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ASIAN TEXTILES

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OATG events programme

Wednesday 30 August 2017

Reframing the Carpet: The Afterlife of the Ardabil Carpets in the West Dorothy Armstrong

Dorothy is a PhD candidate at the Royal College of Art and the Victoria and Albert Museum, UK. We welcome back Dorothy who shared her research on synthetic dyes in Persian carpets in *Asian Textiles* number 56, and at an OATG talk in 2013. This time we will hear about her current research and how the West reinvented the Ardabil as the world's greatest carpet.

Location: Pauling Centre, 58a Banbury Road, Oxford, OX2 6QS
Time: 6 pm for a 6.15 pm start.

Friday 22 September 2017

Eloquent pattern – the craft of the Japanese printing stencil Dr Alice Humphrey

This talk will introduce the construction and use of Edo and Meiji period katagami, Japanese paper stencils used for resist printing onto clothing and domestic fabric.

Alice developed an interest in Japanese textiles and katagami from working on the collections held at ULITA, and at the Museum of Domestic Design and Architecture. Her doctoral research analyses the structures underlying decorative motifs and patterning.

A viewing of Japanese stencils and linked textiles from the Ashmolean collection will take place before the talk.

Location: Ashmolean Museum Jameel Centre Study Room 1 (viewing) and the Education Centre (presentation).
Time: 4.15–4.55 pm (viewing) and 5.15 pm (presentation).

Saturday 14 October 2017

Gender twists in the weaving, embroidery and structure of Shidong Miao festival costume Iain Stephens

Talk followed by a Show & Tell (you are welcome to bring your own Shidong Miao pieces!). The talk will explore the seemingly endless creativity of the Shidong Miao employed on festival jackets. It shares insights into the sexuality of weaving and embroidery as well as essential pattern hierarchies.

Iain Stephens is a master upholsterer, a previous lecturer in biochemistry and English, and a tutor of biblical Hebrew. He is an avid collector of Xhosa beadwork, Chinese ethnic minority costume and Taiwanese budaixi puppets.

Before the talk there will be a display of Miao textiles from the Ashmolean collection.

Location: Ashmolean Museum Jameel Centre Study Room 1 (viewing) and the Education Centre (presentation).
Time: 2.15–3 pm (viewing) and 3.05 pm (presentation).

Wednesday 6 December 2017

With Golden Thread – The revitalisation of songket weaving in West Sumatra Bernhard & Erika Bart

Bernhard and Erika Bart will talk about their 20 years researching into Sumatran songket (brocade) weaving and the 12 years spent in charge of the weaving at their Palantaloom studio. They will discuss Songket patterns and techniques and will show some old textiles as well as new ones woven at Studio Songket Palantaloom.

Location: Pauling Centre, 58a Banbury Road, Oxford OX2 6QS.
Time: 6 pm for a 6.15 pm start.

Saturday 3 February 2018

Annual General Meeting and show & tell.

For more information and registration please contact: oatg.events@gmail.com

Contents

Front cover Detail from an evening coat c.1900–1910, silk crêpe with silk threads, designed by S. Nishimura, Kyoto, Japan. See *Embroidered Bodies from the Ashmolean Museum* p. 3.

Embroidered Bodies from the Ashmolean Museum

by Aimée Payton

Eighteen months ago I was given the wonderful opportunity to curate the exhibition *Embroidered Bodies: Stories, Garments and Stitches from the Ashmolean Museum.* It is now on view at Broadway Museum and Gallery in the Cotswolds until 10 September 2017.

One of my main aims was to introduce the breadth of the Ashmolean's textile collections, and the subject of embroidered clothing gave a good opportunity to display objects which have not been shown before. There are garments and shoes from Britain, Egypt, the Greek Islands, the Middle East, Central Asia, Pakistan, India, China, and Japan.

Garments

I was keen to impress on visitors the skill involved in making the garments, and I wanted to provide a reason for looking really closely at the stitches used. At the beginning of the exhibition I showed how some stitches are constructed alongside examples on the textiles. All the stitches are tiny and expertly executed. See, for example, the chain stitch on Lawrence's collar Figure 2.

Figure 1 *Stitches panel seen beside* ***left*** *Sleeveband,1800 –1900, silk, China. Presented by H. Margaret Le Mare, EA2005.92* ***right*** *T.E. Lawrence's collar (see below).*

Others are almost invisible, such as those in the Bokharan couching on the Central Asian cap shown at Figure 3 on the following page.

Figure 2 *Collar, c.1916–c.1922, silk, Syria or Saudi Arabia. Presented by Dr MR Lawrence and Prof AW Lawrence, EA1966.84.*

EMBROIDERED BODIES

Figure 3 *Cap, 1800–1869, silk with silk and wool threads, Kashgar or Yarkand, China, Shaw collection, EAX.7399.*

The next introductory section highlighted the use of motifs to identify the wearer as a member of a particular community or of a certain status, and how images and symbols are able to communicate specific messages.

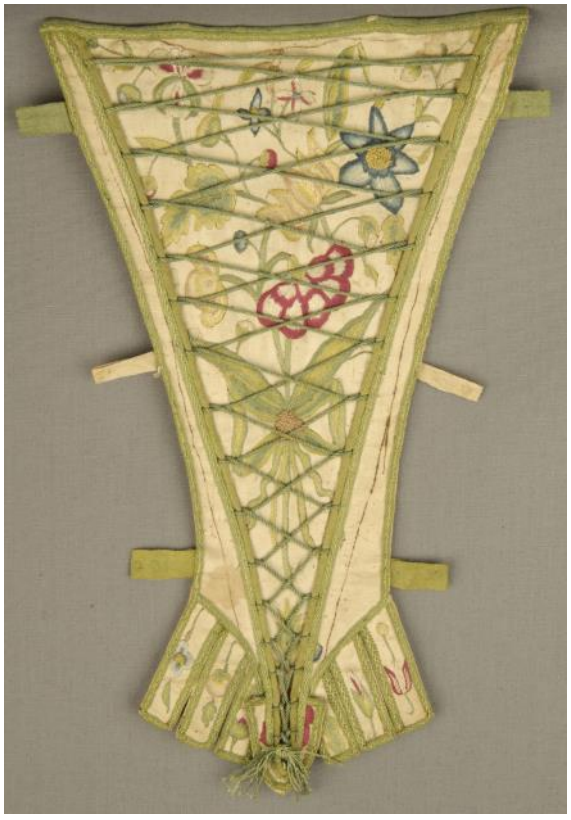


Figure 4 *Stomacher, 1700–1750, linen with silk threads, England, AN1921.854.*

Across the globe plants and flowers have had specific meanings for thousands of years, but Lady Mary Wortley Montagu is credited with bringing floriography, the language of flowers, from Turkey to England in 1717. Images of plants and flowers were not merely decorative, but had a symbolic function, for example roses symbolised unity, while oak stood for strength and courage. She was the wife of an ambassador and became fascinated by Ottoman life. The flowers on the stomacher, Figure 4, are stylised, which makes them difficult to identify.

As an example of communicating identity, I used a skirt panel worn by a woman from the Mochi community see Figure 5. We can be certain of this attribution as the motifs are typical. The peacocks, women and arrangements of flowers are used in different combinations and colour variations, but they always have this even spacing. The parrots in the border are also a common motif.

There are several garments in the exhibition which are not so straightforward. The magnificent Japanese evening coat, Figure 6 below, was made for the western market. As you can see it is definitely not a kimono, but neither is it a western shape. The central buttons on the front, give it away, and could be influenced by Middle Eastern robes, while the embroidery and ribbon at the neck, cuffs, and hem might be a nod to Chinese robes.

Right Figure 5 *Detail of part of an embroidered skirt, 1800–1900, Silk with silk thread, Mochi community, Gujarat, India. Presented by Mrs Ormiston, EA1966.91.*

Left Figure 6 *Back of evening coat with crane and pine branches, c.1900 –1910, silk crêpe with silk threads, designed by S. Nishimura, Kyoto, Japan. Presented by Mr and Mrs Douglas Dalrymple, EA2013.150.*
A detail from this coat is shown on the front cover of this journal.

The designer, S. Nishimura, was based in Kyoto and his creation here is neither western nor Japanese. He has invented an eastern fantasy, a wearable statement for the elite of London and Paris. The craftsmanship, such as the embroidery, is superb and would have made this a very expensive garment. At the turn of the century Japonisme was at its height, as is proved by the many portraits of western women lounging elegantly in kimonos, often surrounded by ceramics, prints and screens.

EMBROIDERED BODIES

India, of course, is of major importance in the world of traded textiles. In the Ashmolean we have a collection of fragments originally made in India for export, one of which is included in the exhibition. In 18th-century Europe textiles traded from India were very fashionable, especially those with floral embroidery. They often featured winding vines with many different flower head types. This is the result of the embroiderers in India not having direct knowledge of the European flowers that their customers expected, and copying drawings given to them by the traders or sent by commissioning customers.

