



SEMIOTICS IN THE WRAPPERS (CHADORSAHB) OF “TONEKABON” REGION UP TO “RUDSAR”

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ABSTRACT

Wrapper weaving is an ancient art in the regions of East Guilan and West Mazandaran, in which the motifs used in it are woven according to the culture and customs of the people of these regions, which has made this feature unique in the wrapper. In this article, in addition to expressing the cultural aspects of the themes, an attempt has been made to study the visual diversity of the drawings along with its special feature in the wrapper. The hypothesis that is proven here is that the patterns characterize the simple way of thinking that is derived from nature and the environment around them. The research method is descriptive-analytical with field and library studies and is in-depth. In general, the results indicate that the drawings used in the wrapper are inspired by the environment of the weavers and by the tools of the wrapper art itself. Also, the culture of symbols and signs in the art of wrapper weaving can be matched with the culture and traditions of other regions; This means that symbols and signs have a function beyond the clime of any region and can cover a large part of a land. Wrapper motifs in all weaves of the study, show the following of specific patterns along with symmetry, order and rhythm. Research method in the present study was done using the library and field methods.

KEYWORDS

Wrapper; Semiotics; Tonekabon; Rudsar; Culture.



СЕМИОТИКА ЛЕНТОЧНОГО ТКАЧЕСТВА (ЧАДОРШАБ) В РЕГИОНЕ ТОНЕКАБОН И ОКРУГЕ РУДСАР

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АННОТАЦИЯ

Ленточное ткачество - древнее искусство в регионах восточного Гиляна и западного Мазандарана, в котором используются мотивы культур и обычаев жителей этих регионов, что сделало это искусство уникальным. В статье была сделана попытка изучить визуальное разнообразие рисунков вместе с их особенностями в ленточном плетении. Доказанной гипотезой является то, что рисунки характеризуют простой образ мышления, вытекающий из окружающей среды. Метод исследования - описательно-аналитический с применением полевого и библиотечного поиска. В целом, результаты показывают, что рисунки, используемые в ленточном плетении, вдохновляются средой обитания ткачей и инструментами самого ленточного ткачества. Кроме того, культура символов и знаков в искусстве ленточного ткачества может быть сопоставлена с культурой и традициями других регионов; это означает, что символы и знаки выполняют функцию, выходящую за пределы региона, и могут быть найдены в других частях страны. Мотивы ленточного плетения, наряду с симметрией, порядком и ритмом, демонстрируют специфические узоры.

КЛЮЧЕВЫЕ СЛОВА

ленточное плетение; семиотика; Тонекабон; Рудсар; культура.



INTRODUCTION

The hand-woven wrapper, which in the local dialect is called “laband” or “lavand”, is one of the arts of “Ghasem Abad” village, which is superior to other parts of “Iran” in terms of variety of vivid patterns and colors, which can be found in the climatic characteristics of this region. The design of the motifs, along with the way of thinking of the weavers, has been passed on to the next generations, either directly or by creating creativity and changes as a tradition. In this research, the author examines the patterns and symbols in the wrapper, which are rooted in the social relations of the people of that land with their surroundings. Although the purpose of these weavers is not to create a work of art, but in addition to the consumer aspect, these works also have aesthetic aspects that are seen in the form of geometric, plant, animal and human patterns on the weaves. In this article, only animal motifs are studied. With the change of cultural and consumption patterns of today's societies, the use of wrappers loses its past function and is declining and forgotten. Handicrafts are derived from the collective identity of people who have historical, cultural and social commonalities and live in the same geography and climate (Hall and Vivoska 1998, p.14). The empirical issue here is to know the design and analysis of the patterns according to the culture and beliefs of the indigenous people. According to the requirements of time, culture, faiths and beliefs, pictorial symbols have changed over the years and have moved towards simplification or more complex motifs. The importance and necessity of studying in the field of wrappers, in addition to showing the artist's taste and ability in weaving such patterns, is more accurate in recording them, because at present many of the patterns in this area are rarely or not woven and using some motifs have been forgotten due to the lack of a skilled weaver and the proper valuation and pricing on the wrapper, or the original form of the desired pattern has been reduced, which is remarkable and worthy of reflection. Since handicrafts define the identity of many years of civilization, the study, understanding and awareness of the pattern of motifs and their diversity, has paved the way to achieve cultural, social values and thoughts of the natives of the region; In a way that the result can be familiarity with the ancient culture and civilization of the people of this land and reach a methodical and scientific knowledge of them.

