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Woven Structures Updates - Part 8 (continued)

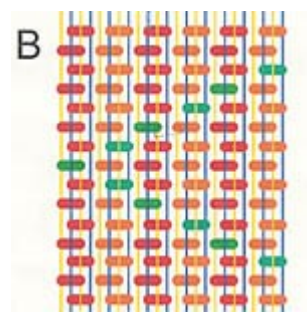
Comparisons Between Band Techniques

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On this page I have posted assorted notes on contrasting details from the bands that we have examined so far. It is too soon to say whether differences in knotting practices will help to group these pieces either geographically or chronologically.

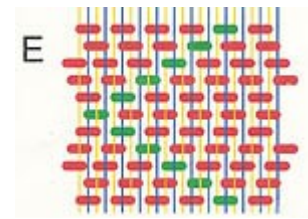
We can normally expect patterning in VERTICAL design areas and stripes to be executed in normal tent band knotting done on an open shed. That's because otherwise almost constant knot transitions would be required along vertical border edges.

Some weavers have extended this kind of knot arrangement into their HORIZONTAL bands. I have found this consistency in bands that most people label Yomut. In the band detail below, diagonal "barber pole" color divisions were made in exactly the same way whether the areas were vertical or horizontal.



Yomut (?) band with "normal" knotting used consistently for both vertical and horizontal pattern areas.

Other band weavers have used *extra offsets* and diagonally aligned pile for HORIZONTAL elements. Such an approach appears in the Arabatchi (?) band from which some details on the previous page were taken; the same approach was used in Christoph's band below, a band type that has more often been labeled Tekke, and in the Mosby fragment shown later below -- a piece that is probably Saryk.



Tekke (?) band with regular band knotting in the vertical stripe. The HORIZONTAL pattern areas, however, uses *extra offsets*, with knots aligned as in diagram E.

We have found striking differences in the way weavers have formed similar zigzag borders. The Yomut (?) bands, and also the Mosby Saryk fragment shown later, display zigzagging elements executed with *extra offsets*, as in the left photo below. In contrast, Christoph's band, below right, has a vertical zigzag that is a continuation of the regular knotting in the two encompassing vertical borders.

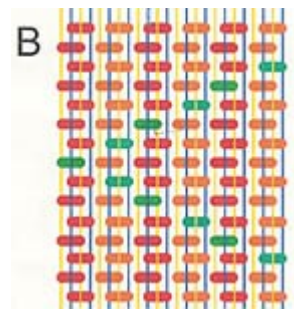
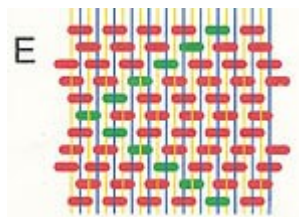
In other words, the Yomut weaver treated the zigzagging form as a separate element, to be articulated in the easiest and smoothest way. The weaver of the band on the right treated the zigzags and vertical borders as one motif, executing all parts in the same fashion, even though on an open ground the irregular diagonal knot alignment was a little more clumsy.



Yomut (?) band with zigzag motif articulated with the *extra offsets* of diagonal knotting



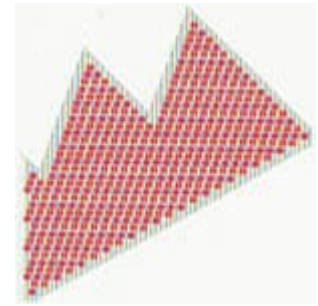
Tekke (?) band with zigzag motif articulated along with vertical borders in regular knotting



Serrated "wing" forms are prominent features on Turkmen tent bands, presented in the narrow format as leaves on a flowering stalk. Several versions appear, with variations due primarily to differences in the techniques used.

In Example 1 below, the leaves appear to have been articulated with *extra offset knotting* aligned in continuous diagonal columns, as in Diagram C. Each serration is thus shaped with two slightly different inclining diagonals. This is the purest use of *extra offsets*. The lower edge of each leaf inclines at a more shallow angle than any other detail in the band -- and is formed with still a third diagonal, presumably like that shown in green in the center of diagram C. These





serrated leaves thus utilize the natural asymmetry of the structure.