Figure 7 *Detail from textile fragment, 1700–1800, cotton with silk threads, Gujarat, India, EA1993.383.*

The final section of the exhibition allows visitors to view the remaining garments in the light of what they had already seen. They can examine the exquisite stitches and think about what the motifs might mean. They can consider the context: was it made for the people who made it? Or is there an element of exchange, either physically or stylistically?

Shoes

When the idea of the exhibition was first proposed, I knew that I wanted to display three Chinese shoes from the Eastern Art collection. When contemplating Chinese women's footwear, most people instantly think of the barbaric practice of foot-binding. I wanted to show that there is more to the story than just the lotus shoe.

Foot-binding has a complex history. It was practised by women on their daughters for around 1,000 years, and nobody really knows how or why it began. It was only practised by Han women, the majority ethnic group in China. The stigma of having natural feet was so strong that

Figure 8 Shoes in case. **Top** *Sandal circa 1900–1920, cotton and silk, Miao community, China. Bequeathed by Emily Kemp, EAX.5589.* **Bottom** *Raised shoe 1800–1930. Silk, cotton, and metal threads. Manchu community, China. EAX.5592.*

eventually all Han women, rich or poor, inflicted this on their daughters, otherwise there was no hope of them marrying. It is too simplistic to say that this was a practice for the erotic pleasure of men and to keep women housebound, although these would have been factors. It was so ingrained in the culture that it was impossible for women not to have bound feet. Reform started in the early 20th century and it was finally banned in 1950.

Figure 9 *'Lotus shoes' for bound feet, 1800–1930, silk, cotton and metal threads. Unworn, and stitched together. Han community, China. EA1953.44.*

The variations in Lotus shoe style are endless and specific to particular parts of the country. The pair in the exhibition is Northern in style and probably from the Shandong Region. They have never been worn so could have been made for the tourist market. Equally it was common for women to make shoes as gifts for their friends and relatives, stitching them together at the top.

One alternative to bound feet was the raised shoe which was worn by Manchu women (*the bottom shoe in the picture opposite*). The platform in the centre of the shoe would have given an unstable, swaying gait, one of the desirable feminine effects of bound feet. Many motifs were used in both Manchu and Han clothing. The lotus flower on this shoe was one of the Eight Auspicious Symbols of Buddhism and understood to mean purity. Fish and boys were related to good luck and fertility.

Other community groups in China had very different ways of decorating their clothing. The sandal (*shown at the top of the picture opposite*) is from one of the many groups that come under the generic term of Miao.

The pair was donated by Emily Georgina Kemp in the 1940s. Our collection was at that time under the care of the University's short-lived Museum of Asian Art, and Kemp's collection was one of the first of Chinese origin that was accepted, and came to the Ashmolean in the late 1950s.

The Newberry Collection

I concluded the exhibition with one of the Ashmolean's oldest complete garments: a child's tunic from Fustat, Cairo Figure 10 overleaf. It is from the Mamluk period and has been carbon dated to 1390 (+/- 35 years). The embroidery at the neck, hem, and cuffs could come from a practical use as it strengthens the garment, but decorative embroidery at all of the openings of the garment may well have been protective.

Figure 10 *Child's tunic, 1350–1440 (carbon dated), linen with silk threads, Fustat, Cairo, Egypt. Presented by Professor Percy Newberry, EA1984.353.*

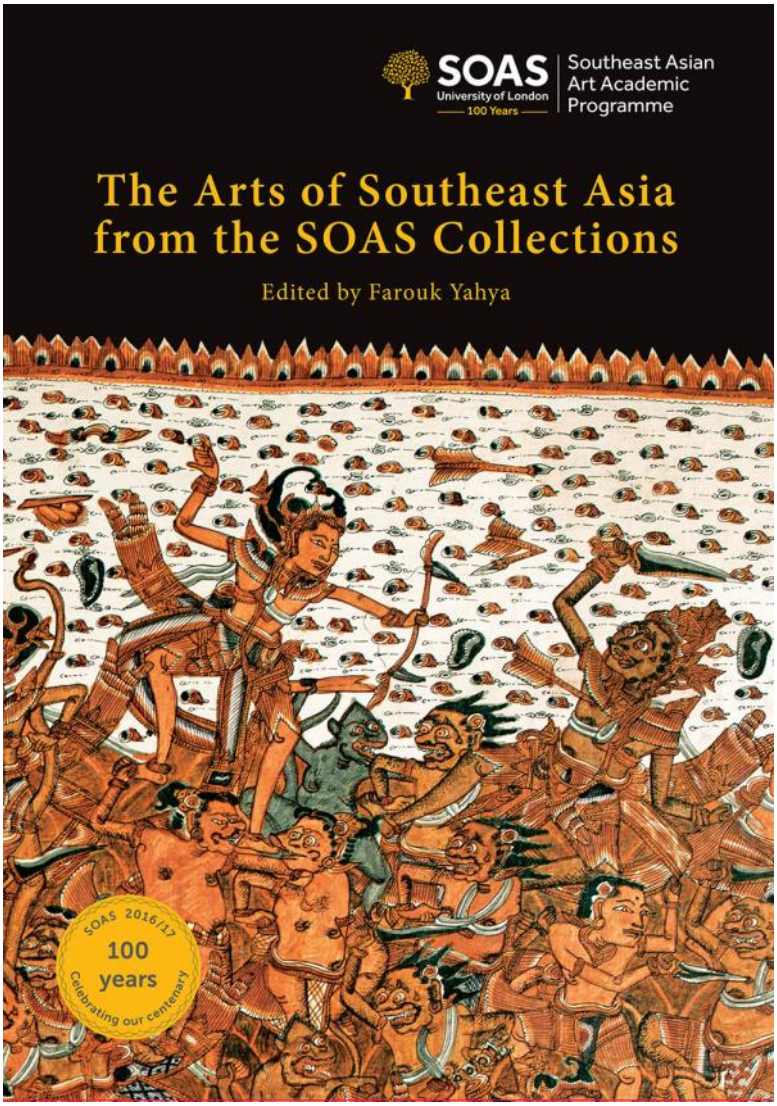
The tunic is one of the 2,272 textiles in the Newberry Collection. Percy and Essie Newberry donated their hugely significant collection, consisting mostly of fragments found in Fustat in Cairo, the earliest of which date from the 10th century. The collection includes woven Coptic pieces, block-printed fragments made in Gujarat in India and traded to Egypt, and Egyptian embroideries.

This article concentrates on just some of the garments in the exhibition. Many more are on display.

Aimée Payton studied Technical Theatre Arts at Manchester University specialising in costume design, and then did a masters at Brighton University in History of Design and Decorative Art. She combined the two disciplines while working at Shakespeare's Globe Theatre undertaking costume research. She has been Administrator in the Eastern Art Department at the Ashmolean for 11 years, and during this time has been involved in the textiles collections, carrying out her own research, giving talks, and helping with gallery displays. She took over the position of chair of the Oxford Asian Textile Group from Ruth Barnes in 2010.

Textiles in *The Arts of Southeast Asia from the SOAS Collections*

by Farouk Yahya



The Arts of Southeast Asia from the SOAS Collections is the catalogue of an exhibition that was held in the Foyle Gallery of the Brunei Gallery in the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, from 28 May 2014 to 2 September 2016.

The exhibition, curated by Professor Anna Contadini of SOAS with myself as Assistant Curator, was part of the 'Treasures of SOAS Project', a programme designed to display and research the SOAS collections. The publication of the catalogue this year also coincides with the SOAS Centenary celebrations.

I acted as the editor for the catalogue, which was published by Areca Books, a niche publisher based in Penang, Malaysia. The publication was made possible by the SOAS Southeast Asian Art Academic Programme (SAAAP). This programme, which is generously supported by the Alphawood Foundation, aims to enhance the understanding and preservation of ancient to pre-modern Buddhist and Hindu art and architecture in Southeast Asia.

The catalogue of the exhibition highlights a variety of material relating to Southeast Asia that is held in the SOAS collections. It covers the modern-day countries of Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar (Burma), the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam, and the objects range in date from circa 1000 BCE to the present day. They include manuscripts, rare books, paintings, maps, textiles, sculptures, metalwork and ceramics. The objects comprise collections of early European scholars as well as purchases and donations made over the last 100 years since the university was founded.

ARTS OF SE ASIA FROM SOAS COLLECTIONS

Following a short section on the languages and scripts of Southeast Asia, the catalogue is organised around four broad themes that touch upon a number of important aspects of Southeast Asian life and culture: religion, magic and divination, literature, and contacts with the East and West.

