the frost to ensure their durability. To make the rods smooth and even, they should be sandpapered. The thick end is covered with cloth to make the work more comfortable. The process of teasing the wool (*sabau*) removes coarse particles of dirt and loosens thick fibers. The wool then needs to be carded with a handy comb attached to a big board. The crafter sits down on the board to steady it and speed up the combing process.

In this way we prepared the wool for a big *tekemet* carpet. The wool to be used for the pattern was beaten to remove dirt. It was then dyed in a big pot, dried, and combed.

We needed a bigger chi mat made of steppe reed than we had. So, we sewed two chi mats together with a thick thread and a big needle. The extra mat overlaid the base by around 20 centimeters (8 inches) and was sewn using the *kokteu* stitch. Where the thread ends it needed to be tied, or the *kigash/tepsheu kaip* (double backstitch) was made. If the chi mat is not enough to place the would-be carpet, it can also be extended with the *kenep* sackcloth. We used the mat, which was 3.6 meters (12 feet) long and 1.5 meters (3 feet) wide.

The chi mat was spread outdoors on a square wooden platform called *saki* or *tapshan* with a side length of 3.1 meters (10 feet). Some 8-9 kg (17-20 pounds) of loosened and combed wool of natural color was prepared to make the base of the carpet and divided into two equal parts. One part was put over the chi mat and beaten with the *sabau* rods to loosen and spread the wool over the surface – the process called *shabaktau*. Then the crafters checked whether the wool was distributed evenly and added fibers where it was thin. An experienced crafter sprinkled the wool with hot (although not too hot) water using a broom and said good wishes. Then the wool was rolled together with the mat and the crafters began to waggle it carefully like a cradle (*besik*). After that, four crafters kneeled on blankets and began to press down the roll (*bilekteu*) with their elbows for 15 or 20 minutes, turning it by one fourth every 15-20 counts.

Figure 3a-3g.
Steps in the process of making felt

Figure 3a.

Figure 3b.

Figure 3c.

Figure 3d.

Figure 3e.

Figure 3f.

Figure 3g.

Then the chi mat needs to be opened and the prefelt (*taldyrma*) should be rolled and doubled. The roll is covered with a blanket and a carpet so that it remains warm and put aside while the second part of the base gets prepared.

The second part of the *taldyrma* is prepared using the same *shabaktau* technique, by first spreading the wool evenly and checking it manually. As at the first stage, it then gets sprinkled with water, rolled, and waggled. When ready, both *taldyrma* pieces need to be laid one on top of the other and the pattern needs to be distributed over them. Crafters may use a ready colored *taldyrma* prefelt cut with scissors or a sharp knife using a template. Then the patterns should be applied to the base and felting begins. In our case, however, we spread colored wool onto the base to form the local design of the carpet. To correctly locate the central rosettes, we used a headcloth as a template, which was folded diagonally and put onto the base three times, as the pattern was composed of three diamond-shaped rosettes. First, we outlined the pattern with a wool band and filled it with colored wool, then we added the fibers of the same color as the base to fill in the spots that bore no design or border.

The felt needs to be sprinkled with hot water again, rolled together with the chi mat, and tied with ropes. As soon as the wool gets watered for the first time, the entire process needs to continue without interruption. When crafters wait for hot water or face another delay, they continue to waggle the roll so that it does not cool down.

This is followed by the *bilekteu* (rolling the felt with forearms) and *tebu* (rolling and kicking it with feet) processes until the felt is almost ready. These processes are very labor-intensive and time-consuming. The crafters needed to change places with each other to have a rest or drink some water. A couple of times, we had to ask several young men (who came to take the hostess' son to a party) to help us. For them, it was an exciting experience of making a connection with the tradition and understanding how difficult this work was. The entire process involves joint work accompanied by singing or rhythmic counting.

The next step is that of compressing and leveling the felt out. This process is called *karpu*. The piece needs to be folded along its long side and then crafters sew together the four ends, the side seams, and, finally, the center. What they get as a result is a hollow cylinder sewn up from every side. Crafters gather into a circle and take the upper part of the felt with one hand while the other hand is placed some 20 centimeters (8 inches) lower. At the word of the lead crafter, everyone lifts the felt and throws it around the circle for 15-20 minutes, during which the roll needs to be rotated in the same direction. When it falls onto the floor, water gets beaten out and the piece becomes thicker and drier. The sound of when it touches the floor changes and this is how an experienced felt maker knows that the piece is ready. The *karpu* process may be accompanied by the ritual of good-wishing. A person who wants his or her dream to come true (for example, to get married, or get pregnant and give birth to a healthy child, or make some wishes for another person) is placed in the center of the felt, which needs to be sewn into a circle. The dreams must be positive, however. After the ritual (or on the next day), the one who made the wish gives presents to everyone who participated in the ritual to make sure it comes true.

Conclusion

I made my first felt item as early as 1993. Since that time, I've undertaken a great deal of training to learn how to use new techniques, materials, tools, and devices, each of which produce very different felts in terms of their thickness, tactile sensation, texture, and designation – from those as tender as silk to the ones as coarse as rough leather. I've been training other crafters for years already. I make big felt pictures, clothes, and accessories. Yet, each time I see a Kazakh *tekemet* or *syrmak* carpet, I tip my hat to those crafters who created these masterpieces and whose works motivate me to study and promote this ancient material, and to engage in new experiments.

I'd like to conclude with my favorite quote from Istvan Vidak, a notable Hungarian ethnographer who studied felting traditions of various peoples and is himself a master of this craft: "To make felt, you need nothing but your hands and wool. You also need a great deal of hard work, however." This is probably why felting is such an exciting art.

Kazakh Traditional Weaving: A Study of History, Value, and Types Based on the Collection of the Kasteyev State Museum of Arts

Nataliya Bazhenova
Kasteyev State Museum of Arts

Abstract: This article discusses the formation and development of traditional Kazakh hand weaving in the 19th and 20th centuries, building on my 2017 book, *Kazakh Weaving*. That book was based on intensive research into the origins of Kazakh weaving and offered a classification of woven items that revealed their rich variety. It also described the role of woven items in everyday life and religious ceremonies, and considered the techniques, tools, and materials used in their production. The major compositional patterns and ornamental motifs, as well as the artistic and symbolic characteristics typical of Kazakh weaving, were considered alongside numerous weaving techniques. This article summarizes the key issues that arose in the course of this research, and describes the formation of the Kasteyev State Museum of Arts collections and the establishment of the first Republican Museum of Applied Arts in Kazakhstan.

Keywords: Kazakh folk art, Kazakh weaving, Kazakh patterns, handmade carpets, weaving craft, Kazakh yurt, semantics of Kazakh weaving, weaving technology, composition of carpets, customs and rituals, types of weaving techniques, folk crafters.

A renaissance of art is the evidence of the renaissance of a nation. Everything accomplished for art is an attainment for evolution.

Nicholas Roerich

Over the course of their historical development, the Kazakh people have built a very distinctive material and spiritual culture. Folk crafts have a special place in this rich and diverse heritage. Traditional Kazakh weaving is a beautiful, complicated, and widespread craft. It originated in ancient times and has long played an important part in the life of nomadic peoples in the region. In the recent past, families would produce all necessary household items and clothing within their own household. The importance of woven items is evidenced by the fact that there were more than 25 types of woven textiles in use. Combined with felts and embroidered rugs, as well as patterned strips, these textiles livened up the interior of yurts, and became symbolic of eternal life and a happy family.

In 1970, the Republican Museum of Applied Arts opened in Almaty. Its founder and first director was Kulakhmet Khojikov. The museum arranged collecting expeditions throughout Kazakhstan that resulted in a unique and wide-ranging collection of folk crafts. Today, this collection belongs to one of the nation's largest museums – the Kasteyev State Museum of Arts. The woven textiles in the museum's collection were manufactured between the late 19th century and the 1980s. They were brought from all the regions of Kazakhstan and include carpets, rugs, patterned strips that adorned yurts, as well as several types of covers, cases, and bags.

Kazakh decorative arts convey the visual impressions of the surrounding world in which the craft makers lived. Patterns are a significant aspect of every ethnic culture, and have a special place in spiritual, aesthetic, artistic, and ceremonial life. The variety of decorations, compositions and colors reflect the inner world of the people and emphasize the fine taste and inexhaustible inventiveness of a Kazakh woman. The patterns used in woven textiles include geometric, cosmogonic, domestic, floral, zoomorphic, and anthropomorphic motifs where nature is closely intertwined with the echoes of ancient beliefs and myths.

Archaeological discoveries and literature suggest that weaving has a very ancient history in this region. Written sources from as early as the era of the first nomadic peoples mention textiles made in the territory of modern Kazakhstan. Medieval accounts by travelers and ambassadors such as Ruy González de Clavijo, Fazlallah bin Ruzbehan, Guillaume de Rubrouck, and Giovanni da Pian del Carpine, among others, also contain interesting reports.

Russian scholars of the 18th and 19th centuries, including Alexey Lyovshin, Nikolay Krasovsky, Vassily Potto, Grigory Potanin, Richard Karutz, Johann Sievers, and Johan Peter Falck, also described the vibrancy and variety of Kazakh textiles. Scientific research into Kazakh folk arts

began in the 19th century, and one of the first researchers who carried out some work was Grigory Kolmogorov. He wrotethat the Kazakhs "prepared bundles of felt cloths and carpets similar to those made in Bukhara" (Kolmogorov 1855: 4-5). Nikolay Krasovsky (1868) described various Kazakh woven crafts, emphasizing that "girls are taught from the earliest age to sew, weave, and make felt cloths and when they grow a little they are already required to do all these things" (31).

In Russian literature, initial reports of weaving in Central Asia and Kazakhstan appeared in mid- 19th century accounts of travelers, traders, members of Russian embassies to Central Asian khanates, and the military. Beginning from the late 19th century, special expeditions were sent to the region to study local history, households, and crafts. These resulted in publications on geographical, historical and economic issues that described the culture and ways of life among Central Asian peoples. Russian museum scholars studied Central Asian carpets and gathered rich collections of these items. In the early 20th century, Armin Baron von Fölkersahm studied museum holdings and all available research and accounts of Central Asian carpet making, such as works by Samuil Dudin (including *Kyrgyz Patterns*, 1925, and *Carpets of Central Asia*), and published his own book titled *Antique Carpets of Central Asia*. The World Oriental Carpet Exhibition of 1891 in Vienna introduced the region's diverse culture and exquisite craftsmanship to European audiences. The exhibition also inspired research on this topic. Of particular significance is Alexander Dobromyslov's work on Kazakh folk arts, which was published in the late 19th century and contained colored patterns, a drawing of the narrow-beam loom, and a description of the beaming process.

Research on Kazakh folk weaving has flourished since the 20th century, including the important work of Marat Mukanov, Toleu Bassenov, A. Orazbayeva, Alkey Margulan, Uzbekali Janibekov, Alibek Kazhgali, N. Ibrayeva, and other scholars. These researchers have studied fiber processing, spinning and weaving techniques and tools, and the most popular patterns in use among Kazakh weavers.

Woven textiles in the museum collection were created from the late 19th century to 1980s. Because weaving traditions have been carefully preserved by Kazakh artisans, we now can explore the history of weaving in this region to develop an understanding of how the craft developed.

Yurt decorations are best understood starting from the dome or uppermost region of the structure, which was traditionally adorned by patterned *baskur* and *bau* bands, and colorful *shashak* tassels. The *baskur* strips tied up the roof poles (*uyk* and *kerege*) of a yurt and its latticework (*kerege*) around the perimeter and decorated the joints between the *kerege* and the dome. The *bau* bands ran diagonally under the wooden poles and were fastened to outer felt covers. In addition to their functionality, they also served as decoration for the dome of the yurt. The *bau* and *baskur* bands were made using a variety of techniques and colors. The *shashak* tassels were also an important decorative and protective item. Like twinkling stars they shimmered, moved by air entering the yurt through the *shanyrak* – a circular opening at the top that symbolized the limitless eternal sky.

Wall rugs are another significant decorative aspect of Kazakh yurts. These include pile items (*tukti kilem*, or *kaly kilem*) and flat-woven textiles (*takyr kilem, takta kilem, taz kilem, araby kilem, beskeste kilem, badnas kilem, alasha,* and many others). There are also rugs made using chain stitch (loop-type stitches in a continuous row) – *tus kilem, biz kilem*, and *ilme kilem*. Carpets adorned the walls of a yurt and served as insulation. They covered its floors and were also used as covers for loaded camels during migration. In addition, they were an indispensable part of a bride's dowry, were given as presents to guests at celebrations, and were used to wrap the dead before burial.

Pile carpets were hung around the yurt to the right and left of the seat of honor – the *tor*. Their decorations were very diverse. An artisan would select a pattern and sew it with threads on a fabric. Then she would put this template in front of her onto warp threads.

Many textiles were made using red and maroon, from light tones to deep crimson and ruby shades. Colors have certain effects on people. A child who is surrounded from their infancy with a harmonious and rich color palette and a variety of patterns learns to discern beauty throughout their entire life.

Kazakh flat-woven carpets are of special interest due to the variety of weaving techniques, compositions, and colors used. Girls would make many things needed for their dowry on their own. Children were taught to weave and sew from a very early age. Having mastered the necessary skills, they became true bearers of their culture, which is unthinkable without creativity and inseparable from their way of life.

Artisans also wove small household textiles such as strips of carpets and small rugs, prayer mats, bags, and covers. The *korzhyn* saddlebags were used to carry loads on pack animals. Bags were also widely used in wedding rituals. There are around fourteen known types of bags and covers used in a household, including *ayak kap, kerme kap, kerege kap, kese kap, tosek kap, uykkap ten, kol dorba*, and *karshyn*.

Figure 1. *Korzhyn*, 1950.
Kyzylorda Region.
Wool, weaving. 52x110

Figure 2. *Baskur alasha*. 1940.
Shymkent Region.
Wool, weaving. 180x295

Figure 3. Pile carpet, 1960.
Kyzylorda Region.
Wool, weaving. 190x32

Figure 4. Flat-woven carpet.
Wool, weaving. 196x340

Woven cases and covers for chests – *sandyk zhapkysh* and *abdire zhapkysh* – were also an important part of yurt ornamentation. Kazakh women wove cloths for horses and camels – *at* and *tuie zhabu* – adorned with tassels, fringe, and colorful strips. *At dorba* bags for feeding horses were made using various weaving techniques and decorated with geometric patterns. These items were stored on the right side of the yurt – the men's side – with harnesses and other things.

A yurt is not simply a dwelling, but a symbol of order and harmony. Each item within had its proper place, and there were no unnecessary items in a household.

Kazakh woven textiles were an important and indispensable part of a bride's dowry and played a major role in wedding ceremonies.

The making of felt and woven textiles depended directly on the availability of sheep's wool. Over time, Kazakh artisans have mastered the processing and use of wool to make many necessary household items. Sheep's wool was cut, washed, dyed, combed or pulled, and then spun using the *urshyk* spindle.

Preparing a loom is an important step that frames the entire process of weaving. Kazakh artisans used three types of looms – horizontal, vertical (for carpets), and the *ormek* narrow-beam loom (for woven strips and small items). Using these looms, Kazakh artisans would make over a dozen traditional patterns, each of which had a unique compositional layout. Dyeing was an important part of wool preparation and carpet makers used local plants and minerals to make dyes. The yarn was placed into a boiling solvent and then washed in cold water and hung to dry, to be later wound into balls.

