

GURAMA AS A VARIETY OF DECORATIVE ART OF AZERBAIJAN

GURAMA PATCHWORK ART WAS AN ORIGINAL TYPE OF CRAFTS IN AZERBAIJAN. THE TERM, WHICH LITERALLY MEANS «COUPLED», IMPLIES A SINGLE PIECE MADE FROM INDIVIDUAL PATCHES. IN TURKEY, THEY USE THE TERM "KIRX YAMA" (LITERALLY «FORTY CONNECTIONS»), IN CENTRAL ASIA, «KUROK» OR «KURAMA» (1).

Types of the gurama. For coverlets



Azerbaijanis retained an old tradition, according to which it was customary to give lengths of cloth for a dress during various family celebrations. The patches left over from sewing garments and other textile products were not thrown out. When there were enough patches, they sewed small textile products which were used at home, but stood out for their bright palette. "Tatar women (Azerbaijani women) like to work hard, and are very skilled in different crafts," Russian researchers wrote of Azerbaijani women in the 19th century. (2) Patterned products from the gurama had spread throughout the territory of Azerbaijan. From generation to generation, people developed different schemes of patches and their own specific design of products, although, of course, their selection and use depended on the taste and wealth of craftswomen themselves. Apparently simple geometric shapes in unpretentious variations of the gurama merged together and created a harmonious

Gurama products became common in the life of Azerbaijanis due to the wide spread of weaving in Azerbaijan. Mainly local made silk, chintz, velvet, damask and wool fabrics were used to create the gurama. As you know, until the mid-20th century,



Types of the gurama. For the «bokhcha». National Museum of History of Azerbaijan, Ethnographic Fund

color scheme. In the gurama, like in a mosaic, the greater the number of particles, the more saturated the colors and the more complicated the pattern.

Gurama products with different structures met the specific nature of their use. The collection of the Ethnographic Fund of the National Museum of History of Azerbaijan keeps more than 100 copies of the

Types of the gurama. For coverlets



gurama relating to the 19th - early 20th centuries.

The gurama method in Azerbaijan was used to make capes, «bokhcha» (a canvas, in which clothes were placed), different types of curtains, covers for quilts and other items of everyday use. With all the variety of compositional forms of the gurama, they can be divided into the following groups: 1) those

made from patches of rectangular shapes and strips of various widths; 2) compositions made from patterned strips; 3) triangular patches connected in different variations.

The most simple combination is the median square (usually of silk), bordered by a strip with a width of 10 cm to 20 cm from other fabrics. This is the way they sewed curtains and rectangular bokhchas. The curtains were a substantial and visible element of the home interior, and special attention was paid to their design. Curtains were used to decorate small wall niches «taxça», large wall niches «camaxatan», as well as to cover and decorate a room or the bride's corner «gərdək pərdəsi». To decorate the wall shelves «rəf», the curtain had a somewhat different form: a strip of colored cloth was sewn from three sides as a border, and a triangular shape was cut out from the bottom. A rectangular cloth was sewn on the central square, sometimes from the top, to cover the triangular space. A golden fringe or lace was usually sewn on the edge of the curtains and its folding part was sewn on a triangular slit.

In the villages of Azerbaijan, «mütəkkə» pillows in the form of a roller are still used. They were also decorated with the gurama by a simple scheme - in the middle there was an oblong rectangle, and on the edges - a strip of fabric of another color. The same structure

of patches of fabric supplemented with square shapes in the corners is typical of the composition of the bokhcha. The dark color strip on the edge connected the front part with its chintz lining and played the role of a narrow fringe. Wide bands are replaced by thin lines of multi-colored patches and form medallions of complex design.

If in the above-described products, the gurama was made from patches of fabrics sewn on each other, in the coverlet (e.g., EF NMHA No 1972) sewn lines of fabric forming a pattern are placed on each other, forming a convex surface. Patches forming long strips were folded and stitched twice, covering the seam of the previous strip. Overlapping, silk lines form square medallions, the contours of which are decorated with small triangles of the same color, which in turn form an X-shaped pattern. The colors of the silk ribbons, rhythmically alternating, repeat in the same order and on the same side of another rectangular medallion. In this way, alternating bright ribbons form a new diamond-

shaped medallion, and the same small triangles now serve as fringes for them. This creates a rhythm of light and dark diamond-shaped forms that look like multicolored quadrangles.

A characteristic pattern of the gurama «pərdə başı» is the long strip with colored triangles sewn from the bottom.

The third variety of «pərdə başı» is the form in which an extra wide strip of fabric is sewn on the upper strip decorated with multi-colored triangles. In one of the «pərdə başı» (EF NMHA No 3078), the corners of the triangles are decorated with solar signs and are embroidered with a stylized image of a woman among stars.