Textiles feature in all sections, demonstrating the important role they played among Southeast Asian societies. For instance, the section on religion includes three Burmese embroidered tapestries (*shwe-chi-hto*) that depict Buddhist scenes (cats. 7-9). One of them (cat. 9; Figure 1) shows a rider on a white horse holding a sword. This figure represents Prince Siddharta (the Buddha) who had left his kingdom in order to seek enlightenment.

Figure 1 Shwe-chi-hto *(embroidered tapestry) of Prince Siddhartha on his way to the Anoma River. Myanmar (Burma), 1980s–early 90s. Metal-gold thread and beads, H53 x W53 cm. London, SOAS University of London, SOASAW 2010.0158.01. Purchased by Robert Taylor for SOAS, late 1980s–early 90s. Photo: Courtesy of SOAS.*

A particular strength of the SOAS collections is the rich array of Southeast Asian manuscripts which come in a variety of shapes and sizes. Some of them are made from textiles. In Myanmar (Burma), *kammavaca* manuscripts used in Buddhist ceremonies resemble palm-leaf manuscripts in terms of their format. Yet their leaves may be made of cloth that has been stiffened, lacquered and decorated with gold (cats. 10 and 11).

Textiles are also often used as manuscript covers. One particular manuscript format consists of a sheet of paper which is folded in half, then sewn along the narrow side and rolled up like a scroll. These scrolls were usually then wrapped in a piece of cloth secured with a piece of string. There are three such manuscripts of this format highlighted in the catalogue, and two of them still have their original cloth covers (cats. 33 and 43).

Figure 2 *Batik with different types of birds. Yogyakarta, Central Java, Indonesia, early 1990s. Cotton, H102 x W172 cm. London, SOAS University of London, SOASAW 2010.0184.01. Purchased by Elizabeth Moore for SOAS, 1994. Photo: Courtesy of SOAS.*

Being on the crossroads of major trade routes between East and West, it is no surprise that Southeast Asian art has continuously been influenced by many cultures. A Javanese batik *sarung* displayed in the exhibition is an excellent example of these cross-cultural connections (cat. 58; Figure 2). The colour palette of indigo blue and soga brown is typical of those produced in Central Java. Yet the motifs of birds and flowers are more akin to those found on batik produced by Chinese communities on the North Coast region (Pasisir) of Java.

Apart from physical examples, we can also gain much knowledge on Southeast Asian textiles from illustrations and photographs. The images found in local and foreign manuscripts and printed books can provide valuable information on the

costumes, designs and motifs that were circulating in Southeast Asia over the centuries.

Nevertheless such images must be used with some caution. Those made by local artists may contain stylised and anachronistic depictions (i.e. continuing styles from previous periods). Meanwhile the artists and engravers whose works appear in foreign publications most likely had never been to Southeast Asia, and thus the images they produced may be inaccurate. Textual sources can also provide information on the use of textiles in Southeast Asia. For example, in Malay chronicles the *songket* is often described as being worn by royalty or presented as gifts. The example highlighted in this catalogue (cat. 46; Figure 3) is one of four pieces of *songket* held in the SOAS collections.

Figure 3 *Songket textile. Terengganu, Malaysia, 1990s. Silk with metal-gold threads, L191 x W82 cm. London, SOAS University of London, SOASAW 2010.0089.03. Donated by Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamad Ali, the wife of the then Malaysian Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, 1998. Photo: Courtesy of SOAS.*

The Arts of Southeast Asia from the SOAS Collections is now available directly from the publisher Areca Books or from the SOAS bookshop in London:
http://arecabooks.com/product/arts-southeast-asia-soas-collections/ or
https://www.soas.ac.uk/soas-life/bookshop/

Further examples of Southeast Asian textiles from the SOAS collections can also be found in the catalogue of the previous exhibition *Objects of Instruction: Treasures of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, edited by Anna Contadini (London: SOAS, 2007, reprinted 2016).

Dr Farouk Yahya (PhD, SOAS University of London, 2013) is currently Leverhulme Research Assistant in Islamic Art and Culture at the Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford, and Postdoctoral Research Associate at SOAS. He is the author of *Magic and Divination in Malay Illustrated Manuscripts* (Leiden: Brill, 2016).

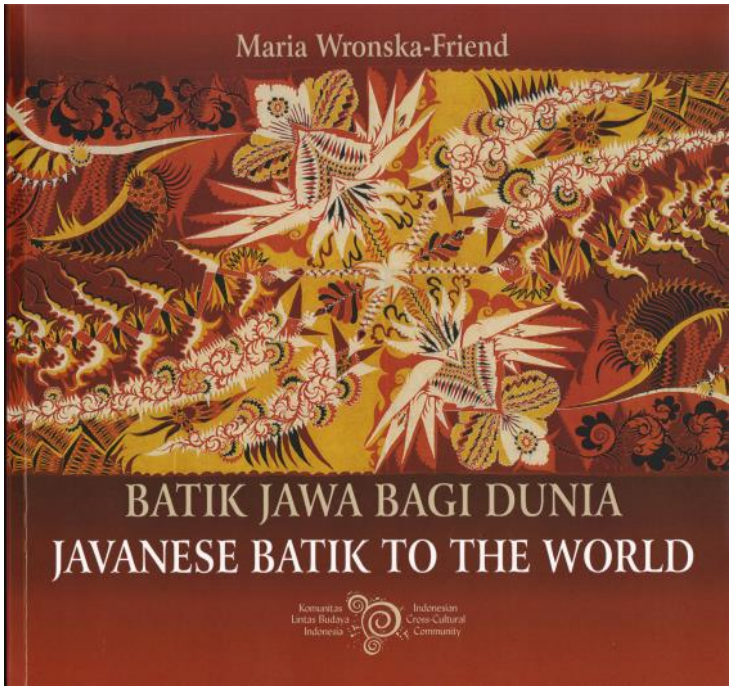
Book Review: *Batik Jawa Bagi Dunia – Javanese Batik to the World*

by Maria Wronska-Friend

Published by Komunitas Lintas Budaya Indonesia – Indonesian Cross-Cultural Community, Jakarta, 2016. ISBN 978-602-99212-7-4.

Maria Wronska-Friend is a cultural anthropologist and museum curator, and has a particular interest in people's relationship with their material culture. Since 1992 she has been associated with the James Cook University in Australia where she is currently Senior Research Fellow at the College of Arts, Society and Education at their Cairns campus.

She has dedicated almost 30 years to investigating the history and cultural significance of SE Asian textiles, and is a well-regarded expert on the batik of Indonesia.



American batik dress. New York circa 1920. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Javanese Batik to the World is a product of her long-term research into the island's batik becoming a global inspiration.

The book is the first detailed presentation of the topic. It reviews the influence of Javanese textile techniques and aesthetics on the decorative arts of Europe, including Art Nouveau, Art Deco and later movements; printed textiles of West Africa; Australian aboriginal art of the central desert; the textiles of Indian West Bengal; and their impact in USA and Japan.

The first chapter describes and illustrates the techniques of Javanese batik making, and examples are given of the styles which enthused

the rest of the world. Core to understanding the transfer of Javanese batik methods and style to other societies are the pictures in the book. The regional sections carry images in pairs, showing the foreign examples and comparisons with similar Javanese batiks which might have inspired them. The illustrations include some of the Javanese batik in the collection of Rudolf Smend, of the Smend Gallery in Cologne, as well as textiles from public collections worldwide.

'Super-wax', with two applications of resin, is one of the most expensive wax-prints. As the launch of this design coincided with the 2009 visit of President Obama and the First Lady to Africa, it was named 'Michelle bag'. Vlisco, The Netherlands, private collection.

Chris Lebeau, The Netherlands, 1905. Detail of three-part screen with birds, produced in the Javanese nitik *(dot) style with* sogan lorodan *technique. Batik on silk, natural dyes (indigo and* catechu*). Collection S.S.K. Provincial Museum van Drenthe, Assen.*

The book is written in Indonesian and English. Each page is split with Bahasa Indonesia on the left in brown type, and English on the right in black. The images all have dual language captions too. Having worked with dual-language publications in my professional life, I found the main text clear, simple and easy to work with, but reading the captions needed greater concentration. Instead of showing the complete caption in one language, points were listed in alternate languages, only the colour of the type giving it coherence.

Mrs Priti Nartiang displays an achal, *the most prominent part of the Santiniketan batik sari.*

BOOK REVIEW

Europe and Africa

The chapter on Europe is the most substantial. In Europe, batik is used in art and for interior design rather than for clothing, and this chapter covers around 100 years in the Netherlands – inspired by the material culture of their colonies – Germany, France, Poland, Austria, Belgium, Great Britain and Ireland. Examples of batik by several European artists (it is invidious to single any out), are discussed and illustrated.