Choosing which colors to include was another significant step that determined the decorative characteristics of the item. Crafters would place many dyed yarns next to each other in order to select the most harmonious color combinations.

Often, traditional crafts are associated with certain customs and rituals, and weaving is no exception. Textile making was preceded by the *kilem bastau* ritual – a feast for relatives, friends, and neighbors where gifts of food were offered and a prayer for successful work was recited. When a weaver completed a work, there was another feast – the *kilem toy*, or *kilem kuru* – to which several women would be invited. They came to see the new carpet and threw coins and presents onto it to wish it a long and useful life (the *shashu* custom). If a family faced hardships, weaving production ceased, as people believed that the emotional state of a crafter would be reflected in what she made. To avoid negative influences on an incomplete carpet, it was covered with a cloth until weaving was resumed.

Weaving was often accompanied by singing, which saturated it with sounds and rhythm. There were also songs that guided the process. When a woman was busy with weaving, her neighbors, friends, and relatives offered her help in running her household – this custom was called *asar*.

Making a carpet required the work of four women during a month. This intensive workload is reflected in the following Kazakh saying: "Weaving a carpet is like digging a well with a needle."

"The most important and necessary conditions for the development of any culture is the succession and preservation of cultural heritage, the interaction between cultures, and their mutual enrichment. The Eurasian peoples who have been historically, culturally and politically connected from ancient times developed in a common civilizational process where nomadic and settled cultures interacted very closely" (Tokhtabayeva 2005: 307).

The folk arts of Turkic peoples were noticeably influenced by various ancient tribes. These included the Sakas, Kangjus, Wusuns, Sarmatians, Alans, Huns, and the Kimeks and Kipchaks. The Kazakhs lived side by side with the Kyrgyz, Mongols, Uzbeks, Chinese, as well as peoples of Siberia and the East. Their ways of life and households were very similar, as were the climatic and geographical peculiarities of the places they lived in.

The Great Silk Road that crossed Kazakh towns brought people and arts together. Kazakhstan had close contacts with those living on the Volga River, in the Altai Mountains, Mongolia, and Central Asia. The patterns, materials, colors, symbols, and objects of art of these nations therefore share certain common features. However, while developing close connections with the crafts of other peoples and absorbing certain elements, Kazakhstan also has developed unique styles and techniques in crafts, including within their weaving traditions. The trade and cultural ties with neighboring countries contributed to the development of folk arts, enriched and renewed them, yet the main canons remained unchanged. The ancient traditions suggest there was a cultural commonality that manifested itself in the weaving traditions of the Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, Turkmens, Uzbeks, Uighurs, as well as Caucasians and other peoples.

Woven textiles convey the spirit of the Kazakh nation, which has preserved its invaluable heritage in signs and symbols to be decoded by future generations. To conclude, let us consider Nicholas Roerich's words about the role of art:

“Art will unify all humanity. Art is one – indivisible. Art has its many branches, yet all are one. Art is the manifestation of the coming synthesis. Art is for all. Everyone will enjoy true art. The gates of the 'Sacred Source' must be wide open for everybody […] and how many young hearts are searching for something real and beautiful! So, give it to them. Bring art to the people, where it belongs” (Roerich 1936, online).

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The Role of Museums in Supporting and Sustaining Craft Traditions

Robert Pontsioen
Asian Cultural History Program
Smithsonian Institution

Museums have long been understood as repositories of collections of objects and other tangible cultural heritage, which they aim to preserve, study, and share with the public. However, an emerging and often overlooked role of museums is their support of intangible cultural heritage, such as local craft communities and traditions. Drawn primarily from my work with artisans and museums in Japan (which has long been a global leader in the field of cultural heritage preservation and promotion), in this article I present two examples of how museum practitioners can contribute to the sustainability of craft traditions. Many craft communities (and the traditions and knowledge they embody) around the world are currently struggling to maintain viability in a globalized marketplace due to increased competition from mass-produced goods, changing consumer tastes, aging practitioners, and difficulty in obtaining traditional materials among other factors (Taylor 1994; Shah and Patel 2017; Pontsioen 2019). A focused effort to support craft practice can therefore provide renewed relevancy for museums in the 21st century among both artisan communities and the public.

Museums as Facilitators of Craft Law and Bureaucracy

Since the 1974 passage of the *Law for the Promotion of Traditional Craft Industries (Dentōteki Kōgeihin Shinkō Hō)*, which aimed to contribute to local economic growth through the promotion of regional traditional craft industries, the Japanese government has been vested in finding ways to support traditional crafts (Pontsioen 2019: 215). This law established the nationwide system of traditional craft designation, through which *kumiai* (traditional craft guilds) and their members are able to gain recognition as producers of authentic wares made using traditional techniques and materials. As of 2019, there are 230 nationally designated traditional crafts of Japan, with all 47 prefectures represented. In addition to this national-level system, the *Law for the Promotion of Traditional Craft* Industries also facilitated the creation of prefectural-level craft designation and support systems. Tokyo was the first regional authority to enact such a program in September 1981, and has since designated 41 traditional crafts.

One unfortunate challenge in utilizing these government support systems for artisans is that they must navigate the complicated bureaucratic designation process, and this is one way in which several Japanese museum practitioners I worked with provide assistance to craft makers, thereby contributing to the sustainability of local craft traditions. For example, an active group of artisans that wishes to have their craft designated by the Japanese government must complete the necessary application documents and submit these to their prefectural governor's office. In preparing these documents, kumiai have been assisted by curators and other museum staff at the Edo-Tokyo Museum (see figure 1), a major public museum in the heart of the old downtown shitamachi area of Tokyo that was historically and continues to be the location of most traditional craft workshops in the region. As outlined in the next section of this paper, the Edo-Tokyo Museum coordinates with traditional craft kumiai in hosting craft making demonstrations and other events, and this existing working relationship puts museum staff in a good position to provide such consultation as needed.

In this way, the museum and its staff can serve as craft law and bureaucracy facilitators, what Levitt and Merry (2009) call "vernacularizers," who "convey ideas from one context to another, adapting and reframing them from the way they attach to a source context to one that resonates with the new location" (449). For example, museum staff can help to clarify the complex requirements and regulations spelled out in the 1974 *Law for the Promotion of Traditional Craft Industries*, and identify potential benefits of designation more generally, for busy artisans who often lack the time and inclination to parse the text of the legislation. This resonates with Levitt and Merry's research on the implementation of transnational human rights law, which demonstrates the difficulty in rendering legal frameworks coherent and relevant for people at a local level (2009: 499). Given that museum professionals are well- positioned to work with local craft communities and to be conversant in cultural heritage law, the role of museums can be critical in this context. In the case of Japan, for

Figure 1. The Tokyo Metropolitan Edo-Tokyo Museum in Ryogoku, Tokyo.
(Photo by the author, 2017)

Figure 2. Promotional flyer made by
the Tokyo Waggaki Kumiai
to advertise the 15th annual shamisen
and koto craft demonstration,
held at the Edo-Tokyo Museum
on August 28th, 2009.

example, although cultural heritage legislation and governmental support systems help to ensure the future and vitality of many of Japan's traditional crafts, lengthy and complicated application procedures can deter or prevent other groups of craft workers from applying for traditional craft designation (Pontsioen 2012: 198).

Opening Museum Spaces to Craft Communities

In addition to being facilities for housing collections, museums are public spaces that increasingly seek to engage with and benefit local communities (Golding and Modest 2013). Among traditional artisan communities, one important way to promote craft business is through special events, craft exhibitions and craft-making demonstrations, which presents museums with another opportunity to contribute to the sustainability of craft traditions.

For example, most Tokyo traditional craft *kumiai* arrange at least one exhibition every year, which are major annual events for many craft practitioners. These events not only facilitate sales but also introduce new audiences to traditional craft products and producers, and the museum setting is an excellent venue to reach a wide and diverse audience. One such event, organized by the *Tokyo Waggaki Kumiai* (Tokyo Traditional Musical Instrument Maker's Guild), which represents shamisen (traditional Japanese three-stringed lute) makers, is held annually at the Edo-Tokyo Museum in Ryogoku (see fig. 2). *Shamisen* maker Takeuchi Yasuo described the nature of this event:

> We have a demonstration event every year at the Edo-Tokyo Museum, have you heard of it? Here is the flyer for this years' event (see figure 5.12). The kumiai rents a space in the museum, a large concert hall with a stage. They have been doing this event for many years now. Craftsmen work on making an instrument and their techniques are described and narrated by a master of ceremonies. They have about ten craft workers on stage and together they make a complete shamisen or *koto*. One craftsman will stretch the skin over the shamisen body, another will plane the neck, and another will polish the instrument. They have a different time slot to show each part of the process to the audience. The whole event is free to attend and the people who come out really enjoy it. At the end of the demonstration they have a lottery to give away the finished instrument. Whoever wins goes home very happy. Even though it's a shamisen for practice (rather than a concert instrument), it isn't a cheap instrument by any means (17 July 2009).

Kumiai-endorsed exhibitions and special events at museums are one of the best sources of advertising and public relations available to traditional craft practitioners. One of the challenges facing *kumiai* in staging such events, however, is cost. In discussing the annual Tokyo Waggaki Kumiai event, for example, shamisen maker Horigome Toshio had this to say:

> One of the ways our *kumiai* works to promote our craft industry is through the annual demonstration and exhibition at the Edo-Tokyo Museum. This year will be the fifteenth straight year we have held this event. The only problem is that it is expensive to rent the space and there is no entrance fee for visitors to attend the event. This means our kumiai has to cover the cost and therefore our *kumiai* membership dues are somewhat higher compared to other *kumiai*. (23 July 2009)

Despite the costs to *kumiai*, most artisans feel the expense is justified given the amount of exposure such events provide to their craft and business; indeed, several craft workers I interviewed told me they had joined their respective *kumiai* specifically so that they would be able to participate in *kumiai*-sponsored events and exhibitions (Pontsioen 2012: 223). This example of traditional craft demonstration in Tokyo represents one important way in which museums can engage with and support local artisans, by making available museum space for community-directed projects and activities.

A second example of how museums can effectively engage artisan communities by leveraging prominent public spaces is the event around which the papers in the present volume have been organized, the Scholarly Symposium titled Kazakhstan's Crafts and Creative Economy, carried out in conjunction with the Smithsonian Craft2Wear show, (Oct. 3-5, 2019). This international exposure to the crafts of Kazakhstan is an excellent example of the potential tangible beneficial outcomes of partnerships between museums and artisan communities. In this way, the study and exhibition of crafts exemplify one important way that museums can raise awareness of the cultural and aesthetic significance of traditional and modern crafts for a broad public.

Conclusion

As the relevancy of museums in the 21st century continues to be explored and debated, and many craft traditions around the world face an uncertain future, the potential role for museums in supporting artisan communities and knowledge becomes increasingly urgent. I have considered in this paper two examples of innovative ways that museums can help to support and sustain craft traditions: by assisting with the navigation of complex legal frameworks for heritage support, and by making available museum spaces for craft community events. Through these and other measures to promote craft practice, museums can serve not only as stewards of material craft culture, but also as active participants in securing the long-term viability of invaluable craft traditions.

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Tuskiiz Rugs as a Key Element of Yurt Decoration

Nurzhamal Nurfeizova
Kasteyev State Museum of Arts

Abstract: This article considers the history of studies into Kazakh applied arts and embroidery, the linkages between this craft and ancient nomadic traditions, as well as the ethnic peculiarities of embroideries and their use in the decoration of traditional *tuskiiz* wall rugs made in the 19th and 20th centuries. It describes the main types of *tuskiiz* rugs, designs, embroidery techniques, and materials used for making these items, as well as their role and place in a yurt and ethnic customs. The paper also reviews compositional schemes and ornamental motifs used on embroidered *tuskiiz* rugs from the collection of the Kasteyev State Museum of Arts.

Keywords: Kazakh applied arts, *tuskiiz*, embroidery, Kazakh yurt, Kazakh patterns, ornamental composition, chain stitch, satin stitch, Kazakh customs, crafters, embroideresses.

Nomadic artifacts and applied arts interest not only museum professionals, historians, ethnographers, and art critics but all those who love art. The earliest mentions of the Scythians and Sarmatians date back to antiquity. The Greek historian Herodotus and geographer Strabo were the first to describe the way of life, occupations, and dwellings of nomads. The Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, Altaians, Mongols, Turkmens, and other Central Asian peoples are the successors to, and bearers of, the traditions of the great nomadic civilization.

In the 19th and 20th century, Kazakhstan – as one of Eurasia's largest countries – was thoroughly explored by expeditions of the Russian Geographical Society. The researchers were inspired by the spiritual culture, everyday life, customs, and traditions of Kazakh nomads. Samuil Dudin, who took part in Vassily Bartold's expedition in 1894, studied the applied arts of the Kazakhs who lived along the Syrdarya, Talas, and Chu Rivers and in the Semirechye region. Since 1902, Dudin made several travels to Central Asia and Kazakhstan to collect carpets and make drawings of rug designs.

Lev Gumilyov, a renowned 20th-century orientalist, studied the materials of archaeological excavations in Southern Siberia and Central Asia and asserted that, over 3,000 years of its existence, the nomadic culture had made a long historical journey. Eurasian nomads contributed to the development of the world's civilization. They invented the wheel, a narrow-beam loom, and a yurt which fostered the advancement of other areas of human activities such as mechanical engineering, the light industry, and architecture. The nomadic civilization was also a golden cradle of ancient art that produced the Scythian animal style and geometrical and polychrome designs. The nomadic traditions have been preserved in Kazakh applied arts and patterns.

Archaeological finds in different regions of Kazakhstan and the Pazyryk burials discovered in the Altay Mountains (5th century B.C.) play an important part in the studies of nomadic crafts and designs. Woven and felt carpets that survived in permafrost became a real sensation for researchers. The large textile pieces found by archaeologists suggested that nomads could use them to warm and adorn their houses.

A yurt is a phenomenon of the nomadic culture. It is a convenient portable house made of wood and textiles. The Kazakhs call the yurt a *kiiz ui*, which means a *house made of felt*, as its wooden frame is covered from the outside with thick white felts that resist cold and water. The semispherical form of a yurt is often compared with the inverted skies, and its round dome with the sun. The *shashak* colorful tassels that hang under the dome remind of stars and the woven and ornamented *ak baskur* strips that frame the dome refer to the symbolic image of the Milky Way.[1] People's aspiration for beauty and comfort manifested itself to the utmost extent in the desire to adorn and organize their dwellings. Textiles were an affordable material that protected nomads against heat and cold and served them as bedlinen, furniture, and clothes.

The colorful interior of a yurt comprises carved furniture, felt floor carpets (*tekemets* and *syrmaks*), piled and flat-woven rugs (*tukti kilem, takyr kilem, alasha*), embroidered wall rugs (*tuskiizs*), woven bands that adorned and fastened the dome (*baskur, bau, zhel bau, tangysh*), needlegrass mats (*shym shi*), and a variety of textile bags and cases to store household items and tableware. Of these, the embroidered *tuskiiz* wall rugs were given pride of place in the harmonious ensemble of decorative things that created the atmosphere of warmth, comfort, and beauty in a yurt.