1



2



3

Although the large ashik flower head in Example 2 is made also with the two asymmetrical diagonals natural to *extra offset knotting*, the leaves have serrations that are vertical on one side, and diagonal on the other. Here, it is likely that the forms were articulated with regular tent band knotting in vertical columns that form Alignment B diagonals where they end. We should note that this form of the motif -- serrations with vertical sides -- is the form that appears regularly on Yomut asmalyks. It is an adaptation of an old slit-tapestry details turned on end for convenience in knotting.



4

In Example 3, from the same band, the weaver drew more steeply inclined "teeth." These may have been made with

regular tent band knotting in vertical columns that ended to produce the steep diagonals shown in Alignment A. It is possible also, though, that the diagonal columns of *extra offset knotting* may have produced the steep inclines, with knot transitions made where each column ended at a vertical outline. Whichever was used, this weaver returned later in the band to the method in Example 2. It may be worth investigating to see if such differences in approach help to separate the work of different tribal groups.

Sometimes the difficulties that weavers experienced in articulating certain designs can be informative. Example 4 shows one weaver's problems with the three natural diagonals of *extra offsets* -- the same approach as that used in Example 1. Although the structure is perfectly suited to the motif's formation, the concept is mentally difficult to handle when one is knotting row by row. Straight-sided serrations that could be drawn with vertically aligned knotting had an advantage in this respect.



5



6

In Example 5, the weaver has omitted the serrations, making simpler, and perhaps more effective, diagonal elements that were articulated completely with *extra offsets*.

In Example 6, we see another design solution entirely -- an attempt to ornament plain diagonal forms with angular hooks, all presumably made with *extra offsets*. This weaver jettisoned the small flowers which were so difficult to knot, retaining only one drooping blossom at

the end of each branch. It's a complete transformation of the traditional design.

Thus stylistic evolution appears to have been closely tied to technical considerations.

The small flower forms on these bands also display contrasts in their construction. Most weavers at least tried to draw the points with *extra offsets* arranged in converging steep diagonals. Beyond that, however, these motifs show a variety of approaches.

In a very finely woven band fragment (Saryk ?) from the collection of Rob Mosby, the points are the steep diagonals we expect, and they are executed with near perfect consistency. Because of the steeper alignment, more outlining knots are close together in these areas, thickening the outlines. (Remember that each knot is represented by two separate nodules on the band's back.)



Tent band fragment. Wool and silk pile on wool. Detail. Rob Mosby



On this band, although the flower contours were drawn with consistency, the interiors are full of variations. In most of these, the steep points outlined with converging Alignment D diagonals are also filled with converging diagonal columns. As these knot columns continue into the flower centers, they are interrupted by small triangular ornaments. Where the columns end (or start) at the base of each flower, the wider steps of more shallow *extra offset* diagonals form the contours. There are startling complications within motifs only 2 to 2.5 cm. wide.

The outlines of these flower points display a clever feature. The point of each was made with one knot. Just below that the collar of a larger knot was stretched out to encompass one warp on each incline. We see a blank space in the middle of this knot on the band's back. Below that, regular knots form the diagonal outlines.

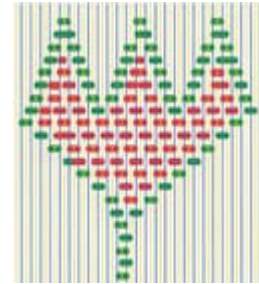


On the Yomut band below, the weaver formed the outer flower petals with knot columns inclining consistently outward. Columns converged to make the center petal, while the heavy center stalks and flower centers were made with normal, vertical knot columns. This weaver did a little shaping of the outline at the side corners to round the forms a little. The knots positions are more difficult to see on the back of this band, as in many areas at least half of each knot is hidden.