In Africa, batik-inspired cloth is worn to work, for celebrations, at funerals, or to support favourite candidates during elections. European production, initially produced for export to Indonesia, was later expanded to Africa. Now more than ten African countries print their own fabrics inspired by the patterns and techniques of Javanese batik. Batik is now deeply assimilated into African culture.

Bengal

Although India is one of the oldest batik centres in the world, I was not aware of the Bengal batik of the late 1920s which has its roots in Javanese batik. The Indian polymath Rabindranath Tagore was responsible for stimulating its development, which was based on Javanese batiks given to him as presents on his travels in Indonesia in 1927.

Australia

In 1970 a new chapter in cross-cultural development was started by the introduction of the batik technique to Aboriginal communities in the central desert of Australia. It reached its peak in the 1980s and 1990s, becoming a well-recognised expression of Aboriginal culture and skills, and was exhibited in major museums and galleries in Australia as well as overseas. There was also cross-cultural collaboration between batik artists in Indonesia and Australia.

Javanese Batik to the World does not touch on wax-resist techniques from other countries in Asia, such as China, where people may have developed the use of decorative techniques in the medium independently of influence from Indonesia.

The book was an interesting and informative read, and well written. I was pleased to learn more about batiks from regions already known to me, and enjoyed extending my knowledge to new areas. I discovered that I had previously seen, and largely enjoyed, many of the textiles and art identified as influenced by Javanese batik. Perhaps I had been attracted to them because I was drawn to the original Javanese batik, as I have a few examples in my textile collection. As a practical needle-worker I had used Javanese batik, and textiles influenced by it, in my sewing, including those made in Europe and Africa for the African market. I was even part of the 1970s surge of interest in batik, and executed a crude wax-resist to make dress fabric from sheeting whilst living in the Cayman Islands with limited access to materials.

I was pleased to discover that Maria Wronska-Friend is a fellow member of OATG. I hope that on some occasion in the future, when visiting the UK, she will be able to come and talk to us.

Pamela Cross runs the online tribal textiles resource Tribal Textiles.info at: http://www.tribaltextiles.info/index.html and is on the committee of OATG.

Rosati – the painter who loved textiles, but ethnographers beware

by Gavin Strachan

A pair of 19th-century pictures recently appeared at auction in UK which had very fine depictions of textiles. The paintings were overtly commercial, were watercolours not oils, and measured just 14 by 21 inches. However, the estimate on each was a stonking £8,000 to £12,000. I had never heard of the artist. My interest was piqued.

The artist was a Giulio Rosati. I googled him. He had a Wikipedia article, but it was rather sparse. However, he appeared in auction records a great deal. Digging further I discovered that Rosati was just one of a group of Italian Orientalists working in Rome at the end of the 19th century painting Middle Eastern and North African subjects. Rosati himself was born in 1857, and died in 1917, and it seems he was one of the most prolific of the Orientalist artists.

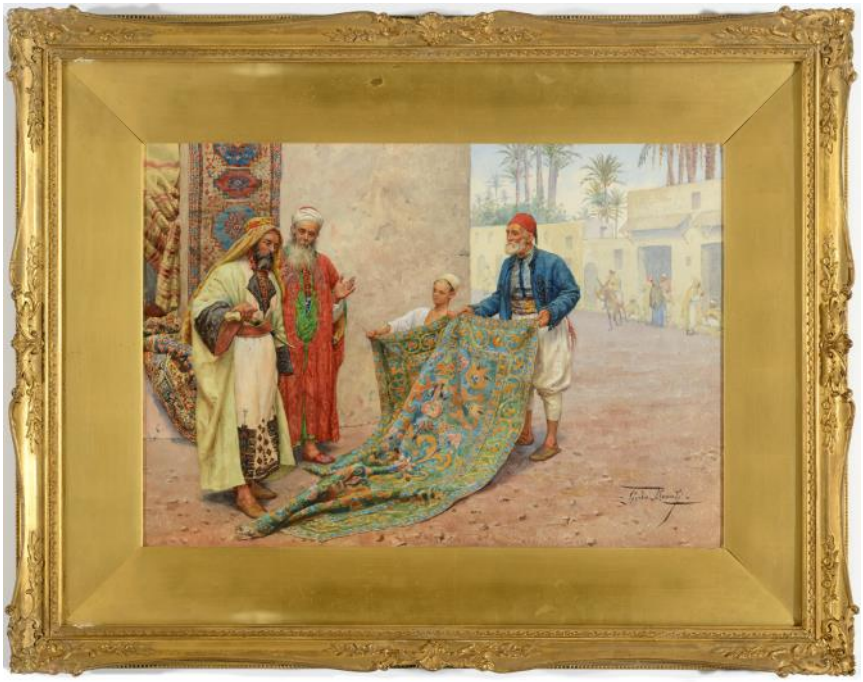


Figure 1 *One of a pair of pictures for sale earlier this year at Lawrences Auctioneers: Giulio Rosati's* The Finest in the Shop. *Signed, watercolour with traces of pencil, 37 x 53.5 cm* and in its original frame.

Giulio Rosati

The more I have looked at Rosati's work, the more it becomes obvious that Rosati really loved textiles. He was particularly good at painting them, and in greater detail than other Orientalists. He reproduces complicated carpet motifs, focuses intently on the intricacy of Islamic patterns, and his details of dress and draperies are outstanding. He also balances and juxtaposes his colours very well. In Rosati's many works that feature textiles and rugs, they are essential parts of the composition. Caroline Juler summed him up in her *Les Orientalistes de l'Ecole Italienne* by writing that his watercolours "emphasised the nobility of the Muslim culture" [translated from p.136].

The pictures painted by the Orientalists are linked only by common themes,

and not by the painters' styles, which across the genre differ quite markedly. Orientalist painters worked in many countries from Austria westwards, but until the 1870s most were based in France and a few in Britain. The Orientalists in Italy only evolved in the last third of the 19th century.

Figure 2 *Rosati's* The Dance was *sold by Sotheby's London at its Orientalist Sale in April 2012 for £289,250 (including buyer's premium). The high price was achieved because, for a Rosati, it is a rare oil on canvas, but it is also relatively large at 53 x 82 cm.*

Middle Eastern subjects had become popular in Europe at the end of the 18th century, and this escalated in the 19th century with the rise of a middle class with disposable incomes. The art world moved from the gentry commissioning works of art to the new middle classes patronising galleries, and they preferred something other than family portraits and European landscapes. "Orientalism, with its scenes of opulence, exoticism, savagery and sensuality, offered [the middle class] an exciting escape from the convention-bound society in which toil and duty were prized virtues" [Thornton p. 13]. Rosati, like other Orientalists, chose themes that were exotic and unfamiliar. Favourite subjects included parties of armed horsemen, scenes in souks, and semi-salacious nude slave girls, all undoubtedly aimed at pleasing his customers. His pictures are also small, suitable for a Victorian parlour rather than a large drawing room.

Rosati's Orientalist career has French and Spanish influences

There is surprisingly little primary information available on Orientalist painters. Lynne Thornton explains that "In many cases, no monographs were produced in their lifetimes even on relatively well known painters." Although "copious articles were written … these were often misleading or erroneous." Unfortunately "titles given to paintings … often differed depending on the source", and "Exhibition catalogues had

introductions that were either too terse, or too verbal and flowery, to be of much help." [Thornton pp. 16-17]. Modern scholarship is attempting to rectify this, but a paucity of accurate biographical information remains.

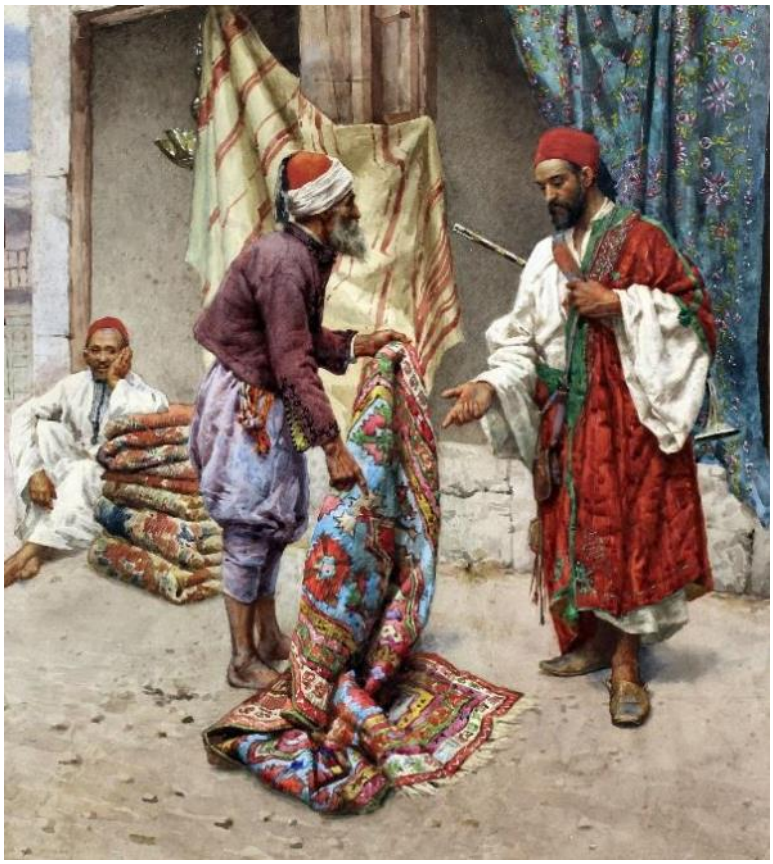


Figure 3 *Rosati's watercolour* Arabian carpet sellers *(detail). The textiles are tangible, including the white flatweave which is possibly a jajim. Shown here is the central part of the picture which overall measures 36 x 20.5 cm.*