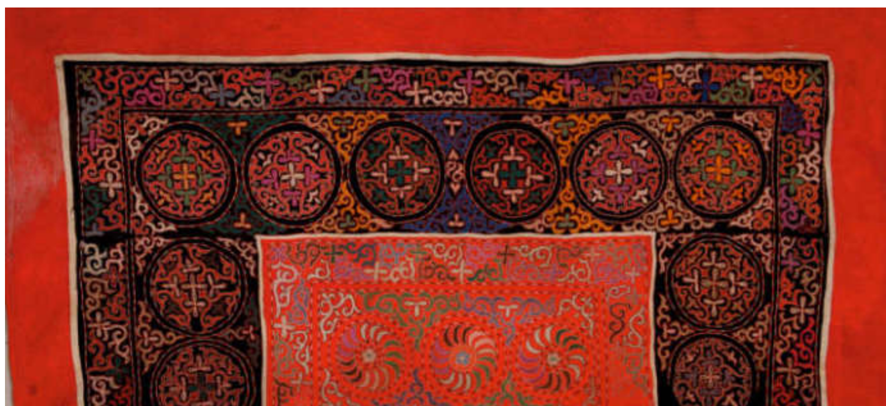

Figure 1. *Tuskiiz*. 1960. Mongolian Kazakhs. Cotton, colored threads, chain stitch.

Figure 2. Ualipa Tulegenova.*Tuskiiz*, 1914.Taldy-Kurgan Region. Velvet, chain stitch.

Figure 3. Bibi Aisayeva (1874-1944).*Tuskiiz***.** 19-20th centuries. Eastern Kazakhstan. Silk, felt, tiger pelt, chain stitch.

Embroidery is a very popular craft among the Kazakhs that dates back to antiquity. The key territories where embroideries flourished were eastern Kazakhstan, its northeastern parts, and the Semirechye region which lacked almost fully carpet making. Embroideries were used to adorn not only *tuskiiz* rugs, but also bedspreads (*tosek zhapkysh*), bed curtains (*shymyldyk*), valances (*tosek ayak*), bands that embellished a yurt (*tegerish, uzik bau, tundik bau*), headdresses, towels, pillowcases, and many other things. Women embroidered when they were free from seasonal and household work and taught their daughters and granddaughters who, by the time of their marriage, could embroider a big ornamented *tuskiiz* rug on their own.

Translated literally from Kazakh, *tuskiiz* means a wall felt. In olden times, these carpets were made of felt or fine leather. The museum's collection comprises several *tuskiiz* rugs with an arch-shaped rectangular border. These were crafted in the past century using the mosaic and appliqué techniques that were typically applied in the production of traditional *syrmak* floor carpets.

In eastern Kazakhstan and Altay, people continued to make *tuskiiz* rugs on felt bases for a long time and attached an embroidered fabric to it. Such a thick carpet would stop cold winds from penetrating a yurt. Later, crafters began to sew *tuskiiz* rugs from imported Chinese velvet, Bukhara silk, Russian woolen cloth, and cotton fabrics.

A *tuskiiz* is a guarding element, so it was often placed next to a fox or wolf pelt, less often that of a marten, and a *kamcha* whip or a bundle of owl feathers that were believed to protect against the evil eye.

This colorful rug symbolizes happiness and well-being of a family. It was given pride of place in the central part of a yurt called *tor* and was the compositional dominant in its interior.

Customs required that a girl should embroider the rug on her own and take it to her groom's house so that his family could assess the skills of the future housewife. *Tuskiizs* were made using the chain stitch (*biz keste*) with a special crochet needle. According to the researcher and archaeologist Sergey Rudenko, the chain stitch was used by the Altay tribes from as early as the Saka epoch.[2] Crafters use this stitch to produce a variety of embroidered surfaces. The chain stitch outlines or fills in the patterns. Another popular embroidery technique is satin stitch (*baspa*). The chain stich was often combined with satin stitch using the couching technique (*bastyrma*). The old *tuskiiz* rugs made in eastern Kazakhstan (*oyuly tuskiiz*) were adorned with a decorative one-sided stitch running mostly on the front surface (*olbyr keste*) that fastened appliqués to the base material. Embroideresses used rectangular or round tambour frames (*kergysh*).

The Kasteyev State Museum of Arts owns a small, but fascinating collection of old Kazakh *tuskiiz* rugs. These may be divided into four groups by key ornamentation techniques.

The **first group** of *tuskiizs* is widespread in all the above-mentioned regions. Its center field is free of design, with a wide embroidered border running along its three sides as a rectangular arch. The borders bear floral patterns, or designs with solar rosettes, or, sometimes, stylized horn-like motifs. The main elements of the composition are round or diamond-shaped medallions, as well as floral rosettes containing finer floral patterns.

The designs of *tuskiizs* from Almaty and Taldykorgan Regions are diverse. These items bear a contrasting combination of a bright center field and a darker border. The embroidered border comprises several ornamented strips of different width that alternate with each other and create an illusion of depth. Ualipa Tulegenova, a crafter from Taldykorgan Region, made a *tuskiiz* rug in the early 20th century. She adorned the wide border and the center field with a complicated floral design. The rich floral motifs and the color palette refer to the ancient cult of fertility and nature's rebirth in the spring.

Another *tuskiiz* made in the early 20th century by Mariam Ilakova from Semipalatinsk Region is decorated with large corals. The center field is made of red velvet and the wide dark border is filled with a splendid garland of colorful wildflowers embroidered using the satin stitch. Coral beads form large flower clusters and are combined with silver plates and small turquoise insets.

One of the most popular floral motifs is a tulip which Muslims believe to be a heavenly flower. A *tuskiiz* by Aisha Beissenbayeva from Taldykorgan Region is adorned with solar rosettes with red tulips representative of the vivid colors of a blossoming steppe, the coming of the spring, and *Nauryz* celebrations marking the beginning of a new year. Kazakh embroideries often contain solar rosettes and floral designs shaped as leaves, rosehips, wild apples, almonds, flowers, and buds that symbolize the cult of fertility and also the paradisial garden.

Among rare pieces in the museum's collection is a *tuskiiz* from Semipalatinsk Region made at the turn of the 20th century. Its center field is adorned with a design of two tiger pelts. The use of this pattern echoes ancient totemic beliefs of the Kazakhs. In the Saka mythology, a tiger was a guard and a totem associated with the cult of fire.

The **second group** of *tuskiiz* rugs includes those with a big embroidered center field and a narrow rectangular border. These were typical of eastern Kazakhstan and the Altay region. One of them, a wall rug from eastern Kazakhstan, has an elongated center field embroidered with the *bitpes* (endless, continuous) pattern in the form of a diamond-shaped grid with intricate entwinements of stylized floral and zoomorphic elements. The border consists of two ornamented strips and is embellished with a tree- like pattern and S-shaped branches. This carpet bears a very rare archaic composition with a stylized design of floral motifs that remind of the ancient polychrome style.

In most *tuskiiz* rugs of this group, the ornamental composition is made of solar circles, stylized floral and zoomorphic motifs, or, less often, diamond-shaped elements.

Contemporary *tuskiiz* rugs made by the ethnic Kazakhs living in Bayan-Ölgii Province of Mongolia have a distinct feature – their borders made of single-color plush or velvet get embellished with the *komkeru* machine stitch, which forms a continuous small-sized pattern made of four-petal flowers. The machine stitch makes carpets durable and protects their edges and tie-strings attached to them, which are used to fasten the rugs to the lattice walls of a yurt.

The **third group** of *tuskiiz* carpets is the rarest one. These have a wide and fully embroidered center field and no border. A carpet from eastern Kazakhstan made of dark velvet and containing three large solar circles reflects the notion of the tripartite model of the world. People regarded the circle, which symbolized the sun, as one of the most powerful guarding elements.

The museum also owns a *tuskiiz* from the Semirechye region, which has a border in its central part that transforms into a wide V-shaped element. This carpet is decorated with solar rosettes, four-petal flowers, trefoils, palmettes, and stems. Embroidered carpets with a similar V-shaped border were typical of the Kyrgyz.

A **separate group** of *tuskiiz* wall rugs is *oyuly tuskiiz* textile carpets that were mostly crafted in eastern, northeastern and some other regions of Kazakhstan. These were made of felt, woolen cloth, velvet, plush, and corduroy and decorated with appliqués from contrasting fabrics.

Tuskiiz rugs were often designed as patchworks, a technique very popular with the rural people, sometimes combined with embroideries.

Kazakh ornaments are an important part of the creative and historical memory of people. It is an ever-living source of information about the surrounding world. A solar circle, a world's mountain, a cross, a spiral, the Tree of Life, a diamond, a square, and other elements that are often used by crafters echo ancient beliefs and cosmogonic myths and symbolize harmony and perfection of the universe.

Embroidery due to its picturesque quality is usually called the “painting by a needle”. In Central Asia the needlework was closely tied with color that always had a symbolic meaning. For instance: the red color personifies the fire, blood, youthfulness and beauty, the yellow is perceived like a mark of the sun, the luster of gold and the sign of treasure. The divine for the steppe peoples white color symbolizes wisdom and beauty, the blue alludes to the sky as the green personifies the eternal life and grass. The brown color symbolizes the earth, the black one stood for the night, darkness and death. In Central Asia the coloristic symbolism along with the ornament came into being in the prehistoric period.

The ornamental compositions and color palette of Kazakh *tuskiiz* rugs reflect the spirit of the Great Steppe. Generations of talented crafters created outstanding masterpieces of folk arts that depicted most directly and sincerely the living beauty of the surrounding world.

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The Treasures of the Great Steppe: Kazakhstan's Tutankhamun

Oxana Tanskaya
Kasteyev State Museum of Arts

Abstract:

The First President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, wrote in his article *Seven Facets of the Great Steppe* (published on November 21, 2018), that “the historical finds of the last decades clearly confirm the indissoluble connection of our ancestors with the most advanced technological innovations of their time and allow us to take a fresh look at the Great Steppe's place in global history.” One such historic discovery is a burial mound on the Issyk River around 50 kilometers to the east of Almaty. In 1969, the unique grave site of the Golden Man (also known as the Saka Prince, or Kazakhstan's Tutankhamun) was found in the Issyk Kurgan. “A sensational discovery for world science, which made it possible to take a fresh look at our origins, was the Golden Man, found in Kazakhstan in 1969 in Issyk, referred to in the circles of art scholars as “Kazakhstan's Tutankhamun”,” wrote Nursultan Nazarbayev (2018).

The Golden Man is a unique and invaluable find for Kazakhstan, and the entire world. The Issyk Kurgan has become a sensation because it is one of the few (if not the only) untouched rich burials, not only in Kazakhstan but the entirety of Central Asia and West Siberia.

The symbols associated with the Golden Man have become cherished among the people of Kazakhstan, and are included among the national symbols of the country as a representation of its independence.

The detailed review of this archeological find presented in this report provides insights about the important contribution to global art and culture made by the tribes and peoples who lived in the territory of modern-day Kazakhstan.

Keywords:

Kazakhstan's Tutankhamun, Golden Man, Saka Prince, Seven Facets of the Great Steppe, Issyk Kurgan, Saka Tigrakhauda.

In the 2nd millennium B.C., the area currently occupied by Central Asia and Kazakhstan, i.e. the steppes from the Danube to the Khingan, was a single cultural and historical region inhabited by kindred tribes known from historical accounts under the collective name “Saka.” The word *Saka* originated from the Iranian *sak*, meaning “walk” or “run,” which suggests that a Saka was a “running, quick, agile nomad” (Bailey: 1958). Herodotus, the “father of history” who lived in the 5th century B.C., and other writers from antiquity referred to the early nomads as the “Asian Scythians.” In other words, the Sakas were an eastern branch of the Scythian peoples. Other Saka tribes such as the Massagetae, Dahae, and Issedones, also lived in the territory of Central Asia and Kazakhstan when people began to occupy these steppes and mountains.

The Scythians, or Sakas, were nomads predominantly engaged in animal husbandry and, to some extent, farming, hunting, and the making of crafts primarily associated with the production and processing of metals (notably bronze). Horse breeding was the most important domain of the Sakas' animal husbandry, while millet, barley and wheat fields provided them with food during winters.

Scholars still argue about how Saka society was structured. One widely held theory posits that the society was comprised of three groups: warriors, priests, and commoners. Further, it is believed that each of these classes were associated with specific traditional colors. Warriors dressed in red and golden-red, priests white, and commoners yellow and blue.

Political stability among the Saka, Sarmatian and Scythian confederations of the 7th-3rd centuries B.C. ensured the flourishing of Scythian and Siberian artistic styles. The triad of zoomorphic images (a bird, a hoofed animal, and a predator), which appeared in the early Saka period, conveyed the idea that the natural world (cosmos) and society (a human being) were similarly structured. The spiritual notions of the Scythian tribes were pagan and the main deity in their pantheon was Tengri. The integrity of a clan was believed to reflect the structure of the world, in that a clan was guaranteed survival if it managed to ensure continuous relationships between ancestors and descendants, of the dead and the living. This is how the Scythians' belief about the afterlife – a cult reflected in burial rituals – emerged.

After rulers died, their bodies were buried under a huge mound called a *kurgan*. Burial mounds such as kurgans have been found on all continents of the world, except for, possibly, Australia and Antarctica. There are many ancient burial sites in Central Asia and Kazakhstan, especially in the AltaiMountains and the former Semirechye – the Seven Rivers region – covering the entire southeastern area of Kazakhstan and the north of the Kyrgyz Republic. These include the famous Tagisken, Uigarak, Bizhe, Arzhan, and Besshatyr burial sites.

In the surroundings of Almaty, royal burials are also located along the Ili, Karakemer, Turgen, Chilik, Charyn, and Karkara rivers and northeastwards – in the upper reaches of the Karatal, Aksu, Lepsy, and Ayaguz rivers, reaching the Chilikty burial in Zaisan Basin and the famous Pazyryk Kurgans in the Altai Mountains. However, most of them were looted long ago. Just a small portion of them survived untouched, as they had been created over two thousand years ago. The incredible discoveries made at these sites are widely known (Ginzburg: 1972).

To better understand the meanings and significance of kurgans, we need to make an imaginary or speculative journey to the epoch in which they were made to consider the rites of a burial.

A mourning crowd moves slowly to the funeral site, with male priests carrying a stretcher containing the body of the deceased, while a cloth embroidered with golden threads flows behind in rhythm with the procession. The priests are followed by an endless flow of warriors, relatives, and tribesmen from every side of the demesne. The grave had been prepared long beforehand and priests are waiting for the moment the body would be transferred to them to ceremoniously see the deceased off to the mysterious world of non-being.

The funeral procession finally reaches its destination. The entire crowd, including relatives, remains on the ground as priests are the only ones who can descend to the grave with the body to lay it in a special bed of cloth. They arrange food and sacrificial vessels, which had been brought here by the funeral procession, around the body on the floor. Only after the chamber holding the body is closed with logs, thousands of tribesmen begin to erect a huge mound above it. The more powerful and glorious the ruler, the higher and wider the kurgan – as each of those present throw a handful of earth or a stone.

