

## ABSTRACT

The Central-Asian region, in current geo-political signification understood as the territory of five Post-Soviet states: Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and partially of Kazakhstan, has went through a very rich and colorful historical development. During this development it has absorbed many different culture impulses and influences that helped the region to develop conditions for the formation of a distinctive artistic expression. To a certain extent, we can observe continuity in the development of traditional arts and crafts professions since early historical times until today. Among the most important craft branches we need to mention textile production, involving carpet weaving, processing of felt, fabrics and embroideries, and also artistic metal processing represented particularly by the jewelry production and last but not least, ceramics production.

Arts and crafts have always had a very important position in the history and culture of Central Asia. Craftwork has been a subject of trade for a very long time period here, this fact being enhanced by the geographical position as well, since the region is situated on the route of the famous Silk Road. Arts and craft production, which comprised of common goods but also exclusive products of high artistic value, intended for the wealthy population strata and export, has represented a major economic factor both for settled and nomadic populations. According to the evidence provided by many historical sources, already the ancient and medieval Central-Asian golden and silver handicrafts, silk and cotton fabrics and carpets were subjects of international trade.

Based on rich material evidence, the period between the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century can be considered to be one of the most important eras of first-quality arts and crafts production according to used material and production procedures. Records of travelers and especially of ethnographers, who conducted numerous field investigations in Central Asia, provide very important data as well. Also artifacts kept in museum collections represent a valuable source of information about the arts and craft production between the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century. Documents and artifacts from this period formed the basis for the revitalization of traditional handicrafts, which started with the declaration of independence on the former Soviet Union in 1991, when Central Asian states, in the process of building national self-awareness and search for a new identity, began to come back to their cultural heritage and traditional values.

Main subject of this thesis introduces arts and crafts branches represented in the Central Asian collection of the Náprstek Museum in Prague, since it has never before been sufficiently examined by any researcher. This work focuses on collected artifacts originating from the second half of 19<sup>th</sup> to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century because of their uniqueness and also because of the fact that contemporary arts and crafts production draws inspiration in ornament and color from this time period as well as it uses original technologies and materials. My thesis also describes the situation in traditional arts and crafts production during the Soviet era and in the era of the 90s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century after Central Asian republics gained independence. Single themes are supported by data gained from own field research in different workshops in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan between years 2011 and 2012.

Arts and crafts of Central Asia have never been subjected to a systematic study in the Czech Republic and there also doesn't exist any overall publication concerning this topic in Czech language. Therefore introduces this thesis a new - not familiar and so far unprocessed - topic to domestic academic field.