

The Art Of Pattoli: Design And Aesthetics Of Jewelry From Multan

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Abstract

Multan's history of thread jewelry, or pattoli jewelry, is well-known throughout Pakistan. Traditionally, necklace ends are tied with pattoli, which is essentially an ornamented thread work. Unfortunately, pattoli craft has never been acknowledged as an independently. Craft, despite its widespread use as a supporting element in jewelry design due to its enormous appeal. Practitioners of this skill, also called pattoli, are few and difficult to locate. Apprenticeships have a long tradition in Multan, where the master teaches the apprentice his vocation and wisdom, treating them like his own children. This disappearing breed of craftspeople may be found in Multan's Sarafa Bazaar (gold market) and craft bazaar's little street marketplaces. Sitting in the small 3x3 m shop that has been handed down from generation to generation, much like the craft. This study will address the artisans, relevance, and importance of pattoli work.

Key Words: *Pattoli, Design and aesthetic, jewelry, Culture, Oral tradition.*

Introduction

Multan is the center of thread craft in Pakistan, where some of the best artisans in the country teach the next generation. The religious, mythological, political, cultural, and artistic contexts that have encouraged the desire to exaggerate human tendencies from the dawn of time are the reasons for its popularity (Bukhari, 2019: 155). To fully understand the product, one must be aware of the cultural discourse of the people who made it. To understand the patterns and motifs present in pattoli jewelry, it is essential to search for numerous influences on Multan culture. An analysis of the Persian peacock motif included in Multan's pattoli jewelry is one of the findings (Esmi & Shiran, 2022: 776). The skilled pattoli craftspeople teach their craft to the next generation through a cultural framework that teaches trainees through hands-on practice. It is a perfect example of how knowledge and skills can be passed on orally (Bukhari & Manzoor, 2019: 156).

Throughout history, Multan has been referred to by various names. Hindus referred to it as Omphalos, or the "navel of the world," Arabs called it "Bait-al-zahāb," and the Mughals termed

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it "Dar-ul-aman," or the "city of safety (Maclagan, 1990: 41). However, it is regarded as one of South Asia's ancient cities, perhaps even older than Harappa or Mohenjo-Daro (Gardezi & Jamil, 1988: 16). During the Mughal era, which lasted from 1561 until 1739, Multan had a time of stability and peace. Nonetheless, Multan's pre-Mughal past is also an important part of its past (Bukhari & Arshad, 2021: 152). Numerous temples and tombs constructed prior to the Mughal dynasty are regarded as architectural wonders (Maclagan, 1990: 53). Because of its many shrines, mosques, and khānqah of Ṣūfī saints, Multan is also known as Madīnat al-Auliya, or "the City of Saints," indicating the city's inhabitants' commitment to religion (Bukhari, 2021: 34; Fareedi, 1980: 14). Because of its art and crafts, Multan flourished even throughout the 18th century, when the Mughal dynasty was in decline in the area (Bukhari & Naeem, 2021: 31). Islam continued to be a major source of influence for art at that time, along with Mughal, Arab, and Persian customs (Durrani, 1991: 18).

Arabs, Iranians, Sikhs, Mughals, Hindūs, and other central Asian ethnicities have occasionally impacted Multan's culture (Bukhari & Manzoor, 2021: 34). Their trade and industry were impacted by the religions and customs they carried with them, which influenced the city's language, clothes, cuisine, and way of life. Multan became a market for several ethnic groups as a result of the diversity in artefact manufacturing. In Multan, art in all its forms flourished. The indigenous music that Iranians brought with them ushered in a new period of Ṣūfī music throughout the subcontinent. Iranian culture also influenced threadwork, particularly Multan's pattoli jewelry. Peacock designs are among the Iranian patterns and motifs that are thought to be utilized in Multan's pattoli jewelry (Frembgen, 2012: 14).



Pattoli; Craftsmen Working in Ṣarāfa Bāzār, Multān, Photograph by First Author. October 15, 2010.

Origin of Pattoli

Different languages have different origins for the term "pattoli." Here are a few instances from Urdu, Saraiki and Punjabi Dictionary.

1. According to the Urdu dictionary, pattoli is a cast that includes jewelry manufacturers who work with silk threads; dori is the name of the silk thread used in jewelry weaver of threads, A worker in the silk thread industry (Cited in Bukhari, 2000: 349).