There were possibly additional rites and cults, however it's hard to imagine those in detail today. Yet, people of those times undoubtedly believed in the afterlife. These beliefs echoed in funeral ceremonies and this is the reason why the Saka kurgans often contain household items, weapons, clothes, money, and other everyday items.

One such burial is the Issyk Kurgan, where the unique grave of the Golden Man (also known as the Saka Prince or even Kazakhstan's Tutankhamun) was discovered. This find constitutes a unique and invaluable treasure for Kazakhstan and the entire world. The Issyk Kurgan has become a sensation because it is one of the few, if not the only, untouched rich burials not only in Kazakhstan but the entirety of Central Asia and West Siberia. The individual contained in the burial site was first described as the Golden Man in an article by Myrzabek Dyussenov in 1970 (Trofimova: 1972). Before that, it was called a man in golden clothes.

The mound site was discovered by researchers in 1969 on the right side of the road leading to the town of Issyk. The legendary Issyk Kurgan was located in the southern part of a huge site where Saka nobles were buried – the so-called royal kurgans. The site comprised 45 big mounds stretching from north to south.

The Golden Man's grave was found on the left bank of the Issyk River 50 km to the east of Almaty. The mound impressed with its size – 60 meters (197 ft) in diameter and six meters (19.7 ft) high. Unfortunately, we must discuss the Golden Man's mound using the past tense because the kurgan was not preserved after archaeological excavations. A stone slab with a bas relief depicting the Golden Man has been installed there to mark the location.

Dr. Kemal Akishev (a winner of the state prize of the Kazakh SSR, a correspondent member of the German Archaeological Institute, and a winner of the state prize named after Shokan Valikhanov), a Kazakh archaeologist and one of the founders of the national school of archaeology, discovered the Golden Man and wrote in his account about the beginning of work at the Issyk Kurgan in 1969 that there were three kurgans that needed to be excavated in Issyk (Maksimova: 1978).

It was the Issyk Kurgan where the burial of a man later called the Golden Man was found. His grave was located not in the central burial chamber, which excavations found to be empty, but in a side room 15 meters to the south of the central one. This ensured the integrity of the burial, which is

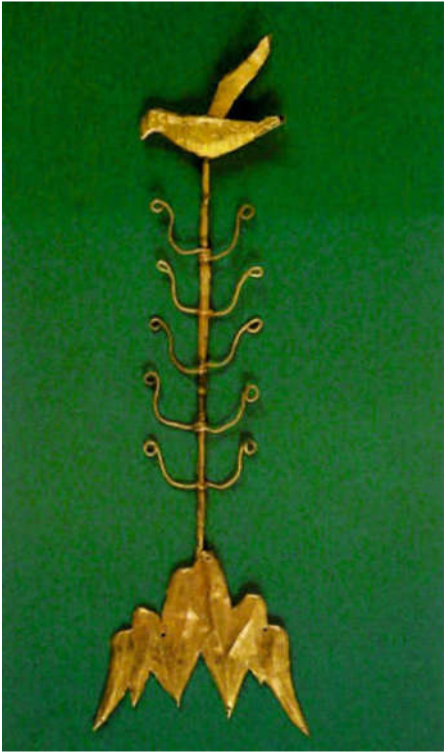

Figure 1.

Figure 2.

Figure 3.

Figure 4.

Figure 5.

the only one that had survived looting – all the 45 mounds of the Issyk complex had been ransacked long before the 20th century. The central and southern side burials were 1.2 meters below the ancient horizon. The fact that there were two burial chambers suggests that initially the mound had two burials. The side one has survived until the 20th century. It is also supposed that the central chamber could have contained a grave of a man of significantly higher status than that of the Golden Man.

Anthropologists who studied the remains of the Golden Man's bone tissue suggested that the skeleton, which was not fully formed, belonged to a young man, 165 cm (5 ft 5 inches) tall, who died in battle at around 16-18 years of age of a deadly puncture wound under the left shoulder blade. No traces of organic substances were discovered in the grave, except for tiny fragments of the epidermis. Sadly, the bone remnants of the Golden Man that are currently on display and in the collection of the Issyk Museum lack his skull. However, according to the first photographs made at the site and eyewitness accounts, there was a skull at the time of excavations. It was badly damaged but still could shed some light on many secrets. For the time being, the disappearance of the skull is another mystery to be solved.

The burial chamber was built of carefully dressed spruce logs, 1.5 to 3 meters (4.9 to 9.8 ft) wide and 25 to 30 cm (9.8 to 11.8 inches) thick. A part of the floor was covered with a cloth adorned with small golden plaques. The body was laid on it on its back, with the head pointing westward, in full ceremonial attire.

A total of 31 ceramic, wooden, and metallic pieces of tableware were arranged in a particular order along the western and southern sides of the burial chamber. Ceramic and wooden vessels included jugs, bowls, dishes, and a ladle. Also present were metal wares comprised of silver and bronze items.

In addition to this, the Issyk burial chamber contained an iron sword and dagger, a bronze mirror, a silver spoon, and 26 beads made of carnelian and paste.

The discovery of the Golden Man was a sensation. Let us recall the meaning of expressions such as golden memories, a golden heart, a golden boy, or that of adjectives with similar meanings such as wonderful, beautiful, or great. Many world languages have similar idioms. This name was given because the man was dressed in gold.

Gold was one of the first metals mastered by people. Its high plasticity and beautiful sunny tone made it a popular material for use in jewelry. The warm color of gold and its matte texture were believed to convey the hidden solar energy and made it a symbol of the sun. An ancient riddle asks, "What is gold in the steppe?" The answer is a sunset.

The most important quality of this metal is that it is resistant to corrosion. This is why antique golden pieces discovered today still appear as they were originally made. The abundance of antique golden items found in Kazakhstan suggests that gold was produced here since antiquity. Ancient gold mines were discovered in the eastern and central parts of the country, as well as in Eastern Semirechye (the Jungar Alatau region). Even today, Altayzoloto – a company that mines gold along the rivers of Eastern Kazakhstan – occasionally finds half-finished bronze implements, decorations, and other items made during the Bronze Age. Archeologists suggest that jewelry in the territory of Kazakhstan originated as early as the 2nd millennium B.C.

Before I describe in detail the weapons and outfit of the Golden Man, let me mention that his attire comprises 4,000 decorations made of 24 karat gold. However, despite all the luxury, one can't overlook a deliberate or necessary disguise – the total net weight of gold used in the Golden Man's costume is just 2.5 kilograms (5.5 pounds).

The impression that the precious metal was used in greater quantities is an illusion – the animal figures were made of bronze and wood, then covered with a very thin layer of gold foil. We can admire the mastery of ancient crafters who were clearly familiar with a host of different jewelry making techniques. These included forging, stamping, engraving, soldering, cold gold-plating, polishing, granulation, inlaying with paste and resin, and painting.

Golden attire was not casual. It was supposedly worn for ceremonial occasions, important meetings, and parades. It was too luxurious and uncomfortable to be worn daily and it is unlikely that there was a special burial outfit. Most likely, golden clothes were intended to impress commoners and aggrandize those with a higher status. In other words, having golden things was a sign of the high status of their owner.

The Golden Man was found wearing a tall arrow-shaped hat with a three-flap bottom and a clasp under the chin, which was embellished with golden plaques and platelets. Pointed headgear was

typical of the Saka Tigrakhauda (Tigrakhauda means “people with pointed hats”). Some archaeologists believe that these were an ethnic symbol of the Saka Tigrakhauda (Orthocorybantians) only and, as distinct from other kindred tribes, the Tigrakhauda wore them at all times (Akishev: 1963).

The man was dressed in a thin shirt, possibly made of silk, and a short leather kaftan or camisole, all covered by golden plaques. The thigh-length kaftan had a heavy belt decorated with cast plaques in the shape of fantastic deer and elk heads. He had a long sword attached to his right side and a short Scythian *akinak* dagger on his left. He also wore tight leather or woolen red pants tucked into knee-high flat boots adorned with golden figural plaques.

The Saka man had two rings on his right hand – one with a mirrored bezel and a massive cast signet ring with a large round bezel. Engraved in the bezel was a concave image of a man in profile. His head is crowned with a fanciful headdress or hairdo outlined with ten arched imprints. This is suggested to be the image of a sun-headed anthropomorphic figure or a man in a Zoroastrian headgear – a worshipper of the sun (Ivanov: 1963). Many scholars are in agreement that this golden ring features the image of Mithra, a Zoroastrian deity of the sun.

The Golden Man had a golden earring in his left ear and a light and exquisite torque of three strands twisted together with sculptural terminals on his neck. The torque was shaped as a spiral, which had three and a half twists. The terminals had the form of detailed leopard heads with their muzzles expressing evil vigilance.

The kaftan featured the largest quantity of golden items, including plaques shaped as trefoil leaves and tiger's heads. It was a luxurious piece of clothing embroidered with gold that looked more like scaly armor than a simple kaftan. However, just some of the golden plaques attached to this item of clothing were shaped as zoomorphic figures.

A total of 2,411 plaques were triangular, their shape resembling that of an arrowhead. These were distributed to a certain scheme: while their tops face upwards, the lower ends adjoin each other in imitation of a cataphract. The plaques were cut from gold foil and attached to red velvet as an applique. They are the main adornment of the kaftan and the boots. Their rhythmic alternation from the ankles to the tops of the high boots and on the red caftan creates an open-work pattern.

The kaftan's collar, borders, and flap, as well as its forearms and cuffs, are ornamented with rectangular plaques bearing an image of a predator's head, probably that of a tiger as follows from rather clear morphological features of this animal. The strips on either side of the animal's head were made in relief and four holes were cut in the corners so that the plaque could be sewn onto the cloth. These decorated plaques suggest that the kaftan closed right over left.

The Golden Man had a heavy ceremonial belt over his kaftan, made of sixteen massive plaques with golden cover plates, including thirteen small and three larger ones. Attached to the belt's ends were big rectangular plaques. The solid lines of horns and bent legs, as well as the stylized interpretation of tails and “beards” outlined and filled the entire space of the rectangular frame. The elks are shown lying with their limbs bent and bodyweight shifted onto the half-bent forelegs. The head appears to be that of an elk. The shoulder blade is shaped like a curl, which transforms into the neck of an eared griffon. The elk images are highly stylized, but the specific features of these animals are quite clear. All the plaques were cast using molds and the details and parts of the animal torsos were finished with stamping and chasing. Four silver loops were attached to the corners of each frame to connect the plaques.

The thirteen cover plates on the belt are shaped as bas relief deer heads in profile. Eight plates have the heads turned left and the other five right. The image of a deer had symbolic meaning – for the Sakas and Scythians, a golden deer was a symbol of the sun, and its horns symbolized the branches of the Tree of Life (Ivanov: 1963).

The Saka warrior had a short akinak, a Scythian dagger, attached to his left side with fine inlays and 41 animal images. The blood grooves running along its blade are covered with golden plates showing boars, leopards (or tigers), hares, goats, wolves, saiga antelopes, black-tailed gazelles, argalis, foxes, and snakes following each other in a row in the so-called “scraping” posture. This could be the Saka's version of the hunting scenes typical of the Western Asian and ancient arts. The images are so minute that the crafter highlighted some typical features such as eyes, ears, hooves, and legs. To emphasize the compositional rhythm, he also added drop-shaped carnelian and paste inlays to the most prominent parts of the animals' bodies – their shoulder blades and trunks.

The warrior also had an iron sword on his right side with a slightly bent pommel and a narrow cross-guard. The hilt has a round section and the blade is lenticular, with grooves running

along both edges. The pommel and cross-guard are inlaid with small golden plates and the hilt is adorned with golden wire. The blade was deteriorated to a significant extent. The pommel is shaped as two griffon heads and lined with gold foil and the blade is inlaid with golden plates featuring four different animals. The headdress of the golden warrior – a conical *kulakh* cap with three flaps – is of particular interest. This style of cap can be seen on the reliefs depicting the Saka Tigrakhauda men on a staircase in Persepolis. The headdress was most probably made of felt adorned with golden plates. The decorations were often made of copper wire plated with gold foil, which was polished with chamois leather. This technique helped to save the precious metal and was used later in the art of early nomads.

Golden plates were glued onto cloth or leather as they didn't have holes to be sewn onto it. There are pairs of similar adornments attached symmetrically to the cap. The images (four protomai, four lotuses, four wings, four arrows, and four horns) on the Issyk *kulakh* refer to the four cardinal directions. All the decorative plaques are placed in certain zones and in this the Golden Man's cap reflects all the Scythians' ancient beliefs and philosophy.

The bottom part of the headdress symbolizes the lower world – that of the dead and reptiles. For this reason, it has the least number of decorations – just five open-work plates, all shaped as geometrically stylized plants, beaks, and claws. The plates are made of narrow golden strips and have ribbed edges. Each of them is painted in red and has holes for attachment to the cloth. The shapes includethat of a stylized fish – the symbol of water and fertility – with the fins formed as drop-shaped sockets. The entire composition in the lower part of the headdress is a unique example of the division of the world according to Saka cosmology.

The second part symbolizes the terrestrial world, featuring the figures of snow leopards and plates with an outline of a mountain landscape. It also has other decorative plates that imitate the figures of horses and birds' wings.

The upper part refers to the upper world and features symbols such as mountain tops, the crowns of trees, and arrows – everything that is seen as aiming toward the sky.

The favored images in Saka art, including petroglyphs, were those of argalis and mountain goats. The Golden Man's headdress also features rather realistic images of mountain goats in its central part, which are flat and lack stylization, with only the horns too large and bent backward without touching the back. The animals are shown in profile with their legs held together as if they were ready to jump. This part contains five plaques with the images of mountain goats and two ones showing a felid, which are placed between them.

Felids are very common figures in the animal style. The image of a leopard is extremely vivid, with its torso twisted in the middle and hind limbs turned upward looking lifelessly hung in the air. This S-shape image suggests the animal is in agony. On another plaque, the animal is standing with its hind legs resting on indented mountains while the forelegs are ready for an attack. The image of the snow leopard, along with the schematic outline of mountain tops, forms an integral whole. The posture here suggests that the animal, which climbed the slope calmly, was suddenly alerted by a danger and is ready to attack so quickly that it didn't have time to turn its body around and just turned its forelegs and head for protection.

These animal images may be similar to ancient Mesopotamian interpretations of a lion that fought against a hero or a deity, often depicted on cylinder seals. The animal is shown with its neck extended, jaws grinning, nose wrinkled, round ears pressed to the head, and eyes and cheekbones outlined with notches. Its shoulder blade is emphasized by a bulge and a beak-shaped spur on the back of its neck refers to a wing. The plaques have fastening holes on the leopards' paws, the wing-shaped spurs and the tail ends, as well as on the images of mountain peaks.

The images in the central part of the headdress include an outline of mountain peaks – the so- called "mountain motif." Some of the plaques bear a red pattern painted onto gold.

The images of the escaping leopards are more naturalistic. The predator looks around while running away, its chest close to the ground and body curved with grace. The tail is curled into a ring between the paws. These leopards are full of energy and force and their muzzles look amiable. This is why this decoration was named a "laughing leopard" or a "dancing leopard." All the plaques with the images of leopards are in the bas relief technique. The Saka crafters preferred expressive lines, profile images, and vivid deformations.

