

Traditional handicrafts of Kurdistan Province



Kilims of Kurdistan Province
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A carpet-weaving workshop in Kurdistan Province
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A shawl weaving workshop in Kurdistan Province
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Handicrafts and traditional arts are among the most attractive ways to become familiar with the culture of different tribes. Handicrafts are associated with and symbolize the cultural heritage of societies. They also provide unique opportunities for boosting employment, developing businesses and generating wealth, IRNA wrote.

Kurdistan is among the Iranian provinces which possess a remarkable capacity in the field of handicrafts. Inhabitants of Kurdistan, in urban and rural areas, are engaged in the production of handicrafts with passionate enthusiasm.

Kurdistan footwear

Kalash, a local *giveh*, is among major handicrafts of Kurdistan Province. It is an espadrille like traditional footwear woven from natural fibers. *Kalash* has earned global fame. It is soft, comfortable and durable.

Kalash production in this province is very prosperous. Many men and women are engaged in the business in the cities of Sarvabad, Marivan and Uraman. Women produce the upper part of *Kalash*, which has a delicate texture. They sew the upper part of the footwear using a kind of needle called "*javaldooz*". Men are responsible for making the sole because it needs more strength, and comes in red, white and blue. The upper part is usually made from cotton yarn, while the sole is made of leather or plastic.

Kalash is the only footwear that is symmetrical, which means it does not have a left foot and a right foot; both are the same.

Kilim weaving

Kilim weaving is another beautiful handicraft of Kurdistan, which has gained fame across the globe. *Kilim* is a kind of rug which has a smooth and lint-free surface, made of warp and weft. Unlike Persian carpets, it does not have long piles.

Historical documents show that kilim weaving dates back thousands of years.

Carpet weaving

Carpet weaving is among the most important and most beautiful hand-



Kalash
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icrafts of the province. The most famous carpets of the region come in different designs. The provincial capital of Sanandaj and the city of Bijar are the major producers of carpets in the province, which are famous worldwide. Many craftspeople are engaged in this traditional business.

Shawl weaving

Shawl weaving is also among well-known crafts of Kurdistan, which has been popular for centuries. It is a type of men's clothing.

The raw materials of the hand-woven fabric are made from the hair of a type of goat called Markhuz, which forms a soft wool. Men and women produce delicate and beautiful shawls. The fibers that are used in weaving these shawls have provided them with special properties. They are cool in summer and warm in winter.

Kurdish clothing

Artisans in Kurdistan produce a wide range of beautiful and colorful clothes which are worn by men and women.

Sewing Kurdish clothing is one of the richest arts of Kurdistan Province, which requires a lot of knowledge and expertise.

Traditional and local jewelry

Local jewelry has a long history in Kurdistan Province. Craftspeople in the provincial capital of Sanandaj have been producing various types of jewelry from copper, bronze, and nickel silver scraps, which generally have a local design and shape.

Local products include necklaces, bracelets, headbands, bangles, rings and earrings.

These are only a small part of the industries and crafts of men and women with artistic taste in different regions of Kurdistan. Presently, handicrafts have an influential role in boosting employment in Kurdistan. Nonetheless, providing better working conditions for artisans will further lead to reducing unemployment and creating jobs not only in the province but also across the country.

Economic prosperity

A deputy of the Kurdistan provincial governor said handicrafts are among spiritual heritage of the province and can pave the ground for creating jobs and boosting the economy.

"The art that is created through the creativity of artisans represents the deep-rooted culture and civilization of this country. Due to its great efficiency, it plays an important role in creating employment and bringing economic prosperity to the province," Hamed Qaderzadeh added.

The caretaker of the Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Department of Kurdistan Province also touched upon the economic aspects of developing handicrafts. Mansour Mehrzad said Kurdistan exported \$124,000 worth of handicrafts in the year to March 20, 2023. He said traditional ornaments, *kalash*, *giveh*, pottery, felt, mats and leather products were among the exports.

Persian potters had been imitating Chinese white wares as far back as the Song period, and each generation in Iran seems to have produced some kind of white ware reminiscent of the Chinese prototype.

White wares with delicately incised floral designs entered the princely collections of the Muslim world in the early fifteenth century. Small Safavid bowls copy the lien-tzu shape of early fifteenth-century incised white porcelains.

Carved celadons, well represented in the Ardebil collection, might have inspired some of the decoration, but we do not know why the incised monochrome whites became so popular with Safavid potters in the second half of the seventeenth century. They were not a major Kangxi export.

Different techniques of decorating distinguish the various phases of Safavid white-ware production.

During the seventeenth century the earliest luxury white wares were made in the same ateliers as painted pottery. Kerman was certainly a major producer of white monochromes with incised decoration. This phase of Kerman ware is datable to around 1,665 by the dish with black-band inscription mentioned above. The dated

dish also has small motifs painted in blue around the rim and the typical Kerman fan-leaf spray back as well as a blue tassel-mark denoting Kerman manufacture.

Characteristic of the incised designs on this class of white wares are the large lotus blossoms, as can be seen also in series around the exterior or cavetto.

A second Safavid white ware is distinguished by its use of deeply carved lines in conjunction with lightly incised patterns. The carved lines delineate the framing patterns while the etching is used for the filler design. Among the common shapes for this technique are ablution, globular bottles with long neck tapering outward toward the opening, and spittoons. The spittoons (curvilinear type) resemble lustre-painted wares and so are datable to the last phase of Safavid pottery production.

Open shapes may have the recess in the centre of the base, which is also typical of lustre-ware. However, some open shapes lack this feature and have a partially glazed or unglazed base. The base with recess suggests Mashhad manufacture (similar to Mashhad lustre), while the flat base may point to a different centre, perhaps Kerman.

Monochrome and white wares in Safavid era



The above is a lightly edited version of part a chapter entitled, 'Dominant Fashions and Distinctive Styles', from a book entitled, 'Persian Pottery in the First Global Age', written by Lisa Golombek, Robert B. Mason, Patricia Proctor, Eileen Reilly and published by Brill. The photos were taken from the book.