

## The Analysis of the Structural Design and Patterns of the Nomadic Rugs of South Khorasan Province

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### Introduction

South Khorasan Province is considered as one of the important regions of carpet production in the southeastern part of Iran. The carpets produced in this province are primarily created in two well-known styles: urban weaving (centered around the provincial capital and the city of Birjand) and nomadic weaving (focused on Baluch and Arab nomads dispersed throughout the province). Throughout historical eras, South Khorasan has consistently attracted the attention of state rulers, who have utilized nomadic forces to ensure border security. Some tribes have migrated to South Khorasan by force, while others have voluntarily moved to find suitable grazing lands. Generally, among nomads weavers, most patterns are geometric and abstract. The stylized floral designs vary significantly depending on the region they belong to. In other words, specific patterns within each classification are determined based on nomad groups's place of residence. Additionally, there some designs that have been adapted from other carpets. Despite its variety, the study of nomadic carpets in the South Khorasan province has received little attention due to the geographical dispersion of nomadic living areas and the difficulty in accessing authentic samples of these carpets.

### Research Method

The method of this research is descriptive-analytical, with data collected through both library and field studies. The historical background data of South Khorasan was gathered through library resources, while the identification of samples was carried out in the field. The statistical population was purposefully selected based on the accessible and currently produced carpets in the region. Given the diversity of design and pattern structures in nomadic areas, a classification based on common categories was employed for a better identification of patterns. These patterns were divided into seven general categories as illustrated in Fig. 1:

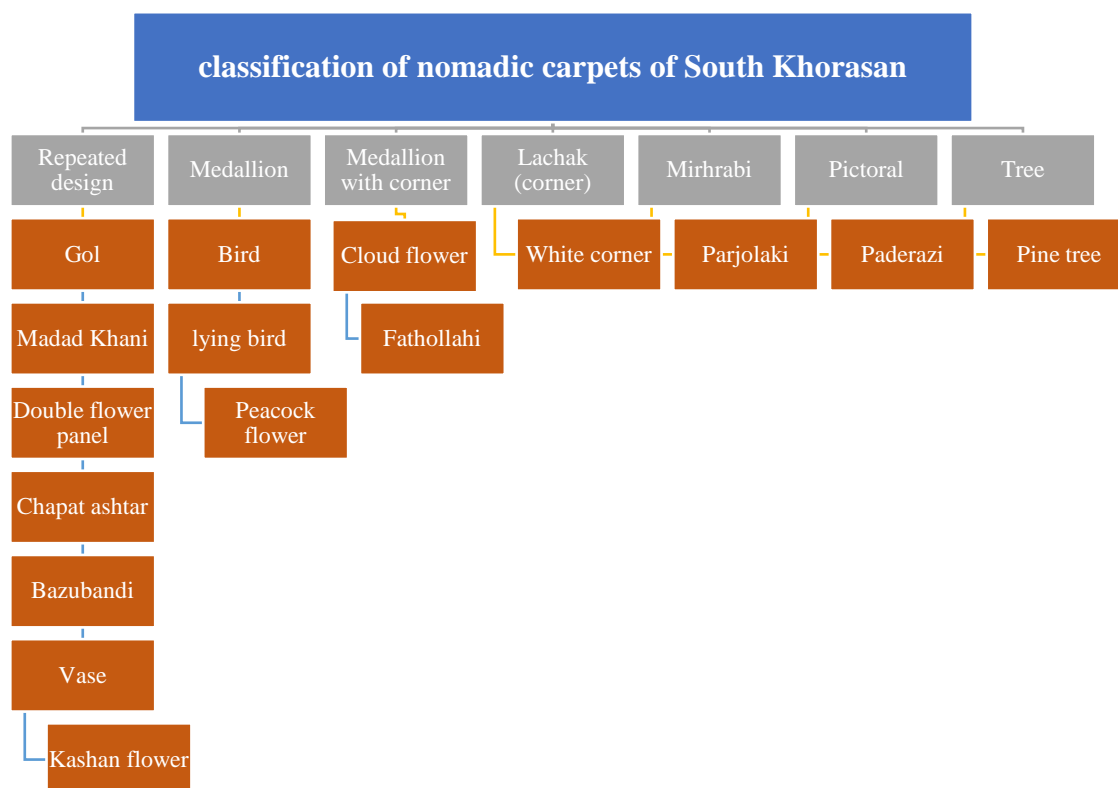


Fig.1: classification of nomadic carpets of South Khorasan (authors)

## Research Findings

The diversity of designs and patterns in the nomadic carpets of South Khorasan, as one of Iran's key carpet weaving centers, reflects various aspects of cultural and ethnic influences of the weavers. The associated patterns are intertwined with the nomadic lifestyle. Depending on their location in the mentioned regions, these designs and motifs were found to possess unique shapes and characteristics.

In examining the patterns and motifs of nomadic carpets, the deployment of designs such as Medallion with corner, Pictorial, Tree, Mirhrabi, Medallion, Repeated Design, and Lachak (Corner) is evident. The most commonly used design is the Panel pattern, while Pictorial, Corner, and Tree designs are less frequently used in this area. The design structure of carpets in this province includes 16 specific types, including: cloud flower medallion with corner, Fathollahi medallion with corner, bird medallion, peacock medallion, white corner, Gol Keshmiri repeated design, Madadkhani repeated design, double-flower repeated design, Chapat Ashtar repeated design, Bazubandi panel design, vase repeated design, Kashan flower repeated design, pine tree, Parjalaki mihrabi, and prayer rug mihrabi. The predominant form of the medallion in the carpets of the region is diamond-shaped, often featuring a single medallion. In terms of divisions, they are mostly executed in quarters. The form used in the structure of the region's corners is predominantly triangular, incorporating motifs related to the overall design. An examination of the borders in the nomadic carpets of South Khorasan reveals that certain designs are commonly shared among carpets, with the most significant borders being Kajhmar, Sizdahdomi, Attareh Shakhdar, Ya Ali, Golkoloucheh, and Chehelmorg. The most common border divisions include three, five, seven, and eight-part divisions. The shape diversity, found in rural and nomadic carpets of South Khorasan, is based on broken motifs, and the decorative elements used in the borders are considered one of the main structures examined in these carpets. Alongside the breadth and variety, specific motifs can be identified as fixed and repetitive patterns in carpets of the region.

### **Conclusion**

The studies conducted on the common motifs in the nomadic carpets of South Khorasan Province indicate that the majority of the design space is occupied by abstract and broken motifs inspired by the weavers' surrounding environment. Given their lifestyle, the use of local plant motifs, including various flowers and leaves as well as animal motifs such as goats, camels, birds, and horses, is prevalent in these carpets. Additionally, abstract human motifs (stick figures) are observed in some carpets from the region.

**Keywords:** design structure, motifs, nomadic carpets, South Khorasan, baluch nomads.