The figures of horses are no less detailed but are more laconic. The horse is an image that was widely spread in Saka and Sarmatian art. Images of horses, including mythical winged unicorns,

were cut from wood and bone or cast in metal. The horse was a sacred animal for nomads and the cult of the horse was not accidental. People believed that a man cannot do without a horse in the afterlife and buried them with their masters – the skull and hooves of this animal were regarded as a guarding amulet. The two plaques shaped like horses demonstrate just their foreparts. The forelegs are raised threateningly – this is the posture of fighting stallions.

The frontal part of the headdress is shaped like horned horse heads connected by a single winged body – these are the protomes of winged horses with the horns of a mountain goat. Their heads raise high on their curved necks and their forelimbs are bent under the torso. The sculpture was made of wood and then covered with gold foil, which was fastened by bronze nails. The horns and ears were made separately and inserted into the slots in the heads, and the wings were attached using the slots in the shoulder blades.

The upper part of the headgear is adorned with sculptures of birds, which are all volumetric but rather primitive. As in the protomes of the horses, the birds' wings have a wooden base covered with a very thin sheet of gold. The trees consist of an iron rod, which serves as the trunk and is covered by gold foil, and two tiers of golden wires with loop terminals that are attached to the trunk and represent the branches. The birds are shown sitting on the crowns of the trees. It should be noted that the motif of the sacred tree, combined with the images of animals and birds, is typical of earlier cultures that flourished in the Near East, Transcaucasia, and the Northern Black Sea coast.

The headdress is topped by four long decorations shaped as arrows, featuring leaf-like motifs and feathers. The arrow-like decoration consists of a shaft, head, and round sticks painted in red, with round lumps on the ends. The shafts are adorned with narrow golden strips running in spirals. The headsare an obvious imitation of the archaic arrowheads shaped as laurel leaves.

At the very top of the headdress, 65 cm (25.5 inches) above the skull, a miniature golden sculpture of an argali was placed on a rectangular stand. This static figure is in the posture of alertness typical of a male sheep that guards its herd. Despite its small size, the figurine is extremely detailed including the curved mighty horns with growth rings, eyes, ears, nostrils, wool, and a round tail. The statuette was cast in a mold and its stand has four holes to fasten it to the top of the headgear.

To conclude, I should mention that the decorations in the golden costume of the Saka prince were all in the so-called Scythian animal style featuring zoomorphic motifs and animal figures in typical postures. The Scythians primarily depicted their local fauna – a lion, tiger, wolf, leopard, fox, horse, elk, or deer. The symbols associated with the Golden Man have become cherished in Kazakhstan and were even included among the country's national emblems as a sign of its independence. Replicas of the Golden Man's costume are currently kept at the United Nations' Headquarters in New York, the Official Residence of the President of Kazakhstan, and the National Bank of Kazakhstan.

The Golden Man demonstrates the talents of ancient crafters. The symbolic elements it features convey the mythological beliefs of the ancient tribes that lived in Kazakhstan. The items discussed here are just a small part of Kazakhstan's archeological treasures, but they illustrate the great contribution to global art and culture of the tribes and peoples that lived in the territory of modern day Kazakhstan. The large-scale archaeological research currently underway in the country makes new discoveries almost every year. Therefore, we have no doubts that this collection will grow steadily and new insights about the history of the region will continue to emerge.

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The Role of Crafts in Economic Growth: A Comparative Example

Inigo Acosta
Asian Cultural History Program
Smithsonian Institution

For centuries, Southeast Asia has been at the crossroads of cultural, linguistic and economic exchange. Situated in a strategic position in the Asia-Pacific, Southeast Asia has long been a hub for Chinese, Indian, Middle Eastern and European merchants seeking to engage in trade of local products with indigenous populations. Over time, this exchange has resulted in a fusion of cultures that is evident in the region's rich and dynamic crafts tradition. The Southeast Asia of today comprises 10 nations forming the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and constitutes a global hub for commerce and trade. In the last 40 years, the region has experienced rapid growth with the population exceeding 600 million people and a median age of 29 (Worldometers, 2019). Positioned between the regional superpowers of China and India, the region also remains a major trading hub with a combined GDP of $2.4 trillion, thus cumulatively the 7th largest economy in the world (Quah, 2017).

This paper will give an overview of the role that crafts have played in Southeast Asia's rapid economic growth and development. A substantial amount of literature has been written about economic growth, especially after the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis. In addition, much has been written about Southeast Asian crafts with emphasis on the crafts and hand-made products of specific nations or regions. However, less work has been done to combine both topics for a more holistic understanding of crafts and economic development as a whole. According to the IDRC, one of the main reasons for this is the widely scattered and isolated units of analysis and limited existing databases in each country (IDRC, 1986). In this paper, I will argue that crafts have played an important role in economic development in Southeast Asia through: providing a source of income for rural communities, increasing tourism, and creating export-oriented products. I will also draw important distinctions between theoretical ideas of crafts-as-industry versus crafts-as-culture as well as differences between crafts produced in urban versus rural settings.

One of the main roles that crafts have played in economic growth in Southeast Asia has been as a source of income for rural communities. According to one study, families involved in craft production are not only above the poverty line, but have incomes over the national household average (IDRC, 1986). In particular, craft making became a cushion for possible fluctuations in agricultural earnings. For example, research among agriculturalists in Thailand showed that wicker crafts provided for up to 32% of household income and 35% for cotton (IDRC, 1986).

In the highly seasonal income cycles of agriculture, crafts become an indispensable and stable source of income. In a study done in Thailand, the IDRC noted that agricultural families typically experience several months of deficits in which they are charged high interest rates that could only be paid off with a successful surplus following the harvest. As a result, crafts play a huge role in alleviating this "feast-or-famine" syndrome by providing a stable source of income through nonfarm sources such as crafts (IDRC, 1986).

Crafts in Southeast Asia, in many ways, have moved beyond the conventional modes of production simply as "crafts-for-culture" (Mohlman, 1999). "Crafts that were majorly traded within the community as utilitarian or everyday objects are gradually being commercialized to suit other needs." (Chutia and Sarma, 2016). Some of these needs include serving as a product for export as well as for tourism purposes. In the 1980s, the Thai government was the most supportive of local craftsmanship, especially through the strong promotion from the Royal Family (IRDC, 1986). However, since the economic booms of the past few decades, other ASEAN governments have recognized the economic potential of craft production. In Indonesia, the government and members of the private sector (Maybank Foundation) have launched initiatives to train 600 women weavers in Lombok to receive weaving and financial literacy training (Ismail, 2016). This sentiment is shared by Phillippine Senator Cynthia Villar in her speech at the opening of the 2016 ASEAN Masters Craft Designers Festival, stating "We have excellent craftsmanship and creativity going for us,, that's our biggest strength and competitive advantage." Therefore, I would agree with Chutia and Sarma's

assertion that governments bear the responsibility of sponsoring the commercialization process (Chutia and Sarma, 2016) by means of policies to transform household items into commodities for distant markets (Maznah, 1996).

The crafts produced by Southeast Asian artisans have experienced changes and modifications over time, especially with increased interest from international markets. One of the best examples of this is Indonesian batik designs and patterns that have drawn attention from international design magazines like ELLE Décor, Vogue Living and Belle and have all influenced the craftsmen of Indonesia (Chotiratanapinun, 2009) and vice versa. Cultural diffusions of this sort have also been seen with spontaneous innovations (Marckwick, 2001) of items such as chopsticks, wine containers and Japanese noodle bowls, completely alien to the Balinese culture, but adorned with traditional batik patterns, that are produced in the remotest workshops of the island and exported to international markets (Chutia and Sarma, 2016). This has increased the accessibility of these crafts to the extent that fine embroidery, once reserved for elite textiles, has appeared in contemporary fashion items like home apparels, T-shirts, blouses and undergarments (Trade Research and Development Agency, 2008). This process of rapid modernization does not completely eradicate small-scale manufacturing. Mohlman asserts that capitalism's expansion continues to create space for renewed production, recreation and reimagination of small-scale crafts as seen in Indonesia (Mohlman, 1999; cf. Taylor and Aragon 1991; Taylor 1994).

Crafts also represent an opportunity to preserve indigenous cultures in the midst of the region's rapid economic growth and transformation. One of the ways many ASEAN states have done this is by incorporating crafts as part of the region's status as a tourist destination, which allows for crafts to be produced to suit new tastes and preferences (Chutia and Sarma, 2016). In Indonesia, the emergence of cultural villages like Yogyakarta is one example of a successful effort to capitalize on increased tourism with a goal to preserve culture (Quah, 2017). In both Java and Bali, Wayang, a folk puppet play popular among tourists, has also seen transformations and reimaginations of the puppets by incorporating bright colors with the traditional flat wooden puppets (Chutia and Sarma, 2016). Many visitors to Southeast Asia appreciate and seek out the handmade objects that represent "[n]ot only the cultural values of the craftsmen, but also their personal touch." (Quah, 2017) Ultimately, Southeast Asian artisans are proving that traditional crafts can be integrated and adapted into an increasingly transnational audience while still retaining their cultural core.

Despite the many positive aspects that crafts bring to economic development, it is also important to acknowledge some of the challenges that craft making (both craft-as-culture and craft-as-industry) faces in the region. Written in 1986, the International Development Research Center's (IDRC) report on craft making in the Asia-Pacific already showed that the majority of artisans at that time were over the age of 40 and not attracting a younger generation (IDRC, 1986). 30 years later, this author did not come across updated statistics, but we can assume the trend has persisted. While there has been increased support from governments and the private sector, the wealth of craft-making knowledge in aging populations remains a challenge for this sector. Furthermore, the availability and accessibility of traditional materials remains a challenge as well. Despite the success of some artisans to create new products for export, many small-scale artisans encounter high cost of materials, for example in the Thai teak (tropical hardwood) industry, or small producers of rattan (hardwood common for furniture) items in the Philippines (IDRC, 1986).

Throughout its history, Southeast Asia has been no stranger to change. Similarly, Southeast Asia's skilled artisans and craft makers have constantly embraced the new trends and influences that crisscrossed the region. The Southeast Asia of today is no different, with artisans continuously negotiating and renegotiating the region's crafts in the midst of their countries' rapid economic growth. Whether crafts are produced for rural-based domestic use or manufactured to cater to tourists and export markets, there is one common feature that separates the craft industry from other small and medium- sized firms: all represent items that require immense artistic skill (IDRC, 1986). Despite the challenges that artisans and the craft industry face, crafts have played a major role in the region's economic growth over the past 30 years both in rural and urban settings. This growth has been seen both in family incomes and in macro state-level economics. This author looks forward to future analyses that shed more light on the ties between crafts and economic growth in Southeast Asia.

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The Manifesto of a Generation:
A Painting Encapsulating and Conveying the Ethnic Artistic Idea – ***Portrait of Contemporaries*** by Tokbolat Toguzbayev

Galina Syrlybayeva
Kasteyev State Museum of Arts

On June 26, 1962, the *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda* newspaper announced the visit of the American painter Rockwell Kent and his wife Sally to Alma-Ata, then Kazakhstan's capital. This event caused a huge stir in creative circles and the entire city alike. As a chair of the National Council of American- Soviet Friendship, Kent met with the Ministry of Culture of the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic and toured the city, visiting artist workshops along the tour. In order to give the city's guest a better understanding of Kazakhstani art, on June 24 – just before Kent's arrival – the Taras Shevchenko Art Gallery [1] opened an exhibition featuring 134 works by Kazakhstani painters. For local artists, this was the first opportunity to interact with a foreign counterpart [2, p. 54] and one of the first signs of the ideological "thaw" in arts.

Eleven years later, in 1973, Tokbolat Toguzbayev [3] presented a painting atypical of his style or his time – the *Portrait of Contemporaries*, a painting with a difficult fate that has been underestimated and undeservedly forgotten. Perhaps its true message is only just beginning to be understood and appreciated. Now, it is perceived as a manifesto for an entire generation, a unique document, and a testament to the changes that occurred in the consciousness and creative practices of a rather wide circle of artists.

What does this painting say? Who are the people standing together as a confident, cohesive group? Toguzbayev devoted this work to his friends and contemporaries who shared his views on contemporary art and were enthusiastically in search of new ways to develop creative approaches. It is a group portrait of artists who joined the circle of Kazakhstan's painters at almost the same time. They were all born in the late 1930s and early 1940s and studied, almost simultaneously, at the same art schools – including the Nikolay Gogol Art School in Alma-Ata – and under the same teachers. They were, indeed, contemporaries who became like-minded artists: Salikhitdin Aitbayev, Tulegen Dosmagambetov, Isatay Issabayev, Makum Kissamedinov, Adil Rakhmanov, Vagif Rakhmanov, Yerkin Mergenov, Oralbek Nurzhumayev, Shaimardan Sariyev, Abdrashid Sydykhanov, and Bakhtiyar Tabiyev.

This generation changed the trajectory of Kazakhstan's art, expanded its creative pursuits, and inspired their contemporaries and followers to interpret ethnic designs and traditions. These artists were a generation of sensitive and thoughtful intellectuals who, despite the spiritual and artistic constraints they faced, managed to conceive of and ask questions addressed not just to themselves but to the entire creative community. Paul Gauguin raised the same questions as early as 1897 in the title of his painting *Where Do We Come From? What Are We? Where Are We Going?* In the 1960s, it brought together artists and creative and scientific intelligentsia – historians, archaeologists, writers, and architects. Unending disputes, painful reflections, and the exchange of information all focused on the pursuit of ethnic authenticity.

At the time, merely posing such questions was dangerous. Today, however, it is clear that it logically resulted from the evolution of the Kazakh school of arts, which was founded in the 1930s, drawing its inspiration from traditional Russian art. The generation of the 1950s added ethnic features to their works, but they were predominantly new themes and topics – fragments of Kazakhs' everyday life that had no age-old roots but were close and easily understandable to the artists and their audience.

The issue of ethnic identity would arise sooner or later as a result of several factors. The 1960s saw a new, though sparse, generation of artists emerge from the already established professional school of painting. The ideological pressure from cultural officials in Kazakhstan was rather weak, which is important to remember. It was a generation of "tame" artists, untouched by the dramatic "struggle against formalism." A new wave of resistance began in the 1940s and gathered momentum throughout the Soviet Union by the early 1960s, resulting in many artists being deprived of the opportunity to exhibit their works and falling into oblivion for years. Far from romanticizing the situation, we can say that arts could "breathe easier" in Alma-Ata's official environment.

A comparison of just two works serves to see how the national school of painting developed: the *Shepherd* (1934), a watercolor by Abylkhan Kasteyev, Kazakhstan's first nationally recognized painter and founder of the school of painting, and *At Noon. A Song by Assan-Kaigy* by Makum Kissamedinov from his *And the Sun Rises* series printed in 1968. Without considering the literary context of the latter piece, we see the same subject – a shepherd with a staff in his hand and a flock of sheep pasturing in the steppe – pictured in totally different styles. Kasteyev, who had just begun to master drawing and painting, did his best to capture real life. Kissamedinov, meanwhile, used this extremely quotidian subject to dive into deeper facets of folk culture, encapsulate knowledge of the past, and demonstrate his understanding of the creative processes by synthesizing various historical and artistic concepts.