What we know about Rosati is that not only did he work in Rome, he also was born, studied, and died in the city. In 1875, aged eighteen, he started studying at the Academia di San Luca under the painter and architect Francesco Podesti (1800–1895) and the portrait and history painter Dario Querci (1831–1918). Illustrious alumnae of the academy over the years have included Bernini, Poussin, Lorrain, and Canova.

Apparently Rosati soon tired of the academic discipline and he left to become a pupil of the fashionable Spanish painter, Luis Alvarez Catala (1836–1901), who then was in Rome but later returned to Spain to become the director of the Prado. Rosati was probably inspired to paint Orientalist pictures after seeing the work of the Spanish Orientalist Mariano Fortuny y Marsal (1838–1874) whose paintings were immensely popular in Rome in the 1860s. Fortuny y Marsal had come to Rome in 1858, but he died young at thirty-six when Rosati was only sixteen. The Italian Orientalists, including Rosati, generally emulated Fortuny y Marsal's detail and his bright colouring.

In the last third of the 19th century, Paris was the focal point of Orientalism, and was shaped by the high standards of the Académie des Beaux-Arts. This was characterised by adhering to precise compositional rules and the use of delicate colours. Rosati's technique was probably also influenced by the Orientalist painters working in Paris at the time such as Jean-Léon Gérôme (1824–1904) and Ludwig Deutsch (1855–1935), an Austrian who had settled in Paris.

ROSATI AND TEXTILES

Figure 4 *Photograph of Rosati in his studio taken on 24 December 1912 by Alfredo Saldivar © Estate of Chicago photographer Thomas Yanul. Saldivar is also the subject of the painting on Rosati's easel – the figure on the camel in front of the Sphinx and Great Pyramid. On the left side of the easel, for ease of copying, there appears to be the original photograph of Saldivar, which is also extant and in the Yanul collection. Textiles and rugs are on Rosati's studio wall, floor and table.*

Some claim that Rosati was without parallel amongst the Italian Orientalists working in Rome's Via Margutta. Rosati's fellow Italian Orientalists included Giuseppe Aureli (1858–1929) and Enrico Tarenghi (1848–1938). Although textiles and rugs appear in these two artists' pictures, they do not take on the significance that they do in Rosati's. Another contemporary, Ettore Simonetti (1857–1909) uses many textiles and rugs in his paintings, but Rosati's are depicted with much greater care. Giuseppe Signorini (1857–1932), born in the same year as Rosati, and who was also at the Academia di San Luca, "owned an important collection of Islamic works of art and textiles" [Thornton p. 166]. Signorini's paintings accordingly have a plethora of textiles and rugs, but they are just part of the scenery and are not painted with the same sympathy as Rosati's.

Rosati's working methods

As Rosati's paintings have such great detail and an almost photographic quality, surely they are good source material for researching Islamic 19th-century textiles?

It would be reasonable to assume that Rosati's skill was derived from years of careful study in Arab countries. However, apparently he never visited the Middle East or North Africa, unlike most Orientalists. Instead he worked from photographs taken by others, which at that date were of course were black and white, so the colours he chose are purely his own. He also made use of clothes, rugs and other artefacts brought back by travellers, and found inspiration from published engravings and literature.

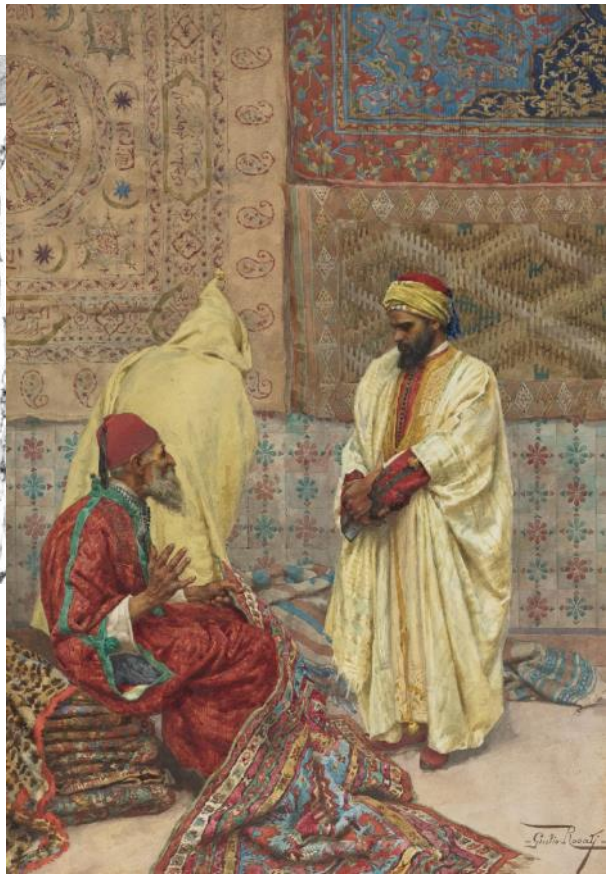
Like other Orientalists he romanticised the East. From an ethnographic point of view he juxtaposed objects from a variety of cultures. To look carefully at his pictures is revealing.

- Judging from what seem to be date palms in the background, Figure 1 could be set in the south of Tunisia or Morocco, but the headgear of the three main

figures on the right is Turkish, and the buyer is wearing an atypically-coloured Arab *ghutrah* or *keffiyeh.*

- In Figure 2 the architectural features and dress, rugs and metalware are all intricately drawn. However, the scene is rooted in no specific place or people. The American Orientalist Dr Emily Weeks, when writing the catalogue description for its sale, observed "the cream-colored burnouses, worn by several of the seated Arab figures, suggest a North African setting, while ... carved plasterwork and a scalloped arch seem vaguely Moorish in design."
- Figure 5 shows a photograph taken in 1912 of what might be a Kerman embroidery on the wall of Rosati's studio. The adjacent Figure 6 is a watercolour depicting the same textile. Here is evidence that Rosati was using items in his studio for his paintings.
- The same blue-ground Turkish Kırşehir prayer rug appears in Figure 2 (on the floor lower centre left), Figure 3 (in the seller's hand), Figure 6 (in the foreground), Figure 7 (under the slave girl), and in Figure 9 (right-hand side of door). It is also in other Rosati paintings not illustrated here. Rosati must have liked it, and his depiction of it is constant and its details faithfully reproduced.
- I think the same white flatweave, possibly a jajim, was used in Figure 1 (in the background of the shop) and in Figure 3 (between the two shops), and it also appears in other paintings I have seen but which are not illustrated here. As its red stripes differ in some of these pictures, I suspect Rosati used artistic licence as to how he depicted them.

I am sure that readers can spot more discrepancies and items of interest, and I look forward to you pointing these out. Answers on the modern equivalent of a postcard please.



Figures 5 and 6.