The design of the gurama of a wall decoration (EF NMHA No 6669) with a size of 262x234 cm built on a subtle combination of geometric shapes is even more complicated. The composition resembles the patterns of lint-free carpets of mixed technology - palas-kilim. Small pieces of geometric shapes made of silk, zerhar and velvet complex,

intense patterns around the central monochromatic medallion with a size of 45x45 cm. The X-shaped strips with diamond-shaped elements in the square medallions are interspersed with medallions consisting of four squares made from monochromatic triangles on the basis of the above structure. The corners of the central field are decorated with four equally ornamented medallions of the same color. Each row, consisting of square medallions, is divided with a yellow-black strip that resembles carpet patterns. In the rectangular medallions there is symmetry of patterns and sizes, but not of the colors. Apparently, the color asymmetry was caused by either the lack of patches of the necessary colors or by the fact that the square medallions were made by individual craftswomen. But in the general mosaic of small symmetrical forms, the discrepancy in the colors of the fabric does not diminish the composite value of the product. The wall decoration was hung up on a wall (wall decoration) by metal rings or as a curtain on the large wall niche «camaxatan».

The «bokhcha» looked elegant

Types of the gurama. For wall shelves «rəf». National Museum of History of Azerbaijan, Ethnographic Fund





Types of the gurama. For coverlets

thanks to the edge made from a succession of multicolored triangles that were connected at bases and made up two-color squares. Sometimes the scheme of a medallion of two triangular forms was complicated by four colored triangles. The colors of triangular elements in each medallion cross together. This scheme of decorating the gurama is found in many edges

of curtains and bedspreads.

Medallions made from triangles in two rows, stacked around a central square, are very widely used. Triangles forming a two-color diamond usually connect to the sides of the square at their bases. The second row of triangles completes the whole structure of the square medallion. Such a structure of the gurama was widespread as an integral part of

the composition of bedspreads, wall decorations and capes.

In one of the capes (EF NMHA No 4717), the square medallion consists of four quadrilaterals, which in turn consist of triangles. The specifics of this medallion are the monochromaticity of the triangles that form the square, which makes the shape of each square more clearly expressed. The cape has a rectangular shape with a 20-cm wide strip of fabric sewn from two transverse sides, and its edges are decorated with the gilt braid «zerbafta», and a gilt fringe is sewn along the longitudinal sides. This cape was apparently used to cover the wedding trays «khoncha».

In Azerbaijan, by the quality and quantity of bedding, one could judge the wealth of the bride's family, as they were the main part of her dowry. «Yorğan üzü» (literally «the face of the blanket»; the face of the quilted blanket) was decorated very elegantly. They were usually made from solid silk fabric, but the presence of museum exhibits implies that patchwork quilts were common in the old days.

An interesting piece of the interior was «pərdə başı» (literally

Types of the gurama. For curtains. National Museum of History of Azerbaijan, Ethnographic Fund





Types of the gurama. For coverlets

«the head of the curtain»; roof-shaped curtains and decorations of wall shelves). «Pərdə başı» in the middle of the 19th century, made by the gurama scheme, represents colored triangles inserted in each other, which form a strip with a length of 0.5 - 2 m and a width of 0.2 - 0.3 m. A more typical scheme of the gurama «pərdə başı» is a long strip of colored triangles sewn from the bottom. The third kind of «pərdə başı» is the form in which an extra wide strip of fabric is sewn on the upper strip decorated with multi-colored triangles. The contours of «pərdə başı» were decorated with silk braid and the gilt lace «qaragöz»

and «zəncirə». Tassels of fringe from gilt and silk threads gave special smartness and elegance to «pərdə başı». Tassels were also decorated with bright beads and metal pendants and were attached to the connection points and the tips of the triangles and laces. Metal plaques and pearl buttons of various shapes and sizes were symmetrically sewn on the plain smooth «pərdə başı», and in the early 20th century - laces.

Although rarely, the gurama was still used in details of national clothes. For example, the museum keeps four «patavas» (outer puttees) made by the gurama technique. Two of them are sewn from calico strips

at the edges of which small triangles of bright colors are sewn that match the color in pairs. The other two are made of red and green strips of silk. Green fabric is sewn on the red strip in a wavy line.

The gurama had a symbolic meaning as well. Thus, a coat of rags «xırqə» (Arabic - «break») was worn by ascetics who had taken the mystical path (3). In the Middle Ages, Sufis wore clothes made of rags, and sewed again even new robes given to them by tearing them into several pieces (4). Perhaps, sewing colored patches together was a kind of talisman then. For example, carpets have retained a diamond-



shaped pattern that was divided into four different colored pieces and protected from the evil eye.

As one of the varieties of folk crafts, the gurama had a special place with its mass and utilitarian nature, while in the composite solution, the symmetry of geometric shapes, where the string of simple geometric shapes constructed simple and complex images, played an important role. The traditional colorful solution

of the gurama is the effect of a combination of dark and light colors that are refined in their harmony. The bright palette of the gurama in home products created comfort and a sense of festivity in the interior of the house. The variety and originality of the artistic manner of the gurama suggest that this type of craft existed independently in Azerbaijan. ✨

References

1. Таджики Каратегин и Дарваза. Под ред. Кислякова и А. К.Писарчик, Душанбе, 1970, с.203.
2. Обзорение Российских владений за Кавказом, т. II, Казах, с.228.
3. Ислам, энциклопедический словарь, М., 1991, с. 278.
4. Fərhəng-t əşar-t Hafiz, Əhməd Əli Rəcəyi Buxarayı, Tehran,1375, s. 200.

Types of the gurama. For coverlets