Toguzbayev's group portrait conveys the spiritual and creative solidarity of the artists of his generation and is probably the first and brightest example of their unity driven by common aspirations. This demonstration of an unofficial model of a creative union – a phenomenon very typical of the global art scene in the early 20th century and absolutely impossible in a Soviet republic in the 1960-1970s – was the only such case in Kazakhstan's art.

"This is, by and large, the only painting that transmits the idea of the comradeship of the 1960s. It does not matter who is shown and where they are shown: they are all united by the spirit of time, self- reliance, and trust in their ideas" [4, p. 19].

Their art is a tight knot of contemporary trends inspired by the world's culture and creative innovations, as well as their desire to understand and establish the importance of ethnic features in art.

The event that encouraged Tokbulat Toguzbayev to paint this picture took place at his workshop. The central figure on the canvas is a visiting guest, which was a rather popular subject in the art of the 1950s and 1960s. Examples include *In My Native Aul* (1961) by Kamil Shayakhmetov, *A Guest from the Virgin Lands* (1961) by Aisha Galimbayeva, as well as *A Guest Has Come* (1969) and *Sons* (1969) by Salikhitdin Aitbayev that tell the stories of families meeting and express the cordiality and hospitality so typical of the Kazakh people.

This topic attracted Toguzbayev, too. However, in his case, the guest was not an ordinary character – a colleague from a neighboring workshop, or a family member from a remote village – but rather a man with a European appearance. The traditional respect for the guest is emphasized here by objects and the composition. The guest sits in a turquoise armchair, his figure in the foreground.

The painter presents the workshop as a sacral place where art dwells. In doing so, he creates the impression of a staged performance, in which his contemporaries take part. The time has come for the artists to express their views and opinions and share their concerns. The stage effect suggests they should express their ideas, concepts, and convictions not only to the honored European guest but to a wider audience represented by the display room and us in it.

This is what happens in the space of Toguzbayev's painting. The artist was the first to raise concerns about the professional challenges facing the artistic community at the time and invite the public to discuss them. By doing so, he placed the typical motif of meeting a respected guest in the context of professional communication, thereby attaching emphasis to it.

The picture also bears the main attribute of a stage – a curtain, which may refer here to the so- called Iron Curtain of the Soviet era that converted the sphere of art into a sort of a reserve disconnected from global culture and the 20th-century art of other countries. In Toguzbayev's painting, however, this curtain is raised.

This work is unique for many reasons. In particular, it is one of the few group portraits showing not three or four men, but sixteen figures. In this regard, it is reminiscent of 17th-century Dutch group portraits depicting members of a certain profession. To do it justice, we must also mention *The Composers of Kazakhstan* (1958) by Leonid Leontiyev, which depicts eleven people listening to a folk singer, or *akyn*.

It should be noted that, while portraiture was not Toguzbayev's preferred genre, this portrait of his fellow artists expressed their common position. "What was the way to resolve the issues around the essence of a human being, the historical importance of the moment, the ethnic identity, and many other things endlessly argued about with friends and colleagues? [...] What did we need to do? It was impossible to do something similar in the context of socialist realism, even as a small sketch or drawing. [...] The only solution that remained was to turn to the man himself, those around you, those interesting because of their character, work, or deeds – be it a historical figure or your contemporary. Man – as alpha and omega of life's drama – can answer many questions" [4, p. 17].

The emotional impact here is intensified because of the composition. As if he were an experienced film director, the painter builds a scene where silent groups of people express their spiritual unity more than words could. Each character is a link in a chain. All people shown here are in a single emotional state, somewhat austere, which is meant to convey the gravity and depth of their reflections, as well as the importance of the moment. They will always remain young in this portrait.

Toguzbayev did not try to produce life-like portrayals of his fellow artists. Their faces are stylized and look similar. In this paper, we do not intend to identify everyone, although we recognize many of them. We'll describe just some of the scene's participants.

Here Toguzbayev once again demonstrates the skills of a director by placing compositional focus on the leaders, the most radical activists in the group. Among them is, in the first place, Salikhitdin Aitbayev whose prominent profile is easy to recognize. He is shown in the foreground, left of center, sitting on a cube with his back turned to us. His figure seems to cross a conventional "line" – the ornamental strip running along the bottom of the canvas that delineates the space of the picture – as if hinting that he transcends existing borders and established traditions.

Another figure that captures our attention is a lonely man with a smoking cigarette in his hand that stands against the background of the curtain. This is definitely one of the reformers of Kazakhstan's sculpture Yerkin Mergenov. The central group has three noticeable figures. These are presumably Makum Kissamedinov in the center, Issatay Issabayev on the left, and Adil Rakhmanov on the right. The sculptor Tulegen Dosmagambetov can be seen in the second row.

The kneeling figure in the red blouse is obviously the painter himself, Tokbolat Toguzbayev, who is entrusted to represent the new concept of ethnicity in art. Scattered on the floor in front of him and in his hands are sheets of papers with drawings of Kazakh patterns that have concentrated century-long traditions of the nation and expressed its worldview through symbols, forms, and colors.

Figure 1. Tokbolat Togyzbayev. *Portrait of Contemporaries*. 1973

The artist combines two worlds. One is his workshop, a concrete visual space, a creative lab, a place where like-minded people meet and ideas are born and develop into new works (see, for example, Toguzbayev's painting, *Competition* (1971), and fragments of other pieces depicted behind him). There are also associations related to the image of the yurt. Its spirit, the genetic memories of it fill the space of the picture. But how? A nomad's house and microworld, the yurt is a perfect circle, as is the central object in its interior, a small table called a *dastarkhan*.

The composition of the painting also forms a circle reminiscent of the nomadic structures used in the steppe. In this somewhat theatricalized presentation of the workshop, the artist transmits the idea of the yurt as an ethnic dwelling by introducing colorful vertical stripes in the background that refer to folk crafts. These designs are reiterated by the rhythm of wrinkles on the clothes of those present as well as the graphic outline of their facial features. The shape of the hands echoes the patterns drawn on the sheets of paper. Another element in this ornamental game is an exotic plant that recalls a palm tree with long narrow swirling leaves.

The circle that seems to symbolize the unity and solidarity of the artists eventually becomes broken. Toguzbayev uses this technique to visualize the idea of the artists leaving the loop of established traditions and offering their new vision of the present and future art of Kazakhstan. On the other hand, the broken circle may symbolize the artists' openness to the world and their desire to convey the essence of their national culture.

What did Toguzbayev's contemporaries think about this work? Was his message understood by his counterparts and did it resonate with them? The author of this paper did not have an opportunity to witness those events but firmly believes that the time has come to give this artist and this work their due.

Endnotes and References

1. Since 1976, the State Museum of Arts of the Kazakh SSR; since 1984, the Kasteyev State Museum of Arts of the Kazakh SSR; and since 1991, the Kasteyev State Museum of Arts of the Republic of Kazakhstan.
2. Syrlybayeva, G. Union of Artists of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Documents and Photographs. 1933-1991. – Almaty: Interprint, 2009 – 279 pages.
3. The works mentioned in this paper are part of the collection of the Kasteyev State Museum of Arts.
4. The Road Unknown. A Collection of Paintings. – Almaty: Kazakhstanika 2004 – 272 p.

Art on the Margins: Chokan Valikhanov as an Artist

Amir Jadaibayev
Kasteyev State Museum of Arts

The life and career of the first Kazakh scientist and scientific traveler Chokan Valikhanov (1835- 1865) exemplifies a true universal phenomenon which incorporated a range of characteristic features of the whole historical period. Having been born in the core of Kazakh nomadic society, he reached a level of personal esteem recognized by both cultural and scholarly luminaries of Europe and Russia. His achievements in the sphere of ethnography, geography and history significantly contributed to the study of Central Asia and Eastern Turkestan and introduced these regions to the international community that had previously perceived these as an ill explored terra incognita.

The most important mission of Valikhanov was to show the European and World community the ancient civilizations of the Central Asia that emerged long ago in the very heart of Eurasia – home to the hordes of Chingiz Khan and Tamerlane, who haunted the peoples of the East and West in the Middle Ages. In the works of the Kazakh scientist, Asia was envisioned in its tangible reality, shown through a of historical facts and Descriptions of the lifestyle and traditions of people.

Despite the noticeable aspiration to assimilate fully the positive aspects of European civilization, Valikhanov remained an arduous patriot of his native land and a dedicated proponent of the importance of perceiving the nomadic peoples as an integral part of world history. He wrote "… In Europe still exists the false tendency to perceive the nomadic tribes as the fierce hordes and irregular wild people. Nevertheless, the majority of those barbarians have their literature and epics. Whether it was the influence of the free nomadic lifestyle or a constant contemplation of nature——the always open sky and the endless expanding steppes—something stimulated the poetic nature and particular abstract vision of those steppe inhabitants …" [2, p. 340]

The accomplishments of Valikhanov in both historical science and ethnography are widely recognized. But it is necessary to draw attention to his contribution to world culture as an artist. Despite the fact that he did not have fundamental professional training in visual art, he constantly tried to record events and surrounding life using pencil and paint.

The study of basic elements of practical drawing occupied a considerable place in the system of noble military education in 19th century Russia. In part, learning this skill reflected the desire to create an integrated personality. In addition, it had concrete utilitarian goals such as forming the future officers' capacity for exacting visual measurement and attention to details. Moreover, the study of topography, requiring a professional command of graphical instruments, was also an obligatory part of the curriculum in the system of Russian military education. This type of educational institution was exemplified by Omsk Cadet College, in which Valikhanov was enrolled in 1847. The college educational program offered a wide range of disciplines that also included technical graphics, creative drawing and calligraphy, as well as the study of fortification and the elements of architecture. Thus we can say that Valikhanov found himself in a favorable environment stimulating his inborn creative and scientific capacities.

Valikhanov showed a special interest in drawing from an early age. According to the account of the well-known Oriental scientist and close childhood friend of Valikhanov, Gregory Potanin, "In that period Chokan did not speak Russian at all but demonstrated a keen interest in drawing. Dabshinski had a picture drawn by Chokan in Omsk; the Russian town had struck the imagination of a boy and he depicted one of its views".[5, p. 6] From the period of his studies along with Valikhanov at the Omsk College, Potanin remembered a characteristic episode when Valikhanov was telling him about Kazakh traditional hunting with falcons that revealed his good knowledge of the subject: "He kept describing this and I was writing after him; and then Chokan illustrated my writings by depictions of the falcon's eye's covers, the drums, the gun powder containers, rifles etc.". [3] There is some information that Valikhanov's artistic gift may have developed during his study in the Omsk Cadet College (1847-1853) under the guidance of the artist V. Pomerantsev. In the memoirs about Valikhanov's childhood we can learn that "Chokan had found in the personality of Pomerantsev a real patron. He was a young, easy-going officer of the General Headquarters who was working as our teacher of drawing. His apartment was just like an artist's studio".[4] Further Potanin wrote about

Valikhanov's childhood in Omsk "He was a draw for many—a Kirgiz boy and a very talented one, revealed good drawing skills before entering the college".[3, p.352] And later in his letter to N. Veselovsky Potanin wrote that "Chokan had an excellent ability in drawing. In *The Accounts of the Geographic Society* the articles were accompanied by portraits of Kirgizes created by Valikhanov". [3, p.225]

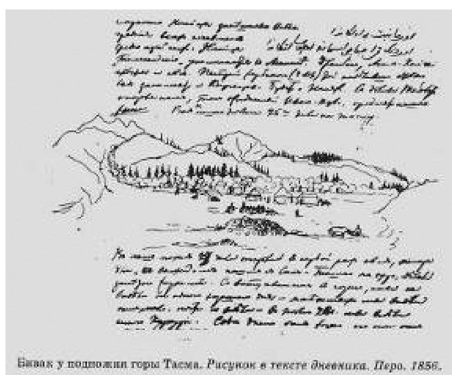
This gift for drawing with Valikhanov was not a casual phenomenon but was a result of the special upbringing and particular atmosphere of the family in which he had grown up. His grandmother Ayganim, the farther Chingiz, and his uncle Musa Chormanov were educated and erudite people, adept in national history, interested in Asian culture, encouraging curiosity and commitment in little Chokan. Stories about his great ancestor Ablai, fairy tales and epic poems, surrounded by samples of Oriental applied arts, folk music, and the beauty of nature – all these factors stimulated and affected the imagination of the young boy. In the Omsk Cadet College Valikhanov had excellent teachers who managed to foster the capacities of the boy and to encourage his interest in history and traveling. Drawings executed easily and quickly on the margins of diaries and sheets of papers were characteristic for many writers and poets of that period. We know sketches and drawings by Russian poets Alexander Pushkin and Mikhail Lermontov, the British poet Lord Byron and some other distinguished personalities who tried by these means to personify their thoughts and to capture elusive glimpses of life. These spontaneous sketches had little importance for their creators, therefore they were just sort of intimate reflection, miraculous traces of covered or hidden emotions and fantasies. These drawings sometimes possessed satirical, ironic and critical content. The graphic works by Valikhanov incorporated all the characteristic qualities of this type of visual reflection. But there is a significant distinction between European analogs and Valikhanov's graphic heritage

At the same time the artistic visual practice for Valikhanov had certain objective obstacles stipulated by the existing traditions and rules of the Asian society of that period. At first hand Valikhanov belonged to the privileged estate of sultans which meant he had the high status of a representative of the Asian nobility (*ak suiek*) that did not allow him to take up any manual labor. Secondly, Islam forbids any depictions of people or animals that could also have posed for Valikhanov a problem for doing any kind of drawing practice. Nevertheless, Valikhanov broke many Oriental norms; declaring by his actions and activities his commitment to European principles of man's freedom of choice to realize his personal abilities and aspirations. The third factor is an absence of the established artistic tradition in Central Asia at the end of the 19th century. The European tradition of visual art had been introduced to Kazakhstan at the end of the 19th century. This was a result of its inclusion to the sphere of Russia's imperial interests and the political unification of the two countries. The region was regularly visited by scientific expeditions that always included artists. For various reasons a number of artists arrived to Kazakhstan. Among them were such figures as T. Shevchenko, N. Khludov, P. Kosharov, N. Karazin, V. Vereschagin etc. As a rule, they were professional masters who discovered for themselves new facets of Asian Orientalism. It is important to mention here that their drawings were executed later than depictions done by Valikhanov. The early watercolor compositions produced by the twelve-year-old Valikhanov *The House of the Omsk Gubernator* (1847), *Jatak* (1847) and *Akshomchi* (1847) had been executed with especial diligence, and their pictorial structure is well developed. They were produced in the first year of his study at the Siberian Cadet College in Omsk. Already in these works Valikhanov demonstrated a real artistic gift. We cannot exclude the possibility that these pictures might have been executed under the guidance of his teacher V. Pomerantsev.