2. Bun'ne wala (the weaver) and Resham baf (silk threads) are Persian words that are used in Saraiki and Urdu Lughat (Mughal, 2003: 99)
3. In Punjabi, it is referred to as Pattoli, Resham ka karobar karan wala (a person who works in the silk threads industry), Gehnan vich resham di dori (thread lace used in jewellery), Pawan wala (wearer), pavi jolaha (Jewelry Designer or stringer), kapra bunan wala (fiber weaver), dopatta, and Chunni da pallu (a dupatta is a long piece of cloth that South Asian women wear around their heads, necks, and shoulders) (Salahuddin, 2002: 512).

The Hindū community in northern India, who have been engaged in thread work for a long time, is the source of the name patwa or pattoli. They wove jewelry for women using silver and golden threads. Pattoli or Patwa is a term with several meanings (Bukhari & Manzoor, 2019: 155). The above-discussed North Indian community is one example, while the Hindi word pat, which signifies silk, is another possible origin. Hindu mythology holds that all people descended from their lord Vishnu (Bukhari, 2021: 204). According to oral myth, a pair sprang from Vishnu's breast to execute the ceremony when Lord Shankar and his wife Paravati were married. This was because there was no Brahman priest present to officiate the marriage. After the ceremony was over, Vishnu urged the man who had come out of his chest to continue making a living by doing patwa (Bukhari, 2021: 204; Bukhari & Manzoor, 2019: 156).

Animal decorations, parānda, azārband, and other jewelry pieces are all made in Multan using the pattoli craft. One of Multan's specialties is the pattoli craft, which began as a supporting element for priceless jewelry before taking on a life of its own. Over time, the subcontinent's threadcraft evolved. Most craftspeople from India moved to Pakistan after the subcontinent was divided (Naeem, 2011: 24).

Although seventy to eighty members of their family were involved in the Pattoli craft, Pattoli Ustād Ramḍān (bādshāh), (Late) Ustād Sājad, and (Late) Ustād Arshad are well-known figures in the field, and the craft is slowly dying because of the low profit margins for the artisans. Ustād Kāmṛān, a pupil of Ustād Salīm is currently the trained pattoli in the Multan Sarāfa Bāzār Shaheedān wāli galī.⁶



Pattoli Working; Late Ustād Ramḍān (bādshāh) & (Late) Ustād Sājad working in Sarāfa Bāzār, Multān. Photograph by First Author. October 30, 2010.

⁶ Muhammad. Sajad, personal communication, September 14, 2010



Pattoli; (Late) Ustād Sajad working in Šarāfa Bāzār, Multān.
Photograph by First Author. October 15, 2010.



Pattoli; Ustad Kamran working in Šarāfa Bāzār, Multān.
Photograph by First Author. October 15, 2010.

As crafts have advanced, machines have taken the place of numerous steps in the process. In Multan, machine-made jewelry replaced handmade jewelry (Bukhari, 2021:207). In Multan, machine-made jewelry replaced handmade jewelry. A single thread, known as dorī, has taken the place of the jhābba, a necklace with seven threads shaped like a peacock, as consumers now desire a more elegant finished item. In an effort to broaden the market and make the inexpensive craft accessible to everyone, even the string-attaching procedure is now carried out by machines (Krishnan & Ramamrutham, 2006: 270).



Pattoli; Katmalāh Necklace (Pānch-lada).
Photograph by First Author. November 15, 2010.



Pattoli; Katmalāh Necklace (Sat-lada, Pānch-lada),
Photograph by First Author. November 15, 2010.

Multan is widely known for its talented craftspeople who make expensive, time-consuming jewelry out of gold and silver. Jewelry-making in Multan is thought to be as old as Multan itself, and Multani gold-smithing has a unique worldwide market for its styling. Jewelry manufactured in Multan has a traditional flavor thanks to its intricate workmanship and native patterns (Naeem, 2011: 48).

Jewelry pieces like kundan, jarro, and chitrai are made using a variety of techniques. Multan's artisans specialize in chitrai and kundan. Only skilled artisans are able to complete these handcrafted pieces. Using the Jarro technique, artisans create jewelry that is adorned with jewels (Usha R. Krishnan 2006). Both inside and outside of Pakistan, these jewelry pieces are in high demand after. Another method of creating jewelry is galāpattis, which involves decorating the pieces with threads. This technique involves weaving colorful and golden threads around a base of black thread, then attaching tiny colored beads to it. This method is used to make tawīdh, galāpatti, pāzaib, tikkās, and jhumkās. A more intricate variation of the

pattoli method, which is used to make parānda (hair accessories), is utilized to make jewelry (Untracht, 2008: 72).

Development of Pattoli Craft in Subcontinent

Although its exact origin is still unknown, this craft has long been a part of Multan tradition. Its presence for hundreds of years is confirmed by the remnants discovered at several archaeological sites. Evidence that this art was also well-liked in that culture may be found in the unique paintings of the Mughal dynasty (Bukhari, 2021: 210; Krishnan & Ramamrutham, 2006: 270).