RESEARCH ZONE

The realm of research in the present study includes the location of “Rudsar” and “Tonekabon”. “Rudsar” city is located in the easternmost area of “Guilan” province (Abbasi, 2007, p.5). “Qasemabad” is one of the original and historical villages of Iran, located in “Rudsar” city and “Chabaksar” district and also in “Oshian” villages. “Qasemabad” includes two neighborhoods called “Upper Qasemabad” and “Lower Qasemabad”, which is the most important part in terms of originality in the texture of the wrapper. “Tonekabon”, however, is part of western “Mazandaran”, but before the Qajar period, it was part of “Guilan”. As a result, “Tonekabon” is culturally



and traditionally closely linked to the cultural realm of East Guilan. In a way that they are closely related in terms of language, culture and economy. (Panahi, 2009, p.23)

SEMIOTICS IN THE WRAPPER

The patterns and motifs in the wrapper have a symbolic language. In fact, most of the motifs in the wrapper help to convey the characteristics of the culture of this region to the audience at different times. Thus, wrappers are inherited media of cultural transmission.

The value of wrapper motifs requires that many of its components be understood. So that similarities can be found between the geometry used in architecture and the geometry of wrapper motifs. Due to the fact that the use of stripes and zigzags is common in the structure of wrapper motifs, the reason can be found in the colorful stripes of local Qasemabad women's clothing in this area.

Weavers put colors together with their own taste, meaning that they are more subjective in their use of color than naturalistic, while the shapes are inspired by nature. Finally, they put colors, shapes and geometric shapes together in a harmonious and pleasant way.

Sometimes the colors of the patterns are repeated in vertical, horizontal and diagonal directions, and sometimes they are used freely in different directions without observing special rules and regulations, the use of each of which goes back to the weaving spirits and mindsets. The colors and patterns they use are insights that they have unconsciously acquired from the environment and nature and do not limit their use of colors and patterns in a specific framework (Makinejad, 2009, 394-395).

ANIMAL MOTIFS IN THE WRAPPERS OF EAST GUILAN AND WEST MAZANDARAN

Animal motifs are motifs that either represent the objectivity of an animal in a completely direct and borderless manner, or are simplified to the point that only details of them are depicted, in other words, stylized.

1 – The concept of horse motif

Horse motif depict a human on it, which is why it is known as a riding horse in the local dialect. The weaver weaves the horse with the bridle in the rider's hand, and also weaves the man sometimes from the profile where only one leg is visible and sometimes in the full face where both legs are visible. The end of the horse's foot is woven in a different color or four strips are placed on the foot, sometimes a strip is passed through the middle of the animal, these two features can be seen in most animal motifs. Originally, the use of colored ribbons is a special feature of wrapper motifs. Horses with two ears are also more common.

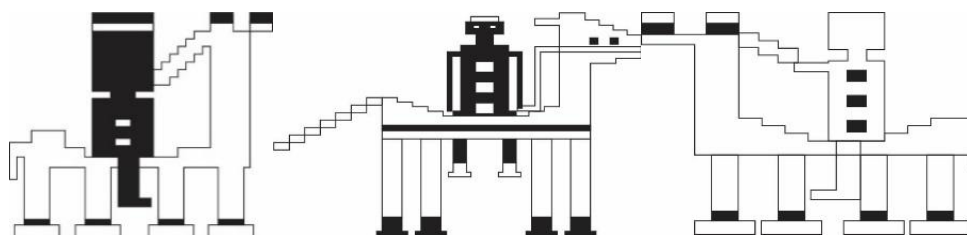


Figure 1. Horse motif, (Figurative source: author)

Also, shooting with horseback riding has been the most important sport and competition in "Rudsar" region. The sport was performed on certain days at sunset in the presence of "Khan". The riders placed an egg on their children during the race and aimed at it, thus adding to the excitement of the race.

Before the devastating flood of 1330 solar year on the west bank of the river "Plurrud", in the playground called "Machianlat", at a wedding ceremony, it was customary for a horse to run, which was called "Asb Tuji" that belonged to the winner (Abbasi, 2007, p.404).