The artworks of the Russian and European artists were predominantly ethnographic in theirapproach to the depiction of the life and people of the Asian region. In them the artists, as a rule, failed to render the characteristic anthropological features of the representatives of Asian population. In this respect the drawings of Valikhanov overcome them in their scientific-ethnographic aspects despite certain technical imperfections in their execution. Valikhanov, in contrast to the other artists, perceived Asia from within; he felt and understood it like no one else. In one of his notes the scientist had marked that "two nations (Kazakhs and Kirgiz-Buruti) are distinct in their languages, origin and rites. Even in the face of a Burut there is something specific that is not Kazakh (look at the portrait of manap Burambay drawn by me in 1856 and another one taken in Omsk in 1858)". Valikhanov identifies the peoples of Central Asia in accordance with their anthropological types into Persians, Mongols and Turks. He finds with Kalmiks the characteristic Mongolian form of a face, olive in color, having narrow eyes, flat cheek-boned face and squeezed nose. "The rest peoples of Central Asia like Mongols ... represent a strange mixture of types and colors... You can meet fair-haired persons with a

Figure 1.

Figure 4.



Бивак у подножии горы Тасма. *Рисунок в тексте дневника. Перо. 1856.*

Figure 2.

Figure 5.

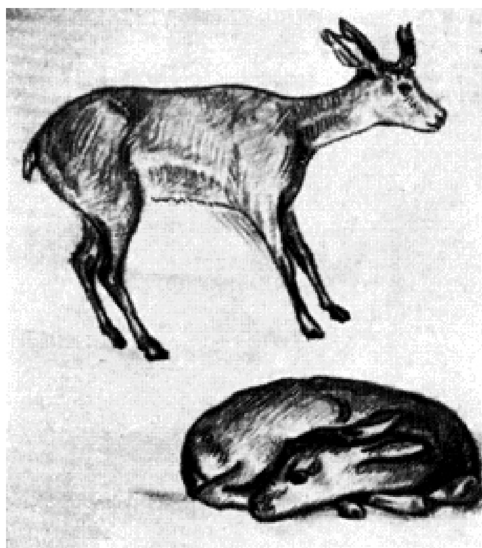


Figure 3.

Figure 6.

Mongolian set of features and narrow blue eyes; encounter a quite classical Roman nose and cheek-boned face. In general the physical appearance of these peoples represents an interracial mixture, an amalgamation of features of Caucasus tribe with Mongolian".[5, p.53] Thus the drawings of Valikhanov possess a special scientific value as documents that precisely and objectively convey particularities – not only ethnographic features of nomadic and settled peoples of Asia but their anthropological type.

The drawings of Valikhanov can be divided into three groups. The first group is comprised of his quick travel sketches, taken as a rule on the margins of a diary or right in the text. Often they are executed by ink and pen and are directly referred to the text. The value of these depictions lies in their ultimate immediacy. The second group of drawings is comprised of page-size pictures with elaborate light and shadow modeling and clearly rendered theme. The third group includes the drawings that represent the completed graphic depictions, executed by pencil or watercolor. These works demonstrate Valikhanov's true artistic abilities and his aspiration to the constant perfecting of his personal artistic habits. These three types of drawings are divided conventionally and separated due to the common features in form and methods of treatment.

In the spring of 1856 within the life of the future explorer of Asia there occurred an important event that to a great extent defined his destiny – a meeting with the distinguished Russian scientist, geographer P. Semenov, who highly appreciated Valikhanov's research interests and directed him to the study of the current issues regarding Oriental civilization. In the same year Valikhanov participated in two expeditions traveling from Alakol Lake to the Central Tyan-Shan, to the Issyk-Kul Lake and to Kulja as a member of a diplomatic mission. During his first travel to Semirechye and to the Issyk-Kul Lake in 1856, Valikhanov executed a series of drawings depicting people he met and landscapes as well as historical architectural monuments, various types of flora and fauna. In the sketch *The Encampment near the Tasma Mounting* (1856) Valikhanov skillfully renders the perspective space in which we can see the contours of urtas and tents, placed on the flat valley at the foot of the low mountain sierra. A chain of fir trees on the left in the distance with a smooth zigzag rises to the slope and vanishes among hills. This drawing possesses a particular intonation and is filled with serenity and quietness. The artist drops all the insignificant details and emphasizes only characteristic and impressive elements of the composition. Pictures of the encampments and halts are repeatedly seen in the diaries of Valikhanov. This can naturally be explained by opportunities he had during the short intervals between marches when he could concentrate on the travel diary, take notes, and make sketches from the static personages and objects. The portraits executed during this expedition have as a rule a representative character therefore the sitters are shown in them wearing their ceremonial costumes. The compositional scheme of these works, and the poses of people, are in many cases similar. There is generally a half-size depiction with hands, often crossed on the belly.

In these drawings the artist is interested in rendering the character and particular features of a man. Slightly worked details of the costume and pleats of the clothes allow us to attribute this genre as the traveler's visual recordings. In the Portrait of Borombay (1856), the supreme manap of Kirgizes of the bugu tribe, the author managed to convey the easy-going character of a man who can reveal both perspicacity and smartness. In the picture we can see deliberately worked a face and the upper part of the costume. Contrasting the stout figure of this personage and the light smile on his round face along with screwed eyes informs us about this man's lively and frisky temperament. If we approach the book of N. Zeland *Kirgizes* we can get information about the way the steppe inhabitants were perceived by travelers: "… Kirgiz is a sanguine type. His state of spirit is predominantly affable and cheerful, it is very easy to evoke a smile on his face … Kirgiz is distinct by natural benevolence …" [6, p.203] In the sketch the artist expressed his sympathetic attitude to the sitter.

The portrait depiction of the sultan of the Big Horde Mamirkhan Rustemov (1856) represents a typical example of the drawing of the third type. In this artwork, along with Valikhanov's traditional preciseness in rendering the costume, special attention is given to the psychological description of the image. In his diaries and articles Valikhanov rather often approaches the description of a person's personality revealing in the man the characteristic individual features and giving a very picturesque representation of his appearance. Valikhanov provides the following description of one of the personages: "He entered the tent stepping like a stout goose, which is used by Kirgiz sultans in extremely official ceremonies. He has taken a seat at the honored place and petrified in a contemplative air … and absorbed himself in Buddhist stillness".[5, p.57] The haughtiness and pomposity of Kazakh sultans and Kirgiz manaps are emphasized in the articles and diaries of Valihkanov. In any given drawing the artist is fixing his observations and along with that striving to

create the image of the Oriental ruler. In this respect it is important to mention a vivid generalization in the rendering of the person's appearance. Existing within the framework of the travel sketches the gallery of portrait images created by the artist is really diverse and possesses a considerable deepness of the psychological analysis of the person. His heroes are the representatives of a concrete national group and a social status. Their outer image is used to represent their character in the picture. Their glance directed straight to the viewer is a glance of people living in feudal conditions, as they with great curiosity look at the representatives of European civilization. They seem to like to pose for a portrait and feel easy in the presence of their guests. Valikhanov was the first artist who looked at the Asians from within trying to take into account all the aspects of their mentality and traditions. In his portraits a considerable amount of attention is given to the character and individuality of each man, while a majority of previous explorers of Central Asia perceived this region in the ethnographic perspective because of the established cliché that this part of the world was populated by barbarian tribes. During his expeditions Valikhanov kept collecting a wide range of biological, botanical, historical and cultural objects. An event of great significance for Valikhanov became a discovery and record of the fragment of the ancient Kirgiz epic Manas.

Valikhanov's aspiration to render in drawings the specific places he visited was connected with his interests as a traveler. Nearing the Aksu he made a note in his diary: "From Aksu we have seen the snow- clad peaks of the Alatau Mountains. At the long distance their blue haze was a pied one, joining the clouds. In some places the summits come out of the dark clouds – the rising sun reflected on them in the purple glistening light. It's a really great beauty". [3, p.311] Valikhanov recorded his impressions in his watercolor *The Peaks of the Alatau Mountains*, where he depicted the distant sierra melting in the fog, with the sharply delineated solemn mountain ridge in the foreground. Thanks to the skillful compositional and coloristic scheme, the artist managed to convey in the drawing the characteristic mountain landscape's transparency in the air. The group of drawings in which Valikhanov recorded the historical monuments of Central Asia is of special interest. Such sketches as *The Stone Monuments at the Tomb of Kozi-Korpesh and Bayan-Slu* (1856), *The Profiles of the Stone Figures at the River of Ayaguz* (1856), and *The Ancient Stone Figures at the North Coast of Issyk-Kul* (1856) have the character of research documentation.

Valikhanov, like many other Russian scientists, paid great attention to the ancient poem *Kozi- Korpesh and Bayan-Slu* and recorded some of its versions. One of them had been made after the famous akin (singer) the from Karkaralinsk steppes, Janak. The depictions made by Valikhanov of the stone figures located near the tomb of Kozi-Korpesh and Bayan-Slu at the river of Ayaguz are precious and important examples of Kazakh pre-Islamic history and culture of the 5-10th centuries. In his Issy-Kul diary Valikhanov wrote: "In 10 versta … stands the tomb of Kozu Korpech, famous in Kirgiz poems. We had studied the poem very well and were eager to see their tomb".[9, p.508] Judging by notes of Valikhanov he had a strong desire to record the tomb on paper, however the bad weather and high tide on the Ayaguz river at that moment had canceled his plans. Not having means to cross the river and reach the right coast we continued his travel, postponing the close study of the monument until the next time. In the diary of 1856 Valikhanov made a note: "My plan is to record and explore the tomb of Kozu Korpech". [3, p.308] Valikhanov had got back to the monument in the Fall of the same year after finishing his expedition to Issyk-Kul and Kulja.

In the picture from 1856 we can see four stone figures depicting three women and one man. The sculpture on the left has a missing head – it is Kozi-Korpesh himself. The other personages include Bayan-Slu, her sister Ayagiz and her aunt. These stone monuments stood next to the tomb at its eastern side. Before the revolution in Russia in 1917, these figures were transferred to Germany and because of that the sketches done by Valikhanov possess a special value as historical documents for Kazakhstan. In general, the period of 1856-1858 was especially productive for Valikhanov. In Semirechie region he studied the ancient excavated towns of Almaty, Koilyk, Almalyk, collected old medieval coins, and did sketches from the original prehistoric engravings in Tamgalytas. Drawings with images of three Buddhas on the rocks of Tamgalytas located on the river of Ily are excellent in their precise rendition of this historical artifact.

Such drawings as *A Women of Issyk-Kul Kirgizes* (1856) demonstrate Valikhanov's interest in studying the characteristics and particular features of Kirgiz people. In his notes Valikhanov focuses on the description of Kirgiz women, revealing interesting and lively moments from the meetings with them. In the Issyk-Kul diary Valikhanov writes: "In general (dikokamenniye) Kirgiz women have many good personal qualities …" [3, p.339] Dwelling on the description of the clothing

worn by Kirgiz women he notes “that married women put on the head two white kerchiefs, one near the cheeks and the second on the head as a turban … Girls wear a white cone-shaped headgear with a small tassel”. [3, p.339] He goes on: “The length of their hair is considered to be the prime beauty for a girl that is the reason why almost all women use fake plaits”. [3, p. 339] Valikhanov shows characteristic types of Kirgiz women marking illustrations and notes in his diary: “The beauty of Kirgiz women is comprised in the roundness of body and an extent of their obesity as well as in the moonlike oval face and red cheeks, which poets compared with the blood drops on white snow”. [3, p.333] The female types are represented in such sketches as *Horsemen and Horse Drilling with Kirgizes* (1856). On this sheet of paper Valikhanov arranged 12 separated sketches of horses and horsemen shown in different foreshortenings. Obviously drawn from nature, they suggest a sense of immediacy and provide a sample of the artist's diligence and persistence in capturing a range of poses and types of personages. His sketch depicting a Kirgiz caravan has a similar character. The composition includes a group of women riding bulls and camels. By several lines the artist conveys characteristic silhouettes of people and animals. He managed to render the very process of movement of a caravan, making us feel the whole mass of the procession, and at the same time each personage is individualized. Valikhanov made a written record of his impressions of the moving caravan: “All night long the caravan was passing by. In the morning when we had woken up the lines of camels led by dressed up women and girls kept riding. Men were accompanying them driving herds of sheep and rams … The major components of urts were placed on bulls and the “steppe Amazonians” had these racing animals under themselves”. [3, p. 355-356]

In 1856 Valikhanov had been sent to Kulja as a member of a Russian trade and diplomatic mission. For this trip he executed a series of interesting sketches including the composition *The Audience with a Chinese Officer* in which we can see the Chinese and Russian representatives seated and talking at the oval table. We cannot exclude the possibility that one of the pictured personages in the foreground wearing an officer's uniform represents Valikhanov. In his diary, the scientist describes the meeting in this way: “Tugolday – a gaunt old man with almost blind and narrow eyes wore a huge spectacles on his hawkish nose. … He is unusually frisky for his age and very talkative. He was dressed in a silk gown with a black belt to which was attached a tobacco container and a fan”.[3, p.202] And he goes on: “Kogoltay is pale, his head is devoid of a back part that is flat as a plank, on the facial side he has screwed eyes, a nose and mouth on another one there was attached a hair plait”.[3, p.202] This description is imbued with a keen humor that was characteristic for Valikhanov and repeatedly marked by his contemporaries. During a stay in Kulja there was also made a multi-figured composition *The Opium Smokers* (1856) where Valikhanov provides a detailed description of each personage trying to single out the person's character through both his pose and by his physiognomic treatment. The whole group is placed in the interior that is marked exclusively by a window shown on the left and the doorway in the middle. The artist precisely renders all the details of costume as well as hair style and all the objects, revealinganthropological features of people. This type of drawing is characteristic and rivals his presentation of detailed and scrupulous accounts in his diaries. Thus documentary preciseness was always a priority for Valikhanov, in both textual and graphical presentation.

Valikhanov's trip to Kashgar was the most complex and productive event for him. His accounts about this travel made him a known and famous explorer. In honor of his scientific accomplishments Valikhanov was granted membership in the Russian Geographical Society. A series of sketches from the Kashgar diary includes images of peoples populating Eastern Turkestan. Valikhanov wrote: “Despite the great danger I kept tracking impressions in my diary during my travel in Kashgar”. [5, p.53]

In extremely expressive sketches such as *A Woman from Kashgar*, or *Kashgar Women* (1859), Valikhanov recorded the particularities of the hair styles, headgears and clothing of Kashgar women. Writing about the status of women in this region Valikhanov marks: “Women living here in Minor Kashgaria occupy an honored place and many of them acquired historical fame”. [3, p.166] Valikhanov provides a rather detailed description of the costume of a Kashgar woman: “The woman's costume consists of a silk shirt, a gown with a straight beveled collar …. On leaving a house they put over it a silk coat with golden bands on the bosom and a white long yashmak … In winter they usually wear ram or fox fur trimmed headgears”.[3, p. 169] His drawings serve as illustrations to these notes. It is interesting to note for comparison an extract from the article about Kashgar published in the Russian Niva magazine in 1879 where was given a detailed description of an appearance of women

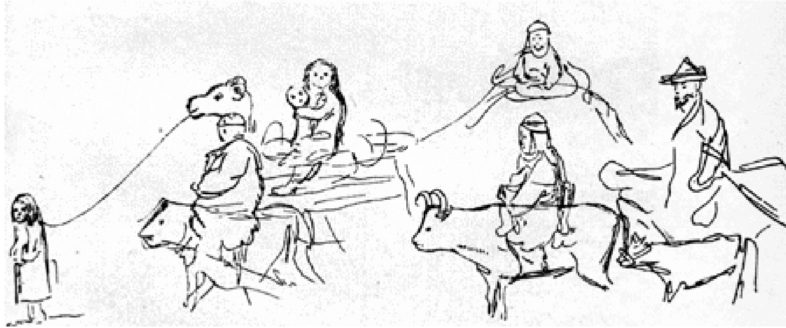


Figure 7.