Silver and gold are typically used for making necklaces employing the pattoli technique. To create a single, huge item, the artisans join small, adjustable pieces. There is a ball of yarn or wool between these sections. The necklace has a really elegant appearance thanks to these vibrant yarns. Metal beads are another material that is utilized as a divider. Despite being very economical, the yarn ball approach is not long-lasting. Because of normal wear and tear, it needs to be replaced frequently, however the metal balls last a very long time. Because pattoli is skilled at threading beads together rather than threads, weavers used to weave genuine gold and silver threads together to create necklaces in the past. These weavers were capable of weaving cotton, wool, and silk threads. These days, pattoli's use metallic yarns and synthetic threads to create their creations (Krishnan & Ramamrutham, 2006: 270; Untracht, 2008: 72).

In the seventeenth century, it was customary practice to employ jhabbās, or tassels. It was used to create bracelets, necklaces, tasbehs, and azārbands (belts). In order to create a secure knot, they are subsequently knotted together. To give them a sophisticated appearance, these tassels are constructed from several threads. During the Mughal era, these jhabbās were also manufactured for royal families; for them, silk thread was utilized, and intricate beadwork was done (Bukhari, 2021: 201).

The pattoli technique was frequently used to create the bazuband (arm jewelry) that the Taimūrid were known to wear. Later, the Mughals inherited this craft. Many jewelry enthusiasts, both local and foreign, still desire these unique items even though this tradition is fading in India. After the Mughal era, these compositions continued to be a part of cultural bāzārs. The Mughals loved the art of pattoli. Pattoli jewelry was very popular in their time. Numerous paintings and records recovered from that time period attest to the significance of this art form. Several Mughal literature describe how Mughal women hired pattoli craftsmen to create bracelets, anklets, and neckpieces with embroidered dorī (thread lace) (Ali & Abbas, 2022: 907).

It is common for these artisans to go to several towns in order to market their jewelry. Sat-lāda and panch-lāda are the two main pattoli methods. Panch-lāda has five strands, while sat-lāda has seven. Even the ancient scriptures of the subcontinent mention sat-lāda (Krishnan & Ramamrutham, 2006: 270). This sat-lāda had a jewel in the middle and strands of beads hanging down, giving it an amazing appearance. This type of necklace completely encloses the chest (Naeem, 2011: 28).

Cultural Identity of Pattoli

Jewelry served as a tool for displaying wealth and prestige in addition to its primary function of decoration and ornamentation. This explains why there are thousands of pictures of kings and queens or gods and goddesses wearing a lot of jewelry. Over the centuries, mankind have devised various decoration techniques to improve physical imperfections or enhance beauty. In addition to the beautification material available in prehistoric societies, which consists of painting the face and body with ash, ochre paste, and blood, several pieces of jewelry are used for this purpose (Kamran, 2014: 7).

Jewelry is nearly often presented at weddings in Pakistani society today as a way for the couple to save money or make an investment. However, the aspect of beauty and ornamentation is also quite important during this social event. Therefore, the element of design and style is regarded as being just as significant as the monetary worth (Bukhari, 2021: 210). Nowadays, purchasing certain jewelry to go with a particular article of clothing is common, especially among women. The intricate jewelry depictions in these paintings were meant to convey both the wealth and the sophisticated taste of the imperial superiors (Ali & Masooma, 2022: 902).

As a result, amuletic jewelry has long been popular throughout all societies. Amulets, also known as *tawīdh*, are said to be items of power or protective devices that people created to ward off bad spirits and assist the living in overcoming the negative, hostile, or harmful forces of nature (Ali & Abbas, 2022: 903). It's interesting to note that there has never been any evidence of a class difference among amuletic jewelry users. Such jewelry could be as costly as gold and diamonds or as inexpensive as a tiger claw, feather, bone, piece of wood, or flower (Bukhari, 2021: 233).



Amulet jewelry,
Photograph by First Author, September 15, 2010.

