



## UZBEK GOLD EMBROIDERY

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**ABSTRACT:** The art of gold embroidery has a very long history in Uzbekistan. Bukhara is considered to be the traditional and renowned centre of gold embroidery, with its high point being in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Gold embroidery was used in particular to decorate the clothes of the emir and his courtiers. Goldwork masters used specific materials, technical processes and stitch types. There were also rules for the creation of compositions and the choice of pattern.

Numerous examples of gold embroidery from the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries can currently be seen in Uzbek museums in Tashkent, Samarkand and Bukhara.<sup>2</sup> The Náprstek Museum in Prague has five items in its collection (four caps and a saddle blanket) which illustrate the Uzbek gold embroidery of the period mentioned above.

**KEY WORDS:** gold embroidery – Uzbek embroidery – Uzbekistan – Bukhara – National Museum – Náprstek Museum of Asian, African and American Cultures – Prague – museum collections.

### Introduction

The oldest museum examples of Uzbek gold embroidery come, with a few exceptions, from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, archaeological finds have shown that gold embroidery has a very long tradition in Central Asia. There is evidence of this kind of embroidery on the territory of Uzbekistan dating from the 1–2 century A.D., discovered in the Tashkent region. Fragments of gold, forming a spiral scroll-shaped pattern, were found in the waist and chest areas of human remains in the Tashkent region.<sup>3</sup>

The first detailed descriptions of gold-embroidered clothes and fabrics at the court of Timur were made by Spanish diplomat Ruy González de Clavijo<sup>4</sup>, who came to

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<sup>2</sup> Tashkent – State Museum of History, State Museum of Art, State Museum of the History of the Timurids, Samarkand – A. Ikramov Museum of History and Culture, Bukhara – State Museum of Architecture and Art.

<sup>3</sup> ГОНЧАРОВА, П. А. (1954): Золотое шитье. Сб. Народное декоративное искусство Узбекистана. Ташкент, p. 179. Cit. from: СИДОРЕНКО, А. И.; АРТЫКОВА, А. Р.; РАДЖАБОВ, Р. Р. (1981), p. 8.

<sup>4</sup> He died in 1412. His date of birth is unknown.