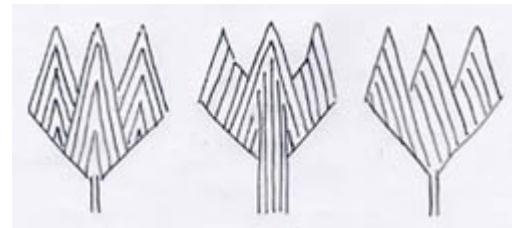




Still another approach was used in Christoph's (Tekke ?) band (Example 5 above). The small flowers were made of knots arranged diagonally in the ordinary *extra offset* alignment. The interior knot columns all run in one direction consistently. The incline is very smooth along the starting point at the flower's lower right side, as well as along the right side of each flower point, where the contours shift to the steep Alignment D inclines. This weaver drew left-side flower outlines to mirror those on the right, however, meaning that some extra filling was needed and that adjustments were necessary where the interior knot columns met the left outlines.



Here's a simplified comparison of *extra offset* knot arrangements in the three bands above. The first shows the three sets of converging knot columns used in the Mosby (Saryk?) fragment. The second shows the combination approach used in the Yomut band fragment, where vertical columns fill most of the flower center, while other parts are made with inward-inclining knot columns. The third drawing shows knot columns running in only one direction as they are in Christoph's band just above, with extra filling needed and different outlines used on the left.



These drawings show only the general approach to each. The small flowers vary within each band, as the weavers struggled to make smooth exterior outlines and consistent pile textures within the motifs. The first two examples also included small triangles in the middle of each flower; these interrupted the smooth flow of the knot columns.

A non-Turkman example of knotting with *extra offsets* that combines two inclines in a single motif is seen in a narrow band from Daniel Deschuyteneer's collection. It is thought to be Uzbek. Though there are some irregularities, the red "S" forms are made with identical converging columns of *extra offset* knots. Most of the asymmetrical yellow triangular tips are formed with *extra offsets* in the same fashion as the Turkmen flower in Christoph's band above, with adjacent and differing diagonals.



In most places, red diagonals that make the large "S" forms on this Uzbek band were formed as in Alignment E. The yellow triangular tip above shows the asymmetrical shape that resulted when most knots were aligned along one side of the motif (the left here); larger steps formed on the other side. These details vary freely, however, throughout the band.

How have band weavers handled the rather unnatural triangular motifs that appear in many of the more complex bands? Inconsistently, it seems. In the detail below, from the

Mosby fragment, the small stacked triangles on the right sides of the columns were executed with *extra offsets* in diagonal columns. This weaver apparently was not totally comfortable with that approach and so switched to regular knotting for *most* of the small triangles on the left sides of the stacked columns. For the large points on the ashik motif, she also did half in one fashion, half in the other. Those pointing upward in the lower right half of the photo are regular knotting with vertical pile columns; those on the left side have diagonal pile columns produced by *extra offsets*. In all of these areas, the outlines are consistently drawn with *extra offsets*, while the fillings differ.



An Attribution Question

The fragment above presents the typical kind of dilemma faced when we search for tribal tent band labels. Is it Tekke? Or Yomut? A combination of clues suggests that this example instead be tentatively labeled Saryk. First, the inclusion of both silk and cotton pile is consistent with that attribution. So is the fineness of the knotting, much of it done with wool singles, rather than two singles. Bands that surely must be Yomut have lower warp counts, even when executed with great finesse. The coral colors in this band are more typical of Saryk work than the other groups. And included is a fine multi-ply commercial yarn in cherry red that I have found in early Salor, Saryk and Tekke work, but not in Yomut weavings.

But the clinchers came in unexpected technical details that my friend Allan Arthur noticed. Tiny colored (red and blue) weft inlays were used to straighten and strengthen the weave near the edges -- features not found in Tekke or Yomut work, but common in Saryk weaving. Weft-splice ridges typical of Tekke and Saryk weavings are sprinkled throughout. Then we found

overlapped knots forming columns in the outside borders -- knots jammed together purely to add bulk and strengthen the band edges. This is a Saryk weaving practice, and one not used in Tekke work.

If a significant number of bands can be attributed with some certainty based on distinctive weaving practices and characteristics, we may then be able to add unique *extra offset knotting* techniques to our arsenals of features useful for making tent band attributions.

If you have information on bands or photographs of them that you would like to share, please contact either:

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