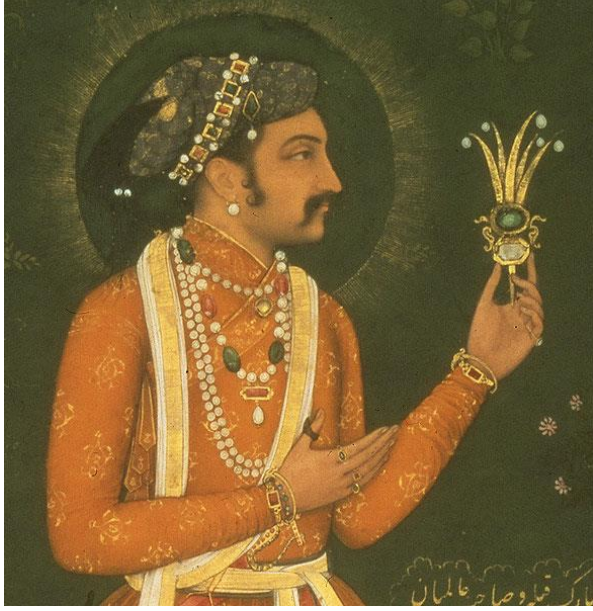


Pattoli; Material; Silk Thread used as a base,
Photograph by First Author. October 15, 2010.

In Pakistani culture, jewelry is typically presented as a wedding present as a way for the couple to save money or make an investment. However, the aspect of beauty and ornamentation is also quite important during this social event. Therefore, the element of design and style is regarded as being just as significant as the monetary worth. Nowadays, it is common, particularly among women, to purchase certain jewelry to go with a particular article of apparel. Consequently, platinum, gold, silver, and precious and semi-precious stone jewelry has gained a lot of popularity. People are searching for less expensive solutions as a result of the global recession, rising gold prices, and worsening economic conditions. A few elements have been taken into account when discussing and evaluating the art or craft of a certain place. These include geography and climate, followed by history, religion, politics, society and culture, economy, and trade. These elements are unavoidably connected to one another to some degree (Ali & Abbas, 2022: 902).

As a result, Indian jewelry masterpieces describe the characteristics of the Vedic ethnicity, the magnificent Indus Valley Civilization, and the inspirational prehistoric India. Around the sixth to fifth millennia BCE, textiles were first discovered in South Asia during the Neolithic era in Mehrgarh, Pakistan. Further illuminating the evolution of the ancient textile industry is archaeological evidence from the Indus Valley Civilization, particularly at Kunal, Harappa, and Mohenjo-Daro (Guru & Rani, 2023: 953). This study is the archaeological evidence of textiles from the Indus Valley civilization, illuminating the variety of materials used and the likely timeline of textile production throughout this time. The materials used to make textiles, which are made up of interlocked yarn or thread fibers, include cotton, wool, linen, jute, silk, and natural materials including plants, animals, and minerals, as well as synthetic ones (Bhardwaj, 2024: 327).

Furthermore, understanding Mughal psychology is essential, as their approach heavily relied on self-promotion. These emperors' personal recollections are filled with their unique intelligence, kindness, courage, generosity, knowledge, and consideration. This era's poetry is merely the emperor's adulation, while paintings frequently flatter monarchs' appearance, bravery, religious commitment, or aesthetic sensibility. The intricate jewelry depictions in these paintings were meant to convey both the wealth and the sophisticated taste of the imperial superiors (Bukhari & Arshad, 2021: 152).



Portrait of Shahjahan, opaque water color on paper 20.6 X 11.5cm.
Source: Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

The pattoli technique was used to create jewelry masterpieces under the patronage of the well-known Mughals (1526–1707), who are known for their wealth and passion for jewelry. With a reputation as one of the most complete and advanced societies in antiquity, India's rich and thriving culture was enhanced by the Mughals' majesty, which brought and produced unparalleled and distinct aesthetics. Literary records of paintings and sculptures in India are used to depict traditional jewelry-making techniques, the symbolism employed in designs, the preferred plants and animals, the size and color of specific motifs, and their relationship to the social and cultural structures of various religions (Ali & Abbas, 2022: 906). The fertile land of sweet waters, known as "the heaven on earth," was not only ruled by the fortunate Mughals in the sixteenth century. It was also a place that concealed unrestricted riches of minerals, gas, coal, marble, rubies, emeralds, lips, turquoise, diamonds and, last but not least, gold and platinum. It was fate that determined that they had to take the enriched soil in order to synthesize the Eastern and Western traditions and ideas, as well as the oral and written traditions in psychology, philosophy, and religion. This made it the most significant and laden culture in history. Methodologies were tested, discarded, and then refined. Although the extended experimentation produced an extremely time-consuming and difficult procedure, the final outcome was spectacular, timeless, and truly a work of marvelous beauty (Bukhari, 2021: 235).

Peacock Motif

The peacock emblem is closely associated with Indian sub-continental culture. According to Indian iconography, the peacock represents Mother Earth. In addition, the peacock represents immortality. Peacock meat is thought to grant humans immortality. Indian jewelry also features peacock designs. India's national bird, the peacock, is used in jewelry, henna, saris, and many other designs. The peacock motif has a unique and important place in Indian mythology and design, but other designs found in Indian jewelry include paisley, lotus, fish, snakes, and crocodiles (Bukhari, W.N. 2021: 235; Esmi & Shiran, 2022: 777).