As can be seen in the picture below, the horse motif on the "Pazirak" rug dates back to the earliest times in Iranian history. In this rug, Persian riders are depicted riding on their backs in the widest margin of the rug (Shabani Khatib, 2008, p. 96).



Picture 1. Horse motif on "Pazirak" rug - 2500 BC, (Source: Artteacher)

The horse appears spectacularly in the reliefs of the Median period, Persepolis (Achaemenid period), Parthian, the reliefs of Taq-e Bostan and the motif of Rostam in the Sassanid period (Shabani Khatib, 2008, p. 96).

Horse is a manifestation of purity, decency, beautiful body, stability, movement, speed, strength, stubbornness and resistance (Habibi, 2002, p. 118).



The horse was a sign of the sun. In prehistoric times, he was involved in the burial ceremonies of Iranians and Greeks and the image of a horse was a sign of death or its representative that took the deceased to another world (Mokhtar Masoumi, 2010, p.11).

2 – The concept of goat motif

This motif is called “Boz” (goat) or “Booz” (goat) among weavers. Among the collected motifs, the motif that has smooth horizontal horns is the most original. In all these motifs, a horizontal line passes through the middle of the body, which is in perfect harmony with the horizontal horn. The animal's legs or single strips on the legs with the middle Strip on the body are sometimes the same color as the animal's tail.

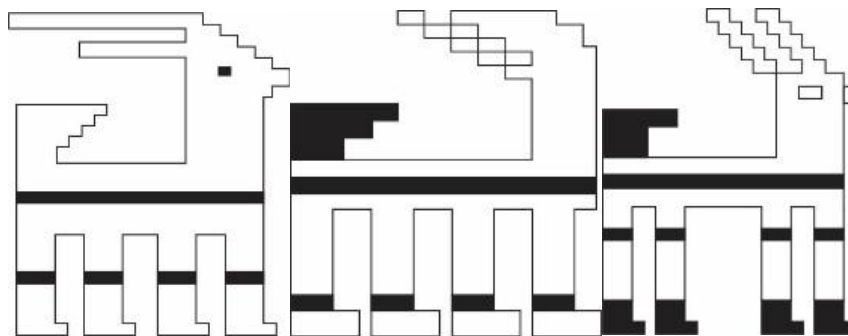


Figure 2. Goat motif, (Figurative source: Author)

Goats in Guilan are called “Kadkhoda” because they are always the vanguard of a flock of sheep (Fakhraei, 1975, p.78). From the villagers' point of view, this animal is important for its use of wool for the textile industry and its meat for feeding, and it is also sacrificed for many ceremonies.

Because goats and sheep were closer to the villagers than other animals, they were not only considered a major part of a person's possessions during their lifetime, but their bones, skulls, and horns were found in tombs. Images of these animals have also been used in textiles and objects of worship. So that we can see the pictures of animal heads in the Pazyryk rug (Hall and Vivoska, 1998, p.72).

Every ancient people considered the antelope as a manifestation of one of the beneficial natural factors. In “Lorestan”, the goat was an animal of the sun and related to the sun. From ancient times the moon has been associated with rain, and the sun with dryness and heat, and because there is a relationship between the curved horns of the antelope and the crescent moon, the ancient people believed that the tortuous horns of the antelope are effective in precipitation (Mokhtar Masoumi, 2010, p.10).

The ram is considered to be a very powerful and mythical animal, and because it is a symbol of fertility and gives birth in the herd, it was considered by the people (Hatemi, 1374, p. 364-365).

3 – The concept of bird, duck and chicken, sparrow

In weaving, it is difficult to tell exactly what kind of bird the weaver intended. Even they do not make much difference to these motifs and generally call them birds, hens,



sparrows, ducks, chickens. But what may help in the diagnosis is the type of beak and elongation of the bird's neck. If the bird has a long neck and beak, it is often referred to as a duck. If the bird has a short beak, or a curvature in the lower part of the body, or has legs, it is called a hen, a chicken, or a sparrow, and if it has a comb, it is called a bird. Birds are usually woven on top of a tree, inside a tree, or scattered on the ground, in small pieces, or facing each other. In some cases, birds are even depicted with their necks turned in the opposite direction.

In the old weaves, only one example of a dragonfly was found, which shows the abundance of this type of bird in the area.