Above: *Two textiles on the walls of Rosati's studio; one of four extant photographs (stereo glass negatives © estate of Thomas Yanul) taken on 24 Dec 1912 by Alfredo Saldivar (see also caption to Figure 4).*

Right: *watercolour and gum arabic on card, 51 x 36 cm. At the top left of the painting is the same ?Kerman embroidery in Figure 5 photographed in Rosati's studio, and in the foreground the same Kırşehir prayer rug also evident in Figures 2, 3, 7 and 9.*

ROSATI AND TEXTILES

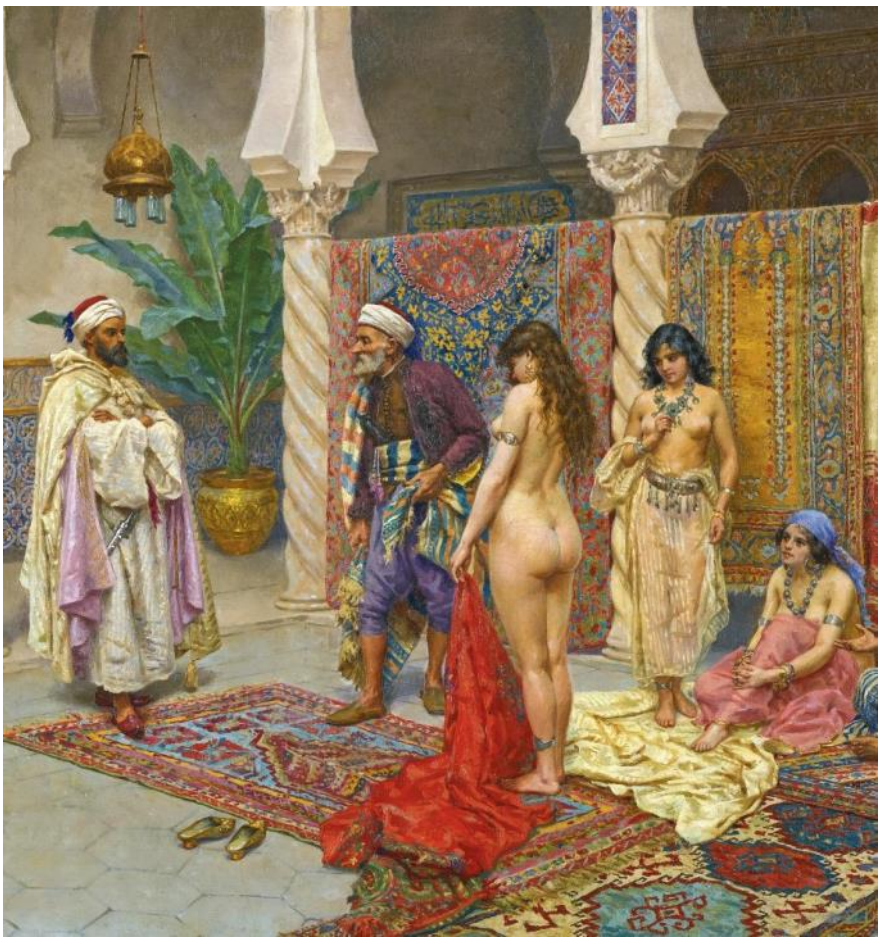


Figure 7 *Detail from Rosati's* Choosing the favourite. *Oil on canvas. The whole picture is 36 x 60 cm. The Kırşehir prayer rug on which the central slave girl stands appears also in Figures 2, 3, 6, and 9.*

To be fair to Rosati, other Orientalists were cavalier about mixing cultures, and most finished their work in the studio, but it was abnormal not to have visited the Middle East and made initial sketches. British artists tended to stick to the reality of what they saw. Paintings by the Royal Academician David Roberts (1796–1864) are characterised by their topographical precision. Another Academician, Frederick Goodall (1822–1904), went so far with authenticity that he had local sheep and goats shipped home.

In comparison, French painters, by whom Rosati was influenced, indulged their fantasies more. The doyen of Orientalists, Jean-Léon Gérôme, travelled to many countries and encouraged others to do so, but he returned to Europe with exotic objects galore. His studio was stuffed with costumes, carpets, rifles and tiles which he used as props in his paintings.

In terms of ethnographic authenticity, Rosati was like his Austrian Orientalist contemporary Rudolf Ernst (1854–1932). Ernst was never concerned with ethnographic accuracy and freely juxtaposed objects from different cultures. In his oil on panel *Tending the Lamp* (not illustrated here but easily findable on the internet) he has a Syrian lamp, an Ottoman sash and Hispano-Moresque architecture. Ernst's aim was to dazzle viewers with his pictures. Rosati's method was to combine meticulous attention to detail and great technical capability, so making his pictures appear much more real than they are.

The decline and recent rise in the market for Orientalist works

Orientalist painting began to go out of fashion towards the end of the 19th century, ousted by the avant-garde, including Impressionism. No longer was the academic manner fashionable and the well-drawn and well-painted admired so highly. While some Orientalist painters were still prized, Rosati and his ilk drifted into obscurity.

In 1975 Brian MacDermot, a knowledgeable arabophile, greatly assisted in the resurrection of the Orientalist market when he opened his London-based Mathaf Gallery in Motcombe Street within Belgravia's Arab and Persian community.

Figure 8 *Oxford-educated Brian (pronounced Bree-an from his Irish ancestry) MacDermot (1930–2013) with Danakil tribesmen in Ethiopia in 1965. He founded the pioneering Mathaf Gallery in London in 1975 around the time of the* World of Islam Festival.

Opening a gallery with an Orientalist focus challenged the socio-political opinion of the time. Edward Saïd's 1978 book *Orientalism* held that depictions of the East by Western painters and writers had a Eurocentric, colonialist subtext. But Claude Piening, Sotheby's Head of Orientalist Art, commented in MacDermot's obituary that "Brian proved that this was not how many from the Arab world saw it. Through his sales of paintings to the Middle East, he showed that there was a genuine appreciation for these views which, for many buyers, formed, and still form, a valuable visual record of their countries in an age before photography." It should be borne in mind that the Islamic diktat which opposed figurative imagery meant that local artists could not produce equivalent scenes.

As evidence of the recent revival in Orientalist painting, it was only in 1998 that Christie's became the first auction house to establish Orientalist sales. Now many Orientalist pieces are going to the Middle East. Competition for such work has increased and its value increased exponentially. "In the mid-1970s you could pick up a Gérôme for $15,000," MacDermot pointed out late in life. "You'd now be looking at a million at least for a good example."

ROSATI AND TEXTILES

Rosati was prolific, so it is not surprising that between 2000 and the first half of 2017 auction house records show that at least 110 Orientalist pictures by him were sold in various locations around the world.

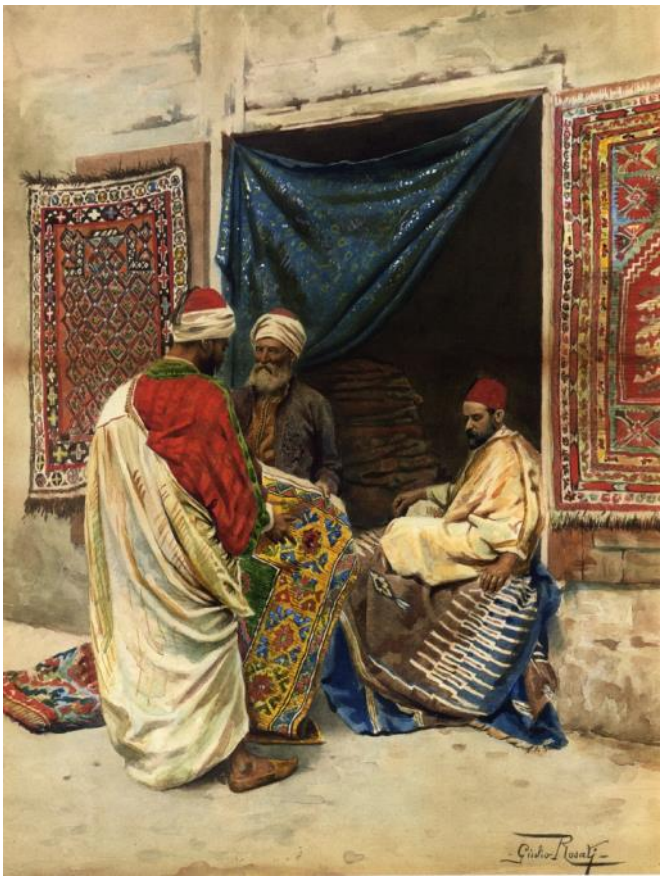


Figure 9 *Rosati's* The Carpet Merchant. *Watercolour and pencil on card 48 x 36 cm. Part of the much-copied Kırşehir prayer rug appears on the right.*

So what of the two small Rosati watercolours in the recent sale?

The *Antiques Trade Gazette* of 13 May 2017 described the watercolours as good examples of the artist's style which were "distinguished by their impeccable condition and came in their original frames. Offered separately they were given punchy £8000-12,000 guides …both sold on bottom estimate to the same private collector in Wales despite enquiries from the orientalist trade". With buyer's premium of 26.4% that is still over £20,000 for the pair.

Quite apart from the price, and in spite of their technical brilliance and sympathetic rendering of textiles, they were never for me, but now I understand why they sold for so much.

Gavin Strachan is a lecturer and writer on oil geopolitics and editor of *Asian Textiles*.

Acknowledgements

Christopher Legge of Legge Carpets, Oxford, for help in the identification of the Kırşehir prayer rug.

Filiberto Boncompagni, of Charlottesville, Virginia, for his Turkotek blog of 27 Feb 2005 which included Salvidar's photographs of Rosati's studio in 1912.

Estate of Thomas Yanul (1940–2014) blog on amateur photographer Alfredo Salvidar http://www.thomasyanul.com/saldivar1index.html.