Figure 8.

Figure 9.

Figure 10.

Figure 11.

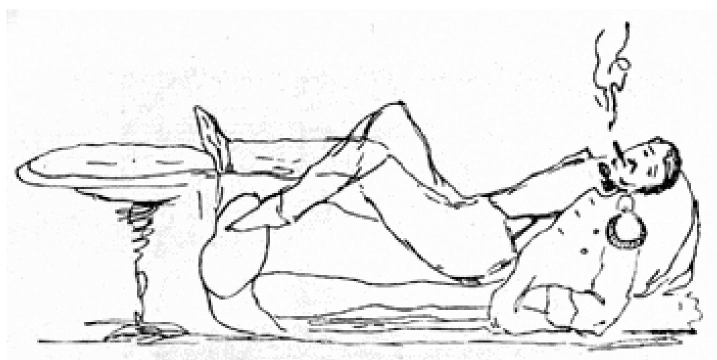


Figure 12.

from the Eastern Turkestan. Mr. Chapman, who accompanied in 1874 the British Envoy to the emir of Forsit, wrote: "Jarkand women in the winter wear on the head something like of a flat, fur headgear (they call it a turban) covered from above by fur of an otter and encircled by sown around silk or paper fabric; on the backside of this headgear there is a white veil hanging down and sometimes placed on the shoulder substituting in some cases a yashmak. The hair is usually collected in two plaits and some women left them dropped in curls. Their dress is long and loose but pleats free. Over this clothing they wear another garment made of solid paper fabric of various colors from very modest to the most bright ones ... The dominant colors in female's costume are gray, chocolate, dark-green and blue. For special festive events they usually wear silk dresses from Khotan or Andijan covered with patterns a *la chinoise* on an extremely bright background and decorated by richly ornamented borders ... People of high status wear the dress that is produced from silk trimmed with precious fur. Jarkand women strictly followed the special requirement of indigenous fashion by connecting their eyebrows with paint; faked plaits are also widely in use. In the summer the dress is less complex and more comfortable. Women to a great extent are beautiful ones". [7, p.217]

In the drawing *A Kashgar Woman* created by Valikhanov, the figure is depicted in profile. The face of the girl is done out well and her hairdo and headdress correspond to a description in the diary. In Kashgar Valikhanov had his own *chauken* or temporary wife that he was obliged to take in accordance with the ancient established tradition on arrival to Kashgar. Overtly the given sketch is a portrait of this chauken. On the other page of the Kashgar diary we can see several female figures in different foreshortenings. In this drawing Valikhanov attentively studies particulars of their hair styles and headdresses. Among the graphic heritage of Valikhanov we should also mention a series of drawings that had exclusively research-ethnographic goals. To them are attributed sketches for an article about Kazakh weapons and illustrations for his work dedicated to Kazakh architecture. In the text of the article it read: "In the Kazakh mola (a grave tomb) and around it the ultimate taste of Kazak is expressed, his skills in carving and painting". [3, p.193] And he goes on: "The ancient grave monuments are distinct by their various forms ... these structures are the real artworks created by an educated people but not a wild one". [3, p.193]

The separate portion of the graphic heritage of Valikhanov is constituted by the scenes and personages from the life of the high class of Omsk and St. Petersburg. An excleent example isa self-portrait by Valikhanov, in which he is shown reclining on a sofa with a smoking cigarette in his mouth. One leg rests on the round table, his hands in the pockets. He is dressed in a Russian officer's uniform with epaulettes. His appearance suggests a sybarite and relaxed dandy, lazily enjoying romantic dreams. The sketch is executed by easy and light lines.

This drawing of Valikhanov is rendered perfectly and fully corresponds to the descriptions of his friends and colleagues. "Chokan had Mongolian features and he used to say that the sultan's relatives ("the white bone") are distinct from the low class "black bone" representatives. With the "black bone" people features are quite varied due to the mixed blood of different tribes and in its type it is closer to the Western Turks. And the sultans are the descendants of Chingiz Khan of Mongolian blood and their features are more homogeneous and represent the typical Mongolian type". [3, p.365]

N. Yadrintsev wrote about him: "With a Kirgiz face and fine features, and small mustache, his face reminds one of a good-looking, educated Chinese. His slim figure and manners were just gracious, they had something feminine in nature, lazy movements gave him an air of a European sybarite and dandy ... on his fine lips always laid an ironic smile all that imparted to him a sort of the Lermontov's and Childharold's type". [3, p.96] He goes on: "His face could be called an attractive one so much were its features ennobled. European dress and European manners of wearing hair ultimately enslaved the "Mongolian character". [3, p.365] The high artistry and the ease with which this portrait was executed attest to Valikhanov's extraordinary talent. In the sketches of officers drawn in 1860 we can see a surprising expression of the men's characters. The artist bravely outlines the profile of the face and marks the shape of the hair style of the four officers. These depictions very vividly render the immediacy of perception of the surrounding world. As S. Kapustin wrote in his memoirs: "By a few particular features of the face, by the manner to behave himself, Chokan could outline a whole character of a man, and make extremely witty suppositions about his past and future adventures". [3, p.410] With keen humor the author records the dancing personages in the drawing *After the Ball* (1855). These drawings by Valikhanov can be attributed to a calligraphic style, close in its form and logic to the Oriental miniature. In this respect, it clearly shows the connection between text and graphics in his travel diaries. Laconic contours and an arrangement of elements of the composition on the sheet also correspond to the Oriental pictorial tradition.

Unfortunately, there is only a small quantity of Valikhanov's drawings preserved, but by them we can make a conclusion that the first Kazakh scientist possessed a unique artistic gift and considerable creative potential. His drawings represent important historical monuments in which are fixed the human's images and pictures from the life of the Central Asian peoples in the middle of the 19th century. His drawings also recorded architectural monuments and specimens of flora and fauna of the region. The study of the artistic heritage of the great Kazakh scientist Valikhanov has just started and we hope that it will bring many more interesting and unexpected discoveries in the future.

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Contributors

Inigo ACOSTA, a graduate student in Anthropology at the George Washington University where he is also recipient of the GW Presidential Fellowship. He is also a researcher for the Asian Cultural History Program at the Smithsonian Institution. A native of Thailand and the Philippines, Acosta is interested in topics related to history and culture in Southeast Asia.

Natalia BAZHENOVA, art critic, Senior Researcher of the Crafts Department at the Kasteyev State Museum of Arts, member of the Union of Artists of Kazakhstan. Natalia has authored a monograph about Kazakh weaving and articles on Kazakh crafts. She took part in more than twenty international and national conferences and curated many exhibitions.

Aizhan BEKKULOVA, member of the Expert Council at the National Committee for Intangible Cultural Heritage, artist, member of the Union of Artists of Kazakhstan, Chair of the Union of Artisans of Kazakhstan, and Vice President of the World Crafts Council for Central Asia. Aizhan has authored and edited five books and many articles on Kazakh traditional crafts. She organized more than a hundred practical workshops on felt, carpeting, and embroidery and curated over twenty exhibitions and festivals about Kazakh crafts.

Clara ISABAEVA, journalist and editor, Head of the Public and Foreign Relations Department of the Kasteyev Museum of Arts. Clara curated the Asem Alem Art Academy and Musical Vernissage concerts, as well as successful international exhibitions and art projects in partnership with the Embassies of Hungary, Germany, France, the USA, and China in Kazakhstan. She was a curator and member of the museum's delegations to international exhibitions in New-York (USA), Ankara and Bursa (Turkey), as well as Moscow and Saint-Petersburg (Russia), and took part in many international art conferences in Almaty, Nur-Sultan, Kazan, Moscow, and Washington. Clara has authored more than 55 academic and media articles about the decorative, applied, and visual arts of Kazakhstan. As the Head of the Museum's Press Service, she gave more than a hundred interviews about the museum's activities to Kazakh and international TV channels.

Dr. Amir JADAIBAYEV, Senior Researcher at the Kasteyev State Museum of Arts, curator of the Kazakh Fine Arts Department. Amir holds a candidate of sciences degree in arts and has authored articles on contemporary and classical arts of Central Asia, America, Europe, and Russia. He also curated national and international art exhibitions in Kazakhstan and abroad. Amir was a recipient of the Fulbright and other American research grants. His research interests include the Soviet art, as well as contemporary and classical arts of Central Asia and the USA.

Dr. Svetlana KOBZHANOVA, Deputy Director for Research, Kasteyev State Museum of Arts. Svetlana holds a candidate of sciences degree in arts and is a member of the Union of Artists of Kazakhstan. She is also a member of the International Association of Art Critics (AICA) and an expert on cultural values. Svetlana has authored a monograph on global artistic traditions in Kazakhstan's painting and articles on art presented at national and international conferences. She is also a curator of exhibitions.

Jared M. KOLLER, a Ph.D. Candidate in Archaeology at Boston University and a Senior Researcher with the Smithsonian's Asian Cultural History Program. Koller has significant experience planning, developing, implementing, analyzing, and reporting on geographic projects using a variety of data, graphics software, and GIS software, with a particular interest in promoting the social sciences and humanities through web-based and open-source applications.

Nurzhamal NURFEIZOVA, art critic, Senior Researcher of the Crafts Department at the Kasteyev State Museum of Arts. Nurzhamal has authored a catalog entitled *The Jewelry of Kazakhstan in the 19th and 20th Centuries*. In 2008, she took part in an international ethnographic expedition to study the way of life, traditions, and crafts of ethnic Kazakhs living in Southern Altai (Russia) and Mongolia. She has also authored articles about Kazakh crafts, embroideries, costumes, headdresses, and contemporary tapestry. Nurzhamal took part in regional and international conferences and curated many exhibitions.

Dr. Robert PONTSIOEN is a research fellow in the Asian Cultural History Program at the National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution. He is an author of books and scholarly articles about contemporary craft practice and the role of museums in preserving and promoting cultural heritage, and has carried out ethnographic and museum collections research in Japan, Korea, Turkmenistan, Pakistan, the United Kingdom, Italy, Canada, and the USA.

Dr. Yekaterina REZNIKOVA, candidate of sciences in arts, Scientific Secretary of the Kasteyev State Museum of Arts, member of the Union of Artists of Kazakhstan. Yekaterina has authored over eighty publications about contemporary Kazakhstani artists and artistic processes in Kazakhstan and Central Asia. She took part in international conferences on culture and arts and curated exhibitions at the Kasteyev State Museum of Arts and contemporary art galleries in Almaty, Kazakhstan.

Dr. Gulmira SHALABAYEVA, Merited Worker of the Republic of Kazakhstan, winner of the Shoqan Walikhanov State Prize (Social and Political Sciences), PhD, professor, correspondent member of the Academy of Social Sciences, chief expert of the Expert Committee of the Silk Road International Cultural Forum, international consultant for the National Art Museum of China (NAMOC), Director of the Kasteyev State Museum of Arts. Gulmira has authored the monographs entitled *Ethnos. Nation. Identity*, *Comprehending Culture*, *Kazakhstan: The Evolution of the Cultural Policy*, Kazakhstan's Culture in the Global Cultural Space, Yevgeny Sidorkin. Ontology of the Artistic Method, Eurasianism through the Prism of Art, Facets of Realism, The Cosmos of the Kazakh Ornament, and many articles on aesthetics, the philosophy of art, and national culture.

Galina SYRLYBAYEVA, art critic, Head of the Foreign Art Department at the Kasteyev State Museum of Arts, member of the Union of Artists of Kazakhstan. Galina has authored a monograph on the history of the Union of Artists of Kazakhstan and more than eighty articles on the Russian art of the 19th and 20th centuries and the art of Kazakhstan. She took part in forty international and national conferences and curated many exhibitions.

Oxana TANSKAYA, art critic, Head of the Tours Department, Kasteyev State Museum of Arts, expert on cultural and tangible heritage at the Academy of Arts of Kazakhstan, and member of the Union of Journalists of Kazakhstan. Oxana has authored dozens of articles about Kazakhstani artists, took part in international and national conferences, and curated many exhibitions.

Dr. Paul Michael TAYLOR, a research anthropologist at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History, is director of that museum's Asian Cultural History Program, and serves as curator of Asian, European, and Middle Eastern Ethnology. He is an author or editor of seventeen books and numerous scholarly articles on the ethnography, ethnobiology, linguistic anthropology, and art or material culture of Asia. He has also curated twenty-one museum exhibitions (including five online virtual exhibitions) and helped produce twelve ethnographic films.

Dr. Jasper WAUGH-QUASEBARTH is a researcher with the Smithsonian Asian Cultural History Program in Washington, D.C., and public folklorist at The Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio, USA. He has conducted ethnographic research on craft traditions in Europe, Central Asia, East Asia, South America, and North America.

Gulaim ZHUMABEKOVA, art critic, Head of the Crafts Department at the Kasteyev State Museum of Arts. Gulaim has authored articles on Kazakh crafts, took part in more than twenty international and national conferences and curated many exhibitions.

Cover illustration:
Tuskiiz wall rug. *Early 20th century*
Semipalatinsk Region
Mariam Ilyasova. 1877-1946
Velvet, corals, silver-plated plates, coloured threads, smooth embroidery. 133x267 cm
From the collection of the Kasteyev State Museum of Arts of the Republic of Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan's Crafts and Creative Economy, jointly published by the Kasteyev Museum of Arts (Almaty, Kazakhstan) and the Asian Cultural History Program, Smithsonian Institution (Washington, D.C., USA), presents papers delivered at the international scholarly symposium of the same title held in Washington, D.C., on October 4, 2019, along with additional relevant papers solicited by the editors. The symposium brought together researchers from both institutions. The Kazakh scholars, staff of the Kasteyev Museum of Arts alongside the head of the Union of Artisans of Kazakhstan, here present compelling studies of Kazakhstan's crafts. The American contributors, who are researchers in the Smithsonian's Asian Cultural History Program, responded with papers presenting comparative examples of their own approaches to craft studies in the USA and elsewhere.

The symposium was held at the National Building Museum, during the annual Smithsonian Craft2Wear Show, at which members of the Union of Artisans of Kazakhstan displayed many Kazakh craft works never before seen outside Kazakhstan. The book presents chapters by the volume's two editors, Paul Michael Taylor (researcher and director of the Smithsonian's Asian Cultural History Program) and Gulmira Shalabayeva (director of the Kasteyev Museum); by Aizhan Bekkulova (Union of Artisans); by Nataliya Bazhenova, Clara Isabaeva, Amir Jadaibaev, Svetlana Kobzhanova, Nurzhamal Nurfeizova, Yekaterina Reznikova, Galina Syrlybayeva, Oxana Tanskaya, and Gulaim Zhubabekova (Kasteyev Museum); and by Inigo Acosta, Jared Koller, Robert Pontsioen, and Jasper Waugh-Quasebarth (Smithsonian).

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