Figure 3. Bird or sparrow motif
(Figurative source: Author)



Figure 4. Duck motif
(Figurative source: Author)



Figure 5. Bird or chicken motifs
(Figurative source: Author)

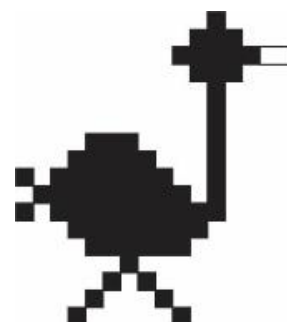


Figure 6. Bird motif
(Figurative source: Author)

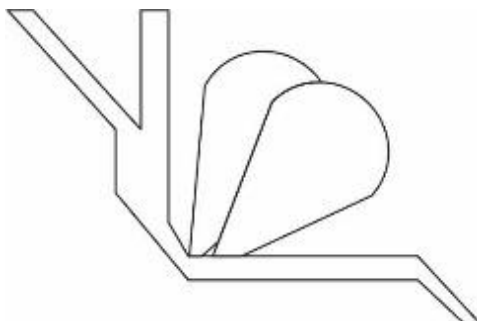


Figure 7. Dragonfly motif
(Figurative source: Author)



Wish, freedom, sky, cloud, inspiration, wind, prophecy, messaging, respiration, fertility, sun, divine essence, life, growth, haste and acceleration and child are the symbolic meanings of the bird (Yavari, 2010, p.150).

In Islam, birds are specifically a symbol of angels, while the bird is a symbol of the immortality of the soul in the Qur'an. In Yazidi religion, when the whole world is covered with water, God appears in the form of a bird on a tree branch.

On prehistoric buildings in Europe and Asia, a picture of a cosmos tree with two birds on its branches has been seen. We know that in Central Asian, Indonesian mythology, birds perched on a tree branch represent the human soul. (Knight and Gerbaran, 2009, vol. 2, p. 196-206).

The duck, and actually a pair of ducks, is a symbol of union, happiness and marriage throughout the Far East. The reason for this is that male and female ducks always swim together (Shavalieh and Gerbaran, 2009, vol. 1, p.112). In the wrapper, it is sometimes seen that two ducks are placed next to each other with their heads facing each other or opposite. The use of the motif of the bird is usually around the motif of the moon in the center of the wrapper, around the motif of the chandelier, the flower rug and sometimes the background as a sub-motif and filling the empty space.

4 – The concept of butterfly motif

Some believe that the motif of the butterfly in the patterns became popular after the revolution and was inspired by the motif of the star. Although this pattern was also found in older weaves, it seems to have been nothing more than a wrapper's pattern. In fact, this design is the most original in the appearance of the motif of the star. Sometimes the butterfly consists of two triangles that are connected to a rectangle from the vertex or between ">" and "<" which is the same hollow triangle. These two motifs are completely stylized and simplified, which are less used. The simplified motifs of the butterfly are sometimes considered to be one because of their great resemblance to the motif of the spool.

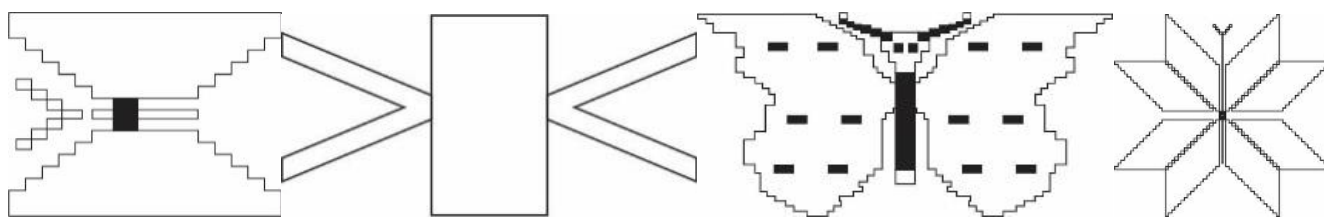


Figure 8. Butterfly motif, (Figurative source: Author)

The butterfly is a Chinese symbol for the soul and being a woman. Two butterflies are a sign of marriage (Hall, 2001, p.34). Currently, wrappers with this motif are given to newlyweds as more dowry.