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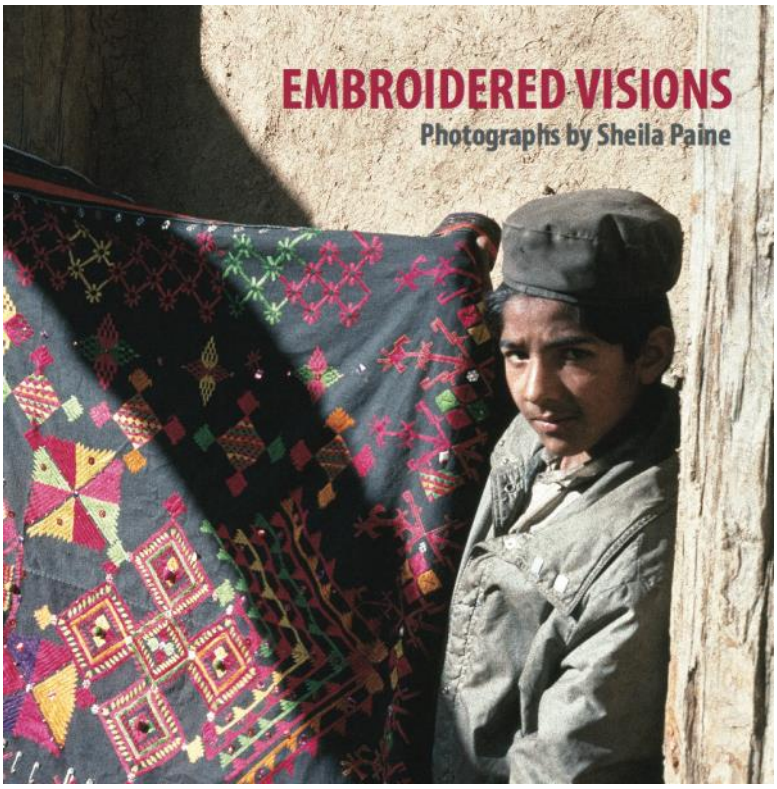
Book Review: *Embroidered Visions: Photographs by Sheila Paine*

by Katherine Clough and Philip N. Grover

Full colour, 106 pages, square format paperback. £10.

Published and distributed by the Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford, South Parks Road, Oxford OX1 3PP, www.prm.ox.ac.uk. ISBN 978-0-902793-50-7.

This book endeavours, through a selection of 90 images, to highlight the travels of Sheila Paine covering a period of more than two decades (from the 1980s to the early 2000s) whilst researching textiles and their motifs. The book accompanied a temporary exhibition in the Long Gallery of the Pitt Rivers Museum entitled *Embroidered Visions: Photographs of Central Asia and the Middle East by Sheila Paine*, which ran from November 2016 to April 2017.



The front cover of the book shows a detail from Sheila Paine's photograph "A man and boy hold up a colourful embroidered textile decorated with geometric motifs. Sherakot, Pakistan. 1993".

The title, *Embroidered Visions*, is perhaps a little misleading, for several images present neither embroidery nor textiles, and it is therefore useful to note one of the author's stated intentions for their image selection was to reveal Paine's "eye for colour, pattern and texture".

Making a selection of representative images from the more than 3,000 by Paine now held in the Pitt Rivers Museum will remain daunting. Photographs are grouped into five geographic sections: Europe, Middle East, Central and South Asia, Central America and Africa, and there are some truly stunning standout images in each of them. The layout and format of the publication lends itself to easy page turning, with Paine's framing of her subject(s) often textbook perfect with colour, pattern and texture leaping off the page.

However, it is in the text that the authors' second intention, "to show the people, processes and the roles of textiles encountered in everyday life," falls short. The

accompanying text is often simply an obvious statement of what the viewer already sees which gives no greater understanding of the context, process or indeed role (when present), of the textile being shown. The text in the labels that accompanied the exhibition images provided greater detail, and space was certainly available for at least some of this information to have been included in the book.

Given the breadth of Paine's travels and her stated interest in the "protective amuletic function" of decoration, future publications of her work may benefit from a focus on a specific region or country and include greater detail in the explanatory text.

Iain Stephens is a master upholsterer, a previous lecturer in biochemistry and English, and a tutor of biblical Hebrew. He is a collector of Xhosa beadwork, Chinese ethnic minority costume and Taiwanese budaixi puppets, and lives on a narrowboat in Oxford.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor

Afghalaine

Crepe fabrics were very popular in the west in the 1940s. There was renewed interest in the 1970s when I was buying for a cloth merchant in London called Tissus Michels.

Mills in Leeds and Bradford were making both worsted crepes and worsted/polyester crepes. Marks & Spencer at the time were selling skirts and dresses in worsted crepes.

It was part of my job to see all the continental collections that the textile agents, mostly based in Golden Square, carried. I came across *afghalaine* in a French and an Italian collection. The French described it to me as follows:

The cloth was 100% worsted. The warp consisted of an 'S' twist yarn alternating with a 'Z' twist yarn. The weft had the same pattern of an 'S' twist yarn alternating with a 'Z' twist yarn. The cloth was a plain weave. The effect of the 'S' and 'Z' twist yarns alternating created a tension and there was a very subtle crepe effect. The cloth had a beautiful appearance and handle.

I have not seen *afghalaine* since the 1970s as tastes changed and crepe fabrics went out of fashion. It is not mentioned in any of my reference books.

I have no idea how it came by its name. I would be most interested to know if anyone has ever come across it.

Yours sincerely,
Caroline Washington
info@carolinewashington.com

Editor's note

The Online Textile Dictionary has the following entry at http://en.texsite.info/Afgalaine

"**Afgalaine**" [in the Online Dictionary spelt without the h, but Afghalaine with the h, as in Caroline Washington's letter, seems a more usual spelling] is defined as:

> "Light- to midweight soft, wool fabric with a characteristic fine shaded lengthwise stripe created by the reflection of light given by alternating S twist and Z twist thread in the warp and in the weft. Woven in linen weave, predominantly as a fabric dyed as single piece. Produced from worsted and carded yarn, sometimes the two in combination. The fabric is used in women's and girls' dresses. The name is derived from Afghan wool, from which this fabric was produced originally."

If any readers are able to shed further light on Afghalaine, please email the editor at gavin@firthpetroleum.com or Caroline Washington, whose email address is given above.

Early Textiles Study Group Conference September 2017

The Early Textiles Study Group – 15th Conference Precious Cloth and Court Culture (400–1600 AD) at Lucy Cavendish College, University of Cambridge will be held 16–17 September 2017.
The provisional programme is:

Day 1 Saturday 16 September 2017

10.00 Welcome by Conference Convenor: Anna Muthesius

10.05 Power in the periphery. The Importance of dress during the Migration period in Sweden (c.400–550 AD). Helen Persson, Senior Curator of Textiles, National Museum of Antiquities, Stockholm, Sweden.

11.30 The damask dalmatic of St Ambrose: a reassessment of this top-quality late 4th-century silk. Hero Granger-Taylor, independent scholar, London.

12.00 Sixteenth-century gold lace as reflected in portraits of Elizabeth I and by later period ecclesiastical furnishing. Dr Lena Dahrén, Department of Textile History, Uppsala University, Sweden.

14.00 Mix and match: textile furnishings at the English Court 1300–1470. Lisa Monnas, independent scholar, London.

14.45 "Thre Cusshions of clothe of gold tissued": the role of luxury textiles in court culture during the reign of Henry VIII. Dr Maria Hayward, Professor of Early Modern History, University of Southampton.

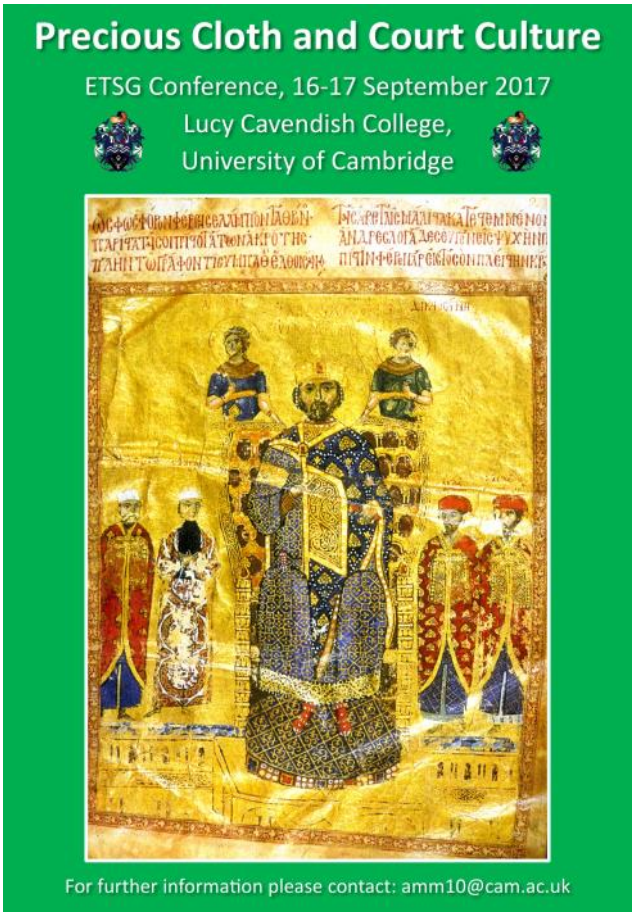
16.30 'Silk as power' at the Byzantine court: cross-influences along the Silk Road (Latin West/Byzantine and Islamic Mediterranean/ Near East). Dr Anna Muthesius, Professor of Textile Studies retired.

