

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

---

Textile Society of America Symposium  
Proceedings

Textile Society of America

---

1998

## Exploring Patttern in "Kashmir" and "Paisley" Shawls

Arlene C. Cooper

*Metropolitan Museum of Art; The Textile Museum, Washington, DC*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/tsaconf>



Part of the [Art and Design Commons](#)

---

Cooper, Arlene C., "Exploring Patttern in "Kashmir" and "Paisley" Shawls" (1998). *Textile Society of America Symposium Proceedings*. 158.

<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/tsaconf/158>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Textile Society of America at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Textile Society of America Symposium Proceedings by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

## Exploring Pattern in "Kashmir" and "Paisley" Shawls

by  
Arlene C. Cooper

Using six extraordinary shawls from the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, this presentation will explore the relationship between how a shawl is made and the symmetry system used in its patterning, and briefly consider the terminology which might best express these relationships. Certain symmetry systems and styles of shawl patterning may evolve from the capabilities of particular looms. For instance, weaving on a basic Indian handloom with the characteristic Indian shawl weave, 2/2 double-interlocked twill, is a very slow process, which encourages simple symmetry: a motif repeating exactly across the width of a textile, or straight repeat. With a drawloom, one could weave patterns in either straight or point repeat, in which the design reverses on an axis. Technical innovations inspired by the evolution of the Jacquard loom made it possible to weave designs with only 2 large repeats. Market demands, however, often determined designs and the interaction among these factors will be examined utilizing the following: 1-a classic Kashmir shawl made before 1810 and woven in one piece in 2/2 double-interlocked twill; 2-a quintessential "Kashmir" shawl from the second quarter of the 19th century, with the same weave structure but woven in sections; 3-an unusual "Kashmir" shawl dating after 1860 with an asymmetric design made possible by "patchwork" construction of myriad pieces woven in 2/2 double-interlocked twill; 4-a distinctively British drawloom-woven shawl dating c. 1830-40; 5-a superb mid-19th century Jacquard-woven French shawl with rotational symmetry; 6-a uniquely-Russian plain weave dovetailed-tapestry reversible shawl woven by serfs in the second quarter of the 19th century.

Arlene C. Cooper, a textile historian specializing in "Kashmir" and "Paisley" shawls, is the author of *Infinite Variations: "Kashmir" and "Paisley" Shawls in North American Collections*, to be published by E. J. Brill, Leiden, in 1999. Her articles on shawls have appeared in academic journals, in *Hali*, and in *Pink*. She has presented papers on shawls at symposia of C.I.E.T.A., the ICOM Costume Committee, and the 1988 and 1992 TSA conferences. Ms. Cooper has also conducted a two workshops on *An Introduction to Shawls*, for non-specialist colleagues under TSA auspices, and was an Editor of the TSA Newsletter from its inception until 1995. As President of Arlene C. Cooper Consulting, she is a consultant to institutional and private collectors of textiles and costume on collections management and documentation. Ms. Cooper was Consulting Curator for "A Passion for Paisley: Indian and European Shawls from the Collection" at the Philadelphia Museum of Art (1996-7), and Guest Curator of "Kashmir and European Shawls from the Collection" at the Museum for Textiles (1990-1), in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. She was formerly a Senior Research Assistant with the Department of European Sculpture and Decorative Arts at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Ms. Cooper serves on the Advisory Council of The Textile Museum, Washington, DC.