Many Turkic tribes in Central Asia are influenced by Iranian thought and believe that their dead can appear as butterflies at night (Shavalieh and Gerbaran, 2009, vol. 2, p. 209-213).



5 – The concept of crocodile motifs

The motifs of the crocodile and the snail are related to the wrapper, which is one hundred and ten years old and is one of the old motifs that are not woven by modern weavers. The crocodile is a symbol of abdomen and hypocrisy. The bearer of the universe is the god of the night and the moon and the lord of the primordial waters, whose abdomen, like the night, separates the sun. In many Asian countries, it is associated with the spirit world (Knight and Gerberan, 2009, vol. 4, p.550).

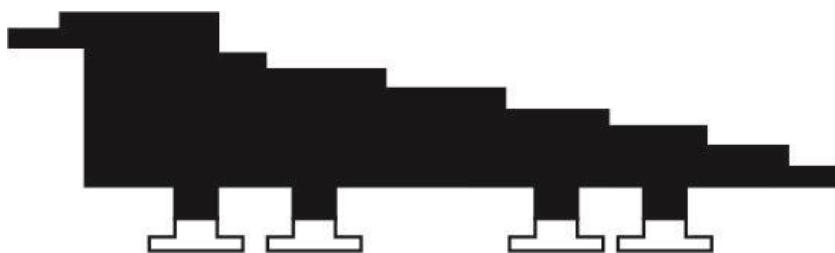


Figure 9. Crocodile motif, (Figurative source: Author)

6 – The concept of snail motif

In general, due to the fertility of this area, snails are seen in large areas. Patterns such as snails or crocodiles are unique patterns that are directly related to the environmental characteristics and thoughts and spirits of the weaver to fear or overcome and dominate the animal or its benefits and may not be seen in other wrappers.

The snail is related to the halo of the moon because of its spiral shape. As the moon appears and disappears, it is a sign of resurrection. It is also a sign of fertility (Eliadeh, 2010, p. 168).

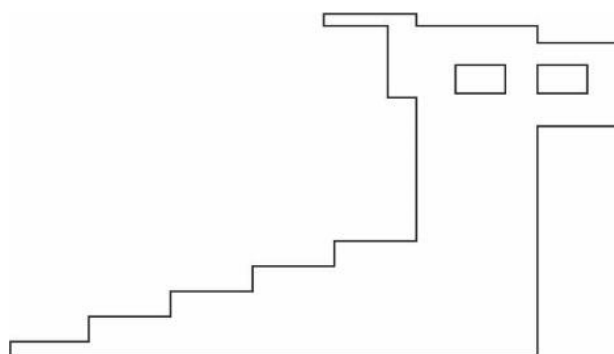


Figure 10. Snail motif, (Figurative source: Author)

7 – The concept of bat motif

"Shabpareh"(night flying) or the same as "Shabpark(night flying)" is called the same bat (Moin, 1363, 2015) in the local language is also called "Kor Shahpar" (Javid,2011, p.73).This motif is created in reverse with two large wings and a large rectangular head. Its wings are woven in different ways according to the artist's taste. The feature of the motif is that in the upper rectangle and sometimes at the bottom of the head is given a strip. A small square is drawn in the middle of the head.

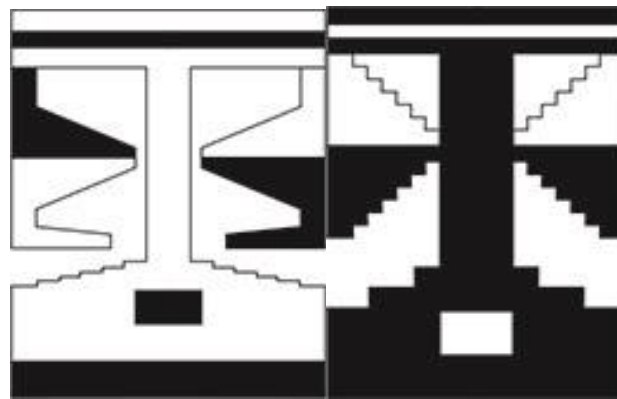


Figure 11. Bat motif, (Figurative source: Author)

In the Far East, it is a symbol of fortune because the letter Fu, with which the bat is written (in Persian), is homonym with the letter meaning fortune. This is why the Chinese attach the bat to their grain barn with nails. The weight of its brain forces it to rest from head to toe (Shavaliéh and Gerbaran, 2008, vol. 3, p.107-110).