Day 2 Sunday 17 September, 2017

9.30 Precious Cloth at the Castilian court (12–13 centuries). Maria Barrigon Montanes, museum conservator, Palacio Real, Madrid.

11.00 Badges of rank at the Chinese Court (14–16 centuries) Christopher Hall, TMF Group – Chris Hall collection of Chinese Textiles, Hong Kong.

11.45 From heaven to earth: transformations of motifs on Ming court robes (14–16 centuries). Sally Yu Leung, Trustee, Berkeley Art Museum, University of California.



14.00 Persian literature as a source for the use of precious cloths. Dr Hassan Bastani Rad, Professor, Shahid Beheshti University, Tehran.

14.45 Ottoman Turkish ceremonial court attire and furnishings: symbols of power and dynastic heritage. Sibel Alpasian Arca, Curator of the Textile collection, Topkapi Palace Museum, Istanbul.

16.30 Summing up of conference.

Japanese embroidery exhibition

One of the most active Japanese embroidery firms, Aoki Shishu, which has practised from around 1900 to the present day, is having a first exhibition of its history and work in its local town, Aisho-cho, near Hikone City, in the Shiga Prefecture. The exhibition runs between 5 August and 18 September 2017.

More information is available from Dr Hiroko T. McDermott: hirokomcd@aol.com.

Correction: in *Asian Textiles* 66 we referred to Tsai Yushan as Associate Professor at Fu Jen Catholic University in Taipei. She is now Professor at the University.

The 17th-century Mughal pavilion at Jodhpur

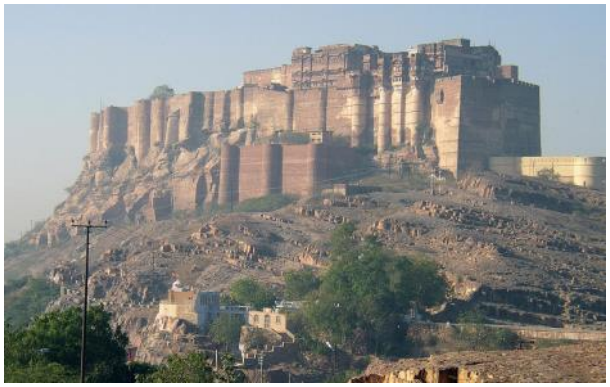
The Mehrangarh Fort above the city of Jodhpur in Rajasthan is home to the *shahi lal dera*, a 17th-century Mughal emperor's tent or pavilion. *Shahi lal dera* means royal-red-tent, and it belonged either to the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan (1592–1666), the builder of the Taj Mahal, or to his successor, Aurangzeb, who reigned 1658–1707.

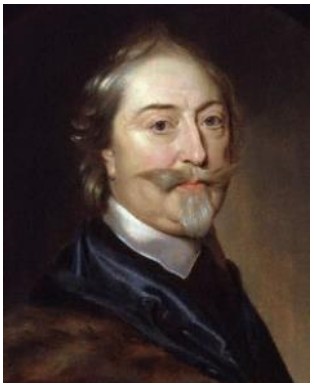
The tent is made of red silk velvet, brocade, and gold, and is the only complete Mughal-period tent still extant. When erected it is four metres high, and includes lobed archways and a colonnaded inner chamber. Its red colour and crenellations are a reflection of the status of its user, and the inside is decorated with cloth panels embroidered with yellow flowers.

Left Shahi lal dera *before restoration.*

The tent has been in Jodhpur for 350 years

The tent's origins are disputed. One theory is that it was looted in January 1659 by Maharaja Jaswant Singh at the battle of Khajwa. Jaswant Singh (1629–1678) was ruler of Marwar which included Jodhpur. Although Hindu, he was allied to Aurangzeb, one of Shah Jahan's sons who was fighting his brother for power. Aurangzeb had put his father under house arrest, and his army of 90,000 men defeated his brother Shah Shuja who had 25,000 men, 10,000 war elephants and European gunners. However the tent came to Jodhpur, it has been in Mehrangarh Fort for 350 years. Hindu Rajasthanis value it as a symbol of Rajput resistance to Muslim Mughal overlordship.





Left *Maharaja Jaswant Singh.* **Centre** *Mehrangarh Fort.* **Right** *Sir Thomas Roe, c.1640, National Portrait Gallery.*

Thomas Roe's observations of Mughal 17th-century encampments

The Mughals were used to erecting temporary cities and large tents. Babur, the first emperor, who arrived in India from Central Asia, boasted he had never spent two Ramadans in the same place. The 16th-century chronicler Abu'l Fazl provides in his *Ain-i-Akbari* descriptions of Mughal tents, but in 1616 Sir Thomas Roe (c.1581–1644),

British ambassador to the Mughal emperor Jahangir, described a *leskar* or encampment he witnessed. Roe wrote that it was "one of the greatest rarities and magnificences I ever saw". He estimated it was slightly under twenty miles in circumference and up to six miles across, and that there were no less than 200,000 men, women and children, as well as countless elephants, horses and camels, and all requiring food and water.

In the centre of the *leskar*, the Emperor's lofty red pavilions (note Roe's plural) were encircled by a red calico screen nine feet high, patrolled by sentries. Outside the screen, each noble was allotted a fixed space to pitch his tents; many were white, some green, some of mixed colours, those belonging to the highest in rank and favour nearest to the Emperor. Tents joined together formed orderly streets with shops and trades set in a fixed pattern so that everyone readily knew "where to seek his wants". The camp could apparently be set up in four hours, and by using two sets of tents a new camp would be ready for incumbents while the old camp was being dismantled.

Restoration

The *shahi lal dera* is now being restored. Karni Jasol, director of the Mehrangarh Museum archive, revealed "The *shahi lal dera* was on display in one of the galleries here at the Mehrangarh. But every morning the staff would see a sort of gold dust on the velvet and brocade. Since it is 350 years old, we thought of carrying out special restoration work. [The tent] had to have all the luxury of a painted stone palace. There is no surviving piece like it anywhere." Its conservation is part of the revamping of the museum to appeal to the booming domestic tourist market. In the 1970s the British and the Americans were the biggest visitors to the fort, but now the main sightseers are Indian.

Above left *Conserving a canopy, photo Gareth Phillips.* **Above right** *Stitch repair.* **Below left** *Smoke sponge cleaning.* **Below right** *Using micro-scissors under stitch repair; picture credit for last three: Mehrangarh Museum Trust.*

SHAHI LAL DERA

"The effort that went into making it shows the dedication to the emperor," said one of the three conservators, Shakshi Gupta. "Velvet these days might last just 20 years if you are lucky." Before conservation began, the tent's condition was carefully documented to provide guidelines for its restoration, future handling and storage. It included detailing the materials and processes involved, pattern techniques, seam and stitch analysis, visible marks and inscriptions, and the motifs and subjects used.

The conservators are using techniques including 'smoke sponge cleaning' which helps restore the lustre of metal threads by cleaning them with vulcanised sponge. Stitch repairs with conservation stitches are also been undertaken to stabilise fragile areas, and silk crepe dyed a similar colour is being used as a support material. The team is also removing restoration work of the 1980s, which has developed tears and holes, and was not providing any support. Once finished, the restored pavilion will be on display in one of the special galleries in the Fort's museum.

Gavin Strachan; with input from bbc.co.uk © 2017; B.N. Goswamy *The Tribune* 21 October 2012; Michael Strachan's (my father's) biographies *Sir Thomas Roe*, 1989, and *The Life and Adventures of Thomas Coryate*, 1962 (who *inter alia* walked from the Mediterranean to India, arriving in Ajmer in August 1616 where he stayed for 14 months) and Surbhi Kapila of Media India Group, 7 June 2017.

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American batik dress. New York circa 1920. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

See book review page 13:
Batik Jawa Bagi Dunia –
Javanese Batik to the World
by Maria Wronska-Friend.