The peacock is still a representation of love, whether it be between Sīta and Rama or in any other tale. In Ramayāna, the peacock is used as a symbol of love. In Tamil mythology, Maūrya is linked to the divine Lord Murūnga. This unusual bird was revered by the Maūryas. The word

mor, which denotes peacock, is the root of the term maūrya (Dokras, 2021: 7). In the time of Gupta, the peacock was revered in coins and was regarded as a lucky charm. This bird's significance and portrayal in sub continental culture, particularly in Indian culture, are noteworthy (Dokras, 2021: 7). Marshal identified the peacock as the primary symbol in Harappan pottery during his analysis (Kamran, 2014: 7).



Pattoli; Jhābba (Backside of Katmalāh Necklace).
Photograph by First Author. November 15, 2010.

This important bird was introduced to the world by Alexander. He transported peacocks to the west from the subcontinent via land. Glory, luxury, beauty, immortality, flaunting, prominence, majesty, pride, and decoration are all part of the peacock's symbolic meaning. The sovereignty, splendor, and beauty of the bird's emblem served as the inspiration for Jahangir's renowned peacock throne. This throne has a notoriously high price tag. At the time, it cost seventy-one million rupees. The Mughals were known for their extravagant lifestyle and opulent belongings; the peacock symbolized the grandeur and monarchy that characterized the royal court. Numerous other areas and empires have also favored the bird (Dokras, 2021: 25; Nair 1974: 93).

According to Schuyler V. R. Cammann's publications, the peacock is a major symbol in Persian art as well. Peacock themes are used to adorn Persian carpets and rugs, highlighting the multicolored bird's splendor. In addition to the peacock, these rugs feature lotuses, floral and vegetal themes, the sun, moon, and other symbols that represent the beauty and development of Persian culture. The sun, which represents God, is at the top of their depiction of natural progression. Nūr al-samawat or the light of the sky and earth, is the name of God in Muslim belief (Esmi & Shiran, 2022: 776).

Peacocks are worn as symbols by those who wear them because of their religious convictions. This symbol, they believe, will help them combat the various types of evil that surround them.

In contrast to its profound cultural significance, some contend that the Mughal jewelry represented the pride and glory connected to the ornamental jewelry (Esmi & Shiran, 2022: 777). It is argued that the Mughal jewelry symbolized the pride and glory associated with the extravagant jewelry as opposed to the deep cultural meanings (Ali & Abbas, 2022: 908).

In his book *Iranians in Mughal Politics and Society*, Dr. Abolghasem Dadver discusses the Persian goldsmiths who came to India to serve for Jahāngīr. Two names that might be used in this context are Yūsuf ‘Azīz Iṣfahāni and Zamān Iṣfahāni. Zamān Iṣfahāni, a poet and jeweller who worked for Ya‘qūb Zargar Bāshi in the Safavid court, arrived in India in 1614. As a master of the art of cutting and polishing stones, Saida-i Gilāni was also named "Bibādal Khān" and "Dārogha-i Zargar Khāna," which translates to "coordinator of goldsmithy." It was under his supervision that Shāhjahān created his renowned peacock throne. He was so happy that Shāhjahān had him weighed in gold (Kamran, 2014: 7).

India has a long history of using the ancient method of inlaying jewels on a gold (or other metal) substrate. It was first acknowledged in the Indus Valley in India in the third millennium BC, and it has been practiced ever since. As a kind of worship, the Mughals used gold-studded jewelry to "carry out noble plans and even perform Divine worship in a proper manner." The primary focus of the Mughal marvels' ornamental legacy and the pattoli work is similarly thought to have been adornment and ornamentation. Over the years of practice and across the wide Subcontinent, even a slight variance in technique is acceptable (Kamran, 2014: 7). Jewel inlay is a very old technique that is used all across India on gold (or other metal) surfaces. In India, it has been practiced constantly since the third millennium BC, when it was first recognized in the Indus Valley. The Mughals used gold-studded jewelry as a kind of devotion in order to "carry out noble plans and even perform Divine worship in a proper manner." It is also thought that the primary focus of the Mughal marvels' ornamental legacy and the pattoli craftsmanship was adornment and ornamentation. An insignificant modification in technique is permissible over the years of practice and throughout the Subcontinent. These experiments led to the creation of jewelry embellishment and the pattoli craft in the area (Kamran, 2014: 6).

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