In Chinese, it was thought that this animal would live a long life and therefore, it was a symbol of longevity and happiness (Hall, 2001, p.48).

8- The concept of dog motif

The dog was considered the protector of the villagers' herds and livestock, and this shows how important this animal was to them. The motif of a dog with one ear and two legs is common.

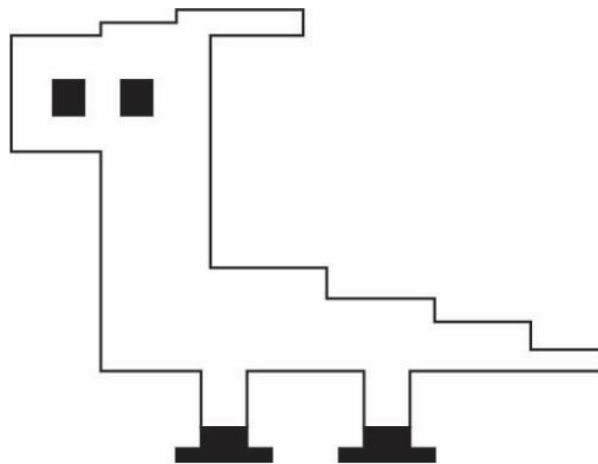


Figure 12. Dog motifs, (Figurative source: Author)

In the past, due to the abundance of jackals, some people believed that if on a rainy night, a jackal calls and the dog responds, the next night the weather will be clear and in fact jackals and dogs were considered meteorological (Keshavarz, 1968, p. 143).

The dog is a symbol of watching, guarding, support, friendship and honesty, companionship and loyalty (Mokhtar Masoumi, 2010, p. 11).



A dog is an animal that conveys the message of the moon to humans. The usage of dog myths around the world, after accompanying man in his life, its task is to guide the spirits (Eliadeh, 2010, p. 177).

The dog is the symbol of countless gods in the art of many civilizations. In Japan, dogs avoid the negative effects of foxes, badger or cats (Hall, 2001, p. 52).

9 – The concept of frog motif

A baby frog or toad is called *pat*, meaning short and wide. *Vek* (Valerianvij, 1364, 154), or *Gozka* (Fakhraei, 1975, p.84) or *Sarpach* (Jaktaji, 1987, p.135) in Gilaki language means frog.

Frogs are seen a lot due to the existence of agricultural lands in northern Iran, especially rice fields.

The frog is the common toad that sings to the community and is found in ponds and tarns.

Singing frogs in groups is considered a sign of rain the next day (Fakhraei, 1975, p. 81).

The toad includes all the concepts of water, night, moon, fertility (Eliadeh, 2010, p. 169). The Chinese consider the toad the goddess of the moon, because they see frogs in the moon. The Vietnamese consider the toad to be the god of the sky, who commands the sky to rain, and whoever kills the toad, the sky strikes him with lightning (Knight and Gerberan, 2009, vol. 4, p. 473-480).

Sometimes we see that the frog is displayed inside the square, which is actually the moon, which can be the reflection of the image and sound of the frog in the water, which is a sign of fertility.

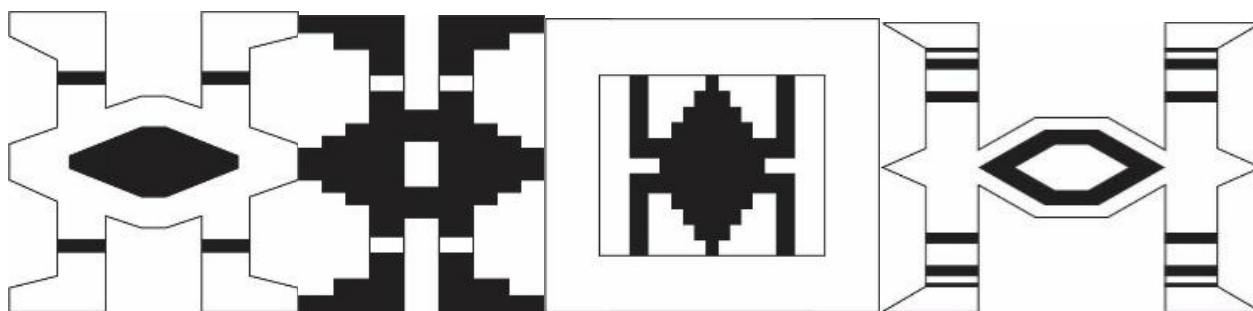


Figure 13. Frog motif, (Figurative source: Author)

10 – The concept of deer motif

This motif is not currently seen in weaves. The deer in the local language is called “*Gonj*” (Fakhraei, 1975, p.84) or “*Ganjeh Gav*” (Javid, 2011, p.73). The deer is depicted with large branches and its inside is represented by several colored rectangles that can be a sign of the inside of the animal and its heart.

In the picture below, it can be seen that in the Pazyrek rug, the motif of a deer is woven with patterns inside it, which show its internal components such as the heart, aorta, etc.

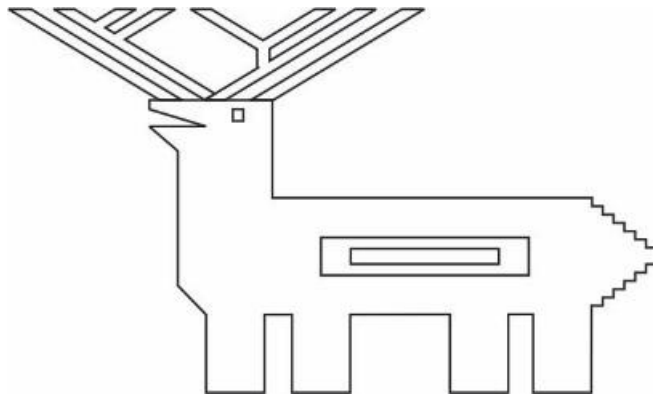


Figure 14. The motif of deer or "Ganjeh Gav" (Figurative source: Author)



Figure 15. Deer motif (Source: Neopazirk)

According to the ancient Iranians, deer was a compound for transferring the soul from the earthly world and light and illumination to the dark world under the ground (Mokhtar Masoumi, 2010, p. 10).

The deer is a symbol of high speed, longevity and dignity, and in ethnic and mythological beliefs it is a symbol of great physical strength and running power. Its branches symbolize the sun's rays. The exaggeration of the branches indicates the fertility and integration of the herding or agricultural community (Habibi, 2002, p. 119). The deer is often compared to the tree of life because of its long branches.

RESULT

According to the researches, it can be concluded that the motifs used in the wrapper are the result of social interactions of the people of that land with their surroundings, which are used in the form of geometric, plant, animal and human motifs in the wrapper, which shows thinking and social and economic livelihood of the people of this land.

In this study, after visual studies of wrapper patterns, a total of 324 motifs have been collected in Tonekabon to Rudsar areas. Geometric motifs with 58.95% have the highest number compared to other motifs. In terms of texture location, Qasemabad with 33.95% compared to other locations, has the most motif diversity. Regarding the location of the pattern, 81.79% of the motifs in the text and a small number of motifs in the margin, margin-text, text-center and center are dense, which shows a significant difference in the importance of text motifs compared to other options.

The range of vertical rectangular motifs with 50% along with the limits of square and horizontal rectangles has the highest usage statistics. In relation to the dominant line, the broken and crooked line with 38.27% has the highest number among other lines. In terms of dominant direction, 44.13% of the diagonal direction and 37.96% of the horizontal direction are the most important directions. In terms of how to combine, 38.58% of the motifs are perfectly symmetrical with respect to the vertical and horizontal axis, and also 62.65% of the motifs have a regular rhythm in terms of how to rhythm.



The result obtained from this statistic indicates that most of the motifs used in the wrapper are of geometric type with broken or indented lines, which indicates the close connection of the artist with nature and the tools of his surroundings, which have made these motifs completely abstract, in which many graphical capabilities and capacities are seen.

The diversity of the motif in Qasemabad, compared to other places, doubles the value of the wrappers in this area. In fact, the motif identity that distinguishes one person from other people is more diverse in Qasemabad, and the purpose of determining the place was to identify or find the differences between people. In fact, in Chabaksar, Ramsar, Tonekabon and Rudsar, except for the motifs that are woven the same everywhere, there is less creativity in the texture of the motifs with new patterns.

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